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Spaces for Jihād: Indian Muslims and Conceptions of Citizenship

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I. Introduction

1.1 Significance of the research

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.

- The Quran, Surat Al-hujurāt, 49:13

The question of citizenship in an increasingly globalized and transcultural world is addressed on different levels of analyses and contexts. Muslim communities, which constitute minorities in non-Muslim countries, are being focused upon as compelling case studies and applications of new theories on citizenship, multiculturalism, cultural diversity, identity politics, secularism, and a wide range of other related concepts and ideas. One of the key problems constituting these theories is the predominance of Western approaches to the study of these concepts, hence the hegemony of some discourses and a process of stereotyping of Muslim youth politics. Ideas such as ‘parallel societies’ and the ‘perennial Other’ have emerged to describe contemporary multicultural societies constituting Muslim minorities, whom are alleged to be rejecting to fully integrate with the ‘mainstream’. Under situations of sociopolitical injustice, political apathy and alienation have proven to be common phenomena that drive disenchanted youth to be easily mobilized and recruited by fundamentalist networks and groups. Unfortunately, this does not do justice to the understanding of political forces interplaying in these situations. Moderate voices seem to be silenced and excluded from the analysis. Thus, apart from extremist political action (or inaction) and fundamentalism, it is essential to understand the mechanisms of resistance that individuals and groups manage to develop against unjust state actions.

Resistance in this sense does not emerge from an identified single and unified class or group. The subordinates are in constant interchanging roles of exploited and exploiters. Taking into consideration the evolution of contexts and the utilization of transdisciplinary approaches, this research tackles this problem by taking Indian Muslims as a case study in two states, where they constitute a minority in one and a majority in another.

Without neglecting the complex definitional aspects of the terms majority and minority, the resilience of the democratic Indian political system is controlled by those who are allegedly weak and powerless and driven by need, thus acting as a paradox to the above-mentioned common argument on alienation. An evident example of this is that the proportion of Muslims responding positively to democracy was consistently higher than the overall national average (Alam, J. 2004).

This is a salient fact, especially in the background of the widespread impression that the Muslims are the alienated people in Indian society, lacking democratic commitment and values. Thus, concern should be cast at the dynamics of inner changes, mobilization and agency within the Muslim community. This is hence the focus of this dissertation. Through a comparative analysis, this research is structured by operationalizing religious politics, hybridizing political categories and choosing questions that travel crossculturally.

Through the historical moment of the creation of postcolonial citizenship, India witnessed a theoretically legal adoption of a specific secular and western conception of citizenship. However, the reality of marginalization of the majority of Indian Muslims –among other communities and minorities, seriously questions the nature of Indian democracy and how inclusive citizenship in India is. *Politically*, Muslims suffer from the discourse on terrorism and the propaganda portraying them as potential terrorists. *Ideologically*, the Hindu nationalistic discourse alienates them by questioning their loyalties to the state and thus plays a strong role in the eruption of communal conflicts. In addition to this, the *socio-economically* backward conditions of Muslims and their marginalization turn relations of power and domination against them. Consequently, a set of practices violating human rights have been incurred on Indian Muslims, either by the state itself, embodied in the instrument of the police, or by state-supported actions of political parties and even mobs. Henceforth, it is argued that we are currently witnessing a strong relapse in Indian democracy, and a shift towards an authoritarian-oriented practice of the state, and with any authoritarian action, protest is deemed to appear. Nevertheless, in the case of the Muslim minority in India, one is overwhelmed by the propaganda of the portrayal of Muslims as potential terrorists. In my opinion, this is due to the inadequate study of the dynamics of self-representation as an element of resistance of Indian Muslims, in addition to the constant concentration on militant politics of Islamic groups and movements that do not always necessarily echo the voice of the public. Therefore, this thesis goes beyond such parochial embodiments or understandings and examines the ways Muslims in India envisage political change and deal with the injustice of everyday life. What was of profound interest to me and beyond the discourses of political leadership, were the lives of the common Indian Muslims, and their perceptions of the ways through which they could counter state or community violence.

By shifting the focus from the state-oriented approach to the study of dissent and protest, to a more society-oriented one in which emphasis is cast on how individuals as agents perceive their problems and solutions, modernistic conceptions of resistance could be challenged. This was studied by regarding, on the one hand, the discourses on withdrawal and alienation, and on the other

hand, the discourses of political participation, self-perception of the political identity of Indian Muslims and their protest as counter actions reflecting an alternative understanding of political action.

The process of adaptation of the secular and western conception of citizenship, which was alien to Muslims, and to their world view (which is in itself based on different interpretations of Islamic *shari'ah*) is reproduced in today's settings by accommodating this adaptation to the reality of political and social life; thus resulting in creating alternative conceptions of citizenship that aim at delegitimizing dominant power structures.¹ This study concerns Indian Muslims and the ways they negotiate power relations and create spaces of agency and forms of self-representation through resisting these hegemonic discourses that constitute the structural context of their sphere of political action. This project aims at identifying Indian Muslims as strong political actors and not mere passive victims or alienated subjects as it is commonly argued and portrayed by the media and political leaders. By relying on group solidarity, an alternative conception of citizenship based on the "collective" is practiced through dynamics of protest on the levels of consciousness, will, and action. In this regard, citizenship is also understood as a question of identity and not simply as a legal set of rights and obligations.

The voice of the moderate middle class citizen is usually hidden from the discourses of politics. Studies concentrating on the political behavior of elites or the subaltern embodied in the marginalized lower classes as in Dalits or peasants often lead to neglecting another subaltern voice—that of the middle class person. Choosing the Muslim minority, and specifically the educated lower middle class, as a target group and a case study, was based on an attempt by the researcher to pinpoint the politics of absence. This refers to the absent discourses on how citizens live their lives, and still be political beings without adopting an extremist position, and how these discourses can enrich the debate on citizenship in postcolonial societies, and thus on forms of political action, and help eliminate global stereotypes of Muslim communities.

The conceptual framework hence is based on the idea of temporal and empirical space as a context, *jihad* as a means and citizenship as a goal. This thesis hence is divided in three main parts; in addition to the methodology and literature review of citizenship theories, the succeeding sections comprise this temporal space or in other terms the historical context, the contemporary socio-political settings in which Muslims live, and finally the case studies where the agents appear in

¹ It could well be argued that these changes came about not just with the formation of the independent state but back

Delhi and Kerala.

1.2 State of the art

This study permeates two sets of questions. The first is of hybrid citizenship, and the second concerns Muslim communities in India. Contemporary studies in social and political theory tackling citizenship in the age of globalization transcend traditional approaches to perceiving citizenship through the liberal and republican lenses. Most studies, nevertheless, focus on citizenship in the European Union and North America as case studies for multicultural existence, belonging and identity. The dynamics of waves of migrations of citizens of postcolonial countries to Western states govern such studies (For example, Taylor, 1992; Soysal, 1994; Ong, 1999; Miller, 2002; Linklater, 1998; Kymlicka, 2001; Benhabib, 2004; Fraser, 2007). Here, it appears that the uniqueness of the Indian case lies in it being a democracy composed of unprecedented diversity of overlapping identities among its citizens: ethnic, religious and linguistic.

India, as a subject of immense research, has become the origin of alternative approaches to studying social and political phenomenon. This is not just shown through the genre of subaltern studies, but also the immensely rich branch of Indian sociology (For example, Chatterjee, 1993 & 2004; Chakrabarty, 2006; Kaviraj, 1997; Kohli, 1992; Khare, 1998; Oommen, 1997; Ahmed, 1983). Hence, the second, yet pivotal, aspect of this study concerns Indian Muslims—a Muslim minority that has not been portrayed among the many famous case studies of Muslims in democracies in mainstream academic literature. Fazalbhoy (1997) attributes the reasons of the limited work on Indian Muslims in the past decades to the hegemony of an orientalist discourse on social sciences and hence the marginalization of Muslims in social science literature due to the allocation of Hinduism a greater symbolic significance as a major definer of Indian culture. This has also led to the imperialism of categories— to borrow Rudolph's (2005) term, which defined Muslims as the 'Other'. In addition to this, Fazalbhoy mentions a significant cause related to the institutional and infrastructural deficit in academic departments considering the case of Indian Muslims for study. In my opinion, this might have been aggravated due to linguistic barriers, as most of the literature pertaining to Indian Muslims is written in vernacular languages, and also due to the emphasis on studying Muslim societies in Muslim majority countries (especially the Arab World) while neglecting or devaluing the Muslim communities of India.

Works on Indian Muslims until a recent period was restricted to Sufism, communalism and women (Fazalbhoy, 1997) or to orientalist discourses that portray Muslims as the other part of the equation of Hindu-Muslim studies (Gottschalk, 2001). After demolishing the Babri Masjid in 1992,

the violence in Gujarat 2002 and the release of the Sachar Committee report in 2006, several works have sprouted on all aspects of lives of Indian Muslims. However, most of these works present the predicaments, the dilemmas, and recommendations (when talking of good governance, or police or law enforcement agencies), but most of these works do not exhibit the positive images that reflect how common people deal with the public sphere and interact with reality and the different ways they counter the hegemonic discourses and try to make sense of their living. Gender is also an aspect that is often researched in Muslim communities. This is done whether through reformists' Islamic revival organizations such as Jamaati Islami and their impact on women (Metcalf, 1998; Arat, 2005; Mahmoud, 2005; Huq, 2009; Bano & Kalmbach, 2011) or through the juristic topic of personal laws (Ahmed, A., 2001; Al-Qaradawy, 2001; Vatuk, 2008).

Another way of studying the case study of Indian Muslims is through economic policies. The Oxford Handbook on Indian Muslims (2010), edited by Abusaleh Shariff and Rakesh Basant is an example of an amalgamation of studies on the socio-economic indicators and policy implications, as reflected through Sachar Report.

This study, therefore, will focus on how Indian Muslims accommodate their Islamic identity and present a remarkably mature political community in which questions such as political representation (whether Muslims have to be politically represented by a Muslim) and tolerance would be critically examined.

1.3 Research questions

The main research question of this study is as follows:

How do Indian Muslims make use of the spaces and channels granted by the democratic framework to accommodate their Islamic identity with the secular one? And to what extent is their Islamic identity conceived (or perceived) as either conducive or conflicting with the political setting in which they live?

Other key research questions:

- What did the *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) of the Indian *Ulama* (scholars) in the time of partition contribute to modern Islamic political theory?²

² *Ijtihād* is defined by Ibn Al athir as “the effort and endeavour undertaken for attaining some objective.” Coming from *juhd* meaning employing one’s complete strength and *jad* meaning hardship and difficulty. Whereas *jahd* means hardship and difficulty, *juhd* gives the sense of power and strength. (Ibrahim M. M., 2004, p. 123). For Shariati, *ijtihād* refers to “a free and independent endeavour aiming at obtaining a thorough and progressive understanding of Islam in

- How does the given socio-political context of an individual shape his/her perception of certain variables such as political efficacy, agency, conception of citizenship rights and belief in democracy?
- Based on data acquired from national surveys, and despite their political and social deprivation, why do Indian Muslims cast strong confidence in the democratic system of governance?
- Could it be argued that Indian Muslims create alternative conceptions of citizenship that incorporate Islamic principles and possibilities for agency based on a sense of collective identity?
- Is it feasible to argue that in abiding by the guidelines to ‘model citizenship’, average Muslims find themselves inclined to adopt an act of ‘self-marginalization’ lest their claim for identity and cultural security would be interpreted as disloyalty?

1.4 Hypotheses

- The integrative element of citizenship is not necessarily embodied in the conviction that more rights mean more integration. The Indian case shows us a paradoxical situation of Indian Muslims feeling a sense of deprivation of full rights and at the same time projecting faith in democracy.
- The Islamic idea of *darul waṭan* (the abode of the homeland) is a viable unit of analysis to be dealt with within an Islamic worldview.
- Although there is a correlation between ideals of the Islamic community as imperatives for political action, there is an apparent separation between these ideals and sources of political legitimacy.
- There is almost a homogenous all-India picture when it comes to conceptualizing citizenship and national identity. However, there is no similar image when it comes to a shared Pan-Indian Islamic identity.

all its dimensions... It is a tool by which a conscious mujtahid (the person who practices *ijtihād*) presents a new and changing interpretation of Islam according to his progressive and exalted outlook...Therefore, *ijtihād* is a grand factor in creating motion, life and constant renewal of Islamic culture and spirit as well as practical and legal orders through changing of times.” (Ibrahim M. M., 2004, p. 124).

- Muslims aspire to achieve citizenship rights through an idea of *jihād* within, by overcoming contexts of hegemonic discourses.
- The viability of a dualistic theorization of political action of Muslims along the continuum of alienation and violent protest should be contested.

1.5 The researcher's role and profile

Before I elucidate details of the methodology adopted in this study, I would like to mention some notes on the dynamics of interaction between the respondents and other elements comprising the field, and myself as the researcher. Through this fieldwork, I have witnessed fascinating interactions and compelling experience where my agency and conception of my 'self' fluctuated between denial, isolation and recognition. Being a political scientist by training and learning, I lacked the experience of anthropologists necessary for facilitating my initial entry in the field. I was aware of how the task of creation of commonalities between the researcher and the respondents was the first step to gain the required trust, in order to obtain information and access to their lives. However, on account of being an Arab *Sunni* Muslim and taking into consideration the historic ties between the Arab world and Kerala, this task was not so complicated. The sharing of practice and understanding of Islamic rituals was the bridge that I crossed to enter the field. Two contending forces thus emerged from this crossing. As Hayden (2009) argues, "in the space of encounter, there is a dialectic of estrangement and intimacy as social knowledge arises from social interactions" (p.92). As my usage of inter- disciplinary methods for my fieldwork necessitated me to become an anthropologist at some times, I was faced with the huge gap between anthropological methods and political ones such as opinion surveys.³ The recognition of the situatedness of knowledge and critiques of the power dynamics of the research encounter is of particular importance for understanding the nature of ethnographic research (Hayden, 2009). I am not in a position to write a commentary on the meaning of ethnography, but if I refer to its definition by Davies (1988) as being "about finding the form and structure of a culture or society, including the representations, signs and symbols, and meanings it maintains and operates" (p.43), I could argue that I ended up doing short-time ethnography, or rather an intensive course of ethnography in Kerala. By living with a Muslim family and trying to adopt the same lifestyle (specific dress code, food, travel limitations and curfew time), I saw how some of the categories I started working with were not only vague but incomprehensibly out-of-context for the large majority of my respondents. Concerning the survey of student opinions, which

³ On this difference, see Rudolph, S. and Rudolph, H. (2008).

I had employed for my research, some of the questions I started working with in Delhi were met with either disregard or refusal. When I moved to Kerala, I was again faced with the same dilemma; as many of the questions I had prepared earlier in my Delhi-targeted questionnaires were either irrelevant to the lives of *Malabaris* (Muslim Northern Keralites) or simply unfathomable.

The questionnaire I am alluding to here is the basis of a survey of around 250 students conducted by me without external help or additional interviewers within eight months from the first of September 2010 until the end of April 2011.

Being a female Muslim foreigner played various roles and either gave or denied me different keys of access to the field. Being to a limited extent acquainted with New Delhi since I had studied there earlier for six months at Jawaharlal Nehru University did not necessarily mean that I was acquainted with the Muslim dominated areas. I had ventured out into areas to which I had no record of previous visits. The same was true with Kerala. I went to conduct fieldwork in a place I have no relation with. This was my first visit to both areas— Jamia Nagar in Delhi and the state of Kerala. I will speak of both the hurdles and the advantages granted to me upon my triple-faceted profile: a Muslim, a female, and a foreigner. To start with the latter, there was initially the visa dilemma since I had planned to go to India for a period of eight to nine months and the research visa would have been an almost impossible task. I managed to secure an affiliation with universities in India and obtain a study visa to India, after being interrogated by the consul in Cairo. My Muslim identity contributed to this and the fact that the flow of Egyptians to India is almost nonexistent. This takes me to being a Muslim and how instead of being a stigma like almost everywhere else in the globe, it had granted me access keys to areas exclusively dominated by Muslims. Being an Arab Muslim was even a prestigious title and status honored by the Muslims in India, and thus a vast majority was quite hospitable and helpful in providing me with either contacts or information and opinions on different subjects. The greatest challenge was being a female on her own conducting interviews among the orthodox Muslims especially in rural settings as in Kerala.

In analyzing cultural processes and trying to define the laws governing the social and political practice of the subjects of my study, the intersection of my Muslim identity with their assumptions or modes of thinking, provided two advantages. The first is context-based and deals with human interactions, while the second advantage relates to the theoretical nature of the topic of my research. First, being a Muslim with similar physical features granted me the benefit of overcoming the processes of what Hayden (2009) calls the epistemology of estrangement, which leads to objectification, generalization and essentialization of both the subject of study and the researcher

herself. The intriguing observation is that contrary to the experiences of ethnographers, I was not faced with the typical generalizations regarding my difference. My Islamic identity was a sort of a researcher's shield or tool. I practiced the same Islamic rituals since I belonged to the same Muslim sect; I also had the same commonsense when it came to notions of decency or even humor. For women in the village, I was just like a typical Malayalee⁴ Muslim girl with my headscarf and long dress cooking with them in the kitchen or watering the tapioca field, but once the laptop and the notebook appeared, the reminders of difference chimed again. I observed how logically inverted the generalizations in our daily interactions were. Assumptions about my social habits were made and were fitting exactly to the same social molds other Muslim girls adopted. My agency was even denied when for instance, everyone made several assumptions regarding my everyday cultural practices, ranging from tolerating the same level of chili, not using any cutlery while eating, coming back before sunset, wearing a headscarf, to even being able to understand Malayalam. Only when it came to the Non Resident Indians (NRIs) in the Gulf countries who had some contact with Egyptians and understood the cultural differences that others became alerted that the previously mentioned practices were part of my adjustment mechanisms in Kerala, whereas in fact, I eat different food, speak a different language, and do not abide by the same social practices. However, because these NRIs' interactions were exclusively with Egyptian male co-workers, my existence in their villages was conceived as being bizarre and confusing and thus ushered in an undisputable acceptance of treating me like a fellow Malayalee Muslim girl.

In other cases, I witnessed a severe case of self-isolation once issues like my marital status or eating habits came up. What happened was that the village women simply overlooked me and for an instance forgot that I can follow what they say about me. Whenever a stranger or an outsider from another village visited, they started introducing the 'different' identity I hold, especially of being twenty-six years old and unmarried, of my strange customs like constantly wearing a wrist watch, of not being used to spicy Indian food, and most importantly of my free mobility and ability of traveling around India on my own.

Back to the repercussions of being a Muslim, the second advantage was of understanding the nature of hybrid identities when it came to being a Muslim in a secular democratic environment. With the new global settings, the dilemma of accommodating Islam and citizenship centers in many contemporary political debates on democracy, liberalism, and secularism. Instead of making

⁴ Malayalee means a person from Kerala. From now on, I use this term interchangeably with Keralite.

dichotomously contending assumptions about religious identity and political behavior, the case of Indian Muslims offers fascinating insight into showing how hybridity can form a basic tenet of understanding citizenship in an illiberal setting. Here, dualities would be questioned to arrive at an alternative conception of political agency and action. By dualities, I mean those actions accounted for by alluding to hermeneutics that are established in categories such as traditional versus modern, rural versus urban, religious versus secular, *madrasa*-educated versus college-educated, and *alim* versus common man. Related to this is the contention that the viability of a dualistic theorization of political action of Muslims along the continuum of alienation and violent protest is questioned. This is not only misleading, but it subscribes to the stereotyping discourses that in the case of Indian Muslims are fueled by right-wing Hindu forces aiming as displaying Muslims as disloyal citizens, failing to integrate and carrying extraterritorial loyalties. Eventually, the differences resulting from living in a dictatorship or a democracy subsume when Muslims are subjected to demands of becoming good citizens and not only morally good persons.

1.6 Limitations of my research

As I resorted to adopt transdisciplinary approaches, especially from the fields of political science, sociology and anthropology, I tried to co-opt between the limitations of different methods in my data collection process. For example, linking the Hawthorne effect (Cassell, 2002) to the limitations of survey-based research and how the act of measurement disturbs the ‘measured’, ethnographic research was utilized in an interdisciplinary manner with conventional political science tools to arrive at a pragmatic settlement.

On a personal note, at times, I felt that I was forcefully turned into an anthropologist, and at other times, I felt that it was impossible to be an anthropologist in the first place. Although I am a Muslim myself, and to a large extent I can follow the Urdu language, however, the cultural gap was so significant that the anthropological process of empathy was simply too hard to adopt. By changing the context and moving to Kerala, the socio-political systems were significantly altered, and thus, I was forced again to get adapted to a totally different culture.

This not only consumed time and energy, but also made me revisit my research question and my approach to tackling it. Focusing on the North Indian Muslim, or the Keralite Muslim as such proved to be greatly infeasible. The worlds of men and women varied tremendously, and I found myself working with two or four (in this case of comparing North Indian and Keralite) different units or subject groups. This made me rethink the division of my thesis to accommodate these different four groups, which respond to remarkably different questions of citizenship and

subjugation.

Of the limitations that I acknowledge in my research is the representativeness of Muslims, who are poor by nature and do not belong to the middle class. However, this research was not intended to be representative as much as to be hypothesis-generative and indicative of certain dynamics in the community. The initial declared focus and target of the study was the middle class. I acknowledge that the majority are poor and that the middle class is a small fragment and thus if the focus is portrayed only on those carrying the middle class values, the results would be evidently and starkly biased (for example, the perception of legitimacy or efficacy might considerably vary). However, the middle class is the class generating the highest momentum for social change, and citizenship ideals, remain after all middle-class ideals. However, I included in my interviews segments of the urban and rural poor, like *rickshaw* pullers and illiterate domestic workers. Practically, it would have been impossible for me to deal solely with the urban poor, especially the males, because of my female identity and this was proven through experience in my fieldwork.

In addition to this, there were significant limitations to the conduct of my fieldwork. The language barrier was the first. My knowledge of Urdu did not require me to have an interpreter in North India, but when I went to Malabar (Northern Kerala), I found out that Malayalam is certainly the only spoken language, in addition to very broken colloquial Saudi Arabic among the men who have returned from the Gulf, and some English among the professors, certain teachers and few students. I was compelled to search for a Malayalee female who is free and able to converse in English, this, on its own, was a difficult task. Later when I found one, she could not always travel with me everywhere, and I had to depend on my own especially towards the end of my fieldwork. However, interestingly enough, I managed to pick up some Malayalam particularly because all of the women in the villages could speak and write a traditional language called Arabi- Malayalam. I will point out to the role of this language in creating transcultural identities among the Malabaris further on in my study. What I would like to indicate here is that, through my knowledge of Arabic and their early schooling in this language besides Arabi-Malayalam, there were basic words that often melted the ice between us in our first encounter and gave them an incentive or rather a push of courage to speak with me.

Another obstruction was to overcome the psychological barriers of shyness of village women and to assert their individuality. Upon taking my interpreter to a village to meet a group of women, and if we go to a family and the husband decides to sit, then the women will always ask him for guidance, and if there is no husband sitting around, the women will tend to laugh, get shy, and

escape in the name of attending to their babies or housework. Eventually, in many cases our attempts to make them open their hearts to us and explain their views failed, but on an overall basis, I managed to get extremely valuable insights on the political structures governing their lives and how they perceive their lives in India politically and socially.

Other hurdles were the hot weather condition and the dilapidated state of roads and transportation system in Northern Kerala, as well as the limited time I got since I was obliged to be back home by five in the evening. The days were always condensed in conducting interviews and being on the long and bumpy bus rides. The evenings were consumed in attending to conversations with the housewife I was staying with and the neighbours who never stopped passing by to see what I was doing or cooking.

1.7 Quantitative methodology and sampling strategy

Several methodological approaches were utilized in the course of this study. Although the nature of the study was qualitative, quantitative methods embodied in a survey were also employed. A major aim of this research was to be able to measure quantitatively several operationalized criteria of political participation and awareness. The interesting by-product from my fieldwork as I started looking for numbers was that instead I ended up being chased by numbers. Numbers played a significant role in this research. Surprisingly, statistics appeared in many of the conversations I had in India. For example, an autorickshaw driver told me that eighty per cent of the population in Meerut (a city in the state of Uttar Pradesh), where he comes from, is Muslim, and hence they form a mini Pakistan.⁵ Other examples are random mentioning of poverty statistics and socio-religious indicators (some kept telling me that 70% of Muslims are poor in Kerala; 80% of Muslims in South India would go to the mosque to pray; and 4% of the children go to Madrasas in North). Among the highly educated, an important governmental report, known as the Sachar report of 2006 (to be referred to in details in chapter four) is often mentioned. The Sachar report emerges as a landmark in the Muslims' self-consciousness because it provided them with their appalling reality in numbers. This reminds me of Abdul-Samad's (1998) comment as he mentions that Vakkom Moulavi (a historical Muslim figure in Kerala) had presented educational statistics of the Travancore Muslims to convince them of their plight— how in 1906, the literacy of Muslim men was 8.4%, and that of Muslim women was 1%.

⁵ This piece of information is faulty since the percentage of Muslims in Meerut is only 32.5% (Census of India, 2001). However, what was significant was the usage of a number, regardless of its plausibility or correctness, as a mental strategy of argumentation.

To identify the case studies for my research, sampling strategies were employed for geographic *sites*, *events* related to Muslim politics in India, and for *people* to be interviewed. Concerning the geographic sites, two states were chosen to form the basis of the comparative research: Delhi and Kerala. This choice of sites is purposive. The first aim was to look at electoral constituencies with a majority of Muslims and to compare the hegemonic discourses and the forces of social change. This helped in generating insights on how the majority-minority question played a role in theorizing on citizenship. I chose the area of Northern Kerala, where Mallapuram district has over 60% Muslims, to contrast it with Delhi, where Muslims constitute around 12% of the population. Level of literacy and education among the Muslims was another factor. From Delhi, the urban capital, to Kerala, the rural peripheral setting, other comparative factors were utilized. Other pragmatic reasons of not being able to conduct long term and political-oriented fieldwork alone without a research guide in states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were taken into consideration upon selecting sites for study. This was overcome partly by interviewing youth from these states studying or working in Delhi.

Concerning events, the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992, the Gujarat carnage of 2002, and the latest Ayodhya verdict in 2010 regarding the division of the site of the demolished Babri Masjid were selected as topics to locate public opinion.

As for people, by limiting the study to the focus on the Indian Muslim middle class, certain groups as teachers in *madrasas*, colleges, and universities, *'ulama*, journalists, and NGO workers related to community development were selected for lengthy interviews. The decision to choose these individuals was based on their strategic role in the community since they play significant roles in the process of political socialization as opinion makers and community leaders of Indian Muslims.

A survey of around 250 Muslim students in Delhi and Kerala was undertaken to generate general observations on the attitudes and perceptions of Muslim students. For this survey and due to reasons to be explained in the course of the discussion, non-probability purposive sampling was selected. By this sampling strategy, generated data are not mechanically representative. Purposive sampling was intended to extract empirical illustration of my abstract conjectures and not to produce representative samples. The survey was utilized to serve the nature of the research questions and to project the diversities within the population under study. This survey is considered a qualitative type that does not aim at establishing precisely representative and distributive frequencies (Jansen, 2010). Strategies included snowball sampling mixed with convenience and heterogeneity sampling

(also known as sampling for diversity). Snowball sampling refers to a process beginning with identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study. Then this person is asked to recommend others who they may know who also meet the criteria (Trochim, 2006). This was useful because I was trying to reach populations that are either inaccessible (Muslim boys in Islamic universities where no female is allowed to enter) or hard to convince to fill in the questionnaire.

These strategies were selected because I wanted to include as many different views as possible without a concern about representing these views proportionately or identifying the ‘average’ or ‘modal instance’ ones. It was also part of my attempt to produce a conceptual mapping, since not only people were sampled, but also ideas. Being a non-probability sample, it is used to yield estimates of the population characteristics, but it does not allow for objective evaluation of the precision of the sample results. The estimates obtained are not statistically projectable to the population (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). This meant that I was not aiming at obtaining generalizations or a representative sample. The survey results were generated (after inputting raw data) by a software provided by the University of Heidelberg called *Evasys*, which performs the same function of the SPSS software but is used for educational evaluation purposes.

The survey was paper-based. Out of the 120 respondents in Delhi, around 45 questionnaires were administered by me, each lasting from twenty to forty minutes, as I wanted to make sure that they understood what I meant by the question, and in most cases they could not understand English and thus I had to translate every question on my own. The serious difficulty was that in Delhi, it took me around twenty minutes to explain to each person what the purpose of this survey is and to assure them that I do not have any hidden agendas or ulterior motives behind asking political questions and targeting Muslim students. This atmosphere of doubt and reluctance to be identified as a Muslim is due to the collective memory of Jamia Millia Islamia University students of the Batla House encounter⁶ and the whole terrorism discourse. As for Kerala, going to students sitting in their free time in campus and giving them questionnaires was an impossible task because one could never find a group of only Muslim students sitting together. The groups were largely inter-communal, and it was very awkward to tell the Hindus or the Christians that they were not part of this survey.

⁶ The Batla House Encounter happened in 19 September 2008, and refers to a police operation to capture suspected terrorists from the Indian Mujahedeen. It led to the death of two young men and a police officer. Several accounts of the encounter appeared later, and many civil society organizations protested. The encounter happened in the residential area of Batla House in Jamia Nagar, which is heavily populated with Muslim students, and it had led to the arrest of several local people especially students.

In some cases, even when I explained this, some Hindus could not grasp the idea and insisted on filling in the questionnaires, which simply led me to discard these filled in forms later. Whereas I depended on my general observation of dress codes of girls and would approach them and ask them to fill in the questionnaire and apologize for the Hindus, it was impossible to distinguish Malayalee males, even after asking for their names as an indicator.

The questionnaire used for the survey is divided in three parts: general information, social and political activities, and conceptions. It is designed to operationalize categories such as political, social and cultural rights, sense of belonging, sense of citizenship versus political subjectivity, political trust, political efficacy, perception of the state, sense of collective memory, forms of protest, civility, participation, role of leaders and *'ulama*, and levels of political analysis.

One of the main reasons that drove me to choose students as a population to draw a sample of was their awareness of what a survey is. When I tried to interview housewives in the villages while holding the questionnaire, they either laughed, or escaped claiming they have housework to attend, or finished some simple questions, and when confronted with political questions they decided to go to their husband to ask, or if the husband was not at home, then they told me, "I will ask my husband when he comes." My attempts to explain to them that this was their personal point of view were futile. The narratives obtained from these conversations, although not used in the survey, added insightful inputs to the analysis of political participation of these women. They were not regarded as shadow participants, especially because most housewives were actually students. Interestingly, not all students showed willingness to participate in the survey, some university students with a madrasa background in Delhi enquired and questioned me, they questioned the validity of this survey and told me: "What is the point of this? You should go to the villages and ask people there. We are the most privileged of Muslims and our opinions cannot be generalized." This was the basic attitude of one segment of the students, another segment of Islamic studies students questioned the whole validity of a questionnaire, or simply did not acknowledge it as means of collecting data for academic research, because they had never seen one or even studied it in their methodology classes.

In addition to the paper-based survey, the same questionnaire was designed on the Internet and made available in the form of an online survey. The software used for this is the same one used by the University of Heidelberg for educational evaluation purposes. Anonymity is completely guaranteed, and there is no possibility of tracking the person who answered or knowing anything about his/her identity. This could be considered a form of convenience sampling. This was

employed due to the sensitivity of the issue and reluctance of correspondence to be associated with any discussion on minority rights; therefore, the online venue gave them more freedom. Of course, some refused to do either the online or the paper-based, others took the Internet link and promised to log online and fill it in but most probably never did.

Telephone interviews were also employed with the usage of the paper-based questionnaire. This meant they were structured interviews. I got the phone numbers from the respondents themselves or their friends. It usually happened that some of the girls came to me and apologized for not being able to finish the questionnaire, so when it appeared that they had time limitations because they were married, they offered to give me the rest of the missing information over the phone.

1.8 Qualitative methodology

The most significant qualitative methods were *analytic narratives*, *ethnographic work*, and *thematic analysis*. Analytic narratives were constructed by combining analytical tools, which are commonly employed in economics and political science, with the narrative form, which is employed in history. Making use of narratives meant paying close attention to stories, accounts, and contexts. The ‘analytic’ aspect signified extracting explicit and formal lines of reasoning which facilitate both exposition and explanation (Bates & Greif, 1998). This research was also problem-driven since it accounted for particular events or outcomes. One of the methodological aims was identifying agents—both individual like elites, housewives and political activists, and collective like electorates and students. This identification of agents was the main indicator towards building an outline of the dissertation. Through ethnographic work and reading documents (official as embodied in governmental reports and court verdicts and non-official as in non-statist actors’ declarations), I sought to understand actors’ preferences, perceptions, evaluation of alternatives, information they possess, expectations, strategies, and constraints limiting their action. In a following section of this chapter, I will allude to Davies (1988) conception of Islamic anthropology and I will show how I tried to import some of the methodology of an alternative discourse to my case study. As for thematic analysis, Boyatzis (1998) identified it as a tool of qualitative research and categorized the obstacles to effective thematic analysis in first projection, as in attributing to another person something that is our own characteristic, emotion, value, and attitude. Second, in sampling and stated that preventing or lessening obstacles of sampling is helped by reviewing the unit of analysis versus the unit of coding: who or what am I observing/analysing? How do I want to encode it? The third obstacle is mood and style since qualitative research is subjective; therefore, many factors may threaten the quality of information collection, processing, and analysis.

1.9 Forms of data collection and the rationale behind them

A general trend in studying Indian minority politics has been either through an anthropological lens of politics of communalism and identity questions, or through a state-oriented approach that is conducted in order to examine and identify the strategies adopted by the Indian state to encompass dissent and to counter opposition in a despotic manner.⁷

Most studies pertaining to resistance in India have focused on rural politics and new social movements of peasantry or gender aspects or naxalism for example (for example: Kabeer, 2005; Mitra, 1992; Mohanty & Tandon, 2006; Oommen, 2001; Sathyamurthy, 1996). As for studies on Muslim minorities, they have been mainly historical studies focusing on the intriguing forces of anti-colonial struggles or formations of political identity within the framework of nation-building (See, for example Ansari (2006); Hasan, M. (1997); Pernau, 2003). Other areas of research concerning the effect of the current predicament of democracy and terrorism and hence the ordeal many Indian Muslims find themselves trapped in, remain limited in scope. Hence, I believe that an analysis of how Muslims in India develop their own and unique mechanisms of resistance has not been duly studied or considered.

This study employed an interdisciplinary approach to the study of cultures and mechanisms of resistance and protest of Muslims in India. Hence, political, social, and culturally anthropological theories and orientations were utilized. This was followed by a focus on the Muslim minority of India: their dilemmas, their living conditions, their perceptions and practice of citizenship, and eventually their mechanisms to override injustice and to protest. It is acknowledged that, through this study, I had to perform an arduous task of using liberal categories to measure illiberal ones. Coming up with correlations between the level of religiosity and political participation is such an example.

Turning to theoretical issues, the model of state-society relationships in India is composed of a complex structure of historical, socio-political, and cultural aspects. Hermeneutics of a postcolonial nature assist us in configuring perennial features of how state-society dynamics operate in India. Consequently, it is vital to consider the impact of the historical heritage and the postcolonial legacy in the Indian system, democratic structures, political culture, political mobilization and even police culture.

⁷ It is inconvenient to provide a comprehensive list of previous studies here. However, the following are examples of such literature: Appadurai (2006); Gottschalk (2001); Hewitt (2008); Hasan, M. (2008); Sikand, Y. (2004b).

One hurdle standing in the face of understanding state-society dynamics in the postcolonial world is the imposition of concepts from one context to another without duly comprehending the asymmetrical contexts and process of conceptual migration. Thinking about concepts is usually done by thinking about the theories embedded in the concept (Goertz, 2008). Since the theories might not be suitable for explaining a migrant context, the whole concept loses its significance. This could be overcome by a twofold approach, first by applying grounded-theory approaches; and second by the formulation of what Alatas (2006) terms as alternative discourses and defines as “those which are informed by local/regional historical experiences and cultural practices in Asia in the same way that the Western Social Sciences are” (p.82). This also necessitates that we differentiate between the constitutive and the indicative elements of a concept.

The nature of the minority that this study seeks to address compels us to look at their traditional references of *lifeworld* existence —namely Islamic *shari'ah* (Quran and *hadith*) and how the application of this reference is embodied or manifested in the political behaviour of Muslims in India. Application is not the sole determinant of understanding, but also various interpretations of *shari'ah* play a pivotal role in political utterances and in the Muslim community's struggles against injustice in the socio-political Indian system.

Other approaches towards politics of anger could also prove influential. Numerous previous anthropological studies have already been conducted on identity politics of communalism and Hindu-Muslim sentiments in India and how inflammatory languages of contemporary communalist politics have served to accentuate nationalist discourses in India. Therefore, building upon these studies is crucial to a more interdisciplinary understanding of minority politics in India.

In addition to reviewing the literature on Indian Muslims, methods of data collection included the following primary sources obtained during interview-based and ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the states of Delhi, Mumbai, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala in the period from September 2010 until the end of April 2011 and a short visit in April 2012 to Kerala and Delhi, in addition to interviews in the United Arab Emirates in April 2011 and July 2012:

1. *Interviews* are the main source of the data obtained for this thesis. The interviewing process was divided between structured and semi-structured interviews and discussions with experts and key informants, and non-structured interviews in the context of ethnographic work conducted in a short span of time (eight months). The expert or the key informant interviews were conducted with historians, intellectuals and university and college professors.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with madrasa and ‘modern’⁸ school teachers, university students, principals, *Imams* and ‘*ulama*, lawyers, journalists, politicians, local government and civil officers, and NGO workers or activists. As for the situational context of the interviews, they were conducted in mosques, madrasas, homes, municipalities, and in universities or colleges with a certain Muslim affiliation. In North India, I interviewed students and lecturers in Delhi at Jamia Millia Islamia, which has recently been termed as a minority institution. In addition to this, I went to Jawaharlal Nehru University and interviewed Muslim students and lecturers at the Arabic, Urdu and West Asian Studies centres. In Lucknow, I went to Nadwatul Ulama— one of the most prestigious institutions of Islamic learning in South Asia. As it was an institution exclusively for male students, I made a visit to the partner madrasa for girls on the outskirts of Lucknow. Other madrasas were visited in a village in the state of Haryana. I made a short visit to Mumbai in which I interviewed two experts on the subject, in addition to several individuals in the Muslim area where I stayed. The conducted interviews amounted to 125 interviews. My fieldwork also included a short visit to the United Arab Emirates in which I interviewed five experts and activists among the Non-resident Indians.⁹ As for Kerala, my fieldwork was concentrated in the two districts of Malappuram and Kozhikode (Calicut). Certainly, the questions and the way I posed them differed; if I were interviewing a political party official or leader, then they always felt more willing to take me seriously if I showed that I had a ready list of questions. With women in villages, experience taught me not to show any recording device or notebook because they tended to be shy and refused to answer questions, so I depended on my memory or sometimes I hid the voice recorder but the identity of the interviewer was concealed, and anonymity is guaranteed through the dissertation. On account of the sensitivity of the topic and the personal request of many but not all interviewees, their names were not mentioned through this dissertation.

2. *Archival research on petitions* (minority commissions, local government authorities) was an intended part of my data collection sources. However, after I conducted the fieldwork, I found out that petitions usually take an oral form and are not documented. In the case of

⁸ I am using the term modern on behalf of both *madrasa* teachers (*ustadh*) and governmental or private school teachers who used this same term and sometimes secular to refer to what is otherwise known as mainstream schools.

⁹ The detailed account and gender distribution of the respondents is as follows: In Mumbai, I had two expert interviews (around an hour each) with a female and male. In Delhi, I had 11 expert interviews with women and 30 with men. In Lucknow, one with a lady and five men. In Kerala, I had 27 expert interviews with women and 50 with men. In Dubai, all my interviewees were male.

domestic violence, it is usually reported to the police stations, and in case of minority-related or human rights related severe violations, then certain NGOs take up the case, present and follow it at the Minorities Commission or the Human Rights Commission. As for petitions at the local governmental authorities (the panchayat level), the village or the municipality officer receives people, listens to their demands and intervenes or tries solving their problems. This process is mainly done in an informal way without any documentation.

3. For this, I employed *participatory observation* as a methodological tool and part of my ethnographic work as I sat down and observed the dealings between the local government head or officer and the people in several villages and municipalities in Kerala. Micro conversations and observations helped me build hypothesis on the macro reality.
4. *Press analysis* was divided among English, Urdu and Malayalam newspapers. I chose the discussion on the Ayodhya verdict in September-October 2010 as a theme to analyse different standpoints from different organizations. Newspapers in the vernacular languages like Urdu and Malayalam covered to a great extent the public opinion of Muslims regarding the verdict. In many cases, I found my informants who are supposed to be public figures and experts on the topic unwilling to convey their honest opinion about the verdict. For this, I deemed the newspaper's editorial pieces and some reports as a valuable source of information. To overcome the deficiency in finding archived petitions, I resorted to Urdu magazines issued by Islamic organizations based in North India. In these magazines, there are several sections on people's problems and opinions in editorial pieces and letters to the editor.
5. *Fatwas (religious edicts)* issued pertaining to political concerns. In understanding the interaction between the political and the religious, fatwas or religious edicts appear in the cotemporary world as a leading international actor or agent (Abdul-Fattah, 2008). Examples of globally influential fatwas include those on suicide killings and the Khomeini fatwa regarding Salman Rushdie and the legitimization of killing him. Later there were fatwas from the Qatar-based Egyptian Islamic scholar Al-Qaradawy. Interestingly these fatwas of Al-Qaradawy were translated to Malayalam and are immensely influential among the Muslim youth in Kerala. Other fatwas relating to social issues like work and divorce assumed wide debates in the media in India and played a role in politics of the mainstream versus minorities and perceptions of the Muslim minority. In other cases, purely political issues started taking religious turns and were introduced by Muslim scholars in public debates especially in the time of electoral campaigns. These latter forms of fatwas were

crucial for my research to understand how religion became politicized and how politics became religionized. However, they are not documented and thus not easily accessible through archival work. I depended on oral narrations from people who had heard an Imam speaking about a certain political party or issue in the Friday sermon. I also relied on newspapers to see the viewpoints of religious scholars after the Ayodhya verdict as a case.

6. *Previously Conducted Surveys* on Indian Muslim participation and political representation. For this, I consulted secondary literature and visited the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in Delhi to obtain quantitative data sets from the National Election Surveys they conducted over the last twenty years.
7. *Documents*: These include first political ones such as party manifestos and writings in the time of partition by Muslim scholars (*'ulama*) on the decision to stay in India and not to migrate. This was either obtained from archival research in the Nehru memorial Library, or from secondary literature which had cited them. Official governmental reports on the Muslim minority were also utilized. In addition to these, historical and religious documents such as Sufi texts chanted daily by Muslim women in Kerala or early nineteenth and twentieth century works by Malabar freedom fighters were also collected since as Davies (1988) argues, the literary sources of a literate society are part of the network of interactions forming the community in time and space (pp.137-138).
8. Last but not least, the 'construction' of the actor and the observer: One of my goals was to overcome Eurocentric methodology. While being to a great extent successful in this, still at other times, I felt totally lost by not being able to stick to a specific theory. I must say that my Islamic background, and my knowledge of the theorization on alternative paradigms of knowledge, has helped me understand the dynamics of my case studies. I was invited to give a public lecture at the centre for West Asian Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia on November 24th. The title of my lecture was: "Socio-political movements and the current political situation in Egypt". I instantly observed how it was Muslim students who were keen on attending and asking questions. When I went to Kerala, I was repetitively invited to give lectures to college students at different Arabic colleges in Kozhikode and Malappuram Districts, as well as at the University of Calicut. After these lectures, I usually had discussions with the students, and through answering their questions; I got a clear picture on what kind of political questions interest them, and also what kind of thinkers they read for. I guess by being interrogated by them, I played the double role of the information giver as well as seeker. In this way, I knew more about their concerns and interests as political

subjects and not merely imposing upon them my set of questions, which in many cases appeared irrelevant to their social and political realities.

The revolution that happened in Egypt on the 25th of January 2011 was another landmark in my fieldwork. It showed me a great aspect of the transculturality of the life of a Keralite Muslim. It was easier to approach people and to understand from them the ways they perceive society and global political realities. Their intrigue in the political situation in Egypt was overwhelmingly surprising for me. This led to intensive discussions on comparing the lives under dictatorships and democracies. It also gave me insight on the way Indians perceive the state and their role in it.

This takes me to the next chapter. Mentioning overcoming Eurocentric methodology compels me to define what I mean by this. I will borrow from Alatas (2006), Shariati (1979), Abdul Fattah (1988), Abul-Fad (1989) and Davies (1988) to explain what alternative discourses mean and how I can employ an Islamic paradigm of studying social sciences. However, I will first present a literature review on citizenship definitions and their relevance in Muslim societies.

II. Literature Review on Citizenship

2.1 Different conceptions of ‘citizenship’

If anybody had an option of not being a citizen of India, they were the Muslims, because in 1947 when partition took place, Muslims had the option of moving out and going to Pakistan and finding a new country. For everyone else India was the only place where they could have lived. So the Muslims who stayed back chose to accept India as their country as opposed to Pakistan, which means they consciously chose secular democracy over a theocratic state.

- Shabnam Hashmi, personal communication, October 2010.

The debate on citizenship finds different roots and grounds according to different historical and political contexts of contemporary societies. As for the present times, we are witnessing a controversial period characterized, on the one hand, by a disjuncture between critical research regarding citizenship as something created, recreated and differentially experienced, and on the other hand, by new theorizations of citizenship. The idea of citizenship is directly linked to both modernity and democratic statehood. Modern citizenship is said to be the product of three political revolutions: the English civil war, the American war of independence, and the French revolution (Turner, 2006). Its first denotations were of a dual nature; i.e. of belonging to a ‘national’ community; and at the same time of inclusion in a self-governing political community (Brubaker, 1992; Castles, 2005; Benhabib, 2005). Gradually and with the structural changes in European societies, new definitions pertaining to community and belonging have evolved and therefore, have deeply transformed the meaning of citizenship (Turner, 1993). These structural changes are mainly due to: first, the developments in eastern Europe and the post-Soviet union order that led to the emergence of complicated relationships between nationalism, political identity, and citizens’ participation; second, the global refugee problem; third, the European Community/ Union where questions pertaining to minorities and migrant labour have arisen. These changes appear in a process of tightening citizenship while at the same time de-ethnicizing it by the inclusion of *jus soli* regulations on acquisition of citizenship, and the increasing tolerance of dual citizenship and minority rights in the European Union (Dobrowolsky & Tastsoglou, 2006).

Accordingly, various transformations in the nature and components of citizenship have been developed. The first is the development of a collective *identity* for citizens. The second element is *political membership* and the *status* as a legal citizen, and thus the privileges arising from it in the sense of access to the rights of public autonomy where questions of inclusion and exclusion in and

from the public sphere are central. The third is the entitlement to active capacities manifested in universalistic social, civil, and political *rights* to influence politics and passive rights of resistance under a legal system. Other aspects could be also included like duties, participation and the civic virtue as in the role of civil society in the public sphere, and a statement of procedural equality (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000; Janoski & Gran, 2002; O'Byrne, 2003; Benhabib, 2005). A concise outlook of the transformations of the concept of citizenship relates to each component. For instance, the liberalization of access to citizenship (via reformed citizenship acquisition laws) could be seen as a major transformation in the element of status (Soysal, 1994; Joppke, 2007; Bauböck, 2007). The ethnic diversifications of society, migration and market flows are appropriate approaches to understanding the mutations in the aspect of identity and rights (Ong, 2006; Joppke, 2007). Current literature on citizenship is polarized between those who defend citizenship as a master status in the modern nation-state, and 'post-national' critics who see it devalued by the rise of a global human rights regime (Joppke, 2007).

These ideas of 'post-national' citizenship and the description of the relationship between the citizen and the polity open the path for us to new conceptualizations and theorizations of citizenship. The influence of discourses on Orientalism and Occidentalism on the elaboration of theories of citizenship of an occidental nature can significantly add new perspectives to the ongoing discussion about citizenship at large. Isin (2002) argues that the western conceptions of citizenship entailed two fundamental perspectives: Orientalism and syneocism. Orientalism refers to the division of the world into essentially two civilizational blocks; the first is rationalized and secularized, therefore, modernized; the other one is irrational, religious and traditional. The second perspective is of syneocism, which is a way of seeing the polity as embodying spatial and political unification. The image that the first perspective reflects is of citizenship as a unique occidental invention, in other words citizenship without kinship ties. As for the second perspective, the images are those of fraternity, equality, liberty and a unified and harmonious polity; therefore, the citizen is seen as a secular and universal being (*ibid*, pp.117-128).

Moving from the critique of the distinction between the ideas of a sovereign rational Western citizen, and that of an irrational traditional Eastern subject, new constellations of democratic and universal perceptions gained importance. These theoretical attempts have been driven by the desire to rid citizenship of its ascriptive and particularistic qualities, and thus an intellectual move from the concept of 'place', where particularism and *ethnos* dominate, to a concept of 'space' where conceptions of universalism and *demos* prevail. In this respect, the introduction of concepts like 'cultural citizenship' (Miller, 2002) has been considered another intellectual contribution to the

debate. These new conceptualizations help to understand how orthodox histories of citizenship have postulated it as the western outcome of ‘fixed’ identities, nationhood, indivisible society, ethnic homogeneity and exclusive citizenship.

Renewed interest in citizenship in the 1990s could be attributed first to theoretical reasons pertaining to integrating the demands of justice and community membership, and second, to political factors such as increasing levels of voters’ apathy, nationalist movements in Eastern Europe, long-term welfare dependency in the United States, multicultural populations in Western Europe and the failure of environmental policies in the developed world (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994).

Different politically philosophical strands of thought have dealt with the theory of citizenship. *Liberalism*, for example, has developed citizenship through the ideals of individualism and rationality, emphasising representative political systems. These systems theoretically either adopt a civic liberal perspective like Marshall’s (1965), or a utilitarian liberal one as the model proposed by Rawls (1993). In contrast to civic republicanism, there is no requirement or obligation to vote or to regard the political community as the most precious entity or to give it the highest loyalty, citizens are also not required to cultivate a range of demanding civic virtues. Hence theorists like Oldfield (1990), Habermas (1992) and Miller (2000) share the perspective of *civic republicanism* that stresses individual obligation of participation, promotion of active and deliberative forms of democracy, with an emphasis on citizenship as a common civil identity shaped by a common public culture.

Another strand of thought is *communitarianism*, which regards the community as a sphere of identity production and sharing, with a socially embedded citizen as a political subject (Sandel, 1982). *Leftist* thought has also contributed to theories on citizenship through the idea of participatory democracy. For the leftists, the answer to the problem of citizen’s passivity lies in empowering citizens by the democratization of the welfare state and dispersion of state power through local democratic institutions, regional assemblies and the judiciary (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). A final school of thought in this abridged summary would be *civil society theorists* who emphasize the necessity of civility and self-restraint to a healthy democracy. It should be noted that, in this last case, the notions of civility and self-restraint are not entirely conceptualized and defined, for the operationalization of civility can be an almost impossible task due to different conceptions

of what civil means.¹⁰ Such theories further assume that neither the market nor political participation is sufficient to teach these virtues. Instead, the stress is directed towards voluntary organizations of civil society. Walzer (1992), a proponent of this group, hold “that most people are trapped in one or another subordinate relationship, were the civility they learned was deferential rather than independent and active” and hence the reconstruction of the associational network under new conditions of freedom and equality is imperative (p.107). The result should ideally be the dispersion of ‘civic culture’, which is defined by Almond & Verba (1989) as “a political culture in which large numbers of individuals are competent as citizens” (p.169).

The vast literature on citizenship suggests that arriving to a single definition is impossible. Definitions of citizenship certainly vary according to the strand of thought from which they emanate. However, I managed to produce a list, after reviewing major works on citizenship, of the common criteria forming the essence of the concept of citizenship:

1. As a *status* “of people who are unable to discern the common good but who nevertheless possess an uncanny ability to elect people who will find it for them” (Alejandro, 1998, p. 9).
2. As a *right* evident from liberal theories of the democratic rights of participation in decision-making. This translates as positive freedom in Berlin’s (1959) terms.
3. As *agency* embedded in social relations when citizenship is viewed as rights enabling people to act as agents with conscious capacities (Lister, 1998). According to Almond & Verba (1989), what differentiates citizens from subjects is their active participation in “the political input process—the process by which political decisions are made” (Almond & Verba, 1989, p.117).
4. As a *legal contract* embodied in legal documents of identity which is according to the traditional and legal definition of citizenship as equalling nationality.
5. As a *practice of civic virtue*. Republican theory sees citizenship as a practice of political rights through participation in the wider political community. This comes from the origin of the concept as implying “emancipation from the realm of necessity, associated with the private sphere of the household (*oikos*) into the realm of freedom associated with the public sphere of political life (*polis*)” (Kabeer, 2002, p.3). Liberal virtue theory, as put forward by theorists such as Gutman, Macedo and Galston, divides civic virtues into four categories:

10 An example of this would be translating the word civil society into Arabic, which swings between secular society versus “family-like or kinship society”. The involvement of religious associations in the sphere of civil society marks this conceptual and empirical mutation and distortion of the term and its reality.

general virtues like courage, law-abidingness and loyalty; social virtues like independence and open-mindedness; economic virtues like work ethic; and political virtues like the capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, willingness to demand only what can be paid for, ability to evaluate the performance of those in office, and willingness to engage in public discourses. These two last virtues (the ability to question authority and the willingness to engage in public debates) represent the most salient components of liberal virtue theory (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 365).

6. As *belonging* and *inclusion*. Anchoring the principle of inclusion necessitates defining citizenship as a balance of three aspects: deliberation, number and power (Alejandro, 1998). The equality perspective deals with citizenship as, first, a guarantee of society-wide participation by institutional incentives meaning that the poor are paid to participate, and the rich are fined if they shun them (making citizenship an exercise in mutual vigilance). Second, the balance in numbers refers to institutional devices insuring freedom from domination by the largest group), while the final balance is given by the principle of the separation of powers. Gender inequality, for instance, is another impellent to the realization of the shortcomings of traditional conceptualizations of citizenship (See for example, Lister, 1997; Voet, 1998). This leads to a huge debate on inclusion and exclusion (Benhabib, 1996; Yuval-Davis, 1997; Mouffe, 1992; Kabeer 2002).
7. As a *relation*: Instead of regarding citizenship as a right, its exercise as a relation between social categories and their stance from authorities is emphasized (Heller, 2000, p. 489).
8. About *feeling at home* in the nation: “It is the capacity to see the nation as a repository of your own history and culture” (Mehta, 2006, p. 21).
9. As a sense of *self-respect* coming in part from a sense that one’s culture is respected and can find unapologetic public expression (Mehta, 2006).

This last definition is inherently linked to the inclusion of the role of culture in political theory. Theorizing on cultural citizenship, as first termed by Miller (2002), is always linked to the vivid presence of cultural subjects in the public sphere. Ideally, there should be a guaranteed set of cultural competences that the government should give to its citizenry and especially to the minorities. Producing cultural subjects, as Rousseau (1762/1975) argues, emanates from civic education that elaborates the definition of a good citizen. In Miller’s words,

cultural policy always implies the management of populations through suggested behaviour. It is a normalizing power that sets an ideal for the subject which can never quite be attained,

yet enjoins that subject to strive for it via a doctrine of ethical incompleteness. (Miller T. , 2002, p. 238)

Before this inclusion of culture, citizenship theories have long celebrated Marshall's (1965) elaboration of the development of citizenship rights from the civil to the political and eventually to the social. As this theorization is to a large extent ethnocentric and largely applicable to the European, especially to the British society in which it evolved (Turner, 1992), modified definitions of citizenship that included the aspect of class and hence economic rights, identity politics and thus cultural rights and gender have been introduced. Turner's sociological definition of citizenship looks at citizenship as

(a) A bundle of practices which are social, legal, political and cultural; (b) which constitute rather than merely define the citizen; (c) which overtime become institutionalized as normative social arrangements; and (d) which determine membership of a community. Citizenship is the new fellowship (*Genossenschaft*) of the modern state. (Turner, 1994, p.159)

Two general normative interpretations of citizenship exist: as an organizational rule (a set of procedures and individual rights by means of which mediation, deliberation and political will can be constructed by citizens); and as a content (a set of substantial values, incarnated in institutions that individuals are supposed to promote by their political behaviour and practices (Gianni, 1998, p.39).

The diversity of modern societies led to another stream of theorization of 'differentiated citizenship', a term which was first formulated by Young (1990), to contrast liberals and communitarians in asserting the particularities of group identities. This is a theory that stands in contrast to equal citizenship, arising when, for example, some citizens' mother language is not the official language, and thus they suffer from a predicament of deliberation with fellow citizens, and consequently from a state of marginalization and discrimination (Bhargava, 2005). In Gianni's (1998) words:

First, it aims to improve the material and objective opportunities of the members of groups that have suffered discrimination; secondly it entails a symbolic recognition of stigmatized or presumed abnormal cultural differences, thus providing them political respect and visibility; finally it reinforces, through democratic integration, the legitimacy of representative democracy. (Gianni, 1998, pp.49-50)

Passive versus active citizenship (Walzer, 1970; Bayat, 2009) is another stream of theorization

on citizenship that emerges primarily from republican theories. The passive citizen is a recipient of benefits from the state in order to act freely in private spheres protected by the state, but hardly plays a role in the public or political sphere (this is originally a Roman definition). The active citizen has an interest in who governs him and why, and in policies. The meaning of civil society is broadened once people begin to see themselves as active citizens. Differentiated citizenship refers to those citizens who are more strongly active than others, meaning that they actually exercise power (Bhargava, 2005). In this sense, citizenship would mean, in Mitra's words "the activation of something which is there passively in the constitution."¹¹

Another method of differentiating between active and passive citizenship is through the dynamics of its development; when the status of citizenship emerges as a result of social struggle and hence from below, it could be ascribed as active. However, when it is imposed as 'a ruling-class-strategy' (Turner, 1994, pp.158-159), as is the case in many developing and postcolonial societies especially in Africa, then it stands as a passive form. Turner (1994) adds another description of its passivity that occurs when politics becomes privatized, and the citizen development is reduced to non-public spheres such as the family. Linked to this is the New Right critique of the welfare state that has been seen as allegedly promoting passivity and dependency and thus "reducing citizens to passive dependents who are under bureaucratic tutelage" (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 356). Eventually, citizenship is weakened through the emergence of private institutions and practices that are more important and meaningful to citizens' identities than public activities, and thus they participate in widening the gap between theoretical justifications of citizenship and its actual expression (Alejandro, 1998).

This raises another controversial issue regarding the inherent relationship between citizenship and the public sphere. Where politics of citizenship are not apt in societies where primordial identities and closed systems of stratifications are prevalent (Gupta, 2005, p. 176), the role of the private sphere as a repository of identity is emphasized. The dilemma is naturally produced when identity becomes an intrinsically visible aspect of the public sphere. In other words,

Citizenship is a status which begins to occupy increasingly more space in the politics of nation-states characterized by open systems of stratification. [...] Citizenship, consistently advocated and adhered to, takes away the efficacy of these earlier ties and confines them to

¹¹ S. Mitra, lecture in South Asian Politics, Winter Semester 2010-2011, Heidelberg University.

the private sphere. (Gupta, 2005, p.179)

Citizenship has been classically affiliated to the ideals of equality introduced by the Enlightenment and Modernity, to a secular state and to universalistic norms of participation in civil society (Turner, 1994). The history of the concept of citizenship hence carries a heavily Western label. It started with the emergence of the public space of the Greek polis as an arena of debate for rational citizens, then with the development of the Universal Church as a religious-political entity within which political membership came to depend on a common faith. After the emergence of autonomous European cities in the late medieval period, the next stage of the elaboration of the concept was evident in the development of nationalism and the nation-state as the carrier of rights in the period following the French Revolution. Finally, the creation of the welfare state in the twentieth century as the institutionalization of social rights was the last stage for the maturity of the westernness of the concept (Turner, 1994, p.157). Turner finally refers to the idea of ‘postmodernization of culture’ in which modern citizens exist in the present time and that revolves around many axes such as the differentiation of culture as a consequence of the pluralisation of social structures; the emergence of global networks of communication and surveillance; and the decline of ‘industrial society’ and its replacement with ‘post-Fordism’ and ‘post-industrialism’ (Turner, 1994, p. 154).

Several problems with liberal citizenship have emerged. As I had briefly demonstrated, liberal citizenship fails to take into consideration issues of culture in general and minority culture in particular (March, 2009b). In addition to this, the liberal-individualistic conception of citizenship that holds that the citizen is a “calculating bearer of rights and preference” suffers from two main problems. The first one is the dilemma of reciprocal benefit and the continual threat of the destruction of the other. The second problem is the theoretical confusion surrounding the understanding of the individual, what shapes an individual, namely his/her insights and preferences and what guides their so-called autonomy (Van Gunsteren, 1994, pp.38-39).

Another defect of liberalism was the neutrality assertion thesis; the principle of neutrality proposes the following prescriptions for a liberal state:

(1) Each citizen should have the maximum possible space to pursue his conception of the good, to make himself/herself happy, or to realize salvation, (2) public, collective action should be restricted to what is necessary for collective co-ordination [...] the justification of collective action should not have to rely on a metaphysical or philosophical belief that some citizens cannot endorse. In other words, liberalism seeks to avoid - to the extent possible-

telling citizens that they are wrong about their deepest beliefs. (3) There should be the maximum possible space for the expression of moral pluralism both in private and in public. That is, liberalism ought not only create a private space for living the good life, but also allow citizens to refer to their deepest beliefs when they are asked by society to do something. (March, 2005, pp. 318-319)

Liberal theories have argued to employ forms of cultural hegemony when it came to their stance from minorities. An inherent paradox in liberal claims to universality was unveiled when both liberal governments and theorists stipulated that those belonging to minority cultures “are obliged to become liberal to a certain extent in order to enjoy equal citizenship or recognition as valuable expressions of human experience” (March, 2009b, p. 21).

This is also related to the stress on individualism in liberal theory. The role of groups and recognition of group rights collided with the traditional scheme. Since the collective plays a strong role in non-liberal settings, thus, individualism fails to explain certain phenomena, actions, and decisions in the socio-political sphere. This again brings us back to the elaboration and discussion on ‘differentiated citizenship’ (See Young, 1990; Meyer, 1998). By basing the functioning of liberal institutions on a process of normalization, their

Rules not only create oppression and marginalization, but also, through the homogenization of subjectivity by the domination of universal categories, the destruction of the authenticity of the groups that do not fit with the content expressed by these rules. In other words, the rule of citizenship embodies an alienating content [...] citizenship, thus, despite its universalistic pretensions, is one vital way through which the superiority of certain forms of identity is publicly imposed and protected. (Gianni, 1998, p.41)

Linked to this is the impossibility of application of principle of equality, and thus models like the Indian one, where religious communities have varying levels of authority in matters pertaining to personal affairs, are not acceptable from the liberal perspective, since this perspective demands the elimination of classification of citizenship on the basis of class, caste, religion, race and ethnicity (March, 2005).

Another limitation concerns that liberal (and also republican) theories of citizenship are essentially ‘middle class theories’, therefore, studies on the common man would not fit into this category. In addition to this, the middle class is no longer a homogenous entity. The rising variations in political and social identities have altered the middle class and, as a consequence, the body of the republican citizenry (Van Gunsteren, 1994).

Alejandro (1998) speaks of a legitimacy deficit from which liberal theories suffer: “The state remains valid as military protection and as a safety guarantee to regulate products and practices. But people do not need permanent state institutions to accomplish this narrower scope of state activities.” He then proposes this paradox: “Those who sustain the state with their taxes and votes do not need it. And those who need it (welfare recipients, the working poor) do not sustain it either financially or politically” (Alejandro, 1998, pp. 20-21).

Communitarian conceptions of citizenship were not also devoid of critique. The awareness of the usefulness or the necessity of a community does not essentially provide a strong basis for the maintenance of such a community, nor for the belonging to it. Critics have also pointed out the question of how desirable this call for an attachment to a community really is. The problem with communities is that they place notorious restrictions on freedom. This is evident through the dilemma of ‘Citizenship education’, for example, where one learns the so-called ‘civic virtues’. As Kymlicka & Norman (1994) argue, the controversy arises when we take into account the role groups heavily relying on unquestionable tradition and authority play. These groups are necessarily “discouraged by the free, open, pluralistic, progressive attitudes which liberal education encourages”, a fact that occasionally leads to the withdrawal of their children from the national schooling system (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 367).

2.2 The case of India

No case would better demonstrate the new dynamics of citizenship as a traveling concept from its place of birth, with its experimentation and application to a unique domain that does not share in any way the slightest resemblance to the birthplace, as India. Pluralism and diversity are the most characteristic aspects of India that are culturally, racially, religiously and linguistically manifested. In addition, India is a postcolonial society in which citizenship as an ideal was fought for, both in a top-bottom and a bottom-up approach. Still, the sense of citizenship was planted from above, unlike in European societies, which witnessed mass-based application of the idea of the *citoyen*, while the ruling powers, especially Nehru’s vision and the constitution framers, founded the secular state based on democratic citizenship principles. However, this would not have happened if it were not for the mass movements for independence from the colonial powers, in addition to the large-scale acceptance of democratic measures that had not only been surviving but progressing through increasing voter turnouts throughout the years and peacefully democratic political transitions.

As it would be shown, India is not a story of pure success when it comes to citizenship. The pitfalls and the zones of marginalization still are exceedingly vast. It is not in the capacity of this

chapter or entire study to deal with either the whole state or the whole groups comprising it. I chose to focus on the Indian Muslims, putting into consideration their incredible diversity and heterogeneity to show a clear case of ‘success’ of the import and acceptance of an alien concept—both in their political reality as subjects of a state and in the ideological realm of Islamic political thought. As I will be showing in the coming chapters of this thesis, this formula of success has been strained under many pressures and cases of inept functioning, where citizens could not enjoy or experience a full sense of equal citizenship under situations of religious-based discrimination.

Not only Muslims, but also the lower Hindu castes and the tribal groups of India have experienced the same dilemmas. In fact, the idea and language of citizenship in India was connected with the fight against racial and caste superiorities manifested in both oppressive structures and discursive constructions (Roy A. , 2002). Historically and through sociological studies on caste, India differed from European societies in terms of the moral, and not the legal, worth of its citizens based on concepts of pollution and cleanliness (Dumont, 1980). This point is hard to be denied.

However, postcolonial citizenship emerged after the colonial policies that had managed to set up structurally segregating conditions in which separate communities were governed by their own ‘different’ customs and hence traditional hierarchies were enhanced. Postcolonial citizenship refers to a differentiated notion of citizenship that “resonates more closely with the prevailing ethical worldviews than do artificially constructed national entities. It corresponds to identities and affiliations, which are more real to their members than are imported ideas of universal rights and abstract individualism” (Kabeer, 2002, p. 15). This differentiation results in making

Citizenship in India a ‘layered’ concept, in the sense that within the same territory, different categories of citizenship, with different levels of rights and entitlements, co-exist. The second interesting aspect of the Indian case is that the notion of citizenship has gradually shifted from a liberal, secular and inclusive basis to a more exclusive, ethnic conception of citizenship that is defined in terms of descent rather than territory. (Mitra S. K., 2008, p. 345)

It is in these contexts of exclusion and differentiated identity politics that citizenship policies were enforced. As a logical outcome, citizenship became fractured, and the transformation from subjects into citizens was not an easy process. In Kabeer’s (2002) words, the asymmetries in social relations translate into inequalities in access to resources and opportunities (p.20). To arrive from a situation in which citizens are still subjects and “a liminal category” as Mitra (2008) argues and to enforce the legal aspect of citizenship into a real one of a sense of belonging and equality, the

Indian State has managed to adopt a strategy of 'turning rebels into stakeholders' (Mitra & Singh, 2009) through different institutional measures. According to Mitra (2008), the first of these are the legal measures found in the Indian Constitution (articles 5-11), legislation of social issues, the double role of the state in being neutral and partisan, and enabling a space for a political culture of bargaining and incorporating these elements in Indian law and political practice (Mitra S. K., 2008).

The acknowledgement of the rights of minorities is directly related to the question of belonging that arises in modern societies witnessing multicultural citizens. The way citizenship functions in India is radically divorced from traditional nation-states built on an exclusionary notion of the nation or in Mahajan's words those "advocating neutrality and difference-blind approach" (Mahajan, 2005, p. 288). A Keralite scholar also reflects this in a comment:

In a democracy, you cannot identify a particular community as belonging or not. You cannot ask the following question: do you belong to the nation-state? The assumption of an alienating element in the social fabric is invalid. This question of belonging would only be relevant in nondemocratic countries like Egypt, where minorities are assigned an inferior position because the constitution is based on Islamic *shari'ah*. But in India, the character of the state is determined by the mandate of the people. (Nesar Ahmad, personal communication, December 2010)

The rationale for multiculturalism in India was provided through an acceptance of the existing cultural plurality and a positive evaluation of diversity (Mahajan, 2005). This thesis will deal with the extent of the validity of this argument. The constitution is utilized as the strongest apparatus to curb assimilation and to guarantee the representation of difference in the public sphere. This ensures full citizenship to minorities and overcomes the urge for a creation of an ethno-nationalist state, unlike other postcolonial states like Pakistan and Egypt:

The strength and vitality of India's experiment, mocked at and derided by a motley group of scholars in the subcontinent, rested on a model guaranteeing full citizenship with equal rights and obligations. This 'formula', certainly superior to the 'Islamic alternative' presented by Maududi and the Jamaat-i Islami, is compatible with the secular and egalitarian thrust of India's nationalist movement. The significance of the Nehru era lies in legitimising this consensus after independence. (Hasan, 1997, p. 222)

Several contradictions and stains to this rosy picture emerge. Critics of how politics work in India would even go as far as registering it as a failure of citizenship. Gupta (2005) argues that citizenship in India remains a legal title that has yet to be realized. This is accounted for by the

communalism and ethnic violence whose toll on human lives is very high, and by the idiosyncratic functioning of the machinery of law and order. The abdication of citizenship and its conversion into subjugation is the marker of this failure. Poverty pushes people into clientelist bonds with elites who offer minimal benefits and protection in exchange for obedience and political support (Weyland quoted in Heller, 2000, p.490). One valuable lesson to learn from India is that there is no linear progression to democracy, and there are degrees in the intensity of citizenship (based on Guillermo O'Donnell ideas quoted in Heller, 2000). Perhaps also what India succeeded in achieving, in contrast to other postcolonial societies was the successful manipulation with the practice and application of the concept of citizenship. It did not witness a paradoxical adoption of certain conceptual systems such as a state based on both citizenship and *shari'ah* (as in many Muslim countries) or on deformed and invalidly imported categories, as it is evident in the dilemmas of slum dwellers and their aspiration for denied urban citizenship in many developing societies (Bayat, 2009).

I started the chapter with a statement from Hussain. Indeed, it is only those at the receiving end who have the highest sense of citizenship. Citizenship provides this lacuna or this special zone in which one could ideally enjoy equal rights and a sense of dignity but also carry his or her identity, because as Gupta argues

When faced with majoritarian-led riots, the first instinct of the minoritized community is to insist on the tenets of citizenship, they are not as inters in going back to into the folds of their community, or the pristine ways of the past, as in demanding their rights as citizens. (Gupta, 2007, p. 39)

2.3 Transculturality of the conceptual framework: Islamic paradigms in social sciences

Alatas (2006) defines Eurocentrism as “the uncritical imitation of ideas, concepts and theories from the West-as well as the context of academic dependency and intellectual imperialism” (p.81). To overcome this, he introduces the notion of *alternative discourses* as

Those which are informed by local/regional historical experiences and cultural practices in Asia in the same way that the Western social sciences are. Being alternative means a turn to philosophies, epistemologies, histories, and the arts other than those of the Western tradition. [...] Alternative is being defined as that which is relevant to its surroundings-is creative, non-imitative and original, non-essentialist, counter-Eurocentric, autonomous from

the state and autonomous from other national or transnational groupings. (Alatas, 2006, pp. 82-83)

Among the different alternative discourses in studying social sciences, two are relevant to my research and thus construct its methodology. The first one is represented by the Indian-born subaltern studies focusing on the agency of the subaltern -as a dislocated tool- and not necessarily on the elite in historical studies. These studies often zoom in South Asian histories. The application to contemporary South Asia remains limited, to a certain extent. Alatas, however, points out two notable sociological and anthropological works; one is Oommen's (1995) study of everyday protests by the rural poor in Kerala, and the other is Kakar's idea of the Hindu '*dividual*', which he contrasts to the Western constructed idea of the individual. To Kakar (1982), the '*dividual*' is "fluid and temporarily in integration, open, dyadic rather than monadic, and has an internally heterogeneous structure" (Alatas, 2006, pp.90-91). One of the problems, however, of working with the subaltern studies discourse is the way agency is conceived. As I show in my research, degrees of agency vary with the variation of context. Spivak (1988) pointed out through her famous article "Can the Subalterns Speak?" that there is no room for the subaltern voice mainly due to proletariques of gender and representation. Nevertheless, the polarization of the oppressed and the oppressor in mechanisms of resistance does not do justice to a meticulous examination of reality. It is often not clear to the observer how dynamics of oppression tend to shift rapidly and get reversed. Here, we could borrow the concept of hybridity from postcolonial studies to designate these dynamics. The complexity of postcolonial societies is the trigger behind using hybrid categories to understand the state-society dynamics. The rural citizen, for example, is an oxymoron from a traditionally Western point of view, but through hybrid lenses, the peasant, as Chakrabarty (2006) contends, is fully capable of making citizenly choices that the colonial rule withheld from him or her. In the case of postcolonial societies, peasants were made citizens overnight (at least with respect to voting) without experiencing the process of formal or informal civic education as demanded now by 'nationalist' forces.

The second discourse, which I would be further elaborating on, relates to the "Islamization of Knowledge" paradigm. Although its primary methodology is based on interpretive techniques and the Quranic sciences of exegesis (*tafsīr*) and commentary (*ta'wīl*), it mainly endeavours to overcome the phenomenon of irrelevance in social studies. The categories of this irrelevance are identified by Alatas (2006) as conceptual, valued, mimetic and topical and refer to the lack of originality, disaccord between assumptions and reality, inapplicability, alienation, redundancy, mystification, and mediocrity. Alatas further points out several topics where the discovery of

irrelevance became apparent. The idea of ‘Islamic socialism’, public opinion polls and the controversies regarding the attainment of research goals via this means, studies on postmodernism in China, confining ourselves to Western imported models and discussing Weber in developing societies, are some examples of irrelevance. Tools of conceptual relevance can be utilized to overcome this. By this, Alatas means “rethinking the universality of concepts and comparative dimensions, by first of all, establishing non-dominant cultural languages as sources and then working to develop truly universal or canopy-like categories” (p.140). For instance, an alternative framework for looking at social change would be the Khaldunian theory of state formation. This theory puts forward the ideas of reconstruction of the pattern and rhythm of/in historical change (p.131).

World developments in the Eighties have led to the rise of the debate on alternative paradigms. As Abul-Fadl (1989) argues, this was evident through, on the one hand, the soul searching among western academics, and on the other hand, the epistemic consciousness among Muslims on grounds of their critical disaffection with their field. The project of “Islamization of Knowledge” signifies the ability to create a distinctive perspective drawing on Islamic sources. Referring to this alternative discourse as a paradigm is justified because “a paradigm suggests an implicit normative and cognitive order that organizes our thinking in a certain field and provides it with foundations and a framework while also setting its parameters and its boundaries” (p.5).

Islam, as a paradigm of a system of knowledge, revolves around three axes that constitute the main directions for any theorization and scopes for change— whether political or social. These axes are history (linked to the prophet’s life), law (evident in the Quranic principles) and community (manifested in the idea of the *Ummah*) (Smith, 1970). The key values forming the basis of the Quran and hence characterize this Islamic paradigm are justice (*‘adl*), benevolence (*iḥsān*), equality (*musawāh*), peace (*salām*), reason (*‘aql*), and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) (Engineer, quoted in Sikand, 2004b, p.15).

Different disciplines of social sciences and humanities deal with this paradigm. In the field of political science, “paradigms provide a loose conceptual framework, a tacit set of assumptions and an organizational matrix for coping with power-related phenomena in a given context of study” (Abul-Fadl, 1989, p.11). As for anthropology, the foundations of ethnography, for example, are different. For Davies (1988), ethnography is not and can never be pure description, since pure description does not exist. Concepts such as *ummah* (the Muslim community), *din* (religion), *shari’ah* (law) and *minhaj* (way of life) are the foundations of ethnography in Islamic anthropology.

One should try to understand how values have been actualized in the specific circumstances applicable to that community. Through social mechanisms, Islamic values [such as justice, communal well-being (*istislah*), knowledge (*'ilm*); limits or parameters (*ḥadd*), permissible (*ḥalāl*), prohibited (*ḥarām*), peace (*aman*), formal allegiance to authority (*bai'ah*), consensus (*ijmā'*), reform and setting things to right (*islah*), and order or rule (*ḥukm*)] constituting the way of life in Muslim communities could be understood (p.136).

Linking the idea of conceptual relevance and the emergence of Islamic paradigms of social sciences, scholars such as Syed Al-Attas from Malaysia; Saif Abdul-Fattah and Mona Abul Fadl from Egypt; Ali Shariati from Iran; Ziauddin Sardar from Pakistan; and Amina Wadud and Merrill Davies from the United States introduce Islamic concepts to mainstream social sciences. This was their attempt, especially upon trying to understand a specific reality or phenomenon in a Muslim society or community instead of Islamizing western concepts and finding themselves entrapped again in Eurocentrism. The main criticisms of the Western *Weltanschauung* by these scholars calling for Islamizing knowledge can be summarized as follows.

Starting with the crisis of the logical positivist paradigm, there are four results of its utilization in human studies, in general, and political theorization, in particular. The first is the reduction of the complexity of social and political reality to elements that can be observed and witnessed, through talking only about sensual reality and behaviours that can be quantified, therefore, treating phenomena that are inapplicable to empirical perception as non-scientific. The second point of criticism is the idea of relativism and the negation of everything absolute since when we discover that all values are not products of absolute cases or contexts, then these values are not absolute or fixed. Hence, there is no absolute truth. As a third point, an evident contradiction exists since the Western worldview is an ideological cause in its essence and methods. It is often considered to be the unique method of attaining scientific knowledge. Critics pose the question of how come we negate at first the absolutism of truth then we come and speak about absolutism of the method. By contrast, proponents of the Islamic perspective see it as logically solid since there is a consistent emphasis on absolute truth, absolute knowledge, and an absolute source (a revelation-based one). Not only this, but some synthesize both the rationalist and relativist poles using the basic definitions of human nature and community intrinsic to Islam (Davies, 1988, p.115).

Finally, the emphasis on the operationalization of concepts does not guarantee the so-called conceptual control. An operational definition is only a temporary academic one, subjected to change. This leads to academic contradictions since different scholars would focus on different

elements to operationalize the same concept differently and then claim to explain reality using these different criteria in the specific time frame of the study. The operational concept could try to be a hermeneutic tool to explain the human society, but it should be put into consideration that this is a temporary explanation focused on a specific time and space. On the other hand, the Islamic concept is based methodologically on understanding the problem and allocating a legal point of view to it. In their point of view, this paradigm became an ideological instrument to spread hegemony instead of being a scientific instrument, especially by the positivist school to achieve objectivity and neutrality.

One of the results of the hegemony of positivism on political theorization is, first of all, conceptual chaos. This happens when a theoretical construct or an abstract entity are employed to study reality or to name certain social and political phenomena. This creates a problem of conceptualization: how to fabricate a concept to express certain behaviors. Therefore, conceptual distortion occurs through the adoption of a concept and its literal translation using a set of motives, while taking the concept as a solid block without thinking of either conceptual architecture or networks or radical attitudes towards concepts.

The dilemma of the positivist paradigm is the lack of an independent criterion, according to which we can judge reality. The theory and practice of contemporary anthropology, for example, is based on a “western construction of reality” and ideal types. As Davies (1988) argues,

“Other” cultures are regarded as unanimous and uniform, the task is to understand them within this convention, to produce the ideal model. The ideal type, obviously a mental construct in abstracted form, is not formulated through technique or mere procedure: conceptually for western anthropology the statement of the ideal rules of a culture is the statement of the concrete reality of ‘other’ cultures. Manipulation to maintain the ideal is a necessary activity of native life since, for ‘them’ there is only the ideal, the concrete. (p. 43)

The process of separation between the value and the action was a dangerously critical consequence of using this paradigm in political theory. Therefore, the intellectual became isolated from solving the problem of the practical reality, leading to nothing but intellectual debris, importation of thoughts and accumulating them.

As for a revelation-based paradigm, it presents a set of givens deemed from the Islamic creed and a set of methodological ways to tackle the politically human phenomenon from a different angle, and traces the theoretical building to revelation. Two components comprise this paradigm. The first is absolute truth, which is divine and cannot be doubted. Otherwise, the whole paradigm

would be rejected. The second is the human component as manifested in efforts, endeavors and attempts: *ijtihad*. The paradigm would collapse if we separate between the two levels. It becomes also vague when we extend sacredness. On one hand, there is a civilizational necessity since religion necessitates Muslims to be unique or else they would lose their *raison d'être*. On the other hand, there is a scientific necessity addressing the unbalanced relationship between reality and the intellectual. Hence, the progressive function of science is stressed since what is the value of any knowledge that does not help in solving problems of reality?

This takes us to exploring the relationship between the concept and experience or the phenomena it seeks to address. According to Abdul-Fattah (1988), Islamic concepts that form the basic units of Islamic political science are drawn from an independent and comprehensive source and are characterized with totality and comprehensiveness. The basic source of building political Islamic concepts comes from the Quran and Sunnah. Islamic concepts provide a methodological contribution in their ability to overcome the elements of experience such as the human being, time and space that that man-made concepts cannot overcome. In contrast to western definition, experience becomes an expression of a holistic comprehensive view of historical mobile models of intellectually tradition-based examples. In addition to this, it is not only experience but also an interrelated chain of time intersected in the present, and extending to the horizons of the future.

Concepts originating from an Islamic background and living in an Islamic environment lead us to an alternative definition of mankind in a social context: "Mankind begins with a covenant between God and every created individual, and hence mankind is a collectivity" (Davies, 1988, p.87). These concepts include, for example, *fiṭrah*, the inherent nature or natural disposition of mankind, seen as the dimension of capacities and endowments; *khilafah*, human trusteeship as God's vicegerent on earth, regarded as the dimension defining human status and rights; and *din*, the concept of religion as a total way of life in the widest possible sense of the term, perceived as the dimension of operational process (*ibid*, pp. 87-88).

Islamic methodology in sciences is based upon four statements. The first is the integration of sources of theorization and the joining between the variable and the constant, relating between revelation and reality, therefore, balancing the variable and the constant in the human life. Sources of science and knowledge are revelation, reason, reality (through the senses) by which the human being reaches the constant scientific fact. This is based on the belief in the idea of monotheism (*tawḥīd*). This symbolism of unity in the creation and oneness of God leads to a comprehensiveness in methods and means when studying human values and realities. This unity reflects itself on

different attempts of theorization about political human phenomena (an epistemological level); therefore, the Islamic perspective does not accept the division of human aspects even analytically. Absolutism is only a premise of the paradigm but does not apply to human attempts that are fallible. Consequently, there is a belief in the complementarity of the human mind and revelation. If the human mind is the means of human perception and burdening responsibility, then revelation concerns guiding the human being and completing its perception through discerning the purposes of rational life for human beings and connecting his partial cognitive faculties with the total cognition concerning relations of the universe, existence and human values.

The second aspect is the temporal context or environment of a political phenomenon. The Islamic worldview depends on the accumulation of Islamic experience forming the memory of the *Ummah*, its history, its experience and experiments in it. There is no separation between the past of the *Ummah* and its present. The past is embedded in the international formation of the *Ummah* and cannot be released or else it would lose its identity and essence. The third aspect is the comprehensive outlook to the human phenomenon. Based on the unity of truth and giving revelation the priority to reason and sense in reaching truth, the Islamic worldview views the human phenomenon as a complicated, multidimensional unit, and an unaccepted fragmentation or division even on the analytical level. This, in turn, led to two main results, first an understanding of all the dimensions relating to the political phenomenon, and second, balancing this understanding, as no dimension overrules the other or dominates it. Linked to this is the conception of justice and balancing without bias or undermining any side. The concept of understanding diversity and the Islamic rationale behind it as the means to understand or to know one another (as stated in the Quran) is seen as an alternative to the traditional European ethnography which is regarded as “a consequence of a limited conceptual view of civilization” based on the initial exclusion of diversity from a definition of mankind (Davies, 1988, p.105).¹²

Finally, the spatial context/environment of the political phenomenon is the last element. Space is a dependent variable. Yet, space does not have an independent role except as an indicator of differences of the cultural or doctrinal framework; hence, transcending the barriers of the nation-state. Therefore, the Islamic world does not signify a specific region, but it means the universal brethren-hood that results from the conception of *Ummah*, bounded by the creed of *tawhīd* and

¹² Davies acknowledges the changes and adaptations ethnographic research took on to overcome its previous limitations. However, she regards the initial structure of imagining reality as the basis for this misfit and hence in her own words Europeans “had to wrestle with a way to include [diversity]” (Davies, 1988, p. 105).

generating consciousness and belonging to a one group (Abdul-Fattah, 1988).

Concerning levels of analysis, this alternative discourse presents us with different levels whether in terms of intra or inter- community relations. One key term mentioned several times in the Quran is *an-nas*. *An-nas* signifies people, precisely, it indicates the masses. It is a word without a singular form. Shari'ati (1979) argues, "Islam is the first school of social thought that recognizes the masses as the basis, the fundamental and conscious factor in determining history and society" (p.49). The unity stressed in the *tawhīd* paradigm poses the concept of *an-nafs*. Davies (1988) points to the various meanings of *an-nafs*: soul, spirit, mind, animate being, living entity, human being, person, self, mankind, life essence, humankind, vital principle. She further explains, "there is no juxtaposition between the individual and the group, but rather they are bound together for understanding. So too are the spiritual and material implications of the term: mankind is mind and soul, spirit and animate human being" (p.83).

The *Ummah* is another level of analysis, usually dealt with in international relations; its acceptance as a unit of analysis lies in the difference between European Nationalism and the Islamic belief system as Saadi (2006), Mustafa and Abdul-Fattah (2000) argue. Since proponents of the project on Islamization of Knowledge regard the oneness of God as the necessary infrastructure on which all kinds of unity of humanity are based, they intriguingly conceive that to say a nationalist Muslim or a racist Muslim is an oxymoron. To them, the Muslim who announces his loyalty to a nationality or racism is either a liar or an ignorant person. With the impact of Romanticism, western social sciences have been developed, through an underlying element of racism, a conviction that the nation in its specific conceptualization geographically, demographically and historically (despite being seen as distorted) is the basic unit for analysis. Anthropology is the most daring among social sciences in these regards. In its perception, humanity simply implies racism. This is accomplished through classifications and the establishment of a correspondent system of values for each classified category of people, and hence, instead of looking for mutual and universal human values and asserting them, this discipline exaggerates the particularistic characters of people. To the contrary, in rejecting racism, Islam affirms the concept of the family as a unit of structure in the social order. Beyond the family, Islam does not acknowledge a national or racial basis of organization of groups, human society, and public social order. The membership of humans in this order is what concerns Islam in social sciences.

The paradigm of *tawhīd* (monotheism) which acts as the core structure of the projects calling for either alternative discourses or more radically for islamization of knowledge rests on the premise of

the oneness of God. As a result of this, there is unity in creation— in the universal system and the created. It is considered to be a rational result. All the created are subject to divine rules. Being is divided into the unseen or the supersensible or lies beyond the scope of examination and observation, and the manifest or the sensible (Shari'ati, 1979, p.84). The principle of *tawhīd* calls on to consider diversity as a main category of existence:

God has appointed diversity within mankind with two referents: a difference of laws (*shari'ah*), and way of life (*minhaj*). [...] Both terms have connotations of direction and movement, that is, both imply the understanding of social existence and living, as a process. (Davies, 1988, p.102)

The Muslim does not mentally collapse before calamities and disasters because he or she knows that Allah has created this universe and at the same time is most capable and omniscient. Hence, these catastrophes are seen as challenges and are considered an integral part of the system of life in *'amal* (work), *jihād* (struggle) and *islāh* (reform). In the Quran, it is stated that: “*On no soul doth Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear*” (2:286). Without this necessary result, the world would have become either rigid, motionless, or a world of madness. Thus, “to study human diversity is therefore to study ways of life subject to change and deviation” (Davies, 1988, p.103). The construction and elevation of culture and civilization is the essence of divine trust (*amānah*) bestowed upon the human being via the process of vicegerency or trusteeship (*khilafah*).¹³ *Khilafah*, in turn, is associated with *i'mār* that translates as achieving peace, security of life and property, organizing humanity in societies capable of providing for human needs such as food, shelter and communication, and finally creation of opportunities for growth, education, entertainment and self-accomplishment. This is all to achieve the implementation of justice, goodness and Right/truth (*'adl, khair, haq*); conceived to be the high ideals governing the Islamic Worldview. In this regards, *khilafah* bestows upon human beings a sense of a moral agency and serves as a foundation for the ethics of human dignity (Wadud, 2007).

The Quran has linked vicegerency and the role of human beings on earth with the establishment of political power: “*Then We made you heirs in the land after them, to see how ye would behave*”(10:14), and with the achievement of peace and security: “*Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority*

¹³ Wadud (2007) poses a point of translating *Khilafah* in a modern way into moral agency or trusteeship. Pragmatically, she uses the term to refer to citizenship since the term *khilafah* refers to an ethics of human dignity.

their religion, the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace” (55:24). Political participation and action like electing a ruler, or advising, or holding the ruler accountable, or criticizing the ruler are all not just desirable from the Islamic perspective, but are also a primary obligation. Neglecting these obligations means retreating in ignorance. This is linked to the requirement of every Muslim to ensure security concerning his life, property, personal dignity, and status in society. The prophet emphasized the obligation to protest against wrong deeds and the unjust. Another hadith says: “*The best jihād is a word of Right before an unjust ruler.*”

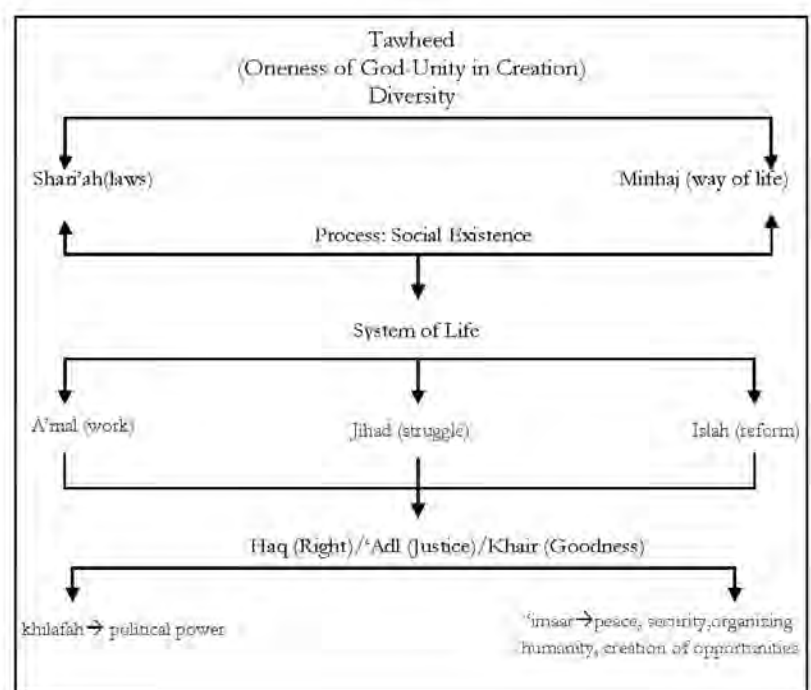


Figure 1 A Visualization of the *tawhīd* Paradigm. Source: Author

Methods of studying Islam and citizenship could be divided into three aspects (March, 2005). The first is sociological, when we empirically investigate the actual attitudes of Muslims towards the constitutional arrangements in their countries of citizenship. Independent variables should include, for instance, levels of religiosity. Muslims should be seen as a socio-demographic group rather than a religious-doctrinal one. The second aspect is hermeneutical, in addressing the doctrinal aspects of Islamic endorsement of the constitutional arrangements in a democratic society. Posing the question whether or how Islam might be supportive of the overlapping consensus is also required. The third aspect is the inclusion of the variable of Islamic revival. This entails two analytical dimensions. The first deals with the way Islamic beliefs, symbols and values serve to mobilize social and political action. The second examines how Islamic movements and political

action operate in particular national contexts.

I borrow these dimensions in my study by partially making use of the methodology of the paradigm of Islamic social sciences, working on conceptual relevance and considering the transcultural and hybrid aspects of socio-political identities and relationships. What should not be neglected is how these concepts shape parts of the socialization process of the youth in madrasas and throughout the writings of *'ulama*. I employ diversity as a mechanism to understand the standpoint of Indian Muslims from democracy. To borrow from Davies (1988):

In outlining our view of Islamic anthropology as a study of consonance we have already addressed one of the major distinctions: there is no place for the concept of 'otherness' as in western anthropology. To recognize diversity is not the same as recognizing the members of different social and cultural groups as 'other'. (p.115)

Since I aim at showing to what extent the travel of concepts of political action and citizenship to postcolonial societies was not consistent with the Western liberal paradigm, it is relevant to understand from these previously mentioned Islamic and alternative discourses the centrality of the moral person versus the citizen. Both Al-Attas (1985) and Asad (2003) make the argument that "while western civilization has been interested in what makes the good citizen, Islam's interest is in the good man, the moral person" (Davies, 1988, p.169).

By introducing alternative paradigms, I aim at avoiding the process of alienating subjects and agents from the discourse. Spivak (2000) alludes to this when she describes the role Subaltern Studies play in the process of production of knowledge but is still suspicious of religious sympathy on the part of Marxist secularists. Concerning my research, since the debate on the Muslim question in India has been hegemonized by secular writers and academics, as a consequence, the vernacular voices (mostly expressed through vernacular languages and non-mainstream media) did not take part in the description of reality and the prescription of remedy. This research seeks to include these voices, although not as much as they deserve because of the previously mentioned limitations of being a third party as a foreign researcher, and because of the impossibility to accommodate such an immense debate within the confined pages of this study.

The recent revolutions in the Arab world have unveiled some of the myths of state-society relationships in the postcolonial world. The struggle or *jihād* towards a moral and dignified life surfaced in an environment characterized by a total absence of a sense of citizenship. The focus on understanding citizenship restrains us to the realm of the middle class. Thinking within the confines of western concepts and terminology has proved to be inadequate in understanding 'other' societies.

By ‘other’ I do not mean alien or parallel, but diverse, hybrid and heterogeneous unlike the homogenous objects fitting the molds of western sociological and political theory. To understand the importance of bringing a concept or a paradigm of thought and action such as *tawhīd*, I see it most necessary to borrow from Shari’ati, one of the men behind the Iranian revolution of 1979:

In the world-view of tauhid, man fears only one power, and is answerable before only one judge. He turns to only one qibla, and directs his hopes and desires to only one source. [...] Tauhid bestows upon man independence and dignity. Submission to Him alone-the supreme norm of all being-impels man to revolt against all lying powers, all the humiliating fetters of fear and of greed. (Shari’ati, 1979, p.87)

2.4 Citizenship in the Islamic paradigm

The identity and community surroundings in which citizenship ideals are fostered impacted the evolution of citizenship and the exercise of citizenship rights, which cannot be understood if detached from these contested community-based claims for entitlements. Rights and identity have acquired a strong connection. This explains the rise of the claim for cultural rights and the intricate roles played by identity politics. India serves as a brilliant example to demonstrate these theoretical points because unlike other democratic states with Muslims minorities, the Muslims are citizens of the soil and not immigrants. The religion-based partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 is another reason to examine how these mechanisms of religion and politics work. The Indian sociologist, Imtiaz Ahmad, explains how the majority did not lead to pressurizing the minorities to a process of ‘normalization’ due to the moderation of the state, which gave multiple spaces to minorities to adjust themselves; “Muslims today are ascertaining themselves because they realized they have rights.”¹⁴ Hence, India has facilitated what Esteva (1987) calls the ‘regeneration of people’s space’, without neglecting the differentiation between citizens and populations:

Populations are empirical categories of people with specific social or economic attributes that are relevant for the administration of developmental or welfare policies. [...] Populations then are produced by the classificatory schemes of governmental knowledge. Unlike citizenship, which carries the moral connotation of sharing in the sovereignty of the state and hence of claiming rights in relation to the state, populations do not bear any

¹⁴ This argument was presented during a conference titled “Cultural and religious pluralism: the Muslim minority in the Indian democracy, East-West Comparison”, New Delhi 18th-20th October 2010, at the India Habitat Center and Jamia Millia Islamia.

inherent moral claim. (Chatterjee, 2004, p.136)

The historical settings in which Indian Muslims have lived dramatically differ from other societies, whether with considerable Muslim populations or minorities. This was determined by the Sufi influence, which hybridized with the Indian philosophy of *Vedanta* and as a result, “developed an exchange or ‘give-and-take’ between the local saints and the Sufis” (Wasey, 2008, p.40), who were not as strict about traditional practices and allowed for a unique environment to flourish. Through this background, even orthodox *‘ulama* accommodated hybrid ideals of co-existence in a manner different from other societies. The ability to coexist with other religions and practices (deemed un-Islamic for a majority of populations) and the acceptance to live under a non-Muslim authority were examples of this hybridization and accommodation. The political solution was evident in the secular state for modern India, which “afforded the optimum freedom for its citizens to develop into fully integrated human beings” (Hasan, 1997, p.142). The head of the Jamiat-Ulama e hind, Maulana Madani, a renowned Muslim scholar and leader of the Deoband Islamic Seminary, whose ideas will be covered in the next chapter, introduced the theme of the right of Indians to religious freedom, in his words in 1921 in one of the sessions of the All India Khilafat Committee,

The command of Islam is that a Muslim can obey a king who operates within the parameters of Islamic law...If we are arrested for serving Islam, then the responsibility will rest with the government and not with us. If the government's desire is to deny religious freedom, then it should openly announce it. In that case, seven crore [70 million] Muslims would have to make their decision either to live as Muslims or as British subjects. Likewise the twenty-two crore Hindus should also decide about their fate. Because when religious freedom is denied, it will be denied to everyone. If Lord Reading [the Viceroy] has been sent [to India] to burn the Qur'an, to efface the hadith, and destroy the books of fiqh, then I will be the first one to sacrifice [my life]. (Quoted in Metcalf, 2009, p.82)

I will now briefly examine the conceptual link between religion and politics in Islam to be able to draw introductory comments on this subject. Etymologically, the definition of religion or *dīn* in Arabic is interrelated to politics. Al-Qaradawy’s (2007) definition of religion is one of the most carefully deliberated. He demonstrates that linguistically speaking, religion is first of governance, second of submission and obedience and third of adopting a path and approach. Religion refers to a relationship between two counterparts; one honors the other and is subjected to him, and this relationship is considered a bond between the two, constituting the basic laws to which they are subject.

Conceptually, Al-Qaradawy (2007) cites other scholars like Al-Tahanwi who defined religion as a divine condition that drives those who are rational with their own will to a thriving state of affairs and success in achieving one's goals. Another scholar, Diraz, has referred to religion as a divine condition guiding to the right belief and the righteousness of behavior and interpersonal relations. In South Asia, the Islamist thinker Abul 'Ala Maududi, who later founded the Jamaati Islami in 1941, dealt extensively with the concept of *dīn* in his *Char istilahain (the four concepts)*. For him, the concept of *din* is more comprehensive than just religion. Maududi expounded the idea that *dīn* refers to state and cultural system. He arrived to this proposition by analyzing the Quranic reference to the story of Moses and the Pharaoh, because according to the story, the Pharaoh warned that the state would change if Moses succeeded (Maududi 1973/2000). *Dīn*, according to Maududi, has four elements:

- a. Sovereignty and supreme authority.
- b. Complete surrender to the will of the supreme sovereign.
- c. The system of thought and action which is under the influence of this supreme sovereign.
- d. Reward or punishment that one may get for loyalty to or rebellion against that system (Quoted from Maududi, 1973 in Bari, 2004 , pp. 86-87).

As for politics, the word for it in Arabic (*siyasat*) was not mentioned in the Quran. However, the Quran mentions other relating terms concerning ruling and governance as for example, just and unjust rule, despotism, *shura* rule (consultation). Another relating word is empowerment or firm establishment (*tamkīn*).¹⁵ In the next chapter, more details on this subject will be given. The aim of this section is to demonstrate briefly the significance of the linkage between Islam and politics in my case study. This connection can be attributed to a point of intersection between two phenomena - the politicization of religion and the religionization of politics.

Politicization according to Smith (1970) is “the drawing of people into active participation in the political process” and it “takes place as people become conscious of conflicts which are perceived

¹⁵ This occurs in reference to the stories of Joseph (Yusuf). “And thus We established Joseph securely in the land [of Egypt]: he had full mastery over it, [doing] whatever he willed. Also in Surat Al-haj 41: [well aware of] those who, [even] if We firmly establish them on earth, remain constant in prayer, and give in charity, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong; but with God rests the final outcome of all events.” (Translated by Asad, 1980).

as relevant to their lives” (p.144). Politicization of religion refers to the dominance of the political over the religious, monopolizing and nationalizing it. It is considered a tool used by developing countries against opposition. The state in this regard accuses all religious forces of seeking political power, and hence discourses on secularism shift between separation and discrimination. In contrast to India, one could see the case of Egypt, where a third discourse arose calling for religion to be above politics. What happened in Egypt was a process of nationalization of religion by the state in the context of citizenship. So instead of non-involvement in religion, the state monopolized religion.

Religionizing politics is a reverse operation, manifested in the domination of the religious over the political. As a commonly held conviction, the religious discourse is considered closer to the heart and mind of the common man. The mentioning of *halāls* and *harāms* and the phenomena of *fatwa* issuance are exceedingly precarious as they are linked to the educational processes, as well as to economic bases, cultural formations, social milieus, and political operations (Abdul-Fattah, 2008). This religionization of politics, as I show through this dissertation, is evident in the Indian case, for example, in the role of *‘ulama*; *fatwas*; vote banks; bases of legitimacy; Jinnah’s notion of the Muslim nation and the resulting manipulation of religious symbols; and Maududi’s ideas and the founding of Jamaati Islami.

It might be argued that there were two historical watersheds in modern history where Islamic political action was manifested. The first is the Iranian revolution of 1979, which was based on a nationwide religious establishment. The second is the global Sunni reformist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wahabist in the Arab World and the Deoband colleges in South Asia. Their basic concern is the cultivation of an intellectual and spiritual practice of Islam based on the teachings of the Quran and the prophet, and the repudiation of saint worship and other non-intrinsically Muslim practices. Muslim politics hence “involves the competition and contest over both the interpretation of symbols and control of the institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them” (Eickelman & Piscatori, 1996, p. 5). An example of the political implications of the reconfiguration of the symbolic production of Muslim politics is that in the nineteenth century print enabled the *‘ulama* to expand their influence in public affairs because they sponsored and controlled religious publications (*ibid*). Ironically, print reduced in the long run the authority of *‘ulama* because of the shift to more accessible translations into the vernacular language and the higher number of educated people able to decipher the symbols.

What differentiates the reformist movements in the Arab world from their counterparts in a

secular and democratic state like India is the presupposition of the union of religion and politics (commonly referred to in Arabic as *al-islam dīn wa dawlah* or literally translated as ‘Islam is a religion and a state’). Paradoxically, this assumption does not feature anywhere in the discourse of Indian ‘*ulama*, except for the writings of Maududi (who was not an Islamic traditional ‘*Alim*). Hence, those in the Arab world who criticize this stance would be referring to three points. The first is exaggerating the uniqueness of Muslim politics (religion is also central to the political lives of other non-Muslims). A second criticism points out to the perpetuation of Orientalist assumptions that Muslim politics, unlike other politics are not guided by rationalist interest-based calculations. In addition to this, this assumption contributes to the view that Muslim politics is a seamless web because of the natural and mutual interpretation of religion and politics, therefore, underestimating political structures, which are components of what Eickelman and Piscatori (1996) call ‘sacred authority’.

This difference in the attitude to the relationship between Islam and politics is also linked to the situatedness of Muslims in their state; being a majority necessitates entirely different conditions of living and thinking than living as a minority. This has also impacted the different jurisprudential trends among their scholars and the difference in the topics of significance. Political actors related to religion also differed in this regards, whether they were individual leaders, interest groups, or political parties. Smith (1970) demonstrates this by showing three different modes of party ideologies: communal parties (the Muslim League at the time of partition, Majlis Ittihadul Muslimeen and on the Hindu part: the Jana Sangh and Mahasabha); traditionalist parties such as the Jamaati Islami Pakistan and Bangladesh; and modernizing parties such as the Muslim League in Pakistan (Smith, 1970, pp. 142-143).

There are two main informative sources on the question of citizenship in Islamic political thought. The first one are the Arabic writings of Taha Jabir Al-Alwani and the second source relates to Andrew March’s theoretical work on liberal citizenship in Islam. Before I present their arguments, it is necessary to mention that traditional Islamic bases of *shari’ah*—the Quran and Sunnah, do not mention the notion of citizenship, but the notion of *Dar* or home. According to Al-Alwani (2011), this emphasis on home was according to the totalitarian vision of life, since life is just a stage of humanity. The concept of *Dar* establishes an idea of change and movement and points out that Earth is a space in which human beings can practise their role as Caliphs.

The word citizen has not appeared except after the French Revolution in 1789. Before this, people were nations and tribes who were not identified or connected to land. The famously alluded-

to division of Earth into *Darul ḥarb* and *Darul Islam* was not a Quranic division, but a jurisdictional one that represented the conditions governing the times of the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid (to be further explored in section 3.1). It was a conceptual tool utilized by Imam Alshibani in the attempt to demonstrate to the Caliph the position of other states. Succeeding Imams rejected this division and called for another formula: *Dar ijabat*, and *Dar da'wah*, these terms do not represent any assault on the rights of anyone. Al-Alwany (2000) defines *dar al-Islam* to include all lands where the Muslims' belief is secure even though this may occur among a non-Muslim majority, and conversely *darul ḥarb* includes areas where the believer's religion is not safe even though all inhabitants adopt the Islamic belief and civilization.

With the waves of migration of Muslims to states adhering to liberal constitutional arrangements, new foundations were established which give Muslims the benefit of not being obliged to assimilate, convert, or abandon their religious beliefs. In March's (2005) words "they benefit from a system that does not see society primarily as united in a single common purpose but rather as the just management of multiple private purposes" (p.322). These new conditions necessitated a new branch of jurisprudence to deal with the newly emerging issues that did not traditionally feature in classical books of *fiqh*; this branch was called *fiqh al aqaliyaat*. Generally, it does not deal with political concerns; it is limited to issues of civic life. As a result to this, the idea of political disloyalty on the part of Muslims is fabricated. This new age of minorities is comprised of different stages starting from a feeling of awakening to awakening, creating movements and mobilizing others for it, then construction of new settings, embeddedness and interaction (March, 2009a; Fishman, 2006).

Hence, several issues remained contentious especially regarding the requirements of citizenship in liberal democracies for minority communities. March (2005) mentions the following as an example:

1. *The recognition of the legitimacy of the political community and one's membership in it* (rather than the recognition of neutrality and secularism). From here, we could measure the level of integration and loyalty. Islamic sources tackle this issue through posing the following two questions (whether it is lawful for a Muslim to reside in the non-Muslim world and whether a Muslim is obligated to migrate to the Abode of Islam). By integration and loyalty, the minimal liberal sense means paying taxes and joining the defense forces.
2. *The problem of competing loyalties and the duty of recognition of the other*. Traditional orthodox Islamic conceptions of justice provide for the toleration of non-Muslims and the

freedom of conscience and belief. However, the intellectual challenge is not their right not to be Muslims but their status as equals.¹⁶

3. *Limitations on cultural or religious authority over group members.*

There is a basic conceptual difference to start with when we examine the concept of citizenship in Islam. The first is the idea of justice and the elevated significance it enjoys in the Islamic paradigm (Abdul-Fattah, 2008; Scott R. M., 2007), which is linked to a specific conception of society, of the other, and of the individual. An Islamic doctrine of recognition of the other consists of variations on the following positions: pluralism, justice across communities, shared ends and a concern for the welfare of non-Muslims (March, 2005). The difference in respect to liberalism could be seen from Rawls' theory of fairness that conceives society as "a fair system of co-operation between reasonable and rational citizens regarded as free and equal" (Rawls, 1993, p. 103).

The Islamic doctrinal opposition to liberal citizenship relates to three issues: the problem of migration from non-Muslim states (Miller K. A., 2000), the issue of residing in a non-Muslim state; the problem of loyalty to the non-Muslim state; and the issue of political solidarity with non-Muslims. This is all linked to serving in the army, defending the state, submitting to non-Muslim authority (March, 2009b).

Another important discourse, although limited to the Iranian Shi'a case, is the idea of *wilayat alfaqih* or governance of the 'ulama (Khir, 2007). This refers to the primacy of the authority of the 'religious' over the secular. Hence, in a technically democratic system like the Iranian one, there would be no objection to the establishment of a hegemonic institution where the highest religious authority resides and influences policy making in the country.

Al-Qaradawy (2010) introduces the concept of *waṭan* in the discussion on citizenship. *Waṭan* means home, either the place where one lives or grows up. It could be either a city or a village, and thus it is more comprehensive than the urban-limiting Western conception (Holston & Appadurai, 1998). The idea of the duty to migrate that was prevalent among Muslim jurists in the Middle Ages (with the demise of Granada and the loss of Arabs over power in Andalusia) is only applicable for the places where there is injustice towards the person, or discrimination and

¹⁶ There are Quranic verses urging Muslims to avoid friendship and alliance with non-Muslims. For example: "O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allah guides not the wrongdoing people." (5:51)

prohibition from performing his/her religious duties. Land has great importance in Islam because of the resulting social relations. Islam has also emphasized duties towards neighbors in the framework of social justice (as a hadith mentions, a believer is not someone who sleeps with a full stomach while his neighbor is hungry). Thus the idea of citizenship originated with the discussion of duties of social justice (*Zakat* and charity) and defense (if foreign invasion occurred). Citizenship is about sharing one *watan* (as evident from the Madina convent) so its basis is coexistence and mutual integration.

Two major and integral part of defining citizenship in the Islamic sense are hence memory and a sense of solidarity. When we examine the case of Indian Muslims we see the linkage between collective memory as a shaping factor of socio-political identity and marginalization as an incentive, which through solidarity mechanisms creates resistance (Mayaram, 2003) and in turn is linked to imagination and its plurality (Das V., 1999). Alam (2004) presents a definition of citizenship that outlines this significance of solidarity:

A citizen is somebody who seeks collaboration and association with other persons to further their concerns and interests and hence is not just driven towards maximizing his self-interest. One important feature of a citizen is his readiness to exert himself with others and be alert towards the exercise of state power. Citizenship, therefore, provides a main pivot on which depends the sustenance and deepening of democracy. (Alam J. , 2004, pp. 74-75)

Memory also outlines the way citizenship is formed, especially among the politically and socially injured. In Mitra's words:

The victims-of lost 'heartlands', human dignity, or unbearable sorrow- attempt to regain a sense of equilibrium through the ritual of institutional arrangement, conceptual stretching and most importantly, memorialisation-transcendence of the joys and sorrows of everyday life in spirituality and aesthetic of a higher order (p.222). [...] Memory and its retrieval are the constants: borders, times, spaces and constitutions are the variables that revolve around them. (Mitra S. K., 2010, pp. 222-223)

One unique attribute of Islamic political thought is the originating notion of ruling. Muslims believe in the idea of *Istikhlaḥ* (inheritance of the earth), which is associated with an "allusion to the God-willed natural law which invariably makes the rise and fall of nations dependent on their moral qualities" (Asad, 1980, p.554). This is explained in the following verse:

God has promised those of you who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds that, of a

certainly, He will cause them to accede to power on earth, even as He caused [some of] those who lived before them to accede to it; and that, of a certainty, He will firmly establish for them the religion which He has been pleased to bestow on them; and that, of a certainty, He will cause their erstwhile state of fear to be replaced by a sense of security-[seeing that] they worship Me [alone], not ascribing divine powers to aught beside Me. (Quran, An-nur 55)

In the elaboration of the concept of obligation (*fardh*) in Islam, it appears that there is no difference between the religious and the political; they constitute one realm. An example of this would be the obligation to fast and to fight. This is especially significant as we examine that Islam rejects the division of its principles. One cannot believe in certain aspects and leaves out other aspects. Life, and so is the human being, a one indivisible unit. There are several political orders prescribed in the Quran. One is the order to make peace and to preach the good, as the Quran mentions: “All believers are but brethren. Hence, [whenever they are at odds], make peace between your two brethren and remain conscious of God, so that you might be graced with his mercy (Al-hujurāt, 10). The idea of patience (*ṣabr*) and perseverance, as associated to solidarity and the strengthening of each other is another relevant theme since *ṣabr* does not imply helplessness or self-abasement but indicates strength and determination. Another order is to fight injustice and not to be silent against it. The Quran regarded the inclination towards injustice and evildoing as necessitating God’s punishment.

The famous Indian Imam and expert on the Quran, Hamiduddin Farahi suggests that the establishment of Islamic rule (*Khilafat*) is obligatory on Muslims. *Imān* (faith), righteous deeds and mutual teaching represent all that is good in human life in this world and the hereafter (Bari, 2004). This system of governance would be based on a repudiation of injustice, a concept introduced in the Quran as *ṭaghūt* and on which Maududi built a conceptual framework since, according to him, *ṭaghūt* denotes “each state, authority, leadership or guidance which rebels against God on His earth and makes people submit either thorough coercion, persuasion or misleading education” (*ibid*). Governance in Islamic thought is dependent on the belief in *tawhīd*, which in turn directly impacts how sovereignty is perceived. The idea developed by Maududi as *ḥukumati ilahyi* (divine government), is that since God is mastering the universe, none is associated with Him in sharing this power and thus sovereignty has to be to Him and not invested in the people, as a democratic system would imply (Bhat, 2007; Ahmad I., 2009). However, these political Quranic interpretations remained limited only to certain discursive groups within the Arab World and to a lesser extent in

Pakistan and Bangladesh, but not India, due to the heterogeneity of its Muslim populations versus the homogeneity in a country like Egypt. Bari (2004) asserts this fact and includes a class aspect, since it was the middle classes that were most receptive to these ideas (p.89).

Certainly the difference between being a minority and a majority contributes to the difference in the reception of these interpretations. One immense dilemma that arises is how the Islamic system, or any religion-based political system would deal with difference. The classical answer to this is found in the utopian idea of unity of mankind.¹⁷ The famous scholar and poet Iqbal (1930), in his collection of lectures *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*, mentions that the symbolism behind having a unified direction in prayer is “meant to secure the unity of feeling in the congregation, and its form in general creates and fosters the sense of social equality inasmuch as it tends to destroy the feeling of rank or race superiority in the worshippers.”¹⁸

Contemporary scholars such as Asghar Ali Engineer, in attempting to reform Muslim communities in India, argue that Islam and pluralism are compatible (See also Moussalli, 2003; Abul Fadl, 2004; Sachedina, 2007; Sajoo, 2008). There is a *surah* which is almost daily recited by Muslims and found in their posters in India that clearly outlines that to each is his own religion, while in another Quranic verse, it is stated that if Allah wanted, he could have created one *ummah*, one community, but he did not do so in order to test humanity; whether it can live in peace and harmony in a pluralist situation and the real goal is excel each other in virtuous deeds.

As Islam emphasizes the role of the self as an initiator of change through different processes, outlined by Robinson (2006),¹⁹ different Muslim leaders have thus adopted different paths. There are Muhammad Ilyas and Abul Hasan Al-Nadwi who emphasized that Islam has nothing to do with the political sphere, and there are scholars like Maududi who “insisted that the mastery of the political sphere is essential to achieve right guidance for society” (Robinson F., 2006, p. 34).

¹⁷ This is understood from several verses, especially the following: “If anyone slays a human being unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth- it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind” (Al-mā'idah, 32).

¹⁸ Lecture on the conception of God and the meaning of prayer. Source: <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/works/prose/english/reconstruction/>

¹⁹ Robinson (2006) presents these as: self instrumentality (meaning that each individual Muslim had to take action to achieve salvation), self-affirmation (increasingly autonomous, for women for example the capacity to women by giving them the learning of a maulvi and practical knowledge), and the affirmation of ordinary life (the life of the prophet as a model and example for each Muslim to follow, which has led to the increase in the discussion of domestic and family issues).

Providing a comprehensive overview of citizenship in Islamic political thought and the political interpretative capacity of the Quran necessitates a separate study. Hence, this chapter sought to outline quickly the most significant aspects on which the debate on this subject is based. The case of Indian Muslims was chosen to demonstrate an application of an alternative debate—one of tolerance and accommodation, but without neglecting the contradicting realities of ghettoization. It could be argued that minorities are more tolerant than the majority in most of the cases. In the case of the Indian Muslims, it is because of the reinterpretation of *Ahl-al-Kitab*, and thus the reconsideration of relations with non-Muslims (unlike Hindus who according to their scriptures are supposed to be automatically accommodative and tolerant). However, the same conditions are not reflected in national holidays, for example; one never sees Hindus in Eid celebrations, and whereas Muslims are aware of all the Hindu festivals and mythologies, the Hindus are ignorant of Muslim festivals and the meanings behind them.

The choice of the term *jihād* as a means of achieving the goal of citizenship necessitates some conceptual clarification. The word *jihād* is an Arabic term that means struggle; it does not essentially connote the military aspect associated to it on account of anti-Islamic propaganda. The root of the term is *jahada*, meaning to exert effort. The meaning of *jihād* is essential to the meaning of Islam, since Islam denotes submission to God, requiring in turn some form of struggle with the self. The Quran cites *jihād* as a form of resistance to pressures leading a person to disobey God. It also signifies striving to do the righteous deeds. In a famous anecdote of the Prophet Muhammad, he was asked: “What kind of *jihād* is better?” He replied, “Speaking a word of truth in front of an oppressive ruler.”

Jihād, as an action, has two forms. The first is the bigger *jihād*, which signifies struggle and self-discipline, and the second is the lesser *jihād*, which is combative, and means repelling wars of aggression against Muslims. It is the first form of struggling with the self on which I am basing this dissertation. The implication of the concept of *jihād* is in transforming religious rituals into media for social change, or as Smith puts it: “an authentic imperative to bring about change, one deeply imbedded in the Islamic tradition” (Smith, 1970, p. 227). By referring to youth's struggles as *jihād*, I am employing a form of conceptual relevance, instead of obstinately applying an alien concept to a different environment.

Maududi, known for his scholarly treatises on Islamic nationalism, becomes interestingly contextualized among progressive Muslims, but what was receptive for them was a totally different emphasis away from the Pakistan-influenced ones. As Jamaati Islami- Hind started to gain support

among Muslim youth, Maududi's ideas on *jihād* and an Islamic life were and still are increasingly circulating. To him, *jihād* was a revolutionary means to attain the revolutionary core of Islam's message:

Like all revolutionary ideologies, Islam shuns the use of current vocabulary and adopts a terminology of its own, so that its own revolutionary ideals may be distinguished from common ideals. The word *jihād* belongs to this particular terminology of Islam. Islam purposely rejected the word *harb* and other Arabic words bearing the same meaning of 'war' and used the word *jihād*, although more forceful and wider in connotation. The nearest correct meaning of the word *jihād* in English can be expressed as: "To exert one's utmost endeavour in promoting a cause". (Maududi, 1980, p.5)

Although *jihād* could not be semantically interpreted as an armed struggle, or holy war, it is the commonly known significance of the term. Historical reasons exist for this disparity between the textual meaning and the popular interpretation of the term, which are embodied in the interpretation of a *shi'a* sect (the *Kharijite*) of the term as legitimate violence against the enemies of Islam (Jalal, 2008). This was reinforced in contemporary time due to the media's usage of the word *jihād* and associating it with any violent or armed action in which Muslims are engaged. Muslim groups themselves tend to use this term to describe liberation struggle, or terrorist activity. An example of this is shown through the *Hindu* newspaper, as it reported the email sent by the so-called India's Jihadist Movement, who is accused of planting bombs outside courtrooms in Uttar Pradesh in 2007 as a means of vengeance of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom. The email ends with the following statement:

"Only Islam," it concluded, "has the power to establish a civilized society, and this could only be possible in Islamic rule, which could be achieved by only one path: *jihad*."

Jihād, as I will show throughout this dissertation, carries very different meanings in the psyche of the Muslim community. For a Jamaati-Islami-affiliated north Indian scholar, *jihād*'s contemporary significance is linked to the universality of the Muslim *Ummah* (nation) and how their issues are not considered merely specific or regional. In her words:

Muslim homes are not just limited to what is inside the four walls of their houses or what is inside the borders of their states. Every Muslim country is one's own homeland and home. Since false news and reports are spreading rumors about *jihād* and Muslims, it is our moral duty to defend these innocent fighters and to clear them in front of the world. *Jihād*'s tool is the Quran: Allah asks the believers not to obey the nonbelievers and to do strong *jihād* with them with the Quran. It is apparent from here that there is no call for a fighting place or war,

but debate. Women's *jihād* is to stay at home, take care of her husband's comfort, and make sure that her children get an Islamic education and way of life. (Thanauallah, 2005, p.114)

III. The Historical Context and the Emergence of Various Nationalists

When the two reached a safe destination, the man carrying the box placed it on the floor. 'So, what is my share?' he asked.

'One-fourth.'

'This is too little.'

'I do not think so. I think it is too much. I was the one who found the box.'

'Right. But who has carried this heavy load all the way?'

'Do you agree to fifty-fifty?'

'Very well. Open'

The box was opened. Out came a man with a sword in his hand. He cut the two claimants into four.

-Saadat Hasan Manto, Taqseem²⁰

India presents a unique case among postcolonial societies. The main cause of this uniqueness is the way the Indian nationalist movement evolved and led to independence triggered by civil disobedience. The secular, civil, and constitutionally guided path that India adopted in the postcolonial stage was emphasized and distinguished from the military or unstable political systems that plagued other countries. Analyses of how India dealt with this transition and theorizations on the Indian model of state and development are amply found. In this chapter, I aim not just at reviewing literature linked to the modern history of Indian Muslims but more significantly, at reviewing the studies pertaining to the decisional perception of Muslims, who opted to stay in India and not migrate to the newly-founded Pakistan at the point of independence, and of what kind of citizenship they endorsed. To achieve this, the Islamic justifications for staying and opting for a secular democracy are also stressed. The case of Indian Muslims offers another aspect of uniqueness among Muslim societies in having not just chosen to stay but also justifying the decision religiously. Finally, I will point out how Indian Muslims deliberated strategies of accommodation to their new status of a minority, yet a 'citizen' minority, and how far the term minority applies to them.

²⁰ Manto. S.M. Black Margins. In M. Hasan (Ed.) (2000), *Inventing Boundaries: Gender, Politics and the Partition of India*, pp. 287-299

Both British Colonialism and Independence as watersheds marked two new episodes in the Muslim psyche in India; those of ‘minoritization’ and ‘nationalization’. Muslim supremacy in India, as a ruling class, had ended with the collapse of the Mughal Empire and the defeat of the 1857-58 mutiny. Capitalism, as an emerging former of resources for culture production, was an additional factor leading to changing the map of traditional bases of power and the rise of Islamic modernist movements (Moaddel & Talattof, 2000, pp.7-15).

The process of coloniality marked the imposition of European categories of knowledge, and hence, the deformation of conceptualization of history and the Self. The postcolonial world thus inherited two newly unfolded episodes of minoritization and nationalization, which were linked to another two processes that shaped India's postcolonial nationalist identity. According to Das (2004), the first process produced India as a “‘cartographically defined geographical whole’, (i.e., representing India as a territorially fixed nation of cultural synthesis)”. The second process represented singularization – “i.e. a process in which alignments between territory and identity constituted practices of domination and subordination between majorities and minorities” (pp.374-375). As Pandey (1999) argued, the simultaneous moments of partition and independence were not only moments of establishment of the two new nation-states of India and Pakistan, “but it was also—and here the date becomes less clear-cut—the moment of the congealing of new identities, relations, and histories”(p.612).

3.1 Contending impacts of diverse notions of community: *Ummah* as a myth?

In the Indian context, the intersection of secularism, nationalism and democracy was the field in which an idea of the community was cultivated. Several hypotheses govern the discourse on Muslim identities and politics. Among these is the idea of the Muslim community as an *Ummah* (an Arabic term connoting a specific form of a nation), which poses as a myth to some, and a nonfallacious reality to others. In the following section, I examine this question by going through the political ideas of Muslim religious scholars (henceforth referred to as ‘*ulama*).

There are ample studies on the general notion of community. Chatterjee (2000), for example, in his study of peasant insurgency, focused on ‘community’ as a unifying idea and a fundamental social character:

Every aspect expresses itself in its specific political forms through the principle of community. Whether through the negatively constituted character of the forms and targets of insurgent action, defined by applying the criteria of we and they or whether through the

rebel's self-definition of the territorial space of insurgency, a principle of community gives to all these specific aspects their fundamental constitutive character as the purposive political acts of a collective consciousness. (Chatterjee, 2000, p.13)

Chatterjee contended that unlike in bourgeois politics where solidarities were formed through a process of individuals' formations of common-interest-based alliances, in some other cases like peasant rebellion it could be argued that pre-existing solidarities were themselves the incentives for collective action (*ibid*). The question remains whether the Muslim community's collective action could be approached with the same logic. Being non-monolithic and formed of different classes and castes, it is hard to assert that individual identities are derived from membership in a community. The endeavor to understand the meaning of a community leads us to build mental maps capturing the relationships between consciousness, everyday social action, and perceptions of risks and interests. Communities are thus woven around trust, social networks and shared norms (Mitra, 2003). This, in turn, builds solidarities in the form of alliances.

Focusing on Muslim societies, and contrary to Western liberal political theory, the communal group is considered to be the basic unit of political representation. There are two aspects of community formation and perception. The first is of *group solidarity* and the second concerns the sense of *superiority* of the community. The notion of solidarity or '*aṣṣabiyya*' is one of the cornerstones of sociological analyses of Muslim societies and thought. There is a particular aspect of the Islamic tradition bearing on the tendency of Muslims to organize on the basis of their faith in politics (Robinson F., 2000, p.182). This is to a considerable extent linked to Ibn Khaldun's theory of '*aṣṣabiyya*', which he considered a social force, an organizational authority and thus an indicator of social stability.²¹ His employment of religion, in the analysis of power, left its hallmark on contemporary Arab political thought. However, it could not serve to understand societies in which Muslims are not the rulers. Islamic political thought remained confined to the boundaries where Muslims ruled, but were not co-rulers or subjects.

Having formed communities, Muslims started a quest for an Islamic Caliphate after the death of

²¹ Ibn Khaldun's theory of solidarity, as explained in his *Muqaddimah*, shows how power is the basis of ruling, and every state is established upon violence, and not on a contractual relationship, and when '*aṣṣabiyya*' reaches its climax, the tribe attains then royal authority, either by despotism, or by backing. Thus, Ibn Khaldun denied the possibility of establishing authority on rational bases. He believed that dynasties of wide power and large royal authority had their origin in religion, based either on prophecy or on truthful propaganda, and that religious propaganda gives a dynasty at its beginning another power in addition to that of the group feeling it possesses as the results of the number of its supports. Thus, in this regard, it is obvious how Ibn Khaldun linked power and religion; establishing in this sense, a domain that provides authority with power; a domain of piety and adherence to religious norms and values.

the prophet Muhammad and had managed to form different Caliphates for centuries until the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1924, thus ending the empirical manifestation of the system of Islamic rule. However, this quest for an Islamic state, according to the legacy of Islamic political history, was circumscribed to the struggle for power, and not for ideals. The civil wars that occurred in the post-prophetic era between the Prophet's followers and relatives were indeed for power. The absolutism that marked the governance and power acquisition was the replacement of a prior democratic setting, where sovereignty had rested with the people and principles of popular representation were enacted during the life of the Prophet. No genuinely innovative book had been written on theorizing the politics of the state, apart from Al-Mawardī's book *Alahkam Alsultaniyya* (*The Ordinances of Government*), which was written in the eleventh century. Although only a small section of it was devoted to this cause, most books on the subject were devised as a loyalty and allegiance tool to a Caliphate. Al-Mawardī's section on the appointment of the sovereign (the *Imām*) has been influencing the course of Islamic political theory until now, since it managed to transform the traditions and political opinions of the past into a logical system (Khan, 1983). Al-Mawardī contended that by executing what was due to the Community, the sovereign accomplished also what was due to God in relation to their rights and duties. Two changes of policy disqualified him of leadership: lack of justice and physical disability (Al-Mawardī, 1996, p. 17).

Qamaruddin Khan (1983) points out that Al-Mawardī's work has been based on dogmatic theology, which refrained succeeding Muslim writers from questioning his authority or introducing new concepts in political thought. In an innovative measure, Indian *'ulama* such as Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad contributed significantly to Islamic political theory, and it is a misfortune that their attempts in generating a theory such as composite nationalism have not been awarded the respect and recognition it requires from Muslim scholars worldwide.

The contribution of such Indian *'ulama* mainly touches the myth of the separate nation by questioning the proposition that there is an inherent conflict between practiced Islam and forces of secularism and democracy, or tradition and modernity. Stifled voices of Muslim secularists and those opposing the two-nation theory highlighted the unresolved issue of how Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who later became the first Governor-General of Pakistan, and his colleagues managed to create the two-nation theory and mobilize Muslims (with their drive of not only ideological but also material concerns).²² Linked to this are Mohamed Iqbal²³ and the insurgence of the call for dignity

²² It is argued that Jinnah was not a practicing Muslim and could not even speak his mother language properly. Being a modernist, he propounded the two-nation theory in a context of power struggles between the Hindu and Muslim

of the middle class out of the colonial subjugation, thus deconstructing the thesis of the inevitability of the partition of India.

Hasan (1997) explains the eventual success of the Muslim's mobilization of Muslims as not based on ideological grounds, but pertains to the context of the performance and resignation of Congress ministries in 1939, the fluid political climate during the time of war, the launching of the 'Quit India' Movement, and the British government's willingness to adopt a different political strategy with the League. This has all provided an opportunity for Jinnah to emerge as a key political player and to propagate the two-nation theory. It has to be asserted that the two-nation theory remained elite-directed. It was taken up by Jinnah and fueled by the economic anxieties of certain classes who were the professional groups in UP and Bihar, the powerful landed classes in Punjab, Sind and UP, and the industrialists of western and eastern India (Hasan, 1997, p. 56; Hussain, 2006).

Orientalist and Hindu propagandist writings on Muslims are guided by the proposition that Islam is a complete reference for Muslims in terms of identity and moral codes. These writings assume that as a result of profound attachment of Muslims to the '*ulama* and orthodox Islam, the Muslim community typically resists a secular and democratic order of society and politics. Hasan (1997) cites these works and points out a generalization they make, namely "the totalitarian character of the faith seemed to imply that only a totalitarian state could put its dogmas into practice" (p.19).

This is strengthened by the conviction in traditional Islamic political thought that only Muslims could represent Muslims (Robinson, 2006, p. 219). Consequently, the Quran builds two models for Muslims to follow if they find themselves in a status of being a numerical or political minority. The first is the Meccan model, or the emigrant (*muhajir*), in which Muslims facing persecution opted for emigration (*hijra*); the second is the Abyssinian model, or the struggler (*mujahid*), in which a state of tolerance and peaceful coexistence was achieved within a non-Muslim majority context through struggling (*jihād*) (Krämer et al., 2011).

Besides group solidarity, the second aspect of the subtle sense of superiority of community appears since the Quran mentions the Muslim *Ummah* as the most benevolent *Ummah*. This has

elites. It was only after 1937 that his political stance was steered towards this idea, since earlier he was advocating a united India until 1928 (Enginner, 2009).

²³ Iqbal was known to be one of the greatest Urdu poets of the twentieth century. His engagement with revivalist Islam and nationalist politics came as a turning point after his return from Europe. He is also known to be among the first who called for a separate state for Muslims in his Muslim League presidential address in 1930.

further implications to relations of power and its exercise. The Community of believers is privileged as long as they follow four categories of obligations comprising the theological, practical, personal and social aspects of Islam: faith (*imān*), actions (*a'māl*), exhortation to truth (*twasau bi al haq*), and exhortation to perseverance (*tawaṣau bil ṣabr*) (Quran 103:3). *Ummah* consciousness derives from the Quranic-imposed duty on those “who have attained to faith, enjoining upon one another patience in adversity (*ṣabr*) and [enjoining] upon one another compassion (*marḥammah*) (90:17).” Here, patience (*ṣabr*) is not an argument in favor of inaction. According to the Quranic meaning, patience is a positive concept that signals a human’s strength. The exercise of *marḥammah* as the twin attribute of *ṣabr* ensures an individual’s continued adherence to human values and acts as a brake against savage impulses (Krämer et al., 2011).

The Egyptian Islamic scholar, Al-Qaradawy (2010), examines the concept of *Ummah* and presents constructive meanings of the term, which extends to religious, political, geographical and social aspects. Religion could be the basis upon which the *Ummah* is defined; so we could have a Muslim *Ummah* or a Christian or a Hindu *Ummah*. It is also a political concept, since not only Muslims constitute an *Ummah*; the historical example shows us that Muslims and Jews were two religious *Ummahs* but one political *Ummah*. Geography, as a basis of political identity and citizenship in the modern age, was surprisingly one of the elements of *Ummah*; the endowment of political benefits was only attributed after immigration (*hijra*), meaning after joining Madina and participating in its defense. The solidarity among tribes and inhabitants of Madina incurred another social element to the construction of the *Ummah*. Therefore, the Madina Treaty accepted multiple identities and belongings.

Not only through the Madina covenant but there is also a notion of patriotic brethernhood upon sharing a homeland that finds evidence in the Quran upon the reference to the nations of prophets and the word brothers to denote them.²⁴ Eventually, the primacy of the human being is the hegemonic principle, which also proves the role of agency of humans in social change, regardless of their religion.²⁵ The concept of the *Ummah* theologically, therefore, was thought of by Asad (2003) as “a defined space enabling Muslims to practice the disciplines of din in the world”, and not an imagined community or an aspired political entity (p.197).

²⁴ For example the Quran (26:105-106) states: The people of Noah denied the messengers when their brother Noah said to them, “Will you not fear Allah?”

²⁵ In one of the speeches of Mudavoor, a Muslim scholar in Kerala, India was described as *Darul Insaan* or the abode of the human being.

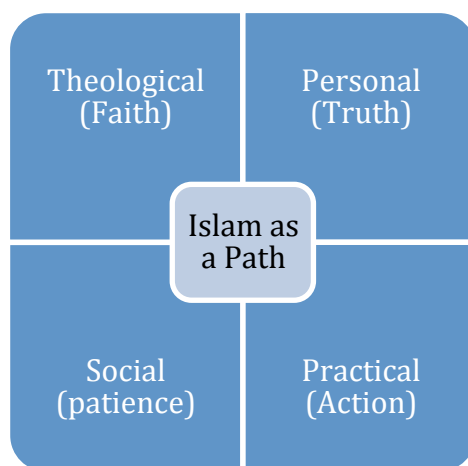


Figure 2 Aspects entailed in the conception of Islam as a path. Source: author

In the Indian context, the search or construction of a communal identity took place within a broader framework of finding one's place within the 'nation'. Chakrabarty (2008) argues that of the first serious attempts to establish the Indian Muslims as a separate community was Rahmat Ali's demand for a separate national status in 1933. Before him, Jinnah showed a determined opinion in the 1916 Lucknow Pact regarding a necessity of separate electorates to ensure communal harmony. The culmination of these demands was evident in the British Communal Award of 1932, which granted separate electorates to minorities (Chakrabarty B., 2008, pp.41-43).

What we have been faced with in India is a large-scale construction of an idea of a Hindu nation, that required the opposite construction of an idea of a Muslim nation to exercise upon it hegemony and majoritarianism. This is one side of the story. The other side is told by some of the Muslim leaders who had crafted an idea of a separate community. What interests me here is not this crafting, but the counter-discourse of Muslim leaders and the ways they envisioned their life in a framework of composite nationalism.

According to Medieval Islamic political thought, the world was traditionally divided into two zones: of peace (*darul salam*), and war (*darul ḥarb*). The benefit goes to the Indian *'ulama* who pioneered the reworking of these divisions. Al-Qaradawy (2010) comes at a later and contemporary stage to affirm this point of view. Indian Muslim scholars emphasized the recognition of the concept of homeland (*waṭan*) in Islam. The love of the place of birth and domicile is a natural tendency and thus theologically, India is not *dar-al-Islam* (the abode of Islam), but neither is it *dar-ul-kufr* (the abode of atheism) or even *darul ḥarb* (the abode of war). It is *dar-al-'ahd* (of treaty), *dar-al-aman* (peace), and *waṭan* (home) (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p.157 & Wasey, personal communication September 2010).

Wasey (2008) argued that the spirit of coexistence marked the interaction of Islam with the Indian civilization. And thus a new term in Islamic thought was invented: *ṣulḥ -e-kul* or peace with all. The division of the world in *darul ḥarb* (war) and *dar al-Islam* had been replaced by *darul aman* (peace) or *darul ṣulḥ* or *dar almu'ahada* (treaty): the region of peaceful coexistence with those who did not accept the faith of Mohammed. The result of this coexistence is visible today among the Bohras and Memons of Gujarat and Maharashtra, the Mappillas of Kerala and the Muslim population of Bengal. North India witnessed a contrasting picture. The conquest of Sindh was the beginning of this civilizational interaction although gradually with the Mughal advent, *ṣulḥ -e-kul* was practiced, and could be evident from Akbar's edict:

In a country under one ruler it is bad that the subjects should be disunited and in conflict with one another. [...] We should therefore strong them together in such a way that unity informs all diversity so that each community may continue to benefit from the positive values from its faith and at the same time adopt what is good in other faiths. That would be real praise and worship of God, and would bring peace to people and order in the country. (Quoted in Wasey, 2008, p.37)

Although the majority of Muslim scholars agree with this classification, there is a minority among them claiming the failure of the determination of the nature of *dar*. Shaz (2001), for example, in his critique of *dar almu'ahada*, argues that the *'ulama* missed the point (in their resemblance of Indian constitution with Medina treaty) that the treaty in Medina had brought the Prophet to the position of ultimate authority, while in the Indian situation, the treaty or the Indian constitution had given the majority a clear edge over Muslims. In addition to this, the treaty was made by the Prophet (who is the ultimate representative of Muslims), but those who claimed to be representative of the Muslim community in the constituent assembly could by no Islamic ruling be called Muslim representatives (p.90).

This leads us to the wider discussion on the role the idea of the *Ummah* plays in shaping political identity. Indian Muslims elites' ideas owe a lot to the past and derive from their historical heritage. Many historians have pointed out that Indian Muslims tended to look less to the international Islamic community and more towards "the organization and solidarity of the local Indian Muslim community for their strength and development" (Esposito, 1987, p. 22).

These politics-based aspirations to where the Muslim community establishes solidarity networks were reflected in the dilemma of political legitimacy. For the Indian Muslim, justifications for the legitimacy of political orientations shifted tremendously according to historical events. In the

beginning, Muslim allegiance to England during the First World War was sanctioned to a great extent especially by scholars like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. However, by 1857, the *'ulama's* main target was to adjust to the *raj* (British rule) rather than repudiate it since “they recognized the need to generate the strength to survive in a world dominated by colonialism” (Hasan, 1997, p. 33). Actually, according to some accounts, the *'ulama's* role in the 1857 mutiny was almost non-existent, and they were not brought afore to political participation except later on through Azad's introduction in the public scene (Haq, 1970). Interestingly, the Jamaati Islami in India had fought against the ‘alien’ concept of a territorial state since it challenged the establishment of Islamic rule on a universal level, as imagined by them (Quraishi, 1971).

The later intricate roles that religious identity played in forming political alliances were as manifold as the idea of diversity of communities that is inherent in the actual concept of *Ummah*. It could be even argued that one of the considerations that led to the theory of composite nationalism and the negation of the two-nation theory was the fear of the *'ulama* to negate the traditional worldview of the *Ummah*.

As a conceptual unit of analysis, *Ummah* can denote several aspects of community formation, varying from the implications of a people, a society, a nation, a tribe, a culture, or a multi-social, multicultural community. For proponents of ‘Islamic anthropology’, *Ummah* is the basic category of investigation since it is an “*a priori* of the Islamic perspective that mankind is created as a culture-bearing, social being who must necessarily exist in community” (Davies, 1988, p. 128). Sardar (1998) points out the locality of integration as defined by the Friday Mosque and the externality on an international level by the collectivity of all Muslims as defined by the notion of the *Ummah*.

Empirically, religion could be analytically treated as the practical translation of faith. When we add the concept of *Ummah* to this analysis, religion or *dīn* (the Arabic term for religion which also means a path) appears as an active ingredient since every *Ummah* possess a *dīn*. Davies (1988) expatiates on the concept of *dīn* as it gives the community a realm of meaning of the self and of other communities, where relationships are actualized as system and process. The function of *dīn* appears as a tool of translation of these networks of relationships into patterns of living. Consequently, the concepts of *Ummah* and *dīn* become mutually defining (pp.129-130).

To sum up the discussion on the meaning of *ummah*, in Davies’ (1988) words, the term refers to

A group having certain characteristics or circumstances in common. It is used to express a community, a people, a nation, and also a civilization. In the Quranic context it is clear that

what a people share in common is their system of social organization, their *shari'ah* and *minhaj* as specific expression of *din*. (p.107)

3.2 The rise of Muslims' discontent with the British

Back to the case of Indian Muslims, the shift from the allegiance to the British was explained in Titus' (1959) study on Islam in South Asia, which demonstrated the effects of British occupation on the Muslim discontent with the British. The first effect concerned language and the replacement of Persian by English, "in every school and court, this change of language served as a constant reminder to the Muslim of the distinct loss that had come to his community, and of the fact that he was now among the subject peoples of mankind" (p.199). Second, the abolition of the governmental posts of *Quādhī* (judge) and *Quādhī al Qudhāt* (judge of judges or supreme judge) and the consequent effect upon the administration of Muslim law had a direct impact manifested in the secularization of the life of Muslims by a non-Muslim power. This resulted in first, discontent and the Wahabi movement's question of whether India was any longer a suitable place of residence for Muslims (thus the recurring debate on *darul ḥarb* or *darul Islam*). Second, a determination to boycott Western institutions, led by Muslims, had followed. There was continual negative reference to Western education; consequently, Muslims fell behind Hindus in education. They pursued a policy of isolation and self-sufficiency until mid nineteenth century and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's educational movement, which will be further referred to (Titus, 1959, pp.199-200).

Different historical stages marked the contention between Muslims and the British colonial power. The 1857 Mutiny was the first watershed in this series. There is ample literature, especially in Urdu books written by Indian Muslims on partition history, claiming that Muslims were often portrayed in an anti-nationalist image, although they were the ones who carried the burden of the anti-colonial struggle starting from 1857 (for example, Rehmani & Arshad, 2001; Kamal, 2009). The Partition of Bengal in 1905 and its annulment in 1911 was another moment that has been less investigated from Subaltern non-elitist Muslim perspectives. Whereas Muslim elites were discontented with the cancellation of the partition, there was rising restlessness on a mass level with the colonial powers. Orthodox leaders of the community played a strong role, especially with the commencement of the Turko-Italian war: either by the inclusion of the name of the Turkish Caliph in the Friday *khutbah* (speech) and prayers, or through writings in Urdu press by Islamic scholars such as Muhammad Ali and Azad. It is argued that the Turkish Caliph had been recognized as the legitimate ruler of all Muslims in contrast to the resisted British imperial power (Karandikar, 1969). The employment of Muslim identity, hence, as a means of resistance to the British by arousing the

North Indian Muslim Masses should be seen as a resistance mechanism to the colonial powers rather than a reductionist idea of a fascination of the idea of the Ummah since their goal eventually was independence from the British and not succession to the Ottoman Empire. Their usage of Islamic symbols and metaphors was a tool of projecting a counter hegemonic performance.

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the Indian National Congress, led by Gandhi, initiated both the Khilafat Movement and the non-cooperation movement that included Muslims in its folds. It was perceived by Muslim *'ulama* that Europe and an anti Pan-Islamism plan after it had been exhausted by the Ottoman Empire; the eventual result was the production of two kinds of spirits amongst Muslims:

The first is racial, nationalist and linguistic divisions and differences. The second is the approach and thinking that *jihād* should not be for religious and spiritual purposes, but for race and country, so as to divorce the religious spirit from it. (Madani, 2005, p.97)

Some of the literature on the Khilafat movement in India indicates that it was less about the Ottoman Empire than about India since it was essentially linked to the non-cooperation movement and utilized by Gandhi. The use of religious symbols to address a secular demand was a tool often utilized by the colonized to fight imperialism (see for example, Bamford 1925/1985; Bose & Jalal, 2004; Dale, 1990; Haq, 1970; Hussain, 2006; Jalal, 2008; Madani, 2005; Sanyal, 2005). This was reflected not only in Madani's work, but also in a famous speech by Azad before the Khilafat Committee at Agra in 1921:

We must decide on the goal of the Khilafat movement. Is the goal somewhere outside India? [...] In fact our goal is not outside India. It is not in Iraq or Syria or Asia Minor or Smyrna. Our objective is to test the power of our own belief (*imān*), determination (*azm*) and action (*amal*). Or, let us put it in this way: the goal is in our own country. It is a question of the victory or defer of our own country. Unless you succeed in your own country success will not greet you elsewhere. [...] India is the first goal of the Khilafat movement. (cited in Haq, 1970, p. 102)

Metcalf (2005) contended that this movement reinforced the understanding of society as “consisting of a ‘partnership’ of bounded units” (p.30). Indians saw the fate of the Ottomans conflating with their own for the following reasons. According to Metcalf (2005), the movement first gave westernized Muslim leaders a kind of Islamic, rather than ‘Muslim community’ or interest-based identity. Second, it also drew popular Muslim participation into political movements for the first time. Third, it marked a new role for traditionally educated *'ulama*. Fourth, it

established a model for Muslim participation in political life:

The Khilafat movement set the path for what would endure as a pattern for Muslim participation in the nationalist movement. It entailed whole heartedly embracing Gandhi's leadership, with an acceptance of the new strategy of non-cooperation with British rule and the goal of complete freedom before even the Indian National Congress did so. Political action represented parallel participation of two organizations, not single action comprising individuals. (Metcalf, 2005, p.29)

Madani, in outlining the Muslim stance, cited Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar's last speech at the Round Table Conference in London on 12 September 1932:

One word as to the Muslim position, with which I shall deal at length on some other occasion. Many people in England ask us why this question of Hindu and Muslim comes into politics, and what it has to do with these things. I reply, it is a wrong conception of religion that you have, if you exclude politics from it. It is not dogma. It is not ritual! Religion, to my mind, means the interpretation of life. I have a culture, a polity, an outlook on life—a complete synthesis which is Islam. Where God commands I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second, and a Muslim last, and nothing but a Muslim. If you ask me to enter into your Empire or into your national by leaving that synthesis, that polity, that culture, that ethics, I will not do it. My first duty is to my maker, not to H.M. the King, nor to my companion Dr. Moonje my first duty is to my maker, and that is the case with Dr. Moonje; also. He must be a Hindu first, and I must be a Muslim first, so far as that duty is concerned. But where India is concerned, where India's freedom is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second, an Indian last, and nothing but an Indian.

[...]

I belong to two circles of equal size, but which are not concentric. One is India, and the other is Muslim world. When I came to England in 1920 at the head of the Khilafat Delegation, my friend said: 'You must have some sort of a crest for your stationary.' I decided to have it with two circles on it. In one circle was the word 'India'; in the other circle was Islam, with the word 'Khilafat'. We as Indian Muslims came in both circles. We belong to these two circles, each of more than 300 millions, and we can leave neither... We are not nationalists but super nationalists, and I as a Muslim say that 'God made man and the Devil made the nation'. Nationalism divides; our religion binds. No religious wars, no crusades, have seen such holocaust and have been so cruel as your last war, and that was a

war of your nationalism, and not my Jihad. (Cited in Madani, 2005, pp.137-9)

The stand of these *'ulama*, who reflected the state of mind of many Muslims of India, made it predictable that they would join the nationalist struggle of the Indian National Congress. However, at some point, the Muslim League emerged and the Congress lost many of its ties with Muslims. In explaining the unsuccessful dealing of the Indian National Congress with the Muslims, Robinson (2000) attributed it to four factors. The first is the backwardness factor as incurred by the discrimination of the British against Muslims, and thus Muslims being averse and thus excluded from taking advantage of Western education and eventually falling behind in competition for jobs and economic advancement. The second point contends that the British deliberately created divisions in Indian society for their own imperial purpose, therefore, leading to discouraging the Muslims from joining the nationalist movement. Third, the Indian National Congress was infiltrated by Hindu communalism, as manifested in its symbols, ethos, idioms, and inspiration. Finally, Muslim communalism and the two-nation theory as propagated by Jinnah played a dominant role (Robinson, 2000, pp. 210-213).

One additional point that serves to enrich the discussion on reasons for partition and moving towards the Muslim League was adopted by Nasim Ansari in his novel-like work 'Choosing To Stay', in which he argued that

During the war the Indian capitalists had accumulated such wealth that they wanted to take complete political power. Their political party, the Indian National Congress, was so strong and so well organized that no other party in the country could challenge its power except the Muslim League. One major reason for its agreeing to accept partition was the calculation that once Muslim League was out of the way, then Congress would exercise complete power over the whole country. At the same time the Muslim capitalists too had accumulated a certain amount of wealth during the war but in comparison with the Hindu capitalists, they were nothing. So their survival depended upon winning political power in a part of the country. Thus partition was in the interest of both these groups. (Ansari, 1999, pp.73-74)

As a center of nationalist activity during the Khilafat and non-cooperation movement, Aligarh Muslim University played a pivotal role (Bamford, 1925/1985). It was later transformed to become the 'arsenal of Muslim India and the emotional centre of the Pakistan demand' (Hasan, 2002, p. 253).²⁶ Despite the eventual establishment of Pakistan, the Aligarh Movement nevertheless had led

²⁶ For more details on the Aligarh Muslim University role, see: Hasan, M. (1997).

to the emergence of strong intellectual and political figures that shared the steering of the Khilafat movement and the independence struggle in India. It failed, however, in achieving its initial aim of benefiting from the Western experiences, by not filling the enormous generational gap of the Muslims who were adherent to their faith (Al-Nadwi, 1965/2005).

The propaganda of misrepresentation was another aspect leading to communalism. In a letter written in 1938, Wazir Hasan, a notable Muslim League jurist who propagated for Hindu-Muslim unity, called on Nehru to respond actively to the communal propaganda in order to save the struggle for independence after the defeat of Muslim League in the 1937 elections. He wrote:

The propaganda of misrepresentation, lies and religious and communal hatred [...] is being carried on from day to day with ever increasing false statement of facts under the guise of the rights of the minorities and religious hatred. I may refer in particular to the following items:

- (1) That the Congress is a Hindu organisation.
 - (2) That it wants to establish not swaraj but Hindu Raj in India.
 - (3) That the Congress and its governments in seven provinces are trying to oppress and crush the minorities particularly the Mussalmans.
 - (4) That the Muslim League is the true representative of the views and ideas of the eighty millions of India.
 - (5) That there are very few Mussalmans in the Congress and these few are traitors to Islam.
- (Quoted in Karandikar, 1969, pp. 250-251)

Since the option of exercising free will diminished after independence, the destiny of Indian Muslims was designated through redefining the notion of Islamic community in the Indian environment. This was carried out politically by Azad and Kidwai, and ideologically by prominent figures such as Zakir Hussain, Mohammed Mujeeb and others (Hasan, 1996, p. 207).

Prior to Independence, the boycotting movement against the British yielded influential figures that shaped the course of the Muslim Community in India. Among these were Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Abdulbari Alfarangmahali, who all religiously stood next to Gandhi in boycotting British goods. This movement was then followed by another Pan Indian national movement (Al-Nadwi, 1965). Several movements and names appear most prominently in the struggle for independence and for or against partition. Apart from the Muslim League, Iqbal and Jinnah, who endorsed the call for Pakistan, names of people and movements who

rejected separatism are numerous and include Husain Ahmed Madani, Hakim Ahmed Khan, Saifuddin Kitchlew, Mukhtar Ahmad Ansari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Indian National Congress Muslims, the Ahrārs movement, Jamiyat al-Ulama, the Imarat-e- Shariat in Bihar, the All India Momin Conference (AIMC) and the All India Shiah Political conference (AISPC).

In 1946, other Nationalist Muslims of the Cabinet Mission shared weighty arguments.²⁷ The first was introduced by Zahiruddin, who contended that the Muslim poor, who are estimated to be half the population of Muslims, would be far worse off with the partition. Second, Hooseinbhoj Laljee, president of all Indian Ahrārs argued that partition would leave weak units and create unworkable boundaries. Finally, Maulana Madani emphasized the importance of provincial autonomy, Muslim parity at the center, ending separate electorates, and reservations for Muslims (Metcalf, 2009).

Hussain's (2006) study of the nationalist political processes in Bihar shows the strong opposition to Muslim League from the Imarat-e-Shari'ah, the AIMC and the AISPC, especially due to the non-Islamicness of Muslim League's leaders. The Mufti of Imarat-e-Shari'ah even issued a *fatwa* declaring it un-Islamic to join the Muslim League because “its claims of protecting and representing the *siyasi* (political) and *mazhabi* (religious) rights of Muslims were not grounded in the Quran but the arithmetic of majority votes” (p.35).

Those *‘ulama* who espoused the case of Indian nationalism and a united India, conceived of India as *dar al ‘ahd* (based on the Prophet Muhammad’s pact with the Jews of Madina) as the model and theological justification for sharing power with non-Muslims) or *dar al aman* (which they described as a territory in which the Muslims live peacefully and have the freedom to perform their religious obligations (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p.157). Voices like Mohammad Manzoor Nomani, Mohammed Mujeeb, Abid Husain, K.M.Ashraf, Fyzee, Mohammad Habib, and a large number of *‘ulama* at Deoband and Lucknow carried in the post-partition era a message of hope (Hasan, 1997, p. 218). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to cite all the movements and activists during the partition time. Consequently, I choose to focus on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, an independent Muslim scholar who joined the Indian Congress, and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, who was affiliated to the organization of Deoband, as not just proponents but designers of the theory of ‘composite nationalism’.

It should be stressed that the struggle against the Partition was led by both Western-educated liberals and traditional religious scholars. Although I do not wish to ignore the role of liberals in the

²⁷ The British Cabinet Mission to India of 1946 aimed at discussing power transfer to the independent India

independence struggle, the aim of this chapter is to look at how Islam, not just as a religion, but as a way of life and a path, has been utilized to further political objectives that resonate with those of the secular liberals.

Whereas the demand for Pakistan was not supported by arguments containing Quranic verses or religious experiences, it was credited with democratic and secular arguments such as freedom, the fundamental right of self-determination (a western-based right and not an Islamic one), and the demand for the unity of India was supported with Quran and Hadith and came from most of the *'ulama*.

One interesting analysis of the need for the partition that combined the dogmatic with the pragmatic is the argument forwarded by Kazi Said ud-din Ahmad in his book *The Communal Pattern of India*, written in 1945 in Lahore:

The political problem is at once communal, social and economic. Political rights without communal, social and economic justice are meaningless. [...] There is a great difference between the Muslim and Hindu concept of state. Islam is essentially democratic in character, while Hinduism with its caste system and class domination implies minority rule. In the Islamic conception, the Commander of the Faithful rules in common brotherhood all the children of one God. Amongst the Hindus government is the legacy of the warrior class, the Kshatriyas. (Obtained from Hasan, 2000, pp.72- 73)

Since this study deals exclusively with the anti-Pakistan discourses, space does not allow me to expand on historical studies concerning the role of Muhammad Ali Jinnah (who was portrayed as the major spokesperson for the demand of Pakistan) and Muslim League in the partition. However, it is duly pertinent to refer to one observation, namely the limited and vague religious terminology used in most speeches calling for Pakistan, which is remarkably clear in Jinnah's example. In his Presidential Address in 1940, he urged the workers of the League to “come forward as servants of Islam [and] organize the people economically, socially, educationally and politically” (quoted in Amir, 2000, p.126). He spoke of an Islamic heritage, the *millat*, the Quran, and the Islamic life, without explaining which points he was emphasizing, despite this, he later on advocated socialism and nationalism in Pakistan. In his address to the Delhi session of the Muslim League in 1943:

The people of Pakistan will choose their representatives to the Constitution-making body on the basis of adult franchise. [...] Democracy is on our blood, our marrow. I could not work for a single day if I thought I was working for the capitalists and landlords who fatten on the sweat of our people. In Pakistan exploitation will not be allowed. If the capitalists and

landlords are wise they will have to adjust themselves to the new and modern conditions. If they don't, God help them! We shall not. (Quoted in Sajjad Zaheer A Case for Congress-League Unity, first published in 1944, Bombay, in Hasan, 2000, pp. 113-132)

The voidness of Islamic-based conceptualizations of citizenship and state was also reflected in Muslim League manifestos. The Muslim League election manifesto in 1936 was comprised of national democratic terminology. Its main principles included democratic self-government, and the utilization of the legislatures by Muslim League representatives for the benefits of the people in all spheres of national life (Karandikar, 1969, p.246).

3.3 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: The introduction of Muslim politics

Maulana Abul Kalam Muhiyudeen Ahmed, who was known by his pen name, Azad, lived from 1888 until 1958. Before Independence, Azad was a leader in the Khilafat Movement and was associated with Gandhi in the nationalist struggle. After India's Independence, he became the first Minister of Education. It was Azad who dragged the rather detached Muslim *'ulama* into politics and made them enter the domain almost exclusively occupied by western-educated elites. To Azad, politics were intertwined with religion, as obvious from his main objectives of destroying obscurantism in the religious life of Muslims and establishing a joint platform for Muslims and Hindus to fight the British (Haq, 1970). In 1927, after the emergence of the Khilafat Movement, Abul Kalam Azad wrote in *Alhilar* magazine acknowledging the largely contested issue that remained a paradox for political theorists till the coming century; namely, the relationship between Islam and nationalism, or in other words the hybridity of identity of Muslims:

The large-heartedness of Islam neither negates nationalism, nor is it necessary for nationalism to limit Islamic perception. Both these points are unduly exaggerated. Reality lies not on either extreme, but in between the two. What is this middle course?²⁸

Azad defined nationalism as a concept describing a particular state, that of collective consciousness and social order. By this, nationalism leads to the distinction of certain groups who will incur distinct collective responsibilities. Collective consciousness was initially based on race, but then a stronger force of place of habitat emerged. To Azad, social consciousness had three

²⁸ Azad, *Islam aur Nationalism*, published in the second phase of *Al-Hilal*, which ran from June - December 1927. Obtained from S.S. Hameed, S.S. (ed.), *India's Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, pp. 50-57.

stages of development: patriotism, nationalism and universalism or humanism. The theory of composite nationalism begins with generalized humanism. Azad criticized the chauvinism of the Arabs as embedded in *'aṣṣabiyya* that, to him, meant enclosures of family, tribe, race, and place. The concept of *'aṣṣabiyya* was regarded as an Arab hangover from the days of Pan-Arab tribalism and thus was not as valid for application in the Indian context. Azad then argued that the system of conduct and the rituals Islam came with aimed at a designation of the unity of humanity and the implementation of human brotherhood. This was in juxtaposition to the historical evolution of nationalism in Europe that confined rights and liberty to the boundaries of Europe until nationalism became Europe's own greatest threat (Azad, 1927).

A similar point was put forward by Azad's colleague in the anti-colonial struggle and the Khilafat Movement, Maulana Muhammad Ali, who held a negative stance from the Western concept of nationalism. According to him, in a speech at the Cocanada Congress in 1923, Indian nationalism should have been described as a 'Federation of Religions' and India, instead of being described as the 'United States of India' could have been referred to as the 'United Faiths of India' (Karandikar, 1969). Eventually, Muhammad Ali was alienated from the Congress and Nehru's stance and differed greatly later on with Azad due to his disillusion with the Khilafat Movement and Gandhi's ideas.

For Azad, the Indian nation was an unalterable fusion of differences. It would be impossible to attempt a project of cultural revivalism or to dream of attaining a 'pure' version either of a Hindu or Muslim culture. The Indian nation became the meeting point of 'caravans of race, cultures and religions'. Consequently, the Indian nation shared a common history and common achievements, which led to an indivisible common nationality:

Our shared life of a thousand years has forged a common nationality. Such moulds cannot be artificially constructed. Nature's hidden anvils shape them over the centuries. The mould has now been cast and destiny has set her seal upon it. Whether we like it or not, we have now become an Indian nation, united and indivisible. (Address to the INC 1940, p.162)

The success of the nation, according to him, depended on unity, discipline and confidence in Mahatma Gandhi. By nation, he meant the Indian nation and never the Hindu or the Muslim. This could be exemplified through this excerpt from his address to the Indian National Congress in 1923:

When the order of the day is, 'Protect Hindus' and 'Protect Muslims', who cares about protecting the nation? The press and platform are busy fanning bigotry and obscurantism, while a duped and ignorant public is busy shedding blood on the streets. (p.145)

Azad was most probably the first scholar to theorize on common or composite nationalism. By showing how Hindus are nonbelievers with whom alliance should be pursued since there are common interests, in contrast to the British who are harmful, he managed to apply the idea of the Covenant of Medina to a real context. Succeeding him in 1927, Anwar Shah Kashmiri stressed the same prophetic precedent of alliances with trustworthy non-Muslims, integrity of Muslims in keeping their pledges, long historical ties and love of country of the Muslims of India. In 1938, Madani was the last to theorize on the subject of composite nationalism (Metcalf, 2009).

By composite culture, Azad meant a fused and shared culture and not a mosaic; “The dimensions of that shared culture, moreover, were ones that could be labelled secular or cosmopolitan” (Metcalf, 2009, p.118). Azad envisaged a similar ‘single nation’ (*ummah wahidah*) of Muslims and Hindus in India. He wrote, “If I say that the Muslims of India cannot perform their duty unless they are united with the Hindus, it is in accordance with the tradition of the Prophet” (Madan, 2009, pp. 161-162).

Amir (2000) has the opinion that for Azad the term *jihād* was used to describe the struggle to defend the world-wide Muslim community and its Caliph, and not necessarily the freedom of India. However, in an article in *al-Hilal* in 1912, titled *The Struggle for Independence* or as the translators put it, *The Crusade for Independence*, Azad refers to the Indian independence struggle as a *jihād*. In the same article, Azad wrote addressing the Muslims:

Remember, that for the Hindus the struggle for the country's Independence is a part of their patriotism. But for you it is a religious duty and apart of the crusade for Allah. He has designated you *Mujahids* or Crusaders; the scope of Jihad or Crusade includes every effort made for truth and justice. Jihad means to break the shackles of human oppression and bondage. Those who are, today, engaged in the struggle for country's independence are launching a crusade which you should have initiated. Awake, because now Allah wants you to rise. It is His will that Muslims, wherever they are, should re-dedicate themselves to the duty of this Jihad. So far you have done nothing in India, though Allah wants you to make your best effort and, here too, accomplish all that you are expected to accomplish in other parts of the world. (*Alhilal* 1912, pp.46-47)

The difference between the stances of Iqbal and Azad or between the theorization of a Muslim state and composite nationalism was manifested in the division in the stance among the Muslims who were inspired by Iqbal's verses and the '*ulama* especially of Deoband who adopted Azad's ideas. The power of verse and nationalist emotions stood against the religious and exegetical

analysis by the *'ulama*. It is paradoxical that the same *'ulama* who could not deter the partition and the migration of these Muslims, would acquire significant powers in the coming decades as the controller of the Muslim masses in North India.

In an article written in 1912, Azad gave a detailed, yet to an extent, vague answer to a question posed by a friend. The question concerned an inquiry into the preferred political path to be adopted, in the viewpoint of Maulana Azad, whether it was the traditional and historically followed conservative path of Muslims; that of the moderate Hindus in a right-based civil struggle, or the radical anarchical path adopted by extremist Hindus. His answer revealed a fourth path, a Quranic-inspired one. Azad cited the Quran to explain the incentives for political action along a divine path. The verses he cited, however, do not give a detailed and analytical framework. His emphasis on the straight or divine path remains empirically ambivalent concerning political action. However, the straight path option gave insight on his contribution to an idea of unity of humanity and monotheism (*tawhīd*).²⁹

For Azad, this path led to the rejection of submission and humility to anyone, except for God. Political characteristics that Muslims should withhold are inspired from the task of vicegerency (*khilafat*) bestowed upon them by God and are courage, self-esteem and dignity. The principles of justice and moderation are pivotal to all their transactions. Hence, peace and solidarity are advocated. A Muslim is expected to refrain from causing disorder, and to support the common good. The legitimacy of a government, to which a Muslim should show allegiance and respect, is derived from popular consultation:

It should be the duty of Muslims to make every effort to achieve Independence and, according to their religious precepts, they should not rest until they have established a parliamentary form of government. On the above-stated principles we can frame our political policy; we neither need the policy of the moderate Hindus nor that of the extremists. If we form our own, we shall be a moderate but fearless group, from which no

²⁹ The idea of *tawhīd* was further explicated in Azad's Quranic commentary or Tarjuman Al Quran, in which he argued that "the inevitable consequence of this Divinity is also the concept of unity of Faith. Obviously, the path of spiritual guidance prescribed by the Divine force should be for the entire Creation and shown to all. 'Hence the Koran says that the Revelation is the universal guidance of God and has been present in the world since day one and that it is meant for all human beings... The same universal truth it calls "al-deen" (the Faith), that is, the True Faith for all humankind, so it appeared equally in every age and in every country. The Koran says that there is no corner of the world that is inhabited by human race and where a prophet has not appeared. All prophets, whenever and wherever they appeared, showed the same path; all of them taught to be faithful to the universal law of God, that is, the law of Faith and pious conduct.'" (Quoted in Wasey, 2008, p. 43)

party needs fear any harm. In accordance with our religious precepts we shall strive for the progress and independence of our country. (Azad, 1912, p.35)

Azad departed from this stance in 1920 when he joined the Khilafat Movement and the Indian National Congress. He depended on the Quran (40:8-9) to find a basis for this political alliance. Followingly, he used the covenant of Medina argument, and this was the same argument Hussain Ahmed Madani and the other *'ulama* of Deoband used (Ahmad A. , 1967, pp. 186-194).

3.4 Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani: 'Composite nationalism' as *jihād*

Having lived from 1879 until 1957, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani is considered one of the most notable figures in the history of twentieth-century South Asia. As a traditional Muslim scholar, his role was enhanced by the fact that he was the principal of the famous Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Deoband. In addition to his scholarship, he was a prominent figure among the *'ulama* in the nationalist struggle and a strong proponent of Gandhi.

Madani contended that although the fight for partition was led by secular elite leaders, it was the religious leaders who fought against partition. Before partition, in debating Iqbal's ideas of the Pakistan movement, Madani came up with an appealing argument and stressed the difference between *qaum*, meaning a nation, and thus considered a territorial concept; and *millat*, meaning an *Ummah* and thus a religious concept. Before Madani, there was an inconsistency in the usage of the word *qaum* or *qawm* in the writings of Muslim scholars. The most notable example is Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who used the word interchangeably to refer to the Egyptians or the Turks as a territorial nation, or to the Muslim community, as a nation of a specific faith. However in 1884, in a speech Sir Syed said: "By the word *qawm* I mean Hindus and Muslims both. This is the sense in which I interpret the word nation or *qawm*" (quoted in Amir, 2000, p.11).

In explaining the difference between *qaum* and *millat*, Madani stressed that these two words could not be used interchangeably and that the ancient Arabs, Persians, and Turks never used *millat* to denote *qaum*. Furthermore, he made the following comments. First, *qaum* means either a group of men (excluding women), or primarily a group consisting of men where women are automatically included, or a group comprising both men and women. *Millat*, on the other hand, refers to a religious path adopted by a group of people; in other words a *shari'ah* or *dīn*. Examples are found in the Quran such as *millat Ibrahim* or the path of Abraham. *Millat* could also refer to a doctrine (*Tariqah*) or blood money (*Diyyat*). Second, there was a pluralist aspect to the word *qaum*, since it has no singular form, but plural forms. *Millat*, on the other hand, is singular and can have plural

forms. Third, there was a feminist aspect to the word *qaum*. In Arabic, *qaum* is mentioned in the Quran sometimes as feminine and in other times as masculine. Women are subsumed in the meaning sometimes, and sometimes reference is exclusive to men. Therefore, from a gender perspective, there is confusion in the usage of the word.

A detailed explication of the word *qaum* was found in an Urdu pamphlet distributed by the Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind before partition, entitled “*Khatarnaak na’are (Dangerous Slogans)*”. According to the pamphlet:

European experts have not limited their definition of a nation to a religious aspect. They have also stated geographical, kinship and economic status as other elements of components of a nation. In our common usage, when reference to the word *qaum* emerges, the answer is always about one’s brethren and kinship, so for example, it is Sayyed or Sheikh or Brahmin or Qadri or others.

In the Quran, there are approximately three hundred positions where the word *qaum* appears, and its application is usually linked to kinship and sometimes geographical. However the Quran in its usage of the word nation does not declare it synonymous with religion. There is no doubt that Islam has put an end to tribal bigotry and divided humanity into two sections. Such tribal-based nationalism was not approved of, and there are multiple *ahadith* (prophet’s sayings) condemning it. Actually, according to one of the companions of the Prophet, the word Muslim was applied to a nation. But the *shari’ah* does not base religion as a foundation for a nation. It is the word *millat* which is used to refer to people belonging to the same religion, and not nation. (Then he cites from the Quran: *Millat Ibrahim (Abraham)*, and Yusuf (Joseph) who abandoned the *millat* of non-believers)

It would be appropriate to give an opportunity to copy some of what Sir Syed Ahmad Khan said. The application of the word *qaum* to the residents of a country should be done. Remember that Hindus and Muslims are just religious terms. But Hindus, Muslims and Christians are residents of one country and thus are considered one nation. When all these groups constitute one nation then their country should be one. This is not the time to imagine a country with one religion.

[...]

In a session of Muslim League in 1938, Mr. Abdul Aziz said in a speech:

This movement for Muslim composite nationalism could only be accepted if it helps in the

freedom of India and solving daily livelihood issues. But extinguishing religious identity does not solve issues of livelihood; we should not also worship livelihood issues. It would be never accepted to establish an idea of composite nationalism in which religious existence, specific historical narratives and political rights are annihilated.

Then the writer cites Madani's work on composite nationalism (the action plan of India part and the meaning of composite nationalism).

[...]

The decision of Jamiat Ulama Hind:

All *Hindustan* is our Pakistan

(Maulana Muhammad Miyan Saheb, 1946, translation mine)

As for the word *Ummah*, according to the Quran, there are different *Ummam* (plural of *Ummah*) (nations), but despite this acknowledged plurality, there are numerous Quranic verses in which non-Muslims and the Prophet have been addressed as one nation on the basis of kinship.

Madani disagreed with Iqbal's definition of *Ummah*, which according to him was not based on any linguistically or historically correct source. Iqbal claimed that *Ummah* denotes people who have forsaken their nations and religions and have embraced the religion of Abraham. Afterwards, the word *qaum* would not be used to describe them. Madani argued that Arabic classical dictionaries were void of these characteristics Iqbal attributed to the word by himself. *Ummah*, according to *AlMunjid* Arabic Dictionary, connotes a group of men, ways, era, and stature. According to *Mukhtarul Sahah* Dictionary, it means a group of men. According to another source, it is linguistically singular, but from the point of view of meaning, it is plural.

The message of Islam contained an essentially binding factor since it was called upon the entire world to follow the same path and the same *shari'ah*:

Among those who have accepted the call and have entered its fold, Islam has established a magnificent (spiritual bond) that has overshadowed all other bonds prevalent in the world—whether based on regionalism, kinship, economics, nationalism, language and colour, caste and creed, etc. This relationship transcends the bonds of materialism and engulfs them in a spiritual body of Islamic brotherhood. (Madani, 2005, p. 90)

However, Madani argued against basing nationalism on human dignity and Islamic brotherhood. Madani contended that there is no Quranic verse which carried the meaning that only those men

who advocated universal brotherhood were to be considered as a single nation and not the people of one country, one race, and one colour.

Unlike Sir Syed, who tried to state that loyalty to the British was the religious duty of Muslims, Madani assured his audience in his speech in Delhi in 1921 that the best form of *jihād* was to speak out fearlessly before a tyrannical ruler.³⁰ He reasoned that since the British were the greatest enemies of Muslims, then only by being free from their domination could Indian Muslims safeguard their religion and therefore, it was their religious duty to fight for this freedom. In a dateless letter, he reasoned that since the British had turned India from a *Darul Islam* into a *Darul ḥarb*, it was the duty of every Muslim to try to liberate India from British influence (Amir, 2000). In Madani's pre-partition action plan for India, he had called on Indians in general to

Make a united effort to throw off the yoke of foreign slavery and open avenues for the progress of the citizens of India. The objective is to establish composite nationalism on the basis of national unity. The life of Prophet Mohammed to achieve such an objective through the formation of a United Front with non-Muslims. (Madani, 2005, p.106)

In his article on the fear of European Nationalism and Patriotism, he asserted that Muslims were the ones who suffered most from British oppression. As victims of oppression and as Muslims, they were faced with two kinds of obligations. The first was incumbent on every Indian citizen to struggle against this oppression by overthrowing the regime. The second relates to *jihād*, since *jihād* against the oppressor is a duty on Muslims, and for this, all strategies and arms are permissible. Not only did Madani employ this dual secular-religious discourse on duty, but he also used nationalist and Gandhian terms such as *swatantra* (freedom) and *swaraj* (self-rule) (Madani, 2005, p. 142).

Madani's nationalist *jihād* or struggles were centered on the following battles. The first was against the exploitation of the British (as opposite to Nehru). The second was the focus on the central place of Muslims in the history of the emerging nation and the contributions of Muslims to India (his book *Our India* and its virtues points out that Muslims made India their home for over 1000 years and most Muslims were descendants from earlier inhabitants). An interesting argument was that not only India is the land where venerated Sufi saints are buried, but also Muslims are the only religious group who gets buried; thus they have a strong association with land. This was also a part of his answer to Hindu nationalism. Furthermore, according to some texts, Muslims claim being the original inhabitants of India because of the traditional belief that Adam landed on Earth in

³⁰ This is a reference to a Prophet's saying.

India (from heaven).³¹ Third, in his writings, he portrayed Muslims as not just anti-British, but as the most anti-British. This was linked to a fatwa dated back to 1803 on the status of India after the British occupation of Delhi, the anti-colonial *jihād* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid as Madani described it, the Muslim peasant movements in 19th century Bengal, and the participation of the '*ulama* in the 1857 mutiny.

One of the interesting ways of analyzing Madani's thought is to look at the anti-colonial discourse that had a deeper objective of changing the process of 'Othering' created by colonialism. Metcalf (2009) argues that:

The colonial narrative of Indian history, first formulated in the late eighteenth century, had been to position Muslims as foreigners, thus making British rule seem less intrusive and, by vilifying Muslim rule, more benign. Key elements of that narrative were appropriated by Indians generally to account for their subjection. Today, Hindu extremists justify ethnic cleansing on the basis of this same narrative of Muslims as foreigners. (p.135)

Thus, it could be argued that Madani adopted strategies of resistance to this discourse exemplified in the story of Adam and the burying versus cremation argument.

United or composite nationalism was Madani's answer to both Hindu and Islamic nationalism; by composite nationalism, he referred to the analogical application of the Prophet's dealing with non-Muslims in Madina. Madani argued that if the Prophet managed to coexist with non-Muslims who practice polytheism and idolatry (known to be the greatest sins in Islam), then Muslims in India should not have any difficulty in living with non-Muslims in India. To the contrary, they would be following the Prophet's path since they share the same homeland and form one nation. Instead of fighting among themselves or claiming difference, Indians, irrespective of religious and cultural diversity, should wage war against the foreign and alien forces that have usurped their natural rights and deprived them of their common interests.

This was also the same strategy of the Prophet and his companions when they formed a united front with the Jews of Madina that brought them together as a nation. Madani referred to an earlier position of Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri, who in his presidential address at the conference of Jamiat Ulama-i-hind in 1927, echoed the same message:

³¹ Madani's stance is cited in Metcalf, 2009, pp. 134-5). Yoginder Sikand also explains this thesis by alluding to Maulana Miyan's reference to an eighteenth-century north Indian scholar; Ghulam Azad Bilgrami (See: Sikand, Y. 2006, pp. 68-72)

Although in this brief address I cannot shed light on all the aspects of *Darul Aman* (land of peace-Madina), yet it is important here to highlight certain relevant points. And for this it is necessary to draw your attention toward those clauses of the agreement amongst Jews and Muslims of Madina that Prophet Mohammad made in his early period of migration to that city. It is (quite clear) that Muslims in *Darul Aman* (land of peace) and *Darul Harb* (land of war) can make agreement with a non-Muslim nation, viz., the Agreement of Mohammad Rasulallah with Jews of Madina. (Quoted in Madani, 2005, p.107)

Thus, composite nationalism entailed two aspects. The first was realizing the unity of inhabitants of India and thus fighting against foreign powers. The second aspect was faith-related. All Indians should be free to practice and propagate their ideology in a peaceful setting. Non-interference in the personal affairs of others should be guaranteed, and majority communities should not try to assimilate minorities. The same principles were translated in the Congress objectives and proposals.

Madani never abandoned his idea of composite nationalism. After partition and independence and as he remained in India, the most significant strategy in his opinion was to keep pursuing *jihād*. This was most evident in education; in urging Muslims to participate in elections and government plans for economic development; in learning Hindi since it is the national language; in correcting school books and the misrepresentation of Muslims; through trade and travel to Pakistan to normalize the relations; through Islamic endowments; and finally through Uniform laws among the states. In a meeting with Madani upon partition, Maulana Raipuri and Maulana Zakariyya consulted him on the decision to leave to Pakistan. Maulana Madani, with tears in his eyes, answered:

Our 'scheme' 'failed'. If it had not, there would have been none of this bloodshed or population exchange...Now I stop no one from leaving. Although my own home is Medina and [my brother] Mahmud is insisting I come, I am not capable of leaving the Indian Muslims in this wretchedness and mayhem. Whoever is ready to sacrifice his life and goods, honor and respect, religion and the world for Muslims should stay; and anyone who cannot bear all this should just go. (Quoted in Metcalf, 2008, p.148)

After Partition, Maulana Madani travelled widely to secure peace, renewed his commitment to seminary education and Islamic guidance. He stated that:

Jihād against the British and against the League now over, India's Muslims needed to turn their struggle within. This would be greater jihād of moral struggle through personal and community discipline, education, and moral reform.

Muslims today remember only the word "jihād" but they do not remember that in opposition to rebels against Islam and enemies of the community...patience, forbearance, and high ethics were spoken of as jihād-i-akbar ("the greater jihād"). In this greater jihād, there is no need of sword or dagger, but only strength, resolve, and action (Quoted in Metcalf, 2009, pp. 148-151)

In a letter answering a person from a Muradabad who wrote him complaining about life in India after partition, Madani reminded the reader of his earlier warning of the political incentives behind the call for partition. He showed how Indian Muslims ended up being a sacrifice to attain the political ambitions of Muslim League politicians. Madani used nationalist vocabulary and asserted that there is no point in considering Arab or Afghani help since they showed no sympathy to the ill fate of hundreds of thousands of Indian Muslims. The zealous quest for the establishment of majority rule, whether Muslims in Pakistan or Hindus in India, brought about destructive living conditions for both communities who had to migrate. While condemning the provincial bigotry practiced in Sind, Punjab and Bengal against Muslims of other provinces, in a rebuking tone he addressed the writer:

As you have brought about the partition of the country, what is the reason for your anger? It is an act of generosity on the part of the Hindus that they establish secularism in the country. Failing this, the decisions and actions of the League and of yourself call for a situation in which the Hindus do in their area of majority whatever they wish without your being able to utter a word.

The Indian Muslims are facing extreme difficulties (there). Hundreds of thousands are anxious to come back to their homeland (*watan*). (Lack) of permits and passports, and government forces on the borders prevent them from doing so. Otherwise, a great majority of the emigrants (*muhajirin*) would have come back already. But suppose that you and I and several thousands emigrated and found relief there (i.e. in Pakistan); what will happen to the religion and faith of those Muslims who remain behind? Will they not apostatize and become Hindus (*kya huh murtadd owr shush nah ho jaenge*)? (Quoted in Friedmann, 2002, pp. 172-173)

Madani never ceased to blame the British for the failure of composite nationalism. He referred to a work by an English historian named J.R. Seeley, who, in writing about the means of the expansion of the British Empire, warned of the thriving of a feeling of common nationality as a threat to the existence of the Empire. He later on cites the example of the turning of Sir Syed's thought from

composite nationalism, to later fighting it, as a result of the propaganda by the British, and so did Iqbal. He warned of the effect of English-based educational institutions, of which 80-90% of Muslims are graduating and are turning irreligious. The copying and adaptation of English dress, style of thinking, and character were manifestations of the adverse impact they have on the Muslim psyche:

Those who wax eloquent about Islam and religion, do not differ in their dress and appearance from the British. And why should they? Lord Macaulay had said: We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern [...] a class of persons Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in moral and in intellect. (Madani, 2005, p.130)

Metcalf (2009), in her study of Maulana Madani, eloquently demonstrated the significance of Madani's thought. Even those who differed with him, like Maududi, Thanawi and their followers, and propagated the two-nation theory, were forced to abandon their political ideals. Those who stayed in India realized eventually the value of a secular political setting, and even utilized it to the maximum to achieve their communal goals:

The commitment to democracy and secularism, now realized and justified in over six decades of democratic participation on the part of India's *'ulama* and other Muslims, stands as one of India's Muslims' most striking characteristics. Husain Ahmad Madani's legacy of political thought, and his life as a whole, challenge common stereotypes of Muslims generally and of Muslim clerics above all. (Metcalf, 2009, p.158)

What significantly marks the thought of both Madani and Azad is how they adopted a vision of a political reality, in which no religion assumed a determinant role. Support for equality of citizenship and building political alliances with non-Muslims were basic premises to both of them. And with this, they challenged centuries of Islamic jurisprudence, based on the political supremacy of Muslims. In addition to this, a language of utility was utilized, in reference to Muslim progress and national and community well-being (Metcalf, 2009).

Metcalf (2009), in her biographical study on Madani, argued that the difference between Azad and Madani lies in three points. The first is that Azad theorized the legitimacy of universal government as an earthly analogy to the theological *tawhīd* while Madani emphasized colonial *realpolitik* at the expense of Muslims. Azad imagined India's Muslims to be under an *amīr*, who would guide and speak for Muslims within the larger society (p.117). Azad's later references to India as a secular democratic state appear perplexing in my point of view in contrast to Metcalf's

opinion.³² Second, Azad was engaged in finding theological justification for the truth claims of other religions with his key concept of unity of religions (*weḥdat aladyān*) that looked upon religion as an inward aesthetic experience. Third, by 1930 there was a shift, as he abandoned his theological writings, and began appearing as a spokesman of Indian nationalists within the Congress by adopting a secular approach of argumentation for the idea of composite nationalism. In a speech in 1940, he asserted:

Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievements. Our languages, our poetry, our literature, our culture, our art, our dress, our manners and customs, the unnamable happenings of our daily life, everything bears the stamp of our joint endeavor. There is indeed no aspect of our life which has escaped this stamp. Our languages were different, but we grew to use a common language; our manners and customs were dissimilar, but they acted and reacted on each other and thus produced a new synthesis. Our old dress may be seen only in ancient pictures of bygone days; no one wears it, today. This joint wealth is the heritage of our common nationality and we do not want to leave it and go back to the time when this joint life had not begun. (Presidential Address to the Indian National Congress, p. 162)

Eventually there were four divisions of elite *'ulama* whose stance from the secular state differed accordingly. The first section, like Maulana Azad, Madani and Kashmiri, was termed the nationalist *'ulama*. The second section was the Muslim Leaguers like Shibli and many among the Aligarh Muslim University Scholars. The third group was not exclusively comprised of *'ulama* but included scholars whose writings were influential, most notably Maududi. The fourth section was pendulum-like ones whose attitudes either changed like Thanawi or remained apolitical. The divergence of *'ulama* on their stance from partition breaks the stereotypes about Islamic rigidity, since all these *'ulama*, in basing their viewpoints, had utilized Quranic verses and prophetic anecdotes. By using different religious arguments, *'ulama* managed to lead their followers to favor either Congress or the Muslim League. Haq (1970) metaphorically described this reality when he made the simile of *'ulama* being on the same train but with different and opposite destinations.

³² As evident through his Convocation Address to the students, delivered on 20 February, 1949, at the Aligarh Muslim University: “You are the citizens of free India—a State which is determined to develop its political and social life on secular and democratic lines. The essence of a secular and democratic State is freedom of opportunity for the individual without regard to race, religion, caste or community...I have no doubt in my mind that if you can imbibe this spirit of progressive nationalism which is the motto of our secular democratic State, there will be no position in any field of life that will be beyond your reach.”

Although partition had taken place, it was the concept of united nationalism, as coined by Azad and Madani that dominated the ways through which Muslims accommodated their new status in independent India as citizens and defended the status quo. This notion of common citizenship also got translated constitutionally. Karandikar (1969) contends that the Constituent Assembly had managed to pass a constitution based upon an idea of common citizenship by stressing equal citizenship and outlawing discrimination on the ground of religion, caste, race, sex, and place of birth. To overcome the issue of granting excessive power to religious authorities, the constitution guaranteed the freedom of conscience of an individual: “the Individual is granted freedom of conscience and is also ensured protection against the inroads on his equality under the name of religion” (p. 293).

3.5 Adjustment to the new status of being a ‘citizen minority’

Having shown the challenge to the proposition that Muslims form a separate nation through the alleged *Ummah* framework, it would be necessary to turn to see how valid the proposition of Muslim unity and political mobilization along communal lines is. An attempt to consider a subaltern perspective in the history of partition from the point of view of Muslim masses has not yet been realized. Apart from specific studies, focus has been substantial on elite ‘*ulama*’s perspective like Azad, Maududi and Madani.³³ In contemporary India, the differences in viewpoints between the elite, whether emphasizing the religious or the secular, and the masses, who are not confined to perspectival boundaries, are large. There is a wide spectrum of orthodox Muslims, revivalist Muslims, socialist Muslims, secularist Muslims, in addition to the regional and class divisions, which are further strengthened by media access and media reception. Although secularists and modernists have access to the media, and thus have strong relations with politicians and policy makers, there are contending powers in the small *madrasas*, *maktabs*, and mosques, where not-so-famous *Imams* and *mullahs* enjoy a certain degree of authority. The extent of the power exercised by the ‘*ulama* and *mullahs* would be further dealt with in coming sections of the study. The purpose of this section is to assert these divisions and analytical perspectives to avoid making essentialist arguments especially that of Indian Islam. In Joya Chatterji’s study of the Bengali Muslims, she puts forward the claim of the social construction of the idea of ‘true Islam’ and how that claim shunned alternative readings of history. To her, authenticity could only be a “fundamentalist claim that seeks

³³ Abraham (2006), in a conference paper, introduces a discussion on a proposed subject of re-reading Muslim history through subaltern perspectives.

to standardize, essentialize and sentimentalize a past which has been characterized by plurality, multivocality and bitter conflict” (Chatterji, 1998, p. 282). This becomes more obvious once we take into consideration the complex reality of plebeian politics that subverted the myth of the unity of the Muslim community (Hansen, 2000).

There is ample evidence that Islam was not the principal incentive behind mobilizations of Muslims for the Pakistan movement. It was an aspiration for both political and economic rights that was indeed responsible for the movement. This clearly appears, starting with Syed Ahmed Khan, who contended that political rights “were more important than religious traditions, and so long as the Muslims lived freely under British rule they would remain good subjects” (cited in Hasan, 1997, p. 32). Then the argument got crystallized through Azad’s own words, as they appeared in his autobiography *India Wins Freedom*. Azad argued that

It was Gandhiji who first gave currency to the title Qaid-i-Azam or great leader as applied to Mr. Jinnah. Gandhiji had in his camp a foolish but well intentioned woman called Amtus Salam. She had seen in some Urdu papers a reference to Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam, When Gandhiji was writing to Jinnah asking for an interview, she told him that the Urdu papers called Jinnah Qaid-i-Azam and he should use the same form of address. Without pausing to consider the implications of his actions, Gandhiji addressed Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam. This letter was soon after published in the press. When Indian Muslims saw that Gandhiji also addressed Jinnah as Qaid-i-Azam, they felt that he must really be so. (Azad, 1988, p.97)

According to Azad, the Muslim League had pursued a policy of intimidation to the Muslims who held key positions in the Central Secretariat. The League had pressed all of them to leave. This policy was carried out first by disseminating reports to what their fate would be once Congress came into power. Azad then pressed the Government of India to issue a circular to reassure the Muslims that if they stayed in India they would not only be given their rights, but also would be treated generously. This had a positive result, and a number of Muslim officers regained their confidence and decided to stay. However, once the Muslim League was informed about this, it started to intimidate those officials by threatening to retaliate against their property and relatives in Pakistan (since many of these officers came from areas that were to become in Pakistan). Upon these threats, they had forcibly opted for Pakistan. In Azad’s words:

They had opted for India on the strength of my assurances but when the Muslim League held out threats against their families and their property, some of them came to me in tears and said, ‘We had decided to stay in India but now after the threat held out by the Muslim

League, it is impossible to do so. Our families are in West Punjab and we cannot allow them to suffer. We are therefore compelled to opt for Pakistan'. (Azad, 1988, p. 222)

Apart from Azad and Madani's stance to secularism, confusion was spread among many Indian *'ulama*. Some called to boycott elections, because there was an apprehension of Hindu hegemony either through the constitution (that was not properly understood by the masses) or elections. Others attacked secularism and democracy and condemned them as an irreligious philosophy and a form of polytheism, respectively. Jamiatul Ulama, however, settled on eschewing politics, while retaining a pro-Congress stance. Eventually, the secular and the democratic ideal, rather than an Islamic dimension guided the tactics and pragmatic framework that led Muslims' lives to establish and get enmeshed in political and electoral networks and coalitions. According to Hasan (1997), "Muslims had to seek adjustments not as Muslims per se but as members of a larger collectivity. They had to accept state laws enacted by parliament and not insist on the application of Islamic law except where marriage, divorce and inheritance were concerned" (p.188).

The appeal of Pakistan to the North Indian Muslim community during partition time was fueled by positive and negative factors. For Qureshi (1962), positive factors included the desire of Muslims to maintain a sort of 'separate' identity, in addition to a deep-rooted desire for a Muslim state that had existed in the consciousness of the community. Titus (1959) also mentioned governmental posts being promised and given after partition especially for upper and middle class professionals. Negatively, Qureshi (1962) elaborated on the obvious absence of cementing factors in the relations between the two communities. This was evident in minimum-level co-existence. For example, the rate of intermarriage was very low, there was no considerable inter-dining, and festivals provided opportunities for rioting instead of a social occasion for coming together. According to him, the communities remained different in everything (culture, thought, outlook on life, dress, and cuisine). Besides this, there was no sense of a common history; instead there were two views of such historical happenings. The heroes of the Muslim conquest and the rebels against Muslim domination inspired contradictory feelings. In addition to this, the common bondage to a foreign government did not overcome these conflicting feelings.

Despite these factors, Muslims' attitudes to several issues were radically changed due to their acquisition of a new political identity as citizens in a democratic secular system. Education was one of the main fields of attitudinal change, as they started realizing the importance of education especially that a huge chunk of the educated middle class had migrated, leaving vast poor and illiterate masses behind. Though it was not new, the religious outlook of Indian Muslims towards

other religions was changed. This was manifested through abandoning cow slaughter and joining Hindu festivals that became widely celebrated national holidays.

In September 1947, and before leaving to Pakistan and becoming a Prime Minister later on, Suhrawardy stayed in India after partition and wrote to Khaliqzaman regarding the possible paths of Muslims' adjustment in India:

We appear to have the following alternatives:

1. Continue to live as Muslims in the best Islamic tradition connected with the Muslim League and holding fast to the two-nation theory. In this alternative we shall have to be very strong and disciplined and must be ready to undergo sacrifices and must look to Pakistan for support and protection. We shall certainly get the respect of the Hindus, but equally their indignation. They will see to it that we do not become strong and I doubt very much whether Pakistan can come to our rescue and support. The theory of hostages has broken down. [...]

2. Be a good Muslim and remain on friendly terms with your Hindu neighbours on the basis of common citizenship of the Indian Union. This obviously is the best position to take up but the snags are the following:

(a) Will the Hindu accept you as an equal?

(b) Will he treat you with cordiality? [...] What I fear is, will they have respect for you if you have not strength, that is to say, if you give up your particular group solidarity? At the same time, any attempt to acquire solidarity and strength, will raise suspicion in their minds as regards bona fides.

(c) Complete subservience and submergence in some places as in Bihar. This is the attitude of Hindus towards the Muslims. In order to prevent this there are three alternatives:

(i) The Muslims should form themselves into strong pockets. In my opinion this should be done even with the best co-operation in the world with the Hindus. It is politically desirable as well as necessary for survival and also culturally desirable.

(ii) Transfer of population while the going is good. Although we have had a bad lesson in the Punjab I still think that transfer of population is an impossibility. It is doubtful how many of those who have been transferred from one side to the other will survive. I think we have to take the risk and stand fast to where we live.

(iii) Annihilation: This is too awful to contemplate not from the personal point of view, but from the point of view of Hindus and Muslims as a whole because nothing can then stop a

general carnage. (Quoted in Karandikar, 1969, pp.274-275)

Mushirul Hasan's works touch best the issue of accommodation of the Muslim community to their new status of being Indian secular democratic 'citizens'. What made Indian Muslims different from their counterparts in Muslim majority settings in Arab countries was that the Arabs had no clear-cut idea of accommodation between secularism and Islam. Indian Muslims developed many schools of thought and praxis to draw paths to deal with the new condition.

Initially, the psyche of Muslims and their response to their own situation in the post-partition decade was described as hopeless, fragmented, bitter, frustrated and leaderless (Hasan, 2006). Consequently, the process of searching for alternatives was multitudinous. It ranged from following the Nehruvian ideology of modern secularism, to the politically Islamist Jamaati-Islami perspectives, to the Jamiatul Ulama's Congress-affiliated position, and to the apolitical practices of local and regional organizations such as the Tablighi Jamaat approach.

Concerning the Tablighi Jamaat, different attitudes regarding its roles have been shown through many studies such as Metcalf's (1993), Sikand's (2002) and Talib's (1998) thorough and positively projective studies and Mushirul Hasan's apprehensive position towards it. Hasan's unease, which is shared by other scholars, is for the following reasons: being as conservative as its opponents, insisting on keeping women in *purdah*, resisting social reforms, and 'insulating its followers from the world around them'. As for its attitude on politics, since they see that politics and politicians are evil, they abstain from interfering:

The Tablighi Jamaati has, perhaps involuntarily, surrendered its claim of citizenship. Instead of critically engaging with the multifarious challenges, it has enclosed Muslims in their own cultural world and insulated them from the rapid developments in the world around them. (Hasan, 2008, pp.129-130)

Before presenting a summary of the political attitudes adopted by Indian Muslims in the immediate years after partition, a distinction has to be made between two sets of analytical perspectives. The first is of the majority versus minority perspective and the consequent political options available. This is due to the problematization of the reality of Indian Muslims of being a 'citizen minority', or in other words, a minority not entirely in the political sense since they enjoy the status of being citizens unlike for example the majority of their Muslim counterparts in Europe. The terms of majority and minority, as we will see further on, should be cautiously tackled. The second perspective is of the Islamic divisions among Muslims themselves and the consequent social options with ambivalent assumptive powers on political choices. Whether one is labelled a

secularist Muslim, a liberal Muslim, an orthodox Muslim, or a revivalist Muslim, there is no scientifically acceptable method of measuring how these variations have an impact on political decisions.

In addition to these two perspectives, there is the factor of the externalization of the Muslim community and the way they were classified, categorized and perceived by the majority, as shown by historical studies conducted on Hindu nationalism within the volumes of Subaltern Studies. Pandey (1999) shows how politically active Muslims, unlike the Hindus, were not thought of as 'Nationalist Muslims' versus 'Secularist Muslims'. They were divided into nationalist Muslims who were deemed supporters of Indian nationalism, and simply Muslims who were not (pp. 609-610). He also demonstrates, as an example of this classification, two of the comments forwarded during the Constituent Assembly debates in the aftermath of Partition. The first is of Mahavir Tyagi, a Congressman from UP, and the second was made by Vallabhbai Patel:

The Muslims already know that they will not be returned [in elections to the various legislatures] for some time to come, so long as they do not rehabilitate themselves among the masses and assure the rest of the people that they are one with them. They have been separate in every matter for a long time past and in a day you can't switch over from Communalism to Nationalism.

You must change your attitude, adapt yourself to the changed conditions. [...] Don't pretend to say 'Oh, our affection is great for you.' We have seen your affection. Let us forget the affection. Let us face the realities. Ask yourself whether you really want to stand here and cooperate with us or you want to play disruptive tactics. (cited in Pandey, 1999, p. 620)

It might appear that on account of being a numerical minority, Muslims in India had no other path but to accept what the majority sought to establish. Historical evidence shows us otherwise. Millions have stayed and chose to be part of India. In India, Muslims were never a numerical majority, the Moghul rule was not in any way linked to the Islamic Caliphate, and thus it could not be argued that Muslim rulers opted to establish a religious state. The evolvment of a Hindustani culture throughout Moghul rule bears witness to the Hindu-Muslim cultural integration (Husain, 1965). With the anti-British struggle, the aspiration to regain self-rule was not directed towards the establishment of a religious state. Although Islam was utilized, and armed *jihād* or struggle as a religious duty on Muslims was called for by the '*ulama*, the goals remained secular. With the Congress-led independence movement, the vision of India did not entail any majoritarian role of Hindus, and thus it was the Muslims decision to 'naturally' follow the path their ancestors followed

and achieve self-rule over the land in which they coexisted with followers of other religions.

Logically, Muslims living as numerical majorities have more various options for political set ups than for those living as minorities, whose best option is a secular democracy that would guarantee their rights, at least of existence. However, utilizing Islam and considering giving it a public role or not is still a valid point whether Muslims find themselves in a majority or a minority. The Indian Constitution is unique in the sense that it gives Muslims full freedom of not just practicing Islam, but proselytizing it. This led to a sense, although not strongly shared, of being legally equal. Legal equality, guaranteed by a secular and democratic state ideology, was an alternative opposing the realistic one of being subjects to an alien religion-dominated ideology (Pandey, 1999).

There is a difference between the usage and conception of the state of ‘minorityness’. Conceptualizing the self as a minority or not will be dealt with in the coming sections of this study. Here, I want to focus on the dilemma of usage of the term ‘minority’ to the discussion on Indian Muslims and their accommodation to the new status of citizenship in a democratic secular state. I acknowledge that neither the study nor the researcher is equipped to resolve this question. However, it is compelling to demonstrate how, on the one side, there is a process of mainstreaming identities fitting into nationalist imagination, and on the other side, there is an over-determination of identities. Identity formation entails a non-ending process of formation of ‘Othering’. When one examines the literature written in Urdu, the word minority seldom arises. Instead, ‘community’ is being utilized. Weiner (1997) has an interesting point to make when he contends that

To regard oneself as part of a minority in India is to suggest that one ought to take group action to remedy one’s situation. To declare one’s group a minority is, therefore, a political act, in the Indian context, it is a way of calling attention to a situation of self-defined deprivation. (p.462)

When the word minority is used away from its initial context of parliamentary politics, and numerical calculations and starts being used to locate certain communities, or rather to dislocate them, then it is automatically burdened with cultural luggage. This in turn, over determines difference or otherness. Asserting otherness to fit some identities within a singular conception of nationalism is what Mehta (2004) calls “benchmarking identities”, which is considered a risk to minorities. Pandey (1999) makes a similar argument as he alludes to Asad:

To speak of cultural, ethnic or religious minorities is therefore to posit what Asad calls “ideological hybrids.” It is “to make the implicit claim that members of some cultures truly belong to a particular politically defined place, but those of others (minority cultures) do not-

either because of recency (immigrants) or of archaicness (aborigines).” Or, one might add, simply because of unspecified, but (as it is asserted) fundamental, “difference”-as in the case of the Indian Muslims. (p. 610)

It appears beneficial to employ Hasan's (2002) division of theories of nationalism into two categories: the instrumentalist and the primordial. The instrumentalist category regards nationalism as a product of elite manipulation and contends that nations can be either invented or fabricated. Primordial categories conceive nationalism as a direct process emerging from a “naturally given sense of nationhood” (Hasan, 2002, p.303). After acknowledging this predicament, we find ourselves faced by another difficulty on a micro level; how to theorize and research the ‘Muslim’ question and overcome traditionally Eurocentric approaches that tend to classify, categorize, polarize and exclude. Hasan (2002) responds by arguing that

Most academic exchanges involve a range of intellectual suppositions that still rest on the belief that Muslims are an exclusive category, with a shared world view, a common outlook, and a structure of consciousness in accord with the fundamental tenets of Islam. This approach underlines the primacy of culture and ideology, assigns a privileged place to Islam, and portrays the image of a community acting in unison. In other words, the emphasis is on a monolithic conception of Islamic ideology and practice or a teleology dictating the actions of the Muslims or a general acquiescence in the actions of a few. (Hasan, 2002, pp.303-304)

Hasan’s works revolve around three axioms. The first relates to negating that the birth of Pakistan was directly contingent upon an urge to carve out an Islamic society, based on Islamic ideals. The Muslim nation, in his opinion, was the result of political and economic ambitions of the upper and middle classes, especially landlords and professionals who bargained on a higher fortune in Pakistan. This was proven by their attachment to the League only after 1945 and not before. The second aspect criticizes the patronizingly nationalistic historiography. Accounts of the so-called ‘Nationalist Muslims’ were marginalized, and those including the Ahrars, the *Shia*, the Deobandi *‘ulama*, the Socialists, the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Momins, and other Muslims were pushed out of the imagery of the mainstream and locked in historical footnotes.³⁴ This was prominently because their opinions did not correspond to the monolithically static vision of the ‘Muslim’.

³⁴ The Ahrars was a political party in the 1930s comprised of the disillusioned Indian Muslims with the Khilafat movement. The Khudai Khidmatgars is an organization focusing on non-violent freedom struggle in the North-West Frontier formed of Pashtuns. The Momins is the alternative name for the Ansari Community in North India, historically known as the Julahas or the Muslim weavers.

Finally, Hasan contended that national borders were merely political constructs since most Indians, whether Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, had no solid image of a national border pre 1947. This was a point made by Pandey (2001) and stretched to the post-partition months as he mentioned an announcement in September 1947 concerning the recruitment of Muslims from Aligarh University to serve in the Pakistani Army (p.123).

After independence, there was a secularization process manifested through democratic processes, progressive social legislation, rapid industrialization, and a massive adult literacy campaign. This strengthened Muslim's alignment with the Congress. However, it did not run smoothly or problem free. Basically, from 1947 till 1962, this era could be characterized with a conviction that political mobilization along communitarian lines was a threat to security. Muslims opted to take advantage from the multi-party system by lending support to secular-oriented parties. As a result, the share of total votes polled by Muslim candidates rose from 65.41 per cent in 1952 to 75.20 per cent in 1962 (Hasan, 1996).

The second phase was from 1967-1980. The last phase of Indira Gandhi's rule witnessed unprecedented levels of religious fervor and sectarian feuds. With the rising tide of communalism and Hindu Muslim riots, the secularization process that had marked the independence struggle started fracturing:

The Congress was no longer at the head of a movement: it was turned overnight into a political party whose principal aim was to exercise control and dominance over the levers of power and authority. Devising electoral strategies became its prime concern, whilst populist slogans, radical rhetoric, and diffuse socio-economic policies were its answers to growing caste/class tensions and increased communal animosities. (Hasan, 1996, pp. 214-215)

Although most literature cites this relationship between Indian Muslims and Congress affiliation and takes it as granted, there is an aspect of sycophancy to it since first it is the better of two evils and second, it is argued that this affiliation is due to the lack of Muslim representation.

This led to another strategy initiated by Muslims and embodied in the formation of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat. This body (translated as the Muslim Consultative Committee) was founded in 1964 by bringing together various Muslim leaders ranging from Orthodox members of the Jamiat-ul-Ulama, to the revivalist Jamaati-Islami and some modernist Muslims who were either affiliated to Congress or not. Its aim was targeted to tactically deal with elections through the endorsement of the candidates who adhered to its position. However, due to strong party loyalty and majoritarian pressures, especially in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, this strategy failed (Quraishi, 1971;

Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987).

Finally, the third strategy of Muslim politics was of non-participation in the political process. Shahabuddin and Wright (1987) argue that a great portion of the Muslim community had rejected this strategy, whether they were in the Northern regions that had a long history of Muslim rule, or in the Southern regions that were not deeply affected by partition. Even with the attempt of some small yet prosperous business communities on the Western coast, like the Bohras, Khojas, Memons and Navayats, to adopt this strategy as a means of pressuring the government, their small numbers were deemed anyway ineffective in swaying election results.

3.6 The experience of Kerala

At 9 a.m. Kunhi Qadir led an estimated 3,000 Māppilas from the Tanur area toward Tirurangadi. Some wore the Turkish fez with crescent, others had Gandhi caps, and a few carried flags, one of which had inscribed on it in Arabic:

*God is Great The Khilafat
Go to combat light-mindedly and slowly
and you will certainly succeed and God
will be with you³⁵*

The omission of the non-Urdu Muslim heritage of South India poses serious difficulty to a non-essentialist analysis of community's perspectives on nationalism and partition narratives. Putting in mind the meager number of emigrants to the newly founded Pakistan, and thus the unattractiveness of the idea of partition is the empirical finding on the community's perspective. Thus as a way out of this analytical shortcoming, the stress on North Indian 'ulama's opinions was utilized to comprehend the anti-thesis of Muslim nationalism. The difference in the historical memory and the detachment of Southern Indians from the North and Centre compelled the partition narrative to occupy a humble position in South Indian literature. Perhaps it could be argued that the English language, as a medium of Knowledge, did not hegemonize cultural production in South India and thus a lot of literature is inaccessible to non-Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, or Kannada speakers. Bibliographical search in the state of Kerala has shown that historical literature on the 'Muslim' subject is monopolized by investigations in pre-modern ties with the Arab World, the Malabar Rebellion of the 1920s and the independence struggle. Almost no literature exists on partition

³⁵ Quoted in Dale, 1980, p. 196, from Hitchcock, 1921, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion*.

narratives, apart from those dealing with the quest for Mappilastan or Moplastan.³⁶

The modern history of rural Malabar (what is known today as Northern Kerala) witnessed significant events starting with Mappila outbreaks in the nineteenth century, followed by the Khilafat Movement, the Malabar rebellion in 1921-1922, the call for Moplastan, and the emergence of Muslim League politics that culminated in the establishment of Malappuram district in 1969. The common thread about these incidents is the employment of Islamic identity as a motivating or inciting factor for political action. Panikkar (1989) notes that collective action is, interestingly, an attribute exclusive to the Muslim community and not other communities of Malabar.

The starting point is *jihād*, as the Mappilas called their struggle against first the Portuguese then the British and the Hindu upper-caste landlords. What the Mappilas termed as jihādist activities against social and economic power of the upper-castes, as well as the political authority of the British, was called by the British as the 'Outrages'. The translation of discontent into organized collective action within a religious outline that served as a motivating framework is a perplexing issue to analyze due to the absence of concrete goals. To the Mappilas, it was an attempt to counter injustice and inequality, in pursuit for an ideal after-life or in other terms, paradise. The influence of popular culture, the nature of Islamic belief system, the history of its spreading in Kerala, and the role of the traditional leaders of that society were all factors that shaped the process of political socialization of Mappilas and impacted the outcome of their outbreaks (Panikkar, 1989). These outbreaks amounted to thirty-two incidents and took place between 1936 and 1921-2 culminating in the Malabar Rebellion. Nearly all of them occurred in the areas of Ernad and Walavanad (Dale, 1980).

These outbreaks were mainly acts of murder of upper-caste Hindu landlords who were aligning with the British and causing further oppression to the peasants and land tenants. This resort to violence should not be detached from the long history of violent collision between the British and the state-land lord collaboration and the Mappila tenants. The violent methods of struggles were to a great extent a part of the Mappila cultural political life (Muhammedali, 2004). These struggles were known as the *Moplah* outbreaks and were characterized by the ritualization of martyrdom. The participant would wear a white robe, divorce his wife, settle all accounts and after receiving the blessings of a *Thangal* (an upper class Mappila) would head for his mission and would be considered a martyr (Poonthala, 2004). The *Thangals* and the religious leaders or the *Imams*

³⁶ Mappila or Moplah is the term for Muslim Malayalees from the Malabar Coast or Northern Kerala now.

(*Musliyārs*) gave the blessings that had arisen to claim the power vacuum that resulted after the arrest of Congress leaders affiliated to the non-cooperation movement.

In 1919, the Khilafat Movement provided an opportunity for Indian Muslims to adopt a Pan-Indian identity that was further enhanced by the non-cooperation movement, which established a strong foothold for Congress in Malabar. The feeling that the British posed a formidable threat to Islam fuelled the zeal of the Khilafat movement. The movement also found relevance in the psyche of the Mappila community since to them the British assault on the Ottoman Caliph was a reminiscent of the Portuguese and the British assault on the Muslims of India.

The Khilafat movement was culminated in the Malabar Rebellion in 1921-2 in the southern part of Malabar district. Although the rebellion has been utilized by historians, through Marxist and nationalist lenses, as a quintessential example of peasant rebellion (Panikkar, 1989; Wood, 1987), Dale (1980) in his study on the Mappilas of Malabar, argues counter to this. To him the rebellion, although occurring within the context of the Indian nationalist movement, was actually neither a modern nor a typical peasant revolt. Rather, it was an 'archaic form of protest' with no political vision or goal for the future. It had to do more about resuscitating Indian Islam than about Indian freedom. Later on the ideology of the rebellion was actually made into becoming the goal. The result was the aspiration to establish an Islamic state. The rebellion was mainly carried out by the rural poor who included labourers, cultivators, traders, and a few religious teachers. It resulted in the murder of British officials and non-officials, the destruction of police and government offices, and plundering the property of Hindu upper-caste landlords. The rebellion witnessed a huge involvement of the Mappila population, since apart from the official figure of around 3,000 rebels who were killed, around 87,000 were involved in the rebellion (Wood, 1987, p.203).

Simultaneously with the Partition discourse evolving in the North Indian Context, the Muslim community in Malabar witnessed a call to the creation of Mappilastan (the country of the Mappilas). The idea was to establish a Muslim-majority province in South India within the Indian Union and was first put forward in the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1947 (Miller, 1976).

There are two main factors behind the elaboration of such an idea. The first was the conception of difference in the culture of Muslims from their Hindu counterparts. Although they spoke the same language, Mappilas differed in dress, food and philosophy of life. The evolution of a different identity also came as a quest for independence from Hindu dominance. The second factor was the backwardness of Muslims, and especially of the Malabar region, thus it was thought that if Mappilas were given a province or a federal state of their own, they would have better opportunities

for development and growth void of competition with the fellow countrymen.³⁷ After the Malabar rebellion, the British had retaliated against the Muslim community by discrimination in the recruitment to revenue, judicial, and police posts (Panikkar, 1989). Although the Mappilastan proposal was repealed, it remained on the political agenda of Muslims.

In 1951, the Indian Union Muslim League was formed as a full-fledged political party. Several factors led to the shift of Mappilas to this party away from the Congress. First, the Congress was assumed to be an upper-caste Hindu-oriented and elitist party (Miller, 1976). Second, the post 1921 rebellion circumstances that resulted in Mappila suppression showed the inability of Congress to support their cause legally or materially or protect them from the punishment of the British. Third, the formation of the Aikya Sanghom in 1922 (an organization for Muslim unity aimed primarily at social and educational reforms and thus the upliftment of the community) had fostered the creation of an awareness of a sense of community. The backing of certain candidates by this organization, especially of a class of upper class Mappilas, was a trend that was soon accepted by the masses (Gangadharan, 1996).

The evolution of a reverse looking and closed society among the Mappilas was caused due to fear and frustration in the post-rebellion period of the early 1920s. By the 1930s, Muslim separatism appeared as a political solution to their social and economic miseries. It was the English, with their policy of ‘divide and rule’, who were the first visionaries of a separate Muslim state in India. As a strategic solution, the concept of Mappilastan was materialized in 1969 when Malappuram was formed as a revenue district with a majority of Muslims. The political role of the Indian Union Muslim League managed to forge multiple political alliances and thus obtain a share in the governance process. The League allied with various reactionary groups like church-oriented Christians, caste-oriented Nairs, and anti-communist communalists. This led eventually to “think in a different dimension of separative and vertical solidarity” (Kurup & Ismail, 2008, p. 223). Any notion of communal consciousness in Kerala should be contested because Muslim League won only one seat in the Lok Sabha in 1957, and two seats in 1962 (Hasan, 1997).

The example of Kerala is significant to show how, on the one hand, demands that seemed communal were integrated successfully in the federal organizational structure of the Indian state, and on the other hand, the Keralite public sphere was transformed. The acquisition of religious leadership of stronger roles in the public space of Malabar was coupled with the establishment and

³⁷ These were the ideas presented by Muhammad Ismail and Seethi Sahib, two of the nationalist figures of freedom struggle in Malabar, India. Miller (1976) quoted them in his book, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala*.

systemization of religious practices within an institutional structure. *Jihād* against the British was turned into *jihād* for spiritual purification. This was especially manifested with the advent of the Aikya Sanghom. Earlier, the Mappila community shared cultural and religious rituals that gave them the sense of a unified community. The *mala* and *moulid* (praising of prophet, sufis and martyrs) recitation in madrasas and mosques and the consequent growth of Arabi-Malayalam literature created alternative public spaces in which their identity-related activities were legitimized (Poonthala, 2004).

3.7 Summary

It is argued that Muslims are the only group in India who had the choice to leave or stay, and hence to opt for or reject the Indian citizenship status. This chapter, therefore, briefly demonstrated the historical context in which Muslims found themselves during the call for partition. The role of Indian *'ulama* as motivators for choosing the secular democratic option versus the promised Islamic regime was a fascinating historical precedent that India set in global history. The choice of this case necessitated a quick presentation of the ideas of Maulana Azad and Madani as two examples of these *'ulama* who supported the case for not migrating to Pakistan. Is it possible to confer here that this decision was considered a compromise made by the Muslims? By a compromise, I mean the consent from the beginning of the Indian independence to start a new phase of governance, where their acceptance of a secular identity as Indian citizens became an obligation, then, gradually, their perception of rights stood still, but unfulfilled (evident in the dilemma of Urdu, education, incursions of Hindu violence, national anthem, and history books). This is a question that would be dealt with throughout this thesis.

With this, India clearly stands remote from other studies pertaining to Muslim minorities. Contemporary literature shows us the trend of ghettoization and formation of parallel societies (For example, Alcoff, 2006; Alejandro, 1998; Appadurai, 2006; Benhabib et al., 1996; Jonker & Amiraux, 2006; Kabeer, 2002; Mabry, 2007; Mouffe et al., 1992). Thus, one of the most common ways in dealing with the reality of being a minority is creating enclaves as a strategy. The religious scholar, Al-Qaradawy (2001), for example, urges Muslim minorities to create their own micro-societies within the national fabric of the non-Muslim-majority societies where they live. This implies the creation of their *'own'* educational, religious, cultural, and social institutions. He does not call for ghettoization or isolation, but openness without assimilation; in his words, this is the openness of an active preacher, not of a surrendering imitator. Despite how complicated this sounds to be, Indian Muslims have gone a step further in showing multiple ways of living as a *'citizen'*

minority. This chapter demonstrated these various ways of accommodating their new political identity.

As this dissertation deals with a comparative study of North India and Kerala, Kerala's entirely different historical background could not have been omitted from the study. Despite the fact that partition did not play any significant role in Kerala's recent political history, a short reference to the general historical context of nationalist politics in Kerala had to be introduced notwithstanding the vast multitudes of the topic. To conclude, the main emphasis remained to witness how the practice of *jihād* was forged along different regional and historical experience, interestingly intertwined with a nationalist cause, where a religious tool and objective became mingled with a pragmatically political one.

IV. The Life-Space Context and Hegemonic Discourses

Let us grant that our culture is of a wide variety and many colours. Every place has its own attractive characteristics whether it be the Kashmiri shawls, the Banarsi saris, the Hyderabad jamewar (which alas! one can no longer get); or the muslin of Dhaka, chikan of Lucknow or silk of Mysore. But consider too that there are some threads in the motif of this culture which are common. Khayal, raga darbari, thumri and dada transcend the frontiers of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and are heard in every part of the subcontinent. The ghazals which Iqbal Bano sings or the songs of Lata Mangeshkar are all based on the raags which, for thousands of years, have resounded in the gardens and markets of our country. When the cry goes up in the darbar of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti:

Khwaja pia, mori rang de chundaria

aur rang bhi chaukhe aaye

dhubayya dhoye sari umarya

Beloved Khwaja dye my stole, and let the colour

be so bright and fast,

Even though the washer-woman washes it

all her life

- Nasim Ansari. (1999). Choosing to stay: Memoirs of an Indian Muslim³⁸

In the previous chapter, I introduced the historical setting in which Indian Muslims were both self-situated and were forcefully located. As it is well known, the transition of postcolonial India into a secular democratic state was stained with unprecedented violence and mass-movement. The subsequent Hindu-Muslim riots that were witnessed mainly in Northern and Eastern India throughout the years tainted the socio-political fabric of the body of Indian citizenry and to a substantial extent also led to a specific political culture in which state-society and community-to-community relations were shaped in a unique manner. This chapter will tackle these relations by first demonstrating the nature of the political subcultures of postcolonial Indian citizenry and by

³⁸ Ansari, N. (1999). *Choosing to stay: Memoirs of an Indian Muslim*. (R. Russell, Trans.), pp. 88-89.

briefly looking at the ways Muslims are engaged in politics in India. Second, a frame of reference to the current life-space of Muslims in India would be expounded through portraying the conditions as ‘hegemonic discourses’ governing the lives of Indian Muslims. These hegemonic discourses are not independent of each other; rather they are interrelated and correlated. Finally, this section will overcome the review of the predicaments of Indian Muslims through presenting their counter-discourses to these narratives, through both reflection and action.

By discourse, I borrow Foucault’s definition of it as not only about signs or language, but also practices that form the objects of which they speak. A discourse creates a ‘space of multiple dissensions’ (Foucault, 1969/2009). Political discourses and ‘languages’ are argued to be embedded in social structures and power relations. Gooptu’s (2001) study on the urban poor in India, which emphasized the plural interpretations and contested meanings given by the poor to the political discourses they shared with or even derived from the elites carry this implication:

Social experience does not directly translate into political action but the nature and form of the latter are mediated through various ideologies and languages or discourses of politics which help to order, interrogate and understand social experiences. [...] Prevalent discursive practices thus influence the nature of engagement in political action. [...] The poor hardly ever adopt the political discourses of the elite without modification; they interpret and deploy them in the light of their own social contexts, traditions and histories. (Gooptu, 2001, p. 10)

As we are talking about political discourses, this in turn leads us to relations of power and contentious politics of domination. There is a continual process of mixing between the hidden and the obvious, and mixing between what is prevalent and what is hidden or intentionally hidden from the discourse. As Scott (1990) argues

Relations of domination are, at the same time, relations of resistance. Once established, domination does not persist of its own momentum. Inasmuch as it involves the use of power to extract work, production, services, taxes against the will of the dominated, it generates considerable friction and can be sustained only by continuous efforts at reinforcement, maintenance and adjustment. A good part of the maintenance work consists of the symbolization of domination by demonstrations and enactments of power. (p. 45)

Scott (1990) holds the generalization, “the greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinate and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinates will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast” (p. 3). Scott then presents us with the idea of hidden

versus public transcripts. With hidden transcripts he means the discourses that take place away from the direct observation of the power holder and could consist of elements such as speeches, gestures or practices that aim at contradicting public transcripts. According to him, there are three features of hidden transcripts that appear dominant. The first is the specificity of hidden transcripts to given social sites and to certain actors. Second, hidden transcripts are not limited to speeches but to a wide range of other practices such as poaching enacted by peasants, for example. The third feature is the changing capacity of the dominant power holders in defining the boundaries between hidden and public transcripts.

Scott identifies four forms of political discourses among the subordinates utilized by them as a counter-hegemonic tool: the public flattering of elites, the hidden transcript itself where the elaboration of a counter political culture takes place, the coded double-meaning politics of disguise evident through rumours, jokes, songs and rituals and finally, the transformation of the hidden into public through the intentional rupture in the distinction.

Throughout this chapter I would be locating the sites in which the dominant discourse is prevalent, and in the coming chapters, I will show the spaces of contention where there are counter-discourses and where, in Daechsel's (2006) words "the politics of self-expression had to 'outflank' the world of the everyday by creating alternative spaces" (Daechsel, 2006, p. 128).

The idea of space is inherently important for this study. By space, I do not necessarily mean physical or material space, but the scope of opportunities granted to the subject, or in other words mental space. Madanipour (1998) defines mental space as "our perception of space, which may be regulated through codes or signs, preventing us from entering some spaces through outright warning or more subtle deterrents. Mental space could also be controlled through our fears and perceptions of activities in places" or through social control (p. 162). Usually mental or even social space gets translated into physical space (Bourdieu & et al., 1993). The significance of space is evident in urban settings where it plays a strong role in integration of groups. From a modernist perspective, spaces get their importance not only from the characteristic of urbanness, but more significantly when they become public and act as a venue where people are enabled to engage in certain activities, but are still expected to follow the dominant norms and codes of behaviour (Watson, 1996, p. 202). In social constructivist logic, the context of power and domination is the sphere where ambivalent and ruptured politics of culture and identity take place (Werbner, 1997). In Daechsel's (2006) study of the Urdu speaking middle class of the twentieth century India, space appears as a discursive entity in which arguments are constructed and delivered socially. As

Daechsel phrases it, “it was only after the politics of self-expression had conquered and secured these crucial realms of thought and life, that it could be regarded as the only self-evident form of politics” (Daechsel, 2006, p. 129).

While I do not intend to utilize space as an analytical category, it seems imperative to mention two of the most celebrated authors on space: Henri Lefebvre and Homi Bhabha. To Lefebvre, space is a determinant of social relations. In his renowned work, *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre talks of three general instances of space production: *le perçu* or the perceived empirical spatial practice; *le conçu* that is the conceived and conceptual representation of space, and *le vécu* or the representational space which is lived and in which the conceptual is incarnated and thus mediated and made effective in the concrete; this space obtains its significance from its symbolic use of the objects of physical space. Lefebvre stresses how space not only serves as a tool of action, but also as a means of production, social control and domination (Lefebvre, 1991). Bhabha’s work *The Location of Culture* presents an idea of a third space which locates cultures of hybrid communities and represents “both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 53) through which hegemonic discourses could be born out (Papoulias, 2011).

It would also seem appropriate as a conceptual tool to borrow Gupta’s reference to Jacques Lacan’s theoretical apparatus: the correlative space and imago. According to Gupta (2007), Lacan (1977) argues that a person’s identity must be complemented by a sense of correlative space and hence an urge to project an image of the self which is in perfect concinnity with its surroundings. Lacan uses the ancient term *imago* to dramatically capture the essence of what it meant to be misrecognized and then have to reconfigure a suitable correlative space that would give solace to the hurt identity (p. 40).³⁹

Sites, as spaces for the emergence of public and hidden transcripts, differ. Whereas the public transcript appears most evidently in the intended encounter with the subordinates, either through public meetings, political party campaigns, police encounters, or media, the hidden transcripts usually appear in different contexts. Scott (1990) demonstrates examples of traditional European sites of hidden transcripts to be in the pub, the tavern, the inn, the cabaret, which are also seen as sites of subversion and transmission of popular culture. Throughout this dissertation, I would be

³⁹ Gupta (2007) refers to Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits: A Selection*. London: Tavistock.

tracing specific sites of the appearance of these political discourses. Unlike the European example, this case study of a religious community include sites such as the university, the Islamic associations, the mosque, the press and media especially the vernacular.

4.1 Political subcultures and impediments to Muslim politics

It is a shame that Muslim leaders managed to agitate thousands of Muslims over a mosque that is no longer in use, while at the same time, it is hard to fill one line with men in many mosques in UP during namaz time.

- A Muslim barber from UP commenting on the Babri Masjid issue, October 2010.

Muslims in India constitute around 13.4% of the Indian population (Census of India, 2001); this makes them the second biggest religious community in India after the Hindus. In fact, the nature of social reality in India is incredibly fragmented, to the extent that even the categorization of Hindus as a single religious community has been contested on the basis of the radical differences in castes and practices, which called for a sense of quantitative insecurity among some Hindu groups. Indian Muslims in turn are also comprised of different groups, and their homogeneity is greatly contested. It is thus hard to define who an Indian Muslim is, since not just demographic and regional differences but also caste issues divide them into separate communities. For example, the Southwestern state of Kerala had long-term ties with Arab countries, and the Keralites continue to migrate in large numbers, where they find ample job opportunities in the Gulf countries. They speak Malayalam, and their diet and dress code resembles their Hindu counterparts to a great extent. Muslims are a majority in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, but they have a dominant Kashmiri identity, and do not necessarily identify themselves with the rest of Indian Muslims. In the Hindi-Speaking region where the two-nation theory was developed and attained support, around 64% of Muslims consider Urdu as their mother language in addition to Hindi (Weiner, 1997). In Bengal, Muslims speak Bengali and share a lot of traditions with Hindus that are even considered non-Islamic by a lot of other Muslim communities in India and elsewhere. In Andhra Pradesh, Muslims lived under Muslim rule until 1947 and are overwhelmingly Urdu-speaking (91%). Politically, especially in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, Muslims formed their own confessional parties, while North Indian Muslims have frequently participated in mainstream political parties (ibid) and mainly showed support to Congress. Eventually, it seems appropriate to borrow Metcalf's (1996) argument that Muslims are Muslims in the sense that "they are people who, across time and place, engage with what Talal Asad (1986) calls 'a discursive tradition' created by interaction with sacred texts and with the history of interaction" (p. 4).

Hasan (1997) cites the Orientalist and Hindi propagandist writings on Muslims that are guided by the proposition of Islam as a complete reference for Muslims in terms of identity and moral codes. These writings assume that, as a result of a profound attachment of Muslims to the '*ulama* and orthodox Islam, the Muslim community typically resists a secular and democratic order of society and politics. Or in other words: "The totalitarian character of the faith seemed to imply that only a totalitarian state could put its dogmas into practice" (Hasan, 1997, p. 19). To the contrary of this assumption, Indian Muslims life-spaces are dictated by multiples series of oppressions; caste, class, gender, and religion. Sikand points out the opinion of several Muslim scholars like Asghar Ali Engineer who shows how traditional understandings of religion are a part of the problem rather than the solution. These have been formulated by dominant groups to justify their own interests, to preserve the status quo, and to justify these multiple oppressions (Sikand Y., 2004b).

Two strands of discourses appear when we raise the Muslim question in India. The first is related to the minority position and the second to the issue of religiosity or 'Islamic-ness.' Whereas development-concerned secular activists mark the first discourse, Islamists on the other hand, outline the second and fight for issues of education, power and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). As I have previously mentioned, although most secular intellectuals employ the term minority in writing about Indian Muslims and their predicaments, Islamic scholars, especially in their Urdu writings, use the word community instead of minority. It is noteworthy to comment on the role played by the concept of community as a shaper of social and collective identity. However, before going into this, I would like to refer to the definition of a minority mentality, as juxtaposed to that of the majority. Haniff (1983) argues that the minority mentality could be broken into a feeling of non-secularism or communalism, and to the idea of survival, which is in turn linked to a sense of economic discrimination. This sentiment of being discriminated against is accompanied by a perception of minimal access to power, resulting hypothetically or empirically from minimal participation in society especially problem solving in one's own community. All this leads to hopelessness and low expectations of success and efficiency in society. As for the majority mentality, it comes from a feeling of being legitimate members of society who have open access to power as induced from increased participation in society and an increased problem-solving activity. Not only are there spaces of contention where the sense of majorityness and minorityness oscillates, but also the self-perception of agents in these processes is crucial to the understanding of politics of power and citizenship in India. Interestingly, within the Muslim community there are some voices criticizing the persistent representation of the community in both a homogenously holistic manner and a victimized fashion. Mushirul Hasan is one of these prominent voices who call for the

deconstruction of “the language of minorityism and uncover[ing] the motives of those practitioners of modern-day politics who purported to represent the *millat*, or the ‘community’ as a whole, but were actually exploiting Islam and communitarian solidarity as a shield to cover their political designs” (Hasan, 1997, p. 51).⁴⁰ On the other hand, as I would be showing in a coming section, despite structural predicaments that the community faces, there are counter forces trying to portray them as unmerited recipients of excessive state benefits who employ the minority card.

The study of the Muslim question in India is too complicated since it should be ideally addressed on different analytical levels: the local (village or town), the district, the state, the region, and the country levels. In each, there is a variation in the democratic composition, a difference in the nature of socio-political significance, and specificity of the situation or the problem (Engineer A. A., 1985). If we add the class level to these analyses, the difference in the discourses governing the lives of upper, middle and lower classes will be apparent. Between the two discourses lies the common man or woman who struggles through the construction of the majority setting to overcome the minority problem on the one hand, and simultaneously on the other hand conserves the aspect of Islamic-ness. As the Indian Human Development Survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCEAR) revealed that 31% of Indian Muslims live below the poverty line (Babu, 2010), a prompt problem arises once the ordinary Muslim is defined. There is an apparent problematique of opposing him/her and their problems to the bourgeois Middle class Muslims and their issues.

It remains difficult to define what the ‘common man’ necessarily implies, but I am endorsing a minimal attempt of defining what he/she is not, by excluding the elite and expert aspect. This means I am using the ‘*ām ādmi* or the *janta* perspective.’⁴¹ Paradoxically, few studies have been targeted to the focus and the definition of the ‘common man’. Friedrich (1945), the political theorist who held influential theses on democracy and totalitarianism, wrote on the significance of the common man in the American context and summarized the characteristics of the common man as rationality, fallibility, collectivity and common judgments. However, the common man is “constantly and increasingly exposed to the risk of becoming an undesirable citizen in the eyes of the votaries of law and order” (Veblen, quoted in Friedrich, 1945, p. 121). The common man constitutes an

⁴⁰ For more detailed reference to the history of North Indian Muslims, see: Hasan, M. 1997; 2002; 2008. For a brief description on the different groups see: Alam, A. (2009).

⁴¹ ‘*ām ādmi* is the hindustani and Urdu word for ‘common man’ it is derived from the Arabic words public (‘*ām*) and human being (*ādmi*). *Janta* is the Hindi equivalent and refers to ‘the public.’

integral part of the community. The community in its turn is an indispensable conceptual tool when analyzing the issues of Muslim politics in India.

While interviewing *'ulama* and looking through the works in Urdu, I found that the term minority rarely appears, whereas the most common way of talking about Muslims is through the word community or its Urdu equivalent *brādry*. To briefly examine the significant role played by the concept of community in Indian politics, it should be stated that community is considered a fundamental category like caste, religion and village.

The treatment of 'community' within Indian sociology has been traditionally assumed a substantive character. It could be argued that communities act as collective personalities with enormous powers of policing individual's personal behaviour and morality (Alam, 2004, pp. 77-80). Upadhyaya (2001) reviewed the works of Kaviraj (1992), Appadurai (1994), Cohn (1968; 1987), Dirks (1997), Pant (1987), Dipesh Chakrabarty (1995), and Partha Chatterjee (1998) who share the opinion that caste and community were invented under colonialism by the operation of certain political and discursive processes. The construction of a sense of identity that is embedded in a community and ethnicity started with the enumeration and categorization of subjects, as a means of control of the modern colonial and bureaucratic rule. Colonial ethnography also emphasized the category of caste and how these discursive formations extended to the public sphere where people participated collectively along these lines. Some scholars combine the substantive with the constructivist arguments in order to overcome the problem of agency of the colonized and power as an attribute of human relations (Upadhyaya, 2001, pp. 39-47). This construction of a sense of identity was intricately linked with the political argument of belonging that was raised along the partition narratives and led to the necessitation of the idea of the natural citizen and the disciplining of difference (Pandey, 2004):

To present an argument about *belonging* as a political argument would be to concede that the nation was a political project, first and foremost, and to acknowledge its historicity. The progress of the nation could not mean exactly the same thing to all parts of that imagined community. To acknowledge this, however, would be to foreground the questions of political power and to what end that power should be used-which in turn would defeat the nationalist claim that the nation was a natural moral community. (*ibid*, p. 160)

Pandey (1999) also argued that as a result of the history of Hindu-Muslim political differences and the role the British played in dividing the political orientations of both sides, discourses on Muslims in India tended to divide those who were political active into categories such as either the

Nationalist Muslim or the Muslim, instead of the logically Muslim Nationalist or Secular Nationalist, contrary to other communities in India (pp. 609-610):

All Muslims were, however, Muslims. And the matter of political inactivity or inertia made little difference in this instance. Some Muslims were advocates of "Indian nationalism, and hence "Nationalist Muslims." The remainder of that community, however, in town and country, north and south, handloom workshop or building site, modest hut or railway quarters-were not likely to be supporters of Indian nationalism on account of their being Muslim. (*ibid*, p. 610)

Three significant changes happened within the internal composition of communities in India, as Alam (2004) argues. The first relates to the impact of colonial rule and the decoupling of the close connection between ritual status and occupational position within caste groups. The second change was the breakdown of the internal harmony of Indian society as evident in the coexistence of small communities. Finally, the formation of the neo-middle classes to which the socially and educationally backward classes (known as OBCs) and Dalits joined and their shifting political allegiance to the political Hindu Right wing was a substantial move towards the establishment of a communal mentality. Consequently, the existence of organizations of a special nature such as the Shiv Sena or the Muslim Personal Law Board was justified, as it will be introduced in a coming section of this chapter (4.4.1). Leaders of the community have been perpetually criticized of lacking self-introspection by raising issues that had little to do with Muslims day-to-day existence. The elites of these organizations exerted continuous efforts for the fulfillment of narrow interests. Hence, the communal mentality was based on the belief in the zero-sum game (such as the *Shah Bano* case, the incident of the *Babri Masjid* demolishment and the verdict of *Ayodhya*) on the one hand. On the other hand, it treated individual gain as having benefited the whole community (examples include elections, assassinations, girl teasing, and marriage). Eventually, this led to a rise in anti-social elements; as professional criminals got respectable place in communal camps such as the slum leaders and the rioters (Banu, 1998).

This communal mentality was logically the precursor of communalism and communal violence in India. On different levels, there is a witnessed continuity of factors responsible for communal violence in the partition and post-partition phases in India. On the macro level, these factors were embodied in the problems of modernization, social change and socio-economic development within a democratic context— hence resulting in politics of riots (appeasement), an example of which was Indira Gandhi's electoral politics (the turn to the right Hindu vote bank in 1980). On the micro

level, there were factors such as urban settings and growth where the rich migrated from old parts of the city to the suburbs, where factors conducive to communal violence do not exist, and where the communal and caste structures are different— like the mixed populations in labour areas as in Ahmedabad in Gujarat. In addition to this, there is police role, media-triggered havoc and liquor kings providing illicit liquor and supply to the working classes (Engineer A. A., 1987).

To contain the economic disparities between regions and social groups, the ruling elites have politically manipulated one community against another and used coercive force; thus, producing over a period of time insecurity among people with cultural or religious and ethnic identities different from those of ruling elites. The protective response was therefore of the local elites engaging in a selective mobilization of linguistic, ethnic and religious characteristics to create a militant subnational identity. This is what Raja & Hussein (1987) termed aggressive intolerance embodied in the reaction of wearing “the psychic clothing of the oppressor” (p. 21).

Mahajan (2005) points out two different ways through which a minority could be disadvantaged with a nation-state: first through policies of cultural homogenization and non-recognition of difference, and second through systematic misrecognition and selective targeting of a community and its members. What happened in India through the constitutional and legal framework was an attempt to a curtailment of the former way. However, the second means is still evident through the media, as it would be shown in a coming section [4.3.1] (for example, the *fatwa* concerning women’s work and how it was misportrayed by the media).⁴² Negative stereotyping is increasing, not just by the media but also by political groups who are indeed or potentially affiliated with the government. In addition to this sense of anxiety resulting from such policies, religious minorities in India suffer from potential physical threats through the eruption of communal violence in which the state has proved to be either complicit or a spectator.

To study this mentality and how far it is an integral part of the self-perception of the community, one could consider the concept of the life-space, and how it is translated into the reality of Muslims’ lives in India. The concept of ‘life-space’ was utilized by Lewin (1951) who emphasized studying the behavior of an individual derived from the psychological facts that exist in his/her life-space at a

⁴² In 2010, Darul Uloom Deoband -the biggest Muslim Seminary in India- issued a *fatwa* (edict) condemning women’s work. This has received wide coverage by the English media and led to a sense of frustration among Muslims since the media usually neglect many of their more pertinent issues, yet widely focuses on a non-essential personal *fatwa*. For details of the fatwa, see: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-05-12/india/28280924_1_fatwa-muslim-women-darul-uloom-deoband

given moment (cited in Qamar Hasan).⁴³ Several incidents are considered landmarks in the life-space of Indian Muslims. The first was the moment of partition in 1947 and the consequent migration and fear concerning life and property. The resulting Constitution guaranteeing Muslims equal legal status as citizens of India was a major step that permanently affected the lives of Muslims. In the same year, however, the process of the displacement of the Urdu language commenced. The next historical point was the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war and the communal violence in Jabalpur, Ahmedabad and other places. In 1971, Bangladesh attained its independence from Pakistan and hence the myth that religion is a key element in defining nationalism had exploded. In the subsequent years, India witnessed a series of riots, most notably in Aligarh between 1978 and 1982, in Moradabad in 1987 and in Meerut in 1987 where the complicity of the police was a notable factor.

The conversion of the Harijans in Tamil Nadu in 1981 was another landmark, followed by the famous Shah Bano case of 1986 when a sixty-two-year-old woman sought court to demand maintenance from her divorcee. Being Indian, the Supreme Court granted her the right to maintenance from her ex-husband under the Criminal Procedure Code. As the Supreme Court invoked the need for uniform civil code and made some controversial remarks on *shari'ah*, significant groups of Muslim leaders and organizations treated this issue as an attack on Islam and initiated campaigns challenging the judgment. Parliament, under Rajiv Gandhi's, rule passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986, which limited women's maintenance to their four-month period. Another incident in 1988 spurred lots of attention concerning identity politics: The ban on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in which the decision of the state to ban the book violated the principle of freedom of expression in order to listen to the demands of Muslim organizations. The same logic was ironically used by Hindu nationalists in their attack on Babri Masjid (An-Na'im, 2008). The Babri Masjid demolition of 1992 was one of the watersheds that transformed the way Muslims perceive their citizenship in India. Later in 2002, the Gujarat carnage added to the fissured psyche of the community. Such incidents make it almost unmanageable to generate generalizations regarding the life-space of Indian Muslims and hence the political culture of the state and the political subcultures they bear. However, several remarks have to be made in this regard.

⁴³ Lewin, K. (1951). *Field Theory in Social Sciences*. In D. Cartwright (Ed.) *Selected Theoretical Papers*. New York: Harper & Row.

There is an inherent democratic puzzle in India that resulted from the classical belief that the survival of democracy is negatively related to the persistence of poverty, illiteracy, oppression and related features. However, India is incomparably high in every one of these indices. These societal sections suffering from these problems have undeniably become the important supportive actors in the sustenance of democracy, albeit producing also the phenomenon of ‘collective unfreedom’ as Alam (2001) calls it.

India presents a model in the developing world of a moderate statehood. What is unique about India is the inheritance of a hybrid political culture that joined the earlier pre-modern humanistic traditions and Western political values that came to India in a dynamic way. Thus, freedom and democracy, national self-determination, equality, and social justice were all terms that were translated in the Gandhian concept of *swaraj* and in the postcolonial stage. The result was a tradition of social pluralism, differing from the traditional European idea of political pluralism (Kothari, 2000).

Oommen (1995), in outlining the nature of state-society relationships in India, contends that they are not governed by any of the traditional models of governance as pointed out by Worsley (1984): the hegemonic, the uniform, and the pluralist. Oommen argues that these relationships patterns lie somewhere between the hegemonic and the pluralist models. Though the state operates according to a democratic setting, there is a witnessed state of oppression to several sections in society. Responses to oppression differ according to the conditions and contexts of operation. The first set of responses revolves around the practice of self-enclosure, which is considered a response to failure. The oppressed here limits his/her ambitions, holds on to traditions and escapes to the past. Another strategy is to take the group as a shelter and to assimilate in it.

A second type of responses translates in imitating the oppressor. A noted observation in postcolonial societies responds to the Khaldunian logic⁴⁴ that the oppressed copies the oppressors is manifested in the postcolonial societies wishing to copy their masters, and this explains the adoration for democracy. However, India poses an exception to other postcolonial states that failed in or severely grappled with their democratization process because India succeeded in sustaining the democratic constitution it had from the beginning, and it nurtured among the subjects of the state a

⁴⁴ Ibn Khaldun in his fourteenth-century *Al-Muqaddimah* (The Introduction) wrote that the “The vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive mark(s), his dress, his occupation, and all his other conditions and customs.” See: Ibn Khaldun, (1981). *The Muqadimmah, an Introduction to History*, (F. Rosenthal, Trans.). Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Original work written in 1427). Retrieved from: http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ik/Muqaddimah/Chapter2/Ch_2_22.htm

sense of citizenship that allocated the constitution a sacred place. In Mitra's (1990) words: "The national aspiration for a strong, unified state, ironically mimicking that of the colonial power, lay beneath the struggle for independence" (Mitra S. K., 1990, p. 1). On a societal level, Pandian (1997) remarks, "The dominant reality has been one of the subaltern classes accepting the hegemony of the elite through such processes like deference to the elites and emulation of elite values" (p. 367). Higazy (2005) refers to additional responses to oppression manifested in an illusionary sense of control over destiny and violent attitudes.

The reference to domination and oppression is clearly reflected in the subaltern studies field, which is considerably limited to historical studies, though there is growing literature on contemporary issues. Gooptu's (2001) study of the urban poor, for example, concerns their changing experience of power, subordination, dominance and social control; their experience of the state and governance; and the social and economic roles in which they are involved. She demonstrates how social identities were constituted through political practice. These identities are shaped by and forged through processes of political action and 'power plays.' In her words, "politics are not conceived in narrow terms, limited either to institutions, organizations and state structures or to overt 'political' acts and agitations, but are taken to include cultural, ritual and religious innovations" (p. 19). One considerable analytical concern is how to avoid essentializing the nature of the consciousness of the poor. This is most called for since Subaltern studies ascribe inherently oppositional and resistant, even insurgent mentality or consciousness to the subaltern classes. The role of common sense here is significant, especially when the 'social common sense' becomes opposing to a certain group of people. The human rights activist Ram Puniyani used this expression of 'social common sense' when he was describing the dismal state of the Muslim minority in India (Puniyani, in the Conference "Global Minorities Meet" March 6-9, 2008). Common sense here becomes the target of propaganda. Pandian (1997, p. 370) and Chakrabarty (2002) allude to Gramsci on this point:

What would happen to our political imagination if we did not consider the state of being fragmentary and episodic as merely disabling? If a totalizing mode of thinking is needed for us to imagine the state theoretically, what kind of political imagination and institutions could sustain themselves on the basis of a thought that joyously embraced the idea of the fragment? If the statist idea of the political defined the mainstream of political thought, then here may be an alternative conceptual pole to it: an idea of the political that did not require us to imagine totalities. (Chakrabarty, 2002, pp. 35-36)

He then proceeds to outline the dilemma the subaltern poses to the question of citizenship and agency:

Thinking the fragment radically challenges the nature of the political agent whom we imagine. The subaltern, on this register, is no longer the citizen in the making. The subaltern here is the *ideal* figure of the person who survives actively, even joyously, on the assumption that the statist instruments of domination will always belong to somebody else and never aspires to them. This is an *ideal* figure. No actual member of the subaltern classes would resemble what I imagine here. The question is, Are there moments in the life practices of the subaltern classes that would allow us to construct such an agent? [...] To allow the subaltern position to challenge our own conceptions of totalities, to be open to the possibility of our thought systems, with all their aspirations to grasp things in their totality, being rendered finite by the presence of the other: such are the utopian horizons to which this other moment of Subaltern Studies calls us. (*ibid*, p. 36)

Due mention of the colonial heritage in the formulation of political subcultures of the oppressed is noteworthy. A significant part of this heritage was the manipulation of knowledge and the successful perpetuation of myths and stereotypes in order to deepen divisions among people and acquire a stronger hold over the subjects. Perhaps this could be related, in a manner, to Asad's (2003) analysis of the role of myths in the formation of the secular versus the profane since liberal democracies have historically managed to perpetuate and cultivate two myths:

The Enlightenment myth of politics as a discourse of public reason whose bond with *knowledge* enables the elite to direct the education of mankind, and the revolutionary myth of universal suffrage, a politics of large numbers in which the representation of "collective will" is sought by quantifying the *opinion* and *fantasy* of individual citizen-electors. The secular theory of state toleration is based on these contradictory foundations: on the one hand elite liberal clarity seeks to contain religious passion, on the other hand democratic numbers allow majorities to dominate minorities even if both are religiously formed.

The result of these colonial policies refers to what Hansen (2000) called 'cultural anti-politics,' as the colonial governance differentiated between two realms of society: the political and the cultural-religious. In the first, educated representatives who were assumedly holding rational interests were allowed to enter what the colonizers saw as a sanitized space of civilized disagreement in councils. In the second, communities were considered irrational masses whose identities were demarcated and fixed. And in order to control them, they were given a degree of

autonomy in socio-cultural areas like “family law, administration of religious institutions, traditional instruction in religious schools and inheritance” (Hansen, 2000, p. 257). This eventually affected the ways political cultures of these communities were formed and hence their political realities.

4.2 Political participation: The political discourse

Political culture as defined by Almond & Verba (1989) refers to the internalization of the political system in the cognitions, feelings and evaluations of the populations (p. 13). In Verba’s words, it “consists of the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which defines the situation in which political action takes place. It provides the subjective orientation to politics” (Verba, 1965, p. 513). Mitra & Singh (1999) identified five elements of the Indian political culture: institutionalization of authority in a postcolonial setting; political participation which is responsible for the diffusion of institutional norms and generation of legitimacy; citizenship where the constitution acts as the main instrument; welfare; and finally law and order. Nandy (1989) in his essay on the *Political Culture of the Indian State* clearly summarizes the contemporary dilemmas facing the elaboration of political culture among Indians:

Today, the Indian nation state resides less and less in the minds of men; it is primarily what the Indians confront on the ground. The vagueness, chaos, deliberate obfuscation, and inability to close up definition or mark out conceptual boundaries which so enrage the tough-minded political analysts in India are now giving way to the sharp operational definitions that the moderns relish. The range of options once available within the Indian political culture has begun to narrow. (Nandy, 1989, p. 6)

What is noteworthy is to locate the history of Indian Muslims in the Indian environment and not in the wider scope of the ‘world of Islam’. This is especially because unlike their Muslim counterparts in different countries. Their shared experience and political environment in India are one of democracy, secularism, and “a pragmatic engagement with the social, political and economics processes” (Hasan, 1997, p. 21). Hasan (1997) refers to Mayer’s (1981) identification of central approaches arising from traditional Oriental studies, which are usually reductionist, based on false assumptions, and methodologically flawed:

According to him, the ‘reification’ of Islam in the realm of political ideas results in the postulation of a ‘Quranic Political Culture’ based on the formal ideology of the religion. Instead of considering what political ideas any particular group of Muslims holds, and the

relations between these and their social conditions and practice, the reification of Islam leads to essentially circular suggestions that both practice and ideas are identical with the Quranic Political Culture. (Hasan, 1997, p. 20)

Mayer's study negated the myth of Muslims as a monolithic community and showed that they act as active participants whose regional cultures are reflected in their perceptions and behavior. The space in which their socio-political reality is set is not measured through a narrowly democratic lens. Hence, the democratic reality in India is not just about voting rights and equality, but there are normative questions that must be also addressed. There is a sustained predicament of structural inequalities caused by a history of discrimination and marginalization due to the Hindu caste system and partition narratives. Partition dictated a certain path dependency, which should not be omitted from the analysis. The division into India and Pakistan resulted in a sort of transfer of the bulk of the middle class Muslims and Sikhs where the Muslims headed to Pakistan and the Sikhs to India. This explains to a great extent the current overrepresentation of Sikhs versus the underrepresentation of Muslims in governmental bodies (Fig. 4).

The political discourse lies in a grid of striking a balance between the sense of a separate religious identity and the collective sense of national solidarity, legitimacy, and integration. Seeking to ensure the secular order as a guarantee of their enjoyment of an equal status as citizens, while at the same time overcoming the threat of alienation remains the biggest challenge minorities are faced with in democracies. There are different methods of tackling religious identity as either a precursor or a determinant of political action, or as independent of it. One valid assumption that is endorsed by Williams (2011) holds that religion is not necessarily a primordial identity, but a transformed and mobilized one according to the changing political situation, and especially manifested in electoral politics and within urban public spaces. The reference to the 'urban' here is substantial since Muslims predominantly live in urban areas despite the fact that India is mainly a rural country. In fact, the level of urbanization among the Muslim population is higher than the average level; in 2001, 35.7 percent of the Muslim population was urban compared to 27.8 percent of the overall population (Census of India, 2001).

Limiting the analysis to one coherent political discourse that the Muslim community in India possesses is impossible. This is due to the fact of the existence of Muslim communities and not simply a community. These communities, spread all over India, are guided by regional political differences that determine their political choices. In Shahabuddin and Wright's words:

In coastal South India, the relatively prosperous Muslim communities (referred to earlier),

with a history of peaceful conversion by Arab merchants, do not speak Urdu, nor send their children to Aligarh, nor compete for the civil service—they merge culturally with the majority despite their religious orthodoxy. In West Bengal, the Bengali-speaking Muslims have tended increasingly to support the Marxist parties, primarily because of their relative security from communal riots and minimal restrictions on cow slaughter. Nevertheless, they remain a deprived and backward group. (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 162)

I focus further on two issues in this section: the problem of representation and voting patterns. Representation and especially the political aspect of it is a source of continual frustration among Muslims. There is a widespread discontent when it comes to the disparity between the political representation of Muslims and their percentage of the population in India (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987; Ansari I., 2006). Muslims constitute more than 20% of the electorate in 197 out of 545 parliamentary constituencies, but their presence in legislatures remain dismal (Khan, A., 2006, p. 156).

Labeling this feeling as political deprivation, Ansari (2006) conducted a meticulous study showing the statistics of Muslim members in parliament from 1952 till 2004. After I grouped the percentages compiled by Ansari, the following graph is a representation of this study (Fig. 3). In the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, the parliament yielded 28 Muslim Member of Parliament (MPs) (meaning less than 2%. This is compared to 36 MPs (3%) in the 2004 elections). Despite the significantly large population of Muslims in the states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, no Muslim MP has been elected from them, in addition to Rajasthan and Orissa. As for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and the Indian Police Service (IPS), the percentage of Muslims in these bodies have declined over the years from 4.5% in the IAS and 4.04% in the IPS in 1960 to 3% in the IAS, 1.8% in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and 4% in the IPS (Shah, 2007; SCR, 2006). Municipalities are another space where Muslims are poorly represented. According to Bandukwala (2006), no Muslim could be elected to the municipal corporation in the state of Gujarat because Muslim localities are deliberately partitioned into different municipal wards. This raises the issue of communalism and ghettoization.

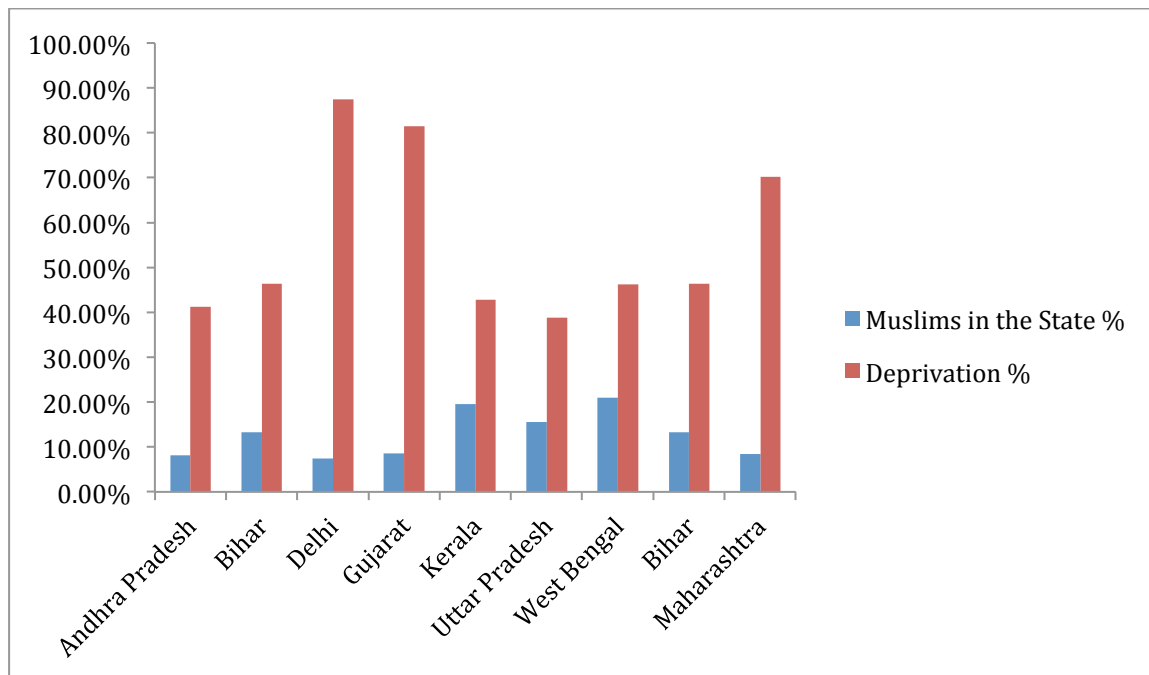


Figure 3 Statistics Source: Iqbal A. Ansari. (2006) Political Representation of Muslims in India 1952-2004.

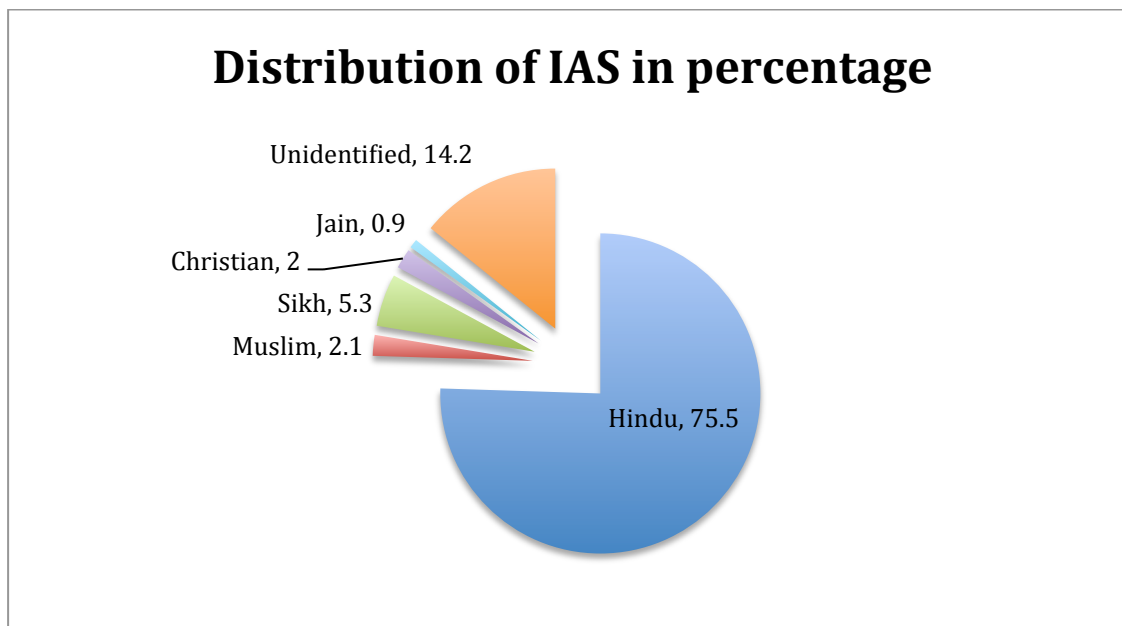


Figure 4 Statistics obtained from: Santosh Goyal (1990). Social Background of Indian Administrative Service. ISID.

The dilemma of political deprivation was closely related to the nature of political participation in India. Although at the time following the independence of India there were calls to boycott the political process, such voices have disappeared from the contemporary political scene. However, several tactics pertaining to voting behavior have been utilized. I will present a summary of these tactics. Still it should be noted that emphasis has to be made concerning some of the structural

reasons accounting for the low representation of Muslims. These reasons include under-numeration in the census, gerrymandering in the delimitation of constituencies, and exclusion of Muslims from the electoral rolls, either to contested citizenship proof as on the border areas (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, pp. 159-160) or due to marriage or change of residence.⁴⁵

Voting as a democratic tool of political participation in India has been often associated with the idea of vote-banks that was first devised by the sociologist M.N. Srinivas (Vasavi, 1999). Vote banks are described by the Rudolph & Rudolph (1967) as a vertical mobilization, which refers to “a cluster of exchange relations which runs parallel to the social system based on *jajmani*”⁴⁶ (Mitra & Singh, 1999, p. 42). Two main strands govern the issue of voting behaviour among Muslims. The first ascertains vote banks, while the second regards it as a myth.

The first strand shares perceptions concerning the Muslim community as being a homogenous, monolithic minority group (hence, treated by parties as a uniform vote bank). Another shared conviction is that voting behavior is determined by *fatwas*, thus Muslims are generally viewed as a distinct and separate political community aloof from mainstream political processes. During the UP election campaigns of January-February 2012, both English and Urdu media reported the speeches of Delhi’s Jama Masjid Imam Bukhari and his incitement to the Muslims to vote for the Samajwadi Party. Interestingly, in the 2004 Lok Sabha’s elections, Imam Bukhari’s appeal was to the BJP as he had joined the “Support Vajpayee Committee”. However, the BJP candidate did not win in the Chandni Chowk constituency (Hashmi, 2012). In 1996, the same Imam issued an appeal in favor of the BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party); this was erroneously termed by the media as a *fatwa*. The fact that BSP got only 20% of Muslim votes indicates how the majority of Muslims do not regard the opinions of religious leaders, especially such a famous one (Asif, 1998). Different contexts in different Indian states offer different voting behavior patterns. In Mumbai for example, Congress is regarded as the only alternative to BJP. The economic elites, who control all charitable institutions like education, health and mosques, align with the clergy in shaping the political mobilization of masses. However, on a pan-Indian scale, Muslim masses, regardless of their caste and sect, have not blindly followed the calls of *Imams*. Additional examples are the refusal to obey Imam Bukhari’s

⁴⁵ In an interview with a Muslim young married woman in Kerala, she was complaining that her name was removed from the electoral rolls after her marriage although she had not changed her address officially and was thus banned from voting both in her family’s area and in her husband’s. Accordingly, she filed a case to regain her right to have her name listed.

⁴⁶ The *Jajmani* system refers to a Hindu economic system of division of labour in which lower castes have obligations to render free services to the upper castes (Bodley, 2011).

call to boycott the Republic Day in 1993 as a protesting repercussion of the demolition of Babri Masjid (Engineer I. , 1995).

However, the second group that challenges these assumptions contend that first, vote banks are a reality in India in general because of caste, linguistic, and religious diversities: “Voting patterns of the electorate have always been guided and determined by the degree of affiliations of the political parties with different social segments or groups of the society” (Rab, 1998, p. 53). The popular notion of communal consciousness as an element of political participation that is usually associated with the Muslim community in India is negated by several intellectuals (Hasan, 1997, p. 217). Alam (2009) shows that the political participation and the voting patterns of Muslims are highly contextual and do not reveal any specific pattern. In states like Kerala and West Bengal, the overall turnout has been historically high and so was the Muslims’ and the contest was usually between the Left (non-BJP) and the Congress, unlike in the remaining states where Congress usually harvests more Muslim votes. Eventually, Muslim voting behaviour is determined at state-level politics and cannot be generalized on a pan Indian scale.

However, voting en masse or as it is referred to enbloc or group voting was regarded as a mechanism, employed by community leaders to prove to be politically efficacious, and is considered a universal phenomenon with minorities as a means of bargaining for their common interests and advantages. It is argued that the political behavior of Indian Muslims has always been in tune with the general political traditions of the country (Rab, 1998, p. 53). Hasan (1997) mentions this strategy enacted in the elections of November 1993, December 1994 and February 1995 to defeat the Congress (p. 269). Before that, voting en masse in 1967 was due to the failure of the Congress in curbing organized communal violence and in providing educational and promotional avenues for Muslims. According to Hasan (1997), the 1975-77 Emergency was the last straw. Voters shifted temporarily to the Janata Party in 1977, due to the actions of the Congress evident in forced sterilization, slum removal, police firing on Muslims and suspension of civil liberties. The Congress managed to re-win their votes due to their disillusionment with the Janata party and its ambivalent relationship with the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*).

There is a basic proposition forwarded by Rab (1998) stressing “Muslim preference for political parties or their voting behaviour is in consonance with the general national pattern”, therefore, negating arguments or “exploding myths” of monolithic political behaviour in the matter of choice of a political party and enbloc voting. In addition to this, there is an apparent problem in the recruitment of Muslims only from Muslim-dominated areas and never from non-Muslim-dominated

areas. It has been observed that Muslims voted for non-Muslim candidates ignoring a Muslim one if he is not sponsored by the political party of their choice or affiliation (*ibid*, p. 46). As Rab further notes, there is a misconception that Muslims do not participate in the electoral process and remain isolated from the mainstream. This was the case of Jamaati-Islami-e-Hind after independence but not anymore. It is often argued that if Muslims were given a chance to seek elections from non-Muslim dominated areas, the number of Muslim representatives would have been much higher.

Another myth dominating the discussion on Muslim political participation and their usage by political parties as voting banks is related to the idea of Muslim appeasement. The Hindu communal forces have fostered the argument that the government pampers Muslims in order to consolidate a Hindu vote bank (Rab, 1998, pp. 49-50). Journalists and intellectuals respond to this argument by counting the incidents in which Muslims have been not only marginalized but also threatened, compelled to be ghettoized and deprived of developmental services and security. Thus, it becomes questionable to retain the appeasement hypothesis.⁴⁷

The appeasement argument has been a strong weapon in electoral politics, used by the BJP against Congress. Generally, Muslims vote for Congress, or for parties allied to it, as in the case of Kerala and the Indian Union Muslim League. The Keralite case is unique in India; this is due to the peculiar historical and communal setting of the state, where IUML emerged, with significant power in the Muslim-dominated district, Malappuram. Earlier, IUML chose to adopt a bargaining strategy between the Communists and the Congress, however, nowadays, IUML is a strong adversary of the Communist Party in Kerala, and is a strong ally of the UDF (United Democratic Front), led by Congress.

Several Muslim intellectuals and politicians share the view that their identification with the Congress party was taken as granted and thus led to their neglect. Consequently, as they became aware of their bargaining position, they created several political bodies such as the Majlis e Mushawarat, the Muslim Personal law board, and the Milli council. However, these bodies remain not as strong as the IUML in Kerala.

According to Shahabuddin and Wright (1987), the Muslim community majorly adopted a

⁴⁷ It has become extremely hard for Muslims to find accommodation in most urban areas, especially in Gujarat. The example of Juhapura in Ahmedabad is striking as it is considered the biggest Muslim ghetto in Gujarat. It has a population of 2.5 lakh residents, but it suffers from the lack of services such as banks, public transportation, maintained roads, water and garbage pickup. However, the police force is present, but to allegedly control terrorists (Bandukwala, 2006).

political approach based on “case-by-case amelioration through political contacts and the building up of pressure through representations and memoranda” in dealing with persistent irritations such as threats to physical security, personal humiliation, media offenses, curtailment of religious rites such as the sacrificing of animals (*qurbani*), the call to prayer (*azan*), the construction of mosques, the allotment of land for graveyards and religious endowments (*wakf*). This is in addition to the criticisms of Muslim personal law, discrimination, imposition of Hindu culture, the ordeal of Urdu, under-numeration in census, police and administrative harassment, and the government’s demand of loyalty. Despite the failure of this approach in providing a permanent solution, it has resulted in a “class of powerbrokers” (p. 174).

In addition to the awareness of their bargaining power, the need to form such bodies came as a result of the dissatisfaction with the failure of national political parties in helping to overcome the under-representation of Muslims. The fact of the receipt of some Muslim individuals of nomination by national parties to contest elections is not in itself a guarantee of legitimate representativeness. Often these nominees are seen as “symbols of tokenism” (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 160). Following the party line prevents them from publicly serving the community and forwarding their demands, this is because they aim to pose as being more national than the national and not be deemed communal and thus lose the chance for re-nomination. This fact serves to partly answer a question I am posing through this study. The fear of a member of a minority community of being labeled as disloyal to the ‘nation’ leads him/her to adopt a self-marginalization position, and in the case of a politician, it is to refrain from being a voice of that community in many cases. Eventually this led to a ‘communication gap’ between the Muslim community and the state leading to further alienation and withdrawal from the political mainstream:

The fact remains that, with few exceptions, such persons are given party posts and tickets primarily to ensure that the party attract Muslim votes. Rarely has a Muslim candidate won from a constituency with less than twenty percent Muslim votes. Even a stalwart of the National Movement like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had to seek a safe Muslim constituency. Thus, although the ruling party and the establishment, in their anxiety to buttress their secular credentials, always managed to include some Muslim names, Muslims, in effect, remained underrepresented in the democratic institutions. (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 160)

Despite media publicity that fuels the appeasement argument, the several important schemes devoted to minorities over the past fifty years remained on paper and were not implemented. These

schemes include the Prime Minister fifteen-point programme in 1983 and 2006, the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation in 1994, the separate body of the National minorities commission in 1992, the increase in *haj* quota, the Setting up of the area intensive programme for educationally backward minorities in 1993-1994, and the constitution of a riot-task force.

In order to have a measurably comparative perspective, it is vital to quickly refer to some quantitative studies conducted concerning Indian Muslims. Nandy (1975) reports that findings of a survey in 1971 showed that two thirds of Muslims were satisfied with territorial non-communal representation. In 1975, he conducted studies on the acceptability of democratic norms and could not find any differences in respect of support for the democratic norms among Muslims and Hindus. Intergroup differences, in fact, mainly occurred in the frequent blaming of the police by Muslims (Hasan, 1987 quoted in Hasan, 2006) and in being more dissenters and outsiders (Nandy, 1975). On symbolic issues (such as the destruction of Bari Masjid, the support for separate personal law), there is notable and sharp difference between Hindus and Muslims (32% to 86% and 41% to 67% respectively). However, when it came to a sense of personal efficacy and legitimacy of the political system, Muslims' percentages were actually higher than Hindus (60% of Muslims believe their vote matters, as compared to 58% for Hindus, and 72% of Muslims believe that better government is not possible without parties, assemblies and elections as compared to 68% for Hindus (Mitra & Singh, 1999).

In a report titled the *State of Democracy in South Asia*, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, located in Delhi, meanings of democracy as understood by the Muslims in India were measured and amounted to 33% conceiving of it as popular rule, 33% as election, 3% as rule of law, 20% as freedom, 43% as justice and welfare, 11% as peace and security, 8% perceived of democracy negatively, and 11% held other opinions. The corresponding figures of the Indian average were 36%, 22%, 4%, 22%, 50%, 8%, 8%, and 11% (SDSA, 2008, p. 242). Concerning the degree of satisfaction with democracy, the Indian average figures corresponded to: 17% very satisfied, 38% somewhat satisfied, 9% somewhat dissatisfied, 6% totally dissatisfied, and 30% no opinion. The Muslim results on this issue were 14%, 41%, 8%, 6%, 31% (Fig. 5). This means that there is no radical conceptualization of democracy that is specific to the Muslims. All Indians, according to this survey, share the conception of democracy as justice.

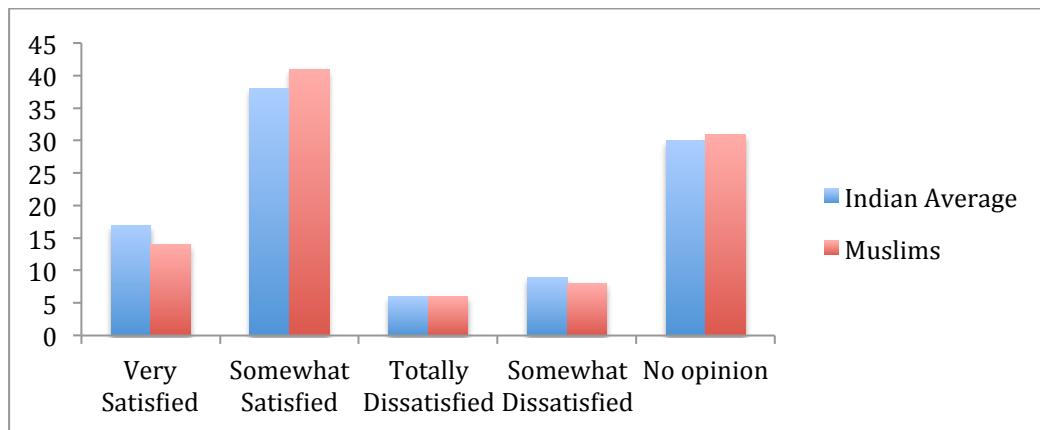


Figure 5 The Indian Average vs. Muslim Responses to the degree of satisfaction with Democracy. Statistics Source: SDSA Report, 2008.

Regarding different preferences to various ways of governance, the following results have been recorded (statistics obtained from the SDSA Report, 2008, p. 229-236).

Degrees of Preferences to governance systems (Muslim respondents/Indian average)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
Preference for religious leaders taking major decisions	7% 4%	12% 10%	24% 21%	21% 29%	36% 36%
Preference for experts	29% 30%	18% 22%	7% 7%	5% 4%	41% 37%
Preference for rule by a strong leader	16% 16%	17% 15%	19% 18%	17% 21%	31% 30%
Preference for rule by elected representative	47% 52%	25% 26%	4% 3%	1% 1%	17% 18%
Preference for army rule	7% 8%	11% 10%	29% 26%	28% 33%	25% 23%

Table 1 Differences in the degrees of preference to governance systems. Statistics Source: SDSA Report.

As for the preference for democracy versus dictatorship, the Muslim average again did not differ from the all-Indian average; as 44% of Muslims versus 49% of the total sampling population preferred democracy, and only 6% in both categories saw dictatorship as preferable, while 15% versus 14% thought it made no difference (SDSA, 2008, p. 229).

These figures show strong congruence between the Pan-Indian and the Muslim average since the differences are slight or in some cases even surprisingly higher when it comes to the support of democracy. Although it is commonsensical that a minority would be supporting a secular democratic order to guarantee its existence, but the figures come as an answer to a strong discourse labeling Indian Muslims as anti-social elements whose political loyalty to the system is questioned as I would demonstrate in a coming section of this chapter (section 4.3.3). In Figure 6, it is shown how the preference for elected representatives gets the highest level of support among Indian Muslims, not differing in this from the Indian average. Perhaps the surprising difference between the Indian Average and the Muslim average records relates to the index of general institutional trust; the India average recorded a percentage of 64% while Muslims had higher rates of around 70% (SDSA, 2008, p. 59). What is also significant about these figures is how they challenge the misconception that Muslims give top consideration to religious interests while deciding for their vote (Engineer I. , 1995).

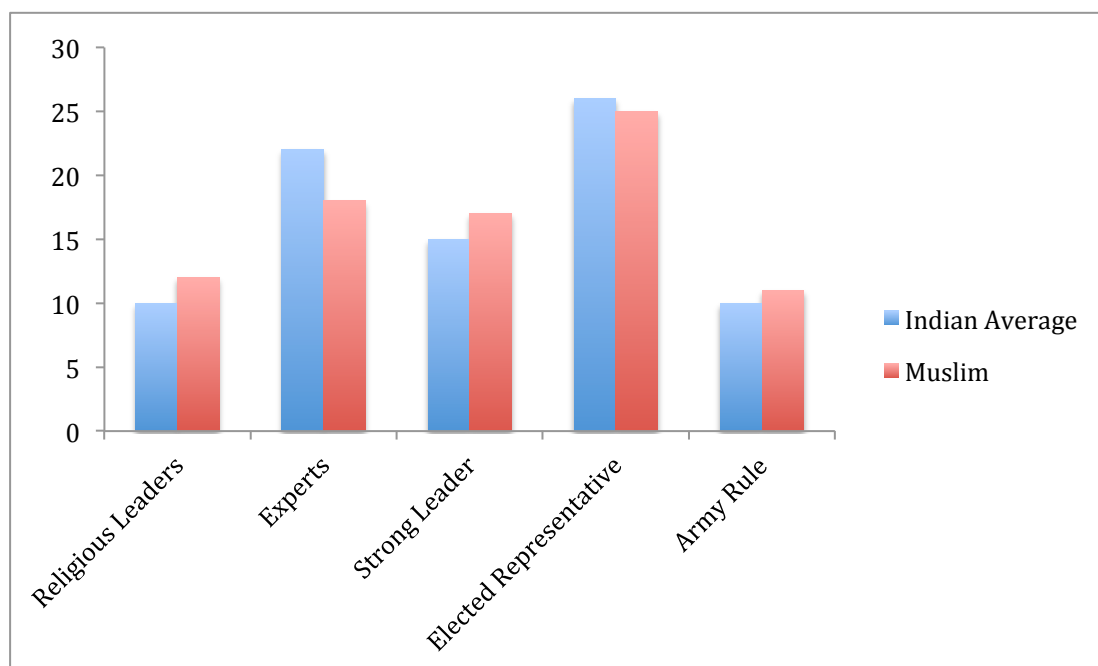


Figure 6 Comparing the "Agree" result between the Indian Average and the Muslim Average regarding to ways of

governance. Statistics Source: SDSA Report, 2008.

4.3 Ideological discourses: The otherness and Hindu nationalism

4.3.1 Media and the role of the press

The double-edged role of the media in India is significant to see how it both voices the concerns of the marginalized and at the same time demonizes him or her. The large Muslim population in India led to a phenomenon called ‘Muslim press’, which are mainly newspapers owned by Muslims and circulated in vernacular languages (most commonly in Urdu and Malayalam). This press to a great extent prioritizes issues related to the Muslim community. In this section, I tackle Urdu and Malayalam Muslim press separately due to the contextual differences of North India and Kerala. These differences not only led to a disparity in content, writing style, professionalism and distribution, but also in the role of media, especially the written one, in serving as an apparatus for mobilization, awareness and socio-political change.

To start with, Muslim press is usually associated with Urdu press (with the exception of non-Muslim Urdu press in Punjab and Delhi and Muslim press in other vernacular languages). Most, if not all, of the studies on Muslim press would mean and refer to only Urdu press. In India, currently, there are around 5519 registered Urdu media publications (newspapers and magazines), the majority of which are in Uttar Pradesh (around 1646) and Delhi (around 1013) (The Registrar of Newspapers for India, 2012). However, in an article written in 2009, Farouqui draws attention to the limited number of Urdu publications that actually reach public hands. Interestingly, the initial number of 347 publications that he gave lags behind the official number obtained this year from the Registrar of Newspapers for India website. Farouqui goes further to explain that the exaggerated number could be accounted for because of the role of the government in granting concessions and advertisements to Urdu newspapers. Eventually, each publication does not give realistic figures on the number of issues published and thus the high number of registered publications does not reflect the reality of readership or distribution.

Although Urdu is identified in contemporary India as an identity marker for Muslims, not all Muslims are able to speak or read Urdu. The southern Indian Muslims, with the exception of Hyderabad and Bangalore, do not speak Urdu. Even the new generations in North India, where Urdu is commonly spoken, have a difficulty reading the language since they mainly learn Hindi and English at school. This causes a severe language problem when it comes to Muslim press, and also

justifies the absence of a national newspaper for Muslims. The thin distribution of Muslims over India is another related demographic predicament of Muslim press. English is also not a useful language in this case, since most of the literates cannot speak it. Raqeeb (1998) sees that Muslims have been so far unable to launch even a single national newspaper or magazine, which could play the role of at least an opinion molder if not opinion maker, and espouse the cause of the community (p. 94). The fascination with such a purpose is explained in Siddiqui's words, who contended, "in a democratic set-up certain institutions are needed to project the image of the community and a newspaper is the best bet" (Siddiqui, quoted in Raqeeb, 1998, p. 94).

Another problem concerns the inter-linkage between media and politicians. The dilemma of Muslim press started with the partition of India and thus the migration of the intelligentsia and the affluent to Pakistan. According to Titus (1959), "The press has been the handmaid of the Muslim Awakening in India and Pakistan" (p. 243). During the independence movement, most of the leaders were associated with the media so that they could take their political ideology to the people. Today, newspapers have limited appeal as they act as political ladders since they are closely associated with political parties and thus the ultimate aim of a newspaper publisher is to create a niche for him self in the political arena, and this partly explains the high number of Urdu publications that do not last (*ibid*; Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 171).

Usually, Urdu newspapers emerge as part of campaigns. The two biggest campaigns that contributed to this were the Shah Bano and the Babri Masjid cases. Newspapers remain a tool in Muslim leaders' hands. However, these newspapers remain more of "a views-paper" (Farouqui, 2009, p. 243) and settled for reporting only half the facts (as in the case of the Bhagalpur riots in 1989 and the Bombay riots in 1992) and thus suffer from "unjustified self-righteousness" (Khan, W., 2009, pp. 258-9).

The spirit of Muslim press was characterized by frustration over the loss of power of Muslims since British colonialism. In a pendulum nature, Muslim press often varies from self-congratulation to lamentation (Shahabuddin & Wright, 1987), however, the sense of lamentation usually dominates. This feeling was carried along since post-partition and the material chosen to be reported only proves this sense of pessimism and negativism and pushes Muslim masses to both a sense of alienation and protest (Farouqui, 2009 and Khan W., 2009). Wahiduddin Khan (2009) points out to an important observation: how unlike non-Muslim press where both backwardness and underrepresentation of Muslims are reported, Muslim press intentionally omit all reference to lack of education and thus backwardness of Muslims as causes for their misfits. Being an Islamic scholar

and preacher, Khan adopts a Quranic approach to the understanding of problems and solutions of Muslim press. To him, Muslims not only neglected the first Quranic commandment of “Read”, but also forgot that the power of peace was greater than of war. Instead of forwarding positive action, Muslim journalism is charged with negativism and protest that built up a paranoid mentality. Khan expands his argument by presenting solutions to these problems through proper training of Muslim youth, cultivation of journalistic consciousness, giving more importance to publishing in mother languages, and opening a Muslim school of journalism.

Media was a tool used by the Hindu right-wing or the *Sangh Parivar* in spreading its ideology and in consolidating the derogatory discourse on Indian Muslims. It started in 1977, as the Janata Party came to power, and LK Advani became the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Asif (1998) argues that this phase led to the birth of missionary journalists like Arun Shourie who expound the *Sangh Parivar* ideology, especially following the discontent with Congress and Indira Gandhi’s policies.

Media shows the stereotype-enhancing modes of dealing with the discussion of Muslim issues, with little reference to changes in the community’s social and economic outlook. Amanullah (2004) points out to Rawat’s (1998) observation concerning the hijacking of the letters to the editor section in newspapers by *Sangh Parivar* members. Amanullah, in his study, contends that Hindutva ideology could be clearly discerned from vernacular press, whereas mainstream English press aims at striking a balance, however, when it comes to Muslims, coverage is biased to a considerable extent.

Two strands in the English media are described to be antagonistic and patronizing. It includes a bias concerning the knowledge of only Muslim elites or the upper Middle class, who constitute a negligible percentage of the community. Issues that are not relevant to the community get more attention in media whereas others of more significance do not (such as Muslim students, police force, administrative service examination, dropout ratios). Media, accordingly, suffer from an elite phenomenon (Mitra C. , 2009). Another stereotyping project had been directed at the issue of freedom of expression and the attitude of Muslims towards it. One clear example was the Salman Rushdie affair that started with the banning of the *Satanic Verses* and the huge media coverage it assumed and then its recurrence in 2012 with the Jaipur book festival. What was noted by several Muslim writers is the Media does not allocate the same interest to other books being banned

especially covering the Hindus.⁴⁸

Activists usually point out the negative role played by English media, especially the Times of India in the coverage of the Batla House Encounter and the ensuing stigmatization of Muslim youth. Scholars and intellectuals emphasize the need to issue a counterbalancing press publication in English. In an interview with a Muslim scholar from Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow, he asserted:

Mainstream media are not concerned with the news of the Muslim minority; on the contrary, reporting is often biased and incorrect. In one of the functions, a newspaper reported that around a thousand attended, while the actual number of attendees was multiple thousands. This is why we decided to issue an English weekly. (Maulana Nazrul Hafiz, Lucknow, 2010)

In 2000, the first English newspaper run by Muslims and directed to Muslim issues in North India was established. The *Milli Gazette* was made available online in 2008 and is published on a biweekly basis. In an interview with Dr. Zafrul Islam Khan, the founder and editor in chief, he contended that the media in India had propagated images of Muslims as being backward, illiterate, dirty, a burden, and had done injustice to Hindus during their rule. By the 1990s, this trend had become very powerful and these kinds of media started asserting themselves. As for Indian Muslims, according to him, they do not have the power to counter it. The Hindu-biased media have numerical and financial power. Muslim resources are too limited to counter them. Mainstream media, he argues, created that hostile atmosphere and connected it to Bush's war on terror. Interestingly, it was the US itself that admitted that there was not a single Indian in *Al-Qaeda*, and thus Indian Muslims had nothing to do with the terrorism discourse.

Not only do the challenges to Muslim press emanate from national levels, but also on an international basis, the media are identified as a factor for misinformation on Islam and for alienation felt by Muslims who are bombarded by western media. To counter this propaganda, Wasey and others conceive of the media as an important tool. However, the Muslim world has not been able to develop a viable media because powerful sections have failed to nurture a democratic atmosphere. Reasons for this condition have been presented by Amanullah (2004) as the absence of objectivity; introvert character; inadequate professionalism; lack of financial and technological resources; limited narrow readership circle; dependence on western news agencies; over-

⁴⁸ The example of banning Jaswant's Singh Book "Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence" in Gujarat due to his remarks on the role of Sardar Patel in the Partition of India.

dependence on Urdu language; and near exclusive dependence on print media.

Although the picture in Kerala is quite different due to the different historical setting, there are some shared concerns relating to the issue of stereotyping and representation in English press. In several interviews with Muslim students in Kerala, the feeling of bias of English media was prevalent as they argued that it was usually ‘anti-Muslim’ as evident from its coverage of issues such as the incident of the chopping off the hand of the Christian teacher, the recruitment of terrorists and their capture in Kashmir, love *jihād*, and the inferiority complex of Muslims. A student in Calicut University narrated:

The problem with media is that there are no investigative media now. But not all media give wrong images of Muslims; it depends to which party it is affiliated. In Shaheena’s case,⁴⁹ even media people were giving bad images about her being a terrorist. In Kerala, we cannot know what is happening exactly by reading one paper. At the time of Eid, Mathrubhumi for example published a bigger photo on an insignificant festival in Kerala and next to it a smaller photo on Eid.

The coverage of the state of Muslim women in media was also a significant point that emerged in several public meeting and conferences such as the Muslim Student Federation’s (the Indian Union Muslim League Youth wing) conference in Calicut University campus in February 2011, where Fatima Muzafar, an eminent member of the IUML in Tamil Nadu, stressed how the media focuses on trivial issues such as triple *ṭalāq* or *pardah*.

Counter to the complaint that there is no mainstream Muslim media house in North India, the different image is projected in Kerala where it has one of the leading mainstream newspapers with Muslim ownership affiliated to the Jamaati Islami, *Madhyamam*, which is said to have the third highest rate of circulation among Malayalam dailies in Kerala (Sikand Y. , 2009). The importance of Malayalam newspaper originates from their readership rates due to the high literacy rate in Kerala. According to the Indian Readership Survey of 2012, Malayalam newspapers and magazines were of the top 10 dailies and magazines in India (*Manorama* came fourth, and *Mathrubhumi* came tenth as dailies, while the top language magazine was the *Vanitha* (Indian Readership Survey,

⁴⁹ Shaheena K.K. is a Keralite Muslim female journalist, who upon investigations in the Madani case (to be explained in the chapter on Kerala) and interviewing him, was pursued by the Karnataka state police with suspect of affiliation to terrorist networks and alleged attempts to threaten witnesses in the Madani case. For more information, see: K. Ashraf and Jenny Rowena, When Two Muslims Meet: The Media(ted) Case Of Madani And Shahina, <http://www.countercurrents.org/ashraf301110.htm> (accessed on 30th July, 2012); Petition seeks withdrawal of case against journalist, the Hindu, <http://www.hindu.com/2010/12/06/stories/2010120665220700.htm> (Accessed on 30th July, 2012)

2012).

Remedies to the plight of Muslim media as presented by Wasey (2008) include a mass media training school of journalism that should be developed; seminars and workshops to spread awareness on the importance of the role of media; change in the ownership patterns of Muslim media; development of democratic temperament; the usage of the Internet and satellite settings; and finally a stress on the need for objectivity of Urdu newspapers so as to attract non-Muslim readership.

One worthwhile attempt is to look at matters of discussion in both English and Urdu press and see how the focus has changed over the years. Qamar Hasan (2006), for example, shows how the press of the 1970s was dominated by a discussion on job reservations for Muslims, modernization of Muslims, the status of Aligarh Muslim university, and management of Muslim trust (*awqaf*, plural of *waqf*). By the 1990s, there were additional captivations such as the alleged illegal immigration of Bangladeshi Muslims, the use of Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA), and the restriction of construction of madrassas and mosques.

Through reviewing major headlines of a daily Delhi-based Urdu Muslim newspaper titled *Sahafat* from December 2009 until March 2012, I generated a list of the main topics frequently discussed and reported. The themes are dominated by the following topics:

- A critique of RSS, national and international reporting on terrorism,
- Fake police encounters,
- A noted difference in the intensity and volume of coverage of the Moradabad riots of August 2011 in compared to the English Press where little was mentioned,
- Achievements of Muslim students,
- UPA government spying on Muslims,
- *Burqa*-related *fatwas* and news,
- Census 2011,
- Model madrasas,
- Reservations and quota for Muslim students and for Muslim women in particular,
- Court verdict on the Sabarmati train and the acquittal of some accused people,
- Jamia Millia minority situation,

- Right-wing Hindu terrorism,
- Communal harmony especially in festivals (as an example there was an image of Muslim male children in Ramadan tying raakhi on Hindu girls),
- Deprivation of Muslims in old Delhi and Okhla areas of government welfare schemes,
- Anna Hazare and his team's failed attempt to get support from Jama Masjid's Imam Bukhari and disagreeing on account of their link to Modi and RSS,
- The linkage of the Norwegian terrorist to the Hindu Right in India,
- Condemning the description of the city of Azamgarh as a terrorist hub and working on improving the services and the living conditions in the city,
- Oppression of Muslim youth in Mumbai by RSS and Bajrang Dal (looting their shops and houses, and harassing pregnant women),
- Condemning bomb blast at Delhi high court,
- RSS books in schools in Bhopal,
- Agra hospital attack,
- Significant criticism of Modi.

It remains to be said that through reading reports or articles written on the predicaments of Indian Muslims, especially of the North twenty years ago and now, we find them almost identical in the spheres of economy, education, and security. In fact, some problems got worsened or appeared (like the Gujarat carnage and fake encounters). Muslims are still calling for:

1. Better representation in security forces and government.
2. More responsible leadership (a magical equation: not too religious, not too irreligious).
3. More emphasis on education especially in the North (madrasa reform, increasing the number of higher education Muslim-run institutions).
4. Human rights.
5. Islamic financial banking.
6. Criticizing the conspicuous consumption of Muslims working in the Gulf.

It is noteworthy to mention that the section related to national news in the Urdu newspaper *Sahafat* is termed as '*apna waṭan*' (Our homeland). Here, the utilization of the Arabic term of

patria is symbolic and appears as a response to the questioning of political loyalty of Indian Muslims. The interaction between the religious and the political through a secular sphere is evident through many news pieces, including for example one reporting on the third Friday prayer of Ramadan, in which the reporting was titled: Mosques were filled up: thousands rise for the safety of their country and faith (*mulk aur millat*) (Sahafat Urdu Daily, 20/08/2011).

4.3.2 Security aspects

There is much that the murdering mobs in Gujarat have robbed from me. One of them is a song I often sang with pride and conviction. The words of the song are:

Sare jaha se achha

Hindustan hamara...

(In all the world, our India is the best)

It is a song I will never be able to sing again.

- Harsh Mander, 2004⁵⁰

Violence, as related to the feeling of insecurity, is one of the main processes behind the backward social and economic conditions of Muslims. Community-related factors such as the declined level of education are not always absolute or independent variables, but are closely related to other processes such as violence. Recognition of direct, structural and cultural violence inflicted on Muslims through discrimination and structural processes such as institutionalized communalism in everyday life is significant to the understanding of the life-space of a majority of Muslims in India. Here, I would first refer to Abdul Rauf's (2011) study that employs Galtung's theory of violence to analyze the structural violence (as in poverty), the direct (as in riots and carnages) and the cultural (as in culture and education).

Any discussion on direct violence exercised on Indian Muslims cannot omit the 2002 Gujarat carnage, in which not only the police was an accomplice, but so was the state itself and its machinery, from the governor to the chief minister, the home minister, the BJP allies, the district administrators, judicial magistrates and even hospitals (Abdul Rauf, 2011; Jaffrelot, 2007). Although what happened in Gujarat cannot be generalized to the rest of India, such incidents could be revealing to inherent symptoms. The wide spreading expansion of the BJP in India is an alert that

⁵⁰ Mander, H. (2004). *Cry, My Beloved Country: Reflections on the Gujarat Carnage*, p. 30.

must be taken into consideration. That is in addition to the remark that the atrocities committed in Gujarat had symbolic attributes. The violence did not stop at killing, but extended to burning corpses and killing unborn babies. The emphasis on raping women and killing babies carried subtexts that reflected the mentality of fear on the Hindu race and the apprehension of Muslim high fertility rates (Abdul Rauf, 2011; Jaffrelot, 2007; Sarkar, 2002).

The role of the police in the Gujarat pogrom cannot be independently considered from its general role in Indian society in relation to minorities. Muslims were not the sole group that suffered because of the complicity or passivity of police role, but also other minorities such as the Sikhs in 1984 in Delhi. In recent times, the police are also notorious for its role in executing fake Encounters against Muslim youth, which usually end up with the killing or detainment of innocent lives. Encounter Killings became a phenomenon typical of South Asia. In her study of the police and political violence in India, Jauregui (2011) points out the definition of encounter killings, as available on Wikipedia, to be “a euphemism used in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to describe extrajudicial killings in which police shoot down alleged gangsters and terrorists in gun battles.” (p. 379). Public and popular descriptions of these encounters add the adjective ‘fake’ to them to denote how they were pre-planned as manifestations of state-sponsored murder (*ibid*).

One of the most exhaustive studies on the role of police in communal riots was conducted by Vibhuti Narain Rai, a senior police officer in UP, whose findings confirmed the partisanship of police during riots, the discrimination in the use of force at police stations against Muslims, and the diametrical opposition in the perception of the police by Hindus and Muslims where Muslims consider the police as their enemies while Hindus perceive them as protectors and friends (Subramanian, 2006).

The frequency of this type of violence shows the significant clash between fundamental rights inscribed in the constitution and their violation on an everyday basis by the police. Extra-judicial killings (Ansari, 2006; South Asian Human Rights Documentation Center, 2003), denial of bail (Khan, A. 2006), and prejudice in representation that led to the communalization of the police are all forms of these violations. It has been also noted that no direct and formal action on the part of the state has been taken to circumvent these policies (Subramanian, 2006; Khan, A. 2006). Special emphasis is directed at the illegality of terror investigations in the cases associated with fake encounters and state-wide arrests of youth and the usage of torture in their interrogations (Ali M. ,

2012; Subrahmaniam V. , 2011; Setalvad, 2010).⁵¹

Considerable media evidence reports the increasingly politicized actions of the Indian police and how some factions of the governing party and local bodies have used it against minorities. In addition to this, in many ethnic conflicts in Punjab, Gujarat, West Bengal and UP, the police has been ineffective (Weiner, 1997, p. 488). In specific contexts like Gujarat and Rajasthan, Indian Human rights activists confirm that the only relationship Muslims had with the police was of terror. To overcome this, organizations like ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy) have started from 2007 forming the internally displaced victims in Gujarat into an organization and have conducted public hearings in Gujarat and Delhi where approximately six thousand victims came and some openly recounted what had happened to them. In the Urdu press, there was a noted emphasis on the expressions of the Muslim communities for a need of sense of security, after the break out of violence in the month of Ramadan in Moradabad in UP, and the brutal killings of the police that preceded these incidents in Forbesganj in Bihar in June 2011.

On a side note, gender concerns have to be emphasized. Gujarat being the most striking case of violence committed against women in India, several studies and activists have focused on the impact of Gujarat carnage on Muslim women and children (e.g. Sarkar, 2002; Hameed et al., 2002; Setalvad's articles in *Communalism Combat*; *Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan* Indian Muslim Women Association). Though being devoid of communal violence, the state of Kerala has been witnessing raising alarms on the rates of violence against women and has thus called scholarly attention to it (See, for example, the works of J. Devika and Usha Zacharias). Most studies on the remaining states of India have focused on the low educational status among Muslim women especially in UP, Bihar and West Bengal.

What happened in Gujarat ushered in the empirical reality of the transformation of some communities in India into alien communities. This was first made possible during colonial times through the British system of census and enumeration, then was consolidated through the instrument of separate electorates and institutionalized through the study of Indian history and its epochal divisions into Muslim versus non-Muslim rule (Abdul Rauf, 2011; Datta, 1993; Hasan 1980; Pandey, 1989).

Cultural violence could be embodied in the Hindu-nationalism discourse that will be tackled in

⁵¹ Teesta Setalad argues that the extrajudicial killings are being used as tactics by the authorities. The recent cases of Ishrat Jahan and Sohrabuddin as victims of these extrajudicial killings were widely circulated in the Urdu press.

the next section in this chapter. The compulsory singing of the Vande Mataram in schools was considered, by some, as the veneration of a country in the form of a deity or goddess that excluded them from a pan-Indian cultural fold.⁵² In Abdul Rauf's (2011) words, "It is a policy of homo-nationalism that attempts to remove all traces of Muslims history, culture and identity from public consciousness and construct a false narrative of historical antagonism for justifying the violence used against the community" (p. 71).

The division among different kinds of violence is also linked to the two different types of power diffusion; as a material force and at the level of consciousness or culture (Mitchell, 1990). Domination through creating an environment of fear not only shows physical vulnerability, but also indicates the integration of fear in everyday life in the minds of people. The history of the fear psychosis in Delhi, for example, goes back to partition and the massacres witnessed in Old Delhi and *Qutub Minar*.⁵³ It is often recalled that the area of *Qutub Minar* had 90% Muslim inhabitants and thousands of Muslims were massacred, to the extent that people were saying there was another *Qutub Minar* of the bodies of the Muslims (Interview with Mazoor Alam). The result of this psychosis is the inability of future planning since the main concern is survival. Identity, hence, features as a top priority and a precursor for survival.

This predicament of the lack of a sense of security among Indian Muslims necessitates the reality of spatial segregation among Muslim and Hindu communities. On the one hand, there is the 'mini-Pakistan' phenomenon, where urban Muslims get ghettoized, especially in Mumbai, Delhi and the state of Gujarat. However, this term seems controversial as it is used in Hindu-nationalistic speeches referring to the difference between their ghettos (Muslims') and our shining cities (Hindu Nationalist') (Abdul Rauf, 2011). In addition to tainting the ghettos with an anti-social criminal outlook, I had heard it once from a Muslim auto rickshaw driver describing Meerut as a Mini-Pakistan, where Muslims form a collective power. It seems imperative to note the surprised look on the face of a Muslim university lecturer I had interviewed once he knew of this driver's story and that he was a Muslim. The logical story, to him, would have been that he was a Hindu driver complaining of the Muslim population and reflecting the Hindutva's sense. On a Hindu upper middle class level, this sense is evident in the marketing strategies of new residential projects along

⁵² Vande Mataram is originally a poem written in Bengali and Sanskrit by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1882. The first two verses became India's national song and stirred significant agitation among certain Muslim groups who banned its singing due to the veneration of India as a mother, and thus due to the aspect of idolatry.

⁵³ *Qutub Minar* refers to a historical minaret in Delhi and the area surrounding it.

community lines 'where one can live without the troubling presence of the 'other', which have been supplanted by a Supreme Court decision to approve restrictions of membership to persons from the same caste or religion (Abdul Rauf, 2011).

In her study about the Emergency in Delhi, Tarlo (2003) narrates the targeting of Muslim urban poor in the sterilization campaign led by Indira Gandhi in 1976. Tarlo expounds that individual and collective fear and anger could be discerned from victims' reports. The feeling of insecurity dominates the way they perceive not just their past but also their future. It is not just the mere experience of a riot or communal violence that shapes a Muslim's perception of fear, but also a strong anticipation of violence that could erupt in any moment. She cites the following quotation of a young Muslim man: "We are, after all, living in a country which is governed by others. Whatever they want to do to us, they do it whether we want or not" (Tarlo, 2003, p. 134). She explained the context of this quotation as a continuation to a discussion on the exclusion of Muslims in a specific colony from the electoral roll in the recent local elections and on the police participation in the riots.

Most reports, studies and expert recommendations on the remedy to the mishaps in Indian democracy lie in the inclusion of Muslims in law enforcement agencies just as the police and the judiciary, which would result in monitoring and curbing the communal elements on both societal and state levels (Khan, A., 2006).

In general, demands by Muslims, as expressed through the press, political parties, and pressure groups since independence, unfortunately do not reflect the interests of the community's largely North Indian elite. These usually include reservations in government employment, control of Aligarh Muslim University, preservation of the Urdu language, and preservation of the Muslim Personal Law. A fifth concern, the prevention of anti-Muslim violence is also stressed upon since it relates more to the Muslim masses. This phenomenon of interest disparity between the masses and the elites is well-depicted by Shahabuddin and Wright (1987), as they complain that "the uneducated and tradition-bound masses are still more readily mobilizable as Muslims by their elite on emotionally charged symbolic issues than on bread-and-butter questions of economic development, health, and education" (p. 162).

The external impediments to Muslim politics relate to the problem that their inclusion in Indian politics has been set and circumscribed by dominant political configurations in society through the wider political culture and the ascendancy of Hindutva. Internally, very few Muslims leaders have had the imagination to carve out an appropriate political space for Muslims that can do justice to the diverse needs of the community without either succumbing to extremism or, more characteristically,

becoming pliant tools of the state.

The noted rise of the Hindu right-wing ushered in the reduction in secular spaces through the complicity of public organizations in depriving Muslims of their secular rights guaranteed by the Indian constitution. In addition to the communalization of state agencies such as the police and the bureaucracy, corporate institutions such as the press or professional associations have also been instrumental in the exclusion of Muslims from the mainstream (Bremen, 1999, p. 273).

These impediments to the emergence of robust Muslim politics lay in Partition. Before it, Muslim politics revolved around two sets of issues: the political and civic representation, which remained most important and unresolved; second, social and legal reform, for which after independence, most of the grass roots momentum vanished.

Mehta (2004) further argues that Congress and the Indian state had a Janus face towards Muslims. On the one hand, they presented their own solicitousness by selectively directing benefits towards Muslims, funding madrasas, arranging *haj*, protecting personal laws from judicial scrutiny. On the other hand, it is argued that they alienated Muslims from the political process. Muslim representation in all spheres of public life (parliament, press, police, civil service, big business) still remains on average far below what their numbers would warrant. The fact is that Indian politics acknowledged Muslims, in so far as it did, as a supplicant minority, not as full citizens. The resources of the state directed towards Muslims were meant to reinforce their status as minority and not to integrate them fully into the political process:

Given the sense of siege that majoritarianism has produced, the existence of thousands of displaced refugees, and the carnage of Gujarat, Muslims will have to show an extraordinary degree of restraint and forbearance. It is sometimes said that only minorities can practice true toleration because they have to put up with more threats and instigations than the majority. This is now true of Indian Muslims than never before. (Mehta, 2004, p. 85)

The success of state management of communal riots in the South versus the North should be noted. This is accounted for by the strength of the middle and lower caste mobilization around a Dravidian identity in the South. In the case of the Ayodhya mosque dispute, the leader of the IUML in Kerala invited the opposition leaders (the communists) and threatened to dismantle the coalition with Congress unless the state managed an overhaul of the police and bureaucracy against any elements inciting for anti-Muslim riots (Wilkinson, 2002). This is in addition to the speedy trials, like the Marad riots case (explained in section 7.3).

4.3.3 Nationalism: The ideological discourse

But to make the future of Muslims in India more secure will require a new political imagination that combines principle with prudence to defeat the forces that are putting the interests of Muslims- and all citizens of India- at risk. The sad fact is that since partition there has not been any form of meaningful Muslim politics for a variety of reasons. Politics, in the genuine sense of the term, requires the availability of a public space and a public discourse where issues of common concern could be debated without let or hindrance. Such spaces have been in an effective sense closed to Muslims.

- P.B. Mehta, 2004⁵⁴

The Indian state employs two principles evidently through the constitution. The first is called in Sanskrit *sarva dharma samabhava* (equal attitudes towards all religions) and *dharma nirapekshata* (religious neutrality) (Mitra, 2003). Although the stress on these two significant markers of the Indian state is evident through many political and social studies, the dominance of upper caste Brahminical influence on the social and political everyday life in India cannot be negated. This dominance is manifested in the Hindu Nationalistic discourse that emerged in the nineteenth century, but was codified only by the early 1920s through the work of V.D. Savarkar (Jaffrelot, 1996). The term Hindu Nationalism has been incorporated into the study of Indian politics. Although its conceptual linkages have more to do with fundamentalism and communalism, the term nationalism has been attributed to it, and the whole term of Hindu Nationalism is often associated with other derogatory phenomena and institutions of Indian politics such as the Sangh Parivar, the RSS, the Shiv Sena, the saffron wave and *Hindutva*.⁵⁵ Zavos (2000) explains that the transformation of nationalism into communalism occurs upon the instrumentalism of the elites of an extreme form of nationalism to create a violent political force. The political manifestation of the Hindu Nationalism was historically evident in two organizations. The first was the Mahasabha which was founded in 1915 and by the 1920s assumed a high political profile on the national and anti-colonial level. It came as a counterpart to the Muslim League, and thus sought to represent the Hindus as a political party. The second organization was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which was

⁵⁴ Mehta, P. B. (2004). Secularism and the Identity trap. In M. Hasan (ed.), *Will Secular India Survive?*, p. 82.

⁵⁵ Major organizations making up the Hindutva network are the RSS, the BJP, the VHP (Vishva Hindu Parishad), the Bajrang Dal, and the Shiv Sena.

formed in 1925 as a regional organization, and it was around the late 1930s when it began to have an impact on national politics (Zavos, 2000). Significant members of the Mahasabha joined the Bharatiya Jana Sangh which was transformed later in 1980 into the Bharatiya Janata Party, currently the second biggest national political party in India on a national level. Another Hindu nationalistic organization is the Shiv Sena. Unlike the RSS, it is regionally based in Maharashtra, and had started its work by targeting South Indian immigrants in Mumbai regardless of their religion in addition to communists. Today, it mainly targets Muslims (Gupta, 2005).

The Hindu nationalistic discourse started with extending the history of domination to incorporate the Muslim rule over India and therefore to designate Muslims as foreigners (Alam J. , 1999). This helped the Sangh Movement to actively describe Muslims as a dangerous and undesirable community who do not qualify for being equal citizens. This was clearly manifested throughout the Ram Mandir Movement (Khan, A., 2006). This is in turn reflected in government-managed schools, history books, modes of greeting and formal cultural programmes.

S.K.Ghosh's studies on the Muslims of India (1984 & 1987) are examples of the discourse on Hindu nationalism. He portrays Muslims as an ungrateful minority in India, whose religion prevents it from sharing communal harmony with other communities. He claims that Muslims see India as *Darul ḥarb* and that they are an inclusive monolithic community sharing an outcaste attitude to external communities. Their tactics to transform India into a Muslim country are never-ending through polygamy and resistance to family planning, infiltration from Pakistan and Bangladesh, the use of Gulf money, and conversion of lower castes.

The Bhartiya Janata Party's ideology and policies reflect this discourse on a national level. Das (2004) cites examples of the BJP's discourse against Muslims in what has been published in the BJP newspaper *Swastika*. These include stating that not only do Muslims practice foreign religions and have extraterritorial loyalties, but they also constitute a 'drag' on the nation because they are ignorant, stubborn, resisting education, and unlike Hindus, they refuse to practice birth control (p. 385). The BJP ideology places the 'Hindu' ideology at the core of the nation, criticizes Muslims for failing to integrate and for being 'disloyal', and thus criticizes the practice of secularism as having wounded the Hindu ethos (Singh, K., 2005). This is what makes the BJP criticize the term secularism and argues that it has become a creed in itself that had destroyed the principles of *sanatan dharma* (the eternal creed of Hinduism) and *bhartiya samskriti* (Indian culture) (Chowdary, 2007) thus leading to its replacement with the hegemonic 'integral humanism' (BJP website, 2012).

Statements of BJP politicians reflect these discourses in a rather obvious way, hence questioning

the nature of secular democracy. These include Gujarat's chief minister Narendra Modi's statement "all Muslims are not terrorists but all terrorists are Muslims", in addition to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's proclamation that "Muslims are the source of problems all over the world" (Abdul Rauf, 2011) and hence find bitter resonance among the Muslim community. In many of my interviews with Muslim students, they mentioned these statements while expressing their grief and their frustration at having to deal with such declarations.

To consolidate this ideology by reaching power, political and electoral techniques are employed. Communal violence and the creation of fear are some of them. Engineer (1999) contends that when the BJP is not in power, it needs to incite communal violence in order to consolidate the Hindu votes and when it is in power it tries to show the minorities that they are quite safe under its disposal. This happened in 1998, in UP, in Hyderabad in order to alienate Muslims from Telugu Desam Minister or by BJP or *majlis*, and was realized in Gujarat (VHP and Bajrang Dal against Muslims marrying tribal girls) (Engineer A. A., 1999). Finally, the Gujarat carnage occurred as "a public spectacle whose aims were unmistakable. It was a public warning to Muslim citizens from the government of the world's favorite democracy" (Roy A. , 2009).

There is a noted failure of the state to check the *Sangh Parivar* and the partiality of judgment and communalism. This is evident in bureaucrats attending cultural events of RSS, career development of police personnel involved in communal riots, mainstream media coverage of communal forces, ceremonial pūjas and anti-Muslim speeches by politicians.

The abuse of Dalits and Adivasis in the realization of the Hindu Nationalist plots is another critical topic dealt with in many of the studies on Hindu Nationalism. Dalits find opportunities, through participation in Hindu nationalistic violence to become included in the Hindutva imaginary and to get rid of their inferior status (Jaffrelot, 2007; Abdul Rauf, 2011). Not just Dalits, but also the middle class Hindus tend to vent their frustration on the Muslim community. The belief that Muslims anyway account for less than citizens is the driving force behind the pouring of rage from the urban and urbane (Abdul Rauf, 2011, Mander, 2009).

The memory of partition played a role in (re)shaping political identities and voter's preferences and thus the spread of BJP in North India and especially in Delhi. According to Jaffrelot (1996), the Hindu nationalist movement has actually obtained considerable support pre-1947, this was further strengthened by the influx of Punjabi refugees who perceived the Congress' policy towards Muslims as appeasement and thus were partially used in mobilization campaigns.

Engineer (1998) is of the opinion that it is the educated modernist middle class that is directly

involved in power struggles and thus gets involved in rightist or fundamentalist movements. This explains why the BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and RSS are not provided by orthodox Hindu priesthood. It is through matters of education like history text books, singing of *Vande Mataram*, *Saraswati Vandana Mantra* in schools, and Vidyabharti syllabus that the role of BJP becomes most obvious. What is enforced is a vision of a ‘one-dimensional man’ and an educational system based on centres of acknowledgement and recognition.⁵⁶ The RSS wanted to also amend some constitutional articles, like article (25) by calling to eliminate the freedom of religious propagation and articles (29) and (30) concerning the rights of minorities to establish institutions (See Appendix 1 for the full text of the articles).

Jafferlot's studies on Hindu Nationalism show how in addition to the creation of communal organizations such as the RSS, and complicity in Hindu-Muslim riots, there was a new strategy implemented in bomb blasts or as he calls it “emulating Islamist terrorism” (Jafferlot, 2010). The Abhniav Bharat organization, responsible for the Malegaon blast, resorted to two tactics. The first was of bomb blasts, and the second was the search for outside support, mainly from Israel and Nepal, and for the purpose of acquiring training, equipment and political asylum (*ibid*).

In addition to direct violence, structural violence is also portrayed in Bollywood films: the villain, the criminal, the backward, the poet, the nawab, or the lazy, who are all Muslims. Muslims are never engineers, teachers, doctors or professionals (Abdul Rauf, 2011). The media play another role through the manipulation and distortion of news and events. There is often a sudden appearance of offensive writings against Islamic history in particular. Further distrust of the media by the community is produced when the inability or the complicity of the government in taking punitive measures against these incidents is sensed (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 171).

Critiques of Hindu nationalist discourse focus on the targeted carving of a ‘natural’ and mainstream idea of a citizen and of belonging to a national and imagined community. The polishing of nationalism in India with a moral obligation is argued to be the reason to its appeal and power. Eventually this led to the creation of the hyphenated national and citizen and the unhyphenated one (Pandey, 2004, p. 152).

On another level of the debate, there is a reference to the impact of Hindu nationalism on the Indian Constitution. Singh (2005) offers an example of questioning the secular basis of the

⁵⁶ The *Saraswati Vandana Mantra* is another important Hindu *mantra* linked to the Hindu Goddess, Saraswati, of knowledge and wisdom.

constitution through pointing out several Hindu biases. The first concerns the naming of India as Bharat (Article 1), a term that is not commonly used by all Indians and reflects a Hindutva mentality of a sense of ownership of the newly independent India. Second, the emphasis on centralization and Union power was a basis Hindutva idea, as opposed to the demand by Muslim politicians for more powers vested within federal states. Third, the expression of state interest in the social welfare and reform of the Hindu religious institutions (Article 25 (2.b) as well as the assimilationist policy towards the Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists are other examples challenging the secular nature of the state. Fourth, the specification on the prohibition of cow slaughter (Article 48) does not only challenge the idea of constitutional secularism, but also reflects power structures that helped in furthering the argument of upper caste Hindus at the expense of the Dalits and other religious minorities. Finally, the emphasis on the Hindi and Sanskrit languages and the Devangari script (Article 343) shows the Brahminical Hindu bias since none of the tribal languages that had a much higher number of people speaking them were accorded an equal status in the constitution. Singh eventually contends that these issues comprise a sort of institutionalized communalism that is manifested in social and state institutions such as the civil service, police, media, arts and education.

4.3.4 The discourse on terrorism

The police would register their deaths as foreign terrorists, take pictures of the bodies and then, late at night, go to the villagers demanding that they be buried, quickly and quietly.

- Peer, 2012⁵⁷

This quote was taken from a newspaper article unveiling some of the atrocities committed by the police in Kashmir. Although Kashmir is an exceptional context, with different political settings, the discourse on terrorism in general has assumed a hegemonic role. The issue of terrorism has been identified on a national level as the biggest threat to the Indian nation, as the Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh has declared in a recent speech. However, this discourse on terrorism seems to be exclusively linked to the Muslims. Hindu terrorism appears to be nothing more than aberrations to the system (Khaliq, 2011). Alternative Muslim media often remark how even after the discovery of Hindu nationalists' complicity in some terrorist attacks, like the Abhinav Bharat, no actions of massive hunts for associated Hindu youth takes place, but once a Muslim is caught, he

⁵⁷ Peer, B. (2012, February 15). *What Lies Beneath*. Retrieved February 15, 2012, from Foreign Policy: http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2011/09/29/kashmir_mass_graves?page=full

is immediately dubbed as a terrorist without sufficient proofs (An Indian Muslim Blog, 2012).

Media is filled with articles portraying Muslims as terrorists or potential terrorists. An example of this is the article by Subramanian Swamy, a Tamil politician, economist and president of the Janata Party, who unjustifiably blamed Muslims for the attack on Norway in July 2011. In his article, titled “How to Wipe Out Islamic Terror”, he wrote: “We need a collective mindset as Hindus to stand against the Islamic terrorist. The Muslims of India can join us if they genuinely feel for the Hindus. That they do I will not believe unless they acknowledge with pride that though they may be Muslims, their ancestors were Hindus. Those refusing to acknowledge this should not have voting rights”. Eventually, he –like most of the Hindu Nationalists– proposed declaring India a *Hindu Rāshtra* (state) (Ahmed, 2011). Such statements were classified by scholars such as Yoginger Sikand (2011) as ideological terrorism, which is carried out by upper-caste Brahminical leaders in the Hindutva camp, and has been spreading since 1901 over India (as the editor of the Urdu newspaper *Rashtriya Sahara* argues). Human rights organizations' records on police communalization reports the following remarks made by the police following incidents of violence in Katipalla in Karnataka in 2001:

You Muslims deserve to be displaced to Pakistan. You have no place in India. Right now we need only men. We will come at night to pick your women. You beardys are anti-nationals. (D'Souza, quoted in A. Khan, 2006)

In an interview with a Muslim human rights activist, she narrated the following:

As far as terrorism is concerned, there is a relationship between the Hindu right-wing and the state. [...] See the state in the last twenty years has become very communal because during the period that BJP was ruling India, they have successfully placed right-wing people almost everywhere: in the army, the media, in military, police and bureaucracy. And those people have reached now almost either the middle or top ranks in various public spheres in the country, so the fact is that they are in the government and they breed this hatred within the system. It is not only that you have to counter right-wing forces who are organized communal forces but their ideologies have also seeped in all public spaces, including these so-called secular political parties, even their way of thinking and acting have become highly communal. (Shabnam Hashmi from ANHAD, personal communication, October 2010).

Reversing the weapon of accusation of Muslims of terrorism, directing it towards the Hindus and calling it ideological terrorism has been a significant counter-discourse that Muslims have been trying to disseminate through media and literature. Police-induced terror combines symbolic,

physical and ideological violence. The terrorism discourse becomes inverted and assumes legitimacy when the projected perpetrator is the Muslim. However, looking at the counter-discourses of Muslims, it is obvious how they not only reject the whole terrorism discourse and condemn it, but also present their own reality as being victims of another terrorism discourse— that of the police.

There is also an emphasis that terrorism in India claims more Muslim victims than others, whether injured or falsely detained (Khaliq, 2011). In addition to this, there is an emphasis on resorting to factual information de-linking Muslims from international terrorist networks. Singh (2005) commented, “It is significant that of the 150 Million Muslims in India, not one joined the Taliban or Al-Qaeda” (p. 15). Iqbal Ansari (2006) clearly articulates this position:

In spite of such a dismal record of four decades of partisan policing claiming a heavy toll of life, limb and dignity and destruction of property and places of worship and in spite of non-delivery of rehabilitative justice to victims and punishment of the guilty, Indian Muslims have not joined any international terrorist outfit. This is a fact testified by observers and monitors of the scene of international terrorism including several eminent Indians. (Ansari, 2006, p. 170)

As a result of the discourse on terrorism, there has been a phenomenon of which the Muslim community in India severely suffers— that is of ‘fake police encounters’. Instead of reforming the police and correcting the impartial control of communal violence, the Indian state, in its pursue of a vision of good governance, chose to adopt Draconian laws such as TADA (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act) and POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) that contributed to the alienation and frustration among the Muslim community since these laws were mainly targeted at them to terrorize them (Ansari I. , 2006).

Media and investigative reports demonstrated police barbarism against Muslim students at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi. Records show that fake encounters have been prevalent for many years, but not enough media attention has been cast upon them. In April 2000, there was an incident characterized as “one of the worst ever incidents of police terror against students since the Emergency.” The police selectively and communally targeted Muslim students with distinct features such as beards or kurta-pyjama. Iqbal Ansari cites sections of the observations of the People Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) report:

The ones (students) sporting beard had their beard pulled, while doing this the police was using filthy words, and abusing the students for following a particular faith. [...] The

taunting, tortures and humiliations of the students on the ground of faith is a serious matter. It shows increasing communalization of the Delhi Police.

The People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) report further stated:

The police entered room after room and fell upon the students calling them ISI agents and other communal abuses and asked non-Muslim students why they were in Jamia. [...] The Masjid in the compound was broken into and the Imam, himself a Ph.D. Student, was beaten up. (Ansari, 2006, p. 169)

4.4 Discourses on socio-economic backwardness: Discrimination and marginalization

4.4.1 Muslim Personal Law(s)

The situation in which Muslims find themselves is based on multiple oppressions including caste, class, gender and religion. Traditional understandings of religion are part of the problem rather than the solution. The set of laws comprising Muslim personal legal codes are argued to have been formulated by dominant groups to justify their own interests, preserve the status quo, and justify these multiple oppressions (Sikand Y. , 2004). In common discussions about applying Islam in everyday life, there is a recurrence of the terms *shari'ah* and its application. This is embodied mainly in the whole debate of Muslim Personal Laws in India, being the area where Islamic rules of *shari'ah* are applied or believed to be applied. To make things clear, *shari'ah* simply means a path or source⁵⁸ and consequently it means the basic laws set by God that one follows in religion and are derived from the Quran and the *Sunnah* (the prophet's sayings and traditions). There is a misconception that *fiqh* or jurisprudence is synonymous to *shari'ah*, since *fiqh* refers to the knowledge or the know-how to apply these basic laws and thus is linked to the observance of certain rituals and also tends to focus on details not set out clearly in the *shari'ah*. In India, the creation of the Muslim Personal Law was equated to a *shari'ah* body. This is falsely conceived and has been criticized by many scholars due to the injustices it holds for women and thus the violation of *shari'ah*, since justice is its basic underlying principle (Sikand Y. , 2006). The unbalanced gender concerns relate mainly to divorce laws, inheritance, polygamy and maintenance issues (Vatuk, 2005). Another serious predicament is the division of Muslims along sects and religious

⁵⁸ This is according to the Arabic Dictionaries; an example of it is al-mu'jam al-waseet, accessed at <http://kamoos.reefnet.gov.sy/?page=entry&id=286287> (12th October 2011)

rifts: for example Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahl-hadith, Shia, Tablighis, Jamaati. The consequent creation of the AIMPLB (All India Muslim Personal Law Board) faced difficulties because of these sects, since it is hegemonized by self-appointed Deobandis who claim to be the dominant ones, and thus are not representative of the Muslim community. One of the latest controversial debates concerns the call by *'ulama* to the creation of state-recognized *shari'ah* courts that would be manned by madrasa-graduated clerics instead of state-appointed judges. This demand comes as a replacement to the system employed in India in which the Muslim Personal Law is applied by civil courts and judges regardless of their religion.

One of the most alluded-to cases in Indian intellectual debates and the media over the Muslim question is the problem of Muslim Personal Laws, and the reference to the Shah Bano case (referred to in section 4.1). For the media, the case is juxtaposed as an inclination by the Indian state to Muslim appeasement, insurance of Muslim votes or even tolerance of Islamic fundamentalism. For a variety of Muslim intellectuals, it is regarded through different lenses; either as touching an essential aspect of cultural rights of citizens, or as an embodiment of the "Sovereign's will in the realm of law making which Parliament was honour-bound to enforce after what the Supreme Court did in the Shah Bano Case" (Rizvi, 1998, p. 45).

An inherent problem with the discourse on a Uniform Civil Code is the hijacking of the arguments supporting this cause by Hindu Nationalists. The Hindu Nationalist discourse presents a model citizen, who is supposedly an upper caste Hindu male idealized as the universal citizen expounding the secular ideas of the middle class. That same model citizen is turned into a victim by the oppressors who fight against these ideals he carries. The Hindu Right has presented the case of the UCC (Uniform Civil Code of India) as an example of this. Within the folds of these discourses, the voices of the feminists, who are not subscribing to the Hindu nationalist project get dissolved and neglected. Roy (2002) speaks of this phenomenon by stressing on the feminism of the new woman who is an active political subject who struggles for her rights of freedom and equality as a citizen before being a woman.

4.4.2 The Urdu language

There is a strong link between language and legitimacy, and thus the sense of citizenship in a nation-state. Trust in the political system, and believing of its legitimacy enhances the sense of citizenship. There are many remarks, for example, on how Bengalis before the independence of Bangladesh deemed it unfair to consider Urdu as an official language and to be expected to be proficient in it to attain a governmental post for example. India did not suffer from this syndrome

because of the incisively managed role of federation and state powers and the acknowledgment of regional languages.

However, the question of Urdu in India and the huge debate on it in literature on Indian Muslims arose because of the colonization of the discourse on language by the question of nationalism. Historically, Urdu has been seen as a political instrument utilized by pro-partition forces and thus appeared threatening to a Hindu Nationalist imaginary (Rahman, 2012; Rumi, 2012). Urdu, as Mehta (2006) argues is “one of the few languages in the world that is treated, not as a language, but as an icon, a marker of an identity that puts the project of nationalism at risk” (p. 15). Hence,

The denial of proper public education to a significant linguistic community such as Urdu speakers is, to this extent, an attack on their sense of citizenship. [...] The denial of language rights is a denial of the political agency of a group to negotiate their terms of participation, it is to deny them a basis for active citizenship. (*ibid*, p. 21)

During the first decade following independence, the Muslim leadership was co-opted to help formulate a language policy. Muslim identity at that time could be characterized as being involuted and repressed. The Muslim response to formulate a vigorous policy for the promotion of Urdu remained weak. In the following decades, the quality and structure of Indian Muslim identity evolved in a more equilibrated form and with much self-assurance. Several factors contributed to the process:

Muslims began to regain their self-confidence due to their increasing significance in the democratic and electoral politics of the country; they moved away in significant measure from the mode of co-optation by the state to self-help, and created voluntary organizations for promotion of their language and culture. This effort has been particularly more pronounced in the western and southern parts of India, but as much in the more backward northern states. Muslims also took to establishing and reviving their entrepreneurial ventures in trade, small and medium-scale enterprises commensurate with their traditional vocations, and made noticeable progress in the educational fields, particularly in south India. (Singh, Y. 2006, p. 37)

Employing Scott’s idea of hidden transcripts, we would arrive at the conclusion that Urdu press represents a site for resistance and for the embodiment of hidden transcripts against the public and hegemonic discourses. According to Scott (1990), “the social sites of the hidden transcript are those locations in which the unspoken riposte, stifled anger, and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression” (p. 120). One aspect to be put into

consideration is despite the fact that a very small proportion of the non-Muslim Indian population could read Urdu, the majority of Urdu press, and the totality of the Muslim-owned Urdu press caters to a Muslim audience, and thus is to a great extent away from the control and surveillance of the non-Muslim public and especially the dominant sections such as the Hindu nationalist forces. Whereas a Muslim citizen would seem intimidated to talk or would feel obliged to stick to a certain path, we find examples in the editorial pieces of the ability to cast one's opinion freely without repression or inhibition. The following is a quote from a letter to the Editor in the Sahafat Urdu Daily dated 26.01.2012 and titled "Happy Republic Day" reflecting typical middle class Muslim concerns:

Today is a historically dear day to us as it put an end to the age of slavery and subjectivity to the British. The newly independent state was supposedly built on the secular premise of non-discrimination among its citizens. However, there is strong discrimination falling on Muslims who constitute the second biggest *majority*. In Gujarat, when the lives of Muslims were improving and when they were advancing, the chief minister prepared a staff to kill them. [...] Students in Azamgarh were falsely accused of terrorism to force them discontinue their education and ruin their careers. Now Azamgarh has turned into a *Terror town*... Mosques are continually targeted and whenever Muslims clear any allegations against them, new ones start appearing. (M.I., Delhi, translation and italics mine)

4.4.3 Backwardness

*Khabar Rihaii ki mil chuki hai, charagh phoolon ke jal rahe hain,
Magar bahut tez roshni hai, qafas ka dar soojhta nahi hai.
Sharah-e naadari hain khali haath sookhi aastin,
Ab to maathe par mashaqqat ka paseena bhi nahin.*

We have received the news of our release from the prison; lamps of flowers are burning bright

But there is so much light that the door of the cage is invisible

The empty hands and dry sleeve is a commentary on our poverty,

There is not even a drop of perspiration of labour on our forehead.

- Feelings of freedom and partition as expressed by the Urdu poet Siraj Lakhnavi⁵⁹

During the colonial struggle in Algeria against the French, Malik Bennabi emerged as one of the

⁵⁹ Quoted in Hasan, 2008, p. 153

most prominent philosophers whose work surpassed the traditional analysis of colonialism, to develop a notion of colonializability. Bennabi asserted the agency of the colonized Muslims in creating a state of civilizational backwardness and weakness that made their colonization inevitable. In a similar fashion, when asking different people, ranging from autorickshaw drivers to employees in the electricity company, to professors at central universities, regarding the reasons of the Indian Muslim predicament, they relate to the backwardness created by the Indian Muslim himself. It necessitated, therefore, the reference to backwardness and understanding its functioning dynamics .

The most apparent method of studying backwardness among countries is what is commonly adopted by the United Nations agencies in setting certain categories and criteria like the level of education or literacy, poverty, nutrition, and average individual income. However, this method does not explain structural social and economic characteristics of the country under study. Hence, there are three other complementary methods, as outlined by Higazy (2005). The economic method is useful for studying levels of industries, production, and dependency. The social method focuses on reasons leading to low productivity and unemployment. The psychological method regards backwardness as a waste of human value—the human being whose humaneness lost its value and respect. Since the backward world is the world where dignity has been lost, this human waste is embodied in two factors: the world of necessity and dominant oppression (Higazy, 2005). Mental characteristics of backwardness are thus first embodied in a disturbance of the methodology of thinking: the feeling that phenomena of life and relationships are too complicated for human understanding. This is followed by a state of a lack of critical thinking and absence of perseverance, leading to sudden appearance and loss of enthusiasm, as well as the dominance of emotional thinking. Eventually, the state of mind of the backward opts to live in the present moment and limits the horizons of the future (*ibid*).

This oppression neurosis directly relates to a minority complex, which according to Hasan (1987) consists of two aspects. The first one is educational backwardness (Hasan Q. , 1987, pp. 168-176) attributed in India to causes such as poverty, the accumulation of backwardness over generation from the time of establishment of British rule and Muslims' indifference to education or the reluctance to send their children to Christian schools. Backwardness, as a discourse, was attributed to the colonial times and the British policy to kill the nerves feeding the Muslim community through killing, exiling '*ulama* and blocking resources to the madrasas (Qasmi, 2005).

In addition to this, there is the partition narrative where a large part of the Muslim educated

class migrated to Pakistan.⁶⁰ Other reasons include discrimination, infatuation with conservatism, Muslims' hesitation to send their kids to governmental schools because of the lack of facilities for teaching of Urdu, the lack of visibility of Muslims' presence in the service sector. This gave rise to a perception of discrimination in jobs in public and private sectors (Ansari I. , 1989), the gearing of language and history books to Hindu ethos, and the unacceptability of an essentially Hindu culture of schools, illiteracy of mothers, attitude of Muslims towards white-collar jobs and the use of children as earning members of the family. Before moving to the second aspect, the emphasis on the Muslim collision with the Hindu dominant culture should be contested. Such a figure (Fig. 7) manifests an aspect of the composite nationalism religious scholars like Azad and Madani tried to emphasize. The Muslim celebration of the Republic day in madrasas throughout India is also another indication, as I will show later (Fig. 18).



Figure 7 A Muslim mother with her son dressed as the Hindu God Krishna for a school function. Source: Times of India 01.09.2010.

The second aspect of the minority complex is social and political malintegration. Almond and Verba (1963) developed a conceptual framework for understanding political integration in terms of people's orientations rather than in terms of macro-level factors. According to them, (in)congruence of political orientations of the people and the political system may generate three kinds of responses: allegiance (high level of political awareness and positive evaluation); apathy (political awareness and indifference to effective and evaluative assessment of the system); and alienation (awareness and negative feelings thus negative evaluation). Bonds of affiliation between people and

⁶⁰ In addition to the partition background, there are other historical studies aiming at falsifying theories on Muslim educational backwardness based on ideas of a "hurt pride" and religious obscurantism by attributing backwardness to discriminatory policies practiced by the colonial powers (See for example: Siddiqui, 1989)

the system are strengthened by people's competence in their role as citizens and subjects, and by flows of feeling from the primary and secondary groups to polity and partisanship (Hasan Q. , 1987, pp. 177-179).

In 2006, the first detailed and government-commissioned report on the social, economic and educational conditions of Muslims in contemporary India (known as the Sachar Committee Report) was presented to the Parliament. The report divided the problems of Muslims in the following categories: identity-related, security-related, equity-related issues. These categories, just like the hegemonic discourses I have been presenting throughout this chapter, are not mutually exclusive or independent. To the contrary, they are deeply inter-related and causal.

The identity and security-related aspects in the report directly relate to the political and ideological discourses. Considerable media evidence reports the increasingly politicized actions of the Indian police and how some factions of the governing party and local bodies have used it against minorities. In addition to this, in many ethnic conflicts in Punjab, Gujarat, West Bengal and UP, the police has been ineffective (Weiner, 1997, p. 488). One of the major triggers of this is the visibility of Muslims in public spaces. Lack of security due to the fear of eruption of ethnic violence and police impartiality led to the shrinkage of safe spaces for women and the transformation of common public spaces into segregated spaces. Thus, an apparent clash with citizenship ideals appears when the feeling of being at home gets redefined. This fear-triggered and self-imposed ghettoization led to another complicated chain of deterioration on socio-economic levels. There is a reported short supply and neglect by municipal and government authorities when it comes to infrastructure (water, electricity, sanitation, roads, transport facilities) and schools, public health facilities, banking facilities and ration shops. This indeed led to poverty and sustained low levels of education due to poor access to school and pessimistic perceptions of one's children's futures. The literacy rate among Muslims in 2001 was 59.1%. This is far below the national average (65.1%). Das (2004) spoke of three modes of inclusion and exclusion:

1. Through the use of institutions such as festivals, sports, processions,
2. Through the creation of new status systems and modes of socialization (e.g. hierarchical educational system),
3. Through the formation of community (nation-*rāshtra*) to symbolize the social cohesion of the members of the group.

What Indian Muslims in certain spheres in India suffer from is essentially socio-economic

discrimination and cultural exclusion but not political discrimination, as in the case with other minorities around the globe. Socio-Economic discrimination mainly refers to employment, housing and credit market. Cultural exclusion is defined by Madanipour as a situation in which group members are marginalized from the symbols, meanings, rituals and discourses of the dominant culture. It is seen as a continuum from full integration in society to complete lack of integration (Madanipour, 1998).

One of the remarkable results of the way the Sachar Report was methodologically carried out was the division of Indian Muslims along caste lines and thus the ability to compare them with other socio-religious categories, hence the facilitation of classification of Muslim groups into either general or OBC categories. Jodhka (2007) contends that this classificatory system reshapes the discourse on Muslims from being a community to a population, and thus could be easily targeted in developmental policies. Eventually, Jodhka adds, “the question of citizenship begins to take priority over the questions of identity and cultural distinctiveness” (Jodhka, 2007, p. 2998).

In a report by Iqbal Ansari, presented to the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban, factors leading to structural discrimination were identified as following:

1. Exclusivist Hindu cultural nationalism.
2. Hindu chauvinist reading of medieval Indian history that keeps on portraying Muslims as oppressors of Hindus.
3. Regarding Islam as an adversary of Hindu Dharma.
4. Emphasis on the bitterness caused by the communally divisive politics of 1940s and blaming the Muslims for partition.
5. Sustained unfriendly Indo-Pak relations.
6. Islamic fundamentalism.
7. Hindu concerns about losing lower castes who convert and leave the unfold of Hinduism due to the caste system.

Usually the situation of any social community in a society is a function of two distinct elements. The first one is access to social assets that the community has traditionally commanded. The second element is the structure of facilities, which the wider society provides for the social advancement of the community and its members. Because of the peculiar mode of organization of Indian society,

Indian Muslims are susceptible of being exposed to a greater diminution of access to this structure of facilities for social advancement (Ahmad I. , 1989).

Concerning the poor, the official perception of the poor in Indian towns as a social threat, according to Gooptu (2001) came more directly from Victorian Britain. A moral imagination had underpinned ideological constructions of poverty and the urban casual poor had come to be seen as the repository of a deviant culture needing moral and behavioral transformation, either by philanthropic persuasion or, if necessary, by administrative fiat or state coercion. In Britain, by the early twentieth century, solutions to poverty were sought through state welfare regimes. Therefore, the middle classes gradually incorporated the working classes in institutional and representative politics. In India, under the colonial government, there was an absence of a welfarist programme. Policy measures remained oriented towards discipline, regulation, and segregation in alliance with Indian elites and were reflected in local policies and policing (Gooptu, 2001, pp. 12-13).

This negative perception eventually led to politics of discrimination, which is defined as “inappropriate and potentially unfair treatment of individuals due to group membership” (Dovidio et al., 2010, p. 8). Discrimination is embodied institutionally and culturally. Institutional discrimination refers to the existence of institutional policies that unfairly restrict the opportunities of particular groups of people, it usually stems from individuals, stereotypes and prejudice. Cultural discrimination on the other hand is deeply embedded in normative ways of behavior and standards. It occurs “when one group exerts the power to define values for a society. It involves not only privileging the culture, heritage, and values of the dominant group, but also imposing this culture on other less dominant groups”. It is argued that the development of 'false consciousness' and compliance to the status quo among disadvantaged groups is a result of the power of cultural discrimination (*ibid*, p. 11). One aspect of this is prevalent in T.K. Oommen's study of the sociology of affirmative action, which proved the vast divide in the perception of alien and native religions, and hence the deprivation of Muslims and Christians of affirmative action (Oommen, 1990).

Now Muslims are realizing that the key to their security is education, and particularly in riot-affected areas like Gujarat, there is a high demand for quality education especially for girls. Girls are indicators of the change happening in the community. They are slowly breaking the confinements of being a minority within a minority (Bandukwala, 2006). Considerable stress has been shed on the significance of education as both a marker of the Indian Muslim dilemma and as a solution. Muslim authors such as Qaradawy have pointed out the irony that despite the importance of knowledge in Islam (since Islam considers acquisition of Knowledge as a medium of attaining

success in this world and the world hereafter) and how its concept of education encompasses all disciplines of secular as well as religious society, two-thirds of Muslims in the world are illiterate, and three-quarters of the female Muslims are illiterate (Shahid, 2006). Despite this, the initiatives of the Muslim community to enhance its welfare through Madarsas and Waqf associations should not be neglected.

In India, dropout rates among Muslims are highest at the levels of Primary, Middle and Higher Secondary schools compared to all the socio-religious categories. As a result, there is a higher percentage among the self-employed, and lower than the backward classes in regular jobs. There is also a noted high percentage of female self-employed Muslims that amounts to 70%. The National Sample Survey provides data for workers engaged in “Public Order and Safety Activities” both at the state and the central government level. The available estimates show that the share of Muslims in these activities at the Central government level was only about 6 %, while that of the Hindu-Upper Caste’s was 42 percent and both Hindu-Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Hindu-Other Backward Classes had a share of 23 % each. (Sachar Report, p. 186). According to CSDS data, if we were to take out 6-7% of those who belong to the gentry or the middle classes among the Muslims, then the condition of the ordinary Muslim is no better than that of the Dalit or the most backward castes. (Alam J. , 2001). Reservations for Muslims who are listed as Other Backward classes are found in Tamil Nadu (3.5%), Andhra Pradesh (4% but still contested in court) and Kerala where the entire community has been classified as “backward”.⁶¹ The acquisition of the right to reservations has enabled the community to overcome the predicaments posed by job discrimination. The problem prevails since job discrimination is more persistent in the private sector, except in a few Muslim-owned enterprises or in Muslim-dominated labor divisions such as the skins trade in South India or the silk weaving in Banaras (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, pp. 163-4).

Historical evidence presented by Mushirul Hasan (1997) shows the structuralization of the process of discrimination against Muslims and the usage of the partition as a common excuse. A Muslim lawyer from Bihar echoed this in a statement:

⁶¹ As a result, the Muslims in Kerala are entitled to reservations in education and employment to the extent of fifty percent of their share of the population (Shahabuddin and Wright, 1987, p. 164). This is provided by the right to equality Article 16(4) of the fundamental rights of the Constitution dealing with “the equality of opportunity in matters of public employment” and stating “Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.”

It is very painful to be reminded every day that we are responsible for bringing Pakistan into existence. In its creation, the Congress was as much a party as anybody else. In that spirit, I request that Muslims should not be regarded as hostages. They should be regarded as citizens of India with as much right to live and enjoy the amenities of India- the land of their birth- as anyone else. (Hasan, 1997, p. 148)

This sentiment of discrimination sadly not only still lingers but gets enhanced every day in North India as voiced by one of Delhi-based journalists in an interview:

When I am in the system, I have no problem, but when I try to act for the Muslim interest then I am crushed, discriminated, and completely denied. [...] I am talking from my experience; I have been a very famous journalist but after I started writing on Muslim issues, I was denied jobs and my articles would not be published. As long as you have no problem with the state, as long as you are in accordance with the system and its ideas, then there is no problem.

The most commonly cited factors for Muslim backwardness in India relate to the pre-independence struggle against imperialism, the intra-community's opposition to the educational system of the British, and hence the reliance on the establishment of madrasas. In the post-Independence period, external and internal factors intertwined. Externally, campaigns of defamation and demonization carried on by communal organizations against Muslims, partisan role of the police and paramilitary forces and complicity of the local administration during communal riots, discrimination against Muslims by governmental agencies, and the biased role of the media were all interplaying and inducing the state of backwardness. Internal factors, however, were deemed more powerful and dangerous. These included the apathetic attitude towards education, the low achievement motivation, endemic disunity and dissension, lack of communitarian engagement and grassroots mobilization, self-complacency and lack of initiative for self-improvement, in addition to the dearth of dedicated leadership. For girls, additional causes such as the scarcity of segregated schools for girls were conducive to the marked low rate of literacy among Muslim females, hence labeling them in the contemporary time as the most disadvantaged group in India. Weakness of Muslim institutions is measured through their weak role in management of educational institutions (in 1997 only 54 out of 3604 degree colleges were managed by Muslim institutions) (Kutty, 1997).

Despite all these factors, there have been sincere efforts to reverse these conditions. The first step was the establishment of *maktabs* and *madrasas*. *Maktabs* are small institutions usually linked to a mosque in which children go to learn how to read and recite the Quran. Mosques, adjacent rooms,

rented rooms are utilized for this purpose. *Madrasas*, on the other hand, are more educationally complicated institutions, and could be regarded as alternative schools in which children go to learn basic religious studies, but also language and some mathematics and sciences to a decent extent. This step catered to the needs of a large portion of Muslim population in marginalized areas providing education up to fifth standard, enabling students to get admission in sixth standard in vernacular schools. The noted concern of parents to let their children join mainstream schools once the madrasas did their role, or once conditions suited them, is a remarkable indicator of the resilience of the marginalized sections of the community (Shahid, 2006). This comes in contrast to claims on their alienation and rejection of the ‘system’ or the ‘mainstream’. Their role in combating illiteracy is also clearly noted since government efforts have not been successful even after five decades of governance. However, madrasahs are bringing good results: “they are working as NGOs with meager resources” (Shahid, 2006, p. 124), act as a deterrent against human trafficking, and their graduates become medical practitioners, Urdu teachers or translators.

Thus, the perception of responsibility for backwardness is divided among blaming both the government and the Muslims themselves. In an interview with a recognized Imam and community leader in Delhi, he answered my question on whose responsibility it is with:

Both! The government ignored the situation and this is why Muslims became backward. The kind of care that Muslims expect from the government is not met. Today there is discrimination in every office. It is not that we are blaming the government. No. Everyone should try his best. Nowadays Muslims do not think of their lives carefully. If there is money, it is spent on building a house and not on education, money is spent on luxury, cars, and if there is a wedding, then two to four lakhs are spent on food in wedding. (Imam Makrami, Delhi)

In another interview with a Muslim middle-class clerk living in a small town in Haryana, he cast full blame on the Muslims for not paying due attention to education. He cited how it was always the case that if someone got highly educated then they in turn would be able to achieve some social status, otherwise how would the Muslims think they would be able to find decent employment without a corresponding decent degree.

The right to civic amenities is clearly violated in India. In the time of Emergency for example, some Muslims complained not only from being excluded from voting lists, and were ascribed foreign identities like a Bangladeshi, but were also targeted in the sterilization campaign. A quote from a retired Muslim embroiderer that Tarlo (2003) cites in her study on the Emergency is useful

here:

The time was such that you had to produce that sterilization certificate wherever you went if you wanted any work of yours to be done. If you went to the hospital for some treatment, they wouldn't treat you unless you had that *nasbandi* card.⁶² It was exactly like it is now with Seshan's identity card.⁶³ That *nasbandi* card was needed at every place and in all government offices. (Tarlo, 2003, p. 157)

The failure of the traditional Indian Muslim leadership is often cited as a reason behind the predicaments of the community in North India, as compared to South India. As I had shown earlier, the calls of boycotting Republic Day celebrations by Imam Bukhari was seen by some as a sign of clear lack of foresight that could have been manipulated by Hindutva forces (Kutty, 1997). Another example was the exhilarated energy spent on the triple *talāq* (divorce) issue and the negligence of other pertinent and pressing issues pertinent to the Muslim community (*ibid*).

As an interesting result of the marginalization of Muslims, the alliance with the Dalits and other backward classes was noted. Within the Muslim communities, there has been a shift away from the concerns of security fostered by the Congress to those of equality, rights and dignity, similar to that of the OBCs' quests for recognition. Therefore, they are no longer solely considered a vote bank; they are being transformed into nation-wide political communities aiming at full citizenship. Eventually, it has opened the space for emancipatory politics and an opportunity of alignment of interests of a secular nature, and a social condition of oppressed forces (Alam J. , 2001; 2004):

One of the most remarkable, yet little noticed, developments within India's large Muslim community since the early 1980s has been the growing articulation of dissatisfaction with and protest against the traditional Muslim leadership by sections of the community. This has been accompanied by growing moves towards building alliances with marginalized non-Muslim groups, in particular the Dalits, the tribals and the Backward Castes, in the process fashioning new Islamic perspectives on religious pluralism and social liberation. (Sikand Y., 2004, p. 93)

4.5 The ideal of secularism and its predicaments in India

Finally, politics for Muslims as Muslims had no raison d'être. With the Muslim

⁶² The Hindi word for sterilization

⁶³ T.N. Seshan, the Election Commissioner at that time introduced a new system of identity cards.

League dissolved in the north and its leadership now located in Pakistan, the political trajectory of the Muslims had to be defined within the broad democratic and secular framework; a framework that had evolved through a painful and tortuous process and depended on the consensual model that Congress was attempting to create in the aftermath of Independence and Partition.

- Mushirul Hasan, 1996⁶⁴

Throughout my fieldwork in India, a recurrent theme emerged as a possibly additional hegemonic discourse; namely secularism. There is a divergence however, in the perception of secularism as a hegemonic discourse between the intellectual elite and the common people. During my interviews with university professors, lawyers, and even some students, their reference to secularism as a tool to either alienate or terrorize Muslims was often remarked.⁶⁵ Secularism as a term does not find a translated equivalent in Urdu (since the transliterated English term is used in written Urdu), hence does not feature in the conversations of the public, but rather in their own everyday practices of coexistence.

The debate on secularism in India is reminiscent of the idea of ‘imperialism of categories’ (Rudolph, 2005) where a process of hegemonizing a conceptual domain occurs through a concept originating from the West and thus results in the vanishing of the original domain from our awareness. The domain Nandy seeks to recover is religious tolerance and the hegemonic concept is secularism (Nandy, 1990). To him, overcoming the imperialism of categories occurs by bringing back into public concern the discussion on religious tolerance in South Asia instead of the language of secularism. (Nandy, 1998). By this, Nandy could have been also echoing Madan’s words: “A people must themselves render their historical experience meaningful: others may not do this for them. Borrowed ideas, unless internalized, do not have the power to bestow on us the gift and grace of living” (Madan, 1997, p. 345).

In drafting the constitution, concepts like secularism, democracy and citizenship were integrated and institutionalized, the architects of the Constitution came from different traditions and thought that secularism was the only path guaranteeing national unity and preventing conflicts. Secularism and democratic socialism were the norms selected and the discourse on secularism grew so strong that “to be non-secular [...] carried a stigma. To adopt ‘non-secular’ postures was considered an act

⁶⁴ Hasan M., (1996). *The Changing Position of the Muslims and the Political Failure of Secularism in India*, p. 206.

⁶⁵ For example, in an interview with Zoya Hasan (professor of political science at Jawaharlal Nehru University) and Mustafa Sherwani (a lawyer and a head of a regional political party in Lucknow, UP.)

of political blasphemy” (Hasan M. , 1996, p. 203).

Indian secularism attempted at controlling religion within the personal belief sphere and thus separating it not from the state but from politics itself (Karandikar, 1969, p. 293). The constitutional drafters desired to ensure that the aspect of impartiality and neutrality of the state in dealing with different communities was understood and applied through prescribed norms of civil society. To them, secularism did not aim at realizing an anti-religious state but one where “people would rise above their narrow emotional orbit ‘to integrate into a multi-dimensional harmonious fellow feeling’” (Hasan, 1997, p. 141).

Whereas some saw secularism as a hegemonizing alien idea, the widespread opinion of the common people regarded the commitment to secularism as the only solution to the threats concerning their livelihood and existence. This commitment, in Metcalf’s words appeared to signify the “struggle against the assumption, subtly reinforced in such diverse domains as the law, classical music, and film, that the real citizen in India is the Hindu” (Metcalf, 2005, p. 216).

Significant evidence in the Indian Muslim milieu shows the surprising and strict adherence to the idea of secularism. For example, there is a clear dearth of Islamic militancy and extremist Islamic parties in India (despite the absence of a constitutional ban). Political parties in general adopt strategies demonstrating a minor stream of separate Muslim parties; support of other parties; and involvement in public life through participation in debates, community and educational services. Perhaps the single exception is the Popular Front of India (based in Kerala) and the attached newly found political party the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). The refusal to sing *Vande Mataram* is also considered a resistant mechanism to the Hindu national ideal and a desire to adhere to secularism, as Madhu Kishwar argued.⁶⁶

Mamdani (2004) refers to the German Islamic Studies scholar, Reinhard Schulze (1995), according to whom, the absence of a conflict between secular and religious hierarchies (since Islam has no institutionalized religious hierarchy) is the reason why “the problem of secularism does not appear in Islam and why Islamic religious movements are not necessarily anti-secular” (Mamdani, 2004, p. 46). This argument contradicts major studies on the subject as those presented by Bernard Lewis (2010), for example, that argue for the incompatibility of Islam and secularism. Schulze argues that modern Islamic discourse is largely secular, concerned more with contemporary socio-

⁶⁶ Madhu Kishwar’s talk titled *The Religious Divide in the Indian Society*, in the Conference: “Cultural and religious pluralism: the Muslim minority in the Indian democracy, East-West Comparison”, New Delhi 18th-20th October, 2010, at the India Habitat Center and Jamia Millia Islamia.

political issues because Islamic societies were able to secularize within Islam rather than in opposition to it. Political Islam, unlike Western political Christianity, is the outcome of the work of non-clerical political intellectuals such as Iqbal, Jinnah, Maududi, Qutb and Shariati (Mamdani, 2004).

Secularization, as defined by Smith (1970), has three characteristics: the separation of polity from religious ideology and economic structures; the expansion of polity to perform regulatory functions in the socioeconomic sphere which were formerly performed by religious structures (such as family matters and education); and the transvaluation of political culture to emphasize non-transcendent temporal goals and rational pragmatic means, i.e. secular political values. Both the first and second characteristics are unproblematic since they are a matter of legislation, but since the third relates to the question of legitimacy, it becomes highly problematic (p. 85). This is precisely the point of contention among liberal/secular and Islamist scholars.

The reference to the public and the private sphere, for which the role of religion needed to be understood, touches the Arendtian and Habermasian notion of the public sphere.⁶⁷ Collective action does not always lead to the emergence of a public space in which citizens can equally attain discursive power. This is evident in Arendt's (1958) critique of the rise of mass society, in which the public realm vanishes when individuals become submerged in the subjectivity of their private world (p. 58).⁶⁸ The intrusion of emotional politics of religion hegemonizes the Indian context. The political process obviously lacks a clear-cut distinction between the two spheres of private and public, and as in the case of many developing countries, religion continues to play a strong role in politics. As Anwar Alam (2011) contended, the Indian setting is more liberal because it is not very regulative and laws are considerably negotiable in application. Since demands are channeled through multiple political institutions (as there is no certain exclusively representative Muslim

⁶⁷ Arendt (1958), in *The Human Condition*, demonstrates the rise of the social and hence the transformation of the public sphere from the traditional Greek idea that "a life spent in the privacy of "one's own" (*idion*), outside the world of the common, is "idiotic" by definition" (p. 38). Benhabib (1992) summarizes Habermas's (1989a) idea of the public sphere, "Public space is not understood *agonistically* as a space of competition for acclaim and immortality among a political elite; it is viewed democratically as the creation of procedures whereby those affected by general social norms and collective political decisions can have a say in their formulation, stipulation, and adoption." (p. 87)

⁶⁸ In Arendt's words: "The public realm, as the common world, gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak. What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved or at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them. The weirdness of this situation resembles a spiritualistic seance where a number of people gathered around a table might suddenly, through some magic trick, see the table vanish from their midst, so that two persons sitting opposite each other were no longer separated but also would be entirely un-related to each other by anything tangible" (pp. 52-53).

institution), there was a failure to recognize the Muslim community as a single faith community, which could be assimilated. This is in contrast to the construction of European liberalism that emerged with the homogenization of European societies and states.

Despite the widespread belief in and adherence to the ideals of secularism, there are several critiques to the way secularism is perceived and applied in India. Bhargava (2011) warns of the predicaments necessitated by the practice of domination in India. According to him, secularism functions in India through a framework of intra-religious domination, not just inter-religious (e.g. the denial of entry of some castes and women in certain age to some Hindu temples, or the non-equivalence between male and female testimonies among Muslims). As a result, the state should be designed in order to fight against institutionalized religious domination in both these inter- and intra-religious forms. While European secularism was shaped and inspired by concerns of intra-religious domination and not by concerns of interreligious domination, Indian secularism was simultaneously concerned with both forms of domination. Different reasons for the crisis of secularism thus occurred in both contexts. In Europe, there was a conceptual problem in understanding secularism, while in India failure is attributed not to a flaw in the ideal but because of the major challenges to the ideal. Historically in Europe, after the treaty of Westphalia, the breakup of Christianity led to every European polity forming a confessional state. There was a strong invisibility of religion in the public sphere in Europe, which led to deep negative privatization of religion. However, in Europe there is a simultaneously institutional discrimination (as evident in the non-existence of burial grounds for Muslims, discrimination in holidays, governmental subsidized schools, and slaughter houses).

Amartya Sen (1998), on a different note, outlines his definition of secularism as a “demand for symmetric political treatment of different religious communities” (p. 484). He presents six lines of argument: the non-existence critique, the favoritism critique, the prior identity critique, the Muslim sectarianism critique, the anti-modernist critique, and the cultural critique (Sen, 1998). As an answer to the non-existence critique, he emphasizes that the distinction between a secular republic and a religion-based state remains a crucial point. Second, the favoritism critique of asymmetric treatment as carried out by the right-wing Hindu factions focuses on privileging and appeasing the Muslims. This confirms the incompleteness of the system of secularism and the need to go beyond it and towards other principles of justice and fairness. Third, the prior identity critique raises the specific relevance of identity in political matters and not in social or personal belief. The assertion of priority comes from both religious sectarians (Hindu Nationalists) and those who are concerned about the increasing power of the state and the threat of usurpation of their cultural rights. Fourth,

Sen answers the Muslim sectarianism critique (the two-nation theory and the failure of Muslims to see themselves as Indians first) by asserting that no general picture of consistence of hostility of the Muslim kings towards the Hindus emerges from Indian history. In fact, evidence shows the loyalty of Indian Muslims and how their record is not different from any of the other communities. Fifth, Nandy adopts an anti-modernist critique to which Sen responds by contending that the characterization of secularism as modernism is not particularly cogent and hence does not provide a persuasive basis for the rejection of the idea of secularism. Finally, there is a culturalist critique arguing that India is basically Hindu. This critique gets invalidated, in Sen's view, since there are no grounds to alienate the right to equal political and legal treatment of minorities: "why should the cultural dominance of one tradition, even if true, reduce the political entitlements and rights of those from other traditions?" (p. 481).

In his critique of secularism, Nandy (1997) points out to four visible trends in South Asia:

1. Each religion has split into two: faith and ideology, by faith he means: "religion as a way of life, tradition which is definitionally non-monolithic and operationally plural" (p. 330). By ideology, he means "religion as a sub-national, national or cross-national identifier of populations contesting for or protecting non-religious, usually political or socio-economic, interests" (p. 330). It is with this religion as ideology that modern states deal with.
2. The growing tendency to view the older faiths of the region in a Eurocentric manner. This led to the assertion of certain polarizations: civil vs. primordial, true faith vs. its distortions, great traditions vs. local cultures or little traditions.
3. The acquisition of the idea of secularism of strong potency in the middle-class cultures and 'state sectors' of South Asia.
4. The incompatibility of the imported idea of secularism with the fluid definitions of the self in the South Asian cultures.

In the midst of these trends, Nandy is of the belief that there is a hidden political hierarchy of political actors, who first are believers neither in the private nor in the public sphere, posing as scientific and rational (e.g. Nehru), or second, who choose not to appear as believers in public, despite being so in private (like Indira Gandhi), or third, who are believers in public but not in private (Savarkar, Jinnah), and finally those who are believers in both private and public (Gandhi).

According to Nandy, the old ideology of secularism is not working in India, due to first the growth of democratic participation in politics; "religion has entered public life but through the

backdoor” (p. 336); second, modernity being the organizing principle of the dominant culture of politics; third, the lack of guarantees that the modern state would not employ discourses of nationalism, development and secularism:

While the modern state builds up pressures on citizens to give up their faith in public, it guarantees no protection to them against the sufferings inflicted by the state itself in the name of its ideology. In fact, with the help of modern communications and the secular coercive power at its command, the state can use its ideology to silence non-conforming citizens. [...] In such societies, citizens have less protection against the ideology of the state than against religious ideologies or theocratic forces. Certainly in India, the idea of nation-building, scientific growth, security, modernization and development have become parts of a left-handed technology with a clear touch of religiosity – a modern demonology, a *tantra* with a built-in code of violence. (Nandy, 1977, p. 337)

Finally, there is a noted questioning of the belief that values derived from the secular ideology or the Constitution are a better guide to political action than those derived from religious faiths.

It is this last point that coincides with some of the Islamist rejections of the blind application of the idea of European secularism. One of the most famous stances is Iqbal’s, who in *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam*, argued, “in Islam, the spiritual and the temporal are not two distinct domains and the nature of an act, however secular in its import, is determined by the attitude of mind with which the agent does it” (Iqbal, 1930/2006, p. 154).

The contemporary political and legal history of India offers many examples of the predicaments facing the application of the ideal of secularism in India. From the critique of Hindu *pūjas* (prayers) being conducted in the inauguration of national projects such as the new terminal at New Delhi international airport, to complicated election-related political games such as the government dealing with the Shah Bano case, leading up to more severe practices of the Hindu right like the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Many intellectuals have also drawn a comparison between the Hindu Right and the Nazi forces in Germany:

Indeed, in its most sophisticated forms, the campaign of the Hindu Right often seeks to mobilize on its behalf the will of an interventionist modernizing state, in order to erase the presence of religious or ethnic particularism from the domains of law or public life, and to supply, in the name of ‘national culture’, a homogenized content to the notion of citizenship. (Chatterjee, 1998, p. 347)

The interesting paradox in how the language of BJP leaders such as Advani and Joshi that ‘matters of faith cannot be decided by the law courts’ became identical with the same commentaries we read on the recent Ayodhya verdict: “The judges asserted that matters of ‘faith and belief’ have an absolute veto power over the ‘fact and legality of the ownership of mosque or temple under the dispute’” (Bhambhiri, 2010).

The demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992 was considered an eye-opener to many Muslims to the bitter reality of a general deterioration of the secular environment. However, many Muslims adopt Imtiaz Ahmad’s line of thinking in recognizing the difficulty inherent in reconciling hidden intentions that could be at best inferred, and apparent pretexts, which could be ascertained.⁶⁹ Therefore, to them, any assessment of the Indian Muslim situation in terms of widely prevalent negative attitudes and perceptions arising out of the deterioration in the secular environment can only make Indian Muslims relapse into empty political rhetoric and is unlikely to be productive of positive results except when the complaint is collective and large-scale mobilization against the action can be achieved. In addition to this, there is a presumption based on the operation of negative psychological perceptions against the community that the real culprit acting to the detriment of the Indian Muslims is necessarily always an outsider. This is not true because Muslims are themselves blocking the social advancement of other Muslims. Ahmad reached the conclusion that Indian Muslims in the past never genuinely concerned themselves to find out why the wider society should harbor such hostility towards them. The result is that they are resentful to it without being able to understand it. Understanding what makes the wider society so defensive despite its numerical and political predominance as to entertain the fear that it might easily be run down by the Indian Muslims, may enable them to develop an empathy towards it and also enable them to see what they might do to countenance its hostile psychological orientations (Ahmad I. , 1989, pp. 43-46).

To conclude, regardless of all the criticism evolving around the subject, it remains a considerable fact that Indian Muslims in their official and religious discourses have managed to accommodate and integrate the idea of secularism as an everyday reality of life. This is a measure that Muslim communities around the globe are still struggling with— be it the majority in Turkey and the Arab world or the minorities in Europe. Shaz, who regarded that the Muslim question in India is not a

⁶⁹ On a side note, Imtiaz Ahmed in a Conference on Cultural and religious pluralism: the Muslim minority in the Indian democracy, East-West Comparison, in New Delhi (from 18th-20th October, 2010), at the India Habitat Center and Jamia Millia Islamia, in commenting on the High Court ruling in the Babri Masjid dispute, he said that the High court gave a panchayat kind of judgment in the sense of attempting not to hurt anyone.

minority issue as much as it has to do with interesting dynamics of Islamicness and an understanding of the religious and ideological dimensions of the community, contends:

Never before in 1400 years long Islamic history, or for that matters, during 1000 years of their positive history in the subcontinent, Muslims had to readjust themselves with an alien system which openly de-recognized Islam as the guiding principle and yet they, as loyal citizens of free India, were expected to honor the new national creed, the secular democracy. (Shaz, 2001, p. 9)

4.6 Summary

This chapter demonstrated the life-space in which the majority of Indian Muslims (with an emphasis on North India) practice their citizenship rights and obligations. The hegemonic discourses presented here emerge after a literature review of studies pertaining to contemporary issues of Indian Muslims. These discourses, hence, were divided into three main sections: a political, an ideological, and a socio-economic. After spending nine months of fieldwork in India, I tried to compare these discourses with the specific ones emanating from Indian Muslims themselves. This resulted in adding the discourse on secularism.

Despite the democratic nature of the Indian political system, several impediments to the realization of a sense of equal citizenship emerge. After the appalling events of Babri Masjid, Ayodha, and Gujarat; to name a few, the circle of communal tension, coupled with government inaction as a response, and thus, a deep feeling of injustice that prevails among Muslims was reinforced. The consequences of the enactment of the now-repealed Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act in 2002, as well as the enduring problems of delays in giving compensation, the attitude of police, and the ghettoization and shrinking of common spaces are principal facets of these problems. It is widely argued that alienation is the condition that best describes the political sentiments from which the majority of the Muslim minority suffers. This produces citizenship of subjugation that perpetuates cycles of oppression. Hence, concern was towards tackling the issue of inclusive citizenship, and how it links to the situation of Muslims in India as a major minority group facing dilemmas, deprivations, and predicaments in the social, economic and political spheres.

Having reviewed these main dilemmas and how they are perceived by Indian Muslims, I turn in the next chapters to look at two case studies: North Indian Muslim youth in Delhi and Muslim female youth in Kerala. The objective of these case studies is to offer a deeper insight into the mechanisms of resistance these youth employ to face the above-mentioned hegemonic discourses. It

also highlights the actual concerns of youth, apart from the elite-dominated agenda of political concerns and intentions.

V. North Indian Muslim Youth and Everyday *Jihād*

5.1 The interlinkage between the Middle Class, citizenship and education

تجھے ابا سے اپنے کوئی نسبت نہیں سکتی ہو
کے تو گفتار وہ کردار تو ثابت وہ سیار

tujhe abaa se apne koi nisbat ho nahin sakti ke tu guftar voh kardar, tu thaabet voh sayyara

*You could not be a relation to your ancestors
Because they were active and constantly on the move
While you merely talked and remained stationary.*

- Iqbal (1908), Kulliyat (An Address to the Muslim Youth)

*“Verily, God will not change men’s conditions unless they change their inner selves.”
(The Quran, 13: 11). Likewise, it is manifestly clear that whatever changes the soul will
transform the society. It is, as well, an established truth that the most profound and most
magnificent patterns of change which have ever occurred in the history of mankind are
those which coincide with the flourishing and the fulfillment of a religious ideal.*

- Bennabi, 1962/2002⁷⁰

It had already been forty-five minutes that I was sitting in the car with two young bearded Muslim men. In the beginning, they drove along Nadwa road and clearly Muslim dominated areas, where signs of extreme poverty, several dilapidated tin houses, and bathing buffalos were dominant features of the road. Then, we passed by a lot of congested areas outlining the end of the urban scene with *Nawabi* architecture in a dismal state and shop names mixed between Hindu and Muslim. I wanted to ask whether these areas are mixed or Muslim dominated, but again I remained silent for fear of annoying them and burdening them with the sins of hearing a female voice. I felt it was enough that they felt they had already sinned by being with me in one car: me -a woman whose face showed. At one point, these urban signs started fading away, and we started crossing fields of nothingness where houses ceased to exist. I could not stop myself from wondering what kind of girls goes to this far away school and how they reach it. I felt this would indeed turn out to be a

⁷⁰ Bennabi, M. (2002). *On the Origins of Human Society: The Social Relations Network*. (M. E.-T. El-Mesawi, Trans.). (First published 1962), p. 94.

futile journey. I had little hope in my ability to make the girls I was heading to meet speak and open up their mind and heart to me. Since I had not received any reply for the *Salamu Alaikum* greeting I told my male accompaniments upon entering the car, my fears grew stronger.

Apart from a bunch of scattered huts and naked children running around, there was no sign of any human settlement or development. Finally, a lonely building appeared, and we stopped in front of a gate that said Jamiatul Mominat Alislamia (Female Believers Islamic College)⁷¹ in both English and Arabic scripts. I was guided to the office right next to the gate where two men sat, one around his early thirties and the other in his sixties. The one, whose photo shows on the picture gallery on the institution's website, said that he is the one responsible for managing the institution, and that the older man is his senior.

I introduced myself, then they asked me the following questions: where I learned my Urdu, if I had come alone, and whether I am married.

Then I was offered to go to the institution.

The student from Nadwa came along with me, knocked on a door and said that he had a guest, the girls behind did not appear, but just slightly opened the door and let me in alone. We did not exchange any talk and thus I did not have a chance to ask how long he was going to wait for me outside.

With both their hands, girls who were hiding behind the door shook mine saying *Salamu alaikum*. I was guided to the principal office, whom after meeting, I was astonished to realize how men who were extremely conservative tended to be friendlier than this woman. She asked me again what I was doing, whether I came alone, and then asked how come I was walking with my face showing without being covered under a *pardah*. I explained that it was not obligatory in Egypt. She asked what kind of Islam was that then. Getting increasingly annoyed with her tone, I managed to suppress my discontent, and I told her, "It is not our tradition to cover our face; however, if a man desired that his wife wore a *pardah*, she would obey his wishes." She then asked me where I had learned Urdu and apologized that the Arabic teacher was not present on that day to speak with me. She asked her secretary to accompany me to the library and meet the librarian.

We passed classes with open doors, where I saw very young girls whose ages were around six or

⁷¹ Website of the Jamiatul Mominat Al-Islamia: (<http://mominat.org/aboutus.htm>)

seven sitting on the ground writing in the notebooks and reciting in a loud voice Arabic texts. They were all wearing a uniform of a *salwar-qameez* and covering their head with a white scarf.

After introducing myself to the librarian, she called on many girls who were in fact young teachers. The minute I started introducing both my research and myself, they got strange exclamation marks on their faces. They became mute. The librarian did all the talking. When I asked about voting and whether they thought it made a difference, she instantly asked them all to leave. She started replying in a very mechanical way stressing there was no difference in India between a woman and a man, both can vote and both have equal rights. I told her I knew that, but I was asking another question. Again she mentioned the same thing. At this point, I was sure she was ignoring me and even making use of the fact that Urdu is not my mother tongue. Then she added that in India, there was no difference between Hindus and Muslims when it came to elections and political rights, it was only about personal law matters. In her own words:

Voting is our right. We people have the right to choose who will work better for us. There is discrimination though and Muslims feel injustice after Babri *masjid*, which rendered them without dignity, shocked and in sorrow. However, there is no risk on Muslims living in India because Allah protects us and we try to build our future ourselves through what Allah has destined for us (*allah ka kismet milta hei*).

I asked her how she answered those who said that education was bad for women. She said, “It is an obligation on us to learn. Or else there would be no difference between an animal and a human being. It is important to have institutions like this so that the poor can learn. It is also important to learn the Quran”. I asked about the founding of this institution. She said it was by Maulana Rizwan and his wife and was inaugurated by Maulana Abul Hasan Nadwi. It hosted eight hundred students, from all parts of India, not just UP. They graduate, teach the younger generations and then leave to get married. At the end, she had to leave to catch the school bus to go home, she gave me her number and told me to call her to chat with her about any other questions I need to know.

Then she wore her *burka*, told me her *salams*, and left. I walked towards the door where I came from and there the young secretary took me and asked me if she could show me around.

I was taken to a courtyard and walked until we reached the bedroom of two girls: the principal’s secretary (I will refer to her as Siddiqa) and her room mate who is a teacher. Both were nineteen. Plates of food arrived. Sliced fresh fruit, savoury Indian snacks, chocolate cookies and water were offered to me. The girl excused me that there was a power cut and asked, “Do you also have power cuts in Delhi or is the electricity running without problems?” Then she asked one of the students

who kept peeping in from the door, asking for permission to come in to greet me, to bring a hand fan. She came into the room and started fanning for us. When I showed unrest with this, Siddiqa took it and did it herself, as if to show me that she is not enslaving her students. Two eighteen-year old teachers came: a silent one that did not open her mouth, and an eloquent girl with the name Mariam Batoul (the Arabic term for the Virgin Mary). They said they had not voted yet because they were young but they would definitely vote in the coming elections. When I asked them how they decided whom to vote to, they said it depended on what they heard about this person, his family and his background. They were surprised when I asked them if they were going to vote, they said, “Of course, we live in a country where our chief minister and our president are both women.” Although she could not remember the name of the president of India, she emphasized the fact that it was a woman. They stated that giving the votes was their right in India. I asked if they could think of any other rights of being citizens. They could not. They also did not grasp the concept of citizenship. They asked what kind of political system we had in Egypt, they had always thought it was a democracy, when I negated that, they asked if it was like Saudi Arabia, again I said no and then I tried explaining it to them and they were shocked. They were in favor of democracy despite its malfunctioning in India. They knew about the Batla House encounter and they told me that there were countless encounters, even there at Nadwa. They spoke strongly, asserting the injustice in these encounters.

On education, they said it was not true that Muslim women were not educated; it depended on them whether they wanted to or not, “we wanted to and we told our parents and here we are. It is always a matter of heart, whether one’s heart goes towards education or not.” One of the girls was waiting for God to send her a suitor so she would get married and leave. The other said she just got admission in a university in Hyderabad and she could not apply in Lucknow because it is mixed education with boys, while in Hyderabad it is not. One girl explained that she wanted to pursue her education and get a BA in Urdu, Arabic or Islamic studies. They asked me whether I was married or not. Then the *burka* discussion came up. They asked what kind of clothes I wore in Germany and Egypt and if I wore this *salwar qameez* style as I was wearing then. They said some girls in India wore jeans and top, but they would never wear that. They said they also never show their face in public and this was a matter of tradition and had nothing to do with Islam. According to them, the Quran did not say a woman has to cover her face, and this was why they could understand my position and how I walked with my face uncovered, but to them it was simply a matter of custom and being accustomed. Siddiqa kept insisting that I should eat and she offered the two other girls but they refused, Mariam remarked, “It is not time for food.” It was obvious how they were

disciplined. Even a snack for them seemed out of order, for it was not the proper time. Their reply to the offer was not that they were full, but that it was not the proper time to eat. We went out and they accompanied me all the way to the gate, they hid there so no one would be able to see them and I bid them farewell and good luck in their lives.

The senior man who had welcomed me upon my arrival was waiting for me outside this gate. He asked me if I enjoyed talking to the girls and how I found the institution. He also asked if I had understood them since we were communicating in Urdu only. Another driver was waiting for me, again no word. At that point I decided to start covering my face with my shawl. This way, the boy sitting in the car felt a bit liberal in talking to me, asked me about my thesis topic and where I studied, this conversation was in Arabic. He talked with a smile. I kept wondering if it was the *burka* making that difference or was it just the different attitude of another human being.

What made these girls different – in my opinion – is that they not only knew what they wanted, but they also had a clear idea of what they did not want. In comparison to the developed world, where individuals have access to almost everything, from excellent health services, to good education, to career opportunities, all in a context of great mobility, these girls in almost prison-like settings, managed to acquire a different perspective and a scope for dreaming.

There are many interwoven narratives, which we can note from the conversations I had with these girls and their teachers. The most basic one, which I would like to draw attention to, is the emphasis on education and its link to modernization that directly relates to citizenship and the emergence of the middle class. The issue of Islam, as both a religion and a paradigm of thought and action, plays an additional analytical category (especially due to the fact that almost no religion has an emphasis on education like Islam).⁷² There are different actors contributing to the discourse on accommodating religious identity within the secular democratic field: the upper caste Islamic scholars or the class of the *'ulama*, the urban and rural poor and the youth with their multifarious educational, regional and economic backgrounds. In this chapter, I will look first at the relationship

⁷² The first word or order that God revealed to the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) via Gabriel, the archangel, was “Read”. There are also several sayings (hadith) by the prophet Muhammad elevating the importance of knowledge. Among them are the following: “The ink of a man of knowledge is more worthy than the blood of the martyr” ; “To spend more time in learning is better than spending more time praying; the support of religion is abstinence. It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray all night”; “That person who shall die while he is studying, in order to revive the knowledge of religion, will be only one degree inferior to the prophets”; “The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Muslim, male and female”; “One who covers a way in search of knowledge Allah will lead him to the paradise”. There is also considerable reference in the Quran and hadith to the importance of *'ulama* and authorities of knowledge: “*Ulama* are the heirs of the Prophets” and “An A’alim is the trustee of Allah on this earth”.

between the Indian Muslim middle class and citizenship, then I will focus on significant centers of learning, where the formation of middle class citizens takes place; this is mainly in minority institutions such as Jamia and madrasas.⁷³ The emphasis on these institutions is central since the present concentrations of Muslim students there pose difficulties in the attempt of the construction of a citizen imaginary in India due to the predicaments faced with the police forces and the media, the fake encounters, and the propaganda on *madrasas* as potential centers for terrorism. This constant struggle summons the failure of the project of citizenship, modernization and the struggle towards the acquisition of middle class values since frustration and a drive of insecurity overwhelm these youth. The next step is demonstrating these Muslim youth's measurable sense of collective action and their stance to political and social indicators such as their feelings of alienation and discrimination, the terrorism discourse, and the increasingly developing gender issues. Finally, I briefly examine the politicized role of two Islamic organizations: Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

This chapter concerns the first case study of this thesis, namely Muslim youth in Delhi, in addition to fieldwork-based reference to Muslim youth in *madrasas* in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The focus is directed to educated Muslim youth (both male and female) who belong to the Indian middle class. The attempt is not to generate a representative study of all Indian Muslim youth in general, since as I noted in the previous chapter, the divisions along regions and classes are utterly overwhelming and preventive of any representative study. It could be thus inferred that the possibility of finding a special class or region which could represent the Indian Muslim is very faint, if not absent. The lack of a Pan-Indian Muslim identity, the lack of leadership except to an extent in specific regional and local politics, and the lack of a homogeneity in the level of education, following Islamic rules, or adherence to the '*ulama* are all reasons for this representation's impossibility. Even the literature on the history of Muslims is either dominated by the upper classes' (the *Ashraf* or *Sayed* or *Thangal*⁷⁴) histories, or by the highly contested Jinnah politics, which was anyway solely representative of the thin Muslim middle class at the time of Indian Independence struggle. Hence, no history of India's Muslims could claim to be representative of their masses. Since the North Indian urban elites dominated the political discourse, a repertoire of expression and reception had to be created:

⁷³ Jamia Millia Islamia only acquired the minority institution status in February 2011. This meant that 50% of its seats are reserved to Muslim students.

⁷⁴ The first term commonly refers to East Indian or Bengali Muslims, whereas Sayyid is mainly used in North and South India. Thangal is a Malayalam term referring to the Muslims who claim Arab ancestry.

The politicians of self-expression contemplated sealed, self-absorbed and un-networked subjects that engage in a game of fierce mutual competition without any clear aim. The only discernible objective was the desire to express an inherent sense of being and to have this being recognized as ‘authentic’ and ‘strong’ by an imaginary audience. (Daechsel, 2006, p. 18)

The choice to consider the middle class in Delhi stems from several factors. The first is the conviction that the middle class carries a strong belief in education as a social mobility factor and thus realization of the ideas of citizenship. With speculations on the increasingly differentiated Indian Middle class size swelling to half of its population in the next generation (Rothermund, 2008; Das G., 2002), emphasis is duly located on the role this class plays and the ideals it holds. Second, most studies have focused on the Hindu middle class and its role in the emergence of Hindu Nationalism (Jaffrelot, 2008; Fernandes, 2006), perhaps in a manner reminiscent to the role the middle class played in the rise of fascism in Europe (Fromm, 1941). Very little, however, has been written on the Muslim middle class. Hence this study comes in to fill this gap. A final factor is a pragmatic consideration of the limits of the researcher being a female Muslim foreigner whose ethnographic access could not be easily extended to either the urban or the rural poor.

The Middle Class has been an important theme for studies on India (See: Ahmad & Reifeld, 2001; Bhatia, 1994; Brosius, 2010; Fernandes, 2006; Pandey, M., 2010; Varma, 2007). However, little emphasis has been cast upon the Muslim middle class (See: Fill, 2008). One significant, yet historical study deals with the Urdu middle-class in India and Pakistan (Daechsel, 2006). According to him, the British never recognized class as a key political identity, but only politics of interest, based on intermediaries and patronage networks. The Urdu middle class milieu was bounded by such structures and desired to overcome them. This class developed a new form of politics: the politics of self-expression. He defines self-expressionism as a political culture that operated on entirely different assumptions and for different objectives from politics of interest to politics of nationalism. Although it used a political language emphasizing the importance of the nation or religious community, it was in reality neither communitarian nor nationalist. In Daechsel’s (2006) words “collective identities were invoked for the sole purpose of giving a quest for personal salvation some form of meta-historical grounding” (Daechsel, 2006, p. 206). The search for the socio-cultural foundations of self-expressionist politics has led us into the realm of middle-class material culture and therefore, the problematic of consumer society that clashes with the realization of a citizen society.

In their edited volume on the middle class in Europe and India, Ahmed and Reifeld (2001) point out the origin of the middle class as a social category and how it differed in India than in Europe where the age of Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and the large-scale mechanical production heralded a new social order, distinct from feudalism and bounded on free relations instead of bondage. The middle class, thus, constituted a composite intermediate layer consisting of a wide-range of occupational interests but bounded together by a common style of living and behavioral pattern. It stood for certain liberal, democratic values, which it expressed in its social and political conduct, but did not always pursue with the fullest possible commitment.

The situation dramatically differed in India, where the middle class was a byproduct of the colonial educational policies (Misra, 1961; Frankel, 1990; Béteille, 2001; Gill, 2008). On the Muslim front, despite the historical emphasis on the class gap between the feudal Ashrafs and the Ajlafs, Mujeeb writes of a different account; of the bourgeoisie Muslim class that existed in Medieval India and were composed mainly of merchants and financial middle men providing the artisans (Mujeeb, 1967, p. 374). As for independent India, it could be argued that beside the occupational and the economic background, also education and culture came to define the new middle class (Béteille, 2001):

Being middle-class was primarily a project of self-fashioning. The middle class in India was constituted not so much by its social or economic standing as by its public sphere politics. The definition and power of the middle class came from its propagation of modern ways of life. Modernity in this sense, represents more than a fixed set of indicators regarding patterns of economic organization, social relations, or even a single set of cultural issues.' (Sanjay Joshi, quoted in Ahmed & Reifeld, 2001, pp. 10-11)

The middle class as a repository of ideals for modernistic nations assumed the momentum of the partition of India and the rise of an idea of nationalism. After the advancement of the professional classes, especially under the system of separate electorates, a Muslim middle class and leadership arose (Gill, 2008). This was followed by a paradoxical elaboration of a cultural and liberal elite at Aligarh Muslim University who adopted the cause for Pakistan (Bhatia, 1994). In the convocation address at Aligarh Muslim University, Liaquat Ali Khan, who later became the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, informed the students briefly of the rationale behind the call for Pakistan:

What happens on the departure of the British from India is of the most vital importance to us. Are we to live as a free and independent nation living our own lives in accordance with the ideals of Islam or are we to submit to a new master? As you all know, the majority party

in this country is doing its best to monopolise for themselves the power that is being surrendered by the British. We cannot, however, allow such a monopoly. We want to live in this subcontinent as an independent and self-respecting people and are in no way interested in, or prepared to submit to a change of masters [...] This can be possible only if we have a free and independent State of our own. (Liaquat Ali Khan, Aligarh Muslim University's convocation address, February 16th, 1947, obtained from Mohammad, 2006)

The Indian case is a unique one where the modern educated elite –manifested in the Aligarh Movement- chose the nationalistic path based on Islam, and largely ignored the religious scholars- manifested in Deoband and Jamiat-Ulama e Hind, who zealously tried to convince the Muslim masses that there was no such thing as religion-based nationalism, and that the idea of the nation was based on the homeland and not on religion.

How was it possible that the modern idea of citizenship developed in such a unique way among the pro-Pakistan movement? How was the importation of this western concept, which was based on a secular foundation so deviant in its Indian application? Again we are faced with a case, where political processes when combined with education, do not produce the logical formula. Actually, education in itself does not necessarily politicize individuals. Education is a domain where processes of citizenship are manufactured and produced. The reproduction of citizenships of the educated, as Hansen (2000) argues, is different from what happens at public rallies in slums and villages, where the uneducated masses are addressed through religious legends within a framework enhancing the networks of trust in their community leaders, who unlike them – in most of the cases but not in all – are 'educated'. According to the liberal and republican paradigms, these masses lack the civic virtue of the educated ones and thus could be easily turned, when religiously manipulated, into violent crowds. Here it is imperative to recall Arendt's definition of the masses who

Are not held together by a consciousness of common interest and they lack that specific class articulateness which is expressed in determined, limited and obtainable goals. The term masses applies only where we deal with people who are either because of sheer numbers, or indifference, or a combination of both, cannot be integrated into any organization based on common interest, into political parties or municipal governments or professional organizations or trade unions. (Arendt, 1951, p. 305)

The colonial imperative would dictate then "politics should therefore remain in the hands of responsible, educated and virtuous leaders who can ensure secular tolerance" (Hansen, 2000, p. 259). This obsession with education as the key to the acquisition of secular citizenship is evident

through many governmental policies or announcements. One example of these policies is the government's offer in 1994 to pay salaries to the teachers in Muslim *madrasas* provided they modernize by introducing science classes (*ibid*).

Kymlicka & Norman (1994) demonstrate the controversial aspect of treating citizenship through education, in which an individual learns civic virtues. They show how controversial the issue becomes when we put into consideration the role played by groups who rely heavily on unquestionable tradition and authority. These groups are necessarily “discouraged by the free, open, pluralistic, progressive attitudes which liberal education encourages”, therefore occasionally leading to the withdrawal of their children from the national schooling system (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 367).

The values reflected by the new middle classes reinforce and recreate caste, religion and gender-based exclusions (Fernandes, 2006). Here, an apparent difference between Hindu and Muslim middle classes' orientations appear; since Muslims are concerned with issues such as Dalit and OBCs causes, co-housing, co-education and hence overcoming ghettoization.

In a recent study on constructing citizenship education in Gujarat, Thapan (2010) argues that this process is created in the language of acceptance: “to have good manners, express perfect behavior, be neatly dressed, control emotions, especially anger, and be committed to religion but within the parameters set by the dominant community” (Thapan, 2010, p. 45). She explains the reason why none of the houses of the schools in her study is named after any Muslim national hero. She argues:

Either this school also accepts the hegemony of the kind of citizenship education informed by majoritarian historical narratives, or the school authorities feel the pressure to present themselves as nationalist in terms of the prevalent hegemonic discourse. The physical location of the school might play a role in this construction. (p. 49)

It is difficult to locate a specific size of the Indian middle class, however, Zoya Hasan (2001) points out to a study that marks this class as around 20-25% of the population, including 13% of the rural and 42% of the urban households. However, there are various ways of measurement: through social science constructs such as counting those who are above the poverty line, or according to their share of the distribution of national income, or through people's self-perception of their status and their aspirations that clearly define them as belonging to the middle class (Rothermund, 2008).

Characteristics determining these class measurements also include different attitudes to women, education, media, usage of information technology, and consumption. In fact, the consumer-citizen

model has been developed as an indicator of the new common man. Fernandes (2006) argues that this new common man is “victimized both by a corrupt and ineffective political system” and by “the supposedly privileged and protected poor and working classes” (Fernandes, 2006, p. 187). Middle class Muslims echoed this sentiment in several conversations. For example, in an interview with a middle class family who was spending some spare time sitting at Jamia Masjid, after attending a wedding in Chandni Chowk, the mother told me:

Although there is one law for the poor and the rich, but the poor get everything in this life for free: free education, free books, everything. But the middle class has the highest number of problems and worries and it is a big class, around 50%. On every level, there are problems: occupation, housing and education. But the most important problem is education. Not all the middle class can afford education, and to get admission in a private English-medium school, you must give a large amount of money as a donation, otherwise you cannot get admission. Add to this, the problem of discrimination. The chances of finding jobs are very thin if you pursue English or medical studies, because of the competition with Hindus. But Arabic or Urdu guarantees them a job quickly after graduation.

Although it should be argued that these were not peculiar ‘Muslim’ issues, but a general Indian middle-class concern, the discrimination aspect is the added aspect of which Muslims, and of course to a great extent Dalits, complain. Eventually, corruption has no religion; a rich Muslim, when bribing an official, can easily strike out a Hindu competitor. The change in the mentality of middle class Muslims to adopt this conviction of the equality of discrimination has been a contrasting feature in many conversations I had with Muslims. One of the important reasons for this is Gulf employment—a process facilitating social change through remittances and a belief in the value of education. Another factor is the overburden of political discourses in which Muslims engage in the North. A student from Hyderabad contends that the situation is much better than the North. According to her, in the south, people are more educated and more aware, hence, political problems do not overburden them and hence most Muslims in Hyderabad go to school.

The phenomenon of Gulf migration has also contributed to the establishment of a consumer society. Baudrillard (1998) defines the consumer society, as one in which there is no societal reality other than the relationship between consumers and branded commodity sign objects. People are entirely what they consume; no immediate relations of power, economic exchange or cultural capital matter anymore. This means that there is a relationship of ‘perpetual unfinishedness’ between consumption, politics and middle-class socio-cultural identities. Somehow the

phenomenon of lavish weddings and over-consumption of food, especially *biryani*, in many events celebrated by the Muslims is a clear translation of this argument. Food itself has an exaggerated value in developing societies as a compensatory mechanism for deprivation in other fields and hence as one of the markers of Higazy's (2005) backwardness theory. The middle class milieu, as Daechsel (2006) argues, by virtue of its material culture, was persuaded to use consumption as an outlet for its frustrated socio-political ambitions:

The development of a middle class through an expansion of the social role of consumption offers no guarantee for a better political culture. Persistent contradictions between a consumer society and other forms of societal organization will stimulate forms of self-expressionist radicalism that may be very hard to control. Far from being the historical carrier of the voice of reason and modernity, the consumer middle class could well turn out as the destroyer of the world that gave birth to it. (Daechsel, 2006, p. 210)

Linking secularism, communal violence, and the middle class, Nandy (1998) argues, "Both secularism and communal violence are built on imported Enlightenment ideas espoused by the urban middle classes who live in secularized worlds marked by 'distorted' or perverted versions of religion" (p. 248). Communal violence is argued to be an urban phenomenon, resisted in rural areas where "communities have not splintered into atomized individuals" and where true tolerance derived from religious cosmologies of the ordinary rural dweller in India persists (*ibid*, pp. 285-6). This discourse of secularism ushers the right to full citizenship. Gupta (2007) presents a different view by arguing that the Gujarat killings in 2002 presented a case where the village no longer became riot-proof and the idea of majoritarianism as an exclusively urban expression of the culturally aware literate classes became questioned (Gupta, 2007, p. 41):

Hindutva creates an alternative community that uprooted and alienated villagers find extremely attractive. This is especially so as the secular project of building citizenship has been deemphasized by the Congress Party since the mid 1970s. If villages were tranquil in the past, it was because there was little room for the underprivileged to despite their position of inferiority and subjugation [...] Not only is the village less and less viable as an economic unit, villagers are also going in and out of their rural surroundings and bringing back other points of view from the city with much greater frequency. (Gupta, 2007, p. 40)

Conversations with Muslims residing in Delhi also prove this point. I have been told that Delhi Muslims are not really from Delhi as they claim to be. They are mainly from the surrounding states and they come to Delhi and stay for a year or two at any friend or relative's place in the Muslim

pockets in Delhi: either Okhla or Chandni Chowk. After finding a good job and saving money, they manage to change their socio-economic profile, and then they move out and go to the external places out of these two pockets. According to my interview respondents, this was all before Gujarat 2002. After 2002, this has significantly changed.

Ideals of secularism, as evident from the real-life experience and from the literature only pertain to privileged urban middle and upper class values. Where is secularism in the ghettos or in the far away girls *madradas* tucked in the margins of a city or a village? Secularism for the masses simply means the right to be Muslim and to remain Muslim and to ensure first the survival of one's children then to ensure that their future will be a Muslim one.

5.2 The role of Jamia Milia Islamia

This is the home of my yearnings

This is the land of my dreams

Here, conscience is the beacon light and guide

Here is the Mecca of heart where the guiding faith resides

Ceaseless movement is our faith

And blasphemy is to stay still

Here, the destined goal is the march on and on

Here, the swimming urge seeks

Newer and newer storms

Restless wave itself is our resurrected shore

- (Muhammad Khaleeq Siddiqui- *Jamia Taranah* (Anthem) translated from Urdu)

“When I replied that I was a student at Jamia, he said, ‘Achcha Jamia. Tabhi toh aap aise sawal karte ho. Tum logon ki mentality aisi hoti hai (Oh Jamia. That’s why you are asking such questions. This is all that you people can think of.’”

- An administrative Official to a student following up a RTI application on the Batla House Encounter, 2010⁷⁵

During one of my interviews with a Muslim social worker, I noticed a sign on a wall in his office, with quotation in Arabic taken from a Quranic Verse and translates to “And Allah Taught the Human being what he did not know.” I was instantly reminded that this is the same verse inscribed on the logo of Jamia Millia Islamia. As an Arab Muslim myself, I was surprised that

⁷⁵ Quoted in Polanki, P. (2010, May 1-15). Afroz Alam Sahil- the RTI maverick. *The Milli Gazette*, p. 7

whereas this verse has acquired the popularity that renders it as a material for calligraphic art on wooden signs, its significance remained in oblivion to many Arabic-speaking nations (since for instance, I have never seen it inscribed anywhere in Egypt). Zakir Hussein, one of the founders of Jamia, explicated the symbolism behind the logo. He explained that the star on the top served the role of guidance, its characteristic, as being a star of Allah (“Allah is great” is inscribed on it), “reflects the truth that Allah is the greatest and he who bows his head before Him only, discovers the truth.” According to Hussain, this was a reminder to believers of the impossibility and illegitimacy of subjugation to any other power. Beneath this star, one sees an open book (the Holy Quran) with the above-explained inscription in Arabic (*Allamma al-Insāna Mā lam Ya‘lam*). Hussain continues his description of the two palm trees as being:

Symbolic of the barren valley in which nothing grew; but it was there that the sapling of *din* took root. These trees are emblems of hope from a land in which not a leaf or flower could sprout; but wherein suddenly the springs of hidaya burst forth and drenched the “communities of the heart”. They are a source of consolation for people who became disheartened with adverse circumstances. Why do external factors make them lose hope? At the very bottom is a tiny silver crescent which reads Jamia Millia Islamia. This crescent is small but just as it expands to become the full moon on the fourteenth night, so also Jamia. Meaning that this is the beginning of our work. It will expand to become the full moon and a source of delight for the eve of its beholder. (Zakir Hussain, Jamia Millia Islamia website)

Jamia milia Islamia or the National Muslim University (a translation of its Urdu name) was created as the counterpart to the Pakistan movement carried out by Aligarh University and was formed as a joint initiative between secular Muslim intellectuals and religious Muslim scholars who were part of the Khilafat Movement and the anti-colonial struggle. So the success in overcoming the secular versus Islamic polarization was evident from Jamia’s inception. Muhammad Ali, one of its founders, outlined the character of education in Jamia as combining religious and worldly education. Religious education was enhanced by the stress on the Arabic language in order to understand the Quran and modern education was endorsed in a Gandhian manner to fight colonial subjugation and thus overcoming the shortcomings of Islamic Madrasas such as Deoband or Nadwa and English-language-based schools and colleges (Hasan & Jalil, 2006). The preference not just to learn but also to write in Arabic is a symbolic decision and should not be dismissed from the analysis of the socialization process inherent in the Muslim educational institutions. Zakir Hussain also noted the objectives of Jamia in 1937 as:

To prepare a road map for the future lives of Indian Muslims with the religion of Islam at its core, and to fill the map with the colour of the civilization of India in such a way that it merges with the colours of the life of the common man. The basis of this objective is the belief that a true education of their religion will imbibe in Indian Muslims a love for their country, and a passion for national integration, and prepare them to take active part in seeking independence and progress for India.

A second objective was:

To use the roadmap for the future of Indian Muslims, especially for creating a curriculum for their children. [...] A man's guiding principle should be to become a useful member of society and civilization. In other words, he should find a niche for himself where his knowledge and wisdom are put to best use in serving the society, as well as in earning a living so that his needs and those of his family are satisfied. (Hasan & Jalil, 2006, p. 92)

Other founders and supporters envisioned Jamia to uphold the principles of 'good citizenship'—a reference to tolerance. Dr. Ansari and Hakim Ajmal Khan, for example, aimed at joining Islamism with ideas of democracy, individual freedom and modernity (Hasan & Jalil, 2006). In Halid  Edib's words,⁷⁶ "the institution has two purposes. First, to train the Muslim youth with definite ideas of their rights and duties as Indian citizens. Second, to co-ordinate Islamic thought and behavior with Hindu[ism]" (*ibid*, p. 104).

Jamia now has around 17,000 students coming from all over India, but mainly from Delhi, UP and Bihar. It is a whole system of education that starts with a primary school and ends with a doctoral degree. It encompasses different disciplines such as language, Islamic Studies, Engineering, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences (Jamia Millia Islamia, 2011). The following order, though not exhaustive, shows the preferences of the student body: Engineering has the maximum number of students, followed by commerce, architecture, education, political science, economics, Arabic language, mathematics, and law (Statistical Data Fact Sheet, Jamia Millia Islamia 2012).

Jamia had great significance for my research on youth; politically, since it played a great role in the community as a mechanism of absorbing anger after the Batla house (Setalvad, 2010); and generally, because it encompassed different kinds of students: those with *madrassa* background and those not; those who were bearded and wearing a kurta-salwar and those dressed in western clothes.

⁷⁶ A Turkish female scholar who delivered lectures at Jamia in 1935.

5.3 Madrasa education & Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow as a case study

My education in madrasas and universities empowered me to go beyond stereotypes. Yes, 'ulama have a legacy but they fail to interpret it for the younger generation, make it more palatable and puritanical, do not interact with their people in their projections. But the importance lies in socializing with non-Muslims as a consequence of da'wah. When I first came to Jamia, I was exposed to Foucault, Marx and Bourdieu, that is what professors know, but they do not know about the Vedic, traditional, oriental, and Islamic education. As a self, I am transcending this border of East and West.

- A Delhi-based Muslim environmental activist

I went to Rampur, which was so far from Hyderabad because it is so famous. It is exactly like people wanting to go to Oxford or Cambridge. Would not they go all the way from Nigeria or India? It is the same idea with these famous madrasas. The problem with madrasas is that they give excellent education and specialization in Islamic studies and Urdu and Arabic, but they lack secular subjects since they do not teach anything in modern sciences and thus they have no chances when pursuing their further education especially in specific universities and specific subjects.

- A female PhD student in Delhi

The discourse on Madrasa education is enmeshed within two general discourses: one relating to backwardness, and the other created by media hype over terrorism. Although Madrasa graduates typically find themselves engulfed with a social image as being backward and less modern than their counterparts who were educated in modern schools and colleges, there have been many cases where the madrasa background did not act as a barrier to earning a postgraduate university degree since universities such as Jamia Millia Islamia, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Hamdard have recognized Madrasa degrees and thus qualify their holders to join many graduate courses in humanities and social sciences.

The analysis should not ignore, however, the handling of the idea of backwardness. Seth (2001) in fact refers to the creation of Muslim subjectivity in colonial times through a discovery of Muslim backwardness in an attempt to “instantiate the new regime of power represented by the modern state” (p.145) and thus modern education became a site for the production of Foucauldian

governmentality.

The colonization of the possibilities of being modern by European discourses of modernity and modernism (Kher, 2008) problematized the dismissal of the project of modernity. Since it had been argued that the madrasas were created as a reaction to the modernity imposed by the colonial powers, it was interesting to see that in their curricula there was no rejection of central values such as secularism which naturally came in this post-Enlightenment package.

In fact, madrasas had been founded as a dual hegemonic tool employed by the *'ulama* to overcome the colonial powers and the so-called unislamic practices found among the converts from the lower castes (Alam A. , 2008). This point has been replaced by the increasing media propaganda about madrasas being grounds for breeding terrorism (Chatterjee, 2004, Sikand Y. , 2005; 2006a & 2006c).

The institution that I have started this chapter with a narration of my visit to is informally linked to Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow, which is considered one of the oldest Islamic schools in South Asia.⁷⁷ Although Nadwa is designed exclusively for male education, many of its *'ulama* supervise and teach in girls' *madrasas* and the Jamiat Mominat Al-Islamia is one example of these *madrasas*.

Together with Darul Uloom Deoband, both *madrasas* occupy a high status among Islamic scholarship in Asia. What differentiates Nadwa from Deoband is the moderate attitude and stream that the scholars chose to adopt and thus differ from the ultra conservative and orthodox Deobandis. The history of Nadwa dates back to the 1890s when a group of *'ulama* called for the implementation of the principle of the middle way or moderation (*wasat*), which was the interpretation of the verse: "And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people" (The Quran, AlBaqarah: 143).⁷⁸ They tried to concentrate on three aspects of this concept: cultural, intellectual, and social. Culturally, they emphasized the reform of the educational system and developing it according to the needs of time and shaping it on the basis

⁷⁷ For a detailed study on the history of Nadwa, see Malik, 1997. Other important studies referring to Nadwa: Hasan, M., 1997; 2002; Noor, F. et al., 2009; Malik, et al., 2008; Winkelman, 2005; Sikand, Y., 2006c.

⁷⁸ As a contemporary scholar, Al-Qaradawy (2010) stresses on this aspect of moderation due to the rising extremism among Muslim youth. According to him, "The Muslim Ummah is a nation of justice and moderation which testifies against every deviation from the 'straight path' in this life and in the hereafter. Islamic texts call upon Muslims to exercise moderation and to reject and oppose all kinds of extremism: *ghuluw* (excessiveness), *tanaṭṭu'* (nitpicking religiosity) and *tashdīd* *strictness, austerity). A close examination of such texts shows that Islam emphatically warns against *ghuluw*. Let us consider the following: "Beware in excessiveness in religion. [People] before you have perished as a result of [such] excessiveness." The people referred to above are the people of other religions, 'particularly people of the Book', namely, Jews and Christians, and most notably the Christians." (p. 9)

of Quran and *Sunnah*, Islamic *fiqh*, history, Islamic sciences, as well as modern sciences. The intellectual aim was the correction of Islamic conceptions and thought and interpreting religion according to the life of the prophet through publications, translation and Islamic preaching. The social goal was to unite the Muslims by finding the spirit of tolerance among them and to establish solidarity on all intellectual and sectarian levels.

Nadwa emerged as a public civil association in 1893 AD in a meeting of South Asian Muslim intellectuals to discuss the situation of Muslims under the predicament of colonial rule and western modernity. At the same time, Muslims were divided into different jurisprudential schools. This meeting took place in Kanpur, eighty kilometers away from Lucknow and resulted in the decision to create a public association called Nadwatul Ulama aiming at the reform of educational curricula, uniting Muslims, and performing *da'wah* or preaching in effective means. Eventually, Maulana Muhammad Ali Almongiri, who was the first general secretary, established a comprehensive school called Darul Uloom of Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow in 1898. This school was led by Allama Shibli Nomani, who was responsible for the educational department (Alnadwi, 2008; Khan, 2004).

Nadwatul Ulama Movement was considered a bridge between Islamic and Western cultures, and *'ulama* and modernistic intellectuals. Upon direct influence and interaction with the Arab World (Hartung, 2006), the foundational members' goal was to establish a new school of thought joining "the benevolent tradition (*alqadeem al-saleh*)" and "the useful modern (*aljadeed alnafi*)" and to find a moderate approach between fixation on sources and goals and flexibility in means and mechanisms. To them, religion was considered an eternal truth not requiring any modification, while knowledge is a fruitful tree that keeps growing and prospering. Since Islam is the religion for all humanity and all times, so it is natural for it to go through the processes of development and different human intellectual advancement (Al-Nadwi, 2005, p. 66).

This vision was thus based on a critique of Sir Syed Khan's educational policy, as carried through the Aligarh movement, which first did not adapt the western-based educational system to the nature of the Indian Muslim society. Sir Syed had imported the system from Europe with its details and spirit, and insisted on the educational approach and Western civilization to be integral components of the policy; he even made it a condition that the dean would be always a British, as well as at least two professors. Second, he emphasized *belles-lettres* and language studies, and ignored applied sciences and fine arts. According to his writings, he said that India does not need to teach artisans, what is important are intellectual capacities. This finally led to educating enormous numbers of literary figures, judges and officials, but no significant engineers, physicists or

scientists. The Aligarh Movement, nevertheless, led to the emergence of strong intellectual and political figures who led the Khilafat movement and the independence struggle in India, as well as the establishment of Pakistan, but it did not achieve its aim of benefiting from the Western experiences, and did not fill the enormous gap of the Muslim generation who is adherent to his faith (Al-Nadwi, 2005).

Nadwa has produced one of the most influential Islamic scholars in modern India: Syed Abul Hasan Nadwi, whose works are being studied by students and are widely quoted. Abul Hasan Nadwi was known for his opposition to Maududi strategies, although they both agreed on the significance of the creation of the Islamic state, they differed on the means. Nadwi eschewed violence and saw that the establishment of faith has to be pursued through peaceful means such as reform (*islah*), consultation (*mushawarat*) and wisdom (*hikmat*) making use of all available legitimate spaces such as literature, public discussions, and volunteers in an attempt for a silent revolution (*khamoshi inquilab*) (Sikand Y., 2004b).

The transnational aspect of the scholarship undertaken not only at Nadwa, but also the major big Madrasas in India is an interesting fact. Nadwa, however, due to its historical ties with Egypt and Saudia Arabia (earlier Hijaz), maintains stronger relations with the Arab World and should not be deemed as a new phenomenon, but a historical fact. The curriculum of Nadwa is the following:

- In the Islamic Studies Faculty:

First Year: Quran's interpretation (*Tafsīr*), Prophet's sayings (*al-hadith*), Principles of Islamic Faith (*al-'aqueedah*), Arabic Literature (*al adab alarabi*), Islamic jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*), Arabic Grammar (*al-nahw*), rhetoric (*al-balaghah*), general knowledge (limited to Islamic geography), composition, English language (eleventh level), for reading and examination: Islamic history. In the second year, logic is added, English for 12th level, and political science in general knowledge instead of geography. In the third year, philosophy is added instead of logic, English for 13th level, economics as the general knowledge subject, the knowledge of religious obligations (*'ilm al faraidh*) and Beliefs and religious groups. In the 4th year: English for 14th standard and all religious courses. After this there is higher education, in which students specialize either in *tafsīr* or *hadīth* or *fiqh* and interestingly, apart from the *'ulama* books, Ibn Khaldun is also taught.

- In the Arabic language faculty, there is first the *da'wah* and Islamic thought institute, where issues such as intellectual invasion and how to respond to it are focused upon through courses in Mass communication and media, education and society, geographical and

political studies of the Islamic world, political and cultural movements in India and their relationship to Islam, English language, belief systems in India, and Islamic revival.

- Then there is also the Department of language and journalism, where students study the history of journalism, Arab journalism, Indian journalism, history of Muslim press in India, western media, civilizational and political knowledge, general knowledge, Hindi, English, and Sanskrit. Finally there is a Higher institute of *ifta'* and jurisprudence which specializes in producing *muftis* and *shari'ah* judges.

The history of Muslim politics reflected cultural assertion as a basis for community loyalty and action. However, in contemporary India, through the example of *madrassa* curricula, there is a dual emphasis on the reproduction of Islamic norms and secular participation in the Indian nation. Through the role of Muslim leaders in the anti-colonial struggles, a political culture among the Muslim communities in India had been created, whose crux was that Indian Muslim citizens in the new India would relate to their nation both as individuals and as members of a religious community. However, gradually after partition, Islamic organizations chose a safer path of withdrawal from politics and focusing solely on the development of Islamic education (Metcalf, 2007).

The rise of Hindutva politics enhanced this propaganda, in addition to several other factors including the rise of militancy in Kashmir and the radicalism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The media is full of examples of RSS and VHP leaders statements such as Praveen Togadia's (the general secretary of the VHP) in 1995 in which he claimed, "one hundred thousand madrasas in India were all engaged in a sinister plot to train jihādists to massacre the Hindus and establish Islamic rule all over the world" (Sikand Y. , 2006a, p. 221). During the Vajpayee government, this tone increased since Madrasas were labeled centers for militants and the mosques as shelters for ISI agents (Shahabuddin, 2004).⁷⁹ There is also Advani's⁸⁰ famous call for the intervention in madrasa issues due to the foreign funding from Saudi Arabia (Fahimuddin, 2008).

Ara's (2004) article is a typical example reflecting the biased media impact. It starts with quoting the Times of India's reporting on the hoisting of the Pakistani flag in one of the madrasas in UP on the Indian Independence day, and goes on asserting vague statements such as: "Educated Muslims feel uneasy when they see swarms of young madrasa pupils in *kurta pajama* sporting small beards and skull caps emerging from a mosque or heading towards the home of a Muslim brother for a

⁷⁹ ISI refers to the Inter-Services Intelligence of Pakistan.

⁸⁰ L.K. Advani is the former president of the BJP.

charity meal” (p. 34).

In fact, Muslim leaders have brought attention to this matter and realized that this campaign against Islam and *madrasas* could be overcome through the strategic use of mass media, especially since India is a democratic state (Muhammad Rabey Hasan Nadwi, head of the AIMPLB and rector of the Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow, cited in Sikand, 2006a). Other counter-propaganda views stress the difference between the technologically and western-educated Al-Qaeda members and how their social profile radically differs from modest *madrasa* students (Qasmi, 2005).

The portrayal of the *madrasa* system of Islamic education has been increasingly stigmatized in the previous decade with negative stereotypes through the discourse on terrorism. It is argued that *madrasas* are becoming terrorist preparation camps, and thus are drawing Indian Muslims away from the national mainstream. Amidst these discourses, there is a considerable absence of counter discourses reporting the reform of the *madrasa* system of education and thus defending it. Yoginder Sikand, a prominent scholar, interested in issues such as the reform of Muslim education, and the dialogue among Muslim and non-Muslim communities in India, is considered one of the few voices that seek to give a different picture of the insides of *madrasas*.

According to Sikand, tackling the issue of *madrasa* reform proceeds in two steps, first, by bringing to the fore the systemic and structural hindrances facing *madrasa* reform; second, by talking about ideas of reform and the challenges these ideas pose to the system. Several metanarratives comprise the structural hindrances to the reform. The clash between the ‘modernization project’, endorsed by the state and developmental paradigms (Metcalf, 2007), clashes with the Islamic theory of knowledge that the *madrasah* system is based upon, most evident in the nonexistence of a twofold distinction between the modern and traditional, and the secular and religious. Another hurdle linked to the state is the rise to power of Hindu nationalism and the consolidation of a hegemonic discourse implying that Muslims are out of the ‘national mainstream’ and need to be brought in. Sikand (2005) in this regard argues that the autonomy of *madrasas* from state surveillance and control acts as a challenge to the “monolithic Indian nationalism [that] is based on Brahminical Hinduism” (pp. 241-2). This is especially significant upon putting into consideration that the majority of *madrasas* are independent bodies free in its administration and syllabus setting (Sikand, 2009a). On an internal level, the dividing strife among the ‘*ulamas* is a persistent feature that impedes reform projects. The debate is dominated by contentions forces among traditional ‘*ulamas* who are afraid of losing their authority as leaders of the community, if projects of *madrasa* reform are endorsed.

On the other hand, young *madrasa* graduates who joined regular universities for higher education disseminate ideas of reform. Their ideas include spreading awareness concerning international and national affairs; publishing articles and thus contributing to the elimination of silence on the positive examples of *madrasa* students; and encouraging social work and thus playing a role in an active civil society. On a wider theoretical and ideological level, other forces of reform call for the emphasis on a different worldview (through the project of Islamization of knowledge).

The contextual and regional difference should not be omitted from the discussion on *madrasas*. There is a significant difference for example between Kerala's and North Indian *madrasas*. Not only do children in Kerala combine both means of education by going either first to the *madrasas* for two hours at sunrise, then to the modern school, or in the evening after school, but there is also a significant role played by language. The usage of Urdu in the North and to a lesser extent in Hyderabad and Bangalore had led to the exclusion or the mal-integration of Muslims in the social mainstream. This is juxtaposed to the Keralite context, where Malayalam was the medium used in *madrasas*, albeit with a creative twist: writing it in Arabic script so as not to be alienated from the language of the Quran. In West Bengal, the picture is also different since there is news on *madrasas* with more Hindu students than Muslims.⁸¹ This opens a huge debate on the politicization of religious identity across different contexts.

There is no specific figure of the number of *madrasas* in India, however, a ten-year-old governmental census accounted for 25,000 full-fledged *madrasas* and 80,000 *maktabs* that are often located in mosques (Qasmi, 2005). The percentage of *madrasa*-going children as compared to those going to modern schools has been a matter of debate. According to both non-official Muslim citizen testimonials and official reports such as the Sachar report, this percentage is considerably low. In a conversation with two Muslim middle class families, the mothers asserted that "it is not true that religious people send their children to *madrasas* and others to modern schools. Actually, very few school-going children go to *madrasas*, around 5%, while the other 95% go to regular schools." Other interview respondents argued that in most poor Muslim localities, there is no government schools, not even for primary education and since the overwhelming majority of Muslims are below

⁸¹ The news on this *madrasa* in West Bengal is quoted from the Indian Express 19/1/09, in Indian Social Institute. (2009). *Minorities: Muslims 2009- Human Rights Documentation*. Retrieved January 10, 2012, from <http://www.isidelhi.org.in/hrnews/isidownload/Muslim/Muslims-2009.pdf>

poverty line, they would send their children to *madrasas* where they get food, clothing and education for free because majority of Indian Muslims give *zakat* to *madrasas*. If it was not for the *madrasa*, these children will be denied basic literacy. I was told that Muslims benefit from the special law enacted in Haryana that poor children would get a monthly pocket money if they join school, so children would go to the *madrasa* to get free clothes and study materials, and would go to the school to get the pocket money as well. A *madrasa* teacher had expressed to me the change in the mentality of Muslims:

As for the future of Muslims, thank god, I am optimistic, the Muslims have awoken now because a lot of parents do not leave their children without education, but take them to both Islamic and modern schools, and especially in this village where there are no problems, and Muslims who are around 20% live peacefully with non-Muslims.

The Sachar report had stated that statistical data seem to counter the commonly held perceptions that Muslims prefer religious education in *madrasas* since only about 3% of all Muslim students of the school going age group are enrolled in *madarsas* at the all-India level (Sachar Report, 2006).⁸²

In an attempt to delineate the role of politics in *madrasa* education from studying the curricula, discussions on the state is clearly absent. Apart from the fact that some *madrasas* concentrate more on *hadith*, and others on Quran's *tafsīr*, the study of *fiqh* in both groups focuses more on matters of worship, and does not extend to political affairs. Looking through the curricula of two of the biggest *madrasas* in India; Darul Uloom Deoband and Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow, there was no mentioning of any course taught on Islamic political thought or on matters related to Islamic governance. The adaptation to the secular and minority setting of the newly independent India was reflected in the socialization process of *madrasa* education, in which it was deemed that studying the terms of the Islamic state ruled by *shari'ah* was unwarranted. The need for the preservation of the Islamic identity in the face of the waves of Hinduisation of the Indian society, as Sikand (2006) argues, was the most fundamental task facing the *madrasa* system.

Madrasas have additional functions: most importantly as a means of identity formation (Aleaz,

⁸² This is based on NCAER data, which is supported by other estimates made from NCERT; albeit indicating a lower level of 2.3 % of Muslim children aged 7-19 years who study in Madarsas. The proportions are even higher in rural areas and amongst males. Kerala, as it is previously mentioned, is a unique case as more than 60,000 Muslim students study simultaneously in both 'mainstream' institutions and Maktabas (Sachar Report, 2006). Arshad Alam: State statistics in the Sachar report about number of *madrasa* students is incorrect (it is much higher in reality because of the difference between wagf board related and independent ones which are not registered).

2005; Alam A. , 2008; Noor et al., 2009), as a site for legal guidance and as means for social mobility of students coming from poor families and thus guaranteeing jobs as *imams* or teachers afterwards.

The activities of *madrasas* on national holidays is a marker of this accommodation. Kerala presents a unique case that is presented in the next chapter. In North India, noteworthy *madrasas* organize functions on the Indian Republic and Independence days, unfurl the flag, make the students sing patriotic songs, and invite both Muslims and non-Muslim figures to participate and give speeches especially on the role of '*ulama* in the independence struggle. (Sikand Y. , 2006a).

Madrasas are thus clearly significant because of the link between authority and power on the one hand and the creation of collective memories of martyrdom of the '*ulama* through their role in nation-building, on the other hand. The same '*ulama* who are heads and leaders of today's big *madrasas* are among the most influential political leaders within the Muslim community in India; especially the Muslim Personal Law Board and Jamiatul Ulama-e-Hind who play a great role in mobilizing thousands of Muslims and influencing their political and social decisions.

Madrasas could be described as illiberal sites in which the struggle for citizenship also appears. This struggle has a negotiative feature as the independence of *madrasas* from the state is considered by many religious leaders a criterion of citizenship rights in the unique political 'secular' settings in India. Around ninety per cent of *madrasas* are funded through Muslim donations (Noorani, 2011). The remainder is aided by state governments and is under their supervision. The Sachar report details how the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Minority Cell) reveals that 4694 Madarsa were assisted from 2002 until 2006, they had been granted Rs.106 crores of which Rs.79 crores is for infrastructure development and Rs.27 crores for modernization of Madarsa (Sachar Report, 2006, p. 183). In the past years, there has been a rising debate among Muslim leaders on the issue of the Central Madrasa Board, which aimed at uniting *madrasas* under a governmental scheme. There are already state *madrasa* boards in eight states and some universities recognize their degrees. However, the majority of leaders staunchly rejected the central *madrasa* board bill (see Section 5.9.1 for details). This is a clear example of how politics continually plays a religious card.

5.4 Centrality of youth and student power

Any discourse on the pluralism and heterogeneity of the political scene in India cannot avoid mentioning a reference to the category of "youth" which in itself signifies the occupation of hybrid spaces where dynamic and multi-faceted expressions of youth identities are manifested (McMillin,

2009). ‘Youthscapes’ refer to a site that is geographic, temporal, social and political, bound up with questions of power and materiality and conceptualizes local youth practices (Maira & Soep, 2005). The category of youth is central to this study and its aims since almost one in three people in India are aged between 10-24 (Jeffrey C. , 2011) and 33% of India’s population is below 15 years (Population Reference Bureau, 2011).

Intellectual interest is not divorced from empirical and ground level attentiveness to this issue. However, emphasis has been traditionally cast on male youth as political and mobilizable actors, whether destructively as in terrorist networks or positively as in NGO activism and protests staged in democratic frameworks. Hence, the gender aspect has been absent. Apart from few studies, such as Tabassum Khan’s ethnographic study of the Muslim Youth in Jamia and Winkelmann’s study on girls in *madrasas*, little has been written on girls as agents of change.

This chapter takes into account this neglected aspect but also overcomes any over-assignment to the role gender plays. Balancing the gender aspect stems from the reality played by both male and female youth in this case study of Delhi. Whereas both share some social and political concerns, others suffer from gender-related problems such as the males being targeted as potential terrorists, or the females fighting with restraining *fatwas* concerning their job prospects. This study, however, focuses more on the political concerns but does not neglect social issues with political implications.

The choice of students, in addition to the previously mentioned reasons, relates to their power as political actors and hence active citizens. This study overcomes reductionist analysis of youths as passive or alienated masses who are more prone to fight or disrupt the mainstream and create parallel societies. For example, Ibrahim (1997) mentions the consequences of populist policies evident in the rapid growth of population, urbanization, bureaucratization and hence the emergence of urban *lumpen proletariat* whose youth “is an easy prey to manipulation by demagogues, organized criminals, *agents provocateurs*, and Islamic activists” (p. 39). To the contrary of these imaginaries, Bayat (2009) establishes youth as a category of active citizenry reclaiming youth habitus and able, through what he terms ‘the art of presence’, to create social space within which those individuals who refuse to exit, can advance the cause of human rights, equality and justice. This is precisely the line of argument I proceed from in my study.

Electoral power is a key factor linking youth and political agency. Putting into consideration the lowering of the age of eligibility to voting to eighteen instead of twenty-one, this means that the electoral power among the strata of students in India is numerically quite high and thus has the following implications:

- An upsurge in political awareness.
- A rise in the sense of political efficacy and ability to influence decision makers.
- An increase in the sense of decision-making.

There have been significant changes to Oommen's (1995) argument on the effectiveness of student politics or student-led movements. While he argues that for example there was no Dalit movement led by students, this has now changed due to the social mobility enabled by education especially in the case of Kerala. Among Indian Muslims, this is also notable especially in Jamia, where students from modest backgrounds in Bihar and UP lead issues relating to their community problems (as evident through the Batla House Encounter related students' and teachers' protests, not to mention the *pasmandah politics* organizations in Bihar and UP).

The argument of students being a privileged group acquires some analytical weight since it is true that until the 1980s they were considered elite groups without political or economic causes to call for (Oommen, 1995). However, this has changed with the reservations given to OBCs and the introduction of the mobile phone technology, the Internet and social media as tools and resources to establish strong networks.

Universities, specifically, have a symbolic power as a place of aggregation of students who would be mobilized. Jamia Millia Islamia has played a traditional role, as it was previously mentioned. Contemporarily, the Jamia teachers or faculty association roles continue to be significant actors as a support base for the students (Jamia Teachers Solidarity Association and the Batla House Encounter as an example) and hence lend legitimacy to student activities. 'Ulama as well contribute to the mobilizing agents. In January 2009, hundreds of Muslims from UP arrived on a chartered train christened *The Ulama Express*. Their aim was to protest against the harassment of youth by the police in UP and the encounters, especially the Batla House and the killing of two Muslim youth from Azamgarh. One of the passengers, Maulana Wasiullah expressed his anger

Very soon we will be a political force and in a position to dictate terms to the central government. This is the last option left with us to save our children from the bullet of the police. The UPA or the BSP, they all have anti-Muslim instincts, which is simply unacceptable in any civil society. (Indian Social Institute, 2009)

The following month thousands of Muslims from Azamgarh and its surroundings protested against the harassment of Muslim youths by Anti Terror Squad of the Uttar Pradesh police and anti-community approach of the BSP Government and demanded a probe into the Batla House case. The Ulama Council organized the demonstrations on a Friday at the historic Tile Wali Masjid and

announced its plans to enter electoral politics. Tarique Shafique, general secretary of Sanjanpur Sangharsh Samiti claimed, “Every year, 10,000-12,000 young boys used to leave Azamgarh for higher studies — this year it has reduced to only 2,000” (Indian Social Institute, 2009).

5.5 Liberal versus illiberal spaces: Overcoming dualities

*One may observe, for example, the overwhelming influence the Islamic Truth still exerts on the people who attend, for example, the Friday congregational prayer and listen to the *Khuṭba* (sermon) of the imam in the mosque. In fact, the words of the imam would deeply shake the audience in such a manner that we often witness a man completely immersed in his tears. Indeed, the imam himself, so much excited, may sometimes be unable to continue his speech!*

However, once the prayer is over and once he has returned to his worldly affairs, the Truth which has just shaken the man would rather, unfortunately, be left in the mosque and thus fails to accompany him in his ‘public life’.

- Bennabi, 1962/2002

Through this section, I quickly demonstrate the stage on which the previously mentioned discourses threatening a full sense of citizenship take place. By liberal spaces, I allude to those democratically and constitutionally enabled channels through which Indian Muslims politically act. These range from voting, to holding legitimate demonstrations and protests, and to actively participate in a process of social change through university education. Illiberal spaces, on the other hand, are manifested in religious spheres, or zones where the practice of Islamic rituals is dominant. These are manifested in the mosque, the *madrassa* and the family.

5.5.1 The political stage of traditional and nontraditional political indicators

Ordinary citizens mainly have three options when faced with constraining forces and repressive institutions. They either have to comply and show loyalty to the system by joining the mainstream; they disengage and surrender their rights to voice concerns and hence exit the political stage, or they manage to express their contention loudly and clearly (through being vocal despite being marginal). This is also reflected in Muslim youth’s reactions in the Indian political stage through traditional and nontraditional political indicators.

There is a noted low sense of activism among the mainstream Hindu middle class in Northern India and is accounted for by a sense of neutrality to inequity, the emphasis of the Hindu ethos on the self and thus the prevention of the creation of a sense of community. This led to the escapism

from reality and the absence of a community gathering for Hindus, like the Muslims on Fridays or the Christians on Sundays, where caste and kinship and class gets transcended, and a forum for seeing the Other is created. The political result is the withdrawal from political space, anchored by a low rate of political participation and a sense of political inefficacy; voting patterns show that areas where the least number of votes are cast are those where the middle class is predominant (Varma, 2001).

However, does this mean that the mosque could be considered as a political site? The answer is positively affirmed in many non-secular countries. However, the picture in India is quite complex. There is an ambivalent relationship between accepting the ideal of secularism and activating the mosque as a political arena for mobilization. Some mosques in India, like the Jama Masjid of Delhi, have acquired a historical status as a political arena. From Azad's famous speech in 1947 to recent and recurrent news on the Imam Bukhari's political appeals in election times:

The minarets of Jama Masjid want to ask you a question. Where have you lost the glorious pages from your chronicles? Was it only yesterday that on the banks of the Jamuna, your caravans performed *wuzu*? Today, you are afraid of living here! (Azad's address to Delhi Muslims, on 23rd October 1947)

Among scholars, there is no consensus whether the political role of the mosque should be maintained. In an interview with Akhtarul Wasey, he contends that

Mosques are neither a center for political activity and should not be, but I am sorry to say that. Mosques are not used as a center for creating a social and civic awareness; mosques are no more community centers. But generally mosques are used for primary religious education (*maktabs*). Mosques should not be places of political disputes, because people from different political orientations and parties come to pray in the mosque. Otherwise, Mosques will become centers of conflict and confrontation. And we should learn something from Hazrat Ali. Why did Hazrat Ali migrate from Medina to Kufa (in Iraq) and shifted the political capital of Islam? Just to keep *Madinatunabbi* (the city of the prophet) free from all types of politics, so as to maintain the religious reverence and dignity of that city. So we should follow Hazrat Ali example and keep the mosque free from political disputes. (personal communication, September 2010)

Prof. Wasey reaffirms his stance by stressing that Hindus and Muslims share and should keep sharing spaces in which their voices and protests could be cast. This is a distinct characteristic of India, hence "in the same areas where Hindu groups stages their processions or events like in Ram

Lila Maidan, you find all the rallies by Muslims against Hindutva” (Wasey, personal communication, September 2010).

Another Muslim religious site, which has been recently interlinked with politics, is the political *iftār*. An *iftār* is the breaking of the fast by Muslims in Ramadan. Political *iftārs* refer to feasts hosted by politicians who are not necessarily Muslims, but to which influential Muslim leaders are invited. News on these *iftārs* is abundantly available in Urdu press. For instance, in Mumbai, some organizations have asserted that unless the innocent victims of Malegaon blasts who have been falsely accused are released, they were going to boycott all political *iftārs*. This was considered a recommendable initiative that reflects the political awareness of such Muslim groups (as a letter to the editor carried in *Sahafat* 11.08.2011). Another Muslim newspaper mentioning a piece of news on a political *iftār* in the *Milli Gazette*, which reported that Indira Gandhi had used the *iftār* as a political tool to measure the political sentiments among Muslim leaders. The report was on a political *iftār* held by a Muslim BJP Member of Parliament, which the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended and caused surprise especially after controversial anti-Congress remarks made by the BJP president.⁸³

5.5.2 Collectivity as a factor

The role of collectivity as an aspect of political organization is manifested in the everyday lives of Muslim individuals. The problem I am tackling here is the dynamics within a group of a certain cultural background in a quite different cultural field. Whereas Hindu communities are essentially stratified and lacks a forum of meeting, Muslim communities at least have the Friday prayer congregation which serves as a model for a community forum of action in which individuals transcend their narrow caste and kinship loyalties (Varma, 2001).

In their suggested model of Indian political development, Eldersveld & Bashiruddin (1978) describe the transition made by the public from being politically ignorant and identified with parochial identities and a non-participant subject political culture, into participatory publics who have a growing sense of political efficacy and who strongly identify with political parties. In the classification of Indian citizens’ orientations towards politics, Eldersveld & Bashiruddin (1978) modified Verba’s trilogy by adding one category. Classically, Verba classified citizens’ orientation in a threesome manner. The first is the cognitive or the perceptual and refers to the individual’s

⁸³ Milli Gazette, 1-15 September 2010: Mohammad Naushad Khan, Congress and BJP hand-in-hand in political Iftar.

knowledge of the system; of the candidates, the parties and the political problems. The second is the evaluative or the normative in which citizens create opinions and views of the party system, election, government and political action but their level of political efficacy remains relatively low. The third is the expressive or the affective where individuals express interest in politics at the local, state and national levels. Eldersveld & Bashiruddin (1978) add a fourth criterion; conformity-orientation to politics or in other words how people voted and whether it was crucial for them to vote the way others voted, and whether it is necessary to vote congruently with other caste members. Another crucial element for democratic reform is the notion of active citizenship as defined by Bayat (2009):

A sustained presence of individuals, groups and movements in every available social space, whether institutional or informal, in which it asserts its rights and fulfills its responsibilities. For it is precisely in such spaces that alternative discourses, practices and politics are produced. (p. 249)

On one side of the continuum of active citizenship, we find protest, and on the other, alienation. Oommen (1995) indicated five features of alienation in India:

1. The units of alienation are collectivities and not individuals.
2. Alienation is mainly from the state and polity and not from economics.
3. The main manifestation is located in the emergence of collective actions challenging the legitimacy and authority of the state.
4. The main sources of alienation lay in the state itself and the cultural mainstream.
5. The constitution of the Indian state of a multitude of societies and cultures adds to the content and nature of alienation in India. (p. 146)

Nandy (1975) drew a three-dimensional conceptualization of political alienation in terms of political powerlessness, isolation from political activities, and belief in political norms. Patterns of political alienation in India, according to Qamar Hasan (1987) include seven categories:

1. Insiders: these are active and efficacious supporters of the existing political system and are politically integrated in the core of the system.
2. Active dissenters: politically competent and active and do not trust the system.
3. Passive supporters: characterized with a sense of efficacy, allegiance and non-political participation.
4. Inefficacious conformists: conform to political norms but suffer from efficacy and do not participate.

5. Mechanical participants: have no sense of efficacy, participate politically in support of short-term demands and are driven under the pressure of 'significant others'.
6. Ineffective supporters: trust the system, suffer from inefficacy and remain aloof from political activity.
7. Outsiders: powerless, normless, lacking trust and are political withdrawn (Hasan Q. , 1987, pp. 183-186).

According to this study, Muslims are less of insiders or active dissenters, but more of outsiders (27.2%) who lack the sense of efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is capable of performing in a certain manner to attain certain goals. Efficacy means the capacity to produce an effect. According to Easton and Dennis (1967), political efficacy refers to a sense of direct political potency of the individual— a belief in the responsiveness of the government to the desires of the individuals; ideas of the comprehensibility of government; the availability of adequate means of influence and a general resistance to fatalism about the tractability of government to anyone, ruler or ruled (cited in Hasan, 1987, p. 201).

According to Hasan (1987), a reason for the low sense of efficacy is the lack of resources required for buying the favour. Parochial patron-client bonds govern India. The low representation of Muslims in administrative services makes it difficult for them to exploit parochial bonds. The majority is poor and uneducated, therefore unable to use gifts and get-togethers for cultivating patron-client relationships with low-ranking political leaders and district officials.

On the other side of the continuum of active citizenship, we find the resort to public spaces and protest. In the post-partition phase, there was an aversion on the part of the Muslim politicians to participate in public forms of protest. Hasan (1997) attributes this to the following reasons. First, it was the fear of being denied nomination in the electoral process that pushed legislators to avoid raising 'embarrassing issues'. This fear was linked to another political complex associating working for Muslims with communalism. Secondly, many elected representatives did not find it necessary to tackle issues relevant to Muslim grievances since they did not have a constituency of their own (pp. 194-195). As I show in the coming sections of this chapter, Muslim politicians assumed a more vigorous role in appearing as pressure groups and, to a large extent, managed to overcome these complexes.

The intensity and frequency of protest in general, according to Mitra (1992) is contingent on the pace of structural change and the existence of room for maneuver, which in turn depends on:

1. The perception by concerned actors of the nature of the state (authoritarian versus accommodative).
2. The collective memory of past struggles (futile versus productive of desired change).
3. The individual's sense of efficacy and the existence of social networks among potential beneficiaries of political action.

India presents us with a rich myriad of forms of protest. The following is a list of forms indicated by Mitra (1992) and whereas the first and the second are institutional forms, the third is radical, and the fourth is somewhere in between:

1. Voting.
2. Contacting politicians and bureaucrats at high levels.
3. Violent and localized insurrections.
4. *Gherao*: encirclement of managerial staff (to secure quick justice).
5. *Jail bharo*: mass violations of the law in large numbers to clog wheels of law and order.
6. *Rāsta roko*: Blocking off traffic on strategic roads.
7. *Satyagraha* and *hartal*: meaning civil disobedience and strikes and hence the cessation of all public activity.
8. *Dharna*: refusal to clear an area where protestors set up camps.
9. *Bandh* and *Morcha*: more militant, using confrontation with authority.
10. Boycott.

Just like the polymorphous perceptions or conceptions of the state, as imagined by Rudolph and Rudolph (1987) in being a third actor, a liberal or citizens' state, capitalist, socialist, the same logic could be applied to the conception of one's citizenship especially in the Muslim case. Identities related to citizenship among Muslims could be analyzed on three levels: the transcultural where the perception of the *Ummah* is noted; the minority level, where discourses on injustice or *zulm* is dominant; and the legal-civil practice. All these are related to one's spheres of civil and political action.

In a survey I conducted among Muslim students in Delhi, I measured the sense of collectivity through the regular attendance of the *Juma* prayer in the mosque. 91% of the male students said they always went, but only 7% of the females went. Another criterion was membership in Islamic associations. 15.2% confirmed they were, and when the figure was broken up into females and males, it accounted for 9.5% and 19% respectively.

55.2% of the respondents said they participated in protests. The difference between male and female participation is obvious since 29.3% of females participated while 54.7% of males did. The majority of issues that respondents protested about had to do with national politics 51.4% (reservations for Muslims (a top issue in the protests), Kashmir, corruption and the *lokpal* bill, student politics, rise in food prices, private education bill, anti-malaria campaigns, arms control, Dalit issues and land struggles, female infanticide and women's development, human rights, Binayak Sen case, anti POTA), 25.7% of issues had to do with the Muslim community (reservations at university, fake encounters like Batla house, unity, Jamia minority status), 22.8% had to do with international concerns (the Palestinian conflict - the top issue among the international concerns, anti-Mubarak, anti-US, Danish cartoons, Indo-US nuclear deals).

When they were asked whether they would be willing to go on a protest for a Muslim-identity-related cause, 86.8% confirmed, 10.4% said they could not decide, and only 2.8% rejected this. It has to be noted that there is no student union in Jamia, and thus there are no political demonstrations there, apart from the Batla House-related sit-ins organized by the Jamia Teachers Solidarity Association.

To measure the level of religiosity among the students, I asked first whether they were a Quran *Hafiz* (a person who memorizes the whole Quran) or knew parts of it by heart. 77.1% confirmed they did, and when I focused on the percentage among females only, it rose to 75.6%. The second question in this category concerned their reading of the *tafsir* (interpretation) of the Quran. 71% said they did, but the figure was lower among the female-only sample and amounted to 53.8%.

There is a noted slight correlation between those who protest and the level of religiosity as shown in Fig. 8 and 9.

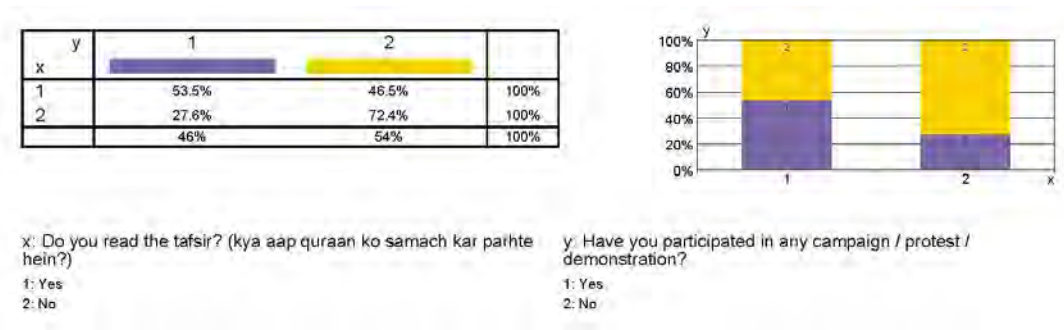


Figure 8 The relationship between reading the Quran's *tafsir* and protesting.

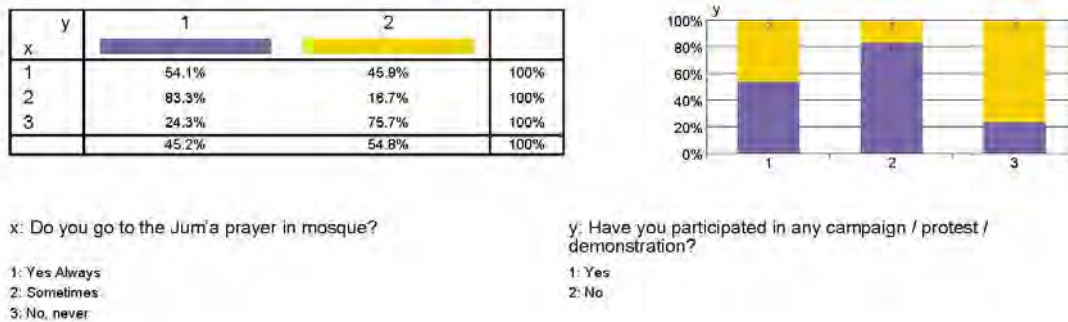


Figure 9 The relationship between going to the Jumaa prayer and protesting.

5.6 Discrimination, minority feeling and finding the refuge in the constitution

One day a friend told me: thank god there is corruption in India, because at least corruption does not discriminate between a Muslim and a non-Muslim.

- A retired Muslim IAS officer, 2010

What could be clearly drawn from Muslim youth's narrations on their present and future is the constant fear or complaint of discrimination. Perhaps this is not unique to them; as it is a commonly psychological feature of all religious minorities in the world. Although the ideal governance model in India is not religion-based, however, Hindutva politics, acts as the trigger to this discrimination.. These politics aim at disabling citizenship rights that are enshrined in the constitution.

Several historical watersheds like the partition of India and the demolishing of Babri Masjid make this fear of discrimination valid in numerous cases. Many Muslims claim that they were first confronted with their identity as Muslims in India on the sixth of December 1992, or that this date was like a wake up call to their reality. As a Muslim journalist argues

India operates at two levels: the systems level, which is unconsciously Hindu and discriminates all the others, but much more Muslims because they are a threat since 1947. They perceive that Muslims have fought for partition and taken their share and thus now they do not have a stake in the system, therefore the system always denies them opportunities; schools and banks do not open in Muslims localities or give them loans, and they are not given health care. The second level is the people's level. Indian people are culturally and civilizationally the most secular people in the world in their day-to-day life, in their behavior, practices and attitude to others. They are a most accommodative and plural society; everybody respects other's faith. On Friday for instance, if you come to that area where there are only twenty-five Muslims, there is a big Mosque on the main road of Haus

Khas, they take half the road for *Namaz*. And when the traffic gets blocked because half of the flyover is taken because of *Eid namaz* for example, no one objects. You will find hundreds of Muslims visiting Hindu shrines and they do not find it odd. I come from Allahabad. Every Muslim in Allahabad participates in Hindu festivals. (personal communication, September 2010)

The partition of India has resulted in a culture of demonization of Muslims and burdening them with an alleged sense of guilt. In addition to this, the construction of the historical narratives of the nineteenth century in a manner portraying Muslims as despotic rulers who subjugated Hindus, forced them to convert to Islam and demolished their temples in order to build mosques on their sites adds up to the establishment of today's reality and the 'othering' mentality that is conducive to discrimination and stereotyping.

This is not to say that this 'othering' state of mind is exclusive in the way Muslims are being perceived. Even Muslims themselves contribute to this, especially as a result of the spatial segregation that is found in urban cities such as Delhi and Mumbai. In a conversation I had with a female student at Jamia, when I asked her if anyone ever goes to these markets outside Okhla, she replied, "yes of course we go to *Lajpat Nagar* and *Sarojni Nagar*. And even people from outside also come here, but very few. Usually it is the other way". This 'people from outside' expression struck me.

Several human right activists and scholars regard the penetration of the Hindu Right wing in different institutional bodies as the biggest reason behind discrimination. In an interview with Manzoor Alam, the chairman of the Institute for Objective Studies in Delhi, he argued that the *Sangh Parivar* managed to penetrate different levels, in addition to the societal one. The first is the bureaucracy especially the IAS and the IPS through establishing in their minds that Muslims are not patriotic and thus cannot be trusted. He also referred to a secret letter written by the first Home Minister of independent India stating that Muslims should not be appointed in any key positions. The second level is of policy makers, where Muslims are dealt with as vote banks rather than participants in policy making. Eventually, these three segments kept the Muslims away from mainstream development of their economic environment, educational institutions and social integration through keeping good relations with non-Muslims.

Despite these accounts, there is a counter-picture manifested in the beliefs of many Muslims. The first angle of this image is the argument that the rise of right-wing Hindu politics led to the rise of the level of consciousness among the young and educated Muslims of their 'Indianness'.

Muslims are being assertive now due to several reasons. The first relates to the set of the fundamental rights, which was visualized by the framers of the Constitution and are being used as key judicial and political tools. In addition to this, articles such as (29) and (30) of the Constitution give tools to minorities to legally fight for their rights (See Appendix I for the full text of these articles). The constitutional recognition of religion and language is a vital aspect. This ideally transforms the minority-subjugated mentality into one of active citizenship. In Prof. Akhtarul Wasey's words

Islam is my religion and Urdu is my mother tongue and both are recognized. In this Hindu majority country, I was given the freedom not only to practice but also to preach my religion. Of course there is the Gujarat incident and all sorts of discrimination. But there is a simultaneous picture. There are all types of deprivation in the Hindu community also. Thank god the Indian Muslims are more comfortable in this country than Muslims in any Muslim country. I have said the same to general Musharraf, "Sir you have Islamabad, but we have Islam." This is the country where a Hindu is not permitted to have a second wife, but Muslims are permitted to have four wives. I am not approving that, but I am telling you that although it is an 80% Hindu society, and Muslims are 15%, triple divorce is not allowed in many countries but it is allowed here. That freedom is very interesting. (personal communication, September 2010)

On a collective and political level, this explains the plethora of Muslim political organizations that either run for elections or act as pressure groups on political parties and representatives. As Manzoor Alam contends, there is an emerging healthy environment that has been appearing since the last fifteen to twenty years and is indicative of a process towards educational and political development in the Muslim community.

This is also strengthened by certain legislations like the right to information act, by the democratic channels allowing strikes and filing petitions, and definitely by the role of the media. For example in Andhra Pradesh, students who got governmental scholarships were not allowed to receive the money in cash but through banks. However, certain branch managers refused to open bank accounts for Muslims. The Hyderabad-based Urdu newspaper *Sisyast* then raised a huge cry. And as a result of this, bank managers were compelled to open the bank accounts (Shahid Mehdi, the former Vice Chancellor of Jamia, personal communication, December 2010).

The idea of opportunities granted by the democratic and secular channels guaranteed to every citizen in India is a recurrent theme in many conversations I had with Indian Muslims, especially

from the ones with a lower middle class background. The following is an example of such a narrative:

I am not from an aristocratic Delhi family, I am not from the upper castes, whatever I have achieved, I have achieved in a democratic secular India. I accept there are flaws in the system, but at the same time, there are experience and opportunities you can explore. It does not work for everybody but for whom it works, it works well. One has to look for opportunities. It is good to appreciate the variety and wider experience that India has to offer: intermingling with different people, trying to understand instead of rejecting, social and educational exposure and religious thinking. [...] Sometimes I feel I am a minority, but after some time, it does not matter, it happens with all the oppressed. They are the real people before the advent of Aryans to this land, they do not have a voice, shot in full blood, women are raped, and no one is taking care. The welfare state really fails not only in terms of Muslims.

A female PhD student also maintained that

There is an overstress on the discourse of marginalization. The problems Muslims face are on a high level not on the daily life level because people get a chance to get an education and to have health services. This access is equal to all. There is no discrimination in education but in jobs.

On secularism, the following excerpts from an interview with an Islamic scholar at Lucknow's Nadwatul Ulama provides us insight on the way the *'ulama* perceive the location of the ideal of secularism in their empirical everyday life and their conceptual realm:

Secularism is the only way of uniting Muslims in India, although it is islamically rejected. But in India, secularism is not like in Turkey. In India, they accepted secularism with the acceptance of all other religions, and made secularism the formula of governance only. Religion sustained the control of the private sphere. Secularism in fact eases all the problems every sect faces. If any religious institution needs to organize an event or function, then it gets full support from the government and authorities. There is no law against public meetings. Tablighi jamaat, for example, holds conferences attended by millions of people. Muslims live freely and religiously without any barriers. Such facilitations are not found in other countries. In Arab countries for example, if a Muslim goes regularly to pray in a Mosque, he will end up under surveillance and doubt of the police. Same for meetings which are actually banned, and there is no freedom of expression of either emotions or

opinions. Magazines and newspapers with a specific religious orientation are banned. But for Muslims in India, there is complete freedom, unparalleled in the rest of the world. However, concerning rights, there is suffering. Rights are not totally achieved in India.

India is considered *dar al amn* (abode of peace and security) because the constitution provided security for all citizens. Although we are deprived of basic rights, we do not consider ourselves weak. We feel fulfilled with our religion and our approach and do not consider ourselves less than any Muslim in the Arab world. All Muslim forces including Jamaati islami and Tablighi jamaat are proud of this. We do not suffer from deficiency or inferiority complex we have intellectual independence. We preserved our identity and we renewed it in the context of India, and we can preserve our existence. We express our Islamic opinion with a free pen, unrivaled in the Islamic world where mouths are muffled.

One does not quite find among the Hindu majority many crediting the theory of discrimination. On the contrary, it is possible to find many Hindus believing that they are being discriminated against now by the government due to the introduction of a number of schemes for the backward groups and the minorities that lead Hindus themselves to become a minority. These sentiments are shared on both a societal level (several Hindu students shared this opinion) and a scholarly one (as evident from BJP sympathizers).⁸⁴ One opinion, for example, criticizes the manner with which the Sachar Committee had pursued its survey. According to Singhal (2007), the Committee should have collected figures of the Muslim candidates who appeared before the government service exams and the numbers of those selected. The problem would appear thus as in not discrimination as such, since the number of Muslim candidates in the first place is remarkably low.

Despite this, some still acknowledge many of the dilemmas of Muslims, especially the urban middle class ones. A comment by a Hindu reader on an article in the Hindu titled “A Decade after 9/11, Indian Jihad still thrives” reflects this:

Apart from dealing with terrorism at the political and administrative levels, there is a strong need to deal with it at the societal and individuals levels. We have to make a conscious effort to bring into the mainstream disgruntled middle class and lower middle class Muslims who are forced to live in ghettos because of the ‘housing apartheid’ and are discriminated against in jobs. We have to muffle the voices within our families and our circles of friends

⁸⁴ An example of this is found in the article written in this edited volume by Dixit (2007).

that justify the alienation and discrimination.⁸⁵

To measure cultural rights, a question was asked on the availability of a place to pray at the educational institution, 78.8% confirmed this. This was a very strong indicator of the practice of cultural rights (apart from some examples in Delhi where respondents complained about national holidays and non-recognition of Islamic events or time for Friday prayers at JNU).

Seeing that there was a sense of rampant frustration, which is directly linked to the demolition of mosques,⁸⁶ an attempt to measure the sense of discrimination among the respondents was pivotal. Among both males and females, 35.2% said they experienced discrimination at their educational institution or a governmental office. When I looked at the female-only percentage, it declined to 23.8%. Concerning the exact places where the students witnessed this discrimination, 50% was at the university, 38.4% at government offices, 7.6% at home, and 3.8% in their employment place.

There was a consensus that discrimination is witnessed in the national holidays in India, in which everyone is expected to celebrate the Hindu ones, whereas the Muslim ones are entirely ghettoized. Apart from that, one student told me that there is discrimination and hardship everywhere in India, but if an Indian would face 30% or 50% hardship, in the same situation a Muslim would be facing 80%. When I asked a group of female students sitting together if they feel they are a minority, the affirmative answer surprised their Hindu friend who was among them. One of the Muslim girls, then, told me she had actually felt it sometimes even in Jamia:

Here, we are at the center of India, where there is everything around us and all opportunities. But it differs if you go anywhere else in India, you will get a very different picture about everything. So yes I have rights and I feel I am a full citizen because I live in Delhi, but I do not know if I would be able to say the same thing if I was living outside Delhi.

⁸⁵ <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/article2444845.ece> (Accessed on 12/09/11)

⁸⁶ In January 2011, a thirty-year-old mosque was demolished in Delhi near Nizamuddin area by the government because according to a Court decision, it had stood on government land. The Muslim authorities claimed that it was Wakf land, but that they had lost the case in Court due to inadequate legal defense, and had argued that the government could have at least offered to sell the area instead of demolishing the mosques. (HT, 13.01.2011, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Will-allow-prayers-at-mosque-site/Article1-650075.aspx>)

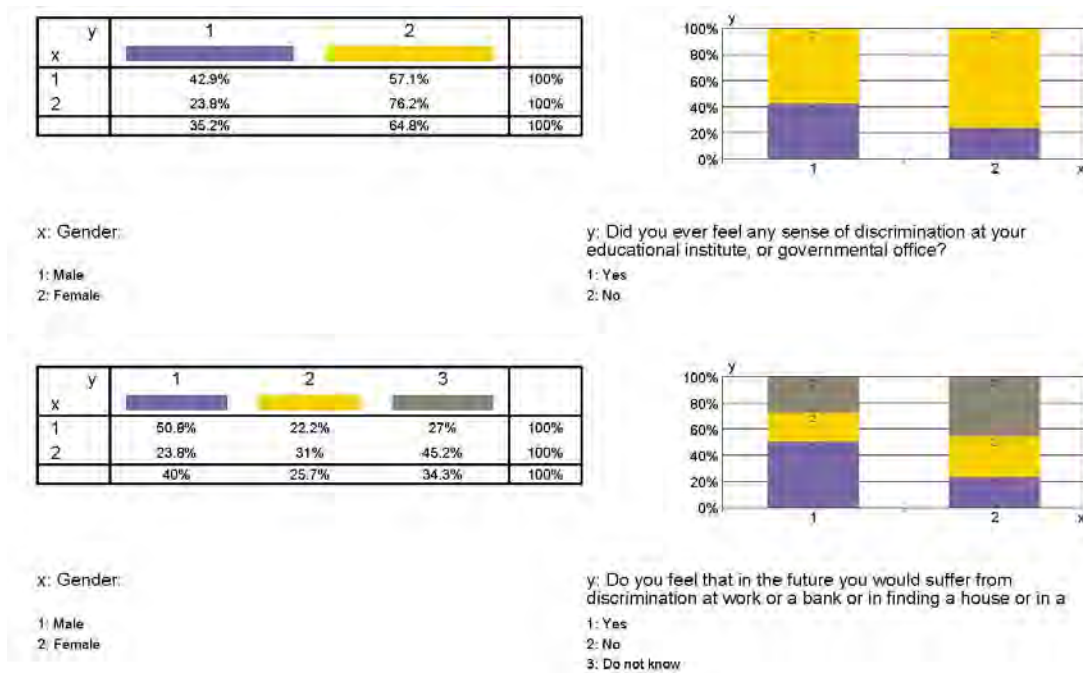


Figure 10 The Relationship between Gender and the sense of discrimination.

The statistics could be misleading because the majority of the respondents live in Muslim majority areas and hence the chances of discrimination or feeling a minority feeling could be lower than of those living outside the Muslim ghettos (some of the students who did not experience problems had told me that they have always lived in places with Muslim majority and probably this is why they had never faced any discrimination, they added that the scenario might be different for other Muslims).

The respondents had a very low level of ‘being experienced to reality’ because their frictions with real-life situations were minimal; their daily routine includes going to university and staying at a hostel. There was no significant level of interaction with the outside world (be it in other districts or at work). Conversation with the elder age groups (between 25 and 35) showed how the Muslim name one carries could put one in unfavorable circumstances, such as at work or the airport. The ‘coming out’ of the safe cocoon of one’s village into the bigger world of metropolises such as Mumbai and Delhi was the first encounter these youth faced with discrimination and reminders of their difference.

When asked about the future, 40% affirmed their fear of discrimination and 34.3% said they did not know. The “do not know answer” is significant to the analysis of perception of opportunities. The fear of discrimination was related to 28.5% in finding a house, 28.5% in governmental offices or jobs, 14.2% at work, and 23.8% everywhere.

When asked if they feel they were a minority, 76.9% confirmed this feeling. The numerical idea did not dominate their mode of thinking while answering to this question. Being empowered was the main driving force to locate oneself as a minority or not. There is a difference, however, in the gender aspect; 84.4% of the males confirmed this, while only 65% of women shared this feeling.

There is also a shared feeling that the lives of Indian Muslims are much better than the lives of Muslims in Pakistan, Bangladesh or the Arab World. Some students have complained of the mentality of Indian Muslims themselves; some said they are fundamentalists, other said that

Muslims have better rights to live, to develop and to participate in the mainstream; the problem lies in the sick mentality of *Mullahs* and *madrasas*. There is an urgent need to either revise the syllabi of these *madrasas* or simply close them down. The educational system of this country is in a transitional phase and due to recent government's special efforts, Muslims have started taking up higher studies and enjoying better economic status. However, women's freedom is still a major issue.

The major problem with Indian Muslims is their victim-centered mentality. Look at Japan and Israel, they do not mourn, but are optimistic. Government creates this victimization. There is also a failure of Indian *madrasas* with their 500 year-old syllabuses. How can you issue *fatwas* if you do not know about world affairs? Muslim '*ulama* are leaders of poorest of poor and the lower middle classes.

Hindu-Muslim problems emerge from politicians, not people. This is evident in the opportunistic politics (*roti garam karna*). They make use of the sentiments of people to their advantage, which results in too much injustice. This division has detrimental effects on the Muslims, eventually their opponents win with these divide and rule tactics. There is no unity among Muslims, unlike Sikhs for example who stuck to their faith in the UK and insisted on wearing the *kirpan* and *turban* till it was legalized for them.

Three things if properly maintained then the issues in India would be reformed; these are the hospital, the police station, and the court. The problem is in the *Sangh parivar*. But they lack authority, and this why they resort to high voice and violence. A human being has to be honest with oneself first. Three levels are essential: the soul (*nafs*), then the nation (*qaum*), and then the country (*watan*).

The kind of school the respondents had gone to appeared to have an effect on their sense of minority. 91.7% of respondents who had studied only in *madrasas* shared this view in compared to

only 78% of those who had gone to governmental schools or 66% who had gone to private schools or 75% who had gone to different schools.

When asked if they feel that the Indian State had been just to the Muslim community 33% affirmed it while 56.3% negated it. Here, historical experience plays an influential role in this perception. Taking the Babri Masjid and the stance of the government towards it is an example of what Muslims term as injustice on the part of the state and a breach with the principle of secularism as enshrined in the constitution. Zafrul Islam Khan, the editor of the English newspaper *Milli Gazette* comments, “The myth suddenly became a real person and has a guardian (the law). Muslims will not forget it. Hindus will speak with a mentality of ruling. This won’t stop here. Many other mosques are on the way.”

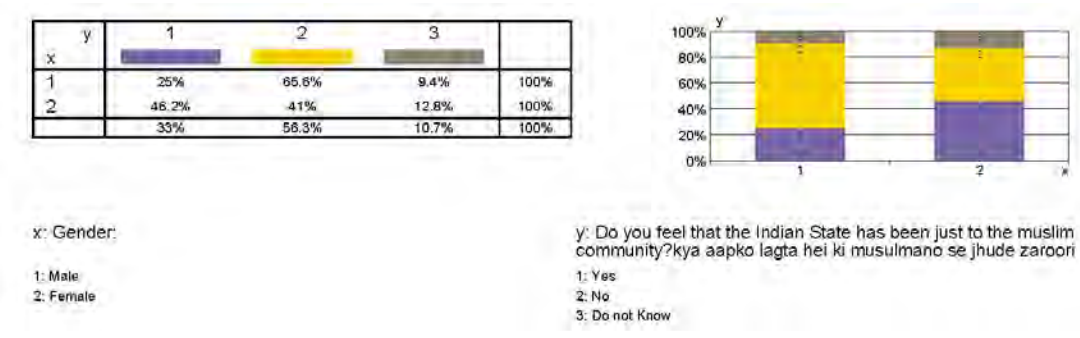


Figure 11 The relationship between Gender and the sense of state justice.

When I asked the students if the Ayodhya verdict was fair to the Muslims, 64.7% said no while 8.8% affirmed it and 26.5% refused to give their opinion or had no opinion. The “No Opinion” answer is a politically burdened one. It was not chosen so as to convey political ignorance or unawareness, but to assert a statement. Students were either critical of the question in the first place, since it was not a matter of justice to them. It was rather a matter of common sense. In other cases, students did not want to sound too critical of the High Court since it is deemed unacceptable from an Indian citizen to challenge a court's decision. There were many students who shared the opinion that “the Babri verdict was not fair to Muslims but was fair enough to the general public.” Another interesting answer was:

This is a monkey’s division (*bandar baant*) the Hindus got everything for themselves and gave almost nothing to the Muslims. What was supposed to be done is that it should have been ruled that it should be turned into a secular place. What is wrong in turning it into a hospital or a park? This judgment was simply useless.

There was no discernible effect of the kind of school the respondents had gone to in shaping their

decision as Fig. 12 shows:

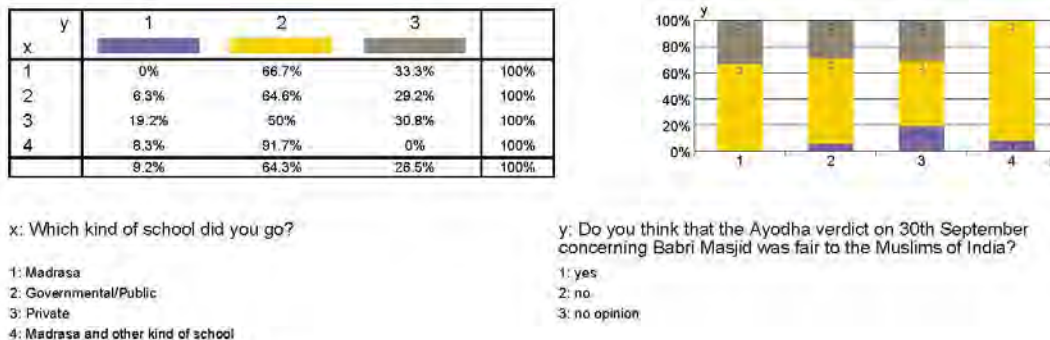


Figure 12 The relationship between school socialization and the opinion on the Ayondhya Verdict.

Finally, to see if there is any impact of following *fatwas* on the way their political decisions are perceived, I calculated the percentages of students who always followed *fatwas* and perceived the verdict to be unfair. This showed no significant difference and indicated the rather weak role *fatwas* play in the socialization and opinion forming process.

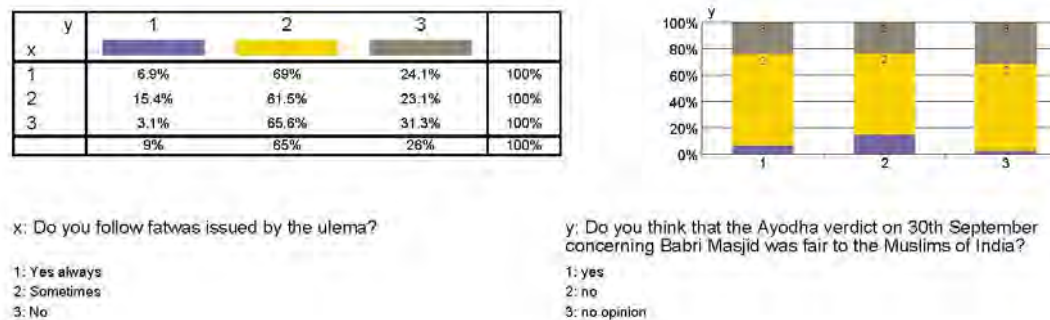


Figure 13 The Relationship between following fatwas and the opinion on the Ayodhya Verdict.

5.7 Terrorism and security concerns

Terrorists are fasadis not jihadis.

- Arif Khan, *Text and Context: Quran and Contemporary Challenges*, 2010.

Many Islamic organizations and independent Muslim scholars have struggled to erase the stigma and propaganda equating terrorism with *jihād*. In one of the resolutions enacted by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, it was stated that while *jihād* was constructive, terrorism was a destructive phenomenon (Indian Social Institute, 2009). The constructivity and creativity of Muslims were outlined in many aspects. Zafrul Islam Khan contends that

Indian Muslims has a tradition of liberal and innovative thinking. The idea of Islamic economy, for example, was first explored in India by Jihadullah Siddiqui, who got the King

Faisal Award. Muslims excelled in other fields like the *hadith* and Quran. ‘*Ulama* like Shibli Nu’mani who wrote the Sirah Nabawiyah and translated the Quran’s *tafsīr* into Urdu are such models. We also hear about Muslims in China, but they do not have any achievements.

In a literary work comprised of a long letter sent by an Indian Muslim to his friend in Pakistan titled “Choosing to stay: Memoirs of an Indian Muslim”, Ansari contends:

In the words of my benefactor, for the last fourteen centuries fundamentalism has never been popular in the Islamic societies. The Ulamas, the Mujtahids and the Shaikhs have always been treated with great respect in every period but in society at large the Ulamas have not been followed. Amongst Shia Muslims this is more evident. They show great respect to their Mujtahids and sit in their gathering in very respectful posture but generally they tend to enjoy life as anyone else. For the Sunni Muslims, there is another door open; they can go into monasteries and shrines of the sufis and thus escape the severities of religion.

[...]

The average Muslim relies upon his God who conceals man's faults, is forgiving and compassionate. This average person knows how enjoy the blessings which his God has conferred upon him. The freedom of imagination and expression found in Urdu, Arabic and Persian poetry is unparalleled in any other language. It is obvious that the people who have this colorful temperament cannot be accused of fundamentalism. (Ansari N. , 1999, pp. 121-122)

There is a widespread feeling of frustration among the Muslim youth in India. This basically stems from the above-mentioned discrimination discourse and the constant feeling of being doubted and suspected as a terrorist. According to a news report in the Urdu daily *Sahafat*, there are almost sixteen thousand Muslim young people in Indian jails arrested with the suspicion of terrorism (Sahafat 14.08.2011). Having visible features that easily identify members of the Muslim community with their religion (be it the skull cap or the beard) adds up to this climate of suspect. While starting my research on Indian Muslims, I was trying to map the Muslim social workers and activists working on issues of the community. I started this by typing in Google: “*muslim NGOs india*”. Interestingly, the following “did you mean” list emerged:

jobs indian ngos

christian ngo india

indian ngo list

indian terrorist organizations

indian charity organizations

The terrorism discourse emerges as a part of a larger Hindu nationalistic discourse aiming at signaling Muslims as disloyal subjects of the Indian state who have allegiance towards Pakistan. 22% of the young men I had interviewed had confirmed that they had been once accused of being a Pakistani or a non-Indian by others.

The frequency of police fake encounters in Muslim residential areas and the targeting of Muslim students without sufficient evidence is a serious predicament facing this youth and the ways they perceive their future. There are many famous incidents in which Muslim students were implicated with no evidence. The first is the Mecca Masjid blast of 2007 in which around 200 Muslim youth were detained following the attacks but most of them were released later by the courts as investigations showed that they were innocent and that the bombing was executed by former members of the RSS. However, the release of the rest of these youth who were subject to torture was not prompt. They were branded as terrorists by both the police and the media which led to agitations of several Human Rights groups and Muslim political organizations until the Andhra Pradesh Court two years later acquitted them. In the 'National Commission for Minorities Note on visit to Hyderabad with Reference to the minorities and Mecca Masjid Blast Case', there is an account of some of these innocent victims:

Of these, Maqsood Ahmed had owned a Computer Centre but had, according to him, been blacklisted on grounds of having been a student of Karate. Rayeesuddin has been a witness to the arrest of the latter. Dr. Ibrahim Ali Junaid had participated in a demonstration protesting encroachment on a Kabristhan and had been arrested. Similarly, Mohammad Abdul Raheem had been arrested for taking part in a demonstration. All of them live within two kilometers of the Mecca Masjid; each claimed that they have never been arrested for any criminal offence. But all of them were tortured to force admissions and sign documents confirming their guilt.⁸⁷

The second incident is the previously mentioned Batla House Encounter of 2008. What is significant to report in this regard is the continual targeting of Batla House area in Okhla until this

⁸⁷ National Commission of Minorities Report, available at http://ncm.nic.in/pdf/Mecca_Masjid.pdf (accessed 12 August 2012)

date. In fact in the months of February and March 2012 there has been numerous accounts in both Urdu and the English newspapers of the police brutality and the recurrent arrests of innocent youth and accusing them of being illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and terror suspects. The community staged collective action in refusing this behavior on the part of the police and their arrest of these youth without a warrant or a judicial order and hence staging protests including women and even school children who have been subject to police abuse. Since the police came wearing civilian clothes, the residents themselves in one of these raids upon hearing the warning call from the local mosque held the police officers captives until the local police officers came to release their colleagues.⁸⁸ The following excerpt from the newspaper report is indicative of the haphazardness with which these unjustified arrests have taken place:

At 1 a.m. on 16 February, eight plainclothes officers from the Bangladeshi cell tried to pick up around 20 people from Jamia Nagar saying they were illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Mohammed Rustam, a vegetable seller, whose house was targeted by the police, says, "I kept insisting that I am from Kishanganj in Bihar and have been living here with my family for almost two decades. I even showed them my voter ID card (a copy of which is with this newspaper) but they took it and confiscated my mobile phone and other documents. I rushed back inside and would not come out or let my family members venture out. They then left my house and picked up four young men from the neighbouring house. (The Sunday Guardian, 26/02/2012)

In January 2012, Mohammad Ali was acquitted from the terror charges after spending fourteen years in jail. Like many other innocent youth, he was detained with false charges and then released because the prosecution could not produce evidence, which could prove his involvement into the respective terror cases (Ali M. , 2012). The fatal repercussions of this terrorism-related detention are voiced out by the activist Shabnam Hashmi from ANHAD (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy):

After five to ten years when they are released, there is nobody to say it was a mistake, that

⁸⁸ Times of India, Batla cries police brutality, shuts down, 29 February 2012, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Batla-cries-police-brutality-shuts-down/articleshow/12076197.cms>

The Sunday Guardian, Jamia residents come together against police raids, 28 February 2012, <http://www.sunday-guardian.com/news/jamia-residents-come-together-against-police-raids>

The Sunday Guardian, Jamia lives in fear after a series of police raids, 26th February 2012, <http://www.sunday-guardian.com/investigation/jamia-nagar-lives-in-fear-after-a-series-of-police-raids#.T0yPvYMYow0.twitter>

this was not right, although in many terror cases, it has been proven that *Sangh* has done it. Even then, initially, Muslims would be arrested, and for every Muslim boy who has been arrested in a case, they would put cases against him fifty sixty cases so when he gets away from one case, there would be other five cases from which he cannot escape.

There has been continuous resistance to this discourse on terrorism, which interestingly instead of taking a physically violent turn had taken a symbolic one. There is an increasing belief among Muslims that they would be compensated for all the injustices incurred upon them in this world and would be granted heaven, and for them, this is the substitute for armed struggles against their oppressors (Sikand Y. , 2006a). A female Muslim librarian in a *madrassa* on the outskirts of Lucknow told me

Muslims feel injustice after Babri Masjid; they feel deprived of their dignity, shocked and are in sorrow. However, there is no risk on Muslims living in India because Allah protects us and we try to build our future ourselves through what Allah has destined for us.

Despite all allegations against *madrassas* as terrorist hubs and training centers, Yoginder Sikand, the scholarly authority on Indian *madrassas*, asserts that there is not a single *madrassa* who has called for violence or even armed *jihād* (Sikand Y. , 2006). In his speech, the Vice chancellor of Darul Uloom Deoband, Marghub Ar-rahman, affirmed that terrorism could never be the means of any struggle of Muslims. In fact, Islam stresses on the idea that whoever kills one soul is considered to have murdered all of humanity (Madani A. , 2012).

Another means of responding to this discourse refers to the sad irony of the overrepresentation of Indian Muslims in Indian prisons as compared to other institutions and governmental bodies in India (According to Mujeebur Rahman, this is considered to be data omitted from the Sachar Report). Mansi Sharma of the human rights group ANHAD recounted details of bomb blasts in various parts of the country that are now known to have been engineered by Hindutva groups. She accused the agencies of the state of their delay in the investigations, of suppressing vital information and of wrongly targeting, arresting and torturing innocent Muslims (Sikand Y. , 2011).

One social activist contends that the media like the *Times of India* reflects a negative role through its reports that portray Jamia Nagar as a terrorist hub although it is a highly educated area, with its residents comprised of mainly middle class citizens— the majority of which believes in secularism. In my conversations with Muslim students, when I asked if they think that the media in India portrays a negative image of Muslims, 38.5% confirmed this on a constant basis, while 56.7% maintained that it is not a permanent attitude.

On security, 62.5% confirmed that they felt always safe where they lived. Most respondents actually never go out of Jamia or Okhla area, which is a predominantly Muslim area (or a ghetto) this is why their sense of security is relatively high, although the fear of crime and police fake encounters is strong.

When asked if there is any place they avoid going in fear of their security, 75% of the female students affirmed this while 63.2% of the males did. Some stressed that the feeling of insecurity is not dependent on being a Muslim. The female students stress the increasing crime rate in Delhi, especially in Batla House:

In every *Eid* there is something wrong with us, last year we had an encounter, the one before there was problems with the police, and this year we have flood. It is the government's fault. Where we are living, the people are not well-educated, and who are educated do not have much time to tackle this problem. I do not feel safe where I live; it is less safe compared to the past. Police have to provide security especially for women.

Some students claimed that the district where BJP rules or is a leader became less safe because of the hate speeches and that the central and state government have failed in stopping this. When asked about whether there is any place he would avoid going to, one student said he would not go out on the 15th of August, because if any terrorist attack occurred then it might be a problem for him as part of the Muslim youth who always suffer.

During my fieldwork, I had an interview in Batla House in the morning of September 30th, 2010, which coincided with the day the verdict on the Ayodhya case was pronounced. It was midday when my interviewee told me in an ordering tone, "You have to make sure you are out of Batla House by one p.m., this is when the verdict will be announced, and we are not sure what will happen to us here." As a social scientist who have never experienced or witnessed public violence, sharing the fear of the ensuing violence on the part of the RSS, in the case that the verdict was pro-Muslims, was astounding to me. In contrast to how my Hindu upper middle class flat-mates got stocked up with food in case of the announcement of a curfew, the residents of Jamia Nagar were fearing their own lives but with a matter-of-fact tone; as if it is an integral aspect of their everyday life.

5.8 Gender issues

A society can be created where a woman can live a life free from fear and where she can realize her social, economic, political and legal rights. She wants to be treated

equally and wants to live a life of respect and dignity.

- Hukook-e-Niswan Federation (Mumbai)

Although this chapter deals with Muslim youth in general, the predicaments affecting the practice of their citizenship rights and the way they perceive themselves as citizens and not subjects of the state, separate reference has to be made for Muslim women, especially the youth. This separation stems from the uniqueness of some of the problems pertaining to Muslim women and girls. Nevertheless, the majority of these problems are exclusively in the domain of personal laws—the private social sphere; and hence should not be targeted as national political concerns, but as Benhabib argues:

The distinction between the social and the political makes no sense in the modern world, not because all politics has become administration and because the economy has become quintessential public, as Hannah Arendt thought, but primarily because the struggle to make something public is a struggle for justice. (Benhabib, 1992, p. 79)

In the words of female students I interviewed:

If every community has its own rules, then this guarantees justice to the community. Communal Violence and corruption erupt when you want to impose others' laws on other people.

As a Muslim I do not feel the state is just, but as a citizen, yes I feel so.

It is this secular framework that allows for the oppression of Muslim women through the freedom given to the *'ulama* in providing personal laws.

The struggle towards justice in the public space is preceded in the Indian Muslim women case with a struggle for legitimizing their voice to appear in the public space in the first place. Women's access to public spaces has been limited and contingent upon several factors such as the region where they live, their age, their marital status, their abidance to a specific dress code, their accompaniment of children or others and their level of education. The last factor is particularly significant because it carries the highest potential of emancipatory force. Although the level of literacy of Muslim women in India is considerably low in comparison to other religious groups as well as to the national average (the National Family Health Survey in 2005-2006 indicated it to be 49.5%), it is actually witnessing a serious rise (the first National Family Health Survey of 1992-1993 had pointed it out to be 34%). There is widespread conviction among various Muslim groups

and communities all over India, whether orthodox or liberal, of the importance of education especially among women. In many of my interviews with Muslim scholars and teachers, reference has been made to a statement by Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, a famous Islamic scholar and a former rector of Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow, “If we teach one girl, this means we have taught two generations.”

Despite the hegemony of patriarchal visions of the role of women and the prevalence of men as gatekeepers for women’s education; since on the one hand it is usually the father who decides the fate of the children, and on the other hand, the world of the permissible and the non-permissible (in other words *fatwas* or religious edicts) is controlled by male scholars. This section does not aim at citing all these cases, since there is ample literature on this subject, but to present the new stirrings in society and the evidence of the ruptures in these discourses on gender issues.

For example, there is a remarkable breakthrough enacted in a decision by the Nadwatul Ulama to open the door for women to become *muftis* or jurists upon completion of a course that has been historically only limited to male students. This is possible in different *madrasas* in Uttar Pradesh and, precisely, in the cities of Rae Bareli, Azamgarh and Lucknow. In a reporting by the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi:

Although history has examples of women *muftis* in the remote past, most of the contemporary Islamic world barred them till 2006 when Syria made a breakthrough and appointed two women *muftis* to work in Damascus and Aleppo. Last year in Lucknow, a Muslim woman priest assumed the role of a *qazi* for a marriage. (Indian Social Institute, 2009)

Several women’s organizations have been active in denouncing restrictive *fatwas* by ‘*ulama*, especially coming from the ultra conservative Deoband seminary. An all-India women’s organization called Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) (the Organization of Indian Muslim Women) and the Mumbai-based Hukook-e-Niswan federation (the Rights of Women Federation) condemned a *fatwa* issued by Deoband banning girls and boys from studying in co-educational institutions. Hukook-e-Niswan’s federation (which is composed of thirty Muslim women representing 1500 women in Mumbai) asserted, “The federation has also referred to the constitutional affirmation of the freedom to exist as free individuals. They have also condemned the claim of Deoband as a representative of the community.”

Although gender equality does not appear through the Quran, there are two strategies adopted by women rights’ activists. Most activists would resort to the constitution and the rights enshrined for

the Indian woman in general. An example of this is the BMMA:

It is an opportunity for us to be in India, we felt that despite Gujarat, if we look around particularly in South Asia, India is the only place where there is democracy and thus we have hope to fight for our citizenship rights. This was over a period of two years of discussions in Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad. We felt that on the one hand, there is the issue of communalism, violence and discrimination, but on the other hand, the so-called Muslim leadership has totally failed in fulfilling its obligations to the community. So we felt that in 2006 and 2007 if Sachar is saying that the community is lagging behind socially, educationally and economically, this means that we failed to become full citizens in spite of the functional democracy. (Zakia Soman, BMMA, personal communication, December 2010)

However, another branch of Islamist activists adopt different 'diplomatic' strategies. These aim at minimizing the collision with male '*ulama* through talking about women's rights from the *shari'ah* perspective which is a tactic for earning legitimacy, and is also used to a great extent in the Arab World where the human rights' perspective has limited institutional channels or support by the system. The proponents of this group argue that they do not need to adopt feminist ideologies because Islam has given full protection and support to women but the problem lies in the social application or malpractice.

Uzma Nahid, a Muslim educational activist and member of the All Indian Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), is one example. She had participated in the drafting of a model of conditional *nikahnamah* (marriage contract) that guarantees the rights of women according to *shari'ah*. This *nikahnamah* was adopted as an alternative strategy to the calls of banning triple divorce—a commonly legitimized practice among Indian Muslims. Nahid explains:

The man has the right to divorce by saying it thrice through fax, email or phone. And most of the Indian Muslims are *hanafi*, so Indian '*ulama* are saying it is valid and do not want to listen to anything against their verdict. There were many activists who collaborated to protest against it like Asghar Ali Engineer and many women, and they all demanded to ban it, which was rejected by the '*ulama* at once. But my approach was different; it was diplomatic. I told '*ulama* that we have implemented only half *shari'ah* law; what about the punishment of 100 lashes when someone divorces an innocent woman? Since this is not done in India, this means we have only half *shari'ah* law, so we should also stop this practice of triple *ṭalāq*. So I never demand any ban on triple *ṭalāq* because then the '*ulama*

will use sixty *hadiths* to prove it is as per Islamic law, then with the help of ten people, we drafted a *nikahnama* on the lines of the work of Maulana Thanvi. We started working in 1994, and after ten years in 2004, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board issued this *nikahnamah*. But despite the fact that in 2005, the board did not agree to all what we intended on triple *ṭalāq*, they released a conditional *nikahnamah*. This is a historic decision; after 400 years the Board has agreed to a conditional *nikahanamah* which means women can have their conditions at the time of marriage. In the board, there is a room for amendment and chances for improvements. (Uzma Nahid, personal communication, April 2011)

Mosque entry is another contested debate where women’s struggle for their presence in the public sphere is most evident. Activists cite the reasons why *‘ulama* are against women’s entry to the mosques as being stuck in memory of the post-partition India where women’s security was at risk. The new life conditions of women and their presence in education and employment necessitated their demand to access to mosques. Although women are denied this access in North India and in several mosques in South India, there are many movements emerging now and demanding this right to entry, especially in Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. The *jama* masjid in Delhi is an intriguing example where women have simply legitimized their presence and prayer there.

Among the students I interviewed, 52.4% supported different civil codes for different religious communities, which meant that they were against the Uniform Civil Code. However, some students have asserted that since India is a secular country, there is no other option but to support the idea of a common civil code. There is a correlation between membership in Islamic associations and support for different civil codes (75%). This is also true for the *jumaa* prayer (as an indicator of religiosity). There is however a gender gap in this aspect; 38.1% of females as opposite to 61.9% of males support different civil codes for different religious groups.

	1	2	
1	75%	25%	100%
2	48.8%	51.2%	100%
	52.8%	47.1%	100%



x: Are you a member of any Islamic association?
 1: Yes
 2: No

y: Do you support different civil codes for different religious groups?
 1: Yes
 2: No

Figure 14 The relationship between membership in Islamic associations and support for the Common Civil Code.

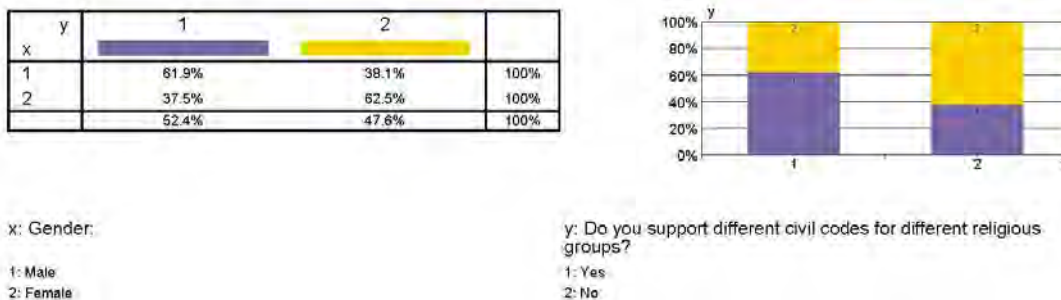


Figure 15 The relationship between Gender and support for the Common Civil Code.

73.3% of the students affirmed they were in favor of reservations for Muslim women. There was no gender gap in this regard. The percentage slightly changed since 71.9% of men agreed, while 75.6% of women did. This was indicative of a strong change in the assumedly conservative mentality of Muslims and their approval of women's appearance in public spheres.

Interestingly, there was no correlation between the level of religiosity and the support for reservations for Muslim women. Whether the respondents read the *tafsīr* of the Quran or not, the support for reservations was almost the same: 74.3% and 75.9% respectively

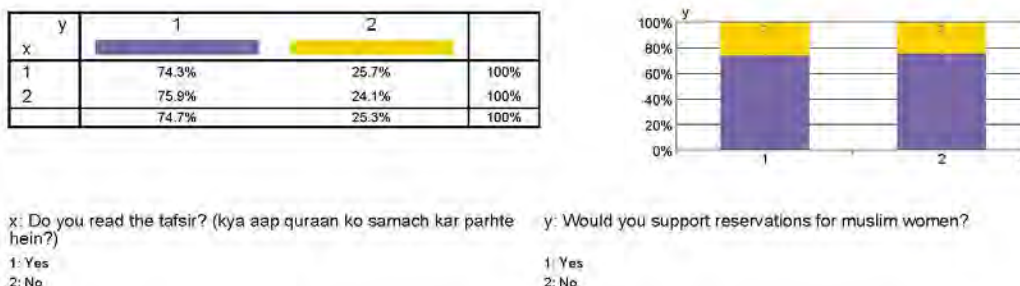


Figure 16 The relationship between the level of religioisty and the suport for reservations for Muslim women.

Another interesting observation was found in the statistical analysis relating to the relationship between following *fatwas* and supporting Muslim women’s reservations. According to the following graph (Fig. 17), one could see no correlation between the two variables. This stands paradoxical to the clear stance of *‘ulama* on women’s reservations and their rejection. However, a deeper look into the reasons why *‘ulama* reject reservations for women, as I show in a coming section provides the clue for this statistical result.

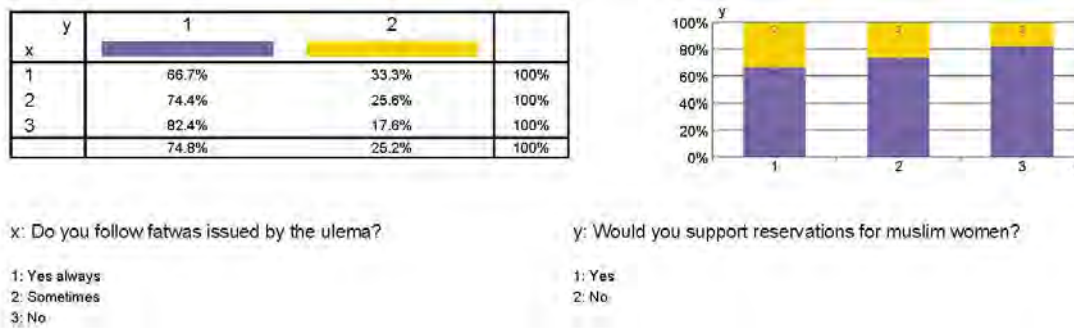


Figure 17 The relationship between following fatwas and supporting reservations for Muslim women.

When asked about the veil, 56.1% confirmed that it gives them a sense of security and at some times even freedom. It was interesting how many men actually decided to answer the question although it was directly addressed to women. This is why I chose to clearly demarcate the answers of men and women, showing that men's perception of the necessity of the *hijab* is much higher than those who are actually using it. 76.5% of the males, who decided to answer this question, gave a positive reply in favor of the *hijab*. The headscarf or the *hijab* features in two inter-related discourses, of security and discrimination, which is essentially complex because although some girls confirm that wearing the *burka* enhances their sense of safety, others mention how it makes their identity visible and thus might put them into danger:

In Delhi, people think that those who wear *burka* or *hijab* are the worse off, but in my opinion this is one of the best things God has provided us. I feel safe in front of God but not in this area because of my clothing style.

[...]

There is *burka*-related discrimination. At university, there is respect for it, but in common public spaces there is not. And anyway, I do not go alone anywhere because I do not feel safe enough outside the university.

Unlike media-influenced obsession given to the *pardah* or the *burka* as a means of women's oppression, the *burka* confinements were not projected by the students in any way in this manner. To the contrary, its privacy gave a liberating force to these girls. The major dilemma however, was the dowry system. As I show in the next chapter, it is one of the nightmares in the Indian society that leads to further deterioration of the opportunities girls have. Although it is not as rampant as in the Southern states, dowry in North India features as a serious predicament that is rarely addressed by Muslim organizations.

5.9 Significant role of organizations

There is a notable lack of Muslim organizations that work for social issues. Sikand (2006) shows an evident example of this as he comments on the absence of Muslim organizations at the World Social Forum in Mumbai, apart from the Jamaati Islami Hind. Many Muslims, who are engaged with the community, work along the lines of secular NGOs with teams composed mainly of non-Muslims. Jamiat Ulama e Hind and Jamaati Islami are exceptions to this.

In the political sphere, Muslim organizations have followed a trend of creating alliances. As it was noted in a previous chapter (section 4.2), the creation of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat was an example of these organizations. One of the recent coalitions that appeared in North India was the All India Milli Council that was founded shortly before the Babri Masjid demolition. Its aim was to arrive at tactical elections among the secular parties. Hence it would guarantee the usage of Muslims of their political rights and affirming their numerical and political strength in an attempt to overcome the minority mentality and the vote bank practice. The founder of the Milli Council, Dr. Manzoor Alam, contends that another goal is to help Muslim leaders emerge at a position to bargain like in Kerala and become policy makers; a process that might take ten to twenty years (Manzoor Alam, personal communication, September 2010).

One example of this is the Delhi-based Islamic organization, Ittehad-e-Mili Muslimin (IMM), which filed a civil suit at a Delhi court for a permanent injunction against BJP leader Varun Gandhi following his alleged hate speeches directed at Muslims. Debarring him from entering the electoral process at least for the next two polls, the IMM, in its petition, said, “Varun Gandhi has violated the model code of conduct and abused the Muslim community. He (Varun) has not only violated the model code of conduct but also crossed all boundaries of India's culture, civilization and secular character” (Indian Social Institute, 2009). In the coming pages I refer to two organizations that have acquired a significant role in Muslim politics, both historically and contemporarily. In spite of the existence of many other Islamic organizations, but my choice was circumscribed to those working in politics based on a religious ideology. The two organizations are also ideologically contrasting and their popularity and membership is significant.

5.9.1 Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind

The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind was formally founded in 1919, however, its history dates back to the early eighteenth century and the struggle of Shah Waliullah Dehlawi against imperialism and corruption. Indian Muslim scholars fought against British colonialism and since 1857 they were

being attacked for being the initiators of struggles (Miyan, 2008). As I demonstrated in chapter three, the *'ulama* played a leading role in mass mobilization against the British and in supporting Gandhi's non-cooperation movement. The political role of the Jamiat was evident in opposing the Muslim League in its appeal for partition, since Jamiat scholars like Maulana Madani vehemently opposed the two-nation theory and instead presented a thesis of composite nationalism.

Having attained the organization's aim of the freedom of India, in 1949, the Jamiat decided to go apolitical to concentrate on the religious and cultural upliftment of the Muslims of India. The first resolutions adopted were the urge to learn the Devangari script, in addition to Urdu, and not to look to Pakistan for guidance, in addition to imparting religious education to children going to governmental schools (The Times of India, cited in Noorani, 2003).

The Jamiat calls for affirmative action for Muslims and alliance with Dalits, as a struggle "to be included in the mainstream" (Metcalf, 2007, p. 103). It also calls on Muslims to establish educational institutions dealing with technical and medical sciences to overcome the backwardness of Muslims. This section demonstrates the main topics of concern to the Jamiat and its stance towards them, namely the stigmatization of Muslim youth within the discourse on terrorism, the Babri Masjid affair, the central board of *madrasas* and women's reservation bills.

One of the most currently compelling tasks of the Jamiat is taking care of the legal cases of hundreds of innocent youth who have been falsely accused and arrested in terrorism-related cases in Malegaon, the Mumbai train, the American consulate in Calcutta and the Akshardham temple as an example (Madani M. S., 2011). To get funding for this, the Jamiat arranges that a portion of the *zakat* in Maharashtra goes to legal aid for the Youth who were arrested in connection with bomb blasts and terrorism-related activities. In 2011 the Jamiat in Maharashtra received 87,68,243 rupees and spent them in fees for advocates in MCOCA (Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act) and POTA (Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act), court expenses, advertisements for donation, medical and educational aid for prisoners, aid for widows. The pursuing of legal fights is part of the organization's emphasis on rights as an approach to citizenship. In a speech at the Constitution Club in New Delhi in 16th December 2009, Maulana Arshad Madani, the head of the Jamiat, declared: "Our struggle now is not for existence, but for rights. We already acknowledge our existence. Our progress is measured by the achievement of rights" (Farooqui, 2012, translation mine).

Concerning stigmatizing Muslim youth with terrorism, in addition to the above-mentioned measures, the Jamiat's stance could be outlined from Maulana Arshad Madani's words in a letter to the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh:

With sorrow, we have to say that Muslims who were proud of the secular and democratic forces could not portray this beyond oral production. It should be an obligation on the government to ensure justice to all residents of the state especially Muslims and other minorities. It is our duty to enhance the country's powers and to preserve it, but this is possible when minorities, should-to-shoulder with the majority, contribute to the progress and welfare of the country. This necessitates ending the inferiority feeling among minorities. (Madani A. , 2012, p. 12, translation mine).

On commenting on the injustice of the Babri Masjid court decision, Maulana Syed Arshad Madani asserted that Muslims would certainly be granted justice at the Supreme Court:

You have to demonstrate the courage of faith by asserting that this is a fight for rights, which is to be fought via democratic means. We have the proof that the property belongs to the Muslims. However, we should not work in an environment of hasty frustrations and provocations but through an environment of patience and endurance, in addition to security and peace. (Madani M. S., 2011, p. 15, translation mine)

The working committee of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind in the meeting discussing the Allahabad Court verdict declared that

This verdict had touched upon our composite nationalism, our common civilization; our country's undermined and violated secular and democratic traditions. This is why this problem does not only concern the Muslim minority, but all of India and every individual, group and party that believes in India's secularism and democracy and that cherishes the country's unity and integration. (Madani M. S., 2011, pp. 17-18, translation mine)

Concerning the agitation against the Madrasa Central Board, Maulana Arshad Madani in a letter sent to Sonya Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Arjun Singh commented:

If the Congress government is willing to improve the current educational and economic conditions of Muslims, so they should build more schools, colleges, universities, professional and technical institutions, and most importantly to ensure the provision of education to Muslim children. We would never object to this. To the contrary, Muslims will help the government in its measures. But if the Congress government wishes to intervene in the religious institutions and gives charity to powerful leaders of the religious institutions, we would never tolerate this. We are clearly demonstrating our position before the government: we could contribute with the government to the development of schools,

colleges, professional and technical educational institutions, but no interference shall be accepted in the affairs, curriculum and management of the *madrasas* that have been founded for the sake of preserving Muslim identity. (Madani A. , 2012, pp. 51-52, translation mine)

Maulana Madani in another letter to Mr. Arjun Singh, recounts the dismal state of *madrasas* in several states that are run under these states boards; as in Shamsul Huda Board in Bihar, Allahabad in UP, in addition to those in West Bengal and Assam. He then contends that Mr. Singh can logically give no guarantee to the continuation of state fund and support to these *madrasas* because

India is a democratic country in which elections take place on a regular basis and different parties, with different agendas come to power. Before the current Congress Party, BJP had ruled, and people deprived them of power through elections. So to sum up, whereas your secular democratic government cannot give guarantees, we as Muslim leaders, can indeed guarantee that we will stay here and take care of all matters concerning the *madrasas* till the Day of Judgment. (Madani A. , 2012, pp. 56-57, translation mine)

Eventually, the list of demands presented by Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind to the government contained the following points:

1. Retreating in the demand of the creation of the Madrasa Central Board and avoiding interference in the independence of Muslim *madrasas*.
2. If the government wants to work for the educational backwardness of the Muslim community, then they should claim Jamia Milia and Aligarh Muslim University as minority institutions, so 50% of the seats would be guaranteed to Muslims.
3. Implementing the Sachar Committee report for the educational conditions.
4. Solving the problems of Muslim-founded modern educational institutions.
5. Founding schools colleges, technical centers and universities proportionate to the Muslim populations in their area of residence.
6. Presenting modern sciences in the minority educational institutions. (Madani A. , 2012, p. 61, translation mine)

As for women's reservations, the Jamiat was opposing the Women Reservation Bill on the account that if it were passed, Muslims would be the most badly affected community from this bill. In an interview with a scholar from the Jamiat, he asserted that fifteen general elections have already passed, and the representation of Muslims does not exceed 8%, which accounts for a 50% deprivation level, since their population is almost double this percentage. The situation worsens when we consider the representation of Muslim Women in parliament. Since the 1952 elections,

only 19 Muslim women were elected. In the current Lok Sabha, there are 59 women; only two of them are Muslim. The way this Women Reservation Bill is devised guarantees that only upper class women who are linked to corporate or political elites would be elected. This surely would not serve the general interests of women. A second concern is the status of backward classes and minorities. Since Muslims are not only educationally and economically backward, but also politically (representation-wise), so how would a general women reservation bill do them any good? This is why the Jamiat asks for the amendment of this bill.

Although the Jamiat is not a political party or organization, but having had a long historical role in the struggle for independence, its political orientations could not be detangled from contemporary times. The choice of the topics briefly discussed in this section reflects what is available in their own pamphlets, brochures and public outcries and hence create the discourses with which North Indian Muslims coexist.

5.9.2 Jamaat-e- Islami Hind

The Jamaat-e Islami (henceforth Jamaati Islami) was founded in 1941 by Sayyid Abu A'la Maududi in Lahore. It was established as an alternative to the secular Muslim League during the calls for the establishment of Pakistan (Ali S. J., 2010). Following the partition in 1947, Maududi migrated to Pakistan, where Jamaati was one of the powerful political parties there. Those who remained in India decided to transform the organization into an independent Jamaat-e-Islami Hind in 1948. This section would not delve into the history, the thought of Maududi and the foundations on which the organization was established. What concerns us is the apparent shift in the ideology of its followers who had first regarded the ideals of democracy, secularism and nationalism as un-Islamic, but later legitimized and even endorsed them. Irfan Ahmad (2009) in his book, *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami*, deals extensively with this issue. He explains that whereas organizations such as the Jamiat Ulama e Hind regarded secular democracy as compatible with Islamic faith, Jamaati Islami, on the other hand, did not sanction it, as it, according to them, negated Muslim's belief in the *kalimah*⁸⁹ and thus boycotted elections for a while. The process of transformation reached a climax in April 2011 when the organization launched its own political party, the Welfare Party of India, to participate in the democratic process in India.

⁸⁹ *Kalimah* refers to the Muslim belief in the monotheism of God; stating that there is only one God and that Muhammad is his messenger.

In an Urdu booklet written by the head (*amīr*) of the Jamaati Islami, titled “Non-Islamic State and Muslims”, Maulana Sayyed Jalauddin Omari presented a jurisprudent alternative to the traditional thesis that Muslims could swear allegiance only to a Muslim ruler or state. Through the employment of *ijtihad*, and the reference to the Quran, according to him, the basic percept is abidance by Islamic faith, and loyalty to the state is an integral part of Muslim beliefs. However, through peaceful preaching or *da‘wah*, Muslims living in non-Muslim countries can strive towards establishing the target of the Islamic system of life and eventually rid themselves of the ‘temporary’ character of being a minority (quoted in Sikand, 2006).

Linked to this is the Egyptian’s scholar Al-Alwany’s contribution to the *fiqh* (jurisprudence) of minorities with the emphasis on two issues: political loyalty to non-Muslim leadership and relations with non-Muslims. *Darul-Islam*, according to him, would refer to any place where a Muslim can live in peace and security, and thus is not limited to the Muslim countries (which themselves are not always abodes of Islam due to the threats subjects face by authoritarian regimes). A country like India for example, could be termed as a *darul Islam* and *darul da‘wah*, since Muslims are allowed the right to preach their religion and not just practice it without threats. (Sikand Y. , 2006).

When the Egyptian revolution took place in January 2011, I was in India conducting my fieldwork. The momentum of Jamaati Islami’s interest with the Arab World was incredible. This is justified by the sympathies they share with the Muslim Brotherhood as another political organization whose founders’ ideologies they adopt to a great extent. In my interviews with several Jamaat-e-Islami’s followers, I noticed a contradictory stance on their political opinions. Whereas they were fully supporting a secular democratic system in India, they were hoping for the emergence of total control of the Muslim Brotherhood and transforming the state into an Islamic one. When I asked them to justify this contradictory stance, they explained how secularism for a minority is the best solution serving justice. But then when I exclaimed of how an Islamic state would not do entire justice to the Christian minority in Egypt, they then affirmed that the Islamic state is based on justice and freedom of religion of every individual. Then eventually they expressed their far-fetched dream of transforming India into an Islamic state by using the constitutional permission of proselytizing work. Yoginder Sikand quoting a Jamaati-Islami sympathizer also pointed this out:

Although Hindus and Muslims thus belong to different nations, we live in the same country and share the same citizenship. As Muslims, we must seek to present the truth of Islam to our Hindu fellow countrymen. We must also serve all the inhabitants of this country,

irrespective of religion, helping the poor and the needy. There is a saying of the Prophet, which says, 'Love of the country is half of the faith, and so we must be committed to work for its welfare. So, as Muslims, we must love India, although we do not agree with those Hindus who insist that this love must take the form of nation-worship. If we can sincerely express our concern for our country through our deeds, our non-Muslim fellow Indians might be suitably impressed by Islam and might even take the step of accepting it. In this way, we will gradually move closer to the goal of establishing the global Islamic Caliphate. (Sikand Y. , 2006, p. 217)

The significance of Muslim political organizations like the Jamaati Islami is the overcoming of the ghettoization mentality and the ability to overcome the narrow ideological basis of the organization in arriving at political strategies that indicate a high degree of integration in the democratic mainstream. For example, the alliance with other backward communities in the fight against marginalization is a considerable matter. The former Jamaati Islami *amīr*, Dr. Abdul Haq Ansari, urged Muslims to ally with non-Muslim groups, particularly the Dalits, who share a common goal of fighting Hindutva forces and preserve the democratic and secular nature of the state.

Subaltern understandings of the Muslim community often see Islam as a force for social justice and liberation from oppression. Since the 1980s there is a growing articulation of dissatisfaction with and protest against the traditional Muslim religious leadership, in addition to building alliances with marginalized non-Muslim groups such as the Dalits, the Tribals and the other Backward Castes (Sikand Y. , 2004).

Jamaati Islami's student wing, SIO (the Student's Islamic Organization), has been acquiring increasing popularity among students. Although the survey conducted was not precisely representative, the indicator shown through it that Jamaati Islami possesses the highest percentage of students' membership was validated through expert interviews with neutral Muslim scholars. It should be noted that an earlier student organization of the Jamaati Islami called SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India) was formed in Aligarh in 1977 and was banned in 2001 upon allegations of its involvement in terrorist activities. SIMI was known for its extremism and emphasis on militant *jihād*; however, it was justified by them as a response to the killing of Muslims by Hindutva groups (Ahmad I. , 2009).

The educational policy of Jamaati is translated in 'education for power'. According to Jamaati ideology, the reason why Muslims lingered backwards and out of the league of *imamat* (leadership)

was because they failed in their competition with the West in knowledge acquisition. As Ahmad puts it “the sine qua non of the Jama’at’s ideology was that pursuit of the state was the main objective of a pure Islamic education” (Ahmad I. , 2008, p. 162).

Their policies are not limited to men; Jamaati has a significant emphasis on girls’ education and awareness and this explains the creation of Girls Islamic Organization (GIO) (See Appendix II for fieldnotes on a visit to a Jamaati school). In Rajasthan, for example, it held a function to celebrate meritorious 200 female students who passed the Rajasthan board and university exams. In this program, JIH state president Engineer Mohammad Saleem stressed the role of girls as catalysts for change, the equality in Islam between boys and girls in their right to education (Milli Gazette 1-15 September 2010).

The Jamaati-associated organization, the Human Welfare Foundation, announced a plan that it termed “Vision 2016”, with an emphasis on education through founding a university in Haryana, a scholar school at *Jamia Nagar* in New Delhi, in addition to seven vocational technical schools, more schools focusing on capacity building, arranging scholarships and orphan care programmes, in addition to medical aid through building hospitals, clinics and providing medical aid (www.vision2016.org.in, accessed 28 July 2011).

5.10 Summary

The idea of *jihād* being a mechanism for social change through education has been emphasized by contemporary Islamic scholars such as Al-Qaradawy, who disapproves of a major trend among Muslim youth manifested in abandoning their studies after obtaining progress in majors like engineering or literature or medicine, in pursuit of Islamic studies. According to Al-Qaradawy (2010):

Such people are ignoring the fact that to pursue knowledge and to excel in a discipline is a collective obligation in Islam. It should also be observed that the competition between Muslims and non-Muslims for mastery of the secular sciences is at its fiercest. When a Muslim seeks to learn, excel, and acquire insight in such sciences for the sake of God he is actually engaging in worship and *jihād*. (p.148)

Indian Muslim youth presents us with an alternative image, an image that has understood this message and is applying it. Most of the *madrassa* students I have met have started pursuing studies in secular sciences after they finished their religious education. They realized that education is a means to the betterment of their lives and the future generations, in order to fill the gap of the

middle class that has been voided during partition.

The serious setback that remains in this attempt of social change is the collective memory and sentiment of discrimination and injustice. The space, where ideas of citizenship can flourish, suffers from the presence of an abyss that alienates Muslims and targets them as ‘different’. Nevertheless, this research proved that against intuitive generalizations, Muslims do not succumb to these hurdles, and they attempt to assert their citizenship and their sense of national identity, albeit through alternative mechanisms that endorse ‘cultural’ or religious aspects through constitutional measures. Before moving on to consider my second case study of Malayalee Muslim women, it would be convenient to end this chapter with the words of an ordinary woman—a female teacher in a Jamaati Islami school, but in her conviction, a jihādīst:

We cannot remain silent, and we cannot get our rights just by sitting, and Islam talks about *jihād*, so as per our religion, we are encouraged to get our rights. We, women, go to people’s houses and we spread the knowledge of Islam. In *our India*, women are doing a lot about religion; groups have been created to spread Islam. We are not high and low; we are one. These divisions among Muslims are wrong. What is in the *hadith*? Anyone who loves Hussain also loves me. And in *our India*, and in Islam, no one has the right to force someone. They only have the right to speak.

VI. Muslim Women in Kerala As Jihādists

One day while I was in Kerala during my fieldwork, I got the following mobile text message from one of the Malayalee female students:

An Afghani woman was asked why she felt it necessary to walk five feet behind her husband. She answered: "Landmines."

Although the setting is Afghanistan, the inherent message crosses borders as women caricature the prevalent discourses on backwardness. Both the creator and the sender of the SMS apparently intended to resist the ways Muslim women are portrayed. I searched for this joke on the Internet trying to locate its origins, and most interestingly, I found an older variation of it. The context was post-Gulf-War Kuwait in 1991. In the older joke, a journalist had noticed that before the war, women used to walk behind their husband, after the war, however, it was the men who walked ten feet behind their wives. When the journalist asked one of the women how they managed to create this change, the woman simply replied, "Landmines." Just as this joke reflects a paradox in gender roles and how historically there has been an ebb-and-tide-like liberalization, configuration and misconfiguration of gender roles, this chapter deals with the paradoxes in the lives of Muslim women in Kerala (the female Malayalee). In this chapter I start with presenting the inherent differences between the political culture and history of Kerala and North India, then I present both the model and the paradoxes of the Kerala model, and eventually I present the most significant collective actors in shaping the conceptual and contextual frameworks of *jihād*, citizenship and women's agency, in which Islam is a clear ingredient of the plot for protest and social change.

6.1 The Kerala model

6.1.1 Historical links with the Arab world and the introduction of Islam in India

You will find monuments of Muslims in North India, but you will find Islam in Kerala.

-Interview with a Lecturer and youth activist in the ISM (itihadul shubanut mujahideen) in Calicut.

Kerala, being the most southwestern region in India, had direct access to the Arab world via the Arabian Sea. This culminated in a trade-based history that goes back, in certain accounts, even before the time of the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century. The six northern districts of what is today known as Kerala comprise the historical area named Malabar,

which is now dominantly populated by Muslims. This chapter focuses on fieldwork undertaken in two districts of Malabar, namely Malappuram and Kozhikode.

As many academics in Kerala informed me, the word Malabar was first termed by the Arab traders in the eleventh century. Albairuni was among the first to use this term. The word is composed of the Persian word *mala* (mountain) and the Arabic word *bar* (land). Folk stories include many etymological references to the origin of the word Kerala. One generally accepted argument is that one of the postulations behind the word Kerala comes from the Arabic expression ‘*Kheir Allah*’, meaning the Goodness or wealth of Allah, which refers to how the Arab traders described Kerala. A joke commonly held by Arabic professors in Kerala is that the word Malayalam is originally the Arabic phrase (Ma la yu’lam) which means “what is not understood” and this refers to also what the Arab called the language upon hearing it for the first time.

The Muslims of Malabar are called Mappilas. The term Mappila has been essentially a title of respect, earlier it was used for both Christians and Muslims but in recent times it has been used exclusively for the Keralite Muslim. It was invented by the natives of Kerala to the respected and welcomed foreign visitors. It might have been derived from two Malayalam terms: *maha* (great) and *pilla* (child). Thus, it also referred to the bridegroom or the son-in-law (Miller, 1976).

Kerala was the first spot where Islam was spread in the Indian subcontinent. Both historical evidence and legends constitute the theories on the advent of Islam in Kerala through peaceful penetration by trade, missionaries and Sufis. The first accounts relate to the Muslim Arab pilgrims who were passing through Kerala on their way to Ceylon and the Mountain of Adam to see his footprints. Upon hearing of their presence in Kodungallur,⁹⁰ the king Cherumal or Cheraman Perumal invited, welcomed them and inquired about their religion and their prophet. He then requested them to take him on their way to meet the prophet (Al-Qasmi, 2000). There are contending arguments on whether King Perumal met the prophet or not, but the main issue is that he converted to Islam but fell sick and could not go back to Kerala and hence sent a message back to his family with an Arab called Malik Bin Dinar. This led to mass conversion in Kerala especially from the lower castes that were attracted to the liberating forces of equality in Islam.

Muslim Sufi saints and missionaries among the Arab settlers contributed to the consolidation of Islam in Kerala hence after. Malik Ibn Dinar who was sent with the message from the King Perumal built ten mosques in between Mangalore and Kollam. Then the qazis he appointed started building

⁹⁰ This is in Malappuram District today and where the first mosque in the Indian subcontinent was founded.

new mosques, through these mosques Islam was spread. The growth of the coastal town of Ponnani, ‘the little Mecca of Malabar’, as a Muslim centre, is related to one such learned person called Ibn Abdul Qadir Jilani (1077-1166) the great Sufi Saint (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 9). Ponnani is still called the Mecca of India until now. In its small area of 27 square kilometres, there are 86 mosques. It is argued that people lived in the same way equal to living in Mecca earlier, and Islamic studies were taught in mosques and affiliated *madradas*. That is how it got its nickname of small Mecca (Abdulrahmankutty, personal communication, March 2011).⁹¹

One of the reasons explaining communal harmony in Kerala is the history of religious education and the expansion of the *madrassa* system of education. Almost every child in the state underwent a process of socialization by religious education attained in these primary schools. In the words of Al-Qasmi (2000), the first acquaintance Muslims have in their childhood is that of peace, erasing of hatred, learning the Quran and studying Islamic history.

The arrival of the Portuguese marks the decline of the Arab link to Kerala. The Portuguese tried to ruin the relations between the Muslims and Zamorins who were most hospitable to them to get hold of the trade monopoly that was at this time in the hands of the Muslims. However, the Zamorins not only did not succumb to these trials, but also took punitive measurements against the Portuguese, who then moved to Cochin and managed to befriend its ruler, demolish a mosque and build a church in its place. This had started the process of oppressing the Muslims of Kerala, forced conversion of some Moorish merchants, and consequently led to the loss of trade monopoly. After the Muslim failure in their fights against the Portuguese, they were forced to resort to agriculture. However, the majority of land was owned by Hindu landlords. This triggered a new trend of Hindu-Muslim hostility that was not precedent before. The historical confrontations with the Hindu aristocracy and acts of treachery on the part of the Zamorin led to the loss of Muslim lives, wealth and thus their sense of security. This situation was eased after the Mysorean conquest of Malabar. The victory of Tipu Sultan and Haidar re-strengthened the Muslim situation. The imposition of land reform led the Namboodiri landlords to sell their land to the Mapillas and leave to Travancore. With the advent of the British and the defeat of Tipu Sultan, the situation of Muslims went in decline again. The Muslims became the target of the English wrath, and lost all their authority. The result was the long struggle, which remained around one and a quarter century and culminated in the Mappilla rebellion of 1921 (Abdul Samad, 1998).

⁹¹ Literature on the history of Ponnani is scarcely found in English since the majority is in Malayalam. For a brief history of the development of Muslim religious education that started from Ponnani, see: Pasha (1995).

6.1.2 The elaboration of a different political culture

If you are able to forget the dirt and the squalor for the time being, a memorable experience is awaiting you there. You will see some of the unique examples of medieval Kerala architecture in the mosques and big residential houses. You cannot find these Kerala types of mosques anywhere else in India or anywhere in the world, because they resemble Hindu temples though they were built as mosques. They are neither entirely Muslim nor entirely Hindu in character. It can only be described as 'Medieval Kerala' style, as it is common to Hindu, Muslim and Christian places of worship and residence.

- M.G.S. Narayanan. (2006). Calicut: The City of Truth.

This distinctive historical context resulted in the elaboration of a different political culture in Kerala. The Mughal Empire for example did not appear in the history of Kerala and hence did not impact the collective memory of Mappilas as it did with the North Indian Muslims. In this section, I summarize the main points of the difference in the political culture. It has to be noted first that different schools of Islamic thought and jurisprudence left their impact on the way Malayalees perceive their identity and establish global routes to it. In Kerala, Muslims historically belonged to the *shafi'* branch of *Sunni* Islam, while the rest of Indian Muslims is *hanafi*. Since the *Hanafi School* had more influence in the Mughal Empire, Islamic treaties in this part were written in Persian. However, the *shafi'* school has direct links to the Arab world and language, and this explains the emphasis on learning Arabic among the Malayalees which is not equally stressed upon among the Urdu speaking Muslims.

Language thus played a crucial role in the distinction of identity. Whereas the literary heritage of North Indian Muslims was carried through Urdu, Kerala's Muslims developed a unique language called Arabi-Malayalam, which is still in use until today.⁹² Arabi-Malayalam was also a reason why Kerala witnessed cultural integration between Hindus and Muslims since the Muslims spoke the same language but developed Arabi-Malayalam as a strategy to strike a balance between their Islamic identity and their nationalist drive against the colonial powers.

The geography of Kerala was another factor that led to its isolation and the difficulty of

⁹² This is Malayalam written in Arabic script. Arabi-Malayalam refers not only to a script but to a genre of literature and had originated in the ninth or tenth century. One of its famous writers is the satirist philosopher Kunhayin Musaliyar of Tellicherry (Kurup & Ismail, 2008). Also see: Karassery (1995).

conquering it through wars since there was a sea on one side and on the other there was the mountain range of the Western Ghat (A. Ahsan, personal communication, April 2011). The location of Kerala gave it a strong feature of insularity from the violence that shook North India. This had a positive impact on the development of the Mappilas. On the one hand, their culture and language was preserved and was not mixed with the Urdu culture of Northern India, since on the eastern part, Kerala was separated from the rest of India by forests and mountains. On the other hand, Kerala's openness on the western side to the sea had resulted in the reception of influences from many parts of the world especially the Arab one it is facing. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, hence, came to Kerala via the sea (Miller, 1979).

Kerala has a population of 3,33,87,677 (Census 2011) and according to the 2001 census, the religion-based divisions were as follows: Hindu (56.2%), Muslim (24.7%) and Christian (19%). The difference in the interaction with Muslims has also precipitated in a different culture. As Narayanan narrates, in the south, the Arabs came as traders and were received as guests. The rulers of the Western coast of Kerala, who themselves never created big organized kingdoms, welcomed them and depended on them for their economic welfare through maritime trade. Even before the arrival of Islam, there were large colonies of Jews who also initially came for trade but stayed in Kerala until the formation of Israel. The special attraction was black pepper, which was not available elsewhere in the world and was a matter of life or death for the Europeans. The rulers in Kerala got gold in return for these spices. It was a clearly advantageous trade formula since Gold was a rare commodity, and there was a fascination to it, while pepper and sandal were common and cheap products in Kerala. Early Greek accounts of Kerala also mention these aspects of trade.

Hence, the Keralite culture was shaped by this interaction between diverse people coming peacefully in sailing boats from different communities, speaking different languages, belonging to different religions; and the competition in hospitality and reception of these foreigners. Although foreigners are usually an unwelcome category in global historical records, in Kerala they were regarded with utmost hospitality due to their economic value and the precious goods they came with in return for spices. The host versus guest relationship characterized the cultural history of in Kerala. Eventually what happened in Kerala was a cultural symbiosis or a fusion of cultures, in Narayanan's words but not a synthesis. This ease in mixing with others eventually led to two results: first, the current phenomenon of an increase in the rate of migration; second, the absence of a strong base of popularity of right-wing political parties. Neither the Hindu right-wing—the BJP, nor the Muslim right-wing—the People's Democratic Party (PDP) or the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), managed to secure seats until the time these lines were written in Kerala. Upon

commenting on the high number of posters plastered on the walls in the streets of Ponnani just before the Legislative Assembly Elections, I was told that the PDP and SDPI exist only on the walls of Kerala but not in people's hearts. The same, to a certain extent, is valid for the BJP

The BJP has not managed to win a single seat until now in the Legislative Assembly in Kerala although they rule the neighboring state. The reason for that is the history of Kerala. Since the time of Solomon there were cultural and trade relations with others. In the poem of Imru' Al-Qais,⁹³ he mentions the Indian black pepper, so this is a proof that even before Islam, there were relations between the Arab world and India, and traders always require a peaceful atmosphere for the trade to flourish. The Zamorin Kings have encouraged the spread of Islam among the fishermen by stipulating that at least one member of each family should be a Muslim. This is to encourage trade and sailing away from India because according to Hindu beliefs, crossing the Indian Ocean is against Hinduism (K. M. Mohammad, personal communication, February 2011).

In spite of these different historical legacies and the geographical isolation of Kerala from the North. Both Gandhi's non-cooperation movement and the Khilafat movement found strong resonance in Malabar. Although *'ulama* played equally significant roles in the freedom and anti-colonial struggle, the collective memory of martyrdom evolves in the Keralite context more vividly than in the North Indian context. Qasmi (2005) refers to the fact that the word *Maulavi* became synonymous with rebel in British dictionary since 51,200 out of 200,000 martyrs during the Delhi massacre that followed the 1857 rebellion were *'ulama* (p. 26). However, these *'ulama* were not properly registered in Muslim historical records. To the contrary of this, in Kerala, the *'ulama* who participated in the Moplah rebellion were revered as martyrs and their graves had been turned into shrines in different parts of Malabar.⁹⁴

The roles these *'ulama* played in the freedom struggle have been recorded in many historical studies both in English and Malayalam (See, for example, Abdul Samad, 1998; Dale, 1980; Engineer, 1995; Kunju, 1989; Kurup & Ismail, 2008; Miller, R., 1976; Wood, 1987). Wood (1987) in his study of the Moplah rebellion reiterates how *'ulama* or 'Moplah divines' as he calls them endorsed sanctioning the rebellion by "blessing combatants, weapons, forays and in fact almost any

⁹³ Imru' Al-Qais is pre-Islamic time Arab poet from the Arabian Peninsula in the sixth century AD.

⁹⁴ Examples of the historically revered *'ulama* who enjoyed privilege status are the jurist Sheikh Zaiudeen Makhdam of Ponnani of the sixteenth century, Sayyid Fazl pokoya Tangal of Mamburam from the nineteenth century and Sayyid Alavi Thangal who was a leading freedom fighter against the British in the Moplah Rebellion.

activity the rebels chose to undertake in the name of ‘Islam’” (p. 198). In other words, the ‘*ulama* were “the legitimizers of an act of revolt which was the instrument of the ambition of the Ernad Moplah community at large for the creation of an ‘Islamic’ Raj of justice” (*ibid*, p. 199).

This interesting hybridization of Islam and nationalism was also manifested in other forms. Ottappilakkool (2007) in his PhD thesis found records of Muslim nationalists emphasizing that only *Khadi* dress would be worn for *Eidulfitr*.⁹⁵ The following is an excerpt by the speech of the Secretary of the Kerala Vidyarti Sangham addressing the Muslims

Revered Muslim brothers and sisters, are not we enjoined to abide by the principles laid down by the majority opinions of the *ulama* of the particular period? And wearing *Khadi* is a matter unanimously exhorted by all the famous *ulama* of India. If we examine many other factors too, wearing *Khadi* is a must even for a Muslim baby now. [...] Allah the Almighty has asked us not to help and support in sinful and anti-Islamic activities, therefore, wearing *Khadi* is part of Islamic duties brothers and sisters. This *Eid* is a good chance for you too to exhibit your true faith. Please do not waste this golden chance. Please do not be deceived. (Reproduced from P.P. Mohammad Koya, Parappil, Kozhikotte Muslimkalude Charitram (in Malayalam) 1997, quoted in Ottappilakkool, 2007)

Another form of how Islamic principles were employed in the freedom struggle is exemplified in the *jihād*-based mobilization. In the fight against the Portuguese, an important treatise titled *Tuhfatul Mujahideen*⁹⁶ written by Sheikh Zainuddin Makhdoum is considered the first historical account done by a Mappila historian in Arabic in which he narrated the caste-oriented communities of Kerala, the beginning of Mappila settlements and their encounters against the Portuguese in a form of *jihād*. This work still has great relevance in promoting an anti-imperialist ideology since it is still taught in Islamic colleges in Kerala.

The *jihād* initiated by the Mappilas against the Portuguese was not initiated to “convert a Darul Harb into Darul Islam but to strengthen the authority of a Hindu ruler” (Kurup, 2006, p. 14). Kerala’s history has multiple evidence of the support and allegiance Muslims showed towards their non-Muslim rulers. In the years between 1579 and 1607 Khasi Muhammad Abdul Aziz composed the *Fathul Mubin* poem that gave an account of the war between the Portuguese and the Zamorin

⁹⁵ In Islamic culture, Muslims usually wear new clothes in *Eid* as a form of celebration. *Khadi* refers to the handloom cloth that was adopted as a counter-colonial strategy by Gandhi.

⁹⁶ For the English Translation, see: Makhdoom, S. Z. (2009).

supported by the Mappilas and showed the strong loyalty Muslims carried to the Zamorin ruler who was described as

The world famous Zamorin's
 Mental strength be known to the whole world,
 Particularly in the foreign countries of Syria and Iraq.
 He likes our religion, and loves
 Muslims than all other [subjects].
 He helps our religion and
 Implements our religion laws.
 In Malabar, wherever the Muslims live
 They are his subjects.

...

He fights, although he is not a Muslim,
 But the Muslim rulers are not fighting. (quoted in Kurup K. N., 2006, p. 75)

Eventually, with the advent of British colonialism, the *'ulama* again raised the call for *jihād* against the British. The rebels secured their blessings and were considered martyrs (*shahīd*) once dead, “for them, the fight against the British was both a holy one and a struggle for existence” (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 17).

The different role of *'ulama* led to another type of political consciousness among the Muslims in Kerala. Being historically grouped into different organizations, Muslim masses could clearly identify the political orientations of each group. What has been obvious is how these groups have been static in their political choices unlike their Northern counterparts whose allegiance differs with every election. Some Malayalees refer to the difference in literacy rates among Muslims and hence in Kerala; Muslims are thus able to read the Quran and their reliance on the *'ulama* is not as high as in the North. Therefore, they could not be used as vote banks or are easily politically mobilized.

The picture is nevertheless not as straightforward as this. In an interview with the sociologist Hafiz Mohamed, he asserted how Muslims in Kerala are generally divided into three groups according to their attitudes to Muslim issues. The first group is those with an organizational background. They have conditioned ideas and do not spur any agitation against their own leaders or criticism of their own policies; they are the most powerful group and are also numerically strong. Having their own media, organizational platforms and sources of funding are other factors of their political strength. The second group could be termed the liberal Muslims who are not associated

with any group and who share a background of Indian nationalism. Their opinions are influenced by nationalists like Azad and Mohammad Abdurahman Sahib from the INC. They are usually shunned off socially and are unable to come against the fort-like organizational ideas. Finally, there are naturally the quiet or non-affiliated Muslims who share an indifferent attitude and would not cast reactive responses that involve coming against the general will of Muslims.

The educational level of Muslim women was seen as both a reason and a result of the differences between the North and South. In a speech by the president of the Muslim Educational Society in Kerala (MES), Fazal Ghafoor, a reference to the way women's social roles was significant. He remarked that in Kerala, there was no culture of dancers or courtesans like in North India; there is not a single Muslim female actress from Kerala. He boasts with the fact that in Kerala in all educational institutions, Muslim girls outnumber boys both quantitatively and qualitatively in grades. Jokingly, he comments, "We are actually thinking of converting this college into a men's college."⁹⁷

The backwardness of women educationally, politically, socially and economically in North India was, in the opinion of many interview respondents, a result of these different roles played by the *'ulama*. In the North, *'ulama* prohibited (and are still prohibiting) the mixing between the sexes in public spaces. This was the case historically in Kerala where women's roles have been limited to a large extent to the kitchen, and they could neither learn English nor their local language.⁹⁸ As it would be shown, the reformists in Kerala or the *mujahids*, as they are commonly known, were the first to call for bringing out the women from their homes to the schools. This movement started in Mallapuram in Areecode in the 1940s by Shaikh Abdulsalam Maulvi, the founder of *jamiat ulmujahideen*. He called that at least one woman from every family should be sent to school. This resulted in ninety per cent of women being educated and working in all fields (I.P. Abdul Salam, personal communication, January 2011).

Interestingly, a recurrent theme of difference was hygiene. Many respondents cited how Kerala is faring much better because of the mere fact that it is cleaner, and Muslims care more for their personal hygiene and the place where they live. A school principal once told me, "In the *madradas*

⁹⁷ The speech was given at MES women's college in Calicut. The joke refers to the fact that there is no need any more for giving more attention to women and reserving colleges for them since they outnumber boys anyway in the other mixed colleges.

⁹⁸ Women would only learn Arabi-Malayalam and the Arabic script to read the Quran. Until now there are many old women who could not read Malayalam but only the Arabic script. In an interview with a worker at a university canteen, she asserted that she did not go to school and hence could not read Malayalam but she could read and write Arabic because she learnt it at the *madrassa*.

in Kerala, the first class is on hygiene, while in North India it is on prayers. In Kerala, they believe you cannot go to mosque with a dirty dress, or while being dirty.”⁹⁹

What was noticeable in Kerala was the strong relevance of social capital and solidarity. The Keralite society is a rural one in which community ties are very strong; there is the *Kudumbasree* (the micro finance system), the *imam* coming to each house for a day in the month to have his meals and give them his blessings, the marriage broker who helps the circle of arranged early marriage goes on, the police superintendent who has friendly relations with everyone and where matters function informally.¹⁰⁰ The higher standard of living implicated by Gulf money led to more opportunities where social work envisioned in charity and establishing orphanages flourished. There are many institutions in Kerala, especially in Calicut that have orphanages for Gujarati and Kashmiri Muslim children.¹⁰¹

On the contemporary political level, Kerala’s political culture has been historically characterized with the history of communist parties in Kerala and the resulting politically activation in a strike culture and high voting turnouts. In Heller’s (2000) analysis, democracy works better in Kerala to a large extent due to the following factors:

- *Individuals* who have been equipped with the basic human capabilities required of citizenship such as literacy and mass education. As a result, women and Dalits have acquired the basic social skills necessary for informed participation.
- *A vibrant civil society* that did not arise from deep civic traditions or associational Montesquieuan impulses due to the long history of feudal domination and acute material dependencies on the one hand, and rigid degrading caste system on the other.
- Highest level of *unionization* in both the formal and informal economic sectors.
- *Class mobilizations* constituted citizens in Kerala.
- Effectiveness of *state intervention*

⁹⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty (2002) in *Habitations of Modernity* (pp. 65-79), provides a structuralist analysis to the phenomenon of garbage in modern Indian societies. His observation on the distinction between the importance given to a private clean sphere and the indifference to a dirty public space deserves due attention in this context, where a different culture and case arises in Kerala.

¹⁰⁰ For example when I needed to ask if I am supposed to register my new address, all that my landlord had to do was to meet the police officer by a coincidence somewhere and inform him about me.

¹⁰¹ In addition to the Kashmir House established by the Sunni Markaz, there is a large institution called JDT Islam (Jam’iyyat Da’wa wa Tablighul Islam) that was established as an orphanage in 1922 by Abdul Kader Kasoori from Punjab. Its history dates back to the tragic consequences of the Malabar rebellion. The orphanage was a place for rehabilitation of the orphans of the men who lost their lives. Now it is being funded by the Gulf, especially Kuwait, when Abdullah Noori funded it. It also has a hospital called Iqraa international hospital, which is fully funded by Saudi money.

- *Horizontal forms of association* that overcame vertical forms and led to a sense of organized and active citizenship.

Heller (2000) also demonstrates the three axes around which Kerala's history of social mobilization coalesced: a social reform movement led by caste-based associations that directly challenged the social and institutional inequities of the caste system, the nationalist movement led by the Congress and instances of agrarian rebellion (Mapilla uprising of 1921 and some grassroots efforts to organize support for land reform) (p. 505).

In Malabar and specifically in Kozhikode and Malappuram Districts, Muslim League politics are a strong feature.¹⁰² The involvement of Muslims in government and local politics, whether with communist or Muslim League or Congress or other parties, was another reason explaining the difference. Being visible as ministers and involved in decision-making gave a sense of empowerment and efficacy that is absent from the North Indian case.

The integration of the different religious groups in Kerala was the most apparent reason for the difference in the political culture. According to Kurup & Ismail (2008), this was evident in the following themes. Firstly, social practices were associated with matriliney especially in matrilineal system of inheritance (which are contrary to Islamic *Shari'a*) and matrilineal residence, where the husband moves to live in his in-laws house. This is however limited to the Northern area of Kerala and specifically in Kannur district. A second theme features in Hindu customs such as the tying of *Tali* in connection with marriage celebrations and the observance of harvest festivals like *Onam* and *Puthari*. The observance of *Nerchas* and offerings to saints and divines seeking blessings is a clear impact of this cultural integration.

The mosque architecture also reflects the Mappila community's integration in Kerala since the artisans and craftsmen who built these mosques were Hindu and thus employed the knowledge they

¹⁰² For a brief history on the Muslim League in Kerala, see: Gangadharan, M. (1995). It is also argued that the Mappilas preferred the peaceful politics of Muslim League to the communists' because of the 1921 revolt and the devastating effect it had on the Mappilas. As a result, the Madras government legislated land reforms in 1930 to grant tenants protection against eviction and to allow some landless labourers to buy land. This climaxed in the 1969 Kerala Land Reforms, which granted more rights to the agricultural classes. The importance given to education was another factor, especially with the rise of Mappila-run schools. Educated Mappilas realized that electoral politics is the road to the achievement of gains for the community. The Muslim League started winning seats in the Legislative assembly by 1945. Muslim League also considered the formation of a separate state for Kerala would enhance the situation of Mappilas who would constitute in that case twenty per cent of the state population. The Muslim League's power was obtained through a dual process: identification with a common problem first and then acquisition of institutional power. In an attempt by the Communist government to attract Muslims, it recognized Mappilas as backward and thus secured them a ten per cent reservation for employment in 1957, and in 1967-9 created the Muslim-majority Malappuram district (Jeffrey R. , 1992).

had of how to build Hindu temples (Kurup & Ismail, 2008). One sees how the mosques and temples are discrete in the sense that they blend with the housing architectural style, and one cannot easily discern the different between a *palli*¹⁰³ and a house. This is however true in the case of small villages and historical towns like Ponnani, but as one goes to the semi-urban centers, one sees the dominating Persian structure of mosques.¹⁰⁴ The new feature is the establishment and transformation of already established mosques into an Indo-Saracen style of architecture. This is due to the flow of Gulf money. The rise of the Babri Masjid disputes and the recent claims that some of the mosques used to be Hindu temples have also led to the revivalist movement in the islamization of mosque architecture in Kerala.

There is an apparent process of utilizing religion differently by Muslim leaders in India. While reading about the history of the controversy concerning *Vande Mataram*, I asked the housewife whom I live with if she knew this song. She said:

Of course! At school in the morning they sing it and in the afternoon they sing *Jana Gana Mana*. There are three important songs, which we all know: *Jana Gana Mana*, *Vande Mataram* and *Sari Jahan*. All these are associated with the Constituent Assembly and are all-India songs.

When I told her that in North India, some Muslims say that singing the *Vande Mataram* is *harām*. She looked at me puzzled, and said, “But it is not a Hindu song, it is for all India.”

Arif Khan (2010) mentions how it was Jinnah and the Muslim League who started opposing this song because of the opposition to the idea of *swaraj* and not that of being anti-Islamic. Looking at this housewife confirms the fact that the partition-related history has little resonance in the Keralite society. We cannot also consider any factor of unawareness since this is the same woman who is well aware of the position of Muslim ‘*ulama* there on many issues like television, education and marriage. But it also proves that in Kerala, the Muslim ‘*ulama* refrain from giving their opinion in political issues.

Dress habits are another feature of difference. Although now it has radically changed due to the introduction of the *pardah* among the majority of Muslim women, malayalees in general wear a sari

¹⁰³ In Kerala the word *palli* refers to a Hindu temple or a mosque or church. This is another indicator of the level of social integration.

¹⁰⁴ It remains to be stated that despite this change in acquiring a presiding architectural style, their dominance is still not equally compared to the North Indian case where gigantic structures of Vishnu or Hanuman protrudes and reminds one of their position and difference.

in their official and festive occasions.¹⁰⁵ This is however a superficial outlook to the reality of dress-based differentiation. One sees clear identity markers starting from schools where Muslim girls differ in their dressing style from non-Muslims and are always required to wear a headscarf. This is enhanced in private schools with a Muslim management, where both boys and girls are differentiated. The following is an example of the guidelines of a school uniform: White cap is obligatory for Muslim boys, while for girls it differs according to their age. From the age of one till ten, it is a *salwar qameez* suit. And above ten it is a *pardah* with a headscarf.

Unlike the case in North India, where some religious leaders had called to boycott the Republic Day, Kerala has not witnessed any similar calls. The demolishing of the Babri Masjid had a minor impact on the actions of Muslims (a majority of which had repeatedly emphasized the role of the Muslim League in containing the anger). In addition to this, there is a fascinating hybrid manifestation of the unique political identity Keralite Muslims possess. During my fieldwork, I went to a celebration of the Indian Republic Day in a Madrasa. The madrasa had organized an evening program on this occasion and included folklore Muslim dancing and chanting of Muslim *Sufi* poetry praising the Prophet. The following is a photo taken of one of these performances depicting a hybrid form of martial art called *kolkali*.¹⁰⁶ Just as these forms of art reflect the long history of accommodation with a different culture and religion, it is argued that the Muslim Keralites have sustained a hybrid political identity in which secularism is interestingly mingled with a distinct religious identity.



Figure 18 Kolkali performance at a madrasa in Malappuram district on the Indian Republic day. Photo by author

However, this strengthened sense of an acceptance of secular democracy is being currently

¹⁰⁵ A difference in the wrapping style is observed to ensure adherence to Islamic rules such as coverign the midriff and the head.

¹⁰⁶ *Kolkali* is a performing art from Malabar which is taken from the traditional *Kalaripayatt* (a form of Dravidian martial art using small sticks or swords) .The change to the original Hindu form is that it is accompanied by Islamic songs, the boys are not bare-chested, and their heads are covered with a piece of cloth.

challenged on account of the rising war against terrorism. As I was told once, “Malappuram now is the Kashmir of Kerala.” This was in reference to the recent arrests of Muslim youth as terror suspects who are being targeted through the RSS-related process of anti-national branding. As a BJP-sympathiser, Narayanan narrates that after partition and during the last sixty years, Kerala has been affected by pan-islamism, which slowly penetrated rural society because Kerala did not develop industrially. Therefore, this led to the increase in unskilled labour, which finally found its way to the Gulf. According to Narayanan,

The problem with unskilled labour is poverty, illiteracy and thus the ease in imbibing fundamentalist tendencies and the allure of money. In recent bomb cases in Mumbai and Coimbatore and the role of Madani,¹⁰⁷ media reports have shown that young Keralite Muslims were trained in the Gulf and Pakistan. And in a recent case, half a dozen of boys were found in Kashmir. Taliban targets rural areas and mobilizes the youth by teaching them language and terrorism. You see, our people are known for learning foreign languages easily.

6.1.3 The transformation from the aversion to secular education

Questioning the idea that modern education is the milestone of progress has been a recurrent theme in Muslim scholarship. As I showed in the previous chapter, Islamic education has been a correlative factor of social change in North India. The history of the Southern state of Kerala is another testimony to the impact of Muslim scholars and education. Jeffrey (1992) comments that Kerala’s Mappilas are the community in which social change has been greater than any other community. Their literacy rates rose dramatically from less than five per cent in 1931 to 48% in the 1970s, where almost all children attended schools (pp. 110- 111).

Defining literacy in the historical context of Kerala is complicated, since until today one may find women who are able to read and write only Arabic and hence Arabi-Malayalam. Muslims refrained from learning Malayalam and English. They called Malayalam *Aryanezhutu* (the language of Hindus). The Muslims refrained from learning English for two reasons. The first is their belief in the non-cooperation policy against the British and thus, like their brethren all over India, kept their distance from the British and their systems especially education. The second reason is the Christian missionaries, which aimed at asserting the superiority of Western culture, and education was utilized as the best tool for propagation. The bible was compulsorily taught at schools and Muslim

¹⁰⁷ This is a reference to the Keralite leader Madani, the founder of the ISS (see section 6.2.3 and 6.2.4) .

girls were banned from veiling their heads. Later, scholars and poets like Hali, Shibli Numani, and Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan established educational reform movements, and like the North, Muslims in Kerala were influenced by these voices (Abdul Samad, 1998). After the Mappila Revolt, the destiny of Arabi-Malayalam was its overnight semi-death. A backwardness discourse erupted when modern education took over violently, and Muslims were called illiterate overnight. The Muslims' ignorance of the English language pulled them back from Modernization.

In an interview with the Malayalam professor Shamsad Hussein, she recounts how Arabi Malayalam emerged as a progressive language when the '*ulama* had stood against studying Malayalam (for being the language of the Hindus) and English (for being the language of the colonial power). The first novel in Kerala was in fact written in Arabi Malayalam. For Hussain, publication of novels is a key indicator of the modernity of a language. In other communities in Kerala, Brahmin women and Dalits were not allowed to study, but Muslims were always studying. Many magazines were written in Arabi Malayalam. Even women magazines like *Nisa ul Islam* existed. Vakkom Moulavi, who was a nationalist freedom fighter, ran a newspaper titled *Al-Muslim* and led this movement. Modern historical records suffer from a sporadic selection of what to be included in them. Hussain refers to Haleema Bibi¹⁰⁸, the first female publisher who wrote in the 1930s in the Muslim *Vaneetha* who is absent from the history of the renaissance of Kerala. At the age of eighteen, Heleema Bibi organized a conference on Muslim girls' education in Kerala in 1938 and stated the following:

It is a terrible realization for us that if histories sought to describe groups of people who have not been touched by civilization in this twentieth century, in which enlightenment has reached its zenith, the first place would be occupied by Muslim women. [...] You cannot afford to forget the fact that 'the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world'. If we are to have erudite and cultured citizens, then those qualities must be dissolved in the very breast milk that they are fed. Surely, it is mothers who must raise children up to be citizens. When we see that the truth is that no other women are under such bondage as are women of our community, we feel ashamed about the culture of the Muslims. We should not allow ourselves to subsist on others' labour anymore, our womanliness devastated, and remain in chains, restricted, to disfigure our community and our brothers. It is but the truth that a woman can work much more effectively for the betterment of the community than a man

¹⁰⁸ Also known as Haleema Beevi (the transliteration differs in different sources).

can. [...] These sorts of thoughts now arise in us precisely because many of us, for whom the knowledge of letters was considered forbidden and criminal, have now attained education. It is a relief that today the misunderstanding that education will lead women astray has largely waned. Education has helped us to expand our ideas, express our opinions, and pronounce them. I do not forget that the large heartedness inherent in the great power of education is what brought all of us together, who have never before stepped out, to take part in this assembly, braving fear and shame. (Haleema Beevi, 1938, obtained from Devika, 2005, p. 169)¹⁰⁹

Such an event is considered a vigorous attempt in an age where Muslim women could not appear in any public space. Just around ten years before Haleema Beevi spoke, learning both the Quran and Malayalam was prohibited for women. The efforts that had resulted in her speech in 1938 were basically engineered and put forward by the Muslim reformist *'ulama*. In 2011, one can see the most apparent result of their attempts since 43.8 per cent of the young women I interviewed (their age ranging from 16 till 32) knew the Quran or significant parts of it by heart; 91.4 per cent read the *tafsīr* or interpretation of the Quran; 25.9 per cent went to the Jumaa prayer in the mosque on a permanent basis, and 17.5 per cent were members of Islamic student or youth organizations.

Since this chapter focuses more on the impact of the high educational level of Kerala on women, the aspect of and mobility and marriage has to be emphasized. Despite the social significance given to education, the idea of traveling outside of Kerala for female Malayalees is still considered a taboo to a large extent. Upon delivering a lecture in an Arabic college in Malappuram district, one girl told me

For Muslim girls, there are so many limitations on their mobility, we can not travel anywhere without a male family member, we are puzzled to see you here alone, so I want to know how you managed to overcome these limitations.

For them to know that another world exists must have been painful, because then their fight would be more meaningful and stronger. When I compare them to their Northern comrades, I think that North Indian girls are luckier. Their lack of education and the prison bar-like social control enacted on their lives prevented them from witnessing or planning any different lives, their self-

¹⁰⁹ Haleema Beevi. (1920-2000) Welcome speech at Muslim Women's Conference of the Travancore Muslim Women's Association, Tiruvalla, 15 Edavam (May-Jun 1938). *Muslim Vanita*, 1, 4, ME 1113 Mithunam (Jun-Jul 1938): 103-7, quoted from: Devika, 2005, pp. 168-173.

content is immeasurable. But these girls are subject to a different type of social control; they are well educated, well read, they know so much about the world and problems in their lives, and to some extent, they have the ability to bargain and negotiate. It is significant to note the way they smile so vehemently when I ask if they are married, and they shake their heads and hands negatively to assert that they won this battle; they are twenty years old and managed to remain unmarried to finish their education.

Whereas women's problems generally in India revolve around low literacy rates or malnourishment, their predicaments in Kerala relate to different and non-conventional issues such as violence against women, low decision making capacities from the home level to the district and state level and hence the gender disparities in private and public spheres. I had a chat with a social worker who was employed under a temporary contract by the government in the *Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society's* (Women Equality Society) development programs in Nilambur municipality in Malappuram district.¹¹⁰ She had a degree in Maths and was pursuing a master's degree. She told me that women's problems were usually related to mental health, mobility and decision making capacity. This is why they develop awareness programs especially in legal aspects since the power lies in the hands of the father or the husband. There is a big difference between reality and statistics. Among women, regardless of caste, enrolment in professional courses is low. Their emphasis is always on teaching or medicine. And even after completing the course, a small minority of them is allowed to pursue work. Like goods they trade in, Keralite men also imported techniques of women suppression. Ironically, despite being traders, very few women are allowed to work in shops or fields (Gangadharan, personal communication, January 2011).

A final point that needs to be highlighted is that the different political culture, coupled with the factor of gulf migration led to the dispersion of learning Arabic in Kerala. According to an Arabic professor, the feeling of responsibility towards the Arabic language is manifested through three fields of studying Arabic (religion, language, arts and culture). There are forty to fifty accredited Arabic colleges, which are aided colleges (private sector-colleges whose salaries come from the government) These colleges encompass ten thousand students, in addition to those in *halqas* in mosques.

During my fieldwork, I noticed that in non-Arabic or non-Islamic colleges in Malabar, the ratio

¹¹⁰ This municipality is central in this study due to several reasons. First, Nilambur is considered the first village in India to achieve a total literacy rate. Second, there is a unique ongoing project to make Nilambur the first dowry-free village in India.

of Muslim female to males or non-Muslim females is extremely low. For example at the MES women's college in Calicut, of the approximate thirty teachers, only two are Muslim females. When an official was asked about this, he said that Muslim women simply do not apply.¹¹¹

6.1.4 Paradoxes in the Kerala model

The birth of a vibrant and effective democracy in Kerala must be located in its political history of conflict and social mobilization, the interplay of these dynamics with the process of state building, and the resulting transformation of social structure.

*- Patrick Heller, Degrees of Democracy, 2000*¹¹²

Whereas the Arab World was historically dependent on the trade with Malabar, contemporarily, the cultural and economic ties are reversed. Since the oil boom in the 1970s, the economical links between India and the Arab World became dependent on labour migration to build up the newly developing Gulf States. Kerala is considered the main source of Indian labour to the Gulf and hence Kerala's economy has become reliant on remittances from Gulf migration. Since job opportunities are scarce in Kerala due to the low industrial level and the rural nature of the state, emigration seems to be the main option. However, emigration is heavily directed towards the Gulf and not towards other states of India. High levels of income that match the high consumption levels of Keralites are not the only reason for this orientation. Another major factor is the cheap daily direct flights to the Gulf, implying it is more accessible than going to Delhi (almost everyone who was living in the Gulf whom I spoke with has never been to Delhi). Muslim Malayalees (known as Mappilas) also feel more culturally attached to the Arabs than to the rest of Indians. In fact, Malayalees, regardless of their religion, do not feel strong cultural ties to the rest of India because of language barriers.

According to M.G.S. Narayanan, it was this Gulf migration that saved Kerala from starvation. However, in his opinion, the influence gained by the communists fostered the idea that industrialization meant capitalism. This fear of science and technology, in addition to land reforms, kept Kerala away from industrial development.¹¹³ Despite the availability of raw materials and a

¹¹¹ There is more to this explanation. In private colleges in Kerala, there is a hidden code or stipulation to pay a sum of money in return for a teaching position. Muslim women, being already financially drained because of the dowry obligations and because of being socially more backward than their Hindu and Christian counterparts do not always afford to pay this sum of money.

¹¹² Heller, P. (2000). Degrees of democracy: Some comparative lessons from India. *World Politics* 52(4), p. 502.

¹¹³ This absence of production, increasing consumerism and dependency on Gulf money is enforced by the fact that

literate working class, unemployment became a serious predicament. Therefore, thousands of literates suffered from unemployment and headed to the Gulf, either legally or illegally:

The gulf earnings generated a parallel economy. Every village has English medium schools and gulf-style bazaars. You will not find a single family in Kerala without someone in the Gulf. There are no slums in Kerala. The existence of airports also facilitated this. The flow of money from the Gulf started in the forties. The first generation bought land, constructed houses but after that realized that they have not achieved much social status. So the second generation started investments in Bangalore, Mumbai and Hyderabad. Now the third generation adopts a development-friendly mind. And also the political administration has the same ideology, all political parties realized new opportunities for investments. Most of these Gulf employees have an experience in the fields of running hospitals, shops, hotels and restaurants. Thus, they are continuously contributing, and they have associations. Also the Jews and Syrian Christians have connections in Israel and Europe. In the Gulf, there is no citizenship, no political liberty and Keralites are addicted to democratic politics. This explains the strong connections with their home country. (Narayanan, personal communication, December 2010)

A consideration of the facts and figures of Malappuram district is intriguing since it has the highest Muslim population amounting to 68.5% and is also outnumbering the rest of the districts of Kerala in emigration (17.5% of emigrants from Kerala are from Malappuram) but not in return emigration. In Kerala, 52.5% of Muslim households have one or more non-resident Keralite. In Malappuram alone, 71% of the households have either an emigrant or a return emigrant. The largest amount of remittances in 2007 was received by Malappuram district, amounting to Rs. 4.6 thousand cores or 19% of the state's total. Around 50% of the remittances to the state were received by the Muslim community, which forms around 24% of the total population of the state (Kerala's population is around 33.3 Million). Malayalee Muslim residents in the Gulf amount to 1.6 Million. This resulted in a phenomenon, as 22.9% of Married Muslim women are Gulf wives (whose husbands live and work in the Gulf) (Zachariah & Rajan, 2007). The interesting fact is that the United Arab Emirates has decided to open a consulate in Kerala to accommodate the demands of its largest Indian workforce community and to encourage business (Padanna, 2011). One of the results of this migration is that the highest wage in India is in Kerala: 400 Rupees/day (Gangadharan, personal communication, January 2011). The Physical quality of life index developed by Morris

the trade of the Malayalees is only in imported goods (Gangadharan, personal communication, December 2010).

David Morris brought Kerala to the attention of development discourses as it “had anomalously high PQLI¹¹⁴ and low per capita income” (Jeffrey, 1992, p. 8).

Kerala is considered to be the land of contradictions. On the one hand, it has the highest levels of literacy, human development, life expectancy, and income. On the other hand, it suffers from the highest levels of alcoholism, suicide, crimes and dowry in comparison with other states of India. On a less formal note, while it is propagated by the Indian Tourism Authority as God's own country, a lot of my teenage respondents claimed it is rather Crime's and Insects' own country, and a Malayalee friend calls it God's own Social Paradox.¹¹⁵

On the positive side, it has both the highest human development index and literacy rate in India. It is also the least corrupt state, according to Transparency International (Indian Corruption Study 2005). Kerala differs from other states also in the appearance of Muslim women in all public spaces without the confines of localities or a *burqa*. It is one of the few states in India, in addition to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, where you would see female bus conductors and petrol station workers. However, in my visits around India, Kerala was not just the only state in which I saw a Muslim female bus conductor but it was in the Muslim-majority- populated district of Malappuram. Unlike the overall sex ratio in India of 940 females per 1000 males in 2011, Kerala has the highest female sex ratio of 1084 females and Malappuram has an even higher one (1096 females) due to the male migration. Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India amounting to 91.98%, in Malappuram it is 91.5%, and in Kozhikode it is 93.16%.

Factor of Gender Statistics	Malappuram	Kerala-wise	India-wise
Literacy 2011	91.98%	93.91%	74.04%
Sex Ratio 2011 per 1000 males	1096	1084	940
Female Work participation Rate 2001	6.6%	15.4%	25.6%
Life Expectancy (in years)	--	76	63.5
Human Development Index 2011	--	0.920	0.547

Table 2 Gender Statistice obtained from the Census of India and UNDP Reports.

Several Gulf-influenced trends are central to the analysis of social change initiated in Kerala.

¹¹⁴ Physical Quality of Life Index, which refers to low infant mortality rate, high life expectancy and high level of basic literacy.

¹¹⁵ One of the UDF/Congress Propaganda Brochures for the Kerala Legislative Assembly Elections of 2011 referred to Kerala as ‘not so shining’. It further criticized the LDF’s rule as having witnessed Hawalas, alcohol, vehicle, sand and sex mafias. (UDF Kerala Website, <http://udf.org.in/kerala-“not-so”-shining.html>, accessed on 14/03/2011)

The historical trade relations did not only result in an exchange of material goods of spices and wood. In fact, the impact of trade was witnessed in the cultural goods that came first in artistic and literary forms (hybrid language and folklore) then turned to the social aspect (inter-religious marriages, conversions and later on women's education and their dress code). In today's time and after the oil boom, this cultural exchange is not only one-sided but also consumerist to a great extent. Goods, dressing and eating styles came in a one-dimensional manner.

The improving standard of living led to the proliferation of what the Malayalees call 'Gulf goods', which are mainly smart mobile phones, computers, kitchen and cooking devices. These consumerist trends resulted in significant social changes due to the enlargement of the middle class in Kerala. Most people I interviewed, especially the elderly, stressed how Kerala fifty years ago was a very different place. Hunger, poverty and modesty were main features of everyday life. These were transformed by Gulf money. According to a survey conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research, Kerala's Muslim households average earnings 29,991/year in comparison with Hindus households' average of 26,344/year (Iype, 2004).

Building new houses is another trend found amongst the families of emigrants. Perhaps what is most significant about this trend is that women's agency and autonomy appear here unrivaled to any other situation. Usually it is the women who are the recipients of money which their husbands send through bank transfers or Western Union, and hence are often solely responsible for all the paper work concerning obtaining construction permits from the municipality, choosing a design for the house and managing all construction-related steps. In a survey conducted by Zachariah & Rajan in 2007, the role of the wife in managing the finances of the household was highly apparent (sixty per cent of respondents manage on their own), and 69 per cent had their own bank accounts.

During my fieldwork, I met an agent who had an authorized money-wiring office, and I asked him who the person usually is to whom the money is sent, he confirmed that in ninety per cent of the situations it is the wife. In my visits to municipality offices in Malappuram district, I often saw young women in their twenties going around with papers. I was introduced to one who was waiting to have some paper work done, as she was the only person present there who was conversant in English. She was twenty-one, with a college degree in Mathematics, a Gulf wife, and unemployed. She was doing all the paperwork for obtaining a house construction permit.¹¹⁶ Although her mother-in-law was accompanying her, it was obvious that due to her education, she was treated with high

¹¹⁶ A Gulf-wife is a woman whose husband works and lives in the Arabian Gulf.

respect, and she was more competent than the mother-in-law.

Migration had a strong impact on the socio-cultural lives of Malayalees. Education was accorded an overriding status because there was a strong realization that a strong educational background secures one a prestigious and highly salaried job in the Gulf. Since most of the Muslim migrants to the Gulf were traders and either low or unskilled laborers, they could easily discern the comparative advantage of their Christian and Hindu neighbours with a higher educational profile and thus a better job.

Gulf money not only led to higher rates of consumerist behavior in Malabar, but also to higher levels of literacy and education. This is most obvious through a comparative observation in the rapid change of literacy rates through years. Malappuram witnessed a trend of improvement of female literacy rate from 86.26% in 2001 to 91.55% in 2011 (higher for males: 95.78%), and in Kozhikode it was higher: from 88.62% in 2001 to 93.16% in 2011 and 97.57% for the males.

Interestingly, Malappuram was the most successful district in achieving the 'Total Literacy Campaign' launched in Kerala in 1991. Aysha, who was a newly literate Muslim woman, was selected to declare Kerala the first literate state in India (Siddique 2005). Nilambur municipality in Malappuram is also considered the first literate village (at that time it had the village status) in India with its 100% literacy rate.

However, these figures hide a strong reality. In fact, the overall average of the Malabar area (the six Northern districts) amounts to 89.22% and thus lags behind the state's average. Literacy of Muslim women in Malappuram district is only 86.3%.

A final impact of Gulf money was the flourishing of Islamic traditional and reformist organizations. Gulf money is used to build mosques and organize welfare programmes and conferences. It is considered the backbone of all the religious organizations in Kerala. Once this flow of money is stopped, these organizations would collapse. The work of these organizations depends mainly on the networking skills of the Non Resident Keralites in the Gulf. Even engineering colleges are made of this money (Hafiz Mohamed, personal communication, March 2011).

6.1.5 The Gender paradox

Look at the international day for women, there was a photo in the manorama newspaper about a conference on that day. The front seats were empty; the women chose to sit in the back seats because they were shy. This is our problem in India; women are

too shy to demand their own rights and to come to the front seats. Women are underdeveloped in India and they are under men's control, especially because of domestic violence.

- A Female Student at a Paramedical college in Malappuram District, responding to my question on problems in Kerala.

Kerala's model of development is associated with a gender paradox. This paradox refers to the notable absence of women, especially Muslim women, from public spheres in Kerala. The same population, which has incredibly high rates of literacy, suffers from under-representativeness, unemployment, caste oppression, religious restrictions, and sexual and domestic violence (Siddique 2005). Interestingly, and unlike all the articles in an edited volume about writings on Muslim women in India, the only article written on Kerala was written by a male. This is a symbolic incident of the situation in Kerala, where the scope for structural opportunities for women is to a large extent absent.

In my conversations with women and girls in villages, I tried to identify their priorities by asking them to choose what is most crucial for them: education, marriage or physical security. The answers were mostly contradictory. Although security was the dominant answer, education came second. However, when I re-asked them to choose between marriage and education, it seemed a nonsensical question since marriage became suddenly the top priority. It seemed paradoxical that in the only state in India where women outnumber men, their main quest is security. And in the opinion of many, it is a quest that precedes freedom.

Many informants including psychologists asserted how women in Mallappuram district suffer from mental disorders and ill health. When I asked an Mphil student working on this topic what the most psychological problems prevalent in Kerala were, she told me stress and overworking about the future. I heard many stories of women suffering from depression and other psychological diseases, and I met several PhD students who are working on this topic. I was told that the percentage of Muslim women going to hospitals is higher than those from other religions; they mostly complain of body pain, however, there are no pathological reasons; it is all psychological effects.

Hussain points out the female tutors who were educating Islamic studies to children (known as *Lebacci*) until the madrasa system took over and women lost their educating role. She warns how the '*ulama* try to erase this fact from history to assume full responsibility and deny the role of women in the writing of the history of Kerala's renaissance (S. Hussain, personal communication,

December 2010).

The interlocking between marriage and education plays a strong role in the suffering of women. Having had the opportunity to be educated, young women grieve their inability to continue it further and the forestallments to their career. I heard a story of a Muslim mother who cried in a school's parent's meeting upon seeing her classmate become an English teacher. She cried because while she had seen that her life changed its course and was forced to quit school, and hence never pursue her dreams, she saw how her classmate achieved what she was deprived of. In a visit to a village in Malappuram district, I met a group of twenty-year old mothers and when I asked one of them until which standard they studied, she burst out in tears. Another woman explained that she was the top student in her class and she wanted to go to college, but her father took her out of school and got her married and whenever anyone mentions school to her she starts crying.

What is surprising is that the same women who suffered because of early marriage do not refrain from committing the same deed with their children. A female Muslim psychologist and social activist offering counseling to Muslim women in different parts of Malabar mentions:

The alarming factor is that when asked about their happiness or whether they are happy with their lives and what they have achieved so far, it is always negative; however they do not see that their daughters should be happy, they do not work to eliminate the same causes of their unhappiness from their daughters' futures.

Apart from the escape of paying a high dowry, another reason to this widespread phenomenon of early marriage as told to me by this psychologist is the inability to tolerate adolescence problems on the part of the parents and especially if she is a Gulf wife taking sole care of her children. This inability to take responsibility of teens results in pushing the responsibility to mold or deal with the teenager to the husband. According to J. Devika, what educated unemployed women end up doing is a sort of child crafting to compensate the loss of decision-making capacity in their lives. This is as a result of a growing sense of individuation. A Muslim female lawyer had commented to me on the difficulties families in Kerala have due to the high level of women's education. According to her, women feel educated and thus self-confident; hence this makes it hard to reach negotiations easily, and their pride is so strong because of education. Most of her clients were actually men suffering from domestic problems. She said that women and not men are usually the reason of any family problem. Interestingly, she asserted that men usually give freedom to their wives, but it is the mother in law or sister in law who controls and starts creating problems between the couple.

Despite these observations, the reality of female literacy among Muslims reflects other

conditions. In Islam, the first divine order, as carried through the Quran, is “Read”. This symbolizes the significance of education in Islam. However, the reality of Muslim women contradicts this divine order. In a survey conducted on the status of Muslim women in Kerala in 1981, Menon (1981) argues that 91.78% of the respondents confirmed that there is nothing in Islam that is against girl’s education (p. 40). However, 35% remain illiterate, due to factors of income and age, which makes their conviction independent of their actual status (*ibid*). Here, it becomes obvious how difficult it is to project and speak of agency. The results of the survey I conducted among Muslim students in Kerala prove this. When asked if they perceive that they enjoy equal rights as Indian citizens, 27.6% confirmed that this how they always feel, 51.3% said it is not always the case, and 13.2% simply rejected this claim. This 51% figure is the quantitative translation of the gender paradox in my opinion.

The level of employment among women in Kerala and especially Muslims is very low as only 8.9% of Muslim women are employed (Census of India, 2001). The percentage of women in the workforce in 1991 was 15.8% (below the national average of 22.3%). Surprisingly, in 2001 the figure decreased to 15.4% while the national average increased to 25.6%. In Malappuram district, the figure is dismally low: 8.7% (Siddique, 2005). When I asked students in a paramedical college, where surprisingly everyone showed a desire to be employed, whether they would search for employment opportunities in India or the Gulf, the majority opted for the Gulf, and all of them chose this subject to study because of job opportunities. When I asked them how they would deal with their husband if they wanted to go to the Gulf, they smiled and said: “We take him with us and he gets a job there.”

The severity of absence of women in public bodies called on affirmative action of seat reservation. The recent action was manifested in the decision to reserve 50% of the seats for women in local governmental bodies that was enacted in 2010. Shockingly, not a single Muslim Malayalee woman was ever elected to the Lok Sabha. Only 6.4% of the elected members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were women. Despite this, there are aspects of change. The 2011 Kerala Assembly witnessed the election of seven female MLAs, two of them were Muslims belonging to the Communist Party of India (M) and the Janata Dal, since the Indian Union Muslim League (henceforth IUML) did not present any female candidate, while Congress only presented three, one of them was a Muslim but did not make it. In 2009, A Muslim lady was nominated by Congress to run for the Kassargod seat in the Lok Sabha Elections. Although this act should be considered a significant step towards change, women's autonomy and agency are considerably challenged, as the patriarchal system in Kerala remains solid. The reporting of this news in the Hindu newspaper

proves this:

Taken unawares, Mrs. Kamal burst into tears on hearing the news. She told Mr. Chandy that she would get her husband's consent and ring back immediately. With her husband's green signal coming, Mrs. Kamal informed Mr. Chandy about her acceptance of the party high command's decision. (The Hindu 21/3/2009)

The Muslim Keralite context is also plagued with the tradition of dowry, which is considered by many females as the biggest problem facing Muslims in Kerala. Originating as a Hindu tradition, the custom was copied by the Muslims, who themselves were converts and did not eschew this Hindu tradition. Ironically, dowry among Muslims in Kerala is more prevalent than among Hindus. The older the girl is the more dowry her family is supposed to provide. This is usually in the form of gold and in some cases, additional cash, as well. The girl is supposed to retain the gold, but often, she surrenders it to the husband's family. Cash goes automatically to the husband, and any other gifts such as cars, electric appliances or even expensive watches. The patriarchal nature of the Keralite society is the basic incentive behind the continuity of this custom, since males are attributed higher significance. The fact that the girl is educated does not significantly change the scenario, because her family will have to pay a higher dowry to the also well-educated boy.

In one of the focus groups I arranged in colleges, I asked a girl who was speaking very eloquently which age she thought was most suitable for marriage, and she said, "Twenty." When I asked her if she would be able to convince her parents of that if they insisted on making her marry before the age of twenty, she answered:

My parents' opinion is my opinion, you see because of our economic condition; I cannot insist on marrying late, my father does not afford a high dowry. Here men in Malabar want to marry young girls, so although I think twenty is a better age for marriage, if my family tells me to marry now, I will agree.

Violence against women is another element of the gender paradox in Kerala. According to police records of 2009, Malappuram appears as the district with the highest rate of violence against women. This is due to reported domestic violence or cruelty by the husband or relative. In a survey I conducted among Muslim students in Malappuram and Kozhikode, 71.1% of the female students said they do not feel safe where they live. When asked if by wearing the hijab they feel more secure or free, only 51.1% confirmed this.

6.2 Reform through *jihād*

Allah at the end of each century will bring forwards one who will revive the faith of this Ummah.

-A Prophet hadith, (Sunnan Abu Dawood)

In India although Muslims are closer theologically to ahl-i kitab, Muslims gave fatwa to support Hindus against the Portuguese. This was probably the first ijtiḥād of this kind in the world.

-Mujeeburahman, editor of the mujahid Shabab Weekly Magazine.

According to the reformist Mujahid leader, Prof. Husain Madavoor, the meaning of *jihād* ranges from the recital of Quranic messages to the unbelievers, to the mass movements aimed at establishing social justice and freedom of faith, and culminating in the highest form, which is the individual's effort to restrain the self. In a hadith by the Prophet answering his wife's question if a woman has to perform *jihād*, he stated that for women, *jihād* is free of combat, it is only via intellectual debates, with the self, with her money and through performing pilgrimage (*ḥaj*).

The word *jihād* has strong significance in the Keralite context but in an interestingly different manner. In 2009, there was strong media hype concerning alleged plots of the Popular Front of India and Muslim extremists to convert Hindu and Christian girls in Kerala and Karnataka to Islam by alluring them into marriage and thus increasing the percentage of Muslims within the states. Hindu right-wing organizations like VHP and RSS termed this as 'love *jihād*'. In 2010 and 2011, the issue was renewed in Kerala with a new term '*penne (women) jihād*' in which gender roles were reversed, and Muslim girls were allegedly seducing Hindu boys to convert them and marry them. In addition to Muslim organizations, which have denied these allegations and regarded them as violations of basic justice, the Karnataka High Court had also ruled against one of these cases. During my fieldwork, the Muslim youth I interviewed always referred to this media hype as a Hindu right-wing conspiracy, and in an interview with a female student activist, she asserted that India is a democracy, and girls should have the freedom to choose their partner. She later referred to the endless efforts of RSS to stain the Muslim community, especially by attacking activist female Muslim youth and claiming they practice *jihād* against the Hindus.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Interview with Jamaati Islami Girls Islamic Organization activist. For more information on media coverage of 'love jihad' see for example: Kerala CM reignites 'love jihad' theory, 26.07.2010, The Times of India: obtained from : http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-07-26/india/28290879_1_pfi-muslim-women-love-and-money

The less featured Muslim narratives actually give us a different picture. One of the most pressing problems in India that the Jamaati Islami for example identifies is what they call the moral degradation among the youth. According to Jamaati Islami, not only is there an increasing rate of crime, alcohol and narcotic consumption, but also a large number of Muslim girls are getting married to non-Muslims and they do not care about any Islamic values. Secular media's influence was the reason to blame behind this predicament:

You see for example the issue of love *jihād*, they claimed that around four thousand non-Muslim girls converted and were kidnapped by Muslim boys. In fact, there are more than five thousand Muslim girls who get kidnapped by non-Muslim boys. But we cannot discuss this or project it the way they do. (Personal communication with a Jamaati Islami leader, February 2011)

There are cited media reports on the response of Muslim leaders and mosque preachers in Kerala to this love *jihād* topic. They have exhorted the community not to believe in such allegations since anyway love cannot be a means of *jihād* and that pre-marital relationships are considered sinful activities (Indian Social Institute, 2009). What is interesting in this regard is this usage of the space of the mosque to counter the allegations and in spite of encouraging conversion activities, to even reprimanding them. In a press interview, the Jamaati Vallakkadavu president stated, "The faithful are told that getting involved in such activities is similar to cheating, which is a sin as per the Holy Quran." President of the Palayam Jama-ath Sheik Hussain said that such matters had not come up in the mosque so far as it was felt that no such activities were taking place there (Express Buzz, 24/10/09).

What I aim to realize through this chapter is a limited twist to this imagination by portraying young women as jihādist or initiators of some form of agency (to put it into mainstream sociological terminology). I call the Muslim young women in Kerala as jihādist because they struggle against problems such as dowry, early marriage and thus discontinuation of education, the 'Gulf Wife' syndrome and limited mobility. Just as *jihād* is considered a typical Islamic ritual, I am putting forward the claim that in their struggles, several rituals appear. These rituals include first going to the mosque, employing their Islamic education from the madrasas and colleges to resist male-dominated authority, and dealing with the ritual of segregation they experience since puberty.

Another term related etymologically to *jihād* is *ijtihad*, meaning independent reasoning. *Ijtihad*, as a process, opens the space for agency and stresses the human element of change; here *ijtihad* becomes the bridge on which *jihād* as a struggle is translated into meaningful action to reach the goal. Jalal (2008) describes writing her book as an intellectual *jihād* in the sense of a constant struggle based on the rigorous exercise of *ijtihad*. When a young woman, or a twenty-year old girl tells me that she has learnt Arabic, and she can read both the original text of the Quran and its translation, then she can decide for herself what is *harām* and what is *halāl*, and thus do not need the fatwa or the Mullah's version of truth, then this is called *ijtihad*, and on her part, it leads to having better opportunities in life, either through education, marital life, career, or simply self-content and peace of mind.

Vatuk (2008) focuses on the emerging phenomenon of 'a new breed of Muslim women scholar activists' who are critically studying the foundational texts of their religion in order to challenge received wisdom. Although there is obvious preference for the authority of the Quran in their struggle to assert their rights, still the Indian Constitution as a basis of reference is not ignored. Thus, although Vatuk tends to belittle the reference to the Constitution, my ethnographic material in Kerala proves otherwise. In many conversations with female Muslim students, they often asked me whether there are constitutional guarantees for Christians in Egypt, as they enjoy such guarantees in India. In a more critically reflective pause, a student has shown surprise to my interest in Indian democracy, to her,

This democracy gives equal citizenship to all. However, it diminishes citizenship for Muslim women. This freedom is for men to limit the freedom of women through the Muslim Personal Law.

Before I delve into how Muslim women in Kerala reconstruct their roles and agencies, it is necessary to stress that the Muslim community in Kerala is far from homogenous. Hence, the position of Muslim women varies according to the dealings with each group. In general, there are four major Islamic groups in Kerala. The first is the most widely spread Sufi group, or *Ahlu-Sunnat wal-jamaat*, which are called *Sunnis*. It is claimed that around 70% of the Muslim community in Kerala follow this group. In popularity, Kerala Nadwatul Mujahideen (KNM) or the *Mujahids* follow with around 20%. The third small, yet powerful group is the Jamaati Islami-Hind's Kerala chapter, with just below 10% of the Muslim population.¹¹⁸ The fourth group, which has a thin layer

¹¹⁸ These data are obtained from an interview with Prof. Hafiz Mohamed. The percentages are obtained through

of supporters, is labeled as the extremist, or the Muslim counterpart of Hindu right wing. This is widely known as NDF (National Development Front) that was transformed into the political party Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) that is associated with the Popular Front of India (PFI) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) of Madani (a famous convicted Muslim political leader).

Reformist organizations among the Muslim community started to appear in the early twentieth century after the Malabar Rebellion when religious leaders (*'ulama*) started facing the deteriorated conditions of Muslims especially in the educational field. The contemporary remnant of these reformist organizations is known as “Kerala Nadwatul Mujahideen”, or the *Islahi* (Reformist) Movement in Kerala. Whereas the KNM's role is circumscribed to social issues, Jamaati Islami is gaining increasing ground in the social spectrum as a progressive and politically Islamist force. Two points of similarities arise between these two groups, the first relate to their urban power. Whereas the Sunnis dominate the villages, Mujahids and Jamaati have strong power-holds in urban centers, especially in Kozhikode city. The second more intrinsic similarity is that both groups are termed revivalist or *mujaddīdeen* in Arabic. Both believe in the following prophet's saying: “Allah at the end of each century will bring forwards one who will revive the faith of this Ummah.” They believe that, as revivalists, their function is to “cleanse Islam of all the ungodly elements, present it and make it flourish in its original pure form” (Maududi quoted in Abdulsamad, 1998, p. 25).

6.2.1 Sunni/Sufi organizations

Being the organization with the widest support base, the Samastha Kerala Jam-iiyathul Ulama leads the Muslim organizational scene in Kerala. The formation of Samastha came as a response of the *'ulama* to the conditions of post 1921 in which Kerala's Muslim community witnessed a radical shift from individual leadership to the grouping of Muslims under organizations. The *'ulama* founding Samastha identified several dangers or trends that the Muslim community was facing. On the one hand, there was the colonial and imperialistic attack after the 1920s Mappila rebellion. On the other hand, modernization forces among Muslims coming from the Arab world were advancing. The latter forces are identified by the Samastha as ‘the fundamental and puritanical views of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1702-1793), Salafism of Rashid Rida (1865-1935), Islamic modernism of Muhammad Abduh (1819-1905), pan-Islamism of Jamaluddin Afghani (1897-1939), and the Tahreek-e-Mujahedeen in North India (Samastha Brochure in Arabic, 2011, translation

calculating the number of *madrasas* affiliated to each group. Faith-wise, Muslims would be actually divided into four groups, including the Ahmadiyyas who have their own mosques and act like a clan, and are considered by non-Ahmadiyyas to be untrue Muslims. Politics-wise, Muslims would be divided into three groups. The majority are the Muslim Leaguers, followed by the Jamaati Islami, and finally the NDF supporters (SDPI and PDP).

mine).

Differences among Muslim *'ulama* started to emerge right after the establishment of the first organization: Kerala Muslim Aikya Sangham, which was founded at Kodungallur of Cochin in 1922 by leaders such as KM Seethi Sahib, KM Moulavi, EK Moulavi, who later formed another organization for *'ulama* called Kerala Jami'yyat ul-Ulama. Later, this organization started identifying some of the cultural traditions of Muslims in Kerala as *Bidaa* (non-Islamic novelty), *Shirk* (*polytheism*) and deviations; and gradually lost the support of some the traditional *'ulama* who did not approve of this classification of their traditions. Those *'ulama*, who opposed the Wahabbi movement,¹¹⁹ started an oppositional and revivalist movement. Among these *'ulama* were Pangil Ahmed Kutty Musliyar, and the Sufi Sheikh Varakkal Sayyed Abdurahman Ba Alawi Mullakkoya Tangal. In 1925, the *'ulama* convened at Calicut Valiya Juma Masjid and formed an *'ulama* organization, with KP Muhammad Meeran Musliyar as president and Parol Hussain Moulawi as Secretary of the organization. They traveled throughout Kerala to propagate the newly established organization. In June 26, 1926, a bigger convention was called at Calicut Town Hall, reorganized the previously formed temporary organization and recognized the Samastha Kerala Jam-iiyathul Ulama as a full-fledged organizational set-up. Its first president was Varakkal Mullakkoya Tangal (*ibid*).

Samastha's supreme body and working committee is called *Mushawara* and consists of forty scholars. The word *Mushawara* means consultation and is drawn from the Quranic order to seek scholarly advice. They convene to discuss and deal with a range of issues facing the community and some questions received from across the state and from abroad where Malayalee Muslims reside. Later, a *fatwa* committee was formed (P. Aboobacker, the director of Samasta's council for *madrassa* education, personal communication, February 2011).

Its mains and objectives are the following:

1. To propagate and spread the rites and beliefs of Islam according to the real view of *Ahl-us Sunnat wal Jama'at*.
2. To legally prevent the organizations and campaigns which are against the rites and beliefs of *Ahlu Sunnat wal Jam'at*.
3. To look after all the rights and powers of Muslim community.
4. To promote and encourage religious education and carry out the necessary steps for secular education that will be compatible with religious beliefs and culture.

¹¹⁹ Wahhabism refers to a conservative and fundamentalist religious movement among Sunni Muslims. The name comes from Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahab, an eighteenth-century theologian from Saudi Arabia, who struck an alliance with the ruling princes and hence his version of Islam became the ruling form in Saudi Arabia. See: Peskes (1993).

5. To work for the welfare and progress of the Muslim society in general by eliminating superstitions, anarchy, immorality and disunity.

The Samastha is traditionally the authoritative religious body that holds momentous influence on Muslims. It has supervised the traditional madrasa education for 85 years (Bahauddin, principal of Darul Huda Islamic University, personal communication, April 2011). The most important contribution of the Samastha is the unification of religious education that they were planning since 1945. Now around 9000 madrasas in India and the gulf are run by this organization with a student population of 12 Lakhs taught by around one lakh teachers (Al-Qasmi, 2000).

Part of the strength of the hold of Samastha is linked to the *mohalla* influence. Demographically, Muslim populations are divided in Kerala in *mohalla* units. A *mohalla* is the division of people living around a single mosque. So every *mohalla* has a local committee (*palli* committee or the mosque committee). The *mohalla* system is a strong system governing Muslim populations in Kerala. Each *mohalla* consists of an *Imam* and a committee that runs the mosque and the executive board. Its responsibility is not only the maintenance of the mosque but marriages and all social activities in the *mohalla* (P. Aboobakr, personal communication, February, 2011). Unlike in countries like Egypt, there are no independent mosques in Kerala, which are also, not under the *waqf* board. They all belong to different organizations and are the same for the *madrassas*.¹²⁰ The *mohalla* system, thus, has been an indicator of the *Sunnis*' authority:

It can be said without any doubt that if the reformists could not get hold of even one percent of Kerala's Muslim *mohallas*, which are the basic unit of Mappila Muslims, after a long and multi-faceted propaganda, it is the success of Samastha in keeping its fortress without many fractures. (Samastha Brochure, 2011, p. 14, translation mine)

In these *mohallas*, public spaces are regularly occupied by student-led protests. In fact, a dominant feature of Kerala is the street parades organized by political parties and their youth wings or essentially non-political bodies like the Student organizations affiliated to the Sunni groups and Mujahids. The main goal behind these parades is a display of symbolic power; the visibility is an important factor in the assessment of student power. The following is one example of a street march by the Sunni Students Federation (SSF) in a protest against the *Endosulfan* case in which news has

¹²⁰ The splitting of Muslim organizations in Kerala eased social control over Muslims. Hussain exemplifies this for in the old days if someone did not attend juma prayer, the *mahals* would enquire about the reason of absence, but now with the tremendous amounts of mosques and factions, people can freely choose which mosque to go. (S. Hussein, personal communication, December 2010)

spread of people who got cancer due to governmental pesticides (Fig. 18). The banner they were carrying referred to a hadith by the prophet that my interpreter, who was accompanying me, translated as “the wolf would not eat those who are in a group”.¹²¹ Being a recurrent event, among different political and religious organizations in Kerala, one notices how these parades are quite incorporated into the everyday scene. Mechanisms of self-policing are developed as a result of the long history of democracy and protest politics in Kerala. These manifestations reflect many remarkable dynamics at hand, especially due to the impact of Gulf money on the expansion of the organizations and its activities.¹²²



Figure 19 A common street march by the Sunni Students Federation (SSF). Photo taken by the author.

Due to political differences, the Sunni organizations split into another faction currently led by AP Aboobacker Musliar. In 1978, Sheikh Aboobacker Ahmed Alias founded the Jamia Markazu Saqafathi Sunniyya (Sunni Islamic Cultural Center) in Calicut. The Markaz is a socio-cultural foundation in the field of both Islamic and modern education, which includes different schools, colleges and institutions: Faculties of *shari'ah*, Arabic language, fundamentals of religion, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Arts and Commerce, Urdu; preparatory and secondary institutes, computer

¹²¹ The correct reference would either be a verse from the Quran from the story of Joseph (Yusuf) or a hadith. The verse reads, They said, " If a wolf should eat him while we are a [strong] clan, indeed, we would then be losers." (12:14, Sahih International Translation). As for the hadith, it reads, "The devil continually pursues humans as a wolf pursues sheep. The wolf only dares to attack those sheep which have separated from the rest of the flock and are standing alone. And so, my followers and my devotees! Save yourselves from being caught in the traps of misguidance and firmly remain with the largest and most well known group of Muslims!" [Imam Ahmed].

¹²² The biggest mosque in India is going to be built in Kozhikode by the AP Sunni group. This is basically coming from Gulf money.

training institute, an institute of vocational training, an orphanage for boys, and another for girls, with a separate house for orphans and poor children from Kashmir, *madrasas* all over Kerala and even modern private schools. It has over 9000 students. Its faculties' degrees are accredited by Al-Azhar University in Egypt (similarly to the other Sunni's sect main university).

Apart from its educational activities, it has activities in the realm of solidarity and peaceful coexistence, as well as relief and charity. It hosts 1400 orphans (50% boys, 50% girls) as well as 350 Kashmiri boys. Some of the students I interviewed, both male and female, volunteered in these orphanages as a form of social work.

Other projects the Sunnis endorse marriages of the poor. Unlike the reformist organizations that fight dowry, the *Sunnis* encourage the practice. In one of the brochures of the Markaz (See Fig. 19), the gold is placed with a strong visual message affirming its integral context in the marriage deal, which is a clear violation of Islamic principles. When I asked about this photo as a proof indicting the *Sunnis*, a *Sunni* student told me, "They give this gold to the girl, this gold stays with the girl, it is our custom, and the father is embarrassed to send off his daughter without any gold."



Figure 20 A Markaz Brochure in Arabic, it reads, "A scene from the Group Marriage Programme."

As I will be showing, the major difference between the traditional *Sunni* or *Sufi* organizations and the reformists is the emphasis on *ijtihad* and accommodation of Islam and contemporary age. In a conversation with a Sunni student from the Markaz, he justified why the *Jumaa* speech is in Arabic because the Quran, the *Adhaan* (call to prayer) and all devotional acts like prayers and the invocation of God (*dhikr*) are all in Arabic and according to him, religion is not about using the mind but about blind following and copying (*aldeen naql wa laysa 'aql*).

One last remark to be made on the *Sunni* organizations is their political affiliation. The Samsatha group holds allegiance to the Muslim League and the authority it enjoys is inseparable from the IUML power. Leaders of IUML are also deemed of as not only political but also spiritual leaders. The allegiance to the Muslim league on the part of the Samastha contributes eventually to the perpetuation of caste-based politics. Among the Sunnis, the former leader of IUML, Shehab Thangal is widely revered by the common people in Malabar.¹²³ This interlinkage is criticized by middle and lower class Muslim in Kerala on two grounds. The first is the perception that the League discriminates against communities such as the fishermen and the barbers since they are of lower caste while the league leaders are *thangals*. The second point of difference is that *thangals* should not be involved in politics because they are religious leaders. They are “inheritors of Thangaluypappa of Mamburam”; they are not common people” (An interview with a Muslim fisherman).

To the contrary of this, the other Sunni group known as the A.P. Sunnis, withdraw from the Samastha group upon a disagreement with IUML leader. Politically, it strikes alliances with non-IUML parties; mainly the communists. It appears impossible, therefore, to build political generalizations on the interplay of religion and Muslim politics. The pragmatic options adopted by Muslim leaders that are fueled by pure personal objectives are the determining factors in the dynamics of political organizations in Kerala.

6.2.2 Kerala Nadwatul Mujahideen (the Mujahids)

Reformist Trends of the Mujaddideen (the renewing scholars) were established to “cleanse Islam of all the ungodly elements, present it and make it flourish in its original pure form” (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 25, quoted from Almadwudi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movements in India*). The list of classical scholars, whose ideas are currently fought by some of the Sunnis in Kerala, included Ibn Taimiyyah, Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab and Jamaluddin Al-Afghani in the Arab World, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah Dahlawi in South Asia. The modern phase included Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida and Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan.

In Kerala, these reformers influenced the emergence of what is known as the Islahi Movement. The role of Sayyid Sanaullah Makhti Tangal who called for education among the Muslims is one

¹²³ In a visit to a fishermen’s village, one of the fishermen showed me his mobile with Shehab’s photo as a screen saver. When I commented on this to another fishermen, he said that I would find his photo on everyone’s mobile and house.

example. He asserted that if one does not study Malayalam, one loses one's faith (*imān*), since the meaning of the Quran would not be understood. He started by questioning the false and established notion that Malayalam is a language of Hindus:

How can one follow the law of the land without reading and writing the vernacular? He requested the government to give more attention to the education of Muslims and reminded that it was the duty of any Government to instruct the citizens to know the law of the land (quoted in Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 46).

Chalilakattu Kunjahmad Haji, also known as the Sir Sayyed of Kerala, instructed students to read newspapers, called for the education of Muslim women and the modernization of the Arabi-Malayalam language. Hamdani Sheikh, a Sufi scholar, emphasized education for men and women through establishing madrasas on all levels. Vakkom Moulavi, also considered the father of the Muslim renaissance in Kerala, through his efforts, Muslims started entering the threshold of modern education, religious redemption, political regeneration and intellectual achievement (Abdul Samad, 1998; Kurup & Ismail, 2008).¹²⁴

The Mujahids are considered the Kerala equivalent of the *Ahl-hadith* of North India whose center is in Delhi and who does not adhere to a specific school of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In the mosque, the upper floor is usually reserved for women. The *jumaa* speech is always in Malayalam. There are around 1000 Mujahid-affiliated mosques in Kerala.¹²⁵ Their main emphasis is on the principle of monotheism or *tawhīd*. The name *nadwatul mujahedeen* comes as an emphasis on the *jihād* against backwardness and poverty (H. Madavoor, principal and leader of the Mujahids, personal communication, January 2011).

Just as in North India, the emergence of reformist organizations and their consolidation in Kerala was a direct result of transcultural flows of ideas that came from Egypt and traveled to India. Vakom Maulvi was deeply influenced by Rashid Rida and had translated his *al-Manar* magazine from Arabic to Arabi-Malayalam. Although they are also called *salafis*, but there are stark differences between them and their Arab counterparts who appear to be more fundamentalist, to be involved in politics, and to stress more on outside appearances. They also differ by allocating serious importance to the Arabic language and emphasizing *ijtihad*.

¹²⁴ For more information on the history of the development of today's Kerala Nadwatul Mujahedeen, see Kutty, E.K.A. (1995).

¹²⁵ Apparently the figure rose significantly from 600 mosques in 2002 as shown in Zain's (2002) article.

Mujahids assign great significance for the Friday *khutba*. Traditionally, cultural change had been initiated from the *khutbah*, which is the strongest tool, in the opinion of many intellectuals, since religion was always taught from the pulpit (*minbar*). In order to exemplify what the Mujahids call for, I am presenting an excerpt from one of the Malayalam *Khutbas* in the Mujahid Mosque of Feroke College:

It is a fact that we do not live forever. We are able to live with so many facilities, but in the after life, no one would be there to help you. There are people who are worrying about what happens to their wife, children, organization, and so forth after their death. But the basic thought should not be this. We should be preoccupied of what would happen to ourselves after death. If you were corrupt, got dowry, committed all bad deeds, then you would see one approaching who is ugly and horrible. It would tell you, "I am your work." People think that Allah would forgive them all, but this is not going to save them. So all the time, Allah and the Prophet reminded us of that fact of death. In order to get peace in the Day of Judgment and ensure a place in heaven, we should give whatever we have. Whoever is straightforward, whoever prays to god alone, whoever does '*ibadat* properly, this is the one who would be sure of passing in the experiment at the Day of Judgment. We should start doing our *karmadharma* (work and ethics). When we see the very famous and powerful people like Qaddafi and Mubarak, we want to copy them, or whoever is popular and strong in order to make use of them but the best person whom we should be close to is Allah. We have advice from the prophet (peace be upon him) not to take from but to give dowry to women. (Juma Khutba, 4-3-2011, Feroke College Mosque, translated by my interpreter).

Both KNM and Jamaati adopted a reformative measure to the way *zakat* is collected. They established mosque-based networks to identify both the donors and the recipients in every locality. Every *mohalla* committee forms a *zakat* cell and is responsible for the *zakat* collection every Ramadan (Zain, 2002).

The Mujahids' emphasis on education as the most important path of social change is embodied in the founding of the Rawdatul Uloom Arabic College, established by Maulana Abul Sabah Ahmad Ali who studied at Alazhar, then came back to India, founded Radwatul Uloom Committee and started establishing a number of educational institutions to uplift the position of Muslims. He started with the Arabic College to teach Islamic studies in 1942 with five students, and then got the license from the government, and it became affiliated to Madras University since there were no universities in Kerala, then with Trivandrum University, and finally with Farook College. After this,

he established an English medium primary school, then the college of Education, the Teacher preparation institute, and finally an institute to prepare students for the civil service. Currently, there are 8000 students in Feroke College, which is financed by the government and from some businessmen who volunteer in the educational field. Of the 300 students in the Arabic college, 60% are girls and are excelling grade-wise. In the master's programme, the emphasis is more on Islamic education. The literature of non-religious Arabic literary figures such as Manfalouty, Hafiz Ibrahim and Taha Hussein is taught. In Kerala, there are additional eleven Arabic colleges and many private schools affiliated to the Mujahids (H. Madavoor, personal communication, January 2011).

Contemporarily, the Mujahids typically cast their votes for the UDF alliance (either the Muslim League or Congress) and refrain from voting to the Communist party, due to perceived ideological differences between communism and a Muslim identity. Historically, the Mujahids had a significant role in strengthening the Muslim League. Upon the Muslim League's formation in Malabar, the majority of the *'ulama* endorsed its ideology. K.M. Moulavi and E.K. Moulavi came into the leadership of Muslim League. The former became the Vice-President of the State Committee of the League. A notable leader of Muslims in Kerala K.M. Seethi Sahib joined the Muslim League upon the stimulus of K.M. Moulavi who wrote an article in *Al-Murshid* pointing out "the imperative need of the Muslims to straighten the Muslim League in order to protect their legitimate rights" (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 111).

The hostile relationship between the Mujahids and the communists were emphasized in a battle that took place symbolically in school textbooks. According to Mujahid Arabic professors I interviewed, the Communist party gradually instilled in books anti-Islamic principles of atheism and wanted to destroy Islam. The names one found in schoolbooks were always Hindu and never Muslim. They emphasized that when the communist-led coalition government (referred to as LDF) stopped Arabic classes in order to withdraw the Arabic language from schools, they struggled and submitted petitions to the ministry of education. In 1982, the Communist government ordered the police to shoot Arabic teachers who were on a strike. Thus, in their own words, Kerala became the only place in the world with Arabic language martyrs.¹²⁶

Although the Mujahids are not politically engaged or oriented, since their efforts focus on the social and spiritual sphere, it would not be correct to describe them as alienated either. In many conversations with Mujahids, their need to exclude Islam from politics is attached to a belief in the

¹²⁶ The teacher used the word *jahidna* (the verb of *jihād*) to express this struggle.

corruption of the political sphere, on the one hand, and on the other hand, that extremism breeds further extremism. One Mujahid female lecturer told me

BJP has no foot in Kerala, twenty years ago we never heard of it, but now it is appearing with RSS because of NDF, those extremists among the Muslims are the reason of the emergence of RSS here. With the partition, the powerful Muslims left to Pakistan. India was not supposed to be a Hindu nation, but now it is. We are a small number compared to the Hindus, and they can easily eradicate us. India is a Hindu nation now, and this is why we should remain silent and not give such speeches like those of PFI or NDF against Hindus. We have always lived like brothers and sisters, but because of RSS now, in order to be safe, we must remain silent.

When I asked her son about the popularity of PFI, he affirmed they are popular among young men, “Even I, when I listen to their speeches, I get emotionally affected. Everyone gets emotional. You know (*smilingly*), there was a teacher in our school who tried to recruit some boys.” So I asked, “And what happened?” He smiled, “Nothing. It is funny, people laughed at his attempts. They took it as a joke.”

The youth wing of the Mujahid group is called the ISM or Ittihadul Shabab Ulmujahideen (translated as the Union of the Mujahid Youth). Unlike the Sunnis, the Mujahids have a girls group or rather a movement called the MGM (Mujahid Girls Movement) who are comprised of college female students focusing on both religious and social issues.

6.2.3 Jamaati Islami Hind Kerala chapter

On February 12th, 2011, I got the following SMS from an Indian student: “Sixty two years ago, Hasan Al-Banna’s blood was shed in the street of Cairo. On this day itself, Cairo realizes the decline of dictatorship. Yes, Banna, your blood has not gone in vain. Allah is great.” The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood founder Hasan Al-Banna and the Jamaati Islami forefather Abul Alaa Maududi had profoundly influenced each other. Their ideas traveled from South Asia to Egypt interchangeably, and Maududi established Jamaati Islami as a model of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.¹²⁷

The lack of unity in the political views of Muslims in India and their division between the Congress and the Muslim League was one of the incentives that shaped Maududi’s aspiration for a

¹²⁷ Interestingly until today, the Jamaati are emotionally involved and concerned about the political developments in the Arab World.

different political set up: “one in which the writ of Islam would be supreme” (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 121). In Kerala, Islahi scholars like V.P. Muhammad Ali of Edayur who later founded the Jamaat in Kerala and K.M. Moulavi disseminated Maududi’s ideas and the youth associated with the Islahi movement were attracted to these notions. Later, the popularity of Jamaati was increased upon its formation of an organization called *Lajnatul Jihād* at a meeting at the Aliya Arabic College in Kassargod. Its purpose was resisting the communist ideology, and hence it conducted public lectures and published books and pamphlets to explain Jamaati’s Islamic ideology (Abdul Samad, 1998, p. 122).

To counter the attacks on it, Jamaati Islami still tries to shun any allegations to it being an extremist organization, in fact it is not conceived as part of the extremist political groups in Kerala, who are mainly referred to as NDF and are essentially the PFI and the PDP. In an interview with a Jamaati-affiliated professor, he recalled that a well-known worker of jamati islami went in solidarity to donate blood to the Christian teacher whose hand was cut by the PFI-affiliated persons.

Since the Jamaati is a politically oriented organization, group voting is a tactic it endorses. Their choice is based on the merit of candidates. Before the launching of its own party, the *Shura* council or the consultation leaders’ council had usually convened and announced its support for a specific group of nominated candidates. Their aims were to first defeat the BJP and Hindu communalism; and second to vote for the candidate who will fit their needs. Jamaati followers would then all vote for this list. In an interview with one of the Jamaati leaders in Kerala, he told me that one of the Jamaati’s goals was to ensure the benevolence of the system of democracy in India since democracy usually brought criminals to power. In his words:

In our parliament, there are at least 150 criminals and 300 billionaires. How could these come to power if not through buying votes? After the Bombay blasts, a joke was transmitted through SMS. It said, “You can conquer terrorists who come by boats, but you cannot conquer criminals who come by votes.” This uncontrolled democracy has become a mockery. Suppose Omar Ibn Al-Khattab comes back and contests in elections against a criminal. You know what will happen? The criminal will easily succeed.¹²⁸

At the time of my fieldwork in the first half of the year 2011, Jamaati Islami was still proposing the formation of its political party with the aim of giving representation to all marginalized sections.

¹²⁸ Omar Ibn Al-Khattab was the second Caliph, after Abu Bakr, in the Islamic Caliphate shortly after the death of the Prophet, he was also one of his companions.

In October 2011, the Welfare Party of India was launched in Kerala.

Another goal of the jamaati Islami is to set up priorities and to enlighten Muslims. The *amīr* or the president, however, gives policy and guidelines but not fatwas. By their conception of enlightenment, they include a progressive attitude towards Muslim women and how they should 'rise'. The noticeable disappearance of women from the Muslim League's list of twenty-five candidates contesting in the last Legislative Assembly elections of 2011 was emphasized. The denial of education for women on the part of the '*ulama* for decades has been one of the reasons of today's women status. It was only recently that the '*ulama* have changed their mind, started colleges for girls and softened their stand. The increasing number of *Sunni* girls getting admitted at Calicut University is an indicator of this change.

The Jamaati in India does not have linkages to its Pakistani counterpart. Since it was twice banned in 1985 in the time of the emergency, and in 1991, the Jamaati is extremely careful with its sources of funding and the government could not establish any cases for attacking it. The Jamaati leader I interviewed emphasized that they only accepted funding from membership inside India and in the Gulf, and since there are vital economic relationships between India and the Gulf countries, the Indian State does not mind it.

Jamaati has three youth wings: a male student wing called SIO, an open youth movement (which is predominantly male) called solidarity and a girls' wing called GIO. The Students Islamic Organization (SIO) has 2000 members in addition to 10,000 workers. They are most effective in Kerala, Hyderabad, Maharashtra, and Delhi. It is also recognized by the UNESCO. Unlike other organizations, there are several criteria for membership. First, there is an interview in which the level of commitment to the principles of SIO is judged, and also the level of readings and writings. The majority of them belong to a middle-class background. This is why funding is not a problem. They have branches in all the Gulf countries under different names; the Dubai branch, for example, is called Youth India. According to the president of SIO Kerala, the difference between SIO Delhi and Kerala is that in Delhi the youth are exhausted, not active enough and do not read. In Kerala, on the contrary, due to the historical effect of maritime trade, a process of cultivation of the minds of Malabar is has been witnessed. This could be shown through the multiple magazines (one is religious and political, another is more focused on politics, for women, for children, in addition to the *Madhyamam* ones as well). For Jamaati youth wings, focus is cast on service, study, *jihād*, and dialog.

What is also interesting about Jamaati is their engagement with events in the Arab World.

Traditionally the Palestinian issue occupied their stalwart attention. With the revolutions occurring in the Arab world in the beginning of 2011, Jamaati dedicated a lot of its attention to the events and organized solidarity protests and events like talks and broadcasting of revolutionary songs. The following is a poster that was disseminated by SIO during the revolution in Egypt.



Figure 21 SIO Poster during the revolution in Egypt, February 2011. Source: Author's own Collection.

Activism is not confined to the male students, but is equally observable through the Girls Islamic Organization, as I show in section 6.3. GIO was established in 1984. It has 1000 members and is considered the sole organization in India having female members whose ages range from thirteen to twenty five. It functions under the supervision of jamaat-e-Islami Hind. Its structure extends from unit to state level. Each unit has a president, secretary and members. It has a body at area and district level, a policy programme, a constitution and a three-month programme for its smooth and established functioning guided by a co-ordinator at all levels.

According to a brochure defining it, "GIO as well as JIH realizes the potential of womenfolk in moulding the society's future, GIO intends to uplift the girls and enhance their power of action and reaction. GIO realizes that it is from the girls themselves that the voices for safety and security should arise." What GIO envisages is

A world where girls can travel more freely from the Himalayas to Cape Camorin with their heads straight and thoughts high. GIO aims at the assurance of justice and prosperity without any discrimination of religion and caste, finding a solution for the problems affecting girls in the socio-political, moral and cultural zones, and refining the girls as value conscious. (GIO Brochure, 2011)

According to GIO, its mode of action is "to function girls on the grounds of Islam." This is done within an atmosphere encouraging creative talents of girls by conducting camps, campaigns and contests. Special focus is given to the campuses. GIO tries to uplift the educational levels of girls, to strengthen them orally and to boost up their talents through its activities. Their activities include protests, for example, recently on the Shahina case, where they protested on the high way with

muffled mouths. One of their other considerable protests was against the fashion parade in Calicut. They also hold writing competitions, quizzes and exposés.

In one of my visits to a Jamaati-Islami affiliated college in Kozhikode district, a twenty-year-old girl came to the principal office where I was sitting to ask him for something. He introduced her to me and told me that she contested for the panchayat elections but had lost. She came to the office because she was planning for a sports event at the college. I noticed how that Jamaati college was different from other colleges I went to because they encouraged the sense of independence and initiative for girls; they had sports, drama and media watch sections. Although the sports event for boys and girls were separate, but it was considered the first Arabic college in Kerala to have such an event organized solely by female students.

What was also noticeable in this college is when I was asked to deliver a lecture on Islamic movements in Egypt in another visit; a girl came to the podium to recite the Quran. This was against what I was accustomed to when it was always a boy asked to recite the Quran in the inauguration of any program or event.

In my conversations with these girls, many imparted that as a citizen, they had no problem, but as a woman, they were limited; they could not freely express themselves, and could not conduct programmes spontaneously as the boys could. They always needed permission, unlike the boys. Also at home, there was no equality between boys and girls. They could not travel alone; they suffered harassment in the buses and men's comments. I noticed that their knowledge of the situation of North India Muslims was so limited, especially women's educational levels. When they heard about the contrasting dowry situation in Egypt where men give the gold to the bride and not the other way, they expressed their desire to come and migrate to Egypt. One girl even remarked that if she studied hard enough, she might get a scholarship and go to Egypt. The problems in their lives came from the family and not from the *'ulama*. *'Ulama*, according to these girls, had no influence socially or politically on their lives, *'ulama* appeared only in marriages or divorce. However, one girl said that in her place, if a girl joins a drama class at school, she would be expelled from the *madrasa*. They followed *fatwas* sometimes if they were acceptable to them. However, in their own words, sometimes the *fatwas* are sound, but people do not follow them. For example, there were *fatwas* calling people to limit their expenditures on wedding parties, but people did not listen and they still spend a lot. Then there was another *fatwa* concerning banning loud music in weddings because it annoys other people, but still the rich continue doing it. Mostly the rich do not listen, but the others followed it. They have not encountered any discrimination, but they

knew that there is strong anti-Muslim discrimination in Christian colleges. They said the problem is the discourse on terrorism. It is enough to carry a Muslim name to be identified as a terrorist. This is everywhere, in Kerala and India. They cited the case of Safia Madani (the wife of Madani who was accused in a bus burning case in Kerala). When asked about the PFI, they said they do not think they are terrorists, but they are very emotional and they carry extreme ideas. But if it were not for them (if they were not here), Muslims would not exist here because of the strong rise of the RSS. They think there is no problem on the part of the rulers or the government, but it is the RSS that causes problems.

Once the prayer was over, many girls who had seen me before in conferences or lectures I gave approached to salute me. Then a group of girls from GIO came to interview me for their women's day bulletin. Their questions were the following and showed how a due emphasis on security is cast:

- What do you say to women on this day?
- Do you think the Islamic dress is the solution for the problems of safety of women?
- Why are women in your country safer than here?
- What do you think of the feminists who claim that there should be equality between man and woman forgetting about the Quranic teachings?

One of the most important programmes of GIO is the training on self-safety and security in order to overcome 'Kerala's molesting society', as one activist puts it. They try to teach them that if they respond and slap back, those molesters would stop:

Society is moldable and so are girls. The society simply nurtures girls to be married off. They are not considered human. GIO teaches them to be conscious of their self. It promotes reading and writing through competitions, it shows that they have a space, at least in GIO. The best access to girls is usually in campus. The most difficulty GIO faces is in the organizational level because those who would be responsible for this are usually in the marriage age and thus the membership is fragile and contingent on single girls. Even Hindus participate in the programmes. In the Malabar region, it is very easy for Muslim girls to live and interact with others. But in the South, they are not exposed to the Islamic way of living but to the Hindu and the secular. They are more interested in fashion and not in reading.

[...]

As a citizen of India, I do not want to close my eyes especially to problems of girls. This is why I joined GIO four years ago after joining Calicut University. Females are exploited by

the male community. Society decided how women should walk and talk. Women are not aware of this fact; there should be self-confidence of their abilities. They have no time for reading because of domestic duties. The Sunday programme of GIO is to make them socially aware. This year our focus was on Academic studies on women. There was also a programme we conducted where we focused on a colony in Calicut notorious for prostitutes and drugs. We conducted health awareness programmes for women there. Those who attended this meeting were all women. Imagine! In this area! No other men participated except for the cameraman!

6.2.4 The Popular Front of India

The National Development Front (NDF) emerged in Kerala as an alternative to both mainstream political parties and Muslim organizations in an attempt to unify the demands of the oppressed classes, identified by NDF as the Adivasis, the Dalits, the Backward castes and the Muslims. This culminated in the formation of different movements and organizations on a national level such as the Popular Front of India and lately the Social Democratic Party of India. The trigger to the emergence of these organizations was the rise of Hindutva forces in India in the late eighties and early nineties. According to the party officials, the exploitation of the Babri Masjid issue was the main mechanism through which Hindu right-wing organizations spread its power.

Interestingly, the alliance between PFI and Dalit movements is directly linked to the alleged Brahminic attempts of hegemony and homogenizing Hindu identity. In a conversation with a Hindu communist, he underlined the transparent and dynamic attitude of the multivocal expressions of the cultural identity of India, which was eventually submerged by Brahmanic movements such as the Bhakti movement that attempted to streamline the various identities in a single essentially Brahmanic one. In a similar manner to the suppression of subaltern discourses, the mainstream discourse, including Leftist politics, tries to target the Muslim community in a reductionist manner and represents it as backward.

Tactical voting was the traditional strategy adopted by these oppressed classes. Alternatively, the popular front of India in its National Political Conference in Calicut in 2009 opted for a long-term plan through what it termed positive politics through the launching of a political party.

Topics of concern include the claimed state's double standards regarding the treatment of terror attack suspects; board based alliances with human right activists, tribals, farmers and Dalits; US interference in India's foreign policy; communal violence; reservations for Muslims in employment and education; the Babri Masjid agitation, anti-dowry; hygiene campaigns; counseling and advising

for women; school going campaigns; disaster relief such as the Tsunami victims of Kerala and Tamil Nadu; and community development through for example the support given to slum dwellers in Bangalore, Delhi and West Bengal.

The popular Front of India runs and supports publishing houses. Their media in Kerala include *Thejas Daily* (Malayalam), *Thejas Fortnightly* (Malayalam). PFI also runs the following educational institutions in Kerala—the Thejas Institute of Journalism at Calicut, which offers journalism courses for Muslims and Dalits, Good Hope School and Green Valley Academy offering Islamic Studies and Technical studies in Malappuram District.

Like the other newly founded Muslim organizations, PFI has a women wing called the National Womens Front and a student movement. Currently the PFI has 30,000 cadets.

The performance of the annual Freedom parades on Independence Day carries significant symbolic power. The obvious transcript lies in “carrying the legacy of the great freedom fighters to the coming generations especially in a situation where the freedom of the country is under threat by the internal fascist forces and external colonial forces” (People’s Choice: Popular Front of India Brochure, 2010). These parades led to the emergence of new open public spaces in which women and children are also included as interactive audience.



Figure 22 Popular Front of India Freedom Parade Rehearsal, Kerala 2011. Source: <http://pfigulbarga.blogspot.de/2011/08/what-actually-we-mean-by-freedom-parade.html>, retrieved on 02/07/2012.

What is also interesting about the PFI is that it managed to overcome narrow regional concerns and adopt a pan-Indian appeal and mobilization strategy hence leading to a pan-Indian success. According to the chairman of PFI, E.M. Abdul Rahman, PFI managed to achieve two goals: the

removal of barriers between state organizations and hence bringing about a sense of togetherness and unity, and carrying PFI's message to the Northern, Western and Eastern regions of India.

The main slogan of the Social democratic party of India is inspired from a Quranic verse referring to the freedom from hunger and fear (the Quran, 106:04). SDPI's leaders argue that the minority and backwardness discourse has to be overcome since Muslims are not a minority.¹²⁹ The bargain for power is the means towards the liberation of Muslims from the fear psychosis and freedom from hunger. In Kerala, Muslims are forward since they are educated, they share the same language, dress and eating habits as the non-Muslims, and they did not experience the same history of discrimination among Hindus. Through education and the utilization of secularism, Muslims managed to overcome the *Mufti* versus *Muftin*¹³⁰ dilemma in the North:

North organizations address cultural problems but never mass people. We address common people, Muslims as well as downtrodden. PFI Started in Kerala then now it exists in twenty-two states. For sixty years Muslim leaders never talked about real needs; instead they tried to keep Congress in power, but never ask for power themselves, and kept far away from it. They supported so-called secular parties and frightened Muslims that RSS would come. Now In UP 21% are Dalits and now in power while Muslims constitute 19% and could not come to power. The reason why there is a high number of organizations in the South is that the leaders of the North did not address mass people's issues. They stressed teaching Urdu instead of Hindi. Their '*ulama* were living in their wells, and the Sufis wanted to keep their power. (E.Abubakr, personal communication, December 2010).

6.2.5 Reformists and women

A great paradox of the reformist agenda appears. Not only do the reformist '*ulama* allow women to go to mosques, but they also encourage them to do so, unlike the prevalent and dominant attitude of the Sunnis' trend to ban women from entering mosques. Mujahids and Jamaati Islami reformers stress on education for girls and women (both secular and religious). Their social, cultural and

¹²⁹ This discourse in the context of Kerala is evident in the Northern districts of Malabar, especially Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur, Kassaragod and Wayanad district with the tribal population. In a news piece on the Budget's neglect of Malabar region, MLA Pradeep Kumar and former Industries Minister Karim commented on the neglect of the State Budget to social welfare programs suggested in the Malabar region. (The Hindu, Kozhikode edition, July 11th, 2011, available at: <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/article2217686.ece>)

¹³⁰ This is a rhetoric pun. Mufti is an Arabic word and means the person giving fatwa or a religious edict. Muftin is also an Arabic word and refers to a person causing political disorder. The interviewee was stressing the disappearance of religious leaders in Kerala who would cause political disruptions and riots.

educational activities are always intermingled (both sexes are in same classrooms and same conference venues) without any physical barrier separating them. Girls are given spaces to voice their opinions through GIO (the Jamaati Islami Girls Islamic Organization) and MGM (The Mujahid Girls Movement). However, all this is performed while a strict dress code is being inscribed.

Choosing what to teach, choosing which experience to write about, and choosing whom to talk about are all in the hands of men (especially through media). It was interesting for me to see that the role of women in anti-colonial struggles of the Arab world was totally invisible in all of the publications, curricula, and topics of research. Many girls had the same topic of studying *Bint Alshati*,¹³¹ but none dealt with political feminist figures. There was a perplexing and noticeable gap between women's roles in the Middle East in deploying charity organizations as spaces for assertion of their public role, and the nonexistence of this in a developed state like Kerala. GIO and MGM's activities remain limited to a considerable extent and ends with the marriage of students. One of the established social realities in Kerala is that a married woman does not venture into any public action affair (with few individual exceptions).

There is an emerging discourse on responsibility and how Muslim women are the bearers of the biggest share of burdens. Like Cole's (2005) study of Madagascar's youth and her emphasis on marriage-related responsible behavior of youth, Muslim girls are burdened with the tradition of early marriage. To some, it signifies missed opportunities, especially when it has to do with the desire to get higher education. And thus, it is always a source of stress. I met several female Muslim psychologists in Malappuram; they all agreed that the biggest psychological problem of girls is stress and anxiety over the future because of early marriage. Marriage, at the age of eighteen, means that these girls are not practically able to pursue their studies, and if they do, then they would not be able to excel or at least retain their level of academic performance. This is due to the newly expected house chores at the husband's wife. Once married, the girl moves to the extended family house of the husband and is expected to take up housekeeping and cooking chores for the rest of the family.

Aside from marriage, there is a close link between the reformists' agendas and women. Women are regarded as the incumbents of reform since they are responsible for the socialization process of their children. In contemporary Kerala, educating women appears as an obligation on all Islamic

¹³¹ *Bint al shati'* or Aisha Abdulrahman (1913-1998) was one of the pioneer Egyptian female writers.

progressive reformers, since, according to them: educating one woman would result in educating at least five persons. In a society historically fused with Hindu culture and alien cultural ingredients to orthodox Saudi-style Islam, Mujahids see women as responsible for the annihilation of these alien factors. Gold accessories for boys are an example for this. In Islam, gold is banned for males, thus Mujahids teach people not to buy or adorn their male children with any gold. In order to differentiate between Sunni and Mujahid children, all one needs is to look at a child till the age of three and see if he is wearing any golden accessory. Women exercise some agency in the decision to follow this *fatwa*. Before I knew about this custom of accessorizing boys with golden anklets, I confused a baby boy to be a girl. Then a woman laughed and remarked, “Ah you must be a Mujahid. We know that it is *harām* for boys to wear Gold.” I was impressed by their attitude. It was obvious that their knowledge of the prohibition of this custom did not deter them from going on with it. Here, basing the missionary ideals of the Mujahids on the assumed ignorance of rural women of the basic tenets of Islam was ridiculed by this woman's assertion.

The concept of agency is often trapped between conformity (as a pragmatic solution) and domestic agency (as a realistic manifestation of the conceptual boundaries). However, with education and class or caste differences, the employment of the concept deeply varies. Educated girls prove their ability to make rational compromises and decisions. When I asked female informants if they follow *fatwas* issued by *‘ulama*, 37.5% confirmed they always do, 40.3% said they do not necessarily always follow them, and it is up to them to choose what sounds rational and acceptable and what is not, and 22.2% said they do not specifically follow *fatwas* of *‘ulama*, but they resort to what they conceive as right or wrong.

The initial imaginary of Muslim scholars of women's roles was that they should be “the mistresses of private Islamic space, key transmitters of Islamic values, the symbols of Muslim identity, and guardians of millions of domestic Islamic shrines” (Robinson, 2006, p. 27). Hence, Maududi and other Islamists emphasized the need for Muslim women to acquire the same knowledge of Islam as the Maulvis: “They were to be the rulers of domestic space, sealed off from all those elements of kufr which polluted public space” (*ibid*). Today this is being dismantled by political and economic liberalization that led to the expansion of communicative spaces and thus the appearance of the public woman.

In the last panchayat elections, women won more than 50% of the seats. Although Jamaati Islami presented many female candidates, none got elected, as they got very few votes. Muslim league, being the majority party, found itself in a dilemma. It had to find Muslim women to pose for 50% of

the seats. This was initially met by resistance from the *'ulama*. And the *hadith* on women that bans their participation in politics was well circulated in public debates. Later on, this was subverted by the introduction of *fatwas* for Muslim women to run for the panchayat elections. However, the *fatwa* came with dress code restrictions and instructions like a curfew time or the compulsion to return home before five in the evening. The *fatwa* even mentioned feminism in a derogatory manner.¹³² What is interesting is women's reactions and how they are negotiating these ideas. Many women iterated the following:

Since we are Muslim women, we are not allowed to participate in the political system. But with strong faith and while being well dressed and since it is a democratic country not an Islamic one, and then we can be involved in politics. (Shamsadh Husain, personal communication, December 2010)

There are contradictory results of both the strong sense of agency and the actual opportunities enabled to young women. On the one hand, educated and employed women are strong victims of violence (whether physical through sexual harassment or getting threat letters, or symbolic through rumors). Hence, they easily become victims of mental illnesses such as individuation, stress and depression. Individuation is a serious problem that resulted from education. No matter how the society tried to solve this problem through molding girls' minds into the utter belief of their indispensable domestic function, they end up suffering from depression. These problems are usually perceived and studied by female psychologists and sociologists in Kerala.

On the other hand, women are free from other stress factors related to the fact that they are not duly politicized. Muslim youth in general suffers from the stigma of terrorism and hence every young Muslim feels that he/she is forced to prove they are not terrorists. Luckily, females in Kerala are not much loaded with this burden. One of my interviewees, a medical doctor by practice, shares this perception. In his words:

You can be ghettoized even if it is only mentally. Everyone is worried about his future and job opportunities and how to deal with the fact that he carries a Muslim name. Not being aware of this, girls are freed from such worries and thus can concentrate better on their studies, and this is actually one of the reasons they are doing well in education compared to boys. Girls do not fall victims for the terrorism discourse, which is distressing and stressing youth.

¹³² I had heard about the contents of these fatwas from many individuals.

The gender paradox is slowly being dismantled. Although women's lives are heavily designed by men in the social sphere, politically, it is not, since female voters outnumber the males, and thus it could be actually argued that they determine the political destinies of the male candidates.¹³³ Women's political awareness and sense of political efficacy are quite high. According to my survey, 63% voted in elections, and the remainder could not vote because they had not reached the suitable age at that time. 78.8% perceived their vote to be important. 84% were able to name the members of parliament and legislative assembly representing them. 10.9% had contacted them when they needed or faced a problem. 100% read newspapers daily, and 17.9% participated in protests and demonstrations. These protests included a wide range of issues but the most frequently cited causes for protest or campaigns were either education-related or alcohol ban related, the majority participated in national causes, most prominently supporting a state-based call against alcohol, communist government, smoking, plastic, and calling for dalit and minority reservations, AIDS awareness, blood donation campaigns, college and education improvement. This in addition to participation in Muslim-identity-based protests concerning the Aligarh campus in Kerala, correction of anti-Islamic elements in school textbooks, against beauty contests and prostitution and the Danish cartoons controversy.

Perhaps the only difference is that girls, unlike boys, do not participate in election campaigns of Congress and IUML (UDF), which remain mostly male-dominated zones. However, IUML might be recognizing the power of women, and although earlier there were not many educated women to be recruited in the party, this is changing now, and there are many women whose husbands are not in IUML and who are interested in politics, two female lawyers I interviewed proved this point. One of them told me that she chose this career as a means to protest against social problems in Kerala. Although IUML in the 2011 Legislative Assembly elections did not nominate a single woman, she had gone to the community leaders and did her best in trying to convince them to nominate a reputed Muslim female teacher who has been a social and political activist. But, according to her, they were not ready to accept a successful woman.

The Sunni organizations, being with the largest support base, hold many meetings and organize numerous rallies all year long. But the participants in these programmes are exclusively men. This

¹³³ According to the Election Commission's polling statistics of the Kerala Legislative Assembly Elections of 2011, 52% of the votes were women's (90,36,356 out of the 1,73,87,651 votes). The highest women voter turnout was registered in Malappuram district. Not only in Malappuram, but also in Kasaragod, Kozhikode, Thrissur and Kannur, women outnumbered men in voting. (The Hindu, Women lead in 1.74 crore votes cast, C. Gouridasan Nair, April 21st, 2011).

has been brought to an end this year with the initiation of the Muslim Student Federation Campus Conference in Calicut University in February 2011, as it was the first Muslim student programme among the Sunnis with women participating in it.



Figure 23 Sunni Students at the Calicut University Campus MSF Student Conference, February 2011. Source: Malayalam Manorama Newspaper

Apart from MSF and the Sunnis in general, and not as a complementary group as in the Sunnis activities, girls appear active in the framework of their own Mujahid and Jamaati organizations—Muslim Girls Movement (MGM) and Girls Islamic Organization (GIO) respectively. In these organizations protest became a ritualized activity. While goals change, methods remain the same. These means are manifested through creating human chains along highways, screening movies, holding talks and discussion groups, arranging conferences and workshops, and even joining demonstrations with male youth (as in the case of the Anti-Mubarak protests organized by Jamaati youth organization “Solidarity” in Calicut in February 2011).

Muslim girls are subject to a strong dress code. All Muslim women in Kerala are required to cover their hair. Of course some choose not to, but the majority succumb to it without considerable reflection. Covering the hair became a ritual in the sense that it is performed as an identity marker in an automatic manner. This is greatly contrasted to the situation in the rest of the Muslim world where covering the hair remains an arbitrary decision of the individual or the family, but not a community-wise accepted moral code.

The dress code is directly correlated to the pendulum of security and education. Whereas some assert that the *hijab* or the headscarf, accompanied by a modest *sari* or *pardah* is triggered by a sense of failing security, others employ the education argument. Reports in this regard are increasingly selective and subjective. Writers, activists and journalists would be referring to the reformist organizations such as Jamaati Islami and the Mujahids and their role in shaping awareness among women of the “Islamic dress”. For example, the Dubai-based journalist Arif Zain, in an article titled “Muslim Women in Hijab on the Road to Progress” quotes Ms. K.P. Mariyumma, a law practitioner and former president of Malappuram District Panchayat:

In the past, educated women turned away from hijab, only a few observed the dress code.

Because only a small number of Muslim women who constitute a meagre five per cent of the total population had the privileges of being educated. They considered themselves creamy layer of the society, and they were not bothered about what was happening to the rest 95 per cent of the community. Now education is in everybody's reach and educated ones are no longer treated as a rare species.¹³⁴

Historical and empirical evidence surprisingly shows the falsity of this argument. Poor and rural Mappilla women or the typical Northern Keralite Muslim woman always covered her hair, wore a long skirt and a long-sleeved blouse, unlike her Hindu counterparts who according to their castes covered their bosom or did not. Modesty has been an integral characteristic of Muslim women whose conversion to Islam granted them a separate dress code from the Hindus. The argument that education made them more modest does not seem to offer solid ground since until this day, the eighty and ninety year old women I ment who had schooling till the age of six or none at all still wore the same dress of the old Muslim women and did not convert to the Arabian-Gulf-inspired code.

Despite the educational and economic uplifting of the community, especially of women, the reformists assumed a role of responsibility in policing women's moral conduct. They considered themselves responsible in front of God, not just to educate women and be financially responsible for them, but also to ensure their decency and their compliance with their own version of divine rules of decency. Interestingly, not only Muslim women were subject to this mentality, but all Malayalee women in general (the upper caste Namboodiri Brahmins or the lower caste Ezhavas). Devika and Husain share my opinion by calling this process: re-forming women. They point to two constant and contemporary pressures on Muslim women in Kerala: the pressure on the young woman to “conform to norms of dressing found desirable by certain elements claiming to represent community interest”, and the pressure under the threat to life (Hussain & Devika, 2010).

Devika (2007) also mentions the process of individualization as a result of women's education in Kerala. She quotes the following from *A Textbook for the Instruction of Young Girls (Streevidya Griha Pathavali)*, written in 1914 by Pillai and Ramayyan, “If women were educated, then beyond any doubt, knowledge would itself act as the guardian of chastity and violation of chastity would

¹³⁴ I got a hard copy from the author in the Mujahid center at Dubai, officially called the Islahi Center. An electronic copy of the article is obtained at:

<http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/01092001/10.htm>, retrieved on 20/06/2012.

not occur” (p. 42). The idea was that through education, self-regulation of the mind was possible, and thus an inhibition of any tendency to adopt deviant ideas or ideas that do not fall within the mainstream attitudes. Control here is enacted with internality without the need to resort to external forms of control. An analogy could be further made between this and education as a cursor for both liberation of women and their subjectivity.

Unfortunately, for those who do not wish to conform, there could be serious repercussions. There was a famous case of Rayana—a Muslim college student in her twenties, who received death threats from Popular-Front-of-India- affiliated people in 2010 to shift to wearing the *purdah*. It was obvious that there was inadequate support from the media, religious and feminist organizations, as well as the police to seriously condemn the pressure to conformity.

Out of personal experience, in addition to opting to fully cover my hair in order to be granted easy access to my informants and to avoid being labelled a heretic or an undesirable Muslim, it was impossible for me to find private single accommodation in Kozhikode or Malappuram district. When I wanted to move out of the university campus, all those who were trying to help me find accommodation told me that no single women stay on her own in the northern parts of Kerala.

It would be crucial to resort to Bourdieu's concept of ‘symbolic violence’ to understand the case of Malayalee females, since to Bourdieu, symbolic violence is the “violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 167). In the case of Keralite youth, their choices and their living contexts oblige them to undertake an attitude that balances their opportunities and their abilities. To Bourdieu, it is futile to analyze domination via a dichotomous alternative between freedom and constraint, but should be processed through an agreement between objective and cognitive structures (p. 168). For the case of educated women, it is more complicated:

Intellectuals are often among those in the least favorable position to discover or to become aware of symbolic violence, especially that wielded by the school system, given that they have been subjected to it more intensively than the average person and that they continue to contribute to its exercise. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 70)

6.3 Emergence of ‘public women’ and the fight for citizenship in new public spaces

6.3.1 New spaces and *Blackberry jihād*

Alice in Wonderland
I want to be Alice in Wonderland

*If I had a rebirth
 Like her I want to play in
 Garden with squirrels
 But I have no vast garden
 Our garden is road and
 The squirrels are vehicles
 They are not kind as squirrels
 They are passing me by roaring
 I wish to play with butterflies
 But they do not like plastic flowers
 I like to play in earth using stones
 But our yard is concreted and tiled
 I want to lie under a tree
 By smelling the fragrance of flowers
 But i have only the foul smell
 Coming out from the nearest drainage
 I want the hugs and kisses of mother
 But she was very busy with
 Office and household works
 I want to hear stories
 But my grandmother is in an old age home
 I want to cry loudly
 But tears are not coming from the eyes
 They are also frozen like
 The two-week-old chicken in refrigerator*

A poem written by Fathima Riya, seventh standard.

Life within a specific insulated community links the problematization of public space and gender. The portrayal of the ‘outside’ as different and unsafe zones where one has to constantly negotiate and bargain disturbs this sense of coziness and perfection of the intricate community network— the family, the mosque, the *madrassa* and the *mohalla*, where everything is traditionally organized and free from politically challenging modes. For women, the street and the public space are considered dangerous zones and hence female spaces are confined to the private sphere where it is ‘traditionally’ thought that they have everything they ‘traditionally’ needed: The coconut trees around, the fish seller coming, the husband bringing the ingredients for cooking. Life seems complete and convenient. However, the private mingles with the public to the extent that there is no private anymore.

In the Keralite case this is not just limited to inter-community context but also to an intra-community one. The division of the community into adherents of different religious organizations— Sunni, Mujahid, Jamaati, and to a lesser extent Tablighi and Ahmadiyya led to curtailment of the ‘liberal space’. By liberal space, I mean the space for contention and revolt. As one university professor had informed me,

The Keralites suffer from the psychological problem of ‘conditioning’, as their individual

opinion is erased and they become conditioned to display the general opinion of the organization. This results from membership in any political party or Islamic organization. This eventually leads to hypocrisy. When we see their declared opinion, and we compare them with how they live and deal in their private lives, we see the high level of hypocrisy, which is evident for example in the dowry system, respect for women, getting financial aid from the Gulf, claiming that their institution is directed for the upliftment of Muslim society whereas they take money from teachers or students to give them a job or a seat.

Having seen how the gender paradox was being fractured in Kerala. I point out the main phenomenon arising from this fracture: the emergence of public women through new public spaces. In addition to the street as a traditional space for protest, there is a witnessed emergence of new public spaces created by new media, especially the Internet. Political rituals create contact zones between the private and the public, and the secular and the religious. These rituals are performed by youth who are located at the periphery of modernity and globality.

Public spaces are those in which citizens appear with public agendas or demands. The notion of public space (Jonker & Amiraux, 2006) refers to four dimensions. The first is a perceptive one, since public space is viewed as ‘space in which social actors played a public role and presented themselves to others’ (p. 13). The second aspect is theatrical when it becomes a stage on which people play roles. It is also a space through which internal plurality could be discovered. Finally, it is referred to as ‘a nonmaterial space utilized to define the conditions of living together’ (p. 14).

Street plays and street political debates are another salient feature of the emergence of a public space, as defined by Habermas (1989b) as a “domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed” (Habermas J. , 1989, p. 231). Alexander (2006), in his sociological analysis of the public sphere, points out

The rise of a public stage, a symbolic forum in which actors have increasing freedom to create and to project performances of their reasons, dramas tailored to audiences whose voices have become more legitimate references in political and social conflicts. [...] Collective action in the wider society comes increasingly to take on an overtly performative cast. (p. 51)

Gender usually problematizes public spaces, since they are often unsafe for women who perceive their security to be fragile or at risk. Zacharias (2001) defines citizenship as “the forms of political subjectivity, social entitlement, and legitimate types of agency that are actively reproduced and regulated by the nation-state and related institutions of civil society” (p. 30). She uses this definition

to map the contradictory spaces between women's political agency and citizenship and the unfinished regulation through narratives of community, class, nation, and state that are traced back to Gandhi who first ascribed the domestic space a role of resistance to colonial economy where women were the agents. Although the role of women in the nationalist movement could not be questioned, women were portrayed through modern discourses as mere subjects of the state (*ibid*).

With migration and education coupled with youth enthusiasm, the fixity of the elder generations was staggered. Public space was transformed. The media had a great impact on transferring images from other 'muslim' societies like the Arab world, where the plot for gender roles and social change differ. In a speech by the president of the Muslim Education Society (MES), images of women protesting in the Arab states, facing the police, sitting in mosques aiding the injured and praying were emphasized to a big audience of Muslim Malayalee students. He further mentioned how a young female Egyptian was the guide to the Indian group all over Cairo.

In Kerala, the GIO played a great role in the transformation of the negative perception of public spaces as unsafe for women. This started by the first women conference in Kerala in 1993, organized by GIO. The organization itself was first launched from Kerala in 1984 (Jamaati Islami Website, accessed on 06/05/2012). In 2010, GIO organized a large scale conference in Northern Kerala on the theme: 'Woman Power for Social Revolution', in which reservations for women, codification for Muslim Personal Law, and combating dowry were the main issues discussed:

The run-up to the conference proved beyond all doubt that if need be, walls can lend themselves to be painted and written on by female hands as well. During the campaign phase of the conference, various programmes like seminars, symposia, public meetings, courtyard get-togethers, motor rallies, personal encounters and press conferences, apart from and cultural programmes, were organized to take the message of the conference to the public at large. The result was the ceaseless stream of women that thronged the conference venue at Kuttippuram. (Jamaati Islami Hind website)¹³⁵

The Iranian sociologist Asef Bayat's (2009) notion of 'social non-movements' brings women as public actors who, through an art of presence, acquire the ability to use marginal spaces. In addition to the urban poor and women, youth is another element of these non-movements. Youth embodies a collective challenge of extending youth habitus (overcoming anxiety over the future, sense of adventure, lightness). Since youth, as a social category, is essentially modern and urban, youth

¹³⁵ http://www.jihwomenkerala.org/general/NEWS_ENG.html, accessed 15/10/2011

consciousness is easily generated among atomized individuals by mass media, shopping malls, youth organizations and urban localities. Identities are created through the recognition of commonalities and mediated either through the gaze in public spaces or through mass media. Youth politics is not just about politics of protest but politics of presence and practice in the public space. The activism of youth in Kerala has reached a state where it became a ritual and an every-day experience. It overcomes activism's classical definition as an extraordinary activity. Bayat argues that the advantage of such a ritualized practice is that it becomes exceedingly difficult to suppress it since it is logically difficult to suppress daily life.

The strong teledensity of Kerala and its 1.7 Million-figure of telephone users contributes to this dismantling, as well. Smart phones are used for multiple purposes: logging on facebook and twitter, downloading examination exercises, applying for jobs online, and matrimonial websites and services. Through these phones, new virtual spaces emerge just like Appadurai's (1990) 'technoscapes'. They offer paradoxical instances of freedom and boldness of young women. In an interview with a Muslim college teacher, who is also a social activist, he narrated how girls are getting more spaces now, from his daughter who joined the soccer team at school, to girls with *ipads* and *Blackberries*. He told me how some of his female students find it very liberal to discuss issues like homosexuality or Islam with him via SMS. It had become 'usual' for him to exchange BBMs (Blackberry Messages) or SMSs with female students who either start intellectual debates with him on the phone, or dare to ask his opinion in matters pertaining politics and social problems. It was obvious that for these girls with *ipads* and *blackberries*, or even simple mobile phones, they managed to create more spaces for themselves and indulge in free and open discussions on sexuality, marriage, and their future.

In addition to the emerging spaces created by electronic media, Kerala has an interesting history of a reading culture. There circulation of newspapers and magazines increases every year with a notable increase in the number of readers. It is a fact asserted by many that everyone in Kerala reads newspapers. The state is characterized by a specifically strong reading culture that dates back to the idea of reading rooms (Bavakutty, 1982).

The proliferation of new media led to the reduction of asymmetry between senders and receivers, producers and consumers (Eickelman & Anderson, 1999) by mingling the participation in secular and religious discourses. In religious spheres, it is obvious in the Jamaati and Mujahid Mosques where there is often a screen in the women's praying area to see the preacher or the speaker in the Jumaa Khutba.



Figure 24 Lu'Lu' Masjid (Jamaati Mosque) in Calicut, Jumaah speech, February, 2011. Photo taken by author.

The means extend from the traditional religious spheres to the so-called “secular” and public spaces. New forms are replacing the traditional media carrying messages of how to lead an Islamic life, or how to deal with the problems faced in everyday life, in an Islamic manner. Traditionally, *fatwas* or religious edicts by Muslim scholars were the sole means to get religious advice. Gradually, *fatwas* started being circulated in audiocassettes, then visual media, and in print books, as well. Apart from these traditional and direct means, *fatwas* found a passage through entertainment and performative media. Comic books and magazines were one way. Another modern way and somewhat unique in Kerala is the ‘home cinema’. ‘Home cinema’ refers to independent movies in Kerala made with a small budget, and always revolves around a Muslim family and themes related to Muslims. The main reason for the proliferation of these movies is the rigidly conservative stance of Muslim scholars against cinema halls, or precisely against intermingling between boys and girls in cinema halls, and against movies that carry either anti-Islamic ideas, or indecency. The idea behind ‘home cinema’ is that people buy the DVDs and watch them at their own homes with their families. I asked many teachers and scholars about this phenomenon and whether it has anything to do with an attack of mainstream movie industry in India and the way Muslims are portrayed through it. They answered that they doubt it has anything to do with this issue, and that the spreading of home cinemas carry mainly symbolic weight of consumerist trends especially with the widening middle class due to Gulf migration.



Figure 25 Home Cinema Advertisement for a movie called Marriage without Stories (*Katha parayatha kalyanam*). Photo taken by the author.

Such enterprises give space to women to occupy new roles, traditionally tabooed or signified as inappropriate. The new spaces are not emerging just in home cinema, with Muslim actresses, but in songs and music videos.

Mappila Muslim songs (*Mappillappattu*), which is a traditional and folklore genre of vocalized music in Kerala, is dominated by Muslim women, who are in most cases housewives or young teens. The act of singing these songs could be regarded as a ritual that symbolizes the strong popular or folkloric Islamic sense in Kerala. The songs always carry religious and historical themes and are divided in various categories. Of these categories are the weddings songs (*kalyana paattu*), praising prophets and saints (*madh paattu*), and war songs.

I had an experience with my neighbour, who is a Gulf wife with two children, living with her mother and sister-in-law (another gulf wife). Not only does she write and compose songs, but also with the help of both her Saudi-based brother and husband, she was able to cooperate with a producer and director to produce her songs in a video form. Fascinatingly, the same housewives who were initially shy to speak with me because their English and Arabic (they studied Arabic at college) were not so strong performed in the videos by singing and dancing.¹³⁶

The case of Malayalee youth shows us a re-structuring of traditional roles of women; a counter ritual of females going to the mosque on a weekly basis has broken the traditional ritual of men

¹³⁶ The following are links to video clips of these mappillappattu (or Muslim Malayalee songs) in which a competition reality show on Jaihind channel was being broadcasted and I often watched it with the women in the village I was staying: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VxYpATwIA8&feature=related> (accessed 01/11/2011);

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8Aka9P2F70&feature=related> (accessed 01/11/2011)

going to the mosques and confining this space to males. The Friday sermon as a ritual was utilized to prove the agency of women. The authoritative use of Islam is being challenged in Kerala, unlike North India, where educational levels led to a different culture of dealing with Islam in a more symbolic way. High levels of education among women in Kerala and the process of reform initiated a change in the way Muslims deal with Islamic texts and how they accommodate Islamic rituals and traditions to their local customs (gold for boys as an example or women's entry to the mosques).

6.3.2 Argumentative *jihād*

Japanese proverb: If one can do it, you too can do it. If no one can do it, you must do it.

Indian version: of one can do it, let him do it. If no one can do it, leave it.

Kerala version: if one can do it, stop him from doing it. If no one can do make a harthal against it.

- A piece written by a Muslim Malayalee girl in 10th standard

Robinson (2000) identifies Quentin Skinner's contribution to the role of ideas in political action through this phrase "men in pursuing their interests are limited by the range of concepts available to legitimize their actions and that this range of concepts is in turn limited by the prevailing morality of society" (Robinson, 2000, pp. 180-181). This statement carries strong significance in the Keralite context, however, upon looking from a female perspective on the discourse on citizenship, and hence substituting 'men' with 'women'.

The paths shown to women to practise their citizenship were controlled by men to a great extent. In fact, concepts were emptied from their original baggage to fit different molds and desires of power holders. If we start with the existential meaning of women, this conceptual ambivalence will come clear. In a study on the role of reason in Islam, the Anthropology of Marriage is referred to as an entry to understanding the means by which men acquired authority. The key to power is argued to have resided in the subjugation of women and thus the establishment of despotism. Despite the ideas concerning Eve's name (in Arabic it is *Hawaa'*) that means the container, and hence the container of life, modern contracts of marriage were designed in a manner resembling property ownership (Khalil, 1993).

What Indian Muslim women, and not only feminists, are engaged nowadays in is this readjustment of the understanding of concepts of citizenship and their societal status based on the utilization of Islam and the constitution as weaponry in their struggles. V.P. Suhra, for example, a women rights activist in Calicut and a self-built woman who does not belong to the academic circles, points out the dynamics of how women are coming to the forefront and revealing the contradictions prevalent in both national and religious histories. To her, political forces are working

in Kerala in order to oppose women's full citizenship rights:

The forces behind stopping of Muslim women's freedom and freedom of expression as a citizen are the political parties, which are working on misogynistic frameworks. There are fundamentalists in every society. There exists the fight between secularists and non-secularists. Freedom and human rights are not the monopoly of a special section. Women themselves have to awake and work so as to attain freedom and the constitutional gender equality. (V.P. Suhra, personal communication, December 2010)

The biggest hurdle to this struggle lies in the nature of the Muslim Personal Law and its relations with power holders. Unlike for example the struggle of the Dalits against the caste system, Muslim women struggle is muffled because their authority is questionable since their weapons are designed by the powerful groups. Since the power of the political leaders is intertwined with the religious, any criticism is destined to be muted with the charges of either heresy or interference in Muslim issues. This is where education comes in place, especially the religious and offers women opportunities to readjust their status and roles in society.

Status of women is generally measured by looking at the roles they play in society. Status as a concept was coined by Linton (1936) and refers to a position in a social system in which individuals have certain roles.¹³⁷ Mukherjee (1972) adds a gender-biased attribute to the concept by defining it as the place that a woman occupies as well as the dignity and privileges she enjoys in society. Roles were further defined by Parsons as "an organized sector of an actor's orientation which constitutes and defines his participation in an interactive process" (quoted in Menon, 1981, pp. 29-30). The multiplicity and addition of roles further shape the actor's position or her status.

Interestingly, although calls for women's representation features as a commonly mentioned goal in minority reports and petitions, many women themselves are skeptic of the impact of the new decision of the fifty percent reservation for women in local bodies. This is evident in a common phrase I heard from students: "Now we do not only have to bear the politicians, but we have to bear their wives as well." As I interviewed several of the newly first time elected Muslim League female panchayat members, a huge difference appeared between them and their counterparts who had been politically active before this decision was enacted. In one 'failed' attempt to interview a panchayat member in Malappuram district, we were accompanied by a male lawyer who took me to that

¹³⁷ Linton, R. (1936). *The Study of Man: An Introduction*. New York: Appleton Century Crofts.

village, my interpreter and this woman's husband. After each question I asked, the lawyer would re-iterate it and try to instill his own answer in the question. She would then instead of giving answers or making statements, reply in a question form addressed to her husband. The same incident was repeated in other interviews. It became obvious how men were always trying to limit or frame their answers according to their male opinions, in my infuriated interpreter words, "it became an in-direct movement against women's representations."

The Muslim Student Federation (MSF) Calicut University Campus Conference of 2011 is an example of the changing atmosphere in Kerala due to the impact of girls' education. As I mentioned earlier, this conference was the first Muslim student programme among the Sunnis with women participating in it. Around five hundred girls participated as well as two female speakers: one was the Muslim Tamil Muslim Leaguer Fatima Muzafar. Despite this precedence, the male dominated atmosphere was starkly relevant. As I got to know about this conference from one of the students, I decided to join the ranks of female students who were seated on different rows, yet not in the back. Gradually, I started realizing that the whole empowerment discourse one hears of or reads as a title on a programme or event schedule is a fake facade to the reality of patriarchy. Since I could not speak Malayalam, I came to the conference when Fatima Muzafar was scheduled to speak. However, as I sat down for two hours, I realized that her talk was postponed and she was to speak after all the political male leaders, and *thangals* have finished. By 4:30 PM, most of the girls were leaving, only some few teachers who live on campus stayed. All had to go because they were supposed to be home by five.

She cited the findings of the Sachar report and commented on them, "Every woman has a man inside her, only when the male and female join together, then the *ummah* is complete." She showed how facts about Muslims in India demonstrate their pathetic state and how the worst off in India are Muslim women. Kerala is actually the only state giving them solace but the state of Muslim women in media is confined to either triple *ṭalāq* or *pardah*. Again she affirmed the commonly held perception that the reason for their problems is mainly educational backwardness, which resulted from dividing education between secular and religious, despite the conviction that in Islam every education is Islamic if it is useful (*'ilm naḥī*). She then mentions dowry, and how it is not only un-Islamic but also lead to social plights. She gave as an example the incident of a father in Tamil Nadu who threw his two daughters in a well right after his wife gave birth to a boy, his excuse was "With 700 rupees per month how can I get dowry for them one day?" Another issue she mentioned was the targeting of Muslim youth with terrorism charges. 167 youth were imprisoned after Coimbatore blasts, and their families were out-cast. She finished her speech with her exclamation

that despite Muslims have one *qibla* (prayer direction), one prophet and one Quran, they are being divided by fascist forces.

As usual, the Sunni girls in the conference I talked to were interested in asking me similar questions as those posed by their Jamaati and Mujahid counterparts; they inquired about early marriage, walking freely at night in Egypt, freedom of speech and working opportunities for women. They told me, “Here freedom of expression exists in newspapers and media is the only freedom we get, but instead of this you in Egypt get all the individual freedoms that we do not get in India.”

The widespread phenomenon of young women organizing conferences, workshops and parades can be looked upon as a form of cultural performance, which is symbolic and perceived as both a ritual and a strategy of protest and fight for agency. The Arabic college girls represent strong threats to the symbolic power holder *Thangal* or upper class Muslim men. This is due to breaking the wall of estrangement created by the Muslim *‘ulama* through deciphering the codes and thus revealing the reality behind superstitions and myths of healing rituals. This rendered great resistance from the part of the *Thangals* who waged attacks against women's presence in the public space. On the side of the women, this led to higher rates of religiosity especially manifested through dress to counter any arguments of heresy or immorality. Islam is a moving and live religion, as a Muslim female scholar wrote. This statement proves how hard it is to disentangle Islamic rituals, from everyday social rituals. And as Muslim women acquire more powers through getting a hold of the interpretive authority, then we would be witnessing a new order where the practice of rituals gives spaces to new forces and actors.

Symbolic action as a term was introduced by Kenneth Burke (1957) and intensively utilized by Clifford Geertz (1973). In their performances, it is important to see the distribution of power among the actors and the performers and in Alexander's (2006) words, whether social power would manage to eliminate specific parts of a cultural text. Despite the fact that capitalist modes of consumption led to the emphasis on individual will and rational choice, participation in these performances is highly contingent on established hierarchies of gender relations and community politics. So we have a case in Kerala where the teledensity and the increasing dispersion of Internet-enabled smart phones, in addition to high literacy rates lead to unbalancing these established keys of entry to the social performative field of power relations. The privileged access to the sacred text, as Alexander (2006) argues stands in defiance with the impact of literacy. In Kerala, however, increasing numbers of girls are getting access to the Arabic language, mastering it and hence

breaking this denial of access and dominance of the *'ulama* authority.

It was always fascinating to see the numbers of girls who are outnumbering the boys in Arabic colleges. Although they are all adhering to the *pardah* dress code, but none has her face covered. The girls do not only outnumber the boys but usually they are the one who score higher grades. In a conference I attended organized by the Mujahids, there was the awarding ceremony of Arabic and Islamic Studies in which the first and third ranks went to girls. The Mujahid leader and the principal of Rawdhatul Uloom Arabic College in Feroke, Mudavoor, commented that sixty percent of students in Kerala were girls. This phenomenon, according to him, has to be exploited in *da'wah* (proselytization) and work together with education could not be divorced from each other. Mudavoor further outlined the two main threats to youth in this age as drugs and abuse of religion. Hence, he called on students to make use of the opportunities granted to them via globalization to overcome these evils.

The ability to employ the knowledge acquired in their religious education and to transform this into a tool of argumentation that is applicable to the ways they manage their lives is characteristic of Keralite Muslim girls. It is intriguing to witness the methods by which they project their sense of agency. Two spheres of struggle are relevant here: their fight against dowry and their ability to stress their desire to work. Here is an example of the conversations I had with female students on the latter issue:

I: In North India, there was a *fatwa* concerning banning women from working along with men. It is the opinion of *'ulama*, what do you think of it? I mean if there were a *palli committee man* telling you not to work with men, what would you say?

Student: I would tell him this is against the Quran.

I: Some people say that there should never be a woman ruling a country. What do you think?

Student: Where men could not do what was required of them, women proved capable of doing it; that is what Indira Gandhi did. She proved it. She proved what men could not prove.

I: but religious people mention a *hadith* against this.

Student: Maybe there are certain restrictions for certain jobs, but still we can prove ourselves. And still so many people suffer due to many religious things. This is the main issue with India, there is always a religious problem and one cannot stop this.

According to the women I interviewed, the problem of dowry emerged as almost the single

predicament that responds to my question of what the major problem in Kerala is. I am hence presenting this issue and the way they fight it or respond to it as an example of argumentative *jihād* waged against a tradition enforced by male power holders that resulted in women's commodification.

As a success story of the fight against dowry, the situation in Nilambur municipality in Malappuram district is demonstrated, although it should be noted that women were not essentially the leaders of this initiative, but were active agents in the process of change. Nilambur, like most villages of Malappuram district has thirty-year old grandmothers since 80% of the marriages include girls who are below the age of eighteen. This is correlated to the fact that 80% of Muslims belong to the *Sunni* group. Nilambur has a population of 45,000, 40% are Muslim. 60% of Muslims are Below Poverty Line (BPL). According to the municipality chairman, Shoukath, every week there is approximately 10 marriages especially in BPL families, eight out of ten marriages are dowry marriages with a minimum of 1-1.5 Lakh rupees and 4 lakh Gold. The divorce rate is 30%.

Nilambur had a two-year programme called the thousand-home project from which 800 homeless people benefitted. After conducting the survey and finding that the number of the homeless was eight hundred, and after giving them the houses, the municipality got more applications. Upon enquiry, the applicants said that at the time of the survey, they were not homeless, but after that they sold their houses to get dowry for their daughters. Every year, fifty to seventy five houses are sold for dowry. Other means of getting the money is through collecting it, or borrowing from banks by mortgaging their house, or borrowing money from a local financier called *marvari* who charges a high interest rate. Then usually, the bank sends a notice when payment is late, and if the house is worth five lakhs, it is always sold at the price of four lakhs because they want it to be sold right away to get the money to avoid being imprisoned.

Dowry is usually spent in multiple ways. The most common way is to spend it to get a visa to the Gulf. There are two kinds of visas, an agreement visa or a free visa and the higher the visa costs, the higher the dowry is. The second option, especially for unskilled men is to buy an autorickshaw. Also sixty percent of it is usually spent on food, feasts and house renovations. In some cases also the dowry would be usurped from the wife to have a second marriage.

According to a survey report conducted by the Nilambur municipality, eighty percent of women have paid dowry. Accordingly, the panchayat in cooperation with the *Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society* undertook an initiative called "The Dowry Free Village Campaign" to fight this practice. This is mainly through two kinds of action: campaigns via street plays and seminars; and capacity

building programmes through community college and free coaching. The idea behind having a community college is to overcome the ramifications of early marriage which result in the discontinuing of girl's education and thus rendering them fragile in case of divorce or abuse by the husband since they are totally financially dependent on him due to their lack of skills.

The *Kudumbasree* or the micro-finance units organized by women in every village had positively impacted women by enhancing their sense of initiative, decision-making and entry in the public sphere. These local self-help programmes are one of the main sources of women's income. These are neighbourhood programmes, supported by the local government. In Nilambur, there are 328 neighbourhood groups, and every BPL family has one member coming under it. On the panchayat level, it is the community development society, and then on the ward level it is called area development society. In Kerala, 50% BPL comes under this. In Nilambur, the figure is much higher: 95%. Surprisingly, no caste or political barriers function in this organization.¹³⁸

Nilambur has a community college, which is run by the panchayat and is part of the anti-dowry initiative. The aim is to make girls get educated and find a job, and thus overcome the dowry system.

After endless questions to every *imam* or *Sunni* scholar I meet and ask about the dowry and why they do not call against it, and after not being able to get satisfying or logical answers, I met a student who wrote his M.Phil thesis on dowry in Kerala and told me that what he has found out that the *Sunni* scholars in the *palli* committee actually take a share from the dowry, and this is how their functions and expenses are covered. On other double standards employed by the traditional *ustādhs*, he laughed and told me how they ban TV for others, but their own kids watch TV more than any other kids.

In one of my visits to a Mujahid Islamic college, this impact of education was most evident, at least in the perceptive capacities of the girls. When I asked them what their problems in India were, they answered, "Child marriage and the inverted (*ūlta*) dowry." They used the Hindi word *ūlta* by referring to dowry as *ūlta mahr*. This was the first time I heard it used to describe the Indian dowry system. Due to their education, they became aware of the fact that it is inverted and hence

¹³⁸ This information was obtained through an interview with Aryadan Shoukath, writer and film producer and the President of Nilambur Panchayat. More general information is available in the Kerala Mahila Samakhya Society Report 2009, accessed on http://keralasamakhya.org/reports/2008-09_Annual_report_part1.pdf, June 16th, 2012. Also in India Today: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/aryadan-shoukath/1/105662.html>, accessed on June 16th 2012; Reekha Kher, Putting Kerala to work The Hindu

abnormal.

After my talk, which was extended to a large discussion, or a strong trial on my side to make them overcome their barrier of fear, a girl came to sing me a song. She was singing a poem in Arabic. The poem read as follows:

Oh mother, you were joyful with my conception and carriage,

But the minute I was born, I became miserable

Why is it that people treat girls as the lowest of creatures?

Aren't they the gifts of heaven?

When I asked who wrote this poem, I was told it is the grandmother of one of the students, not a famous person, just someone who knows Arabic. Then the students told me that this teacher also writes poetry in Arabic. She laughed shyly and said yes I write for my children. A lot of us write for our children to sing.

6.4 Summary

What was evident through the dynamics outlines in this chapter is the politics of youth, which is to a great extent politics of metaphor. These young women manage to disguise a rebellion within a framework of a dominant culture. Although their struggle seems to be one of 'the ordinary', but in reality it is a revolutionary struggle for presence and denial of their absence.

What I tried to show is the heterogeneity of the spaces and contexts in which youth project their active sense of citizenship. Kerala in fact, regardless of the religious variable, is known to be a place where multiple opinions are formed and nurtured; there is a famous saying that holds, "When a Malayalee stays alone, he becomes a poet. When he stays with another one, both form different contending organizations."

Most of these youth are struggling through different conflicting contexts in their life-spaces; they have to deal daily with the societal pressure to be a 'good Muslim' and at the same time while being influenced by theories of political Islam, then again being confronted with the modern democratic secular framework they live in guaranteeing many rights and liberties. This framework has influenced their upbringing and has led to their realization of possibilities of different opportunities. This is perhaps in a manner reminiscent to an advertisement for a private school I saw once in a street in Kerala that says "Peace Public School: Excellent Secular Education in an Islamic

Environment”. However, the ability to conform to the hegemonizing stream of thought as directed by the political socialization process, whether at secular or Islamic schools, is not always present at every individual. This is expressed in the words of a young Muslim lecturer:

Sometimes I am unable to identify myself as a secular Indian citizen because what I learnt from my school about India and its rulers (like Gandhi and Nehru) was met later with the realization that what I learned is wrong, so something has to be changed in my own concepts and in the concepts of society and the community I belong to. And I believe that every member of Muslim youth in India is going through these crises of religious, social and political identity. The minority is forced to be in the majority and to carry the opinion of the majority in India through the media. They are forcing themselves to be part of this democracy. They should have their own spaces and own ideas, only then would democracy flourish. The community I belong to and also lower castes in India are struggling with their identity.

VII. Comparative Analysis of Delhi and Kerala

7.1 Operationalizing political behaviour and awareness

7.1.1 Ballots instead of bullets: The practice of voting as a citizenship right

Might there not be a difference between responding as a citizen and as a voter?

- N.G. Jayal, The Election Game, 2007¹³⁹

In outlining the misfits of studying societies in democratic political systems, electoral participation appears as a necessary aspect, yet an insufficient one to produce a politically conscious and efficacious community. It is inadequate to study political behaviour in a vast country like India solely through the lens of elections since political behaviour during elections certainly varies and differs from the everyday practice or 'normal politics'. Election surveys hence should not be regarded as surveys of political attitudes, especially that as Jayal (2007) argues "the political barometer has been artificially stepped up" during election time (Jayal, 2007, p. 54).

Varma (2001) confirms the political observation that the middle classes are drifting away from formal participation in the democratic process and political spaces as studies show that low voter turnout corresponds to areas populated by the middle classes. An explanation of low voter turnout among middle classes could be found in Fernandes (2006) analysis of the new Indian middle classes and their ability to redefine the boundaries of citizenship through acquiring access to the state through non-electoral politics; security and welfare-oriented civil society groups.

In operationalizing the sense of citizenship among Muslim youth, several aspects have been taken into consideration, and it is misleading to depend on a single one. Citizenship as a set of obligations and rights was measured using indicators of political rights and duties; voting and political awareness for example, in addition to cultural rights and perceptions of discrimination.

What is remarkable in Bashiruddin Ahmed's (1974) study on the political stratification of the electorate is the empirical remark that the level of participation falls sharply as we move beyond voting. His noted continuum of this stratification is significant:

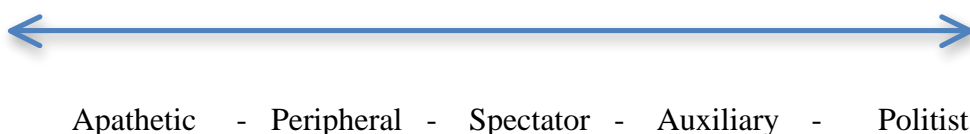


Figure 26 Bashiruddin Ahmed's (1974) political stratification of the electorate.

¹³⁹ In I. Pande (2007), *India 60: Toward a New Paradigm*, p. 54.

Sheth's (1975) study concluded that despite the increasing voter turnout, the notion of herd behavior of the Indian electorate is still valid. The majority of voters had voted according to the advice of the head or elders in the family. For him, types of voters range from partisans (who were most evident in the 1967 and 1969 elections), shifters, new voters, and uncommitted voters.

In regarding voter turnout among Muslims, one could not see any difference between the all-India figures and the Muslim figures (Fig. 26). This is evident from the Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Democratic Societies National Election Surveys. Sanjeer Alam (2009) notes the fluctuation in the Muslim voter turnout that does not drastically differ from the national average. It recorded a high percentage of 67% in 1999 as compared to 60% for the national average, and a low one of 46% in 2004 as compared to 58% for the national average. Based on the National Election Survey Data, the following graph demonstrates how there is almost no difference between the percentage of Muslims who said they had voted and the all-India corresponding figure over three elections in 1999, 2004 and 2009— 92.9% and 90.5%, 82.7% and 85.6% and 83.6% and 83.8% respectively. The reliance on the democratic system of governance as a secure haven for the attainment of rights clearly negates any remark on the alienation of Muslims.

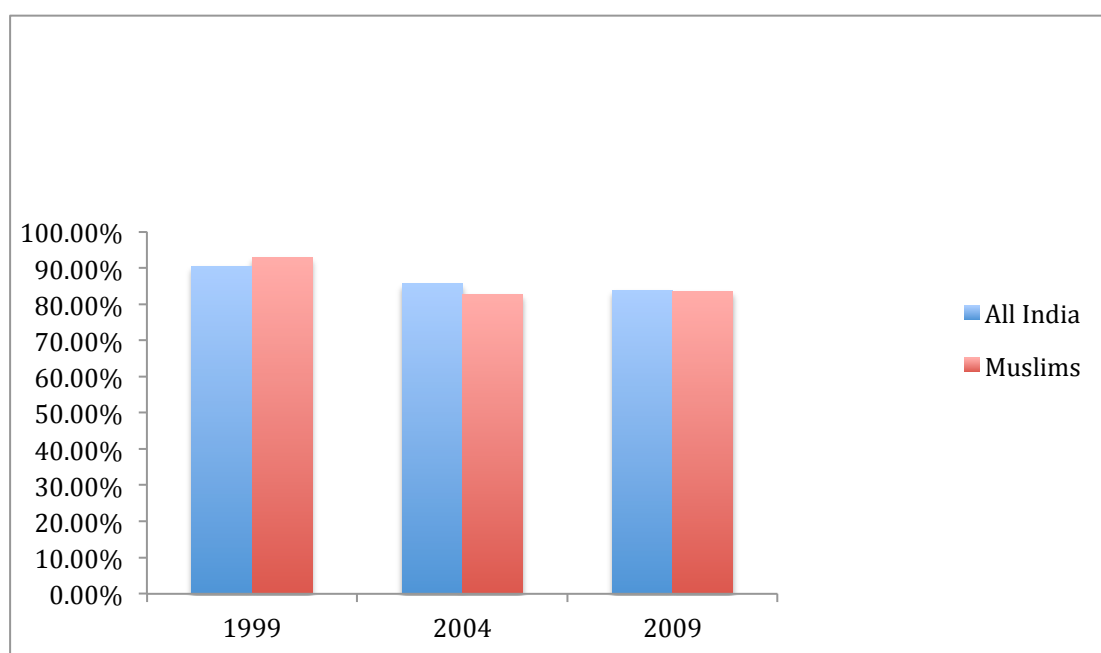


Figure 27 Voter turnout percentages. Statistics source: National Election Surveys, CSDS.

The data also counters any claim on specificity of the Muslims or as it is dominantly perceived, their passivity and aversion to the democratic process or even resort to violence and terrorism. As the Delhi-based journalist, Zafer Aga contends, “Muslim resistance is reflected during elections where they cast their votes; ballots instead of bullets are their weapons” (Zafer Aga, personal

communication, September, 2010).

I conducted a survey of 110 students at Jamia Milia Islamia. 60% of the respondents were male, whereas 40% were females. The disparity is accounted for the random selection method employed in the survey sample. It has to be noted that there was an additional survey conducted in the state of Kerala of 140 students and the gender distribution in this case turned out surprisingly inversed—60% females and 40% male respondents. Although the selection of the sample was accidental, it strongly reflected a reality. In Kerala, the number of girls in educational institutions usually outnumbered boys', and in Delhi, it was the males who were more willing to speak to me or answer the questionnaire. Also, in Delhi it was easier to find boys hanging around the campus, while girls would go from their class to their hostel or home and in their spare time to the praying room, where I interviewed several students.

Concerning the courses they were enrolled in, the majority of respondents in Delhi were at the Masters level, and most of them were studying Social Sciences and Humanities, especially political science, history, and west Asian studies (30%), this is followed by Islamic studies, Arabic and Urdu language (25%), then economics (16%), engineering (8%), education (8%), natural and medical sciences, journalism, law, and finally psychology.

As for Kerala, the majority studied Arabic and Islamic studies (35.8%), followed by English literature (15.8%), education (8.3%), history, economics, sociology, paramedical sciences, mathematics and dentistry.¹⁴⁰

The majority in Delhi spoke three languages (Hindi, Urdu and English): 51% spoke Hindi, Urdu and English; and a significant 13% spoke Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and English. As for their rural versus urban background, 38% came from villages whereas 62% descended from towns. The majority were from UP and Bihar. The sample included also Delhites, and few individuals from Punjab, Kashmir, Jharkand, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. Interestingly, 50% had gone to governmental schools before joining the university, while only 11.8% had a madrasa background, 12% had gone to both madrasas and modern schools, and 26.5% had gone to private schools.

As for Kerala, the majority speaks two languages: Malayalam and English (22.3%); 17.6% spoke

¹⁴⁰ In Kerala, the sample is not entirely representative of the actual student body of Malayalee Muslims because I mainly went to the Islamic colleges and the arts and social science departments. Usually, engineering and medical colleges are in separate campuses. Hence I cannot claim that the course of study is a significant indicator. However, in Delhi, since it was a random sample from the whole campus, representativeness can be assumed.

only Malayalam although they could read and write Arabic; 0.4% spoke Malayalam and Arabic but not English, and the most interesting figure was that 20% spoke Malayalam, Arabic and English. Arabic and not Hindi or Urdu was always the third language to be spoken by the students.¹⁴¹ Opposite to the Delhi respondents, the majority of respondents in Kerala came from a rural background: 74.6% from villages as opposed to only 26% from towns.

In my survey of Muslim students, 44.8% of the respondents said they vote in elections on a regular basis, the figure did not radically change when I included the gender aspect (43.9% of the females said they always vote). In my interviews with students, it often seemed ridiculous to them to ask for the reason why their vote. For them, voting had become a non-negotiable ritual that does not actually hold rational criteria of judgment. Many laughed when I had asked why they voted, and I had to explain that I was asking this question out of my political background of living in an authoritarian regime where I never had a chance to vote. One female respondent, after laughing and telling me “How come why!” contended, “It is to make the candidate who is worthy of winning (with *iqtidaar*) and who is capable of helping us win”. She added that her vote had definitely a high value (*qimati*).

The reasons for not voting as provided by the respondents in Delhi were divided between not voting because of being away from one’s constituency due to studying in Delhi (52% of the cases), or not having a voter identity card yet at the time of the past elections because of their age but would be voting in the next elections (35%) or for different reasons related to not finding any of the candidates representative and simply using propaganda tools to gain Muslim votes but not doing eventually anything for their welfare (13%).

As for those who voted, the following is a division of the reasons for voting and the corresponding percentage:¹⁴²

- 40% see voting as their constitutional and democratic right as citizens of India.
- 38% vote to choose a representative leader.
- 18% vote because of their belief in democracy.
- 7% desire to make a change through voting.
- 5.5% consider voting as a duty.
- 5.5% vote to make a certain political party win.

¹⁴¹ The same is actually true for many of the Non resident Malayalees in the Gulf.

¹⁴² The figures would not add up to 100% because some respondents gave more than one reason for why they vote.

- 3.7% vote to follow their family’s instructions.

Again in Kerala, the dominance of the rights discourse was hegemonic but with an unequivocal emphasis on the belief in democracy. 38.4% said that voting is a right of Indian citizens, this was coupled with the 14% who demonstrated a belief in democracy, only 10% viewed voting as a duty of Indian citizens, 11.5% said they voted to make democracy work better. Only 2% translated their voting into support for Muslims, while 5% translated it into support a secular constitution. The only reason given for not voting was the non-availability of a voter card in the previous elections due to their age.

It is surprising to see that among those who did not vote, especially in Delhi, none justified their political choice as a translation of an identity-related issue. It was a strictly political choice. “Voting is a political act...being political is a way of being in modern time...and not going for voting is also political...voting is an act of representation”- as one of the respondents noted. Despite the commonly held view that Muslims are alienated and do not vote because they do not feel they belong to this nation but to Pakistan, no respondent ever brought up the issue of belonging.

To the contrary of this, the religious identity interestingly appeared as an incentive to vote, as a student noted, “I vote because in Islam itself there is a principle to follow the country’s rules unless it violates basic tenets of Islam and I have faith in the democracy of my country.” There was also an interesting correlation between the level of religiosity and voting since 54.3% of those who read the Quran always voted:

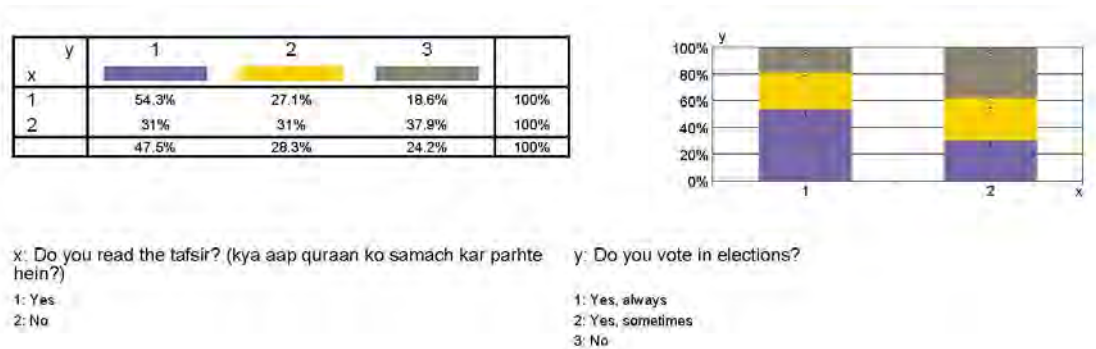


Figure 28 The relationship between reading the Quran's *tafsir* and voting in Elections in Delhi.

The discourse of rights and their aptly conscious decision to make use of it also negates the common perceptions on alienation among youth. Although I do not establish an argument of representativeness, but these indicators of the politically conscious culture among Muslim youth should not be dismissed. The high percentage of respondents aiming at choosing a representative leader is one significant feature. To many others, however, the only right they could think of

possessing as a citizen of India was voting, which was indicative of a shaky sense of citizenship.

When I asked them if they had voted for their current Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), 44.2% said they did. Interestingly one respondent refused to answer this question and wrote the following: “This question violates my privacy and I am not going to answer it.” In Kerala, this figure increases to 56.4%, since the survey was conducted in the area of the Muslim League power hold.

Many Muslim scholars have negated the phenomenon of the vote bank, some asserted that it exists in India on a general basis and is not a Muslim-specific case, but the majority I interviewed held the view that it is a myth and false propaganda. A Muslim scholar at Nadwatul Ulama Lucknow explained:

The vote bank is a myth; Muslims are never united on one candidate. Votes are distributed, for example in a constituency with a majority of Muslims, if a Muslim candidate is nominated, he will win, but if there are several good candidates, votes will be divided, and thus the opposing party will win. Political parties want to make use of Muslim votes, but Muslims are divided because of low levels of correct religious awareness and feeling...Actually the Muslim candidate never works for the sake of Muslims, usually the Hindu does. A Muslim MP cannot pose questions in Parliament concerning Muslims, he does not want to stir trouble for himself...India is the land of wonders, and so in politics, politics is some kind of conspiracy, politics is more of deceit than service.

The Islamic studies professor at Jamia, Akhratul Wasey shared the same opinion when asked about the Muslim vote bank:

Humbug. False. Propaganda. Muslims are not a Vote bank, neither Muslims nor Hindus. They vote for people according to their own preferences. For example Indira lost in 1977. Both voted against her, her party won only two seats. Muslims are voting in greater strength. We should understand this and not be misled by this propaganda coming from the mouthpieces of Hindutva forces.

If we look at the wider image of electoral politics among Indian Muslims, there is a detectable macro level. Muslim identity indeed plays a role but gets divided along different regional axes. In an interview with Sanjeer Alam from the Centre of the Study of Democratic Societies in Delhi, he expounds that this observation can be clearly noted in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar— the two states with high concentrations of Muslims who had overwhelmingly supported the Congress until 1970-1976.

During the Emergency period, Muslims decided to desert Congress and support alternative regional political parties. Such divisions among Muslims were coupled with a sense of alienation. In the 1980s, Hindutva politics emerged and pushed Muslims to adopt a political strategy of defeating the BJP. Then in the 1990s Muslim votes got concentrated to vote to secular parties such as Samajwadi Party, Lalu Prasad's Janata Dal, the communist party in West Bengal and Kerala. But on a national level, the Muslims are not left with much choice but to support the Congress party especially in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh where the political contest is between Congress and BJP (Alam M. S., 2009 & Interview with S.M. Alam, 2010).

In the National Election surveys conducted by CSDS Delhi there is no difference between the Muslim percentage and all-India average on the attitude towards voting along caste lines. In 1999, 54% totally disagreed to vote along the caste line, and in 2004, the figure, however, considerable went down to 35%.

7.1.2 Membership in political parties and religious associations

The freedom of association in India is a very important issue that guides the path of democracy in India. In the National Election Surveys, the percentage of membership in religious organizations interestingly rose from 3.4% in 2004 to 12% in 2009 at an all India level. Reducing the results to the Muslims only, the percentage slightly differs; 2.1% in 2004 to 13.5% in 2009 (NES from the CSDS). This might be associated to the rise of 'Muslim' activism after the Babri Masjid demolition and the Gujarat riots. The survey I conducted among students showed a similar result since 15.2% of the students were members in Islamic organizations. 46% of them were affiliated to Jamaati Islami, 23% to Tablighi Jamaati, 23% to Bareilvi organizations and 15% in other ones.

In Kerala, the figure is impressively higher since 45.2% are involved in an Islamic student organization (17.5% females and 87% males). The divisions in the social fabric of the community, as shown in the previous chapter, are reflected in the affiliations of students where 64.1% are members in Sunni or the traditional Sufi organizations, 22.6% are Mujahids, 9.4% are Jamaati Islami followers, and 1% belong to the Ahmadiyyah group.

As for political parties, 9.5% of the respondents in the Delhi survey said they were members in a party. I noted a slight correlation between membership in Islamic associations and political parties: 18.8% versus 7.9%. One factor that should not be omitted is the young age of the respondents and the possibility of becoming members in political parties in the future, due to the fact that the university workload, the absence of a student Union at Jamia, the lifestyle of many youth who need to work during studies to save for the dowry or to take care financially of their family in UP or

Bihar do not allow for engagement in political activities. This was reflected even among girls, when I asked one if she is a member of a political party, she said, “not yet.”

The figure in Kerala jumps up to 41.4%. This high level of political-party affiliation reflects the nature of the political culture in Kerala, especially that the majority of the Muslims are members of the Muslim League party, followed by the Congress Party.

7.1.3 Political awareness

Muslims are indeed backward and it is because they are not self-aware. Self-awareness is very important. Lā yughayyir allah mā biqawm ḥatta yughayyiru mā bianfusihum (God does not change a people unless they change themselves).¹⁴³ The soul has to be changed first. Only feeling of discrimination does not help. With education, it is possible to change the self. Only then we can turn to the government and ask it to be fair and to change its policies and to rely on it to help us, because anyway governments are known to give lots of promises and less action.

- A Female PhD Student at Jamia

Although 67% of the respondents in Delhi affirmed they could name their MP or MLA. In fact only 61% could actually name them. The question was asked in this way: “Can you name the Member of Parliament or (*aapka netā*) who is representing your constituency?” The reference to the *netā* came in to bridge the political culture gap in the understanding of the representative since not all respondents could understand what is a MP or MLA.¹⁴⁴ This is certainly different in the case of Kerala, where the word MP and MLA did not require any interpretation or explanation, even on the level of rural elderly women who have not finished their basic education. 88% could name one or both of their political representatives, and when we look at the female-only figure it stays around 84%. Here we can observe a noted gap in political awareness between Delhi and Kerala and between males and females in Delhi, as only 45.2% of the Delhi female respondents could name either the MP or the MLA.

¹⁴³ This is a verse from the Quran [Ar-ra’d (13):11].

¹⁴⁴ The question changed from Delhi to Kerala. In Delhi, I just asked about the MP or the *netā*, and I added this question of naming him/her to check the percentage and the honesty. In Kerala, my research assistant modified the question to include MLA and MP since the political culture is different and it is logical that everyone knows the MP.

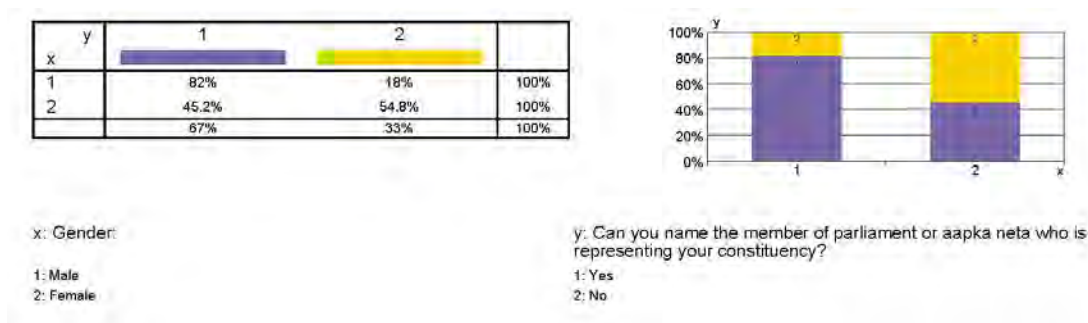


Figure 29 The Relationship between gender and a criteria of political awareness.

What surprised me was the clear idea female students had of the steps one requires in order to stop the government from making a law which is harmful to the community. They mentioned protest, demonstrations, meeting the political leader or the *netā*, and even demonstrating in front of the parliament.

As for reading newspapers, Kerala gave an astonishing figure of 100% readership rate, while Delhi gave a 99%. However, the Delhi figure answer is misleading, because often when I asked some girls about a recent incident, it turned out they have not heard about it, and one time I talked to two girls who could only speak Hindi and Urdu, and when I asked this question, they answered they read *Times of India*, then I asked how they read it when they could not speak English, they said, “Oh, we look at the actors and actresses news.”

Some of the respondents had no idea of what happened in Gujarat in 2002, some even jokingly and naively smiled to me and told me, “We were kids at that time, how do you expect us to know!” Further conversations with them helped me interpret this answer in two ways: first, as a subtle strategy to avoid being dragged into a conversation on communalism in fear of being branded as such; second, as a negation of the fact that they ever read any newspapers, especially Urdu newspapers since the mentioning of Gujarat is almost daily there.

The division of readership of newspapers according to language radically differed from Kerala to Delhi. Whereas in Kerala, Malayalam newspapers enjoyed the widest readership, in Delhi it was the English ones and not the Urdu and the most widely read newspaper was the *Times of India* (38.5%). The following is a detailed map of the most read newspapers and their readership:

	Newspaper	Readership
Delhi	English (TOI, HT)	82.23% (only TOI 38.5%)

Kerala	Urdu (Sahafat, Sahara)	15%
	Hindi	2.6%
	Malayalam	84.1%
	English	15.4%
	Arabic	0.33%

Figure 30 Division of readership according to language in Delhi and Kerala based on my survey results.

In Kerala, the following are the percentages of the readership of each newspaper among the students. These figures could be generalized as representative since most students read what their families read and what is available at home: *Manorama* (National and Congress affiliated) 32.6%, *Mathrbhumi* (national) 17.4%, *Madhymam* (Jamaati Islami) 14.2%, *Chandrika* (IUML) 13%, *The Hindu* 11.7%, *Indian Express* 3%, *Thejes* (PFI) 2.8%, *Siraj* (Sunni) 1.5%, *Deshabhimani* (CPI-M) 1.5%.

Whereas in Kerala the newspaper was the most important source of news (63.9%), television came in the second rank (26.3%), while the least was radio (8.3%) and the Internet (1.5%). In Delhi, for most of the respondents, the television was the most important source of news (49%), followed by the Internet (43.3%), then the radio (3.8%) and finally 3.8% answered with “none”. Although the newspaper was not given as an option in the questionnaire version in Delhi, yet no one told me that they would get news from a newspaper, which proved that the role of the press is not significantly evident in the formation of their political awareness, since they rarely read Urdu newspapers and their level of English proficiency was not particularly strong.

In Delhi, many stressed the importance education plays in the awareness level. They argued that people are not aware of their rights and “If they do not know their rights, then how are you expecting them to demand them?” Some suggested that the role of the educated, especially those coming from small towns and villages is to go back and teach people the importance of education and to raise awareness campaigns in this regard.

7.1.4 Sense of political efficacy

Through the sole focus on political activists, one would get an erroneous image of the political activism among the youth. This would inevitably result in the neglect of those citizens who might

be engaged with the political process but do not fit in one of the already designed forms of political participation or engagement. In fact, typologies of political involvement range from campaigning and party activism (this signifies the highly involved but not always well-informed), to the informed, politically interested and attentive regular voters, to the moderately informed but rather uninterested, to the ignorant and uninterested (however usually mobilized), until the inactive and completely uninvolved, however, some are reasonably informed. Therefore, we have four kinds of politically involved citizens: the mass participative (especially in demonstrations and protests); those belonging to political parties or other political groups; those who contacted party or government leaders; and finally potential participants (Eldersveld & Bashiruddin, 1978).

Political regeneration, as defined by Manor (1996), refers to “a process by which political institutions (formal and informal) become more capable of responding to pressures from and to the needs of social groups” (p. 234). There are basically six types of political regeneration: the rebuilding and/or revival of decayed institutions; the creation of new institutions; the creation of new programs which enhance the capacity of the state to respond creatively to society; the reassertion of political and/or legal and/or constitutional norms (as evident from Muslim press and Muslim scholars and activists); the processes by which an existing institution steps in to perform tasks that are supposed to be performed and may once have been performed by other decayed and incapable institutions; and finally the processes by which an existing institution is strengthened so that it can perform tasks that no other institution has previously performed (*ibid*).

The sense of political efficacy, measured by the following question: “Do you think your vote is important and makes a difference?” was surprisingly high among the respondents in Delhi. 82.9% said it does. Even the females share this positive sense since 75.6% of them confirmed this. Interestingly, the figure did not change in Kerala and was registered at 82.7% on the overall level and 78.8% among the females.

On the all-India level, there was no significant difference between Muslims and others concerning their sense of political efficacy. The following graph is an illustration of this according to the 1999, 2004 and 2009 CSDS National Election Surveys.

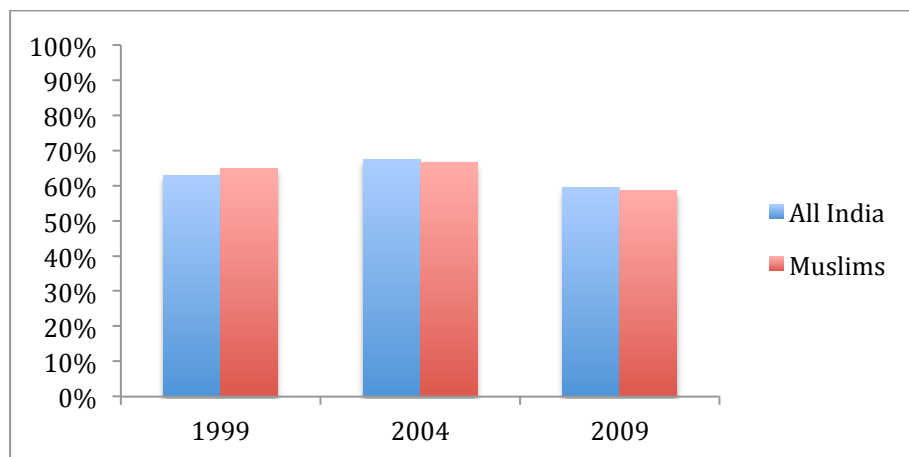


Figure 31 Sense of Political Efficacy. Statistics Source: NES, CSDS.

7.1.5 Discussing politics

There was no difference between Delhi and Kerala in the level of engagement with political issues. In Delhi 65.7% discussed politics with others in daily life on a regular basis and in Kerala the figure was 63.4%. Respondents mainly discussed politics with friends and colleagues 61.4%, or friends and family 27%, or just with the family 8.5%. They told me they also discussed political issues with social workers and slum dwellers, one told me, “Indian people talk all the time about politics.” It could be hence contended that the role of family in political socialization was low on an overall level.

7.1.6 Contact with politicians and representatives.

Another method of operationalizing political engagement and behaviour is to measure the contact with politicians and representatives. The figures did not radically differ between Delhi and Kerala. In Delhi, 75% said they were willing to contact the leader in their district or community, or the political figure there if they faced any serious problem. 25.8% had already contacted him. The figure among women sharply decreases to 12.1%. Even this is misleading since the girls would answer affirmatively, then they would explain that they would not go alone, or they would tell their husband or brother to go.

As for Kerala, 85.2% in general expressed their willingness to contact their representatives, 27% had already done so, and only 10.2% of the women contacted them.

The gender aspect should not be omitted from the analysis. The statistical figures could be misleading since females, despite responding positively to the question “Whether they were willing to contact the political leader in this district”, actually meant that a member of their family would go

and not themselves. Usually when I asked the female respondents how easy meeting the *netā* was, many affirmed this and added, “Many problems come up, and people meet him, but it is the business of men.”

7.1.7 The caste element

Because 80% of Muslims are low caste, different narratives must be woven. Sachar will tell you it is 45% but it is wrong, it is manipulated statistics. Caste has a distinct political function; democracy of Muslim society is not possible without the movement of lower castes. It is about redistribution of resources, not rituals.

- A Lecturer at Jamia, 2010

The role of lower caste Muslim organizations should not be neglected especially when we note the difference in their mobilization strategies and demand articulation. For example, whereas North Indian Muslim elites have fostered and furthered the cause of Urdu language, Dalit Muslim organizations (*pasmandah*) have clearly delineated this issue not only as non-significant but also as a part of an Ashrafization project and hence a social mobility ladder. Individuals in these groups stress that Urdu is not their mother language, and that the linguistic concern of the elites has been rotating from English to Persian to Urdu, but there are many other problems that are more vital than the decline of Urdu, “We are literally dying, we do not have education, why do I die for Urdu? Why not Hindi since it has even a more empowering national character”, a social activist emphasized.

Through these *pasmandah* Politics, lower-caste Muslims are articulating demands different from the middle class ones. In the Indian democracy, political representation seems to be circumscribed to upper caste Muslims, with their different social experience; hence, the dilemmas of low caste Muslims are not prevalent in the political discourses:

We are *shudra* first then we are Muslims because if you change your religion, your caste does not change. This garb of religion is not real. Justice should not be limited to one community. In Jamiat Ulama Hind, these *madanis* and *sayeds* are all upper caste. Sons succeed their fathers. Democracy does not work within these organizations. (NGO activist from UP, 2010)

The scenario in Kerala does not differ much. Caste plays a strong social role in the South Indian’s everyday life, regardless of their religion. In contemporary society, two apparent low castes appear among the Muslims and are being to extent discriminated against within the community itself. These are the fishermen and the barbers. Inter-caste marriage is a strict taboo especially on

the part of the *Sayyids* or the *thangals* (the Upper classes). The political reflection of caste politics appear in the strong support to the Muslim League which is dominated by *Thangals* who claim religious and not only political authority and hence manage to mobilize masses from the lower castes. By the second half of the twentieth century, Dalit movements started emerging in South India (Hardtmann, 2009; Thangaraj et al., 2007).

What could be witnessed in Kerala is a strong affiliation between the lower castes and the Muslims who work together. Different political forces in India have sought to build alliances with other marginalized, deprived, or oppressed groups, as partners in political struggles. Interestingly, many Islamists have taken up the cause of the struggles of Dalits, tribal groups and women. Feminist voices have even found space within the publications of some of the Islamist media, for example on the pages of the *Madhyamam* weekly magazine, which is affiliated to the Jamaati Islami-i-Hind in Kerala and now among the leading weekly magazines in South India. This magazine is known to publish different views dedicated to issues on Muslims, Dalits, and women. Another example is the PDP (People's Democratic Party) established by Madani and is considered to be the first party in Kerala specifically aimed at allying the Muslim-Dalit-Backward caste fronts by his formulation of “power to the *avarnas* and liberation to the oppressed (*avarnankku athikaram, peeditharkku mochanam*)” (Rowena, 2011).

7.2 The stance from Islamic ideals and socio-political concerns

The growing importance of religious identity, I argue, is a striking example of how global trajectories, especially a hegemonic discourse of modernity and the flow of images facilitated by new systems of communication, shape the identities of the relocated group. - Ghannam, Remaking the Modern, 2002¹⁴⁵

Burgat (2008) differentiates between two processes and levels of analysis of Islamism. The first is identity-centredness which occurs when a generation choose to “speak Muslim” and to resort to a central and privileged lexicon derived from Muslim culture in order to counter the categories of the colonial discourse that were imported and imposed. The second level is the diversified uses of this

¹⁴⁵ Ghannam, F. (2002). *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo*, p. 117.

lexicon which are contingent on multiple variables, varying with the kind of political claim and mobilization utilized for (pp. 8-9). Applying these analytical tools to the case of India, one notices the intricate usage of the democratic spaces to channel 'religious' demands, but at the same time the aversion to utilize narrowly religious language or to speak Muslim.

Muslim exceptionalism is a concept that gained momentum in the 1990s in American political science. It creates an idea of 'Muslim' politics and society that is essentially set apart from all other politics and societies, hence, an extension of Orientalism (Mabry, 2007, p. 16). The two resulting assumptions of this approach are that Muslims are predominantly resistant to democracy and to nation-state based nationalism. During my fieldwork, these assumptions were proven fallacious and eventually there was nothing statistically and qualitatively 'special' of Indian Muslims' concerns when compared to the non-Muslim citizen.

7.2.1 Attitude to democracy

I always thank Allah that I have been born in India. Muslim nations are despotic, running governments against basic principles of Islam. Sometimes I laugh at them. Saudi Arabia has a declared monarchy. There were socialist monarchies in Egypt, Syria and Iraq under Saddam. At least I can say loudly: Give me my right. At least I can confront the government when it turns majoritarian.

- Interview with Navaid Hamid, member of the National Integration Council, Delhi,

2010

Democracy is a good system because a human being gets heard in it, he has the right to ask, but in the other systems he can only answer.

- A Muslim Taxi Driver, Mumbai, April 2011

One of the major aims of this research was to check how the attitude to the democratic ideal differs from a place where Muslims are in a majority to where they constitute a minority. Is the commonly held conviction that Muslims would automatically opt for a *shari'ah*-based Islamic system of governance valid? Or has the long political socialization process affected the political psyche of the community in a manner leading it to prefer the secular democratic option? The most interesting result from the interviews and the survey conducted among the youth was that there was no difference either in the perception of India as a democratic state or the preference of democracy

as a system of governance. In Kerala and Delhi, the majority affirmed that they supported democracy in India, although they acknowledged its deficiencies and how it is not functioning on all terms; the figures were 68.2% and 68.7% respectively.

When asked how they consider the Indian state, 34.9% of the respondents in Delhi affirmed their conception of the state as fully democratic. However, 35.8% deemed it fifty-per-cent democratic, and 12.3% considered it more authoritarian than democratic. And in Kerala, the figures ranged from 32.6% who thought of India as fifty-per-cent democratic, 31.1% fully democratic and 15.2% more authoritarian than democratic. On a more critical note, not all students could display an argumentative stance of their perception of democracy. As a Muslim female teacher informed me after a focus group I had with Muslims students:

It was only when I had gone to Qatar that I understood the meaning of democracy. If you ask these students of their opinion, they would not be able to answer, they cannot understand what democracy is because they have not seen the other side. Here in India we see the debates on laws months before it is passed, but in Qatar, people heard about the laws one day before it is passed or even after it is passed.

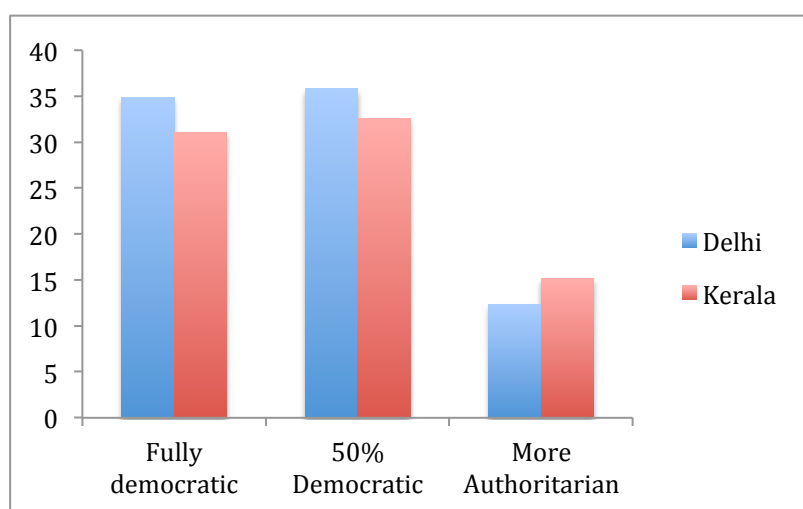


Figure 32 Difference in the perception of India as a democracy between Delhi and Kerala.

Interestingly, madrasa graduates of North India showed a higher percentage of the perception of India as a democratic state.

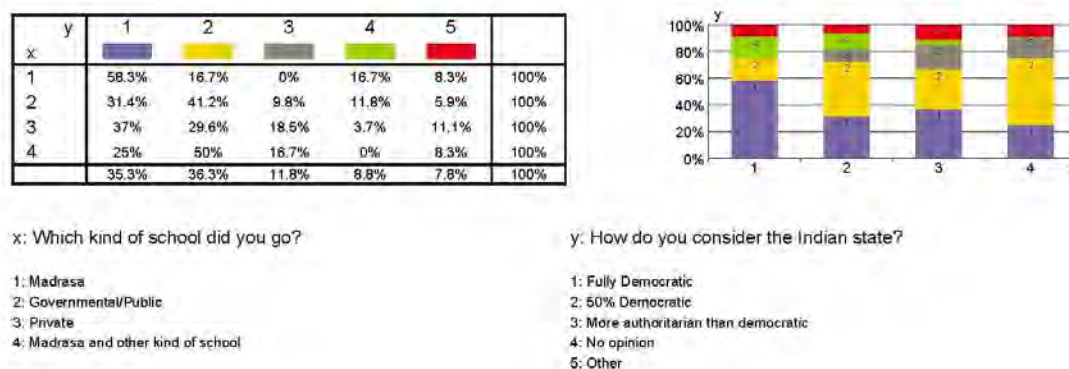


Figure 33 The Relationship between school socialization and the perception of the state.

On the all India level, there was a noted support to the democratic system as the better form of governance: 70.5% in 2004 and 70.1% in 2009. The corresponding figure of the Muslim respondents almost did not differ; 71.4% in 2004 and 69.7% in 2009 (NES from the CSDS). Many respondents in the survey I conducted confirmed the disparity between the constitutional aspect of India's democracy and the empirical reality of malpractice of the democratic ideal:

The system is democratic but not on all terms. Nothing in India is fully operating in a specific way on all terms. There is always corruption and lack of transparency. Although India is the biggest democracy in the world, this system is not always functioning. People usually sell their votes to criminals (*goondas*). Like now the election in Bihar is an example on this, no one can be sure about the result or how it went. The criminals play a very big role in the election process. The voters are silent. Money and *goondas* are what determines the result. (A female student at Jamia, November 2010)

This lack of disparity between Muslims and the other Indians is reflected in almost every aspect relating to political indicators. When asked about the most pressing problems facing them, the following were the highest recurring problems for all Indians: drinking water, unemployment and electricity. For Muslims, only the order slightly differed to have unemployment as the most recurrent problem, followed by electricity and drinking water. Perhaps the difference between Muslims and the all-India percentages appeared in the perception that the government neglected problems of Muslims; 16.2% agreed to this statement while among the Muslims the percentage rose to 41.2%. The same was true for the perception that Muslims are backward and therefore deserving concessions from the government; whereas only 32.6% on the national level agreed with this statement, 77% of Muslims did (NES of the CSDS, 2009).

In an edition by an Urdu Jamaati Islami magazine, the magazine editor had asked the readers in the previous edition several questions, and then they published the readers' answers. I grouped these

answers and arrived at the following graph:

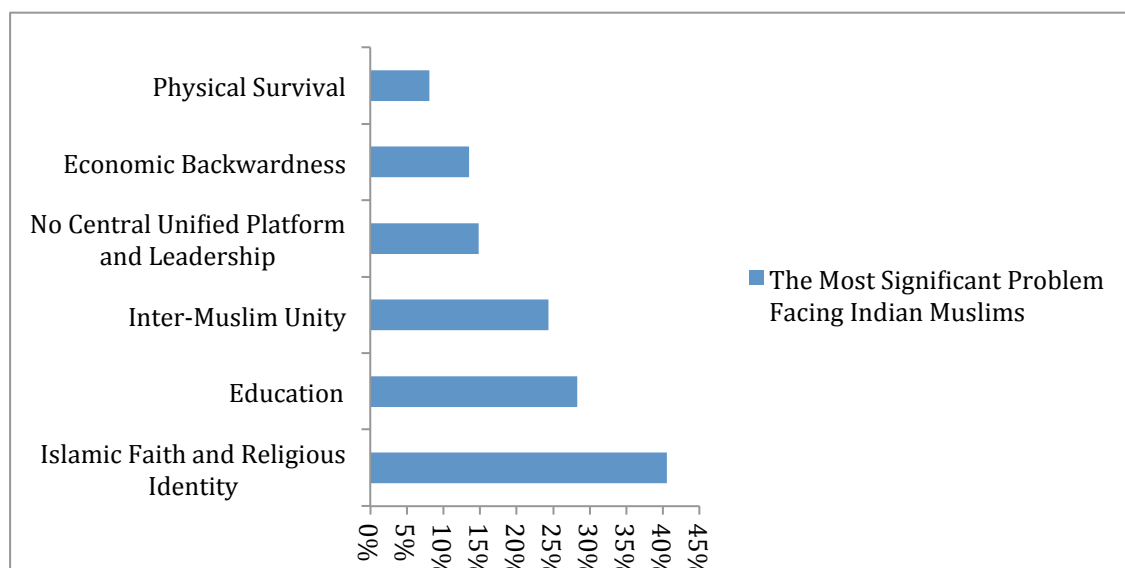


Figure 34 A visualization of the major problems as seen by readers of a Jamaat Islami magazine.

The first question concerned the most fundamental issue facing Muslims. This appeared to be faith and religious identity (41%) which referred to the loss of a sense of moral and religious responsibility, non-understanding of Islam, living according to Islam, and hinduization of society by Hindutva forces. For a reader, the main issue was not that there was no security of life, business and money, women's honour, mosques, graves, schools and education, personal law, monuments and civilization but that the future of Muslim personality was not secured. Education came in the second rank (28%) and especially the inclusion of religious and modern education. This was followed by inter-Muslim unity or the unity in belief (24%) as some readers expressed their grief that after the partition of India, the Muslim community itself witnessed an inter-partition. The lack of a central and unified political platform and leadership came in the fourth rank (15%). Several readers expressed that instead of the polarization of organized religious and political leadership, both kinds of leaderships should be combined, but what was happening was that if there were a good religious leader, then he would have nothing to do with politics, and if there were a good political leader, then he would not include religion in his agenda. Economic backwardness did not appear to hold much significance as an issue (only 14%). And surprisingly the physical safety and survival of Indian Muslims got the lowest percentage (8%). Those who pointed this issue out as the most significant referred to the resilience of the Muslim community despite attempts of the Hindu right-wing to exterminate them from India: "India is free, but we are not, in anytime we could be burnt."

Despite the widespread concern among Muslims of the absence of leadership and united political forum that can voice Muslims' demands and concerns at the national level, there is no parallel

consensus whether they should form ‘Muslim’ political parties. Supporters of the separate political parties camp take up the experience of Kerala and Assam. The opponents, however, emphasize the specificities of the historical experience and the different political cultures that characterize different regions of India. The following is an example of the opposing points of view obtained from different reports by the Indian Social Institute in 2009:

The community needs to become more active in politics and join mainstream parties and assimilate. You cannot lock the community into a religious straitjacket like this. (Irshad Ilmi, editor of the Kanpur-based Urdu newspaper, *Siyasat Jadid*)

Muslims do not have the ability to develop a middle-class leadership. They are simply not allowed the freedom and space to grow, as they are crushed by both the religious leaders as well as the political parties. This is why Muslims won’t be able to develop a party of their own (Athar Siddiqui of the Lucknow-based Centre for Objective Research and Development)

Muslims are becoming shrewd. They are voting for whoever is promising them development, not community-based agendas. The AUDF in Assam may seem like a Muslim party but it is headed by a secular, deeply-rooted Assamese. In Bihar, Nitish Kumar is popular because of his work. The *shāhi imām* is a man confined to a grand old mosque. What would he know of the world outside? How does he claim to represent the community? (Mohammed Anwar Hussain of the Jamiat Ulama I Hind)

7.2.2 The minority discourse and discrimination

No mention of discrimination could be complete without a reference to the Gujarat riots of 2002 and its aftermath on the psyche of Muslim youth and their collective memory. In Delhi, there was a noted difference in the attitude to the memory of communal riots. Whereas some students claimed that they had no idea about what happened in Gujarat in 2002, others chose not to speak, and some spoke of how it was a wake up call for Muslims to realize their place in the *Hindu rāshtra*.

What is interesting to note is the attitude of some students who adopted a similar attitude to the former Gujarati Vice Chancellor of Darul Uloom Deoband Maulana Vastanvi who was forced to

step down from his post after his remarks on Gujarati Muslims.¹⁴⁶ This was evident in the stress of many students to move beyond discrimination and fear of violence, and to see the real reasons behind Muslims' backwardness. In a meeting on the Vastanvi issue in Delhi, the following statement was uttered, "Most of us have tired of the *jalsa-jaloos* [procession-protest] politics of the Muslim leadership" (Subrahmaniam V. , 2011).

The Gujarat carnage does not feature so heavily in the discourses carried out by the Muslim Keralites, whether in media or everyday life. But as one lecturer told me, "The dilemma lies in forgiving versus forgetting." According to him, Muslims should not forget but forgive. Nevertheless, as I deduced from many conversations, it was the RSS that was cultivating the worries of many young Muslims since apparently the number of RSS branches is the highest in Gujarat, followed by Kerala (this negates the perception that RSS is weak in Kerala; it is not weak, it is powerful yet invisible). Kerala, having had a background of militant Islamism as evident in the ISS (Islamic Sevak Sangh¹⁴⁷) or the current Popular Front of India, has presented a clear response to Hindu nationalistic activities. However, this type of political activity has been met with conflicting reactions; some either condemned it as an initiator of communalism, or it was met with limited support, or as a college lecturer informed me, it is not even seen as a counterpart to RSS:

We cannot group RSS and PFI in one group because RSS has gotten the power with them; democracy and human rights in India are defined by RSS. The RSS controls visual and print media, and even government holidays, even without resort to evident violence. The RSS is responsible for setting the standards for who should be a good Muslim.

As I have dealt extensively with the minority and discrimination syndrome in North India in a previous chapter (section 5.6), I focus in this section on Kerala where discrimination and the minority feeling as I show is based more on gender rather than on religion. Whereas 76.9% of the respondents in Delhi claimed that they felt they belonged to a minority, this feeling was registered at 43.8% in Kerala (despite the fact that they constituted a majority in the district the survey was held). The numerical idea did not dominate their mode of thinking while answering this question.

¹⁴⁶ Maulana Vastanvi made positive comments about Muslims' development in Gujarat and had urged Muslims to overcome what happened in 2002. By this, some people interpreted it as a reminder to the Muslims of the role of Gujaratis as businessmen and therefore of the importance of an atmosphere of communal harmony to the thriving or mere existence of their business and thus livelihoods. Others, mainly embodied in the majority of the *Majlis-e Shoora* or the Advisory board of the Deoband seminary, had voted in favor of his ouster since they interpreted his remarks as a praise for Narendra Modi (the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat) in addition to not being from Uttar Pradesh unlike his predecessors.

¹⁴⁷ The ISS was created by Madani in Kerala as a response to Bhagalpur riots of 1991.

Being empowered was the main driving force to locate oneself as a minority or not. Here the gender variable does not present us with interesting results but in the case of discrimination it appears significant.¹⁴⁸ More females in Kerala (16.7% as compared to 9.4% of the males) confirmed they had encountered discrimination mainly at their educational institutions and to a lesser extent at their home. This is in contrast to the case of Delhi, where the males encountering discrimination outnumber the females. When asked about their future, 53% feared discrimination in finding a job (unlike in Delhi where the highest percentage went to finding a house), followed by governmental offices and their homes. Since discrimination in Kerala was based more on gender rather than on religion, this explains the high percentage in skepticism about finding a job since the majority of respondents were females.

The first point to be marked is the majoritarian feature of Muslims in Northern Kerala. The fieldwork was conducted in Malappuram District where Muslims constitute a majority. The establishment of a long democratic culture and competitive politics away from communalism and the memory of partition was also a reason for the disappearance of the feeling of being a minority and for a strong faith in constitutional guarantees:

Muslims in India cannot feel the sense of a minority. India is a pure democracy open to all who enjoy equal rights. We have a system, in fact many systems. We have Acts, one of the most important of them is the Right to Information Act. According to this Act, anyone can apply by a letter and a one-rupee paid, to any office to obtain a copy of any kind of proceeding or document and the office is obliged to give this copy. (Aryadan Shaukath, personal communication, February 2011)

This is also iterated by some of the students I interviewed:

We do not feel we are a minority here because we have considerations and rights. There is justice. India is not a Muslim country, all people are here, but the Indian constitution gave Muslims the right to live like they wish especially concerning education and *da'wah*. There are good chances for *da'wah* here in India; we cannot do *da'wah* in Saudi Arabia as freely as we can do it here.

We feel India is better than the US. Even in the US, women are still fighting for their rights. This is through what I read. It is in the dress code itself. As for India, we have all the

¹⁴⁸ In Delhi, 65% of the females showed their sense of being a minority. This is in contrast to 38.2% in Kerala. The figures for the males were 84.4% and 52.8% respectively.

privileges given to citizens such as freedom of religion and expression and organizing programs in public spaces; we are living here for the goodness.

Unlike the case in North India where 21.3% of the male respondents in my survey complained that they have been accused of being a Pakistani and non-Indian, none in the Kerala sample encountered this problem. The regional context seemed to deeply influence the type of experience they have. In my conversations with an orthodox Sunni Arabic language student, who always wears a turban, I asked him if he encountered any problems outside Kerala based on his distinctive appearance. He told me he had no problems in the two weeks he spent in Delhi. I asked if he wore the turban and had any problems. He smiled and said, “I have my Indian voting card in my pocket, no one can accuse me of being a Pakistani; I am an Indian.”

In an interview with a principal of Jamaati-affiliated Islamic college, he asserted the difference in the accommodation of religion between the North and the South: “In the North, Hindus accommodate Islam, whereas in South India, it is the Muslims who accommodate the Hindu culture.” The strong difference between Kerala and Delhi reflects the historical context of a shared belonging. Thus, the communal harmony existing in Kerala makes it hard to imagine a system of difference, although it is actually practiced and many might not be even aware of the actual manifestations of civil codes (the question was translated into the vernacular because the English version was totally alien to the respondents). This difference was translated in the 32.3% in Kerala who supported having different civil codes for different communities in comparison with 52.4% in Delhi.

Another contested issue of identity that has assumed huge political space is the Babri Masjid conflict. In September 2010, the Allahabad High Court pronounced the famous Ayodhya verdict dividing the disputed land into three parts. Whereas the Muslim press showed significant turmoil over the verdict (as Fig. 36 shows), Muslim youth shared different opinions as the following figure shows. It remains to be said that the ‘No opinion’ answer is a politically burdened one. It was not chosen by the respondents to convey political ignorance or unawareness, but to assert a statement. Students were often critical of the question in the first place, since it was not a matter of justice or not to them. It was rather a matter of common sense. In other cases, students did not want to sound too critical of the High Court since it is unacceptable from an Indian Citizen to challenge a court's decision

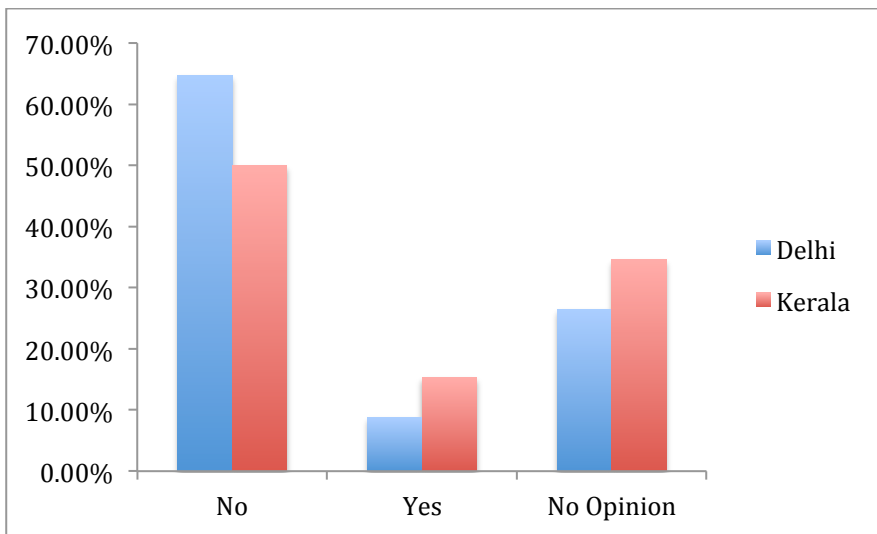


Figure 35 Response to the question: “Do you think that the Ayodhya Verdict on the 30th September concerning Babri Masjid was fair to the Muslims of India?”

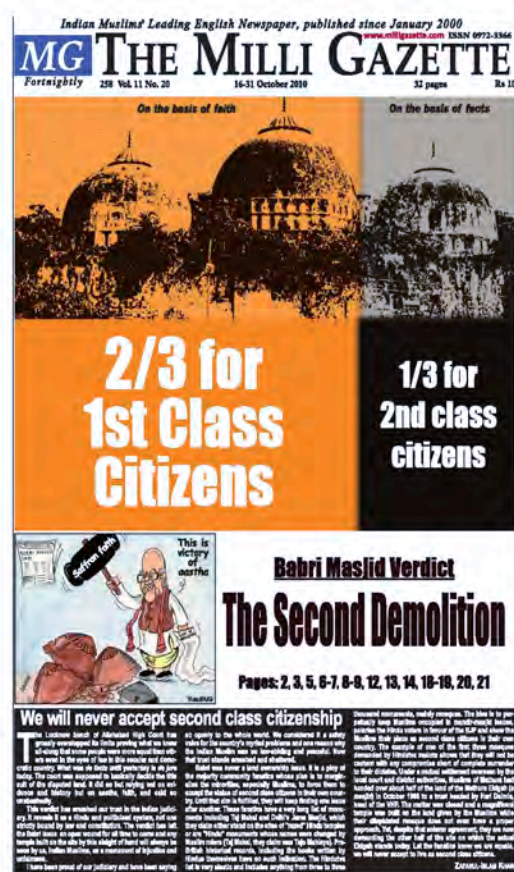


Figure 36 The Cover of the Milli Gazette issue following the Ayodhya Verdict October 2010. Source: Author's own collection.

Another issue that I have alluded to throughout this study was the sense of safety and security. Interestingly, the perception of safety did not alter much from the context of being a numerical

minority in Delhi (62.5%) to the majority district in Kerala (66.7 %). Most respondents in the Delhi survey never went out of Jamia or Okhla area, which is a predominantly Muslim area (in other words a *ghetto*) this is why their sense of security is relatively high, although the fear of crime and police fake encounters is strong. This is why in Delhi 63.2% of the males (versus 75% of the females) said there were places they would avoid going to in fear of their personal security. The figure in Kerala surprisingly did not alter much; 50% among the males in contrast to 71.1% of the females confirmed their fears.

Despite the Gulf syndrome in Kerala and the ensuing widespread belief that education is magical panacea for India, security as a threat to citizenship remains a strongly alarming issue. This is reflected in the words of a Muslim lecturer in Kerala:

The state should provide security and only then we could say we are proud of being an Indian. But if being an Indian Muslim does not give one security, then there is a real problem with Indian democracy and secularism. Everyone should be able to speak about being a Muslim; otherwise there is no meaning of any democratic right being present in India.

Finally, I would like to draw the attention to another identity-related issue, especially with traditional customs. It was apparent that whereas the Indian constitution drew a unique and unparalleled model of secularism, there was no corresponding secularism or democracy in food and festivals in India. In Kerala for example, my interviewees delivered to me the message that celebrating *Onam* and becoming Vegetarian is considered high culture, while if one goes and asks for beef in a restaurant, then he or she is considered inferior. In the words of a lecturer, “The interesting thing is that asking for beef is not considered inferior in an Air India flight going to Los Angeles, but in Kerala it is.” The confidence factor, hence, is tremendously crucial for any social being, and this is lacking among those who are celebrating different festivals or eating different food.¹⁴⁹

7.3 Political trust

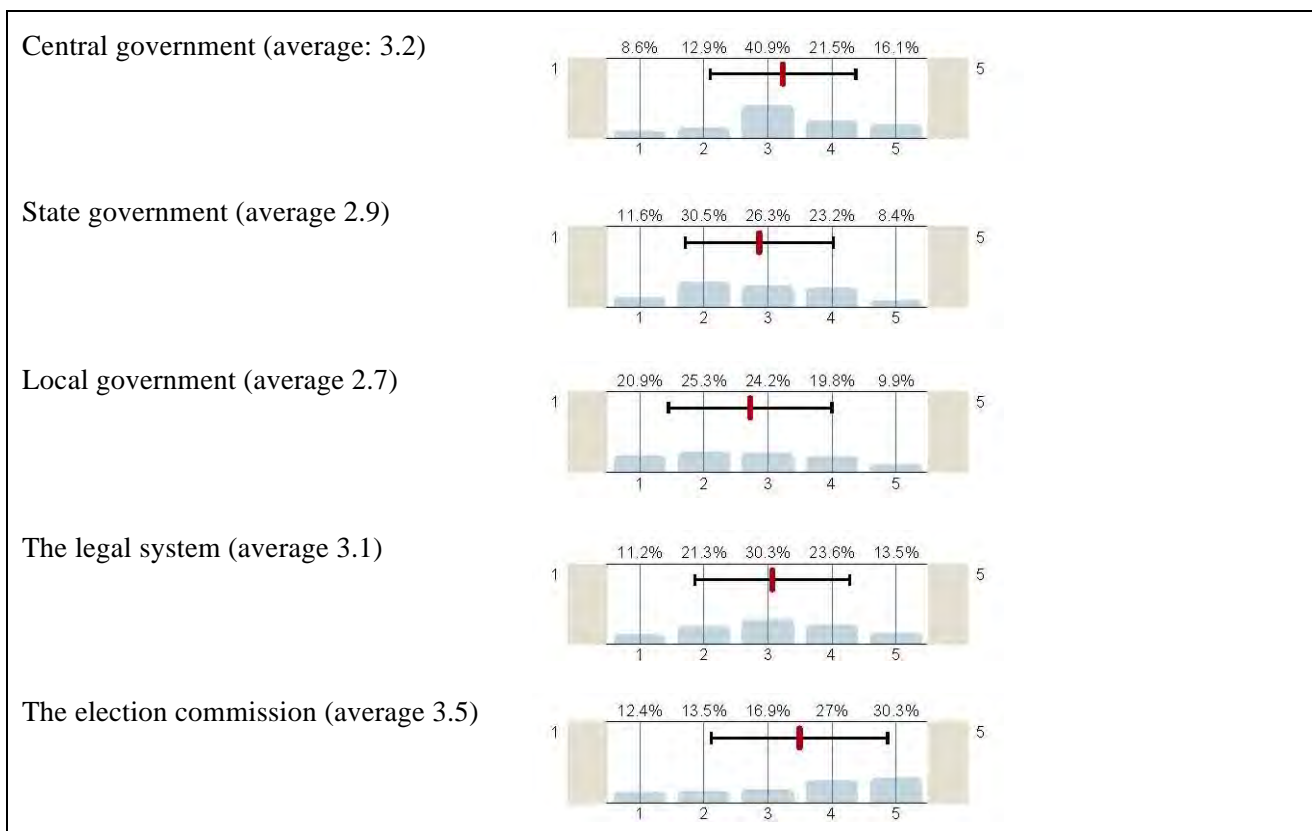
Political trust is defined as “the orientation of a citizen or a section of citizens towards policy, the

¹⁴⁹ Food, as a topic of contention over the meaning of equal rights of citizens, stirred many debates in India. The recent one was in JNU in Delhi when some students had planned to organize a “Beef and Pork Festival” on campus, but had been rejected by the Delhi High Court in September 2012. See: Hindustan Times, 19/09/2012: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/No-beef-pork-festival-High-court-tells-JNU/Article1-932359.aspx>

decision making process, the context of decisions, individuals holding important positions in the political set-up, and the authorities responsible for enforcement of government’s decision” (Hasan Q. , 1987, p. 201). Hasan also regards the attitude to the police as one of the most basic indicator of political trust since it is regarded as the most visible government figure. The relationship between the sense of security, an essential requirement of citizenship, and the way citizens trust the police is evident in many narratives of students’ lives:

People come to Delhi and settle here because of job opportunities, then the police comes and takes the youth especially those from Azamgarh in fake encounters. There are students who were doing their masters, and they were just picked and thrown in jail for nothing. Now their whole careers are gone, what are they going to do after coming out of prison? Who will employ them? This is why we, as Muslims, do not regard police positively. (A PhD student at JNU)

According to the survey I conducted among students, in Delhi, the majority (35.4%) showed moderate support to the Indian political system. The following figures are the percentages of trust North Indian Muslim youth cast in certain institutions on a scale from one to five where one is the least and five is the maximum:



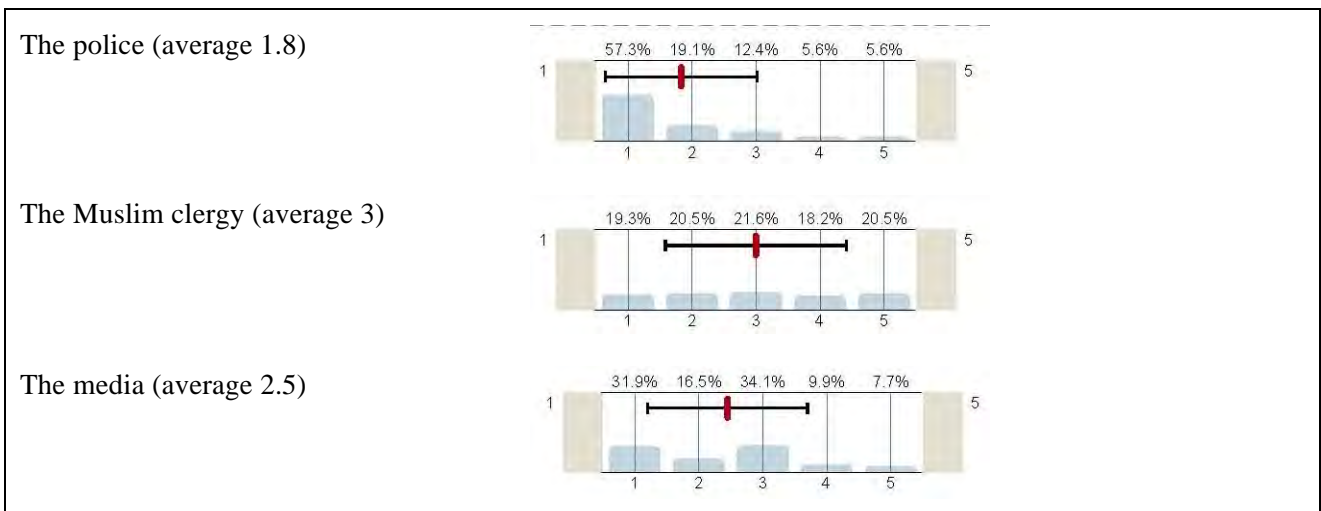


Table 3 Trust Levels among the Youth in Delhi. Source: Own Survey.

In Kerala, the percentages increase as 58.7% show moderate support to the political system. The corresponding trust levels are as follows: the central government got 50.4% with an average of 3, 40% of the respondents showed trust in the state government at an average level of 2.5, the local government got a slightly higher trust level of an average of 3.2 (32.5%), the legal system also had 32.5% of the respondents giving it an average of 3.2, the Election Commission had the highest trust level as 35.7% of the respondents gave it the grade “4” making the average of trust 3.5. Unlike in Delhi, the police got a higher trust level of an average of 2.8 as 39.1% of the respondents gave it the grade 3. The Muslim clergy got a similar trust level as in Delhi, with an average of 3.5 and 30.1% ranking it with 4. Finally, 37.6% of the respondents gave the media the average of 3.

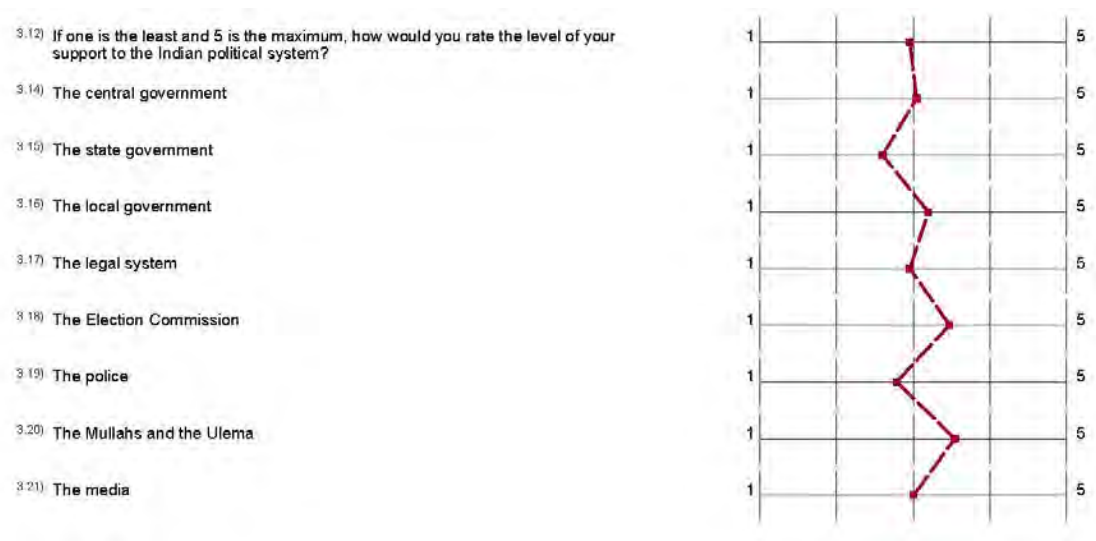


Figure 37 Trust Levels in Kerala. Source: Own survey.

Institution	All India	Muslims
The Central Government	40.8	44.5
The State Government	39.5	36.9
The Local Government	37	37
The Judiciary	42.9	43.2
Political Parties	18.1	19.1
The Election Commission	35.9	35.9
Governmental Officials	21.6	21.3
Elected Representatives	18.1	18.3
Politics	23.8	22.3

Table 4 Percentages of Highest Degrees of Political Trust. Statistics Source: CSDS National Election Survey 2009.

Despite the high level of trust cast in the police and media in Kerala, in-depth interviews with people belonging to the *'ām ādmi* category or the working class have reflected a disparate image. One explanation to the difference in the trust level of the police lies in the lower intensity and number of police fake encounters. Despite this, the results of the survey were skewed to the 'better' or rosy position due to the outnumbering of females. Being confined to the safe realms of their home, their hostel or their campus, they did not encounter many problems with institutions and the police. However, interviews with working students or destitute fishermen showed cases of police

bias based on their economic class, not to mention their caste. Many of these interviews refer to the notorious Marad massacre on the coastal village near Calicut and the ways both the police and the media biasedly dealt with the issue. According to my interviewees, there were two Marad cases, in which the first Hindus were attacked, and the in the second the attack was on Muslims; however, the media made a mass coverage of the first case.¹⁵⁰ In the words of a Muslim fisherman:

It was seen that the police in Marad was angry with the Muslims. It depends upon the area. My aunt lives there in Marad. Her son has been in jail for seven years. When we go there we feel that the police is angry with our people. And so is the media. When they give some news about the first Marad riot it would be given in the first page, but when it is about the second Marad riot they put it in the inner pages. They left the Hindus who were captured. Now our people are in prison.

Throughout my conversations with students in Delhi, it was apparent that most of them did not know what legitimacy meant. Some girls did not know the word democracy in the first place (in both its English and Urdu variants), and most did not know what authoritarianism referred to. For one female student, legitimacy was linked to the commonwealth games and how the country was not prepared for it. For another male student, he decided to give the central government the grade “3” because, according to him, he saw it as corrupt, and after the commonwealth games deal, the chaos (*garbar*) and the corruption behind it became apparent. He also read in the Hindi newspaper *jansakta* how the money that was spent on the commonwealth games could have fed all of India rice, and could have given free medical services to Indians for the coming eight years. Another respondent claimed that Muslims did not trust the government; for example, there was the campaign for polio, which was boycotted because there were rumors concerning the vaccine.

This means that the level of trust is contingent upon events unveiling corruption deals for instance. The same is the case for the police and ‘*ulama*. The police for many are a body that works only via bribes and hence only the rich can get away with everything. The similarity in the support level to the central government is directly linked to the fact that it was a Congress government at the time of my survey. Respondents in both the regions affirmed that as long as it was a Congress

¹⁵⁰ The Thomas P. Joseph Commission of Inquiry report could be accessed at http://www.mathrubhumi.com/2006_customimages/news/PF123172_marad01.pdf; For a sample of media coverage see for example: V.R. Krishna Iyer, The Marad Massacre, the Hindu 31/05/2003, accessed at <http://www.hindu.com/2003/05/31/stories/2003053100621000.htm>; Marad Riots, rediff.com 27/12/2008, accessed at <http://www.rediff.com/news/2008/dec/27marad-riots-five-years-on-63-found-guilty.htm>; George Iype, Marad Riots: How politicians fanned a communal riot, rediff.com 28/09/2006, accessed at <http://www.rediff.com/news/2006/sep/28gi.htm>

government, then it was the best among the worse.

Although there is a realistic difference between what an *'alim* refers to and what a *mullah* is since *'alim* (singular of *'ulama*) is a learned scholar of Islam, with a higher educational status than a *mullah*, but the two words are used interchangeably among Indian Muslims. Very few students actually managed to differentiate between them in their conversations. This is the reason why I grouped them in one category despite my acknowledgment that they are not synonymous. As for the *mullahs*, the low level of trust cast by some of the students was due to their frequent political inclinations. Another reason was explained by a female PhD student who, despite her madrasa educational background, had a low level of trust in the *'ulama*. She argued that it was because they saw every matter with the lens of Islam and belief. But, according to her, not everything was linked to faith; it should be a little neutral, liberal and not narrow.

The role of *'ulama* is surprisingly stronger in Kerala because of education. There is a big difference between female and male support, in Kerala only 17.2% of the females showed maximum trust in the *'ulama* in contrast to 45.5% of the males. In Delhi it was the opposite: 25% of females gave the highest rank, while only 17.9% of the males did.

The Jamaati Islami readers were asked whether they trust the Muslim leadership in India. Whereas only 4% gave a positive answer, 25% did not provide a specific answer, and 73% said they do not (in reaching this percentage I also included those who said that there is no Muslim leadership in the first place). One of the interesting answers was, “currently, Muslim Leaders are definitely a phoenix.” The same sentiment was shared among many students:

One of the problems facing Indian Muslims is that they have no single united platform to participate in the political system. Other political parties have many constraints to support Muslims wholeheartedly. Many Muslim majority places are very backward in basic necessities. The only exception is the state of Kerala where Muslims have a united political party, which helped a lot to attain their rights without damaging others' rights.

The absence of this platform is also linked to the previously mentioned bifurcation among Indian Muslims according to divisions based on caste. These divisions resulted in the difference of united interests and demands:

Who are the people raising injustice calls? And who are the people supporting them? These are indeed big organizations. But the common people say, “Take Babri Masjid and give us reservations in jobs in return.” (A lecturer at Jamia)

Other problems as seen by students included women's freedom, *madrassa* educational system, lack of Muslims' representation in Indian politics and the occupation of governmental offices by non-Muslims, reservations that should be granted to poor Muslims, the deteriorated social and economic status of Muslims, the victim-centric mentality, which they need to come out of, the communalism of the police establishment and Hindutva politics, the state terrorism and the alliance with the United States of America. A student in Jamia sums up the predicament of the Muslim community:

Though conditions of other sections have improved a lot since the transfer of power in India, Muslims' conditions are getting worse day by day. Thousands of Muslims were killed with impunity in Gujarat, and the murderer is chosen for a second time as a chief minister. Mosques are demolished, and temples are built over them with no historical, factual or moral justification. Muslims are generally perceived as terrorists, and many are killed in fake encounters. Commissions are formed, and their recommendations are not endorsed.

7.4 Agency dynamics

This world is a world of strife and struggle and cannot be changed with mere talk.

- Maududi

We walked through dirty alleys. She apologized that her house is very small. She also told me, "Muslim areas are very dirty." I told her, "I noticed this, but why?" She said, "Because they have dirty minds." I told her, "But Islam encourages cleanliness." She said, "Yes, they clean their houses very well and throw the garbage outside on the roads." I asked, "Do they expect the government to clean it?" She said, "No one expects the government to do anything. The government promises a lot. But people are supposed to clean themselves."

- Excerpt from my fieldnotes of a day I spent with a female Muslim student in Batla House, 2010.

When asked what steps should be done for Muslims to achieve educational advancement and to overcome their economic backwardness, a strong sense of a need for agency and a belief in the responsibility of the self in the deterioration of Muslim conditions and as a solution was noted in the replies of the readers of the Jamaati Islami magazine's opinion poll. Minor mention has been noted of any assumed or aspired role for the government to be taken. The mosque appears as a recurrent

tool and space for reform. Through the mosque, several readers mentioned primary education could be enforced, and networks of these primary educational centers could be coordinated on a *panchayat*, village, and block levels. After the *fajr* prayer, the poor and the rich should convene and decide the possibility of donations and funds according to the educational and economic needs of their neighbors. This should be done on a daily basis, following a tradition that was performed in the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

The embodiment of the self as an initiator of change is central to Islamic conceptualization. In the Quran, it is asserted that God does not change a people's conditions unless they change what is in themselves first (13:11). Robinson (2006) in his study on the self and change in South Asia, points out to four Islamic percepts in this regards: self-instrumentality (the idea of the individual human being as the active creative agent on Earth), self-affirmation (the autonomy of the individual), affirmation of ordinary life (ordinary things of the self), and self-consciousness (the reflective self which the Western experience is referred to as the inward turn).

Almost all Islamic organizations adopt this methodology in their work. An example of this is the Tablighi Jamaat that is famous for its proselytizing work all over South Asia or Jamaati Islami with its intermingling between the role of religion and politics in a person's life. If we overlook the intensity of orthodoxy and rigid rules adopted by these organizations, we will find unprecedented spaces created for individuals to exercise their sense of agency in self-change. Jamaati Islami builds a network in which the youth is creatively engaging in leadership roles and career building. *Tablighi Jamaat* offers a vast space for women to become preachers and to exercise mobility. In an interview with a PhD student at Jamia working on early Urdu Women novelists, she emphasized how she was an active member at *Tablighi*, which she joined because of her grandmother who was also another member. This student was responsible for a weekly programme of *da'wah*, in which she gathered some girls and discussed religion together. Although this young woman was not employed, and according to her, was not going to work, she was studying out of interest—the same answer I got from a girl at the Madrasah in Lucknow. She referred to the importance of education, especially when her children go to school and how it differs when the child realizes how educated his mother is, and also how the school sees that the mother is highly educated. Education thus opens up spaces not only for agency but also for challenging orthodox and widely accepted ideas like the ban on intermingling between males and females. According to this woman and to many others, although this intermingling is *harām*, there is no problem when it comes to going out seeking education at the university. In the words of a Muslim scholar at Nadwa: “India is a democratic country, because of this, Muslim girls find spaces for education, they progress in the same time they

conserve their *shari'ah*.”

This is a clear and outspoken defiance to the commonly established *fatwa* on the separation between women and men in public spaces. The secular democratic nature of India makes the realm of *fatwas* a deeply contested one. This was mostly obvious after the Shah Bano case. In a society where citizens are free to opt between civil or religious laws governing their personal lives, the scope of agency increases. However, the power the ‘*ulama* class is invested with makes this choice almost absent in many cases.

Increasingly, the realm of *fatwas* trespassed its ‘personal law’ boundaries and assumed significant presence in the political arena. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, many ‘*ulamas*, *Mullahs* and *Imams* produce what could be termed a political *fatwa* such as banning the singing of the *Vande mataram*, or preferring a specific political candidate in elections. Through amplifying the negative impact of the politics of *fatwas*, many notable Muslim figures first condemn these *fatwas*, like Zafrul Islam Khan who contends that *fatwas* are only followed by the media. Second, they dissolve the conceptual chaos of terming political opinions or appeals endorsed by Muslim ‘*ulama* as *fatwas*. Upon asking him whether the *muftis* give any political kind of *fatwas*, the *Imam* of the Fatehpuri Masjid in Delhi vehemently argued

No, there aren’t two kinds of *fatwas*. Those related to *shari'ah* are considered *fatwas*, but those of *vande-mataram*-like are not *fatwas*, these are opposition *fatwas*. They are not based on *shari'a*. *Fatwas* should be based on *shari'a*. If there is a political candidate in front of us, a non-Muslim who is better than the Muslim, we will just help the non-Muslim. This *imam* who does this is not an *imam* of a mosque, but an *imam* of politics.

On the mass level, there was no consensus whether the public follows the *fatwas* or not. The ‘*ulama* assume their power in many cases from the inefficiency of the Indian court system, which takes many years to make a ruling. Thus in personal matters, most Muslims go directly to the ‘*ulama* to solve their problems, especially if it is a woman seeking a divorce:

Very few people go to Indian courts. The case there goes on for ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty, to forty years. (*She starts giggling*). It goes on forever. Because our Personal Law body people know *hadith* and Islamic law that is why any need of going to Indian courts does not arise. Of course we do follow the *fatwas*. Darul Uloom Deoband is the number one in Asia, but people following *barelwi* ideas and those coming from Western UP do not follow Deoband’s *fatwas*. (A middle class woman I met at the Jama Masjid Delhi, December 2010)

Because I can read and figure out for myself then I only follow those *fatwas* I see right. Most *fatwas* issued related to women intend to keep them backward, like women cannot be judges or Sania Mirza cannot wear shorts. So do they expect her to play tennis with a *burka*? There are so many people around me whom I can ask questions relating to religion, I do not need to go and ask a *sheikh*, I would never actually. (A female student at Jamia)

Although we are *madrassa* graduates, we do not always follow *fatwas* issued by the '*ulama*, and there are specific institutions like Darul Uloom Deoband, which we think are too extremist, narrow-minded and irrational and therefore we do not follow their *fatwas*. We follow only those appealing to our hearts. (A male student at JNU)

When asked if they follow *fatwas* issued by the '*ulama*: 29.1% said they always do, 37.9% said sometimes, and 33% negated this action. For females, the figures interestingly differed since only 14.6% said they always follow the *fatwas*, 36.6% said sometimes according to what they are convinced of, and 48.8% said they never do. The following graph is hence an indication on the difference between this sense of agency among women and men:

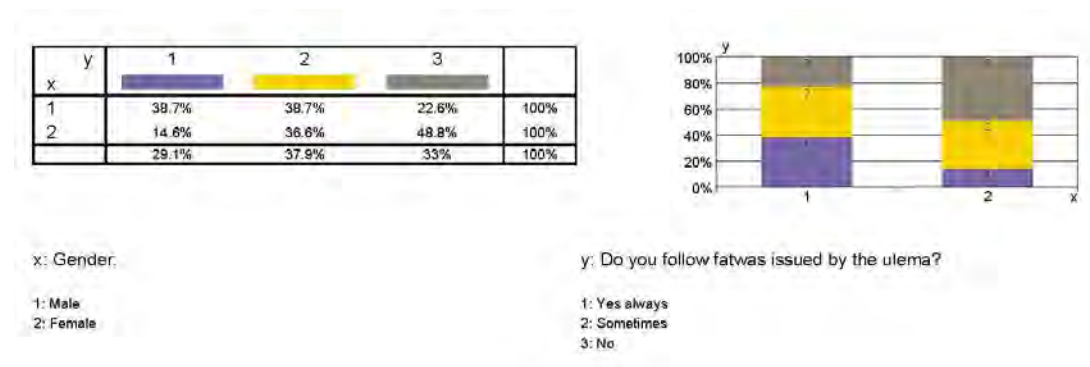


Figure 38 The relationship between Gender and following *fatwas* in Delhi.

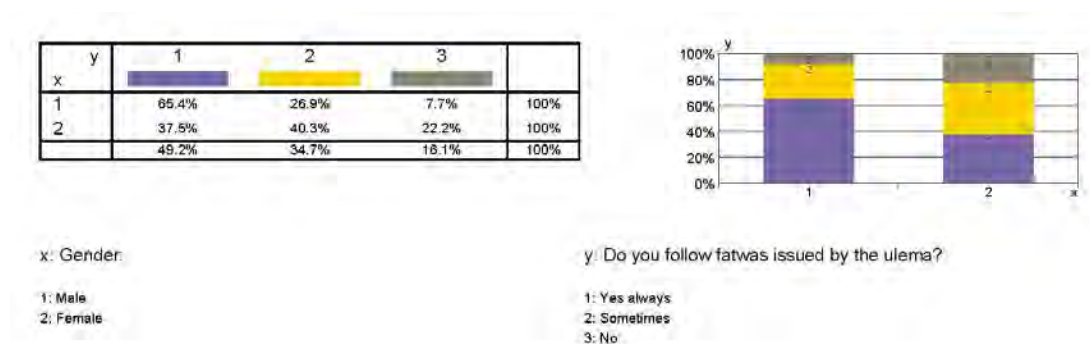


Figure 39 The relationship between Gender and following *fatwas* in Kerala.

The relationship between following fatwas and being a member in Islamic associations

membership is shown as follows:

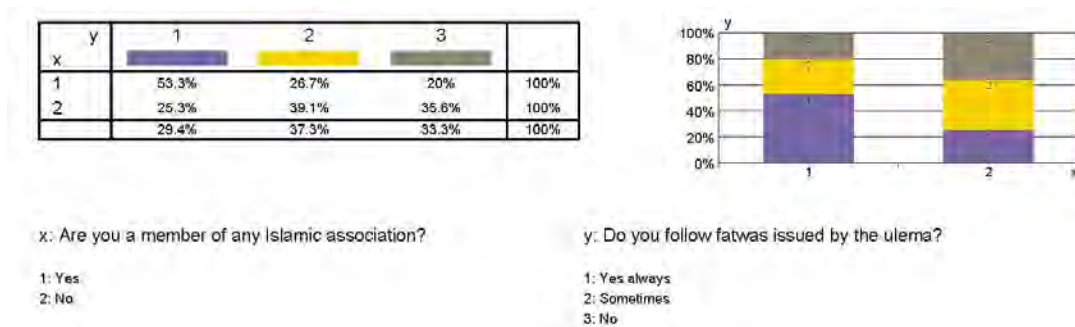


Figure 40 The Relationship between membership in Islamic associations and following fatwas in Delhi.

Unlike in North India, it is argued that there is no *fatwa* culture in Kerala, but only a ‘whispering effect’ (Hafiz Mohamed, personal communication, January 2011). The ‘whispering effect’ refers to the action by upper caste Muslim religious leaders (the *thangals*) who hold a weekly ceremony of inviting people to their houses and then offering them some healing rituals by whispering a set of Islamic codes and writing them some Quranic verses on a piece of paper. The practice is not isolated from the North Indian Sufi rituals of healing as I show in the next page, however, the authority imbibed by the *thangals* led to an interesting case. Despite the emergence of other series of political authority and affiliations with the Indian Union Muslim League, these *thangals* did not engage in the traditional politics of *fatwa* that were common in North India. In Kerala, *fatwas* are not the business of ordinary *imams*, nevertheless, as a Jamaati Islami leader informed me, while the *imams* and *khateeb*s do not issue *fatwas*, their organizations do. It is here that politics of hidden *fatwas* emerge. For example despite the nonavailability of any direct opposition to women’s reservation in the local government bodies, Islamic organizations have issued *fatwas* stating that no woman should be out after six pm. In other words, these organizations have clearly placed hurdles in the face of women’s public work.

Another issue that has to be emphasized is the transnational aspect of *fatwas* followed by Indian Muslims, especially in the South. Due to the Gulf connections, the literary and intellectual ties with the Arab World precipitated in a situation where Indian Muslims inherited a literary heritage from the Arab World and translated it to Malayalam.¹⁵¹ This practice is still prevalent and has migrated to the realm of religious writings. I was fascinated to see in several occasions, students sitting on campus reading a Malayalam translation of Al-Qaradawy’s books, who is one of the most famous

¹⁵¹ For example, Arabic colleges in Kerala typically teach the literary works of Egyptian writers such as Taha Hussain, Al-‘Aqqad and Naguib Mahfouz.

Arab Islamic scholars— an Egyptian Azhar *'alim*, whose books are widely read and translated in the Muslim World. In one of my interviews, a student told me, “We do not care for local *fatwas* issued by *musliyārs* (local *imams*) we only care for international ones like Al-Qaradawy’s. We cannot depend on the local *fatwas*, one has to check whether it suits contemporary requirements of commitments or not.”

In my attempt to excavate the role of fatwas in Muslims’ lives, the following narrative from a visit to Chandni Chowk in December 2010 is insightful:

I went to Jami Masjid asking for the office of the *shāhi imām*. I sat there with the secretary and I asked him if there is any collection of *fatwas*, he explained to me that the *imam* does not give any *fatwas* and that I should go to Fatehpuri mosque, then I took a rickshaw and went there.

I entered the mosque and saw many small groups of young men sitting and learning with an *'alim* (Islamic scholar). There were doors and windows on two of the sides of the mosque’s inner courtyard. I walked around trying to find a sign of the *imam*’s office. A young man looked at me suspiciously and I knew at once that I was out of place. Then I found an old guard who guided me to an office next to the *Imam*’s. He was the cousin of the *shāhi imām*. As I got to know from him, they all belonged to the Sufi *naqshabani tariqah* (path) or tradition, and they treated people with spiritual means. After introducing myself and the purpose of my visit, he instantly told me I could talk to any of the two *muftis* at the mosque, but he could tell me his opinion as well.

Throughout our conversation, he emphasized four times that whatever he said was his personal opinion and did not represent the general opinion of Muslims. The first sentence he told me was, “If there is no ban on our fundamental rights and if we are freely allowed to practice these rights, then we fully recognize and accept the government.”

The major point is that they have the freedom to take *shari'ah* as their law and that the non-Muslim government would not interfere with it or ban it. As long as the basic rights of practicing Islamic rituals of fasting, praying, *haj*, and *zakat* are not in conflict with any law, then they would be loyal to the state. Loyalty also stems from *shari'ah*, in which it is stated that in *darul ḥarb* if the state allows Muslims to practice their religion, then they should accept their status and be loyal to the state:

The problem with Muslims around the world is that they chose to be dominated by Christians and their laws. Muslims in Arab countries have Christians and even Jews dominating them. They forgot *shari'ah* and applied Christian laws. If *shari'ah* was practiced

properly then there would be no poor or weak Muslim in the world. If the wealth of all these Muslims was divided, and *zakat* was given properly then there would be no problems. Muslims have decided to adopt the subject mentality, and be passive. In India, Muslims are looked upon as being weak. But where is their weakness? It is in their partiality and lack of political power. Discrimination is not just practiced by the non-Muslims. It is also practiced among Muslims themselves. There is a strong partiality among them. In India, the major problem and reason behind the difference in the development of Muslims in the north and the south is funds and resources on the one hand, and infrastructure on the other. There is rampant corruption, not just in the state offices, but also among Muslims themselves.

He further emphasized how democracy is given in Islam; the caliphate system is the best example of this through the *shura* system. Before this, the world never witnessed such an example of democracy where people would elect their ruler. Another ideal is nonviolence, which was also firstly mentioned in the Quran through the concept of *ṣabr* (patience). The three concepts of *akhlāq* (morals), *maḥababah* (love), and *ṣabr* (patience) constitute the essence of nonviolence in Islamic thought.

The *shari'ah* system was referred to upon discussing justice. To him, the Indian state could never be just because it does not apply *sharia*, and voting, as a political right is not enough to maintain a just system:

The judicial system takes years to solve any dispute, unlike *shari'ah*. *Shari'ah* says if someone steals and there are witnesses to his act, then his hand should be chopped off. The penalty in Islam is instant. But look at the Indian court system. I will give you an example. Here is a coin. If someone stole it, and there are witnesses, and I go to the court and sue him. The court will first put hand on my coin, it will become legal property, the thief will pay his bail and be released and live his life normally, then they will take 15-20-25 years to reach a verdict. I may not be alive to witness the verdict, but even if I am alive, I will not remember if this coin was the one stolen from me 25 years or not, and what would its value be anyway then.

The following day, I went to meet the *imām*, there was no place for me to pray *dhuhr* (noon prayer), and when I remarked this, I was told in a matter-of-fact way, “Yes there is no place for women’s prayer.” I ended up sitting in a room filled with women (some had their husbands with them) and many children. Both Hindus and Muslims came to find solutions; one had a baby whom she said cried nonstop at night and people recommended that she came to consult the imam so that

he would give him his blessings. After many conversations with Muslims, I began to realize that the realm of political *fatwas* is a media-created myth. Paradoxically, the *'ulama* played a great role in the common people (the *'ām ādmi*)'s lives, but they seldom appeared as political experts in their opinion. Among many Muslims, the corruption of some of the *'ulama* tainted their reputation, especially when they saw their divisions concerning worldly purposes:

Today, in India, *'ulama* are also to blame for the problems of Muslims. I admit there is strong corruption among them. Money plays a great role in corrupting people. There is greed in one's heart. We have to learn who a Muslim is, we have to know first who we are, only then we could be powerful and see where we stand. (The informant at Fatehpuri Masjid)

7.5 Concluding remarks on the sense of citizenship

The victimized want the reinstatement of their status as citizens in the aftermath of ethnic violence, while the majority community wants to be represented as an authentic "people" burdened by memory and grief.

- Gupta, 2007¹⁵²

Citizenship as a "sense of comfort" in the public sphere (Bhargava, 2010, quoted in Mitra, 2012, p. 91) is composed of a moral commitment to defend one's place and a legal right to where one is (Mitra, 2010; 2012). This chapter aimed at projecting how widely this is shared among the youth in Delhi and Kerala. This task was not carried out in a direct or prescribed manner. The means of operationalizing citizenship remain a hugely contested domain and certainly differ from one context to the other. This is clearly manifested by the participants of this study. The initial hypothesis was that regional contexts with different problematic aspects incur different degrees of a sense of full and equal citizenship. The result as I show proved otherwise. In fact, the other variable, which led to a noted degree of difference in the sense of citizenship, was gender.

When asked if they feel in reality that they have equal rights as a citizen, 50% of the respondents in Delhi confirmed this. The figures did not change when we considered the gender aspect: yes always (50%), sometimes (28.6%), and no (11.9%). However, when I moved to Kerala, and carried out the same survey, I arrived with interestingly different results, especially with the gender variable taken in perspective.

¹⁵² D. Gupta (2007). Citizens versus People: The Politics of Majoritarianism and Marginalization in Democratic India. *Sociology of Religion*, p. 44.

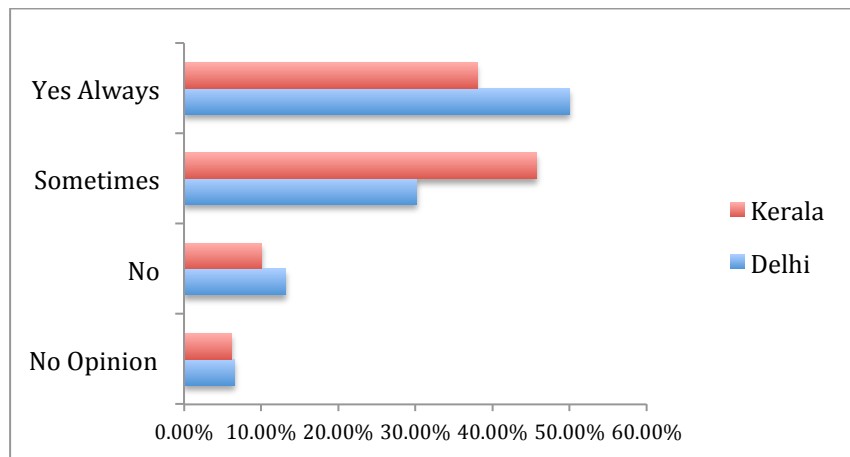


Figure 41 Sense of equal Citizenship in Kerala and Delhi.

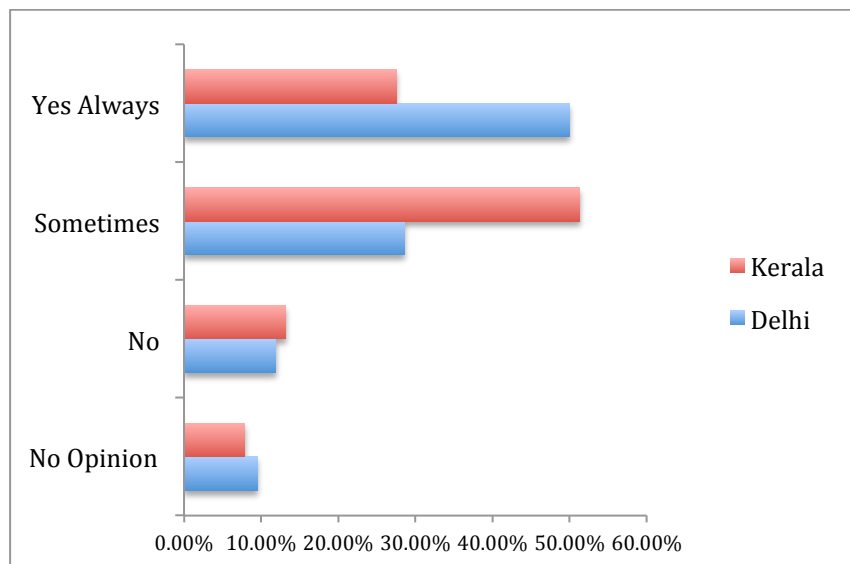


Figure 42 Sense of equal Citizenship among the females in Delhi and Kerala.

When I mentioned the word citizenship to North Indian students, not everyone could understand the political content of the concept. They all knew the word citizenship but in its Hindi form *nāgriktā* and less in its Urdu form *shehreyet*. For many female students, it meant being born in India and thus being an Indian by birth. However, when I mentioned the concept of rights and obligations, this was one answer:

We do have the right to choose our leaders and our political system, but unfortunately there is no transparency. Theoretically and constitutionally, there is the right to vote granted to everyone on equal terms. But at the end, all these rights are on paper only. In reality, there is no equality in rights. There is discrimination everywhere. No one is given equal rights.

In order to put the comparative map in perspective by looking at what other non-Muslims think

of this debate on rights, it is noteworthy to point out that in the National Election Survey, conducted by the CSDS, respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with the statement “Everyone enjoys equal rights”. There was absolutely no difference between the Muslims response and the national average; both percentages that agreed with the statement amounted to 47%.

The spaces of freedom granted in the constitution led eventually to a change in the sentiments of Muslims towards the state, however, this is to a considerable extent limited to the educated. Education clearly leads to a change in the conception of rights and obligations in the framework of citizenship. In the words of a Muslim scholar at Nadwa:

Muslims feel responsible towards the state. They implement governmental laws in their everyday life; traffic laws, governmental, railways, and justice because these laws keep our lives safe. As for religion, and what concerns our daily life (what to eat and how to preserve our religious concerns) then if religion conflicts with governmental law, we will follow Islamic principles. If a court or parliament issues a law contradicting Islamic *sharia* in inheritance or marriage or divorce, then we apply Islamic *shari'ah* and ignore this rule. Because of the nature of life, there are increasingly new issues coming up needing new *fatwas*.

The result is the activation of the practice of *ijtihad* or independent reasoning among both scholars and common people who are educated enough to be able to read the Quran and its translated interpretation as we had seen from conversations with students. Several Muslim scholarly leaders have contributed to the establishment of this trend. Historically, we saw the role played by Maulana Madani in producing the concept of composite nationalism. Contemporarily scholars like Asghar Ali Engineer in Mumbai and Maulana Wahiduddin Khan in Delhi are examples of those who try to raise positivity among Muslims and ensure Hindu-Muslim relations prosper regardless of the acts of Hindu right-wing terror. The youth I interviewed supported this argument and emphasized how India is now witnessing a different development since the government is active in disclosing right-wing Hindus and even *sadhus* who are behind terrorist activities like the Mecca Masjid and the Malegaon blasts. Ensuring justice is interlinked to the increasing sense of responsibility on the part of Muslims. The coming out of the victimization mentality is another byproduct:

All government schemes are badly managed; therefore those for Muslims are also badly managed. It is the responsibility for Muslims to monitor those things. Muslim social NGOs are very few in the North, if you really want to work hard, you can influence the

implementation of whatever has been provided by putting civil society pressure on whatever is being provided by the minority affairs ministry, if we have grass root level civil society we can monitor its implementation. (S. Mehdi, former Vice chancellor of Jamia, personal communication, December 2010)

Even poor people here think of their citizenship, they love their *waṭan*. They love their religion, and they also love their country. This is a good citizen. When you look around you see signs saying this is your city, so keep it clean. A good citizen takes care of the beauty and the development of the place he lives in. (Imam Makrami, *shāhi imām* of the Fatehpuri Mosque, personal communication, December 2010)

In 2010 in an interview with Maulana Madani, a journalist asked him what he thinks should be the most efficient governmental schemes for Muslims to achieve welfare and progress. Madani replied that there were governmental schemes for Muslims on every possible level, but the problem was the accountability of governmental officials and their responsibility that these schemes would actually reach Muslims. According to him,

The problem lied in awareness. For sixty years, Muslims had been sitting idle with their eyes shut. Someone should open their eyes. For a scheme to succeed, it must be preceded with awareness. Every Muslim door has to be knocked and informed. This is the greatest problem of officials; they sit in their positions and do nothing. (Madani A. , 2012)

I had conducted a pilot survey study before I started the survey from which I obtained my statistics for this research. There was an initial question that I eventually removed from the final questionnaire; the question was “Do you call yourself an Indian Muslim or a Muslim Indian?” Not only did many condemn this question, but also some simply could not fathom what I wanted to ask. Some considered the two terms to be equal, and some even told me that I am a Muslim Indian, because we are all Indians, but few Indians are Muslims— an answer that reflected no political consciousness of one’s identity. However, those who were politically conscious would echo Maulana Abul Kalam Azad’s statement: “I am an Indian first, then I am a Muslim.”

The inclusion of religion in the citizenship formula necessitated another question reflecting the common derogatory reference to Indian Muslims as being supporters of Pakistan. I have previously alluded in this chapter to an alarming percentage among youth in Delhi who were accused of being Pakistani. Interestingly, some of the respondents asserted that this was not very common in everyday life in India, but it happened only during cricket matches.

Cricket erupted as an intriguing space where identity was contested. One of the young engineering male students told me that I should also include the following question: “Do you support India or Pakistan in Cricket matches?” He emphasized

50% of them would tell you that we support Pakistan. But actually in my opinion, Pakistanis are not good people because they call Indian Muslims *kafirs*. Actually if you see the reality in the Gulf States, it is the Indian Muslims who have a better reputation. *Pakis* call us Kafirs because we are friends with Hindus but actually the Quran says that no Muslim should befriend the Jews. The Quran does not mention Hindus, so there is no problem in being friends with Hindus.

The fifty-per-cent argument was hypothetically supported by a university lecturer who has studied in Aligarh Muslim University and who stressed that there in the TV room the audience would be divided between India and Pakistan supporters. Further conversations with students did not lead to an absolute support of this hypothesis since the majority just asserted a transnationalist identity in claiming they supported the team that played better regardless of its nationality.

To conclude, it was noted how the common spaces required to establish a coherent sense of citizenship was missing in the case of Delhi. Despite being the Capital, it did not reflect many of the ‘citizenship’ attributes of common existence and transcending religious barriers that were found in peripheral towns and villages. The urban-ness did not necessarily lead to a case of urbane-ness. I conclude this chapter with a narration of one of my burqa-clad days in the Capital.

One day I decided to wear a *burqa*. I went to get credit for my mobile in a shop in an upscale market in Southern Delhi. The shop assistant thought I was a foreigner and started talking to me in English even before I opened my mouth. Apparently he had thought I was from the Gulf although I was dressed exactly like the *burqa*-clad Indian Muslim women. But it was striking that it was easier to assume that a woman in a *burqa* in this dominantly Hindu and upper class area would definitely be a non-Indian; that it was easier to imagine her as a tourist, but not as a local or a fellow Indian. It makes sense to any Indian, who would justify this by saying that Muslims do not come to posh markets. But regardless of this, even if they would come, they would never walk alone. You will never see a woman walking with a *burqa* on her own. It is simply impossible even in the Muslim dominated areas.

This obviously meant that the psychological distance is too huge to accommodate citizenship. But I also sought to employ commonsense since it is a segregated society. One witnesses a huge difference between the South and North of India. In the South, there are mosques everywhere, and

Muslim names are found on shops everywhere. But in the North, the phenomenon of ghettoization is more evident, which according to an Islamic scholar at Lucknow, appeared after partition as a means to ensure security of the self, belief and livelihood. After Gujarat 2002, citizenship in India was put to a test, it is wrong to assume that it is a passing irregularity in the stream of events, since only the truth of many things is realized by these fast or spontaneous fragments of happenings. The idea of citizenship after all revolves on the sense of security. Hence, the resulting ghettoization found in the rest of the country poses substantial threats to a healthy solid formation of citizenship. I ended my fieldwork in India with a short stay in one of these Muslim ghettos in South Mumbai. The words of the Muslim taxi driver taking me to the airport somehow summarizes the stories hundreds of interviewees wished to deliver:

The Muslim area you were staying in is very safe, no one can come and kill except for the police, and the other places especially on the outskirts of Mumbai are dangerous and full of problems because of Shiv Sena. But the Muslims in this area are very united, and no one dares to come and cause problems here.

Conclusion

Then his voice took on strength, although he kept his eyes tightly closed. No. I am sorry, there is an answer. A clear and unambiguous one. It is wrong. The thief should be caught, condemned. But I don't know if we have the strength to do that. Not in a society where the tyrant rules. Maybe that is why tyranny is so poor. It does not take away our knowledge of what we must do, just our strength to do so.

- Omair Ahmed. *Jimmy the Terrorist*. 2010

I chose to study Indian politics primarily for one reason—to understand how Indians managed to develop political mechanisms to ensure their dignity would not re-usurped, while the Egyptians, to a great extent, failed. India and Egypt embarked on the same postcolonial path simultaneously. While Nehru chose dignity for the people, and through the constitution they were turned from subjects into citizens, Nasser decided to withdraw it from them and retained their subjectivity. In a speech following his alleged assassination attempt, Nasser declared, “It was me who planted dignity and pride in you.” Since then, the Egyptians were convinced that the source of their dignity came from the president. Eventually, Egyptians ended up having a very strange history of dignity: a history attached to three presidents in the span of fifty years.

In these fifty years, India managed to be the largest democracy on Earth, and Indians developed

a unique sense of citizenship. I only clearly understood what it means to be a citizen when I came to India and listened to nineteen-year-old village girls teaching me what freedom of expression means and how it is indispensable to choose one's leader. The reference to my Egyptian political identity might seem out-of-context in the conclusion of a study of Indian Muslims, but it was this subjective researcher's motivation that shaped the approaches to the study of (a) Muslim community(ies) and the way they perceive living in a secular democracy.

The path dependency of the political history of Nasser and Nehru's rule is significant to understand the forthcoming political developments in both countries. The anti-colonial nationalism through the transition to mass nationalism in 1919 in Egypt and in the twenties in India through Gandhism and secular liberalism, the crises of secularism and religious fundamentalism in both countries are the aspects on which these states converge. However, due to, on the one hand, the diversity in the Indian citizenry, and the direction of the Congress party to which Nehru was heavily attached, and on the other hand, the autocracy of the military from which Nasser sprung, these leaders radically differed in setting the political systems of their states. This in turn resulted in two radically different political cultures of an Indian citizenry versus an Egyptian subjectivity. Starting from this point, this study investigated the nature of citizenship ideals and sentiments among the Indian Muslims.

This thesis started with presenting the historical context in the post-partition era and how the notion of the community was theorized and presented within both the broader and global Islamic discourse and the local context of India as a case study. This impelled me to look at the myth of the *Ummah* as a component of what can be termed transnational citizenship as a new level of analysis in global politics. The Indian case presented us with first, a postcolonial order of an application of a liberal conception of citizenship, coupled with an invention of minority status and adjustments guided by a uniquely secular constitution. Second, these adjustments led to the invention of concepts such as composite nationalism. By this, the Indian case sets a historically fascinating precedent in global history; the majority of Indian religious leaders (*'ulama*) acted as motivators for choosing the secular democratic option versus the promised Islamic regime.

The role of *'ulama* is highly significant since classical Islamic jurisprudence dealt only with a situation in which Muslims assumed political power, the question of Muslim minorities had been neglected from traditional analysis. This had necessitated a drive towards *ijtihād* among Islamic scholars worldwide. Reconciling faith with citizenship was a major innovation of the Indian Muslim *'ulama*. The classical fascination with *darul Islam* versus *darul ḥarb* was replaced by

multiple variants such as *darul waṭān*. The love of the *waṭān*, hence, was asserted as an integral part of faith. Nadwi refers to the dual responsibility demanding that Indian Muslims should take an active interest in the affairs of their country (Sikand Y. , 2004, pp. 81-85). I showed how Azad and Madani's ideas of composite nationalism embodied the result of these new interpretations of Islamic laws and called for a unique adjustment and accommodation of the Islamic identity to a new one of being a 'citizen minority' in a secular democratic setting.

In the analysis of the treatment of Islamic political thought to the idea of the political home (*dār*), Indian Muslim '*ulama*, by the introduction of the term *darul waṭān* as a source of legitimacy, managed to establish a discovery of an entity both modern and Islamic. This had further implications on the way the notion of the community or the ummah was conceived. We saw from the examples set in this study how *Ummah* consciousness was not a myth but was realized through solidarity networks established chiefly by Muslim organizations such as the Jamaati Islami, the Popular Front of India, and the Jamiat Ulama-e-hind. The relevance of the *Ummah* took additional transnational turns, as Muslim youth expressed their opinion on international issues such Kashmir, Palestine, Pakistan and a critique of India-US and Israel relations.

The second step in this study was a movement from the historical to the contemporary. The question of citizenship as an identity guided the analysis of the hegemonic discourses governing the lives of Muslims in India. The demonstration of these discourses came after a meticulous literature review on what have been written in the past thirty years on Indian Muslims and their varying conditions in different states of India. After indicating the different political, socio-economic and ideological discourses, the aim of this research was to reveal the response of the public with a specific emphasis on the middle class, which is the most evident carrier of citizenship ideals. I tried to locate the most significant agents of political and social change and give them distinct reference as *jihādists*. The word *jihād*, meaning struggle, was used by many of my respondents as a description of their everyday reality in India.

Regardless of being in a majority or minority setting, the realization of citizenship ideals as inscribed in the constitution is the main goal that Indian Muslims through means of argumentative and spiritual *jihād* strive towards in a context of unfavorable conditions of intra and inter community conflicts. To operationalize *jihād*, I started with emphasizing its exact definition and its moral component. Self-rule, education, striving for social mobility and patience are all operationalized mechanisms of what *jihād* means for the Indian Muslims. The practice of *jihād* was forged along different regional and historical experience, interestingly intertwined with a nationalist

cause, where a religious tool and objective became mingled with a pragmatically political one.

By calling the agents as jihādists, I tried not to essentialize or ascribe western terminology to the actors and reactors of my case study. Employing the term jihādist sought to achieve another general aim of the research; that is to further explore the usage of non- Eurocentric conceptual approaches to the study of postcolonial and especially Muslim societies. After meticulous press analysis and expert interviews, I decided to identify the most strikingly strong agents of social change among Muslims as the youth in general in Delhi and the Muslim women in particular in Kerala. Although the youth are not a homogenous entity (even Hindu youth play major roles in the development of the Muslim community) whether in Delhi or Kerala, they were regarded as the victims of the discourses and the initiators of change. In Kerala, due to high levels of education among women, high degrees of individuation and psychological disorders appeared significantly among women in the Muslim majority district, Malappuram, where I did my fieldwork. This district interestingly witnessed the highest rates of social change among all other districts in India in terms of education, social mobility and elevated standards of living and income levels. Women were the subjects of this change to a great extent. Hence, I saw it convenient to give them the status of being a jihādist for their struggles, among other Muslim citizens, are of the most significant. This is despite the fact that they do not work from gender-based perspectives, but within the mainstream legal and social perspective while utilizing Islam as a reference and support to gain more agency. Finally, I presented a comparative analysis based primarily on a survey I conducted among the students in Delhi and Kerala to consider different correlations between gender, levels of religiosity and political participation.

Analyzing the dynamics of politicizing a religious identity is a complex endeavour. First, there is a strong role played by collective memory and hence a community identity. Second, socio-religious structural changes in the fields of education, personal laws and caste associations also interfere with the political power sphere. Finally, we find internal struggles among the *‘ulama* or the religious institutions over power and authority.

Unravelling the means by which Indian Muslims accommodate Islam with the reality of being citizens in a secular democratic state was one of my main concerns as I embarked on this research. The answer I got could be summarized in the Fatehpuri Mosque’s *shāhi imām*’s statement, “Accommodating with Islam was not difficult: the public sphere is left open to propagate freely on the one hand, and on the other hand, the constitution is not biased to any religion.” Fieldwork-based research revealed that the decision to support secularism and to actively engage in the democratic

process is not seen as a desperate person's last refuge in constitutional rights, but is surprisingly often emerging out of Islamic incentives. Hence this drove to a deeper analysis of the reasons behind creating enclaves, which are fundamentally prompted by the demand for security and filling gaps in the sense of citizenship. The reasons for these gaps have proven to be gender-related and not only emerging from the traditional religious minority discourse.

The high level of political efficacy projected by students touches the hypothesis generated in this study concerning the paradoxical situation of Indian Muslims in which the sense of deprivation and discrimination does not diminish their faith in democracy and in the value of their votes. The falsification of this hypothesis is also valid, as many citizens have expressed the hinduization of the Indian state and how the benefits of Muslims could never be forwarded or their rights guaranteed.

Reference is hence made to policy implications concerning the betterment of the life-space in which citizenship is practiced and felt. In my opinion, I think one of the most important measures to be undertaken is to organize illiteracy programmes managed by *madrassa* and university students. This would be considered part of obligatory social work. In addition to this, the translation of historical '*ulama* writings from Urdu to English and Hindi might also enhance the spread of social reform among the public and counter the Hindu right-wing propaganda against Muslims.

The most important measure is to make sure the gap in the Muslim middle class is overcome. Policy analysis, instead of being influenced with an alleged relationship between Islam and educational backwardness, should put into consideration spatial contexts and socio-economic indicators. Empirical studies have proven how there is no unilinear process in conceptualizing religious differences when it comes to literacy and levels of education, on the contrary, demographic and socio-economic indicators determine the rate of educational development (Alam & Raju, 2007). The religion-based explanation of the low rate of Muslims' enrolment in natural sciences and engineering should be surmounted:

Muslim students cannot simply qualify to medical and engineering sciences, because their economic situation makes it very hard to compete with others. High tuition fees and exam preparation procedures always disqualifies them from entering such fields, in addition to the fact that *madrassa* education is not recognized in many universities or for many disciplines. That is why they are mostly in Urdu or Arabic or Islamic studies. (An interview with a Muslim University scholar, Delhi, December 2010)

Examples of Muslims, especially girls, being able to acquire an educational Habitus, to borrow Bourdieu's term, and thus induce different levels of social change, have been presented throughout

the thesis. In more desolate cases such as the survival after riots, especially in the Gujarat experience, the attempt to arrive at normalcy and to move from victim to survivor status should not be omitted from analytical observations.

Instead of the discourse on religion-based reservations, which does not always find resonance among Muslims, due to the fear of the hegemony of the Muslim upper class, emphasis is cast on the enforcement of law and the eradication of corruption and discrimination. In Gupta's words, "Citizenship becomes a viable project when the enforcement of law respects the individual as a citizen and does not make concessions to sentiments of "the people" (Gupta, 2007, p. 43).

The sense of security is hence directly related to the efficacious practice of citizenship rights. The sense of citizenship and belonging of the part (the citizen) to the whole (the *patria* and the homeland) necessitates cooperation and integration of issues that are of relevance of the part but influence the whole. This process passes by the citizen's experience with security forces and ends at the elaboration of a comprehensive citizenship culture where conceptualizations of rights and obligations are clearly embodied going away from personal benefit to a preference for public benefits (Awad, 2009).

The predicaments Indian Muslims face in several parts of India, where their sense of security is critically low, convey a significant part of the story. However, the other less narrated stories are of youth redefining the meaning of safe spaces. This is realized primarily through women's efforts. The case of the fight for mosque entry and inclusion in the job market in Kerala is such an example. Another prominent example presented through this study was the programs organized by Jamaati Islami's female wing, which campaigned in the drug-and-prostitution zones in Calicut. Eventually, youth overcame the dualistic imagination of political realities of Muslims in India. In both North and South India, illiberal spaces were gradually transformed to accommodate for liberal ideas and spaces. The intersection of the perception of a common reality led, on the social and political level, to circles where Hindus are working with Muslims and essentially for Muslim causes, especially on the civil society level. This negates the classic remark that Muslims are obsessed with a desire for Muslim representatives.

The idea of 'composite nationalism' that Madani forged in the first half of the twentieth century as an answer to the partition call was central to this study. Examples in everyday life were presented throughout this thesis: Muslim women taking their children to Hindu ceremonies at school, Muslims celebrating national holidays in an entirely Muslim manner, youth getting socialized to the idea of being 'Indian Muslims' and 'Muslim Indians' simultaneously without a preference to an

identity over the other, holding mass demonstrations and public rallies that carry purely Islamic causes but utterly respect Indian legal regulations. All these are manifestations of how 'composite nationalism' is indeed a basis of citizenship in a diverse society.

Many interlinked networks are formed through the role of the state (materialized in the surveillance by the police), the locality (represented in the mosque committee), the individual and collective level of Non-resident Indians, religious leaders and organizations who manage to establish transnational connections with the Gulf. These networks provide the intricate spaces in which citizenship ideals are created and transmitted in a complex manner, arriving at an embodied sense of composite nationalism.

The dynamics of political action and awareness, expressed through the Indian Muslims acquisition of a 'citizen minority' identity, contribute to a subversion of the stereotyped identities ascribed to them. I devised the term citizen minority to describe the status of Indian Muslims, who are full citizens, yet possess in differing contexts different minority cultures. The inability to be critical of the Babri verdict for example, and hence of the Indian Legal system, as shown through many interviews and review of the press represent an inclination towards a process of self-marginalization and a construction of an idea of 'model citizenship' to which an Indian Muslim strives. However, this struggle is combined with another crucial one: the search for life's security.

It remains to be said that only in a diverse country like India, one would find travel agencies advertising for a *haj* package coupled with a visit to Israel and Egypt. There, conceptions such as the religious intermingle with the 'anti-muslim' and the pagan to create an essentially transcultural awareness allowing a rare sense of acceptance of the other.

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Appendix I: Relevant Articles of the Indian Constitution

Part III Fundamental Rights

Right to Freedom of Religion

25. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.

(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;

(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.

Explanation I.—The wearing and carrying of *kirpans* shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.

Explanation II.—In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

26. Freedom to manage religious affairs.—Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right—

(a) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes;

(b) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (c) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (d) to administer such property in accordance with law.

27. Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.—No person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.

28. Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.—(1) No religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.

(2) Nothing in clause (1) shall apply to an educational institution which is administered by the State but has been established under any endowment or trust which requires that religious instruction shall be imparted in such institution.

(3) No person attending any educational institution recognised by the State or receiving aid out of State funds shall be required to take part in any religious instruction that may be imparted in such institution or to attend any religious worship that may be conducted in such institution or in any premises attached thereto unless such person or, if such person is a minor, his guardian has given his consent thereto.

Cultural and Educational Rights

29. Protection of interests of minorities.—(1) Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.

(2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

30. Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.—(1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

(1A) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause.

(2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.

Part XV Elections

325. No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.

Appendix II: Selected Fieldwork Narratives

The Muslim Autowallah (24/11/2010)

One day I took an auto rickshaw, the driver was a bearded Muslim in his thirties, I did not need to haggle as usual to convince him to take me to Batla House, the moment I said Jamia, he said yes sure. Then the following conversation took place.

“Are you a Muslim?” he asked. “Yes, but from Egypt,” I replied. Then he surprised me by saying: “Ah from the land of Sheikh Abdulbaset Abdul Samad, he is the best Quran reciter in the world.” “How come you know him?” I asked. “From the madrasa where I studied in Delhi,” he replied.

“And now you are done with your education?” I asked. “Yes, and I have worked for 10 years as an Imam in a mosque, but I quitted it, and now for two and a half years I have been working as an auto driver. The problem is that the income of madrasa graduates and the job opportunities ahead of them are very limited,” he replied.

Then I introduced myself and how I am working on my PhD. “*Inshallah* one day you will be in the place of ...” He added. I could not hear the name properly. Then he explained that she was a famous and learned woman at the time of the prophet and his companions.

“Do you read newspapers?” I went on with my questions. “Yes, the *Urdu Sahara*,” he replied. “What do people usually read?” I asked. “Times of India or Sahara,” he answered. “But *TOI* does not write much information on Indian Muslims, and if it wrote, it is mostly negative, isn’t it?” I remarked. “Yes, because it is Hindu. But Sahara is Muslim. The problem in India is Hindu-Muslim extremism,” he explained. “But why?” I asked. “After partition and because some Muslims chose Pakistan, India became a Hindu state (*rashtriya*) and this is how it remained. The problem is that Muslims in big positions have left us Muslims behind in India,” he elucidated. I understood “us” as a reference to the poor. Then I asked, “But is extremism and discrimination on all levels? Or only poor while the rich have no problems?” “Not on all levels, even rich Muslims have the problem of discrimination,” he responded.

Then I asked him what the biggest problem faced by Muslim was. “Employment. No one finds jobs, especially in the government; all non-Muslims easily get employed, unlike Muslims who even if they get good education, still won't find jobs,” he retorted. “Your children go to school?” I asked him. “Yes, madrasa,” he replied.

Eventually, I asked him what he thought the solution to the Muslims' dilemmas was. "There is no solution, it is a Hindu *rashtriya* and there is nothing in our hands to do except ask Allah for support and patience, and Allah will bring us our rights," he responded. "So the Muslim citizen does not feel he has equal rights and obligations?" I asked. "No, nothing as such exists," he answered.

I finally asked if he voted in elections, then he replied affirmatively, "But uselessly". When I asked him if his vote made a difference, he replied, "No, I do not feel that it can ever make a difference."

Eid in Batla House (18/11/2010)

The following is an abridged narrative from the second day of Eid I spent at the family house of a twenty-two year old Muslim female student who invited me to her home in Batla House on Eid-ul-Fitr. I refer to her with the pseudo name Fatima.

I wore the burka and headed to Jamia Nagar. When I asked her about her address, she said just to go to the Batla House bus stand and she would pick me up from there. So I took the auto from my residence to one of the uni gates, where I waited for a long time to find a rickshaw taking me to batla house bus stand. The rickshaw dropped me in the middle of the crowd. There was no sign indicating a bus stand, just a group of people.

We walked through dirty alleys. She apologized that her house was very small. She also told me that Muslim areas were very dirty. I told her that I noticed this, and I asked her for the reason. "Because they have dirty minds," she said. I told her but Islam encouraged cleanliness. "Yes, they clean their houses very well and throw the garbage outside on the roads," she commented. I asked if they expected the government to clean it. "No one expects the government to do anything. The government promises a lot. But people are supposed to clean themselves," she replied.

The house was indeed small. Her mother was in the kitchen, making kebab out of minced beef. I said hello to her father then I was invited to sit with her father who spoke Arabic. He looked like a drained man, utterly exhausted, in his fifties but looking end of sixties. I asked him how come he knows Arabic (his Arabic was colloquial not like that classical one of the *'ulamas*). He mentioned he worked for fifteen years in Saudi Arabia in the Arab League Embassy. He drove to many places

to the border but never went inside because the passport would need a stamp (meaning a visa), he even went to the border of Egypt. I asked if he liked it there, but I did not get an answer. He just emphasized his long years of service. Then he mentioned that now he works in the Libyan embassy in Delhi.

Fatima came and changed the Bollywood song channels, which her father was watching to get the “Peace” channel. “This is Peace channel from Mumbai, the one I told you about, Dr Naik’s,” she told me. There was a program with a young girl around seven years old preaching in English to a huge group of audience which constituted only of men whose ages ranged from eighteen till seventy, all with long beards, skullcaps, and white *kurtas*. Then once she had finished, a teenaged boy thanked her (he was Dr. Naik’s son), who acted as the moderator of that program.

We then exchanged a conversation on academic duties, when she suddenly asked me if we had the dowry system in Egypt. I explained to her how financial duties were carried out in Egypt. “You are very lucky. Here, we have to pay a lot of money for dowry,” she said. “I thought that was more common among the Hindus,” I asked. “No. Also Muslims. But we do not ask for this in our family. But when my sister got married we had to pay one lakh rupees and get all furniture and kitchen utensils. It is very unfair,” she replied. Then when her mother came. “Imagine in their country it is the boy who pays dowry,” she told her. Her mother smiled and said, “yes I know. It is reversed (*ulta*) there. I heard that families are very happy in the Arab countries when they get girls, because this is the source of wealth for them. We have it the other way here.”

Then she left. Fatima asked me if I were married and I replied negatively. Then she inquired when I planned to get married and I said after my PhD. When I asked about her own plans, she said, she planned to in four years when she was done with her studies and working. I asked her if she was going to work after marriage. “Yes of course,” she said. I asked what if her husband said she could not work. Then she said she would obey him. “But you wanted to work. So if you get a marriage proposal and the man wants you to stop working, then would you accept it?” I exclaimed. “Oh no, why would I obey him then? Before marriage, the girl obeys only her parents. Of course I will not accept him,” she replied.

Every now and then a group of young girls come in and convey their Eid greetings. “These are my students. I give tuition in the evening you see,” Fatima explained. I asked her how she spends the day. “Morning at the university, then I work at school as a teacher, then I give tuition, then I study, then I sleep very tired,” she replied.

I understood that she is working to save money for her dowry and marriage expenses, just like a

lot of girls her age.

Then I asked her whether she considered herself among the middle class. She explained that they were a middle class family. “There are two kinds: either middle class or upper middle class. It depends how much you earn. If a family has 150 rupees per day to eat then they are middle class, if they have 250 rupees, then they are upper middle class. Here in Jamia, people are mostly middle class, but if you go deeper inside the allies, then you will see the real poor like the *rickshaw wallahs*; those people have very less and are uneducated. The government has made a lot of schemes for the slum people, but education is the biggest problem. They do not send their children to school, because they need food more urgently. They send them instead to work in restaurants or hotels,” she replied.

When I added the word Muslim to my question on those poor who do not get education, she said: “No it is not just a Muslim problem, it is an all India problem.”

I tried to ask her about what she thought about their future and whether they perceived any betterment if educated or not, and I gave her an example about Egypt and how slum dwellers did not get good jobs because they were asked about their address and family jobs. She confirmed that it was the same in India but when I tried to understand whether religion played an additional role in this discrimination or not. She was silent and did not comment.

At the end when I was leaving, her mother came and gave me 100 rupees. I was shocked and she said it was *Eidi*. My efforts to decline the money failed since the mother insisted by saying “I am elder than you”. So I took it.

I might be the first social researcher who actually gets money from her respondents. But I guess this is India, where most things are *ulta*.

The night I took the village ladies out for an outing in a *coolbar* (27/02/2011)

I stayed with a family in a village in Northern Kerala. Usually the day would end by five pm when all females would be expected to be confined to their homes. I naturally had to abide by this social custom. One day, however, I felt very bored and by seven pm I desperately needed something sweet to eat. I went to the lady I was living with and told her:

“What about going out to have some ice cream?” She smiled: “Ok, tomorrow we can go.” “No, now. I need it now.” She looked at me surprised: “But it is seven pm.” “So what?” I said. “Ok, I will call my husband and see when he will be back so he can join us.” “No, he comes late,” I

argued.

She called him. And then her face lit after the call. “Ok he will be late, he told us we can go alone. Let us go,” she said.

We put on our *purdahs* and went out. She told me that *Ayesha tata* (the elderly neighbor) loves *faluda* (a dessert). I told her to go and tell her to come with us. We went to her house, she simply told her “Wear your *pardah* we are going.” Her husband looked at her with a blank look, and asked: “To where?” She said, “To eat ice cream.” Then he looked at us immensely puzzled as if she had said to drink alcohol, “Why?” he asked.

“Because Julten wants to eat ice cream. We will be back soon. It won’t take an hour time,” She said. We all went, the two of them with a smile that did not part their face. We took an auto, arrived there. *Ayesha tata* told us this is the first time in her life to go out to a *coolbar*. She was immensely happy. As soon as we finished the ice cream shake, we left. We went back home walking. I believe they took that decision to walk at eight pm to feel a glimpse of freedom; they did not need the exercise, but I guessed they needed the feeling that they were walking back home at night.

I told them about Egypt; how we go to cafes, spend hours there chatting. They smiled and acknowledged their knowledge of this cultural difference. She told me, “Ah women in Egypt are happy.”

Then when we reached, I wished *Ayesha Tata shubhratri* (good night), then *Rajiyat* looked at me and said *Sandosham ratri*. (Not Good night, but happy night).

The *Imām*’s Visit (03/02/2011)

The *imāms* (or as they are called the *ustādh*) of the nearby mosque of the village I lived in Kerala come every month on the third day to have dinner. In the morning a boy from the *madrasa* is sent with empty lunch boxes that are filled with very carefully prepared vegetable *korma*, *appam* (a type of bread), and tea. The same happens with lunch, but at dinner, he comes in person, eats with the men of the house, the housewife, *Rajiyath*, serves without being seen, hides in the kitchen waiting for them to finish, and then he sits out with the other men in the living room, divided from the dining table with a stained glass wall, she sits on the dining table, the *ustādh* reads out *du’ā* (a prayer) and everyone says *amen* after him. From behind this wall, *Rajiyath* does the same. Interestingly, it is only *Rajiyath* who understands the meaning of the prayers, due to her knowledge

of Arabic from the *madrassa* where she had studied in her childhood.

So on that day in the morning, Rajiyath told me enthusiastically, “The *ustādh* is coming tonight; this is a good chance for you, why don’t you interview him?” When she told this to her husband, Mr. Aboobakr, “But how can she speak to him? They do not speak to women and she does not know Malayalam,” he asked. “Well he speaks Arabic, it will be fine. And she can write down the questions and you give it to him,” she replied. I explained to her that the *madrassa ustādhs* definitely did not speak good Arabic, because I had just tried to interview an *ustādh* two weeks ago and I needed a ten-year old kid to interpret and translate my questions from English to Malayalam. She was surprised. “Really? They do not know Arabic? But they claim to be masters in this language,” she exclaimed. I smiled back at her instant recognition of the fake authority on the text that religious scholars claim. I wrote the questions and later that night, I gave them to Mr. Aboobakr. I wore my *pardah* and went out to sit with his wife and listen to the prayer. After the prayer, the husband tried to read the questions but my handwriting was not very legible. He called me and from behind the wall I read them out to him. Then he called me to come and introduce me to the *imāms*. It was quite strange that in one second the wall vanished, and the two *imāms* looked like very ordinary men, talking and addressing me normally. My first question was whether the Muslim ‘*ulama* and *ustādh* there felt that they were different from their North Indian counterparts. The *imām* replied that the difference lay in them following the *shafi* tradition whereas the North Indians followed the *hanafi* one. In addition to this, the *khuṭba* is in Arabic. In North India, they depend on the *hadith* before issuing the *fatwa*, whereas the South Indians depends first on the *shafi fiqh* before proclaiming a *fatwa*. Then I asked them what their role in solving social problems was. He did not seem to identify on his own what the social problems I referred to were. So I gave an example of the dowry system. He explained further that the Arabs propagated Islam in Kerala, and when Indians converted, they gave ornaments to the Arabs who were going to marry them. This is how the custom started and it was not essentially very negative in their point of view. However, because of the social malpractices associated to it now, all ‘*ulama* in his opinion are against dowry, but people keep on practicing it. When I asked him if he thought that since people did not totally follow what they preached then this might have indicated that their power was not so strong. He answered that people did not necessarily follow *fatwas*, especially those with strong financial powers. Then I asked about political *fatwas*. He said they never intervened in politics, but if there were a big issue, they usually read and referred to what the Egyptian scholar Yusuf Al-Qaradawy wrote. The *juma* speech is not part of this since it is in Arabic and thus does not serve as a tool to address sociopolitical problems. The *imāms*, however, play a role in solving social problems because people

first come to them then they resort to either the police or courts. Usually the last resort is the police.

The Jamaati School in Okhla (15.09.2010)

In September 2010, I visited a Jamaat Islami School in the Muslim majority area of Okhla in Delhi. My purpose was to interview female teachers at the school. A student I interviewed who happened to be teaching at this school facilitated my access. Sitting in a room filled with female teachers, whose ages are ranging from 22 to 50, wearing *abayyas*¹⁵³ and headscarves, showed me that it could be exactly like sitting in a school in Egypt. This was evident from the almost similar facial features, the same method of tying the scarf and the familiar look of concentration as they try meticulously to examine me. Somehow I felt that I was the surveyed, the object of study, not them. The conversation would often turn against me and I would find myself answering their questions on how I dress like in Egypt, if food there is boiled, what kind of spices do we add and if we especially add chili and salt to it, if I wear full sleeves or as I showed up in three-quarters of sleeves on a salwar. I needed to turn their look of concentration and somewhat caution into that of trust and easiness. I succeeded when I told them how I felt; that their faces do not differ at all from the faces of Egyptians. They smiled and an elderly woman told me, “But aren’t we all Muslims after all? I am sure if I go to Egypt, we will feel the same.” This was similar to a statement made by a female JMI student, with a smile she told me: “all people are at the end the same, it is just their tongues that speak different languages, isn’t it?”

I was faced by one fact: they could not be representing alienated political subjects. They are one of the most focused groups of people I have ever met. They work, educate themselves, know about the world, and do their housework; they see it as a simply; ‘normal’ life. Being political is part of being in the school. They say they belong to the Jamaat but as I saw, it is just their job-affiliation identity, but they believe independently as their education dictates them.

The Signs in Urdu that were hanging in the school interested me. Here is an attempt of rendering them into English:

¹⁵³ Long black coats worn by Muslim women. Also referred to as burqa or burka.

- The three chains of correct education: knowledge, work and manners.
- The three aids of correct education: clear mind, fearless heart and beneficial methods.
- The three goals of correct education: the reform of the individual, improvement of society and the welfare of the nation and the state.
- The goals of education: building society and character, divine knowledge.
- Means to these goals: mother, teacher and environment.
- Assistants: teaching, judgment and organization.
- Investors: knowledge, good work and good manners.
- Means: advanced mind, anxious heart and a strong will.
- The road: fear of God, proper mind and delicate sense.

They had bachelor or Masters in Urdu, English or history. They went to both madrasa and governmental schools. Mostly they were from Bihar and UP. What was interesting was that unlike the majority of North Indian Muslim women, they prayed jumaa always in a group and not at home. They considered reading Quran as a duty and blessing. Despite working in a Jamaati school, they had no political party affiliation (although this was at the time of interviewing them in October 2010 before the Jamaati Islami announced the formation of their own party). They had a high level of political awareness; they voted and they knew their members of Parliament (MPs) and members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

Appendix III: Glossary

The Romanization of foreign words follows the regulations of the Library of Congress and the American Library Association

<i>'ām ādmi</i>	(Hindi & Urdu): the common man
<i>'adl</i>	(Arabic): justice
<i>'amal</i>	(Arabic): work
<i>'aql</i>	(Arabic): mind or reason
<i>'aṣṣabiyya</i>	(Arabic): group solidarity
<i>adhān</i>	(Arabic) or Azan (Urdu): Islamic call to prayer
<i>ahl al-Kitab</i>	(Arabic): a Quranic term referring to the people mainly the Christians and Jews.
<i>an-naḥs</i>	(Arabic): soul
<i>an-nas</i>	(Arabic): people
<i>'alim</i> (pl. <i>'ulama</i>)	(Arabic) : a Muslim religious scholar
<i>aman</i>	(Arabic): peace or security
<i>amānah</i>	(Arabic): divine trust
<i>amīr</i>	(Arabic): a Muslim Leader
<i>Ashraf</i>	(Arabic): a title denoting noble descent (the opposite is <i>ajlaf</i>)
<i>bai'ah</i>	(Arabic): formal allegiance to authority
<i>brādry</i>	(Urdu): community
<i>crore</i>	A unit in the south Asian numbering system equaling ten million.
<i>da'wah</i>	(Arabic): the preaching of Islam.
<i>darul ḥarb</i>	(Arabic): the abode of war
<i>darul insan</i>	(Arabic): the abode of the human being
<i>darul islam</i>	(Arabic): the abode of Islam
<i>darul mu'ahida</i> or <i>darul 'ahd</i>	(Arabic): the abode of reconciliation
<i>darul ṣulḥ</i>	(Arabic): the abode of treaty
<i>dharna</i>	(Hindi): refusal to clear an area where protestors set up camps
<i>dhikr</i>	(Arabic): an Islamic devotional act, lit. remembrance of God.
<i>dīn</i>	(Arabic): religion
<i>Eid</i>	A Muslim festival (there are two, Eidul Fitr and Eidul Adha)

<i>eidī</i>	(Urdu): money given by elders on Eid to younger members of the family.
<i>fajr</i>	(Arabic): sunrise, refers to the first Muslim prayer in the day
<i>fiqh</i>	(Arabic): Islamic jurisprudence
<i>fiqh alaqaaliyyat</i>	(Arabic): the jurisprudence of minorities.
<i>fiṭrah</i>	(Arabic): the inherent nature or natural disposition of mankind
<i>Gherao</i>	(Hindi): encirclement of managerial staff
<i>ḥadd</i>	(Arabic): limits or parameters
<i>ḥaj</i>	(Arabic): Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca
<i>halāl</i>	(Arabic): permissible
<i>Hanafī</i>	(Arabic): is one of the schools of <i>fiqh</i> (jurisprudence) within the Sunni branches of Islam.
<i>harām</i>	(Arabic): banned
<i>hartal</i>	(Hindi): strike
<i>Hijra</i>	(Arabic): migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina
<i>ḥikmah</i>	(arabic): wisdom
<i>ḥukm</i>	(Arabic): rule or order
<i>ḥukumati ilahyi</i>	(Urdu): divine government
<i>‘ilm</i>	(Arabic): Knowledge
<i>iftār</i>	(Arabic): breaking of the fast by Muslims
<i>iḥsān</i>	(arabic): benevolence
<i>ijmā‘</i>	(Arabic): consensus
<i>ijtihād</i>	(Arabic): independent usage of reasoning in interpreting religion.
<i>imām</i>	(Arabic): the praying leader in a mosque and often the preacher in jumaa prayers.
<i>imān</i>	(Arabic): faith
<i>iṣlāḥ</i>	(Arabic): reform
<i>Istikhlāf</i>	(Arabic): <i>inheritance of Earth</i>
<i>istiṣlāḥ</i>	(Arabic): communal well-being
<i>Jail bharo</i>	(Hindi): mass violations of the law in large numbers to clog wheels of law and order
<i>Jāmi‘</i>	(Arabic): mosque
<i>janta</i>	(Hindi): the public
<i>jihād</i>	(Arabic): struggle
<i>Jumaa</i>	(Arabic): friday

<i>kāfir</i>	(Arabic): non-believer
<i>Khadi</i>	(Hindi): handloom cloth that was adopted as a counter-colonial strategy by Gandhi
<i>Khalīfah</i>	(Arabic): caliph or a Muslim ruler
<i>Khaṭīb</i>	(Arabic): preacher in jumaa prayer.
<i>Khilāfah</i>	(Arabic): human trusteeship as God's vicegerent on earth
<i>Khuṭba</i>	(Arabic): the jumaa prayer speech.
<i>Kudumbasree</i>	(Malayalam): the name of the women oriented, community based, State Poverty Eradication program in Kerala.
<i>kurta</i>	(Hindi): a traditional long shirt.
<i>Lakh</i>	A unit in the south Asian numbering system equaling one hundred thousand.
<i>Madrasa</i>	(Urdu (originally from (Arabic))): Islamic schools in which children are taught the basic principles of Islam and the Quranic teachings
<i>Mahr</i>	(Arabic): money given to the bride by the groom in the Muslim marriage. In kerala, mahr is always gold and not money.
<i>maktab</i>	(Urdu): small institutions usually linked to a mosque in which children go to learn how to read and recite the Quran
<i>Malayalee</i>	a person from Kerala.
<i>Mantra</i>	(Hindi): in Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism, a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that is considered capable of spiritual transformation.
<i>Mappila</i>	(Malayalam): a Muslim person from Kerala
<i>Mappillappattu</i>	(<i>Malayalam</i>): traditional songs sung by the Muslims of Kerala
<i>Marvari</i>	(Malayalam): a local financier.
<i>Masjid</i>	(Arabic): mosque.
<i>Maulavi</i>	(Urdu): a religious man of some authority, usually a mosque preacher
<i>millat</i>	(Arabic): a religious path
<i>minhaj</i>	(Arabic): way of life
<i>morcha</i>	(Hindi): violent demonstration
<i>Mufti</i>	(Arabic): a person delivering Islamic edicts and opinion
<i>Mohalla</i>	(Urdu): neighbourhood.
<i>Mujadid</i> (pl.mujaddideen)	(Arabic): revivalist
<i>musliyār</i>	(Arabi-malayalam): imam of a mosque
<i>nāgriktā</i>	(Hindi): citizenship

<i>namāz</i>	(Urdu): the Muslim prayers performed five times a day.
<i>nasbandi</i>	(Hindi): sterilization
<i>nercha</i>	(Malayalam): religious offering
<i>netā</i>	(Hindi): political leader.
<i>Onam</i>	a Hindu festival in Kerala
<i>palli</i>	(Malayalam): religious place, temple, mosque or church
<i>panchayat</i>	(Hindi): local self-government at the village or small town level.
<i>pūja</i>	(Hindi): Hindu prayer
<i>pardah</i>	(Urdu): in North India it refers to the act of covering the female body and face and in Kerala it refers to the black dress worn by women, which is equivalent to the Saudi 'Abaya.
<i>Puthari</i>	(Malayalam): the harvest Hindu festival in Kerala.
<i>qaum</i>	(Arabic): nation
<i>qurbāny</i>	(Urdu): animal sacrifice
<i>pasmanda</i>	(Urdu): marginalized
<i>Raj</i>	(Hindi): rule, refers to the British colonialism of the Indian Subcontinent from 1858 until 1947.
<i>rāshtra</i>	(Hindi): state
<i>rāsta roko</i>	(Hindi): blocking roads
<i>rickshaw walla</i>	(Hindi): a puller of the rickshaw
<i>ṣabr</i>	(Arabic): patience
<i>sadhu</i>	an ascetic, wandering monk.
<i>Salafī</i>	(Arabic): a muslim who emphasizes the earlier Muslims as model examples of Islamic practice.
<i>Salamu alaikum</i>	(Arabic): the Muslim greeting, literally meaning peace be upon you.
<i>Stayagraha</i>	(Hindi): civil disobedience
<i>Shahīd</i>	(Arabic): martyr
<i>Shafī'</i>	(Arabic): is one of the schools of <i>fiqh</i> (jurisprudence) within the Sunni branches of Islam.
<i>shāhi imām</i>	(Urdu): the head of the imams
<i>shari'ah</i>	(Arabic): source of laws
<i>shehreyet</i>	(Urdu): citizenship
<i>Shi'i</i>	(Arabic): of Shi'I Islam, the second branch of Islam following Muhammad's cousin, Ali.
<i>Shudra</i>	(Hindi): The fourth and hence lowest level in the Hindu caste system

<i>Shura</i>	(Arabic): consultation
<i>Siyasat</i>	(Arabic and Urdu): politics
<i>sufi</i>	(Arabic): a practitioner of Sufism (of the mystical dimension of Islam)
<i>Sunnah</i>	(Arabic): model of virtuous conduct
<i>Sunni</i>	(Arabic): of Sunni Islam, the largest branch of Islam following the sayings of the prophet Muhammad.
<i>Swaraj</i>	(Hindi): self-rule
<i>Ta'wīl</i>	(Arabic): commentary
<i>tafsīr</i>	(Arabic): exegesis of the Quran
<i>ṭaghūt</i>	(Arabic): injustice
<i>ṭalāq</i>	(Arabic): divorce
<i>Tali</i>	(Malayalam): necklet tying ceremony in marriage among the Hindus
<i>Tamkīn</i>	(Arabic): empowerment
<i>Tata</i>	(Malayalam): a title for elder sister, used among the Muslims of Kerala.
<i>tawḥīd</i>	(Arabic): monotheism
<i>thangal</i>	an honorific Muslim title given to males who are allegedly from (arabic) origin and descendent of the prophet in Kerala, in contemporary Kerala, they are the leaders of the Sunni Muslims.
<i>ūlta</i>	(Hindi and urdu): reversed
<i>Ummah</i>	(Arabic): nation
<i>ustādh</i>	(Arabic): a teacher, especially a religious one. In Kerala, it is used among the Muslims as a reference to the Madrasa teacher.
<i>Vedanta</i>	(Sanskrit): part of the Hindu philosophy
<i>Waqf</i>	(Arabic): religious endowment
<i>wasat</i>	(Arabic): middle way or moderation
<i>Waṭan</i>	(Arabic): homeland, patria
<i>Wilayat al-faqih</i>	(Arabic): the governance of the scholar

Appendix IV: The Questionnaire (in English, Malayalam and Urdu)

Dear Participant, I am a PhD Student at Heidelberg University (Germany). This questionnaire is part of my data collection methods as I am working on Islam and Citizenship. I am trying to know more about Indian Muslims and their conceptions of citizenship. This online survey ensures privacy since no names are required and no individual could be identified and information you give could never be traced back to you.

1. General Information

1.1 Age:

1.2 Gender:

Male

Female

1.3 Course of Study/Level of Education

1.4 Languages you know:

1.5 Which kind of school did you go?

Madrasa

Madrasa and
Governmental/
Public

Madrasa and
Private

Only govern-
mental school

Only Private
School

1.6 What is your native place? And is it a village or town?

1.7 Are you a Quran hafiz or do you know parts of it by heart?

Yes

No

1.8 Do you read the tafsir? (kya aap quraan ko samach kar parhte hein?)

Yes

No

1.9 Do you go to the Jum'a prayer in mosque?

Yes Always

Sometimes

No, never

2. Social and Political Activities

2.1 Are you a member of any Islamic association?

Yes

No

2.2 Please name it:

2.3 Are you a member of any NGO?

Yes

No

2.4 Are you a member of a political party?

Yes

No

2.5 Do you vote in elections?

Yes, always

Yes, sometimes

No

2. Social and Political Activities [Continue]

2.6 Why do you vote or not vote?

2.7 Do you think that your vote is important and makes a difference? Yes No Do not know

2.8 Can you name the member of parliament or legislative assembly who is representing your constituency? Yes No

2.9 If yes, please name him/her

2.10 Did you vote for him/her? Yes No

2.11 Do you read newspapers? Yes No

2.12 If yes, which ones:

2.13 Which of the following sources are you most likely going to use to know the news? Newspaper Radio Television
 Internet None

2.14 Have you participated in any campaign / protest / demonstration? Yes No

2.15 if yes please explain for which cause

2.16 Generally, do you discuss politics with others in your daily life? Yes No

2.17 Please specify with whom are you most likely going to discuss politics with i.e family, friends,..

2.18 If in the future any problem happens concerning Islam or your muslim identity, would you be willing to go on a protest for this cause? Yes No Do not Know

2.19 Would you be willing to contact the leader in your district or community, or the political figure (aapka neta) there if you face any major problem? Yes No

2.20 If yes, have you ever contacted him/her? Yes No

3. Conceptions

3.1 Do you feel that in reality you have equal rights as a citizen? Yes Always Sometimes No
 No opinion

3.2 Do you follow fatwas issued by the ulema? Yes always Sometimes No

3.3 Do you have a proper place to pray at your college or university? Yes No

3.4 Did you ever feel any sense of discrimination at your educational institute, or governmental office? Yes No

3. Conceptions [Continue]

- 3.22 Do you think that the media gives a wrong or bad image of muslims? Yes always Sometimes No
- 3.23 Do you support different civil codes for different religious groups? Yes No
- 3.24 Would you support reservations for muslim women? Yes No
- 3.25 Do you always feel safe where you live? yes no
- 3.26 If you are a woman, do you feel that wearing a hijab/veil or a burka makes you feel safer or gives you more freedom? yes no
- 3.27 Is there any place you would avoid going to in fear of your personal security? yes no
- 3.28 Do you think that the Ayodha verdict on 30th September concerning Babri Masjid was fair to the Muslims of India? yes no no opinion
- 3.29 Have you ever been in a situation where someone accused you of being a Pakistani or non-Indian? If yes, how did you reply?

- 3.30 Thank you so much for your help. Please feel free to leave any additional comment you think is useful for me to better understand Indian Muslims. The last message you will read in German is simply a thank you note for participating.

സുഹൃത്തേ,

ഞാൻ ജർമ്മനിയിലെ ഹെർഡൽബർഗ് യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിലെ പി.എച്ച്.ഡി. വിദ്യാർത്ഥിനിയായാണ്. 'ഇസ്ലാമും പൗരത്വവും' എന്ന വിഷയത്തിൽ ഞാൻ നടത്തുന്ന വിവരശേഖരണരീതിയുടെ ഭാഗമാണ് ഈ ചോദ്യാവലി. ഇന്ത്യൻ മുസ്ലിങ്ങളെയും പൗരത്വത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള അവരുടെ സങ്കല്പനങ്ങളെയുംപറ്റി കൂടുതലായി മനസ്സിലാക്കാനാണ് ഞാൻ ഇതുവഴി ശ്രമിക്കുന്നത്.

പേരുകൾ ആവശ്യമില്ലാത്തതിനാലും വ്യക്തികൾ തിരിച്ചറിയപ്പെടുകയോ നൽകപ്പെടുന്ന വിവരങ്ങൾ മറ്റുകാര്യങ്ങൾക്ക് ഉപയോഗിക്കപ്പെടുകയോ ചെയ്യാത്തതിനാലും ഈ സർവ്വേ പൂർണ്ണസ്വകാര്യത ഉറപ്പുനൽകുന്നു.

1. പൊതുവിവരങ്ങൾ

- 1.1 പ്രായം :
- 1.2 ലിംഗം : ആൺ പെൺ
- 1.3 പഠിക്കുന്ന കോഴ്സ് / വിദ്യാഭ്യാസനിലവാരം :
- 1.4 പ്രാവീണ്യമുള്ള ഭാഷകൾ :
- 1.5 ഏതുതരം വിദ്യാഭ്യാസമാണ് ലഭിച്ചത് ?
 - മദ്രസ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം മാത്രം
 - മദ്രസ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തോടൊപ്പം ഗവൺമെന്റ് സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും
 - മദ്രസ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തോടൊപ്പം പ്രൈവറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസവും
 - ഗവൺമെന്റ് സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം മാത്രം
 - പ്രൈവറ്റ് സ്കൂൾ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം മാത്രം
- 1.6 ജന്മസ്ഥലം ഏതാണ്? ഗ്രാമമോ പട്ടണമോ?
- 1.7 താങ്കൾ ഒരു ഖുർആൻ ഹാഫിസ് ആണോ? താങ്കൾക്ക് ഖുർആന്റെ ഭാഗങ്ങൾ മനഃപാഠമാണോ?

- അതെ അല്ല

1.8 ഖുർആൻ വ്യാഖ്യാനം വായിക്കാറുണ്ടോ?

- ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

1.9 പള്ളിയിലെ ജുമുഅ പ്രാർത്ഥനയിൽ പങ്കെടുക്കാറുണ്ടോ?

- ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

2. സാമൂഹ്യാഷ്ടിയപ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ

2.1 താങ്കൾ ഏതെങ്കിലും ഇസ്ലാമികസംഘടനയിലെ അംഗമാണോ?

- അതെ അല്ല

- 2.2 ആണെങ്കിൽ സംഘടനയുടെ പേരും എഴുതുക :
- 2.3 താങ്കൾ ഏതെങ്കിലും NGO-യിൽ അംഗമാണോ?
 അതെ അല്ല
- 2.4 ഏതെങ്കിലും രാഷ്ട്രീയപാർട്ടിയിൽ അംഗമാണോ?
 അതെ അല്ല
- 2.5 തെരഞ്ഞെടുപ്പിൽ വോട്ടുചെയ്യാറുണ്ടോ?
 ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല എപ്പോഴും ചിലപ്പോൾ
- 2.6 വോട്ടുചെയ്യുകയോ ചെയ്യാതിരിക്കുകയോ ചെയ്യുന്നതിന്റെ കാരണം?
- 2.7 താങ്കളുടെ വോട്ട് പ്രധാനമാണെന്നും മാറ്റങ്ങൾ സൃഷ്ടിക്കാൻ പര്യാപ്തമാണെന്നും കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?
 ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല അറിയില്ല
- 2.8 താങ്കളുടെ എം.പി.യുടെയോ എം.എൽ.എ.യുടെയോ പേര് അറിയാമോ?
 അറിയാം അറിയില്ല
- 2.9 അറിയുമെങ്കിൽ ദയവായി അവരുടെ പേരെഴുതുക.
- 2.10 താങ്കൾ അവർക്കോണോ വോട്ടു ചെയ്തത്?
 അതെ ഇല്ല
- 2.11 താങ്കൾ പത്രം വായിക്കാറുണ്ടോ?
 ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല
- 2.12 ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ അവയുടെ പേരെഴുതുക.
- 2.13 വാർത്തകളറിയാൻ താങ്കൾ ഏറ്റവും അധികം ആശ്രയിക്കുന്ന മാധ്യമം ഏത്?
 പത്രം റേഡിയോ ടെലിവിഷൻ
 ഇന്റർനെറ്റ് ഇവയൊന്നുമല്ല
- 2.14 താങ്കൾ ഏതെങ്കിലും പ്രചരണപരിപാടികളിലോ പ്രതിഷേധസമരങ്ങളിലോ പ്രകടനങ്ങളിലോ പങ്കെടുത്തിട്ടുണ്ടോ?
 ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

2.15. ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എന്തു കാരണത്തിലാണ് പങ്കെടുത്തത് എന്ന് ദയവായി വിശദീകരിക്കുക.

2.16. സാധാരണയായി മറ്റുള്ളവരുമായി താങ്കൾ രാഷ്ട്രീയം ചർച്ച ചെയ്യാറുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

2.17. ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ആരുമായാണ് മിക്കവാറും ചർച്ചചെയ്യാറുള്ളത്? ഉദാഹരണത്തിന് കുടുംബാംഗങ്ങൾ, സുഹൃത്തുക്കൾ

2.18. ഇസ്ലാമുമായോ താങ്കളുടെ മുസ്ലീം ഐഡന്റിറ്റിയുമായോ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് ഭാവിയിൽ എന്തെങ്കിലും പ്രശ്നങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാകുകയാണെങ്കിൽ അക്കാരണത്താൽ പ്രതിഷേധസമരം നടത്താൻ താങ്കൾ തയ്യാറാകുമോ?

ഉവ്വ് ഇല്ല അറിയില്ല

2.19. ഗുരുതരമായ ഏതെങ്കിലും പ്രശ്നം നേരിടേണ്ടിവരുന്ന ഘട്ടത്തിൽ പ്രാദേശികനേതാക്കളെയോ സാമുദായിക നേതാക്കളെയോ രാഷ്ട്രീയനേതാക്കളെയോ താങ്കൾ സമീപിക്കുമോ?

ഉവ്വ് ഇല്ല

2.20. ഉവ്വെന്നാണെങ്കിൽ മുസ് എപ്പോഴെങ്കിലും അവരെ സമീപിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3. സങ്കല്പനങ്ങൾ

3.1. ഒരു പൗര/പൗരൻ എന്ന നിലയ്ക്കുള്ള എല്ലാ അവകാശങ്ങളും കടമകളും താങ്കൾക്ക് യഥാർത്ഥത്തിൽ ഉള്ളതായി കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട്, എല്ലായ്പ്പോഴും ചിലപ്പോൾ ഇല്ല പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല

3.2. ഉലമ പുറപ്പെടുവിക്കുന്ന ഫത്വകൾ താങ്കൾ പിന്തുടരാറുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല ചിലപ്പോൾ

3.3. താങ്കളുടെ കോളേജിലോ യൂണിവേഴ്സിറ്റിയിലോ പ്രാർത്ഥനക്കായി സ്ഥലം അനുവദിക്കപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.4. സർക്കാർ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളിലോ താങ്കളുടെ വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ സ്ഥാപനത്തിലോ വെച്ച് ഏതെങ്കിലും തരത്തിലുള്ള വിവേചനം അനുഭവിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

- 3.5 ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എവിടെവെച്ച്?
- 3.6 ഭാവിയിൽ ജോലിചെയ്യുമ്പോഴോ ബാങ്കിൽവെച്ചോ വീട് തിരയുമ്പോഴോ സർക്കാർ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളിൽവെച്ചോ വിവേചനം അനുഭവിക്കേണ്ടിവരുമെന്ന് താങ്കൾ കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?
- ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല അറിയില്ല
- 3.7 ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എവിടെ വെച്ചായിരിക്കും?
- 3.8 മുസ്ലീം സമുദായത്തോട് ഇന്ത്യൻഭരണകൂടം നീതി പുലർത്തുന്നതായി തോന്നുന്നുണ്ടോ?
- ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല അറിയില്ല
- 3.9 താങ്കൾ ന്യൂനപക്ഷമാണെന്ന് താങ്കൾക്ക് അനുഭവപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ടോ?
- ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല
- 3.10 ഇന്ത്യൻഭരണകൂടത്തെ താങ്കൾ എങ്ങനെയാണ് വിലയിരുത്തുന്നത്?
- സമ്പൂർണ്ണ ജനാധിപത്യം 50% ജനാധിപത്യം
 ജനാധിപത്യത്തേക്കാളുപരി സർവ്വാധിപത്യം
 പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല ഇതൊന്നുമല്ല
- 3.11 മറ്റ് അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എഴുതുക.
- 3.12 ഏറ്റവുംകുറഞ്ഞത് ഒന്നും ഏറ്റവും കൂടിയത് 5-ഉം ആണെങ്കിൽ, ഇന്ത്യൻ രാഷ്ട്രീയ വ്യവസ്ഥയോടുള്ള താങ്കളുടെ പിന്തുണ എത്രയായിരിക്കും?
- 1 5 പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല
- 3.13 ഇന്ത്യയിലെ ജനാധിപത്യത്തെക്കുറിച്ച് താങ്കൾ എന്തുകരുതുന്നു?
- ജനാധിപത്യത്തെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുകയും ഇന്ത്യയിൽ അത് നന്നായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്ന് കരുതുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു
 എല്ലാതരത്തിലും പ്രവർത്തനക്ഷമമാകുന്നില്ലെങ്കിലും ജനാധിപത്യത്തെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നു.
 ഇന്ത്യയിൽ പ്രവർത്തനക്ഷമമല്ലാത്തതിനാൽ ജനാധിപത്യത്തെ അംഗീകരിക്കുന്നില്ല.

ഈ ജനാധിപത്യത്തെ നിരാകരിക്കുന്നുവെങ്കിലും ന്യൂനപക്ഷങ്ങൾക്ക് യഥാർത്ഥ പ്രാതിനിധ്യം ലഭിക്കുന്ന പുതിയ ഒരു ജനാധിപത്യക്രമത്തെ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കും.

പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല

താഴെ കൊടുത്ത സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളിൽ താങ്കൾക്കുള്ള വിശ്വാസത്തിന്റെ അളവ് രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുക. ഏറ്റവും കുറഞ്ഞത് ഒന്നും ഏറ്റവും കൂടിയത് അഞ്ചും ആകുന്നതരത്തിൽ കൂടിവരുന്ന ക്രമത്തിലാണ് കള്ളികൾ കൊടുത്തിരിക്കുന്നത്.

	1	5	പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല
3.14 കേന്ദ്രഗവൺമെന്റ്	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.15 സംസ്ഥാനഗവൺമെന്റ്	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.16 പഞ്ചായത്തുകൾ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.17 നീതിന്യായവ്യവസ്ഥ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.18 ഇലക്ഷൻ കമ്മീഷൻ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.19 പോലീസ്	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.20 മുല്ലമാരും ഉലമയും	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.21 മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.22 മാധ്യമങ്ങൾ മുസ്ലീങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് തെറ്റായതോ മോശമായതോ ആയ ചിത്രം നൽകുന്നതായി താങ്കൾ കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് എപ്പോഴും ഇല്ല ചിലപ്പോൾ

3.23 വ്യത്യസ്ത മതവിഭാഗങ്ങൾക്ക് വ്യത്യസ്ത സിവിൽകോഡ് എന്ന ആശയത്തെ താങ്കൾ പിന്തുണയ്ക്കുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.24 മുസ്ലീംസ്ത്രീകൾക്ക് സംവരണം ലഭിക്കുന്നതിനെ താങ്കൾ അനുകൂലിക്കുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.25 ജീവിക്കുന്ന സ്ഥലത്ത് എപ്പോഴും താങ്കൾ സുരക്ഷിത/ സുരക്ഷിതൻ ആണെന്ന് കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.26 താങ്കൾ ഒരു സ്ത്രീയാണെങ്കിൽ ഹിജാബോ ബുർക്കയോ ധരിക്കുന്നത് കൂടുതൽ സുരക്ഷിതത്വം നൽകുന്നതായോ കൂടുതൽ സ്വാതന്ത്ര്യം നൽകുന്നതായോ കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.27 വ്യക്തിസുരക്ഷയെ കരുതി താങ്കൾ പോകാൻമടിക്കുന്ന സ്ഥലങ്ങൾ ഏതെങ്കിലും മൂണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല

3.28 സപ്തംബർ 30-ന് ബാബറി മസ്ജിദുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടുണ്ടായ അയോദ്ധ്യാവിധി മുസ്ലീങ്ങൾക്ക് അനുഗുണമാണെന്ന് കരുതുന്നുണ്ടോ?

ഉണ്ട് ഇല്ല പ്രതികരിക്കുന്നില്ല.

3.29 മുസ്ലീം ഐഡന്റിറ്റി കാരണം സംശയിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ താങ്കൾ എന്നെങ്കിലും അകപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ? ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ താങ്കൾ അതിനോട് എങ്ങനെയാണ് പ്രതികരിച്ചത്?

3.30 താങ്കളുടെ സഹായത്തിന് അകമഴിഞ്ഞ നന്ദി. ഇന്ത്യൻ മുസ്ലീംങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് കൂടുതൽ നന്നായി മനസ്സിലാക്കാൻ സഹായകമാകുന്ന എന്തെങ്കിലും കാര്യങ്ങൾ കൂടുതലായി താങ്കൾക്ക് പറയാനുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ ഈ ഇടം ദയവുചെയ്ത് ഉപയോഗിക്കുക.

میں جرمنے میں ہیدلبرگ یونیورسٹی کی سٹوڈنٹ ہوں

یہ سوالات میں اپنی thesis کے لئے کر رہی ہوں جو اسلام اور شہریت پر ہے

1. عمر:
2. جنس:
 - مرد
 - عورت
3. تعلیم کا معیار:
4. آپ کونسی زبان بولتے ہیں:
5. آپکی تعلیم:
 - مدرسہ
 - مدرسہ اور سرکاری یا سکول
 - مدرسہ اور خصوصی سکول
 - صرف سرکاری سکول
 - صرف خصوصی سکول
6. آپ کہاں کے رہنے والے ہیں؟ گاؤں یا شہر؟
7. کیا آپ حافظ ہیں؟
 - ہاں
 - نہیں
8. کیا آپ قرآن کو سمجھ کر پڑھتے ہیں؟
 - ہاں
 - نہیں
9. کیا آپ جمعہ کی نماز مسجد میں پڑھتے ہیں؟
 - ہمیشہ
 - کبھی کبھی
 - کبھی نہیں

سماجی اور سیاسی سرگرمیوں

1. کیا آپ کسی اسلامی تنظیم سے تعلق رکھتے ہیں؟
 - ہاں
 - نہیں
2. کونسی تنظیم؟
3. کیا آپ کسی NGO سے تعلق رکھتے ہیں؟
 - ہاں
 - نہیں
4. کیا آپ کسی سیاسی پارٹی سے تعلق رکھتے ہیں؟
 - ہاں
 - نہیں
5. کیا آپ ووٹ دیتے ہیں؟
 - ہمیشہ

- کبھی کبھی
- کبھی نہیں
6. اگر ہاں تو کیوں اور اگر نا تو کیوں؟
7. کیا آپ سمجھتے ہی کی آپکا ووٹ قیمتی ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
- معلوم نہیں
8. کیا آپکو معلوم ہی کی آپکے MP یا MLA کون ہی؟
9. اگر ہاں تو اسکا نام لکھیے
10. کیا اپنے اسکو ووٹ دیا؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
11. کیا آپ اخبار پڑھتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
12. اگر ہاں تو کونسا
13. آپ خبروں کے لئے کونسا ذریعہ استعمال کرتے ہی؟
- اخبار
- ریڈیو
- تی وی
- انٹرنیٹ
- کچھ نہیں
14. کیا آپ نے کبھی کسی کمپن یا ہڑتال یا احتجاجات میں حصہ لیا ہے؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
15. اگر ہاں تو اسکی وجہ
16. کیا آپ عام طور پر سیاسی معاملوں پر بات چیت کرتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
17. کس کے ساتھ؟ خاندان؟ دوست؟
18. اگر مستقبل میں اسلام یا آپکے مسلم تشخص کے بارے میں کوئی مسئلہ ہوتا ہے تو کیا آپ احتجاج کے لئے تیار ہونگے؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
- معلوم نہیں
19. کیا آپ اپنی مشکلوں کے حل کے لئے اپنے ضلع کے نیٹا سے یا ڈسٹرکٹ رہنما سے ملیںگے؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
20. اگر ہاں تو اپنے ایسا پہلی کیا ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں

نظریہ

1. کیا آپکو لگتا ہی کے آپکے حقوق برابر ہی؟
- ہمیشہ

- کبھی کبھی
○ کبھی نہیں
○ جواب نہیں
2. کیا آپ علما کو فتویٰ مانتے ہیں؟
○ ہمیشہ
○ کبھی کبھی
○ کبھی نہیں
3. کیا آپکے کولج یا یونیورسٹی میں نماز پڑھنے کے لئے جگہ ہے؟
○ ہاں
○ نہیں
4. کیا آپکو اپنے سرکاری دفتر یا تعلیمی ادارے تعصب محسوس ہوتا ہے؟
○ ہاں
○ نہیں
5. اگر ہاں تو کہاں اور کس طرح کا
6. کیا آپکو لگتا ہے کہ مستقبل میں آپکے ساتھ گھر ڈھونڈنے میں یا کام پر یا بینک میں یا سرکاری دفتر میں تعصب ہونگا؟
○ ہاں
○ نہیں
○ معلوم نہیں
7. اگر ہاں تو کہاں
8. کیا آپکو لگتا ہے کہ مسلمانوں کے ضروری معاملوں پر حکومت انصاف کرتی ہے؟
○ ہاں
○ نہیں
○ معلوم نہیں
9. کیا آپکو لگتا ہے کہ آپ اقلیت ہیں؟
○ ہاں
○ نہیں
○ معلوم نہیں
10. آپ ہندوستان کے بارے میں کیا سوچتے ہیں؟
○ پوری جمہوری
○ ادھی جمہوری
○ جمہوری سے زیادہ آمرانہ
○ پتا نہیں
○ کچھ اور
11. اگر کچھ اور تو وہ لکھیے
12. آپ ہندوستان کے سیاسی نظام کو کتنا سپورٹ کرتے ہیں (ایک سے کم اور پانچ سے زیادہ)
○ ۱
○ ۲
○ ۳
○ ۴
○ ۵
13. آپ ہندوستان کے جمہوریت کے بارے میں کیا سوچتے ہیں؟
○ میں جمہوریت کا حمایتی ہوں اور یہ سمجھتا ہوں کہ جمہوریت کامیاب ہے ,
○ میں جمہوریت کا حمایتی ہوں مگر یہ ہر جگہ کامیاب نہیں ہے,
○ میں جمہوریت کا حمایتی نہیں ہوں اور نہیں یہ ہندوستان میں کامیاب ہے,
○ میں جمہوریت کا حمایتی کرونگا اگر اقلیتوں کو نمائندگی ملتی ہے ,
○ جواب نہیں
14. نیچے لکھے اداروں پر آپ اپنے بھروسے کے معیار کو بتائیے (ایک سے کم اور پانچ سے زیادہ)
مرکزی حکومت
15. ریاستی حکومت
○ ۱
○ ۲
○ ۳
○ ۴
○ ۵

16. مقامی حکومت (پنچایت) ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
17. قانونی نظام ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
18. الکشن کومشن ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
19. پولیس ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
20. ملا اور علماء ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
21. میڈیا ۱ ۲ ۳ ۴ ۵
22. کیا آپکو لگتا ہی مے میڈیا مسلمانوں کو بدنام کرتا ہی؟
- ہمیشہ
- کبھی کبھی
- کبھی نہیں
23. کیا آپ الگ الگ مذہبی گروہوں کے لئے الگ الگ سول کوڈ کی حمایت کرتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
24. کیا آپ مسلم عورتوں کے لئے رزروشن کی حمایت کرتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
25. کیا آپ اپنے آپکو محفوظ سمجھتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
26. اگر آپ عورت ہی تو کیا آپ کو یہ لگتا ہی کی حجاب یا برقع پہننا سے آپ محفوظ ہی اور آپکو زیادہ آزادی ملتی ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
27. کیا کوئی ایسی جگہ ہی جہاں آپ جانے سے ڈرتے ہی؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
28. کیا آپکو لگتا ہی کے ابودھیا کا فیصلہ بابری مسجد کے بارے میں صحیح تھا؟
- ہاں
- نہیں
- جواب نہیں
29. کیا کبھی کسے نے آپکو پاکستانی یا غیر ہندوستانے ہونے کا الزام لگایا ہی اگر ہاں تو آپ نے کیا جواب دیا؟
30. آپکا بہت شکریہ . اگر آپ کچھ ہندوستانے مسلمانوں کے بارے میں کہنا چاہتے ہی تو بتائیے