Chapter One

An Overview of Historical, Social and Cultural Background of Indian Muslim

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Chapter One

An Overview of Historical, Social and Cultural Background of Indian Muslim

Central Asian vagrant tribes and the Persian Empire\(^1\) very often invaded the Indian subcontinent from the North-West over the period of its history. When the Caliphates came and the Sassanids fell, these regions became the part of Muslim dynasties of Central Asian Heritage; initially Turkish people and later Mongol and Turko-Mongol people (M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, 1998). Legal and administrative systems were established by Muslim invaders retaining by their Islamic identity and replacing the existing systems of social conduct and ethics. As for earlier conquerors they integrated into the existing social systems.

The first incursion by the new Muslim inheritor states of the Sassanid Empire took place about 664 AD during the Umayyad Caliphate led by Al Muhallab ibn Abi Suffrah towards Multan in Southern Punjab (Pakistan), in modern day Pakistan. He reached the capital of Maili and returned with treasure and captives of war without conquering the region. This was an Arab foray and part of the early Umayyad push from the time of Islamic conquest of Persia and Central Asia which was within the boundaries of the eastern borders of previous Persian empires. It is supposed that the last Arab push took place about the end of Umayyad reign under Muhammad bin Qasim, after whom the Arabs would be defeated by the Rajputs at the Battle of Rajasthan in 738 and Muslim forays continued under later Turkish and Pathan dynasties who

\(^1\) The Persian Empire was a series of Iranian empires that ruled over the Iranian plateau the original Persian homeland, and beyond in Western Asia, Central Asia and the Caucasus.
superseded the Caliphate and spread their regions both to north and east (Ram Puniyani 2002: pp. 38).

Process of the expansion of Islam in India lasted several centuries and became the issue of heated discussions as to how it happened. Some hold the view that Hindus were converted to Islam forcibly by making Jizya compulsory and Dhimmitude\(^2\) for those supporting Muslim citizens, and threatening of naked force: the "Conversion by the Sword Theory." The other view was that it was due to inter-marriage, conversions, economic integration, to escape caste systems, and under the influence of Sufi\(^3\) preachers (Ram Puniyani, 2002: pp.47).

**Prolonged debate on conversion**

The below mentioned schools of thoughts show disagreement of both scholarly and public opinions concerning to the conversion to Islam. We have a number of opinions on conversion, among them: most of Muslims come from the Iranian plateau or are Arabs and they pursued conversion by means of Jihad\(^4\); conversion was a result of non-religious motives of pragmatism and patronage, for example, social climbing among the Muslim ruling elite and immunity from taxation; Sufi saints took an active part in conversion by changing of attitude; conversion was originated from Buddhists and it was the conversion of lower groups for social freedom as a denial of existing tyrannical Hindu

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\(^1\) It is derived by adding the productive suffix -\(\ddot{\text{a}}\)tude to the Arabic language adjective \(\ddot{\text{d}}\text{himm}\), which literally means protected and refers to a non-Muslim subject of a \(\text{sh}ah\) law state (Wikipedia)

\(^2\) Dhimmitude (Arabic: دهيميتودة) is the inner or mystical dimension of Islam. A practitioner of this tradition is generally known as a Sufi (Arabic: سِفی), though some senior members of the tradition reserve this term for those practitioners who have attained the goals of the Sufi tradition. Another common related denomination is dervish

\(^3\) Sufism (Arabic: صَوْف) is the inner or mystical dimension of Islam. A practitioner of this tradition is generally known as a Sufi (Arabic: سِفی), though some senior members of the tradition reserve this term for those practitioners who have attained the goals of the Sufi tradition. Another common related denomination is dervish

\(^4\) Jihad an Islamic term, is a religious duty of Muslims. In Arabic, Jihad means "strive" or "struggle". Jihad appears frequently in the Qur'an and common usage as the idiomatic expression "striving in the way of Allah (\text{ش}جَادِی}\text{ل} \text{للل} حَ". A person engaged in jihad is called a mujahid, the plural is mujahideen)
### Census information for 2001*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Sikhs</th>
<th>Buddhist</th>
<th>Jains</th>
<th>Others</th>
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<tr>
<td>% total of population 2005</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Yr Growth % (est '91-01) *</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio† (avg. 944)</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>955</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Literacy rate (avg. 79.9)</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
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<td>70.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Participation Rate</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>37.7</td>
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<td>Rural sex ratio</td>
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<td>1001</td>
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<td>Child sex ratio (0–6 yrs)</td>
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<td>950</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>942</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. Table excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul subdivisions of Senapati District of Manipur state.

* The data is "unadjusted" (without excluding Assam and Jammu and Kashmir): 1981 census was not conducted in Assam and 1991 census was not conducted in Jammu and Kashmir.

† No. of females/1000 males.

caste systems; conversion was a combination which was first done upon compulsion and later led to the complete change of attitude; conversion was a long socio-cultural process of dispersion and integration into the sphere of the ruling Muslim society and global polity in general.

It has been a prevalent idea regarding Islam though not scholarly to be a foreign imposition and Hinduism being a native religion confronted with which caused the failure of the plan to Islamicise the Indian subcontinent. This resulted in the politics of the division and communalism in India.

K. S. Lal in his book *Growth of Muslim Population in Medieval India* calculated the approximate number of the people killed. These data were based on Muslim chronicles and demographic calculation. He stated that between 1000 AD and 1500 AD, the population of Hindus was reduced by 80 million. Historians such as Simon Digby (School of Oriental and African Studies) and the Marxist historian Irfan Habib censured the book for its content and lack of precise data in pre-census times. Historians such as Will Durant argue that Islam expanded through aggression (Durant, Will and Elst, Koenraad, 2006: pp. 96).

Sir Jadunath Sarkar argues the fact that Muslim raiders were conducting an organized *jihad* against Hindus in India which was described as "Every device short of massacre in cold blood was resorted to in order to convert heathen subjects" (Durant, Will and Elst, Koenraad, 2006: pp. 196). There are some records of bloody armed conflict in the Tarikh-e-Yamini document kept by Al-Utbi, Mahmud Al-Ghazni's secretary. Converted to Islam Hindus were not absolutely resistant to discrimination because of the caste structure among

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South Asian Muslims in India founded by Ziauddin Al-Barani in the *Fatawa-e-Jahandari* where they were referred to as an *Ajla* group and exposed to persecution by the *Ashraf Castes*6 (Sikand, Yogind7)

Critics of the "Religion of the sword theory" indicate the existence of powerful Muslim societies in Southern India, in present Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and western Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. Critics also indicate the absence of any Muslim societies around the central historical Muslim states in the Indian subcontinent as denial to the "conversion by the sword theory" (Sikand, Yogind8)

Muslim invasion of South Asia is a topic of heated discussion even in present days. Angus Madisson, economic historian, states that the population of the whole India together with the population of other religions did not decrease between 1000 and 1500; however it increased from 75 to 110 million making up 35 million during that period.

**Emergence of Islam in India**

Islam emerged in India together with the Turkish Muslim foray of medieval India, including large parts of modern Pakistan. The invaders assumed the control of management of most parts of India. Influenced by Islam, Indian history has undergone a lot of important changes which reflected in religious,

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6 Most Indian Muslims are descendants of 'untouchable' and 'low' caste converts, with only a small minority tracing their origins to Arab, Iranian and Central Asian settlers. Muslims who claim foreign descent assert a superior status for themselves as Ashraf or 'noble'. Descendants of indigenous converts are, on the other hand, commonly referred to contemptuously as Ajla or 'base' or 'lowly'. Going by this classification, an overwhelming 75% of Muslim population of India would fall into the Ajla category. But conversion to the egalitarian faith of Islam has not helped their cause. The Ajla continue to be discriminated against by the Muslim upper caste. The ill treatment meted out to the lower and backward caste Muslims has led to a movement for recognition of the lower caste Muslims or 'Dalit Muslims' as Scheduled Castes, on par with the lower castes in the Hindu society.

7 Retrieved on 22/07/2008 from *http://stateless.freeshosting.net/upload.html*

8 Ibid.
artistic, philosophical, cultural, social and political spheres (Eaton, Richard Maxwell, 1993).

During last fifty to sixty years, Muslims have had an unstable history in South Asia. After the freedom from British reign, Muslim League politicians created a Muslim-populated state Pakistan by Lahore Resolution of 1946. In present days the Muslim population of India and Pakistan is nearly unchanging. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former president of India, the other two presidents who preceded him, many other politicians, as well as sportsmen and film stars are of Muslim origin. Nevertheless, cases of aggression took place among the Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians.

As opposed to common belief, Islam emerged in South Asia before Muslim foray in India. It was at the beginning of the seventh century, with the arrival of Arab merchants, when impact of Islam was felt for the first time. Commercial relations between Arabia and the subcontinent date from very long time ago. Long before the Islam had been founded in Arabia, Arab merchants came to see the Malabar region which connected them and ports of South East Asia.

As per the book *The History of India* by Elliot and Dowson, the first ship with Muslim visitors was noticed on the Indian coast dates back to the beginning of 630 AD. The book *Ancient and Medieval History of India* by H. G. Rawlinson states that the first Arab Muslims inhabited the Indian coast at the end of the seventh century AD. The book *Tuhfat-ul-Mujahidin* by Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum is also a trustable work in this field. *South Kanara and Madras*

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*The Tuhfat ul-Mujahidin* or *The Tribute to the Strugglers* is one of the earliest extant historical treatises about the southern Indian state of Kerala. Its author, the sixteenth century Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum, hailed from the renowned Makhdum family from the town of Ponnani in Malabar, in northern Kerala. This family traced its descent to immigrants from Yemen, who played a leading role in the spread of Islam in southern India.
Districts Manuals by J. Sturrock as well as Cultural Heritage of India Vol. IV by Haridas Bhattacharya confirm this statement. Arabs turned into a major cultural power of the world with the arrival of Islam. The Arab merchants were the bearers of the new religion spreading it everywhere (Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdum, 2006: pp. 90).

Malik Bin Deenar\(^\text{10}\) constructed the first Indian mosque in Kodungallur during Prophet Muhammad’s life (571–632 AD). It is supposed that the Mappilas were the first community who were converted to Islam as they were in closer relations with the Arabs than others. Many natives were also converted to Islam and attached to the Mappila group due to careful missionary actions. Accordingly, Arabs’ successors are traced among the Mappilas through local women and the converts from among the local people. In the eighth century, Syrian Arabs led by Muhammad bin Qasim invaded the province of Sindh, situated in the farthest east region of the Umayyad Caliphate, the present day Pakistan.

Mahmud of Ghazni included the Punjab in the Ghaznavid Empire at the beginning of the tenth century and carried out a number of invasions further into the present day India. Muhammad of Ghor succeeded more at the end of the twelfth century followed by the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Ibn Batuta, who passed through Delhi in the fourteenth century, states in his memoirs that the preceding sultans were too atrocious and thus disliked by Delhi’s population.

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\(^{10}\) A mosque was built at Kodungallur by Malik Ibn Deenar around 632 AD (although this period antedates the time when he is supposed to have first arrived in Kerala). The mosque was preserved by the Hindus population living in that place. A mosque at Madagai in Kannur District called the Malik Ibn Deenar Mosque is also believed to have been built by Malik Ibn Deenar. In addition to these two mosques, some other palaces were also granted by the local raja as places of worship for the Muslims. This explains the temple style of architecture for some of the earliest mosques in Kerala.
Batuta's records also state the fact that Muslims from the Arab world, Persia and Turkey were often given significant positions at the royal court. This was, however, not the case with the locals who were given secondary roles in the Delhi administration. The word "Turk" usually meant senior social rank. S. A. A. Rizvi, nevertheless, indicates that Muhammad bin Tughlaq had not only to inspired locals but to encouraged artisan groups, for example, cooks, barbers and gardeners to senior administrative positions. Conversion to Islam during his rule was probably a way to advanced and better social status. (The Wonder That Was India - II)

Islam in Kerala and Tamil Nadu

Malik Ibn Dinar along with twenty Muslims, first arrived in Kodungallur in Kerala when they reached India. Here, Islam obtained a royal patronage in certain parts of the region and then it flourished across the entire undivided India. He constructed the first mosque in the Indian subcontinent in a Jain temple gifted by a local ruler. Nowhere found written the accurate date of the building of this mosque. It is, however, assumed that it was built in 629 AD. It is believed to be the second mosque of the world built in order to offer Friday Prayer (Juma'ah) next to the Masjid Al-Nabawi, the world famous mosque of Medina city, Saudi Arabia. Ten other mosques together with the ones at Kollam, Chaliyam, Pantalayini Kollam/Quilandi, Madayi/Pazhayangadi, Srikandhapuram, Dharmadom, Kasaragode, Mangalore and Barkur were constructed along the Malabar Coast by his missionary group. Certain records assume that the ancient mosques at Chombal, Kottayam, Poovar and Thengapattanam were also constructed during that period.
Seljuk Turks from Ottoman Empire, known as Rowther in South India, were welcomed by Cholas for trading relations in 1212 AD. Then a lot of Turks merchants and missionaries inhabited Tharangambadi (Nagapattinam), Karaikal, Muthupet, Koothanallur and Podakkudi. The Turks inhabited this region with their fleet and developed into a medium Islam group with population reaching almost one million Rowthers. These new communities were included into the Rowther district. Hanafis fractions had fair complexion as they were in more close relations with the Turkish than others in South. Certain Turkish Anatolian and Turkish Safavid Inscriptions by Madras were discovered in the regions from Tanjore to Thiruvarur and in other villages, which can be viewed by public. This is now available in the Archeological Division [II] of Madras Museum for public view.

In 1235 AD, Arabs inhabited in the regions of Nagore, Kilakkarai, Adirampattinam, Kayalpatnam, Erwadi and Sri Lanka. They might have been the first Shafei community of Islam, known as Marakkar in Far South and Coastal area of South India (Majumdar, R. C. (ed.), 1973: pp. 115). As Shafei Fractions were in close relations with the Arabs than others in South they have mixed fair and darker skin. Arab merchants also built a lot of new settlements and communities in these regions. Malaya and Indonesia population converted to Islam as well. The natives who embraced Islam were particularly women due to their marriage with Arabs. These Arabs (Marakkars) became a great Muslim fraction whose population constitutes around 2.5 million.
Role of Sufism in promotion of Islam in India

As we studied above regarding the spread of Islam in India, different fractions of scholars have different views on the same. A very small group of scholars believes that Islam has firmed its roots in India due to forced conversion. The matter of fact is something else. After an intensive study into Islamic laws, I got to know that Islam itself denounces forced conversion. Qurán clearly states, “There is no compulsion in religion”, Explaing this verse of Qurán renowned Qurán commentator Ismail bin Omar Ibn Kathîr writes in his landmark Qurán’s commentary Tafsîr Ibn Kathîr "Do not force anyone to become Muslim, since Islam is a clear religion and its proofs and evidences are plain and clear. Therefore, there is no need to force anyone to embrace Islam. Rather, whoever Allah directs to Islam, opens his heart for it and enlightens his mind, will embrace Islam with certainty. Whoever Allah blinds his heart and seals his hearing and sight, and then he will not benefit from being forced to embrace Islam. (Ibn Kathîr. Ismail bin Omar. 2003).

It was reported that the Ansar were the reason behind revealing this Ayah, although its indication is general in meaning. Ibn Jarir recorded that Ibn 'Abbas said [that before Islam], "When (an Ansar) woman would not bear children who would live, she would vow that if she gives birth to a child who remains alive, she would raise him as a Jew. When Banu An-Nadir (the Jewish tribe) were evacuated [from Al-Madinah], some of the children of the Ansar were being raised among them, and the Ansar said, 'We will not abandon our children.' Allah revealed,

Prophet Mohammad says: “There is no compulsion in religion. Verily, the right path has become distinct from the wrong path.” Abu Dawud and An-
Nasai also recorded this Hadith. As for the Hadith that Imam Ahmad recorded, in which Anas said that the Messenger of Allah said to a man,

"Embrace Islam. The man said, "I dislike it. The Prophet said, "Even if you dislike it." First, this is an authentic Hadith, with only three narrators between Imam Ahmad and the Prophet. However, it is not relevant to the subject under discussion, for the Prophet did not force that man to become Muslim. The Prophet merely invited this man to become Muslim, and he replied that he does not find himself eager to become Muslim. The Prophet said to the man that even though he dislikes embracing Islam, he should still embrace it, 'for Allah will grant you sincerity and true intent.' (Ibn Kathir. Ismail bin Omar. 2003). 11

Sufism, in fact, played a significant role in the proliferation of Islam in India. Apparently, it sounds amazing to think as to how the Sufis have been successful in the propagation of Islam in a country where the majority of population is Hindus about whom there is no clear description in the Islamic Holy book Qur'an. The detail study on this will come in the next chapter. They have succeeded in their mission, maybe, because a number of Sufi practices and

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11 (There is no compulsion in religion ) [2:256]. Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Ju'far al-Muzakki informed us> Zahir ibn Ahmad> al-Hassan ibn Muhammad ibn Musa> Yahya ibn Hakim> Ibn Abi 'Adiy> Shu'bah> Abu Bisir> Said ibn Jubayr> Ibn 'Abbas who said: 'The women of the Helpers whose boys always died in infancy used to vow to bring up their boys as Jews if they were to live. When the Banu1-Nadir were driven out, they had among them children of the Helpers. The Helpers said: 'We will not leave our children!' Upon which Allah, exalted is He, revealed (There is no compulsion in religion). The right direction is henceforth distinct from error .'). Muhammad ibn Musa ibn al-Fadl informed us> Muhammad ibn Ya'qub> Ibnhim ibn Marzaq> Wubah ibn Jari> Shu'bah> Abu Bisir> Said ibn Jubayr> Ibn 'Abbas who said regarding the saying of Allah, exalted is He, (There is no compulsion in religion . ). 'The woman of the Helpers whose boys never survived used to vow that if a boy of hers survived, she would raise him as a Jew. When the Banu1-Nadir were driven out of Medina they had among them children of the Helpers. The Helpers said: 'O Messenger of Allah! Our Children!' Allah, exalted is He, therefore revealed (There is no compulsion in religion . ). Said ibn Jubayr said: 'Those who wished to leave with the Jews did leave, and those who wished to embrace Islam embraced Islam.' Said Muslihd: 'This verse was revealed about a man of the Helpers who had a black boy called Subayh whom he used to coerce to become Muslim.' Al-Suddi said: 'This verse was revealed about a man from the Helpers called Abu1-Hassan. This man had two sons. It happened that some traders from Syria came to Medina to sell oil. When the traders were about to leave Medina, the two sons of Abu1-Hassan called them to embrace Christianity. These traders converted to Christianity and then left Medina. Abu1-Hassan informed the Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, of what had happened. He asked him to summon his two sons. But then Allah, exalted is He, revealed (There is no compulsion in religion . ). The Messenger of Allah, Allah bless him and give him peace, said: 'May Allah banish both of them. They are the first to disbelieve' (Al-Wahidi, 2010)
ideologies, religious structures and manners had many features in common with Indian philosophical literature, particularly nonviolence and monism. Sufis have never been orthodox. It has been, therefore, easier for Hindus to practice the Sufis' unconventional attitude towards Islam. A number of Islamic scholars, however, denounced the Sufi practices and ideologies. Ahl-e-Hadith and Wahbis have completely rejected the Sufi philosophy while Deobandis, who are parallel with the Wahabi faiths and Barelvi practices, have partially rejected. Detailed study on the same will be done in coming chapters.

Hazrat Khawaja Muin-ud-din Chisti, Nizam-ud-din Auliya, Shah Jalal, Amir Khusro, Sarkar Sabir Pak, Waris Pak prepared Sufi groups in order to spread Islam in the various parts of India. After the Islamic Empire got founded in India, Sufis always gave splendor to the reign which would otherwise be very cold and severe. The Sufi movement also influenced adherents from the artisan and untouchable groups, playing an important part in filling the gap between Islam and the local customs (Shah, Idries, 1969). On the other hand, there are indications of obsessive and ferocious conversions by Sufi Muslims. This is what some historian say. Ahmed Sirhindi, Naqshbandi Sufis, however, eagerly supported the peaceful adaptation of Islam by Hindus. A lot of Indian Muslims come and see Dargahs of Sufi Saints to pray to God.

Sufism is a mystical trend (tariqa) while sharia exhibits strict adherence to the law. A Sufi reaches a complete concept of oneness with God, often on the edges of orthodox behavior, and thus can turn into a Sufi trainer (pir), living saint, who may adopt followers (murids) and establish a religious genealogy (silsila) that can remain for generations. Instructions of Sufis turned out to be essential in India during the thirteenth century following the school of Moinuddin Chishti (1142–1236), who inhabited in Ajmer, Rajasthan, and drew
a lot of new converts to Islam due to his sacredness. His Chishtiyya order turned to be the most important Sufi genealogy in India, though other orders from Central Asia and Southwest Asia came to India as well and played an important role in the expansion of Islam. Thus, literature which traced Islamic culture in older South Asian customs was established in regional languages.

The largest number of Muslims in India is either Sunni Deobandi or Sunni Barelwí, there are Shia and Salafi also as well as other smaller groups. Sufism are almost common to all except in Salafism or wahabism. Darul-Uloom Deoband, the most important Islamic institution in India, is regarded as the second compared to Egypt's Al-Azhar in its worldwide impact. There are a number of famous Muslim institutes in India. The institutes which were considered to be founded by Muslims are: Aligarh Muslim University, Darus-Salam Education Trust having colleges such as Deccan College of Engineering, Deccan School of Hospital Management, Deccan College of Medical Sciences; Jamia Millia Islamia, Hamdard University, Al-Barkaat Educational Institutions, Maulana Azad Education Society Aurangabad, Dr. Rafiq Zakariya Campus Aurangabad, Al Ameen Educational Society, Crescent Engineering College and Al-Kabir Educational Society.

Among traditional Islamic universities are Sunni Markaz Kerala which is the biggest charitable, nongovernmental, non-profit Islamic institution in India, Raza Academy, Al-Jamiatul Ashrafiya, Azamgarh, Darul Uloom Deoband and Darul-uloom Nadwatul Ulama. Here is a list of key Muslim educational institutes:

- Al Ameen Educational Society
- Al Ameen Medical College, Bijapur
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- Al Falah School of Engineering and Technology, Faridabad
- Al-Barkaat Educational Institutions, Aligarh
- Aligarh Muslim University
- Al-Kabir educational society
- Anjuman-e-Islam, Mumbai.
- Crescent Engineering College
- Darul Huda Islamic University
- Darul Uloom Deoband
- Darul Uloom Manzar-e-Islam, Bareilly
- Darul-uloom Nadwatul Ulama
- Dar-us Salam Education Trust
- Dr. Rafiq Zakariya Campus, Aurangabad
- Era's Lucknow Medical College, Lucknow
- Hamdard University
- Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine and Sciences
- Integral University
- Jamal Mohamed College, Trichirapally
- Jamia Ashrafia, Misbahul Uloom, Mubarakpur
- Jamia Darul Huda Islamiyya
- Jamia Millia Islamia
- Jamia Nizamia
- Madrasa Alia (now turned into Alia University), Kolkata
- Markazu Saqafathi Suniya, Kerala
- National College Of Engineering, Tirunelveli
- Osmania University
- Raza Academy
- The Maulana Azad Education Society, Aurangabad
Most of these institutes don’t follow any particular sect in order to spread education among Indian Muslims. Traditional Islamic institutes or seminaries, however adhere to a particular Islamic sect. Such institutes don’t even allow admission of those students who don’t follow their school of thought. A detailed study will be coming on that in the Chapter Three.

Role of Muslims in India’s Freedom Movement

Muslim revolutionaries, poets and writers’ role is recorded in India’s fight against the British. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai are Muslims who actively and whole-heartedly took part in freedom movement. Muhammad Ashfaq Ullah Khan of Shahjehanpur planned to burgle the British treasury at Kakori (Lucknow). Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, generally known as Frontier Gandhi, was a famous follower of nationalism who spent forty-five of his ninety-five years of life in prison. Barakatullah of Bhopal was one of the creators of the Ghadar party who made groups of anti-British parties. Syed Rahmat Shah of the Ghadar party was a secret revolutionary in France and he was executed by hanging for his role in the failed Ghadar (mutiny) rebellion in 1915. Ali Ahmad Siddiqui of Faizabad (UP) organized the Indian Mutiny in Malaya and Burma together with Syed Mujtaba Hussain of Jaunpur and was executed by hanging in 1917. Vakkom Abdul Khadar of Kerala took part in the "Quit India" movement in 1942 and was executed by hanging; Umar Subhani, a manufacturer and millionaire of Bombay supported Gandhi with congress expenditures and sacrificed for freedom. Hazrat Mahal, Asghari Begum, Bi Amma were among Muslim women who participated in the freedom movement.
European states began to expand their naval and trading influence since 1948. Their task was its expansion around the Indian subcontinent. Later with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and Europe, the European authorities gained important technological and commercial advancement over the Mughal Empire which was on its decline. Then, they increasingly kept their gripping their power in the region.

A father-son duo was the first to recognise the threat of British East India Company. These were Hyder Ali, and then his son Sultan Tipu. They wasted no time to oppose the Company. But at the end, Tipu Sultan lost the battle at Srirangapatnam in 1799. They confronted the expansionist aims of the British East India Company in Bengal, Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah and attacked the British. However, he was defeated at the battle of Plassey in 1757. The Britishers directed their force against the upper class Muslims after the First War of Independence, known as Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, because under their direction the war was frequently conducted in and around Delhi. Thousands of people were executed by shooting or hanging at the gate of Red Fort, Delhi. In present days, this place is known as 'Khooni Darwaza', which means 'the bloody gate'. Mirza Ghalib, the famous Urdu Poet (1797-1869), gave a true depiction of this slaughter in his letters which are now published by the Oxford University Press 'Ghalib His Life and Letters' compiled and translated by Ralph Russel and Khurshidul Islam (1994).

With the decline of the Mughal Empire, Muslims’ influence in India started fading. The Muslims of India, then, have to face another challenge. They, in this situation, have to defend their culture and interests.
During this time, the Ulama of Firangi Mahal, who settled down initially at Sehali, District Barabanki, and since 1690s, in Lucknow, trained and led the Muslims. The Firangi Mahal directed and guided the Muslims of India. The Maulanas and Maulvis (religious teachers) of Darul-uloom, Deoband (UP) also took a significant part in freedom movement. They declared the British conquer unlawful and such control of power is deemed to be against Islam. Maulana Azad, Hakeem Ajmal Khan, Hasrat Mohani, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Professor Maulavi Barkatullah, Dr. Zakir Husain, Saifuddin Kichlu, Allama Shibli Nomani, Vakkom Abdul Khadir, Dr. Manzoor Abdul Wahab. Bahadur Shah Zafar, Hakeem Nusrat Husain, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. Samad Achakzai, Colonel Shahnawaz, Dr. M.A.Ansari, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, Ansar Harwani, Tak Sherwani, Nawab Viqarul Mulk, Nawab Mohsinul Mulk, Mustsafa Husain, VM Ubaidullah, SR Rahim, Badruddin Tyabjee, and Moulvi Abdul Hamid were the other well-known Muslims who struggled for independence under the British Raj.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a part of the Indian National Congress and as well as the part of the independence struggle until the 1930s. The poet and philosopher, Dr. Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal, was a powerful supporter of Hindu–Muslim unity and an undivided India until the 1920s. Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Maulana Shaukat Ali fought for the liberation of the Muslims. At the same time, they fought for the freedom alongside Mahatama Gandhi and Maulana Abdul Bari of Firangi Mahal. Until the 1930s, the Muslims of India directed the principles of an undivided India to their inhabitants.

At the end of 1920, realizing the different viewpoints of the Indian National Congress and those of the All India Muslim League, Dr. Sir Allama
Muhammad Iqbal introduced the idea of a separate Muslim homeland in India in the 1930s. Subsequently, the All India Muslim League claimed a separate Muslim homeland. This claim, known as the Pakistan Resolution, was raised in Lahore in 1940. Till then, Dr. Sir Allama Muhammad Iqbal was no more, and the Pakistan Movement was moved forward under the leadership of the leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, and many others.

In the beginning, the claim for separate Muslim homeland was within a big, independent, undivided India with self-governing regions ruled by the Muslims. Some other opinions which were to provide the Muslim minority in India with adequate defense and political representation in a free, undivided India were also argued. And as there was no agreement concerning the freedom of India from the British Raj between the Indian National Congress, the All India Muslim League, and the British colonial government, the All India Muslim League demanded for Pakistan with complete independence, sovereignty,

**Law and Politics**

Almost every Indian community has its personal laws in for their civil affairs. Personal laws are applied particularly in the matters of marriages, divorce etc. Personal laws, however, are of no use for criminal matters. Muslims in India are ruled by The Muslim Personal Law (*Shariat*) Application Act, 1937 in their such civil and personal affairs. It guides the use of Muslim Personal Law to Muslims in marriage, mahr (dower which groom offers to bride), divorce, maintenance, gifts, waqf, wills and inheritance. The courts usually use the
Hanafi Sunni law. Exceptions are made for the regions where Shia law differs significantly from Sunni practice.

Communities in India following their respective religions have equal rights. The Constitution of India gives equal rights to all its citizens regardless of their religion. A Uniform Civil Code has also been recommended by the Article 44. This was tried to introduce in the name of social integration and such efforts to assimilate Indian society in the country under common civil code by successive political leadership. However, Indian Muslims particularly opposed it strongly and regarded such initiatives as an effort to weaken the cultural identity of the country's minority groups. The has long been debated in the country and still it is contentious issue as the right wing political groups, the advocates of Hindutva are always embarked on this issue. Therefore, there is a unique situation in India where supporters of a secular law, that could give every community its particular identity, are considered as communal and those who make all their efforts to introduce a so called "uniform law" to impose Hindutva on world's biggest democracy, claim themselves as nationalists.

Muslims, however, follow their own personal law in India under the ambit of Indian Constitution The All India Muslim Personal Law Board had been introduced to defend and use "Muslim Personal Law" i.e. Shariat Application Act in India.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) is an organisation constituted in 1973 to adopt suitable strategies for the protection and continued applicability of Muslim Personal Law in India, most importantly, The Muslim
Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act of 1937, providing for the application of the Islamic Law Code of Shariat to Muslims in India in personal affairs.

According to its website, its aims and objectives are:

- To adopt suitable strategies for protection and continued applicability of Muslim Personal Law i.e. Shariat Application Act in India.
- To strive for annulment or exempting the Muslims from the ambit of such direct, indirect or parallel legislation, whether already enacted or in the process of enactment or to be enacted in future, or rulings and judgments of the courts of law interfering in the application of Muslim Personal Law.
- To generate awareness about the injunctions of Islamic Shariah regarding personal and social life of Muslims, and publication of literature for the purpose.
- To formulate a comprehensive framework for promotion and enforcement of personal laws of Islamic Shariah among the Muslims.
- To constitute Action Committees for protection of the Muslim Personal Law from time to time, and for striving to implement of the decisions of the Board throughout the country.
- To constitute a permanent standing committee comprising Ulema and legal experts to study laws, rules, regulations and circulars issued by the central and state governments and other governmental and semi-governmental agencies or the Bills introduced in the Parliament and state legislation from the point of view of their impact on the Muslim Personal Law.

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• To promote sense of harmony, goodwill, brotherhood, cooperation and unity among followers of various schools of Islamic Shariah, and to advance unity, coordination among them for the protection of Muslim Personal Law.

• To assess currently enforced Muhammadan Law in India in the light of Islamic Shariah, to arrange for study of various issues in the light of various schools of Islamic jurisprudence, and to find appropriate solutions to the issues facing the community, following the principles of Islamic Shariah, under the guidance of experts of Islamic Shariah and jurisprudence in the light of Holy Qurán and Sunnah.

• To constitute Study Teams and organise seminars, symposia, public lectures, assemblies and conferences and tours, and publish literature, use mass media for the purpose of achieving the above objects.

AIMPLB is a private body working to protect Muslim personal laws, liaise with and influence the government and guide the general public about crucial issues. The Board has a working committee of 41 ulama representing various schools of thought. In addition to this, it also has a general body of 201 persons of ulama as well as laymen, including about 25 women. Within the Board, Shias were a minority, as are the Barelvi Sunnis, with the Deobandi Sunnis dominating the Board. The Board suffered splits when Shias and Muslim Feminists seceded to form their own separate Boards, the All India Shia Personal Law Board and the All India Muslim Women's Personal Law Board13.

As for the religious politics, the governance of the Muslim community worked at numerous ways in the evolution of Indian Islam during the twentieth

Tableeghi Jama'at in a ferry
century. The most conservative wing worked on the education system which was offered by the hundreds of religious training institutes (*madrasa*) all over the country, which have inclined to emphasize the study of the Qur'an and Islamic texts in Arabic and Persian. Several national movements have arisen from this part of the Muslim community. *The Jama'at-e-Islami*\(^\text{14}\), Islamic Party, created in 1941, supports the formation of an explicitly Islamic government. The *Tablighi Jama'at*\(^\text{15}\), Outreach Society, activated as a movement after the 1940s, first among the *ulema* – Islamic scholars – emphasizing personal rebirth, prayer, a missionary spirit, and concentration on orthodoxy. It has always criticized at all the kind of events that take place in and around Sufi shrines and remained a considerable force in the training of the *ulema* (McDonough, Sheila, 1983). On the other hand, other ulema have supported the lawfulness of mass religion, including praise of *pirs* and the memory of the Prophet. A powerful secularising campaign led by Syed Ahmad Khan resulted in the establishment of Aligarh Muslim University (1875 as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College) which had larger, more contemporary courses, and other major Muslim universities.

The role of Islam in Indian politics should be examined. Islam has always been the religion of a minority in India. Although it has been the religion of the rulers, yet neither did it ensure equality nor emancipation from the feudal system. It remained fundamental to the system as it could call forth emotional allegiance of its adherents. The so-called custodians of religion wholeheartedly

\(^\text{14}\) The party was founded in British India in the year 1941 by Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi as a religious movement to promote Islamic values and practices. Initially, it was against the Pakistan Movement (a movement to divide British India into two nations - India and Pakistan) on the basis of the Unity or Jama'at and the Universalist ideas imbued in Islam. That position changed during the Partition of India.

\(^\text{15}\) The *Tablighi Jamaat* was founded in the late 1920s by the well known scholar Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi in the Mewat province of India.
justified the institution of monarchy, slavery and exploitation. The dissent, if any, was on the issues of fundamentalism or over socially irrelevant matters. Tolerance and broadmindedness, if any, was the result of pragmatism and expediency rather than religious, (i.e., Islamic) conviction. Consequently, the Muslim government was founded not on Shariah (holy law) but on the laws and regulations of the king.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made some pertinent observations when, as Chairman of its Drafting Committee, he moved for the consideration of the Draft Constitution in the Assembly on November 4, 1948:

'It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognize the existence of minorities, to start with. It must also be such that it will enable the majorities and minorities to merge someday into one. He claimed that the solution proposed in the Draft (based on the 1947 decision) met this test. However, if self-perpetuation of the minorities is to be averted, Constitutional safeguards must be matched at the political level by a party system which cuts across the majority-minority divide.

Muslims of India made no effort to promote such a party system. The failure is not theirs alone. There has been a national failure to evolve a viable party system even half a century after the Constitution came into force. For the most part the Muslim leadership pursued the course of communal mobilization in a polity which gives short shrift to it. Muslims have faced an acute problem. They face grave handicaps and gross discrimination. Till as late as 1961, any

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17 Ibid.
expression of Muslims. grievances was regarded as an obscenity. The frowns
did not vanish thereafter, disquiet at mention of the grievances lingered. On the
other hand, the grievances brooked no neglect, either

Emotional integration was surely not to be achieved by denial of the
minorities' handicaps. But, then, nor is it attainable by pleas for protection.
This brings one to what is really the crux of the problem. To deny
discrimination and pretend all is well is to fly in the face of the facts. But
agitation against discrimination can arouse the very emotions that foster
discrimination. The solution of the Muslim problem lies in a resolution of this
dilemma by devising a form and context of agitation which heals old wounds
and inflicts no new ones. This resolution can be achieved by regarding
discrimination as what it is a problem of Indian democracy to be resolved
within the framework of national integration. This is best done by associating
men of goodwill of all communities in the task of making a success of Indian
secularism.

These days, every political party tries to woo the Muslim voters particularly at
the time of elections. After elections, winning Muslim candidates are given
portfolios to appease the Muslims but little is being done for Muslims' educational, social and economic upliftment.

Muslims an injured community of communal clashes

India, since independence, has been a country where its citizens are abide by
the law. Constitutional loyalty for secularism has always been maintained.
Starting from colonial times, Hindu-Muslim relationships in India have been

\[\text{ibid.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.}\]
\[\text{For details vide the A. G. Noorani's The Muslims of India: A Documentary Record,}
\text{Oxford University Press, 2003}\]
spoiled by communal violences. A consequence of the Partition of India in 1947 was a large scale communal tussle in India resulting in huge bloodshed. India has seen major violences one after another caused by underlying Hindu-Muslim conflicts (Maudoodi, Syed Abul'Ala, 1975: 37). These tensions are originated from the claims of Hindu extremists being sole nationalists versus Muslim population who are hardly ready to leave living their Islamic way of life for which the constitution of India guaranteed.

In these conflicts, the number of Muslims killed across the nation was usually more than Hindus. After 1947, in all the communal uprisings, according to the official police records seventy five per cent of lives lost in such riots and properties demolished were of Muslim. This ratio increased to eighty five percent during the 2002 uprisings in Gujarat (Lal, K. S.,1984 : pp.49). The ideologue of writing wing people of India, let alone the common people, the likes of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) ideologue Mr. Arun Shourie justifies such conflicts by saying that it should be mentioned that the majority of the Muslims of India stayed in their motherland while many Hindus were compelled to migrate from Pakistan to India or Abroad (Arun Shourie, 1998: pp. 29) and Narendra Modi making a controversial statement during the Gujarat genocide that ‘every action has its equal reaction’, Newton’s third law.

The idea of communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the post-partition period has been settled in the last decade with the demolishing of the disputable Babri Mosque in Ayodhya. The destruction occurred in 1992 and was supposedly performed by the Hindu extremist Bharatiya Janata Party and organizations like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. It caused revenge on the side of Muslims and Hindu fundamentalists all over India including Mumbai with the Bombay Riots and
also the 1993 Mumbai Bombings. The infamous Muslim Mafia don Dawood Ibrahim and the predominantly Muslim D-Company illegal band were allegedly among those who supposedly participated in these murders. In 2001 self proclaimed Islamic fighters assaulted the Indian Parliament by establishing substantial tension between community relations.

A number of the most aggressive incidents in recent times occurred during the notorious Gujarat uprisings in India where one thousand people is reckoned to be killed, most of whom supposedly Muslims. Some sources state that among the killed were about two thousand Muslims and fifty-eight Hindus. State was alleged to be involved in it. The uprisings were in revenge to the Godhra Train Burning in which fifty Hindus belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, returning from the disputed place of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, were burnt alive in a train fire at the Godhra railway station. As per Gujarat police the event was supposedly a deliberate act performed by resentful and fanatical Ghanchi Muslims in the region against the Hindu pilgrims. The Commission which investigated this case stated that the fire was just an accident. In 2006 the High Court decided the constitution of such a Committee to be unlawful as another investigation directed by Justice Nanavati Shah was still examining the matter. The Nanavati Shah commission is yet to complete its investigation. It has stated recently that it is not intending to give an interim report.

There is also emergence of Indian terrorist groups like SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India) and then IM (Indian Mujahdeen), allegedly an extension of the former. Earlier, only foreign terrorist groups' hands were found behind...

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21 The Gujarat riots that took place in retaliation for the incident swiftly took the state out of control, with the killing of Muslims by angry mobs of Hindus. Several Hindu extremist groups and governoent ministers (including the chief minister of Gujarat, state, Narendra Modi) have been accused of direct involvement in the anti-Muslim riots.
any terrorist mishap and Muslims of India were proud of the fact that they are not involved in terrorist activities. Hindu extremist groups claim that Muslim-Hindu clashes have been provoked because of the growing of such Islamic Extremist organisations whose aim is the creation Islamic rule in India. They claim that the Pakistan based groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed have been instigating bias among the local Muslim population against Hindus. Many believe that these groups were involved in the July 11, 2006 Mumbai train terrorist attack. In this attack, near about two hundred people were killed. These groups are also said to be behind the Indian Parliament in 2001.

They carried out a lot of other assaults including continuous violence in Indian Kashmir and bombings in the Indian capital New Delhi. They have declared some areas of Indian Kashmir belong to Pakistan in 1999. This stuff has resulted in the increasing communal strife between Hindus and Muslims. Though the common Hindus and common Muslims are nothing to do with such violence. Everyone wants to live in peaceful environment.

Muslim population of India as well as the Muslim civil society have had different views on these new emerging native terror groups allegedly linked with the foreign terrorist groups and funded by them. Some say that the emergence of such groups is nothing but an organized conspiracy against Muslims and media fabrication. Most of the arrested youths accused of involving in some terror attack one after another, have been released due to lack of evidences.

The entire Muslim population of India is, however, united in the view terming such activities as against the teaching of Islam. Muslims are united in
denouncing terrorism. Following the media sensation of the home grown terror groups, the term 'Hindu terrorism' also emerged in the same media. This was a new and highly controversial phrase entered the sometimes cliche-riddled Indian press.

As with the term "Islamic terrorism" and "Christian fundamentalism", this latest addition to the media lexicon is highly emotive. It was in the aftermath of the 29 September bomb blast in the predominantly Muslim town of Malegaon in the western state of Maharashtra that the term "Hindu terrorism" or "saffron terrorism" came to be used widely. That was because the state police's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) arrested 10 Hindus following the blasts and has said that it wants to arrest several more.

One of those detained was a thirty-eight year old female priest, Sadhwi Pragya Singh Thakur, who has been accused by the Anti-Terrorism Squad of being involved in the Malegaon blast. Her detention shocked the common Hindu population of India.

So too did the arrest of a serving Indian army officer, Lt-Col Prasad Srikant Purohit, who the Anti-Terrorism Squad said is the prime accused in the case. Some of the arrested were members of a little-known Hindu outfit called Abhinav Bharat (Young India). Report said that at least three of those held have some links with a prestigious college in the city of Nasik, the Bhonsala Military Academy.

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23 Ibid

24 Ibid.
The worst part of the emergence of Hindu terrorism is the accused were from country's Defense sector. One of the accused was Col Raikar, who retired from the Indian army. Both he and Col Purohit served in the same unit of the army and became friends. Another retired army officer, Maj Prabhakar Kulkarni, had also been under arrest. In addition, the ATS says that at least one of the 10 suspects received military training here25.

Sadhwi Pragya Singh Thakur, Col Purohit, Maj Kulkarni and Col Raikar have denied any connection with terrorism, as has the Bhonsala Military Academy and its parent organisation, the Central Hindu Military Education Society (CHMES).

Founded in 1937, the sprawling Bhonsala campus is run by the Central Hindu Military Education Society (CHMES), an organisation established in the 1930s by Dr BS Moonje, a former president of the militant Hindu Mahasabha (Hindu Assembly) organisation. His vision was actually to militarise India to fight the British Raj. As the name suggests, this is not an ordinary college. Its aim, as its website claims, is to "encourage students to take up careers in the armed forces of the country"26.

Meanwhile, most Hindu organisations believe India's Congress party-led government is playing politics by defaming Hindus. They argue that the very term "Hindu terrorist" is not only a creation of the media but also a contradiction in terms - because the faith explicitly denounces violence. "The government, with an eye on the general election next year, is trying to woo
Muslims in India are less educated, poorer and more often unemployed than Hindus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment: 4.7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy: 19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita: $461*</td>
<td>$109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1987: Communal violence leaves 350 people dead
1992: Nearly 1,800 people killed in riots
1989: Ethnic strife leaves 1,000 dead, 50,000 displaced
1983: More than 500 Muslims massacred and buried in a mass
1989 to present: Insurgency leaves more than 30,000 dead
1989: Ethnic strife leaves 3,000 dead
1992: Nearly 100 people killed in riots

MAP KEY
Muslim concentration
- Less than 5%
- 5%-10%
- 10%-20%
- 20%-30%
- More than 80%

Sources: Census of India; India Today; Muslimworld.com; TIME Research

TIME Map by Dennis Wong; text by Nick Papadopoulos
Muslims by maligning Hindus," says Datta Gaikward, chief of the right-wing Hindu Shiv Sena party in Nasik.27

Hindu political parties are also staunchly defending Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, the arrested female priest. They had hired lawyers to represent her and at every legal hearing in Nasik supporters of right-wing parties gather outside the court and shout anti-government slogans.28

This new addition was considered as a retaliation of Muslim terror groups. Though, Hindu population of India as well the intellectuals belonging to the faith have always denounced such acts of terrorism, the Hindu extremist groups like Bharatya Janta Party and other sister organisations have left no stone untouched to defend the people allegedly involved in the terror activities.

This was the case of Hindu clash with Muslims and vice versa. Clashes of Muslims with Christians were, however, seen in a very rarest of the rare case. Muslims, Christians and some other minorities mostly develop the similar vote bank of the political parties which are generally vocal against Hindu right-wing forces. Nevertheless, in some parts of the country, Muslims and Christians have had clashes with each other in a very low scale. Such kinds of clashes could be seen anywhere between any two communities as human nature.

Muslims in modern India

Today there are more than a quarter of a billion Muslims living in the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). This amounts to more than a quarter of the total Muslim population of the world. Muslims in India make up
13.4 percent of the total population or according to unofficial sources they form about fifteen percent of the Indian population. It is unique that the Muslim population of India has been influenced by the Hindu religion throughout history (Keay, John. 2000: pp. 509). Sufism, for example is an adaptation of Vedanta or both schools of thoughts have eternal relations. Detailed study will come in the chapters ahead.

Over many centuries, Islam in India has undergone several attempts at reforms, some towards modernization and some leaning more towards fundamentalism (Keay, John. 2000: pp. 509). As all minorities, Muslims participated in many spheres of the country's development.

Average revenue of Indian Muslims is the lowest across all Indian religions chiefly because of their low education standard. Only four percent of Indian Muslims study in Madrasas where medium of instruction has been and is Urdu language except in the ones in South Indian regions where generally the primary medium is local language. The other ninety-six percent visit either government or private schools, or are uneducated as per Sachar Committee report. The buying power of the Muslim community in India was assessed at about thirty billion US dollar in 2005 (or four per cent of the national total). However, an overwhelming one hundred and thirty-one million Muslims in India live on a per capita consumption of less than twenty rupees per day which equals to 0.50 US dollar per day, according to the conclusions of the Arjun Sengupta Report on the Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihood in the Unorganised Sector. In spite of such hardship, a forceful twenty-five million-strong Muslim middle class grew in India at the end of the 20th century. (Sengupta, Arjun K. Dr., 2007: pp. 26)
Prominent and Influential Muslims of India

India is the home of a number of eminent Muslims who have made their mark in various fields’ expertise. They have played a pivotal role in various sector of the country. These prominent Muslims have their active hands in India's economic rise and cultural influence across the world.

Since the independence of India in 1947, three Muslims have been appointed the President of India: Dr. Zakir Hussain, Dr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and recently Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Mohammad Hidayatullah, A. M. Ahmadi and Mirza Hameedullah Beg held the office of the Chief Justice of India in different terms after independence. The current Vice President of India, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Abid Hussain and Asaf Ali were prominent diplomats who actively represented India abroad. Throughout independent India's history, though, Muslims have played an influential role in Indian politics, but could do little for common Indian Muslims.

Some other influential Muslim politicians include Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah, chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Sikander Bakht, A R Antulay, C. H. Mohammed Koya, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Salman Khurshid, Saifuddin Soz, E. Ahamed, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Syed Shahnawaz Hussain etc.

I interacted, during my research, with a huge number of Muslims including Muslim clergies. I found that they don't have good opinion regarding prominent Muslims of India. Some even term them as those who run their political business selling the names of poor common Muslims. Few of the popular and influential Muslims are considered by the common Indian Muslim just Muslims by name who have little to do with Islam and Muslims. This is
because the huge social and economic gap between the upper class and lower class Muslims. On the other hand, common Muslims and Muslim *Ulema* don’t consider those influential Muslims as Muslim who are in business which is, according to Islam, unlawful.

Some of the most popular and influential actors and actresses in Mumbai-based Bollywood are Muslims. These include Yusuf Khan (Dilip Kumar), Shahrukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Salman Khan, Saif Ali Khan, Madhubala, Katrina Kaif and Emraan Hashmi. India is also home to several critically acclaimed Muslim actors such as Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, Waheeda Rehman, Irrfan Khan, Farida Jalal, Arshad Warsi, Mehmood, Zeenat Aman, Farooq Sheikh and Tabu. Muslims are also playing pivotal roles in the advertising industry, modern art, academics, theater and sports. M. F. Husain is one of India’s best known contemporary artists and Academy Awards-winners Resul Pookutty and A. R. Rahman are one of India’s most celebrated musicians. Prominent poets and lyricists include Javed Akhtar who has won numerous Filmfare Awards for his work. They are owners of a number of large industries like Wipro Ltd., Wockhardt, Himalaya Health Care, Hamdard Laboratories and Mirza Tanners.

**Sachar Committee and its Report**

Muslims have limited role in the government and social sectors even after more than sixty years of independence of the country. This is a bitter fact which has been disclosed in high level; much talked about Sachar Committee.

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29 Prime Minister’s High Level Committee for Preparation of Report on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India prepared its report in November 2006 and tabled in Parliament on 30 Nov 2006. The chairperson of the Committee was Justice Rajinder Sachar.

Chart showing the Total Fertility Rate of Indian states (SRS survey 1996-98)

**National Population Policy of India**

Report. Another fact which is even bitterer is disclosed in the report that the employment in the government sector is below three\textsuperscript{31} percent in West Bengal, where Muslims make up twenty-seven percent of the population. The Sachar report has got considerable counterattack, including claims of unfairness in the media coverage concerning the report\textsuperscript{32}.

The Sachar Committee is the common name given to the High-Level Committee that was appointed by the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh. The committee was formed under Justice Rajindar Sachar (retired Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court), as Chairman. The purpose was to study the 'Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India', and prepare a report. This 403-page report, presented to Parliament on 30 November 2006, has become a subject of discussion and controversy. It is being dissected widely in the media, as well as informed sections of Indian society.

The report has clearly shown the current state of Muslims in India, and has made several recommendations to remedy this state, and to include Indian Muslims into the Indian mainstream. This is the first report of its kind in the country, and recommends a list of suitable mechanisms that can, and should, be adopted to ensure that Muslims get equal access and rights in the spheres of education, work and residence, among others.

In addition to the number of discussions and debates raging in various public and private spheres over the Sachar Committee Report, certain follow-up steps have begun to be taken that bode well for the future of the community. For

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.


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example, based on the findings of the Committee, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram has allotted additional funds, to the tune of over sixty crore, to the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC).

The committee consisted of seven eminent personalities, including four Muslims, headed by Justice Rajinder Sachar. Apart from the chairman Justice Sachar, there were M. A. Basith, Dr. Akhtar Majeed, Sayid Hamid, Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi, and erstwhile Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, Dr. T.K. Ooman, renowned sociologist and former Professor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Abu Saleh Shariff, Chief Economist of the National Council of Applied Economic Research, and noted expert on various national issues, and Dr. Rakesh Basant.

The committee also had one civil servant, Dr. Syed Zafar Mahmood, appointed to special duty by the Prime Minister, and several consultants and specialists on different disciplines and aspects of the subject. The papers written by these consultants became one of the tools to help the committee deal with complex issues. In addition, the Committee collected data from Censuses and from organizations like the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). They accessed data from banks and financial institutions, schools, and so on, as well as Central and State Governments. They also visited various states across the country for fieldwork. Instead of simply following statistics, they preferred to look at the situation at the grassroots level.

One issue, raised often due to the composition of the committee, especially during interactions with women's groups, was the fact that it did not have a single woman member. This was compensated, to some extent, by a special
half day meeting with women's groups, and allowing women social activists to attend all the meetings to express their points of view.

Literacy rate among Muslims is dismally below the national average. Contrary to common belief only four per cent of Muslims in India go to madrasas. If state run schools exist in the neighbourhood, Muslims prefer to send their children there, for a mainstream education.

The school dropout rate is much higher among Muslim children as compared to those from other communities, mainly attributable to the poverty of the parents, who send their wards to work.

Employment wise, understandably, the Indian Muslim community lags as well. Its share in government employment is around five per cent whereas the population is fourteen per cent. In the Security Agencies, Muslim representation is three per cent, and among District Judges it is nearly three per cent. Participation in professional and managerial cadre is low, and only three per cent are in the Indian Administrative Services, nearly two per cent Muslims in IFS and four per cent in Indian Police Services of the civil service. The community is four per cent of the employees of Indian Railways, ninety-nine per cent of whom are lower level workers. And very few Muslims are employed in Universities, Banks, police force, health care, and transport.

Financially, they face the same problems. Only three per cent Muslims have access to subsidised loans, while hardly any of the Muslim destitute really benefit from the Antyodaya Anna Yojana Scheme (starvation prevention). The average amount, per bank loan, is lower for Muslims than for other minorities. And the per capita expenditure as well as income is lower too. A noticeably larger proportion of Muslim households – especially in urban areas fall in the
below Rs.500 expenditure bracket. In towns, Muslim per capita expenditure is often less than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, across the nation.

The findings of the “Prime Ministers’ High Level Committee” headed by Justice Rajindar Sachar managed to dispel much of the disinformation and misconception surrounding the Indian Muslims as a community. Working from all kinds of data sources, governmental organizations, non profit organizations, and one-on-one interactions, the Sachar Report tells the real story of exclusion, and alienation against this section of the population. This overturning of common stereotypes should help the nation, and the government, in making an honest revaluation of the widely-held, but erroneous, perceptions of the Muslim community in India.

Not all Muslims reject mainstream formal education to go for religious training. Only four per cent actually go to madrasas, and even that is often because they cannot find primary state schools within reachable distance.

Not all Muslims are out to breed the Hindus into a minority. In fact, the report found a “substantial demand from the community for fertility regulation and for modern contraceptives,” with more than twenty million couples already planning and limiting families. According to the findings, “Muslim population growth has slowed down as fertility has declined substantially”.

Perceived Appeasement of the Muslims is not borne out by the conditions most Muslims face everyday. Wherever they lived, the Muslims that the committee spoke to complained of being dubbed “anti-national” while being accused of being “appeased” by the government. There is no evidence of the Indian Muslim community as a whole being involved in anti-national activities and
the conditions of the community clearly indicates that no "appeasement" has occurred.

Not all Muslims are the same. They do not all speak Urdu, and there are caste hierarchies that have always existed among Indian Muslims. Unlike common perception, the Ashraf, Ajlaf, Arzal are very much like the Hindu system of Swarns, Other Backward Castes, and Scheduled Castes respectively. While collective prayers are allowed in mosques, and there is no untouchability as such, marriages and dining are often restricted to within the social group.

The Sachar report makes certain recommendations to remedy the situation of the Indian Muslim community. These recommendations include a National Data Bank be created to store relevant data about different socio-religious communities for further study and action; fifteen per cent of all government funds, under all Central Government schemes, should be allocated to Muslim welfare and development; an autonomous Assessment and Monitoring Authority (AMA) be set up to audit different government programs to ensure that the benefits reach the target groups.

Committee recommended an Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) to be established to examine and analyse the grievances of deprived groups. It would help eliminate the within the delimitation scheme. Justice Sachar, in an interview to CNN-IBN, said that the "Equal Opportunities Commission will have the power to pass order for compliance with it and to punish, either by compensation, or by other things for those who violate it. It has powers of adjudication and powers like a court."
Sachar Committee has recommended the idea of providing incentives to a diversity index be explored to ensure that Muslims get equal opportunities in the fields of education, private employment governance, and housing.

Other recommendations of the Committee are process of evaluating the content of school textbooks be initiated and institutionalized by the UGC to better reflect the diversity in the student population. It is also recommended that hostel facilities be provided to students from the minorities at reasonable costs; and the community be represented on interview panels and Boards, and that the underprivileged be helped to gain access to better opportunities through the development of skill and education. Financial and other support need to be provided to initiatives towards the occupations with larger Muslim concentration.

Although the Committee had no recommendation of "reservations" per se, for the entire community, it does suggest that the Muslim section that corresponds to the scheduled and backward classes – in social or occupational terms, – should be classified as Most Backward Castes. Then they can be given access to the benefits that are available to their Hindu counterparts.

Dasu Krishnamoorti, Indian media expert, and some other likeminded people, however, has censured the media coverage of the report. He censures the statements made in the media that the Hindus and the Congress Party are in charge of the difficult situation of Muslims as politically inspired in support of the Muslim community. He motivates "emotional segregation between Muslims and Hindus that hardly helps Muslims share the Indian miracle. The report is censured as it distorts data and figures, bias and "misrepresenting inequities. The Sachar report was censured by the leaders of the Bharatiya
Janata Party too as it was "distorted, politically motivated and dangerous". They also indicated that suggestions of special reservation given to Muslims would destroy the country, and criticized the United Progressive Alliance Government's approval of the report as insult to their earlier attempts to support the Muslim community. Murli Manohar Joshi, BJP leader, declared that the attitude and texture of the Sachar Committee has a noticeable resemblance to the Muslim League of pre-independence period. It is regrettable that a policy of blind populism threatening to divide the nation is unreasonably pursued by the government.\footnote{Jain, Sunil. Sachar Report: Myth and reality. New Delhi: Rediff News (11/12/2006). Retrieved on 03/02/2008 from \texttt{<http://www.rediff.com/news/2006/dec/11sachar.htm?rc=1>}}.

**Statistic analysis of Muslim Population in India**

There are more than two hundred thousand Muslims who attend for worship on exceptional occasions in the historic Charminar after filling the Makkah Masjid in Hyderabad alone. Islam is the largest minority religion in India. Muslims officially make up 13.4 percent of the country's population, or 138 million people as of the 2001 census. However, according to the informal records a higher figure is evidently disregarded in censuses. For example, in an interview with a well circulated newspaper of India the Hindu Justice K.M. Yusuf, a retired Judge from Calcutta High Court and Chairman of minority commission in West Bengal\footnote{From The Hindu (Friday, October 01, 1999)}, declared that the actual percentage of Muslims in India is at least twenty percent. In the reports by pro Hindutva people it is stated that the Muslim population has reached 30 percent.

As per the 2001 census, the largest concentrations, about 47 percent of all Muslims in India live in the three states of Uttar Pradesh (30.7 million) (18.5
percent), West Bengal (20.2 million) (25 percent), and Bihar (13.7 million) (16.5 percent). Muslims make up the majority of the local population only in Jammu and Kashmir (67 percent in 2001) and Lakshadweep (95 percent). Eastern states of Assam (31 percent) and West Bengal (25 percent), and the southern state of Kerala (24.7 percent) and Karnataka (12.2 percent) are known for high population of Muslims. Muslims are mostly more cultured, urban, united and flourishing in the Western and Southern states of India than in the Northern and Eastern ones which might be because of the division when the more wealthy and cultured population migrated over the border to Pakistan in the North and Bangladesh (at that time East Pakistan) in the East. The third largest Muslim population (after Indonesia and Pakistan), and the second largest Shia Muslim population (after Iran) in the world are situated in India.

The religious data indicates that the increase of the Muslim population in every ten years has reached the highest point (36.0 percent) in the 2001 census. This statistic suggest that while the growth rate for Hindus decreased between 1991 and 2001 compared with 1981 and 1991, Muslim population increased faster in the last decade. The growth of Muslim population caused an anxiety at Indian media and different parties about the demographic inequity and overpopulation, which the Indian government is frantically trying to stop democratically.35

Indo Islamic art and architecture

Islamic architecture in India can be grouped into the following three sections:

35 A grave objection to this theory is the fact that the 1991 census did not include Jammu & Kashmir, the only Muslim majority state and single term Assam, while the 2001 census does include Jammu & Kashmir. Adjusted for this, the Muslim growth rate plunges from 36 per cent to 29.3 per cent.
Delhi or the Imperial style (1191 to 1557 AD);

- Provincial style, including the neighboring areas like Jaunpur and the Deccan;

- Mughal style (1526 to 1707 AD).

Indian architecture acquired new form with the arrival of Islamic reign in India towards the end of the 12th century AD. New elements were presented in the Indian architecture which encompasses use of shapes instead of natural forms; inscriptive art using ornamental writing or calligraphy; mosaic trimming and use of coloured marble, painted plaster and brightly coloured glazed tiles (Beach, Milo Cleveland, 1993).

As compared to the local Indian architecture which was of the trabeate form which means that all spaces were constructed by means of horizontal beams, the Islamic architecture was arcuate - an arch or dome was assumed as a method of bridging a space (Troll, Christian W., ed., 1989: pp.207). The idea of arch or dome was not created by the Muslims but was, actually, appropriated and further developed by them from the architectural styles of the post-Roman period. Muslims applied a cementing agent in the form of mortar for the first time in the construction of edifices in India. Later on they applied some scientific and mechanical formulae, originated from other civilizations, in their buildings in India. Such application of scientific principles assisted not only in gaining superior power and firmness of the building materials but also afforded greater flexibility to the architects and builders36. The Indo-Islamic memorials were typical mortar-masonry works formed of dressed stones as

36 One fact that must be stressed here is that, the Islamic elements of architecture had already passed through different experimental phases in other countries like 12391, Iran and Iraq before these were introduced in India.
distinct from most Islamic monuments, mostly constructed in brick, plaster and rubble (Schimmel, Annmarie, 1983). It must be stressed that the growth of the Indo-Islamic architecture was greatly facilitated by the knowledge and skill which the Indian craftsmen had. They had learned the art of stonework for centuries and applied their practice to build Islamic monuments in India.

Islamic architecture in India can be grouped into two parts: religious and secular. Religious architecture is characterized by Mosques and Tombs, whereas the samples of secular Islamic architecture are palaces and forts. Forts were fundamentally well-designed, complete with a little settlement within and various battlements to fight and drive back the enemy.

**Mosques:** The mosque or masjid is a symbol of Muslim art in its modest form. The mosque is mostly an open courtyard enclosed by a pillared verandah, crowned off with a dome. A **mihrab** implies the direction of the qibla for prayer. Towards the right of the **mihrab** is the **mimbar** or pulpit from where the **Imam** directs the proceedings. A raised platform, usually a minaret from where the Faithful are convened to visit prayers, is an unchangeable part of a mosque (Beach, Milo Cleveland., 1993). Large mosques where the faithful gather for the Friday prayers are called the Jama Masjids.

**Tombs:** Though not indeed religious in nature, the tomb or maqbara set up a completely new architectural idea. Whereas the masjid was mainly known for its simplicity, a tomb could be a modest grave (Aurangazeb's grave) or a tremendous construction enclosed in grandeur (Taj Mahal). The whole assembly is covered with an intricate dome. The mortuary or the **maqbara** is in

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37 The tomb usually consists of a solitary compartment or tomb chamber known as the **hazarab** in whose centre is the cenotaph or **zarib**.
the underground chamber, where corpse is entombed in a grave or qabr. Smaller tombs may have a mihrab, although larger mausoleums have a separate mosque situated to one side from the main tomb. Typically the entire tomb construction or rauza is bordered by an enclosure (Asher, Catherine B., 1993). The term dargah meant a tomb of a Muslim. Almost all Islamic monuments were free to use sections from the Holy Koran and a lot of time was consumed in shaping minute details on walls, ceilings, pillars and domes.

**Conclusion:** Muslims have passed through many phases over a different period of time. They have ruled in India; they have constructed India; they have lived under British rule; fought against it along with the other communities of the country. Muslims have a number of cultural symbols; few of them have even gone to the extent of nation’s symbol like Taj Mahal etc. They have been in this land in different conditions in different ages, on the one hand, and differently in different regions on the other hand. They are homogenous in a few things and heterogeneous in a number of things. Following this social and historical analysis of the Muslims, we will study, other bits and pieces of the community such as their relations with other communities, particularly Hindu community of India, and their customs and traditions and what changes took place during last fifty years.