MUSLIM ATTITUDES TOWARDS BRITISH RAJ (1820-1920 A.D) :
A STUDY OF LONG-TERM TRENDS IN MUSLIM POLITICS

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The Muslims of India never lost their identity like earlier immigrants to India. They have always regarded themselves separate from the rest of people. But simultaneously they have not always rejected the title of “Indian”.

Two nation theory threw the cloak of western nationalism over the Islamic conception of a separate culture and so converted a cultural and religious entity in to a separate political force in India subcontinent.

The formation of a separate political identity of the Muslims in modern India was mainly the contribution of its Ashram leadership. The Ashraf leads of different provinces differed among themselves in the measures to be taken and strategy to be adopted. These differences were procedural and not to content and goal.

This study probed the long term political trends of this force. For this the present research have taken hundred years in other words a century to analyse the thesis how could a group of diverse social origins, speaking many languages and Geographically scattered behaved sometimes uniformly. To understand this it is necessary to delve in to the distant as well as immediate past.

The aims and objectives of the present study was to establish links between different micro and regional studies conducted on the various subjects of Historical interest regarding Indian Muslims and their political attitudes. In other words the present study is an humble attempt to draw long term and macro inferences of Muslim Attitudes towards British Raj. In this study the long term trends are being traced of the Muslims politics in Indian Sub-continent.

To prove above thesis the present research scholar analysed wahabi movement, Revolt of 1857, Aligarh movement Deoband Movement All India Muslim League, Lucknow Pact, Khilafat movement etc. in depth and Comprehensively. The various primary and secondary sources have been explored comprehensively for this study.
The general hypothesis of the present study was that there is an existence of confrontationist attitudes of Muslims towards British Raj with some stray trends of Collaborative Attitude of Muslims with the Raj always there.

Overall it would be a macro study of Muslim politics as a separate political force and entity in colonial India.

In the first chapter entitled "Introduction and Background", the present research scholar have introduced the reader about the Muslim attitudes towards British Raj and traced the whole background of theme of the thesis/study. The following composition of the chapter represent a modest attempt to the understand the psychology of due Europeans, the Muslim, The Muslim Ruling Class, The nobility, The Ulama, and The Elite as also the British Policy towards the Muslim of India. The psychological analysis is proved to be useful in understanding the contradictions and disparities in the attitudes of the various Muslim classes and section towards the British rulers and their culture. In the next chapters that follow, the political part is to be dealt at length.

The second chapter of the thesis is entitled as "Wahabi Movement". In this chapter the attitude of the Muslim religious class towards British rule and western culture have been traced. In order to understand this, the religious movement during first half of the nineteenth century need to be considered. Delhi, a centre of religious and secular learning, saw the birth of all India-movement under the leadership of Saiyyad Ahmad Barelvi. The Movement spread to such distant centres as Hyderabad, Patna, Bengal, Tonk, Oudh etc. Bengal gave rise to many crucial movements like those led by shariatuulah, titu mir and Karamat ali. These movement though they differed in their vision and in their approaches to due question of Muslim life in British India, were one in seeking resolutely to purify Islam in India. They also aimed at re-establishing Muslim rule in India. The study of these movements is the main composition of this chapter. This study quite clearly elucidated that despite local variations and individual differences these movements for socio religious reforms aimed at annihilating British rule/Raj and preventing westernization. Their final goal was to establish a purely Islamic state in India. Hence the subject matter of this chapter also clearly establish the attitude of confrontation of Muslim political thought towards British Raj.

The third chapters entitled "Revolt of 1857 and Muslim," will explore the Muslim attitudes towards British Raj during the great Revolt of Indian History. The contents and discussion in this chapter clearly elucidates the diversity of action and thought among
Muslim community of Indian Sub-Continent. The historians and statesmen have been engaged in labelling the uprising of 1857 with some descriptive word or other such as “muting”, “Revolt”, “Revolution” “National War”, etc since its eruption. To the Muslims the uprising was logical culmination of their vigorous resistance of alien rule i.e. British Raj. Thought wanting in the modern means and techniques of welfare and handicapped by the absence of co-ordination between the various groups, it was based on definite ideals and objectives which converged towards a single purpose, viz. to re-establish Muslim rule in India. However, the concept of Muslim Government differed from section to section. For example, the religious class generally aimed at established a government on the model of Rashida. The Muslim masses on the other hand just wanted Muslim Rule, The Mughal Government being their ideal over all Muslims fought especially for the re-establishment of their old sway. In the end when the finale of the fierce encounter between the orthodox resisters and the British Rulers being enacted, a group of Muslims known to be pro-British behaved differently.

The reasons for such an attitude on their part were varied. Such groups existed n all parts of country. This proves that the Muslim of India in every part of the country reached in two ways, i.e. both for and against British Rule and western culture. However, the anti-British attitude pre-dominated in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In order to understand the regional and micro level behaviour and attitude of Muslim community towards British Raj or Western culture it is necessary to have a separate chapter in this study. Hence fourth chapter of the study is entitle as “Revolt of 1857 and Haryana”. The great Revolt proved to be a perfect historical even to analyse the general attitude of various sections of the Muslims of Haryana. The sepoys, the people and feudal chiefs all took part in this revolt in large number. Their participation and struggle displayed a general attitude of confrontation with British Raj. The specific activities of the sepoys, the masses or the people and feudal chiefs will be discussed in this chapter for which sources are collected from Haryana State Archives, Punchkula.

The Revolt of 1857 extinguished all the ambitions of the Muslim Community for the recovery of their lost power and dominion. This community became special target of British hatred after the revolt and darkness enveloped the community. In these circumstances there emerged three kinds of political trends of attitudes among the Muslim of Indian Sub-continent. The first school of thought was of the Ulama – the custodians of traditional
learning and ideals. This school have imagined a political order which would guarantee free exercise of faith, equal opportunities of welfare and advancement, and a self-respecting dignified life for men of all creeds, all races and all colours. This was the basis of the Deoband Movement in the second half of Nineteenth Century. The Second School of thought accept the rule of the alien masters and endeavour to enlist their goodwill to obtain government patronage. This school of thought consisted of men who were really impressed by the political institutions, military power, civilization and culture of the west. This thought or political trend ultimately led to the Aligarh movement which in turn was prepared the ground and created the circumstances for the establishment of all India Muslim league, the first ever political stage of Muslim community in India. This thought followed the attitude of cooperation and loyalty towards British Raj. The third school of thought was of nationalist Muslims consisted of the educated Muslims especially from Madras of Bombay Presidencies. They supported the political advancement of India along democratic lines, and they were deeply devoted of the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. The nationalist Muslim shared the Liberal attitude of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan towards west, but differed from him on the problems of political reform, the Ideas of representative democratic government, and methods of democratic agitation. The period between 1858 to 1906 witnessed the above political trends among Muslim community and above all the very same period also witnessed the formation of the separate political identity of the Muslims in Modern India. All the above developments will be the subject matter of fifth chapter of the study entitled as “Trends of Muslim Politics: 1858-1906” The last chapter entitled “Loyalty to Confrontation-1906-1920”

In this chapter the foundation of Muslim League and it is politics up to 1920 has been explored comprehensively. The foundation of all India Muslim league in 1906 was the fulfilment of the hopes and desires of the Muslim Community of India. The Muslim League was established to protect and represent the interest of the Muslims of Indian. At the time of it’s foundation it adopted the traditional policy of loyalty towards the British Colonial Authorities which was followed by its Predecessor that is Aligarh school or Aligarh movement. But within a decade it found itself at bay because of the British Policy towards two important issues concerning the Muslims i.e. the annulment of the partition of Bengal and the treatment of ottoman empire in behind of British colonial power. This change was also due to growing participation of English educated Muslim youth from the various classes other than upper classes. In 1916 by signing the Lucknow pact with Indian National Congress. The Muslim League said adieu to its traditional policy of Loyalty to the British Raj. By the
time of Khilafat agitation the Muslim league was well on the path of confrontation with British Authorities. This shifting of Muslim league policy is subject of great interest to study in depth and this forms the subject matter of this chapter. In the last there is conclusion of the study finds its place. The brief survey of the events of the period under consideration elucidated that Muslims of Indian sub-continent behaved diversely towards the British Raj. This diverse behaviour also can be detected in the course of different movements and historical developments and events. For example during Wahabi movement the confrontationist attitude dominated but during the Revolt of 1857 the various section of Muslim community behaved in both ways. Some sections participated in the revolt while some did not participated and remain loyal to British Raj. After revolt of 1857 the Muslim Community behaved politically in three different ways in the second half of nineteen century. One section adopted the path of confrontation on traditional lines and started a major movement against British called Deoband movement. The other section acted differently and adopted the loyal attitude towards British Raj.

This section played an important role in the life of Muslim Community. Mostly educated people consisted this section.

They started Aligarh Movement which ultimately paved the way for the first ever Muslim political organization entitled as All India Muslim League in 1906. In the third section the English educated Muslims from Madras and Bombay were there. This third section believed in Nationalism and democracy. These were the Nationalist Muslims. In the twentieth century when in 1906 All India Muslim league established, Muslims behaved as pro-British but later on this organization adopted an attitude of confrontation. In the end the attitude of Muslims towards British Raj was not Monoclinic but of divorce nature.

This study is based on primary as well as secondary sources. Although, the secondary sources were utilized more than primary sources. This was so because the period of the study was so long and it was not possible to consult the primary sources so comprehensively. Moreover the nature of study was also restricted the present research scholar in the utilization of the primary sources exhaustively. This was the macro level study of long term trends not a micro study. The list of these sources is enclosed which is comprehensive and detailed one.
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       the present study.
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       (iii) Legislative Department
   (b) Letters to the Court of Directors
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(2) Haryana State Archives, Panchkula
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   (b) Delhi Division Records: Political and Military Department
   (c) Hisar Division Records: 1857-1858
   (d) Mutiny Files: Volumes: 37, 51, 59, 63, 66, 70, 82, 88, 113, 124.

(3) Haryana District Record Rooms
   (a) List of Mutineers hanged or shot in 1857, prepared by Deputy Commissioner
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   (c) Miscellaneous records pertaining to Mutiny.

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