CHAPTER- 4

STEREOTYPED DEPICTION OF THE MUSLIM MINORITY

Unlike the Western middle class, which is defined purely in terms of Marxist notion of class struggle, the Indian middle class resists such conceptual definition due to the overwhelming influence of religion and other already existing social hierarchies in the Indian society. The scholars like Freitag (1989), Jaffrelot (2010), Hansen (1999), Sanjay Joshi (2001), Brosius (2005) and Fernandes (2006) have argued that the Indian middle class has exploited a politicized religion to pursue their socio-economic interests, constructing the communal identities. A republicized religiosity has been exploited by the Indian middle class to define itself and stake claim to the national culture (Joshi 2010). As the Indian middle class is dominantly constituted by the Hindu majority, the Hindu values and practices find considerable manifestation in the politics of the Indian middle class. In the public discourses, shaped by the majoritarian values, the minority is seen as a political contender for power, perceiving the minority as an obstacle in the realization of absolute power. Unlike the other minorities, like Sikh, Jain, and Buddhist, the Muslim minority is projected as an ‘alien culture’, posing a constant threat to the ‘Indian’ civilizational values. While the other minorities are applauded for their accommodative approach to the ‘Indian’ civilization, the Muslim community is easily bracketed as incompatible with the Indian culture. Varma rightly highlights the role of religion in the production of the Indian middle class:

There can be no real assessment of some of the identifiable traits of the Indian middle class without taking into account the legacy that Hinduism –the religion of the overwhelming majority of the middle class--has bequeathed and the influence it continues to have. (129)

In spite of the middle class’s self-projection as modern and secular entity, the middle class has failed to expunge the historical prejudices against the Muslim community. The historically created stereotypes of the Muslim community still appear in the popular culture, suggesting the continuity of the historical conflict between the Hindu majority and the Muslim minority. The significant presence of the stereotypes of the Muslim community in the popular culture is implicated in the identity politics of the Indian middle class. The comic book series Chacha Choudhary is shaped by the public sphere, dominated by the majoritraian values.
In the comic book, the urban Hindu middle class values are predominately articulated. Both central characters and background setting inscribe the Hindu middle class values, which are challenged, contested and protected through narrative logic. Amir Ali (2001) and Sandra Freitag (1989) point out that the present Indian public sphere is a mere extension of the public sphere in the colonial India, which was constructed, defined and dominated by the Hindu values and norms. This tendency has been further accentuated by the rise of Hindutva politics, which has sought to “entrench and institutionalize the symbols, cultural norms, values and beliefs cherished by it as the only legitimate ones capable of defining the Indian state” (Ali 2419).

In the comic book *Chacha Choudhary*, the Muslim characters appear as marked characters. The Muslim is seen either as a convenient demonic other, often vilified as a fundamentalist, anti-modern enemy of the nation, or he is explained in patriotic terms, projecting him as an Indianised Muslim, who transcends his communal ties and actively participates in the process of nation-building. The Muslim characters are depicted in harsh caricatures, fatty, rough bearded, often appearing as either stupidly ignorant, cruel villains or terrorists. Even unusual and exotic names, like Rabaak, Halim and Kazaan, are given to them. These stereotypes and unusual names are invested with social significance, and are attributed to the Muslim community. In this chapter, I intend to trace the articulation of the historically created stereotypes of the Muslim community in the comic book series *Chacha Choudhary*, which have been constructed and circulated in the process of reframing ‘national culture’ right from the colonial period, and analyze how these historically created stereotypes still find considerable manifestation in the popular literature, like comics, in the post colonial period, affecting the Hindu community’s perceptions about the Muslim community.

In the colonial period the nationalist discourse was created and propagated to mobilize the Indian masses and oppose both political and cultural hegemony of the West. In the nationalist discourse, the nationalist elites projected the Hindu values and norms as ‘Indian,’ which were compared and differentiated from the non-Hindu cultural systems. In this projection of ‘Indian culture,’ the Muslim community, shaped by the hundred years of forcible cultural contact and acculturation, was exploited as an example of contamination of the ‘Indian culture’, as a lesson ‘for Indians to be
learnt.’ In such account of the history of the ‘Indian culture’, the Muslim came to be seen as intruder and incompatible with ‘Indian culture’. The nationalists exploited the already available stereotypes of the Muslim invaders in the oral traditions and other narrative forms to remind the ‘Indians’ of their weaknesses and their passive submission to the foreigners, who perpetuated victimization and imposed foreign values on the Indian masses. In the portrayal of Muslims as invaders, and the Indians as victims, their purpose was to exploit the fear of erosion of ‘Indian identity,’ to mobilize the Indian masses to fight against the British imperialism. In the nationalist discourse, the Muslim community, somehow, served to function as binary scheme to define what is ‘Indianness’. The popular forms of popular culture were deployed in the project of nationalism to disseminate the nationalist ideology.

The consistent under-representation of the Muslim community in the public sphere has shaped the collective consciousness of the Hindu community. The Hindu has come to perceive the Muslim community in stereotyping terms in line with the historical depiction of the conflict between the Hindu and Muslim community. The persistent repetition of stereotypes of the Muslim in the public sphere has installed a static perception of the Muslim community in the Hindu mind. On the one hand, the Muslim community was ceaselessly vilified in the Hindu dominated public sphere, the inevitable co-existence of the Hindu community and Muslim community forced the nationalists to include the Muslim community in the national discourse on the other hand. The discourse of ‘unity in diversity’ was created to include the Muslim community in the national culture, which tends to cite examples of individuals from the Muslim community, who transcended their emotional bonding with the community to serve the nation. The contradictory representations of the Muslim community have been managed in such a way that they don’t cancel each other. Rather, they complement each other, forcing the Muslim community to demonstrate their allegiance with the nation.

The Muslim characters are neither elaborated nor narrated. Rather, they are exhibited, working functionally as mere background to define the Hindu cultural values and norms. Benjamin also points out the same cultural strategy when he argues that in the era of technology, telling is not as important as showing (1973; 1999). As comics are a reductive art, the hegemonic representation of the Muslim is reduced to a set of signifiers such as postures, poses, appearance and beard. Will Eisner also argue
that comics heavily rely on stereotypes. In his words, “comics employ a series of repetitive images and recognizable symbols, when they are used again and again to convey similar ideas they become a language” (8). The existence of each sign depends on its recognition and repetition, and in each sign exists what Roland Barthes calls “Monster, a stereotype” (1979). It is through reduction of reality that we try to understand the depth of reality; but this reduction of reality is a political process, shaped by a range of both political and cultural factors. A sense of social reality is coded through stereotyping process. Through stereotyping process, different social groups are defined, compared and explained. Brosius (2005) also suggests the role of stereotyping in shaping the politics of Hindutva as it is reflected in visual media representations. She argues that “as we look at objects or situations, we are at once selecting, categorizing and constituting order, projecting as well as enhancing or diverting fears and desires, claiming ownership over and attachment to something, and thus attributing elaborate meaning and value to the world around us” (4).

Stereotyping, as an ideological practice, is central to the representation of Muslim community. Myths constitute the core of stereotypes, which once internalized, become potent social mechanism to install a set of constructed social behavior. The ideological construction of the Muslim as the ‘threatening other’ has been externalized using already constituted cultural codes. The stereotypes of the Muslim community have been so much entrenched in the Hindu psyche by the homogeneous representational codes operating in all media forms, that they do not require to be explained; rather they have been reduced to a set of connotations.

As comics are meant for infant minds, they are simplified and coded in very general cultural codes so that the infant mind could decipher the characters and cultural background and identify the cultural background of the narrative and relocate/dislocate their own cultural identity. The infant minds’ fascination with comics has been interpreted as the process of organizing and interpreting their own relationship with reality. As the infant mind is struggling to deal with reality, stereotyping in comics helps the child to simplify the complex and dynamic reality. The infant mind makes judgment about different social identities on the basis of their encounter with stereotyped identities. Comics consist of a series of panels connected to each other through empty spaces known as gutter. Gutter, the empty space between two consecutive panels, represents discontinuities in the story which has to be filled
by the reader’s imagination. The reader draws on his/her cultural background in which he/she has been trained to understand reality in order to read the given panels as a continuous story. As a result, reading comics is a simultaneously double process: the reader is engaged in the reading process as both an interpreter and a creator, shaping his/her attitude towards the different social groups depicted in the comic book. Lauretta Bender also emphasizes the role of comics in understanding reality:

The absorption of children in the comics is easily understood when we regard it as a part of their constructive experimentation with reality and its problems: problems of the body-its image, its functions, its motility, its boundaries, its similarities and differences to other bodies human and animal; problems of relationships-to the physical world and its forces (with the need for understanding and mastery) and to the social environment (with the need to deal with its problems of aggression and submission, right and wrong, and with the need to believe that the total pattern of the world of reality is one in which the ultimate goal is good. (223-231)

Fredric Wertham also highlights the portentous effects of comics on the infant mind. He argues that comics inculcate false realities of people in infant minds and create prejudices and “affect society as a whole by normalizing racist standards through repetition” (108). The Muslim identity is simplified and encoded in terms of his beard and Muslim names in the comic book. In most cases, the Muslim is depicted either as bearded man with exotic name or as exotic appearance with Muslim names.

Fig.1. The faces of the Muslim characters in the comic book Chacha Choudhary.
Rustum Bharucha argues that the beard has become a multidimensional signifier that carries connotations of all what the Muslim community stands for:

This sign is not about marking an individual identity per se, but of annexing this identity to that of an entire community, if not a species. Once marked, 'the Muslim assumes hyper-real significance, regardless of whether or not it is linked to a mistaken or real identity. A transcendental signifier, it assumes omnipresence, ruthlessly indifferent to the multitudinous realities of the signified. (4239)

The Muslim has been turned into his beard, unclean body and lasciviousness. He becomes an ‘alibi’ for ‘barbarian behavior’. Thus, by linking the marking of beard to the process of demonization, the ideological construction of the Muslim community is naturalized, or what Roland Barthes says myth retreats to invisibility (1972.) The identity of the Muslim is reduced to the marking of beard. The Muslim as a human being ceases to exist; instead he has been turned into his beard. He is his beard. This is the way a myth functions, as Barthes (1972) argues, by creating stereotypes. First, a stereotype is created, consolidated, filled with selective meanings, then turned into a central metaphor, and finally, circulated in the society through representation. Through the process of stereotyping, a myth is legitimized, naturalized and hence, its political efficacy is concealed. The depiction of Muslim characters, most of the time, eludes the reader as their unusual names do not correspond to their appearance. Rather, it is their ambiguousness that renders them so powerful and effective, without being noticed as political in nature by the reader. They seem to be innocent and simply creative characters to invoke laughter and entertain the reader. But in their consumption in the reading process, they mark a particular community as a threat to the unity of the nation and specifically to the Hindu community. Narratives are carefully created so that political meanings can go unnoticed. In the representation of the Muslim, either their faces are disfigured or their names are omitted. If they seem to be Muslim by appearance then their names would be unfamiliar. On the other hand if their appearance is exotic then the Muslim names would be given to them. This ambiguous representation denies any interrogation of the representation as political, hence, political meanings are consumed by the reader as a mere narrative technique, and at the same time, the communal identities are constructed. Naming is linked to the construction of identity, pointing to a particular community, religion and nation.
The representation of Muslim community is marked by what Akeel Bilgrami has termed as “surplus phenomenology of identity” (1993). The specific moments have been selected in order to present them as marked characters. Almost all Muslim characters are depicted as thieves, kidnappers and terrorists, representing the dark forces. The representation of the Muslim community has been so consistent that the representation is rendered as an absolute reflection of the Muslim community. Even the non Indian Muslims are also depicted as criminal, making the representation of the Indian Muslim consistent and universal. In the story entitled ‘Clever Gosha’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1461), the magician Gosha whose native place is ‘somewhere else,’ is depicted as a clever magician, who uses his performances as pretext to smuggle diamonds from one country to another. Travelling across the world as magician, he smuggles diamonds by swallowing them and hence, remains undetected. Their art is depicted as a masquerade to hide their criminal activities. After his successful smuggling in America, Gosha is sent to India by his boss to smuggle diamonds in the market. At airport, he manages to deceive the airport securities. Before his plan is successfully executed, Gosha is timely exposed by the clever middle class hero Chacha Choudhary. The funny panel in which he is harassed as criminal is something more than just humorous. The Muslim community has been marked as a community engaged in criminal activities. Not only are they represented as criminal through their action, but their appearance is also distorted to differentiate them from the sophisticated Hindus. Even in some stories, they appear like animals. Their faces are disfigured and even their eyes, ears, arms and legs are distorted.

In the story entitled ‘In the Country of Mermaid’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics--1284), the creature in the shape of half-human and half-crocodile is seen as a member of Muslim community, linked symbolically by bearded face. The story is a fantasy about an unknown wonderland, inhabited by a strange community of mermaids. Ozan, the colonizer invades their society in order to eliminate the inhabitants of the wonder land. The coincidental presence of the powerful Sabu helps the mermaids to protect their community from the evil designs of the devil, Ozan. After a series of combats, Sabu eventually succeeds to eliminate the colonizer, Ozan. The fantastical mode of narration easily overwhelms the infant mind and leaves an everlasting impression. In the fantasy-narrative, the real is not omitted. Rather, it is symbolically retained.
Fig. 2. The Muslim as an alien, ‘In the Country of Mermaid,’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1284).

The realistic codes are intact in the narrative that noticeably confirms the overall operation of the realistic codes in the comic book series. The reader of the comic book can easily decipher the encoded identity of Ozan in the narrative. The Muslim is not integrated into daily routines of life. Rather, they are seen as appearing on specific moments only to disrupt everyday life, marking them as incompatible with the Indian way of life. However, some positive stereotypes that depict them as Indian citizens can be found in the comic book here and there, but their presence is markedly surpassed by the criminal stereotypes of the Muslim community.

The significant connections have been made between the emergence of Indian comics in the 1970s and the rise of Hindu nationalism (Chandra 2008; McLain 2009). The scholarly interest in the visual has been inspired by dominance of visual rhetoric in imagining the Hindu nation. Several scholars like Pinney (2004) and Brosius (2005) have argued that Hindu nationalism has been invoked through different mass-mediated visual materials such as decorated match boxes, fabric labels and calendar arts, mill goods, stamps and coins. Freitag (1989) argues that the visual realm is a powerful arena in which conceptions of a community are constructed, contested and consolidated. Pinney also suggests “to rearrange Indian history so that central place can be found for the visual” and recommends the centrality of visual image in analyzing contemporary Indian politics as “physiognomic reading of artistic documents, that is reading into them what is already known through other means” (8-9).
In the post independent India, the format of comics is deployed as a visual site for the Hindu culture to be mediated as popular culture, to form what Nandini Chandra (2008) has called ‘national-popular’ consensus. Scholars have analyzed the centrality of image and visual practices in the political imagination to construct national imagination in which India is to be experienced as a picture. Pinney (2004) has analyzed image as a site where contestations over cultural memory and values have taken place. The panels, in the comic book, operate within what Pinney has termed “Indian Hindu scopic regime” (8-9). Reading these comic panels is Darshana of Bharata Mata in which the viewer and what is viewed are bounded in a relationship, rested on the notion of worshipping the Bharata Mata. Freitag has argued that the ‘mobility’ of the viewer is central to narrative –building in South Asian art. The dynamic relationship between the viewer and the viewed artifact makes the viewer capable of occupying the same time and space in which the viewed artifact is placed. In such dynamic relationship between the viewer and the viewed artifact, chronology becomes synchronicity:

Visual materials telling stories, and their viewers, occupied the same time and space. One ‘moved’ from the present to the past and back again, seamlessly; in this way, the meaning of stories about the past became significant in the here and now. Thus, through the acts of viewing, one gained an explanation for life as it was being experienced at this moment in time. (“South Asian”304)

The ‘mobility’ of the viewer in which the viewer can easily identify with what is viewed, formulates a close association between the narrative and the viewer’s own activity, making him/her possible to attend the process of identity formation and express a sense of identity. Because of this dynamic relationship between the viewer and what is viewed, the ways of seeing become ways of knowing. Freitag points the role of the visual in identity construction in the South Asian art: “mobility, in the sense of a viewer actually moving through a space and operating in an ocular regime that allowed him/her to select out certain sources and items of information and construct meanings and understandings around them” (“South Asian”305). Unlike Benedict Anderson (2006), who argues that ‘print capitalism’ has marked the decline of religious affiliations and enabled the far-fetched settled populations to imagine themselves as citizens of a modern nation, scholars like Pinney (2004) have pointed
out that religion has been consolidated by proliferation of the image. It is ‘print capitalism’ that has blurred the boundaries between religion and politics. With the help of visual iconography, the Hindu perceptions, memories and values have been documented and disseminated to the young generation.

The failure of the Nehruvian socialist model made the middle class search for an alternative source of identity, a new model to explain and legitimize its domination. Perceiving the state as being captured by the Muslim community and other marginalized social groups, the Hindu middle class strived to mobilize the Hindus to assert themselves in the political culture. Paul Brass also argues that people form social identities and construct communal identities in order to pursue their economic interests (1991). The disillusioned Hindu middle class became overt in their material pursuits and transferred the burden of nationalist ideology to the marginalized groups to follow. By putting blame for any kind of chaos in the society on the marginalized groups and criticizing them for deviation from the nationalist ideology, the Hindu middle class found a safety valve to redeem themselves of their own guilt of being selfish and deviants. The post-Nehruvian era is characterized by the rise of Hindutva, which accused the Nehruvian socialist model of being captured by the Muslim community which usurped the power from the Hindus, who were legitimate subjects of power, not objects of power.

Communalism had found impetus in the resurgence of nationalist feelings after the defeat in the Indo-China war in the 1962. The Hindu nationalists appropriated the anger of the masses, advocated the revival of ancient culture, and projected the Muslim as a ‘threat’ to the unity of the nation. During the 1970s, the disintegration of Congress party and decline of democratic system and failure of the socialist model of nation transformed the Indian political culture and the political perceptions of the Hindu middle class. Varshney (1993) has linked the political transformation with the rise of Hindu nationalism. He argues that these political transformations provide the BJP a political space to represent themselves as a credible political system to bring much required transformation in the Indian political culture. They tapped into the middle class anxiety and threat of being overpowered by the minorities. Hansen explains the political development as a result of “intensification of political mobilization among the lower castes and minorities” and “the rise of ambiguous desires of consumerism in everyday life and the exposure to global
cultural and economic flows” (5). He further argues that the mobilization of the lower castes and religious minorities, through state protection, produced a deep anxiety in the dominant upper caste community, which sought security and recognition under the Hindutva ideology of cultural pride, order and national strength. The Hindu nationalists tapped into not only social anxiety but economic pressure also. They tended to “acknowledge the powerful attractions of Western consumerism and modern technology but emphasize that the prerequisite for developing a sovereign national modernity is the cultural unity and purity of the nation” (Hansen 12).

The Hindu-Muslim relations are shaped and deployed by this ‘fugitive politics’ of Hindutva to explain its self-validation. Zoya Hasan (2009) also contends that the political situations in the 1970s weakened the earlier language of class interests and socialism in the political discourse. The objectively defined interests were replaced by a greater focus on identity and distribution of patronage to certain groups. As a result, they attempted to puncture the Nehruvian discourse of ‘unity in diversity,’ and highlighted cultural differences, and the Muslim culture was pitted against the Hindu culture, projecting them as ‘alien’ and incompatible with the ‘Indian culture’.

The Hindu nationalists rejected secularism and Congress for its policy of appeasement of Muslims, who were perceived as disloyal. The proponents of Hindutva proposed the ‘Indianisation of Muslims’ to sanitize them from disloyal tendencies. The discourse of Hindutva has defined ‘Indian’ in exclusionary terms. V.D.Savarkar defined the Hindu as “a person who regards the land of Bhartavarsha from Indus to the Seas as his fatherland as well as his holyland” (qtd. in Misra 155). He deliberately defined ‘Indian’ in a hegemonic way that excluded Muslim community from the Indian society. According to his definition of ‘Indian’ they cannot claim this common blood, neither through birth, religion nor through culture. Consequently, Muslims are represented as traitors because their loyalties presumably lie in Arabia, Persia and above all, in Pakistan. They are rendered as ‘secondary citizens,’ who have to go through this test of loyalty, from which Hindus are exempted because they are the ‘real citizens’. Freitag argues that Indian nationalism was rested on definitions of community rather than on the state-individual relationships (1989). Consequently, a politicized community emerged as an equivalent
to nationalism. The Hindu nationalist attempted to project the Hindu way of life as the Indian culture to stake claim to the nation-building. In their definition of self-determination, they constructed the Muslim community as the ‘threatening other.’ The right to national self-determination and its concomitant public sphere are weighed against the Muslim. Tanika Sarkar (2001) and Chatterjee (1986) have argued that gradual disillusionment with the public sphere as space to define themselves against the superior Western world compelled the nationalists to withdraw from the public sphere to the private sphere in which in the family values and domestic arrangement were politicized, inserted into nationalism and pitted against the Muslim community. The semantic inflation of nationalism by the Hindu practices what Freitag termed “the ritual enactment of the polity”, turned out to be anti-Islam (1989).

The idea of the Hindus as a single political community, constituting the Indian nation, is a creation of 19th century nationalist discourse in which the ancient Indian culture was invoked to create a Hindu nation, ignoring the hybridization of culture during the Muslim rule. The exclusion of the Muslim period in representation of the Indian culture was a conscious decision to project the Muslim culture as outsider and hence, their claim to the nation is illegitimate. The minority community is projected as threat to national culture. The cultural uniqueness is reinterpreted as a marker of a modern national ideology. The Muslim period and its cultural enrichment are ignored in the national imagination; instead the Muslim period is projected as a period of forceful conversion, cruelty and degradation of Hindu culture. A Hindu in France circulated a pamphlet entitled ‘Angry! Yes Why Not’ which provoked hatred against the Muslims who presumably had afflicted so much pain upon the body of our mother. The pamphlet reads:

Yes! Certainly I am angry. I have every reason to be angry….And I have been subjected to untold atrocities, dishonor and massacres. I was thrown out from what was once part of India….My temples have been desecrated and destroyed. The sacred deities in them have been trampled under the aggressors' feet. In fact you want me to cease to be myself. …. And that I have shed my blood and sweat in freeing this country. And yet you expect me to continue to be deprived of rights which, those who sided
with foreigners and helped to vivisect my motherland enjoy with impunity….. I believed in equal rights for all - irrespective of one’s faith, and I believed that the same attitude is shares by others as well. …..But, Alas! Again and again I was deceived I was betrayed. (qtd. in Brosius, Empowering Visions 210)

The consistent investment in political representation of the Muslim community has allowed the Hindu nationalists to exploit the Muslim as a symbol of contamination of culture, suppression and erosion of the ‘Indian values’, invoking fear of being overpowered by the Muslim community. The repeatedly invocation and projection of the conflict between the Muslim and Hindu community through media representations have affected the collective consciousness of the Hindu community.

Although Muslims have been in India almost for seven hundred years, and have undoubtedly enriched Indian culture, yet the Hindu majority has failed to accommodate the Muslim community in the political culture. They are still projected as outsider, traitor, barbarian and an existential threat to the majority. In the colonial India, in a search of a powerful and substantial culture as resistant culture to colonization, social reformism was initiated, aiming at purifying the Hindu religion to define the national culture. In this purifying process, the Muslim community was deployed as a scapegoat to define what is pure and impure, and all that signified impurity and violence was transferred to the Muslim community. The British interpretation of the Muslim period was uncritically accepted and used to construct the discourse of nationalism.

Richard Eaton (2000) asserts that the Hindu nationalists have ‘selectively used’ Elliot and Dowson’s ‘selective translations’ in their discourse to construct the Muslim as other. Scholars have argued that the way the Mughal rule, Islam and the partition are represented in the public sphere has shaped the Hindu perception of the Muslim community. The negative stereotypes of Muslim were constructed in the representation of the Muslim rule by both the British historians and Hindus through rumors, oral narrative and the selective historical memory. Historians have pointed how that the first freedom struggle of the 1857 changed the way the Hindu community was perceived as obedient subjects. The British came to recognize the Hindu
community as current threat to the British empire, and initiated a new cultural politics in which the Muslim had to be projected as sole responsible for the current degeneration of the Hindu culture and hence, ‘enemy’ of the Hindu community. They interpreted the Muslim rule in India as dark period characterized by cruelty, barbarianism and social and cultural humiliation of the Hindu society, indirectly projecting themselves as savior. In their interpretation of Muslim and Hindu relations, they deliberately highlighted cultural differences, representing the Muslim as an oppressor and cruel, who afflicted persecution on Hindus and reduced them to a helpless natives. A very significant book is History of India as Told by its Own Historians (1871) by Elliot and Dowson in which the Indian history was approached in the form of dichotomic the Hindu and Muslim categories. The nationalists’ consistent reference to the Muslim rule as a period of deceit, violence and wild savagery contributed to the construction of the Muslim as an enemy. Misra argues that the Hindu nationalists used “Islam as a tool for the prescription, promotion and consolidation of Hindus and Hinduism” (57). The Hindu reaction to the partition also needs to be understood in the context of symbolic insertion of Hinduism into nationalism. For Hindus, the native land is not simply a land rather, worshipped as Bharat Mata, as sacred deity. The partition is not treated as just a division of territory, dominated by the Muslim from the subcontinent rather as a ‘vivisection of the limbs of Mother India’. The partition came to be seen as an unforgivable crime, committed by the Muslim community who demanded a separate nation. The Hindus came to believe that Islam came to India through the sword and afflicted suffering, perpetuated barbarianism and persecution and degenerated Indian culture.

Chacha Choudhary is a Gandhian character who speaks for the synthesis of different communities to create a harmonious society; but his synthesis is based on inclusiveness. Mahatma Gandhi as a nationalist advocated a singular national narrative, but his use of the Hindu ideals and symbols in the nationalist discourse to oppose the British imperialism subsequently turned Indian nationalism into Hindu nationalism. Like Mahatma Gandhi, he preaches tolerance for minorities but does not advocate equal power sharing in the Indian nation. Rather, the ‘imagined community’ that he protects in the comic book is a Gandhian ‘Ram Rajya’ based on
the ‘Indian culture’ and its inclusiveness. In this ‘Ram Rajya’, the Hindu community would be subject of the state power and the Muslim community would be taken care of as an object of the state power. In his vision of India, religion is replaced by national culture, but the national culture he propagates is largely Hindu-oriented.

The Muslim is seen as antithetical to any heterogeneous existence, aiming at eliminating heterogeneity and establishing their cultural hegemony in the society. In opposite to the adverse projection of the Muslim community, the Hindu community is seen as proponent of diversity and multiculturalism. The Hindu nationalism has romanticized the Indian culture’s inbuilt-mechanism that has accommodated several foreign cultures, and at the same time, retained its core essence. In the context of its encounter with different communities, they highlight its inbuilt adaptability and the process of Indianisation. They narrate the stories, how the foreigners came to India and became part of it by adapting its culture and way of life. The Hindu nationalists advocate Indianisation of the Muslim community, cleansing their disloyal tendencies. They argue that the Muslim should adopt the ‘Indian’ values and norms and display their filial relationship with their current mother land. If they adopt the ‘Indian’ culture, they will be accepted and protected as citizens of the Indian nation.

The character of Sabu is deployed as symbolic enactment of the process of Indianisation in which a non-Hindu has accepted the cultural authority of the Hindu society and in return, he is incorporated and accepted as a member of the Hindu society. Sabu originally belongs to the Jupiter and hence, outsider who decides to become part of the Indian society, observing the peaceful and beautiful Hindu society. He offers himself to the eponymous hero as assistance to serve the Hindu society. Like Bhishma, the heroic character of the Mahabharata, he declares himself to remain celibate through his life and use his physical power for the welfare of the Hindu society. In the story entitled ‘Mrs Khan’s security’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-916), the discourse of Indianisation is articulated.According to the discourse of Indianisation, the Muslim community should accept the supremacy of the Hindu community and, instead of staking claim to the nation; they should adopt ‘Indian culture’ and inhabit the Indian nation as secondary citizen without any rights and claims. As secondary citizens of the Indian nation, they will be protected by the nation.
Fig. 3. Protection of the Muslim woman, ‘Mrs Khan’s Security,’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.916).

The narrative represents the nationalist discourse as propounded by the Hindu nationalists. The first large panel depicts the Muslim woman, Mrs Khan, whose life is in danger as the Hindu criminal Dhamaka Singh has asked her to send ten lakh rupees to his place. Being powerless in the Nation dominated by the Hindu majority, she has no other option than to approach Chacha Choudhary to help her get rid of the existential crisis. Chacha Choudhary ensures her that nobody can harm her under his protection. The narrative embodies the political fantasy of the Hindu middle class about itself as politically and culturally superior to the Muslim community. The fear of losing the authentic ‘Indian’ culture is invoked to underpin the discourse of Indianisation. The Muslim community is seen as the ‘threatened other’ without protection and guidance of the majority in the Indian nation.

The Muslim characters are represented not only as criminals, violent, aggressive, sort of animals, but also as stupid, mindless creatures, further linking them to the body, denying any possession of mental capability. This projection of Muslim characters as body confirms historically constructed stereotype of Muslim community as barbarian, devoid of any intellectual power. During the nineteenth century, the social reformists like Vivekananda deployed the Muslim category as other to redefine the Hindu society and projected the Hindu community as ‘mind’ and the Muslim community as ‘body’ (Misra 2004). He suggested that the Hindu had a glorious past which was degenerated by the different forces especially due to invasion of the
Muslim rulers. He used ‘Islam’ as constant reference in his discussion of the history of the Hindu community to highlight the present degeneration of the Hindu society, but in his analysis of the history of the Hindu community, he referred to Islam as an antagonistic force that threatened the identity of the Hindus. Instead of including the Muslim community in the Indian national culture, he suggested that the Indian people should learn from the Muslim community to consolidate themselves to withstand any kind of encounter with outside forces. In his construction of the Indian culture, he contributed to the construction of Muslim community as ‘other.’ In a letter ‘India and Her Problems’ written for Almora, he wrote that “I see in my mind’s eye the future perfect Indian out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible with Vedanta brain and Islam body” (qtd. in Misra 25). The violent characteristics, like physical ferocity, rampant sexuality, lust, gluttony and dirtiness, are attributed to the Muslim, which reflects their inner pollution. To the Hindu mind, the Muslim community conquered India with sword, and with their arrival, the degeneration of Indian culture began. They not only robbed Hindus of their land but also raped their women and forced their sisters and daughters to become their mistresses. In the eyes of the Hindu, the Muslim male is a lecherous, greedy, lustful and insensitive.

In the comic book, the Muslim characters fail to execute their plans because they are bereft of intellectual capacity. In the political imagination, the Muslim has been stereotyped as a barbarian, who has no thinking power, and acts on impulses. In the story entitled ‘Akalmad Banane ka Nuskha’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics Digest -22), Chacha Choudhary is depicted as possessing art of wisdom, which is highly envied by the Muslim character, Babuka. The power of intellect is not only depicted as superior to physical power, but also seen as exclusively gifted to the Hindu mind. The leader of the Muslim group orders his men to capture Chacha Choudhary in order to learn the art of wisdom, but intellectually superior hero easily outwits each of them and imprisons the leader in his own house. The necessity of possessing intellect is articulated and possessor of intellect is simultaneously pointed out, marking the Muslim community as bereft of intellectual power.
The Hindu mind is pitted against the Muslim mind. While the Hindu mind is portrayed as a peace-loving and intelligent; the Muslim mind is projected as a barbarian, stupid and devilish. The Muslim mind cannot execute any plan without engaging in criminal activities. Chacha Choudhary, who is known for his social work, refuses to teach them the art of wisdom. They want to sharpen their intellect so that they could execute successfully their conspiracies, but the wise hero refuses to share the secrets of wisdom with them because intellect must be used for social welfare not for criminal activities. Both the Hindu and Muslim are defined in dichotomic categories in which the Hindu community stands intellectually superior to the Muslim community. In another story entitled ‘Brain or Brawn? Chacha Choudhary and the Wonderful Perfume’ (Diamond Comics-1753), the duality of body and mind is exploited in order to mark the Muslim as intellectually inferior to the Hindu. The title itself is a rhetorical question requiring an explanation, constituting the central thread of the story. The conflict between the brain and the body is exemplified by respectively Chacha Choudhary and Gallo. Gallo, symbol of physical power in the story, is encoded as a Muslim character. The first panel introduces two Muslim characters, who are discussing the comparative strength of the brain and the body. The muscular Gallo challenges anyone, who can prove that the brain is stronger than the body. Chacha Choudhary rejects Gallo’s presumption that the body is superior to
Fig. 5. The body-mind conflict, ‘Brain and Brawn?,’ ‘Chacha Choudhary’ (No. 1753). the brain and indirectly refers to the Indian tradition in which the brain is depicted as more powerful than the body. Gallo arrogantly challenges Chacha Choudhary to prove that the mind is mightier than brawn. In the next panel, another Muslim character Sultan is introduced who also upholds Garo’s view, suggesting the Muslim community’s perception of the body/mind conflict. Through his tricks Chacha Choudhary succeeds to prove that the mind is mightier than the body. In the story not only is the mind projected as superior to the body but also the body is linked with the Muslim community, projecting them as barbarians who have a tendency to conquer the world with sword.

The Hindu masculinity is pitted against the Muslim masculinity. While the Hindu masculinity is linked to duty and social service, the Muslim masculinity is linked to criminality, greed, lust and self-interest. In the same way, the Hindu reformers made a close link between masculinity and social service. In the discourse of Hindutva, the Hindu is projected as a non-violent, sensitive and a self-sacrificing individual who is always ready to sacrifice his comforts, personal happiness for the Indian society and the nation. In contrast to this self-created perception of the Hindu, the Muslim is represented as a violent, inhumane, selfish, lustful human being who does not deserve to be a member of the Indian society. In the story entitled ‘Donkey Affairs’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics -739), the intensity of human cruelty is referred to suggest the essentialized cultural differences between the Hindu community and the Muslim community. The story begins with a panel in which a Hindu is seen as beating a donkey. He is condemned for his cruel treatment of the
animal. But the depiction of his cruel treatment meted out to an animal serves to function as a binary term to emphasize the extreme cruelty committed by the Muslim character Garo who treats his slaves in an inhuman manner. In a large panel, the Muslim is portrayed as whipping four servants with a hunter. The hero reminds him of his responsibility and expected behavior as human being.

![Image of Chacha Choudhary](image.png)

Fig.6. The inhuman behavior of the Muslim character, ‘Donkey Affairs’ Chacha Choudhary (No.739)

But the criminal refuses to pay attention to his didacticism. Rather, he determines to use cruelty and violence to get his work done. In a humorous way, Sabu intervenes and rescues the slaves. The historical memory of cruelty and violence is invoked and attributed to the Muslim community, which is represented by the bearded criminal. The majority strives to achieve ‘purity’, ‘wholeness’ and ‘uncontested nation space,’ where in the Muslim minority can exist only as citizens, Indianized and subordinate to the Hindus, and without any privileges.

In the story entitled ‘Jumbo the Killer’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1318), the Muslim is linked with the body, consolidating the historically constructed stereotype of the Muslim as physically powerful and violent, but intellectually dull. In the second panel, in a close up shot, through conversation between an unknown Indian citizen and Chacha Choudhary, the grotesque features of the killer are explained. He is projected as a devilish soul who has mercilessly killed several opponents in different competitions. In the next panels, his physical power, violent behavior and cruelty are visualized. In the spectacle of stadium, as visualized in the panels; the Muslim wrestler kills brutally two Indian wrestlers Zorawar Singh and Keekar Singh. Anticipating India’s humiliating defeat in the world wrestling
championship, the eponymous hero himself challenges the cruel wrestler for a combat. Like the epic hero Krishna, he pulverizes the wrestler through his trickery. Like Krishna, the epic character in the Mahabharata, Chacha Choudhary, who otherwise preaches to follow ‘dharma’ in everyday life, does not hesitate to suspend the moral framework in order to kill the cruel wrestler.

**Fig.7.** The arrogant wrestler, ‘Jumbo the Killer,’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1318).

The narrative is highly shaped by the Indian epic narrative traditions of the Mahabharata. Similarly, the Muslim is seen as a bestial wrestler in the story entitled ‘Sabu Versus Abdulla’ *Chacha Choudhary* (Diamond Comics --318). As the title denotes, the powerful Muslim is compared with Sabu, highlighting differences between two different cultural systems.

**Fig.8.** Social service and pursuit of power, ‘Sabu Versus Abdulla,’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1318)

While Sabu wisely utilizes his physical prowess to serve the Indian society, the Muslim wrestler Abdulla is seen as a dull person who intends to gain power in the society by orchestrating his physical strength. Sabu is introduced as a social worker who assists Chacha Choudhary in his mission of protecting the Indian society from
social and economic threats. The first panel depicts Sabu’s return to home after his successful social assistance, and Chacha Choudhary, who is sitting in front of his house, is waiting for Sabu. Both Sabu’s return and Chacha’s act of waiting are visualized in the same panel.

In the next panel, a close up shot, Sabu explains, how he has helped the government in laying railway line in a remote area. For his social work, Sabu is applauded and awarded by the eponymous hero. In the next panel, the reader is familiarized with the Muslim wrestler, Abdulla, who introduces himself arrogantly as the famous wrestler from Iran. His grotesque appearance suggests his Mephistophelian self and his endless craving for power is seen in his jealousy for Sabu’s popularity as a savior. Overpowered by his lust for power, Abdulla does not hesitate to resort to unscrupulous means. When Abdulla observes that Sabu is oblivious to his presence, as he is enjoying his favorite food, he attempts to kill Sabu. The powerful Sabu teaches him a good lesson, indicating the victory of good over evil. The Muslim characters are seen as taking side with the dark forces. In another story entitled ‘Burglar’s Madame’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1318), the Muslim character is depicted as a killer who is approached by the criminal Gobar Singh’s sister to kill Chacha Choudhary. In his conspiracy to eliminate Chacha Choudhary, the Muslim criminal ends up burlesquely hurting himself. In the depiction of hatching a conspiracy and its complete failure, the Muslim character has been pointed out as a criminal, who is against the good forces represented by Chacha Choudhary and his assistant Sabu.

In the discourse of Hindu nationalism, desbhakati has been projected as synonymous with Rambhakati. Any citizen, who claims to be desbhakat, has to be Rambhakat. The Indian nationalists invoked the ancient past and used excessive examples from the Hindu epics in their discourse of nationalism. As a result, the Indian nationalism came to be perceived as Hindu oriented, in spite of their progressive outlook. Citing the Gandhian notion of Ram Rajya, the Hindu nationalists established a link between Desbhakati and Rambhakati. In the comic book, Chacha Choudhary and Sabu are seen as representing Ram Rajya, and the Muslim community as reactionary forces. Several stories, in the comic book, draw on the Indian epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata - for characterization and specific moments in the
story, linking the narrative to the Hindu society. In the story entitled ‘Chacha Choudhary’s Illness’ *Chacha Choudhary* (Diamond Comics-260), one scene from the epic *Ramayana* is reworked, depicting Chacha Choudhary as diseased Rama and Sabu as Hanumana who brings Chemist’s shop in order to get medicine for Chacha’s illness. The intense scene is appropriated to suit the contemporary Indian society and its symbolic values are retained at the same time.

Fig.9. Sabu as Hanumana, ‘Chacha Choudhary’s Illness’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.260)

The first panel introduces the situation in third person like folk stories, depicting Chacha Choudhary on the death-bed, suffering seriously from a mysterious disease. A very famous doctor from a remote city visits Chacha Choudhary and suggests Sabu to bring medicine that is available only in one chemist shop in Bombay. Sabu, like Hanumana, travels in the air and gets back within one and a half hour, but being unable to remember the name of the medicine; he fetches the chemist’s shop, instead of bringing only the required medicine. The reworking of the epic scene is not without symbolic significance. The represented world in the comic book has been linked with the Hindu society, protected by the Hindu hero Chacha Choudhary and his assistant Sabu.

In another comic book issue entitled *Chacha Chaudhary* (Diamond Comics-284) the flash page depicts both Chacha Choudhary and Sabu in epic characterization in which Sabu, like Hanumana, carries chacha Choudhary on his shoulders to the targeted destination. There are several stories in the comic book, which represent Sabu as Hanuman carrying Chacha Choudhary on his shoulders in the moment of
crisis to reach immediately the spot of conflict that threatens the harmonious existence of the Indian society. In such a story entitled ‘Operation capital’, Chacha Choudhary and Sabu are portrayed respectively as Rama and Hanumana. The Muslim terrorists conspire to blow the Indian railway Rajdhani Express to invoke terror in the Indian society. As there is less time to locate the site where the bomb is planted, Sabu asks Chacha Choudhary to sit on his shoulders so that they can cover the distance in less time.

![Chacha Choudhary as Rama](image)

Fig.10. Chacha Choudhary as Rama, ChachaChoudhary (No.284).

The memory of Rama and Hanuman has been evoked, and Chacha Choudhary and Sabu are projected assaviors of the Hindu society, representing the victory of goodness over evil. At the same time, they are pitted against the Muslim characters, who represent the evil forces. Through visualizing both Chacha Choudhary and Sabu respectively as Rama and Hanuman, the Ram Rajya has been evoked and its enemy is identified. The historian Sheldon (1993) also argues that in the Mughal period, the Indian epic Ramayana was reworked and reinterpreted in order to project the Muslim rule as rule of the devil, and the Muslim was seen as a reincarnation of Ravana, the symbol of the darkest force that exists in the human world.

The discourse of Hindutva is based on fear- “fear that the “weak”, diverse, disunited, who lacked an ideology, a dogma, a Mecca or a universal church would be swamped by “strong” Muslim and charistians” (Misra 151). For them, the Muslim community is predatory by nature and it is in their blood to “overrun, plunder, and destroy other weaker countries” (Nandy85). The Hindus have a fear of being treated as minority in their own country, the fear that stems from the historical memory of being marginal for almost seven hundred years during the Muslim rule. Almost
hundred years of marginalization of the Hindus have perpetuated agony and anxiety about their inevitable co-existence with the Muslim community, which once enjoyed the political power in spite of being minority and outsider in the Hindu nation, and now stands as a threat to the Hindu culture. For the Hindu mind, the minority suggests, ‘the spectre of conspiracy, of the cell, the spy, the traitor, the dissident, or the revolutionary’ and “the intrusion of the private into the public sphere, and with it the associated dangers of nepotism, collusion, subversion and deception” (Appadurai, “The Fear” 235).

The majority mobilizes itself by creating perception of itself as the threatened majority. What makes the discourse of Hindu nationalism efficacious is the projection of the majority as a ‘threatened community,’ which is marked by what Appadurai call “the anxiety of incompleteness”, and “fantasy of national purity and wholeness” (“The Fear”238). The presence of the Muslim is seen as ‘an intolerable deficit in the purity of the national whole’, and ‘a tiny obstacle between minority and totality or total purity (“The Fear”237). Appadurai has argued that the Hindu majority is not a fact instead; it is a project which survives on the discourse of crisis and practices of violence. Sudhir Kakar also argues that the Hindu can’t think of himself without being simultaneously aware of the presence of the Muslim (1996). The perception created through representation is that the Muslim community is inimical to the existence of Hindu community, and poses an existential threat to the Hindu ideals on national consolidation. For the Hindu nationalists, the real enemies of the Hindu are not the Muslims but the Hindus themselves. They advocate that the Hindus should strengthen themselves and mobilize their community. Chacha Choudhary provides them the much required inspiration to unify themselves against the predatory community. In the narrative, through his adventures, he seems to suggest how the ‘other’ must be dealt with whenever the ‘other’ poses any threat to the unity of the nation.

Ghettoisation of the Muslim community is a potent mechanism through which the Hindu majority deploys an antagonistic construction of identity to produce what Appadurai terms as “predatory identities,” and legitimize its position as a superior cultural entity, constituting the national culture (2009). The presence of the Muslim community functions as a scapegoat to dis locate fear and anxieties of the Hindu community and transfer that fear to the Muslim community, which is portrayed as a
potential threat to the realization of ‘wholeness of national culture.’ The presence of the Muslim community is perceived as impurity of the nation, as an obstacle in the realization of a Hindu nation. As Indian nationalism is constructed on the idea of a single community, the significant presence of the minority threatens the hegemony of the majority and its claim to the state, and questions the tendency of the majority to equate the nation with one particular community.

Arjun Appadurai in his paper “Fear of Small Numbers” (2009) argues that the categories minorities and majorities are historically invented and essentially connected with the notions of nation, population and representation. Although both are simultaneously constructed, it is the majority that requires the minority in order to exist and perpetuate its hegemony. The majority deploys representational practices to consolidate and maintain its political power in the society. In the story entitled ‘Arrogant Kazaan’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1615), the process of representation and its political potency are explained and legitimized. What is conveyed to the reader is that even an unintentional representation can be a faithful picture of the Indian society. The story begins with a literary function in which the author Ranjan is appreciated and awarded for his contribution to literature. In the very next panel, Chacha Choudhary is shown as reading a review of the novel as a wonderful novel. In the first three panels, the novel has been projected as a book of national value, which has depicted a true picture of the Indian society. The hero, overwhelmed by his novel, decides to visit the writer and present him a bouquet.

Fig.11. Representation within representation‘Arrogant Kazaan’ Chacha Choudhary No.1615)
The narrative depicts representation within representation and their intertextual relationships consolidate the political representation of the Indian society. The popularity of the author is countered by introducing a Muslim criminal Kazaan, who orders his men to eliminate the author because he has exposed him and disclosed the names of the members of his group in the novel. While the novel has been hailed as a national asset and appreciated for its true reflection of the society, its author is facing death threats because he has defamed Kazaan. The state and Chacha Choudhary are determined to protect the national hero. After several narrative twists, Chacha Choudhary succeeds to eliminate all threats and subjugate the criminal Kazaan. The representation within representation serves to function as a subtext to the representation in the comic book series and justifies its representation as legitimate and socially relevant to the nation. By defining the minority through representation, they not only define themselves and stake claim to the nation, but also stigmatize the minority as something undesirable or in immediate need to be domesticated.

The discourse of Hindutva exploits space as an ideological paradigm to construct the Hindu space as national space. In this discursive practice, a place is transformed into cultural space. The representation of geographical space functions as an alibi in transforming “a mere place into culturally meaningful, politically charged space” (Deshpande, “Communalising” 3221). Through representational practices, the space is filled with the Hindu cultural meanings and the Muslim community is projected as blocking the process of realizing the Hindu space as national space. The theorists like Anderson (2006) have argued that nations “inhabit a space that is simultaneously abstract (imagined, mental) and concrete” (Deshpande, “Communalising” 3220). Deshpande (1995) has defined Hindutva as an ideological project that has an “ideological spatial dimension”. The discourse of Hindutva attempts to “essentialize the nation space by resacrilizing it thereby stressing its irreducible and exclusive affinity for Hindus alone” (Deshpande 3220). The Hindu way of life and the Indian territory are interlinked through representation to create “heterotopias” (Foucault 1986; Deshpande 1995).

The Nehruvian spatial ideology of projecting dams and factories as markers of the modern secular state is replaced by the Hindutva spatial politics which emphasizes the particularities of the Hindu culture and highlights cultural differences. The spatial politics of the Hindutva constructs the Muslim as an insider enemy and rejects any
possibility of ‘unity in diversity,’ advocated by the Nehruvian discourse by highlighting cultural differences. In the comic book, a Hindu way of life and national territory are constructed as an inseparable structure. Chacha Choudhary, who is representative of the Hindu culture, inhabits and protects a national space. Through his discursive adventures, he stakes claim to the Indian space as Hindu space and propagates Hindu culture as national culture. In the story entitled ‘Hura and Bura’ _Chacha Choudhary_ (Diamond Comics -1260), the urban Hindu middle class is threatened by two Muslim criminals. The encroachment of the Hindu space is projected as a threat to the nation. The threats to the Hindu space are depicted in terms of criminal activities such as kidnapping, stealing and robbery, which are ultimately eliminated by Chacha Choudhary and his assistant Sabu.

![Fig.12. Threatened Hindu space, ‘Hura and Bura’ Chacha Choudhary (No.1260).](image)

In the first panel, the Hindu space is depicted in the right side of the panel in which a little girl is playing in the park and two criminals are represented as looking at her and hatching a conspiracy to kidnap her. Through their ‘gaze’, the Hindu middle class is projected as a space under attack. Before they execute their planning to kidnap her, they are thrashed by the hero. What is important in the narrative is not that the Hindu space is protected, but the way the threat to the Hindu space has been projected and linked to the Muslim community. What is suggested in the narrative is that the Muslim community is an imminent threat for the Hindu space. Despande points out the working of the spatial politics of Hindutva:

The neighborhood is redefined as a threatened space - a besieged haven - that must be protected against the 'other'. If the 'other' is present in close physical proximity, i.e, if the locality is a mixed
Hindu-non-Hindu one, the threat can be very easily simulated; if the ‘other’ happens to be absent from the locality, it is nevertheless portrayed as a threatened idyll permanently in danger of invasion. (3224)

Through the narrative structure, the Hindu-space is linked to the nation-space and its encroachment is depicted through criminal activities of the Muslim character.

The representation of the Muslim in the comic book intersects with other media representations, circulating intertextual knowledge. As Jenkins (2006) emphasizes the role of ‘transmedia storytelling’ in creating ‘convergence culture’ in which the narrative manifests itself across films, animation, video games, novels as well as comic books and web sites: “each of us constructs our own personal mythology from bits and fragments of information extracted from the media flow and transformed into resources through which we make sense of our everyday lives” (Jenkins 9). Through multiple codes operating across different media, a monolithic figure of the Muslim is constructed and circulated, or what Anderson (2006) would say, imagined through ‘print capitalism.’ The negative image of the Muslim has been installed in the Hindu consciousness through media representations, leading to the process of ‘othering’ of the Muslim community. In the story entitled ‘Actress Neil’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-912), the story draws its plot from the Indian cinema in which all characters echo the appearance and characterization of Indian cinema and the criminal appears like a villain from a film. The Muslim characters are depicted as members of the famous Bollywood mafia. The references to the underworld aid in the convincible representation of the Muslim characters. Several stories have been reported in the media about mafia dons who have been operating from Muslim countries, especially Dubai. They demand money from the Bollywood celebrities by threatening them. The double coding in the narrative persuades the reader to identify the real criminals. Through double coding, Muslim characters are contrasted with Hindu criminals; a distinction is made between false representation and true representation. While the Hindu criminals are depicted as harmless tricksters who indulge in insignificant criminal activities that could be condoned, the Muslim criminals are represented as inhuman criminals who can go to any extent to get even a
small amount of money. In the story, Sabu is very popular as a savior and is desired by every Indian girl as a husband. A Bollywood heroine wishes to marry Sabu. Sabu is very popular for his soft corner for women and is said to be concerned with their safety.

Fig.13. The Bollywood mafia, ‘Actress Neil’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.912).

The heroine employs a theater actor to enact as a criminal so that she could meet Sabu. When the heroine is waiting for the actor outside her house, she is intimidated by two real criminals who ask her to go with them. Sabu arrives on the scene at the right time to rescue her and thrash the criminals. Through this dichotomy between the real criminals and false criminals, the Muslim characters are projected as real criminal, representing anti-national forces. In another story entitled ‘Film Actress Tu-Tu’ *Chacha Choudhary* (Diamond Comics--1215), two Muslim characters are seen as members of Bollywood mafia, who try to blackmail the Bollywood actress Tu-Tu to play the role of heroine in a film financed by the mafia don. In a panel, she is depicted as being terrorized by two criminals who look like Muslims by their appearance. They threaten to kill her if she does not agree to act in the film financed by their boss. In the very next panel, Chacha Choudhary is introduced as a savior who protects her from the life threatening situation created by two violent mafia-members. The actress prefers the national interest over personal interest and refuses to be part of the project produced with black money.
The Bollywood heroine is kidnapped by a Muslim gangster, ‘Film Actress Tu-Tu’ Chacha Choudhary (No.1215)

Through her expression of patriotism, the Muslim characters are marked as anti-national agents who are not concerned with the Indian nation and its economy.

The Muslim is also depicted as anti-modern and orthodox, impeding progress of the nation. As a result, the nation fails to pace up with the global powers, clogging the improvement in the living standards of the Indian society. In comic narratives, the well-built houses with cemented streets, financial facilities and theme parks that mark the modern Hindu society are in danger, to be ravaged by the reactionary forces. The urbanized metropolitan city is always under attack. In several stories, they seem to react to urbanization and consumerism as they are never seen as accommodative and confirming the emergence of new patterns of social life. The Muslim community is seen as retrogressive force in the nation, which conspires to ruin its economic system and traffic system, destroy the electricity lines and indulge in bank robberies. Historically, the Muslim community is seen as conservative and inflexible to adopt the contemporary social and economic advancement. In contrast to the stereotype of the Muslim as anti-modern and orthodox, the Hindu is applauded for his inbuilt adopt-mechanism, citing examples from the Indian history to demonstrate how the Hindus have adopted different cultures and social milieu at different historical junctures and have paved way for economic progress and advancement without resisting them on the basis of culture and religion. The conflict between the liberal Hindu and the conservative Muslim is understood in terms of the Muslim community’s failure to come terms with their present socio-economic situation. They could not evolve a
dynamic culture that could coexist with changing cultural and economic trends. In the globally changing world, the Muslim community exhibits their resistance to any dynamic force and feel threatened by the globally changing cultural patterns.

If the Muslim is seen as engaged in advanced technological world, he tends to represent the portentous potential of technology. In several stories, the Muslim is portrayed as misapplying technology to either threaten people or collect money. In the story entitled ‘Bakhiz the scientist’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-259), the Muslim scientist, Bakhiz, who is a well known scientist, and is capable of inventing new things that could be useful for the society, prefers to invent a machine that could help earn money without doing any manual work. He invents a machine that releases a poisonous gas automatically as programmed by him. He utilizes unethically his invented machine to rob people of their money and other valuable assets. Before he emerges as a dangerous criminal for the society, he is subdued by the socially responsible hero Chacha Choudhary. In another story entitled ‘Five Hundred Rupee Note’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1281), a Muslim character is depicted as smuggling fake notes in Indian market as a conspiracy to destroy the Indian economy. Several individuals from different professions approach the hero and complain against the circulation of fake notes in the market. Concerned with the national economy, the omnipresent hero perceives it as a threat to the economic system of the nation. The criminal is identified and captured, abating the perceived threat to the economy.

In the story entitled ‘Missing Wife’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-503), the Muslim culture is differentiated from Hindu culture, highlighting cultural differences and projecting the Muslim culture as conservative and incapable of evolving its culture to accommodate the modern cultural patterns. An unidentified Muslim in traditional Muslim attire is introduced as a stranger in the city who is looking for his lost wife in the market crowd. Chacha Choudhary promises him to find out his wife and asks Sabu to search his wife in the market. In the next short panel, in a close up shot, Sabu is seen surprised at an unexpected scene. His eyes are wide-open with a gaping mouth. What has surprised him is visualized in the next panel. The next panel depicts a crowd of Muslim women who all are wearing sartorial burqa, a traditional dress code for women. The story draws on the Muslim dress code burqa for its central conflict to be resolved, turning burqa into a metaphor for the Muslim community. The burqa becomes a language to define and explain the Muslim
community. Muslim women have been stereotyped by encoding them with a single cultural code, marking them as an orthodox community with rigid notions of culture. The burqa is projected as an identity-crisis in the contemporary world leading to confusion of identity within community and between communities.

Fig.15. The Muslim culture as conservative culture, ‘Missing Wife’ Chacha Choudhary (No.503)

Both Chacha Choudhary and Sabu seem to be amused at their burqas, suggesting their incompatibility with the modern world. In the story, burqa is humorously exploited as a weapon to stigmatize the Muslim community as conservative and unable to adopt the modern globalized culture. The projection of the Muslim as traditional and orthodox in the story is in line with representation of the Muslim community in the comic book series, homogenizing the stereotyping depiction of the Muslim community.

In the comic book, the Muslim does not figure as professionally well qualified or successful businessman as the Hindu is portrayed. Rather the Muslim is portrayed as engaged in traditional economic activities or exploiting technologies unethically for earning money or gaining power in the society. Through representation of their engagement with traditional economic and social activities, they are framed as unprogressive in comparison to the emerging Hindu middle class. In the story entitled ‘Baakhu and Minister’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1453), the first panel depicts the Muslim character Baakhu, engaged in conversation with his pet bird ‘minister’. The pigeon gambling is a game that has been associated with the Muslim
culture since the Mughal period. During the Mughal period, the pigeon gambling was patronized and was part of every sport activities. Since then, the pigeon gambling is linked with the Muslim identity. For Instance, in the story entitled ‘Ali’s Pigeons’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-618), two Muslims are depicted as participating in pigeon-flying competition. Driven by jealousy, Mirza Dafli plans to hire a shooter to kill Ali’s pigeons so that he could easily win the competition. Disappointed by Mirza’s immoral behavior, Ali approaches Chacha Choudhary to protect his pigeons from the shooter.

Fig.16. Pigeon gambling, ‘Ali’s Pigeons’ Chacha Choudhary (No.618)

The game of pigeon-flying, a popular game in the Mughal period, came to be perceived as wastage of time and a marker of ‘lost generation’ in the post-independence India. After independence, so many cultural practices of both Mughal and British period were targeted as inappropriate for the newly emerging nation as human potential should be utilized for the project of nation-building. The Muslim culture has been depicted as ‘nawabi culture’ marked by libidinal indulgence in pleasure of the senses. The presence of flying pigeons in media representations serves to function as a marker of typical Muslim culture.

In the story entitled ‘Baakhu and Minister’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1453), the poor Baakha is seen as parasite on his pet bird minister, who steals money and other valuable materials from rich people for his master Baakhu. Baakhu’s poverty, pigeon-gambling and his dubious ways to earn money reinforce the already
constructed stereotypes of the Muslim community. The next panel introduces another character Chipku, a servant who informs Baakhu that Seth Rai is going to deposit money in the bank. Both plan to steal his money and divide the stolen money. Both the Muslim and marginalized classes are seen as insider enemies of the nation by the urban Hindu middle class. The urban Hindu middle class tends to suspect them as imposters who use unethical means to earn money. Both Baakhu and Chipku manage to earn money through unscrupulous ways till they are exposed by the hero Chacha Choudhary. In the same story, one panel portrays the pet bird ‘minister’ as a non-vegetarian who receives non-vegetarian food from his master whenever the bird succeeds to steal money for him. There is implicit comparison between criminal minded ‘minister’ and the only vegetarian dog ‘Rocket’. While Baakhu’s pet bird engages in theft and robbery, the hero’s dog helps him in solving the social problems. Through intertextual connections, the relation between criminality and non-vegetarianism has been coded to mark the Muslim community. In the Indian public sphere, the Muslims have been portrayed as barbarians who eat animals since the beginning of the Muslim rule in India. The dichotomy of the good and the evil is encoded in terms of food and behavior patterns, demonstrating the cultural differences between the Hindu and the Muslim community.

The theme of ‘the defense of our borders’ is an integral part of the discourse of Hindu nationalism. The Hindu nationalists use this theme as a pretext to ghettoize the Muslim community. In several stories, threat from Pakistan is a central theme and complicity of the Indian Muslims is a subplot, playing on suspicious loyalty of the Muslim community to the Indian nation. Some stories are drawn from real historical events, especially terrorist activities that are said to be operating from across the border. In one story entitled ‘Chacha Choudhary and the Great Kidnapping’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1598), a minister is kidnapped by the terrorists who demand that the terrorist Gogon must be released. The government approaches the hero to help the police to rescue the minister without submitting to the demands of the terrorists. In Bollywood style, an isolated place is fixed to exchange the criminal with the minister.
The government initially opposes Chacha Choudhary’s conspiracy to deceive the terrorists at the right moment but keeping in mind the hero’s skilled mind and his ardent patriotic feelings, the government decides to follow his plan to get rid of the terrorist group. They meet the terrorists on an already decided place and according to the terrorists’ condition; the criminal is set free in exchange of the Indian minister. However, the moment the minister is seen as out of danger, according to the plan, Sabu attacks them suddenly from the hidden place and captures them. The national crisis is resolved, but the enemy is identified who threatens the peace-loving citizens of the Indian nation.

In the Indian public sphere, terrorism has been so much discussed, explained in the context of assertion of the fundamentalist Muslim groups that the term terrorism has become a functional signifier to define the Muslim community. The consistent repetition of the term terrorism for militant Muslims, both insider and outsider, in the media representation, has produced set connotations of terrorism as an integral part of Muslim culture. The discourse of terrorism has stereotyped the Muslim as synonymous with terrorism. In the story entitled ‘One-Two-Three’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics--1211), the Muslim character is seen as a terrorist who is part of a conspiracy, hatched by the anti-national agents aiming at spreading terror in the Indian society. The title of the story suggests both the increasing numbers and power of the social groups that pose threat to the Hindu middle class nationalism. The first panel depicts three characters armed with weapons seeming to be members of three different social groups. The speech balloon indicates their social location as socially aberrant who conspire to trigger terror in order to gain power and money. As the title indicates, the three characters are seen as alliances of different anti-national social groups who are united by their common purpose of destabilizing the Indian
nation. In the next panel, the hegemonic power of the eponymous hero is indicated by
the Muslim character. The Muslim character identifies Chacha Choudhary as their
arch-enemy who will not let them enter into the protected society. Chacha Choudhary,
the representative of Hindu middle class, is carefully pitted against the Muslim
character. The story ends with the resolution of the conflict between the hero and the
terrorists. They fail to eliminate the hero and his assistant Sabu. Rather, they are
brutally killed in their own conspiracy which they conceive to kill Chacha Choudhary.
Following the central structure of the comic book, the story begins with a crucial
moment indicating the impending danger for the society followed by the seeming
victory of the enemy of the society and finally the elimination of the threat by the
omnipresent hero.

Pakistan is mentioned implicitly as a neighbor engaged in anti-India activities,
disrupting the working of Indian democracy. In the story entitled ‘Landmine’ Chacha
Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1281), two Muslims are shown as laying a landmine to
blow a minister’s car. Through their conversation, we come to know that a secret
mission has been assigned to them by a neighbor country. They lay the landmine in
front of minister’s house but their mission is unmasked by the eponymous hero. The
story ends with a proverb inserted in a speech balloon. The speech balloon which
states, “those who dig a grave for others are themselves buried in” is addressed
directly to the reader. To the Hindu mind, Pakistan is an eternal enemy, representing a
constant threat to the national integration. The Indian-Muslim is doubted as complicit
with the conspiracy concocted by the Pakistani army. It is the servant of the minister
who shares the minister’s daily routine with the terrorists and informs his next
scheduled visit so that he could be entrapped. The servant in the story is an Indian
Pathan who has betrayed his master and his country as well. The Muslim servant is
seen as sacrificing his love for his nation in order to help the terrorists because they
are members of the Muslim community. What is conveyed carefully is that the
Muslim has more powerful bonding with his community than with his country,
reinforcing the stereotype of the Muslim as a disloyal citizen.In addition to the
Muslim rule and the partition trauma, the Kashmir issue has provided an ‘alibi’ to the
construction of the discourse of the Muslim as the ‘other.’ In almost all media
narratives, Kashmir has been deployed as a site to construct the Muslim community as
the ‘other,’ whose loyalties lie not in India but in Pakistan, which is projected as a
haven for the Muslim community. The opening panel in the story entitled ‘Operation Capital’ *Chacha Choudhary* (Diamond Comics-1284) depicts a dilapidated house on the Pakistan border and the Himalayan hills provided the background.

Fig.18. The Muslim as traitor, ‘Landmine’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1281)

In the second panel, four Muslims are depicted as holding weapons and discussing their loss in fight with the Indian armed forces. The terrorists are suggested to be the Kashmiri Muslims, who have been fighting against the Indian state for their freedom. There is a reference to a foreign country that has been looking after their families and providing them training and weapons to free the state from the Indian nation. Without any direct reference, it is suggested that this foreign country is Pakistan, which has been helping the Kashmiri Muslims in their freedom struggle. The terrorists lay out a plan to blow the railway track by using RDX. A Hindu overhears their conversation and immediately conveys the message to the eponymous hero. The title of the story suggests that the terrorist activity would be carried out in the capital of India and the Rajdhani Express is the target.

Fig.19 Kashmir conflict, ‘Operation Capital’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1284)
In the fourth panel, the space is shifted from Kashmir to the city of Delhi. On receiving the information about the conspiracy, the hero immediately responds to the critical situation and asks the inspector to map out a plan to subdue the hovering danger. Realizing that the inspector is not paying attention to this current threat, he rebukes him and suggests him that these Kashmiri terrorists should not be encouraged. Through a speech balloon, he suggests to expose the disloyalty of the Kashmiri Muslims. He suggests the inspector the grave implications of his indifference to the situation in a poetic manner: “Inspector, sometimes appearances are deceptive. It is pointless: going to a doctor after the patient is dead.” Sabu, like Hanumana, carries him on his shoulder to the spot where RDX has been fixed. They not only abort their plan, but also capture the terrorists. In the story, the Kashmiri Muslims are represented as traitors who have more affinities with Pakistan rather than with their homeland. The Indian Muslims are accused of being traitors and having being more concerned with Pakistan than India.

Through cricketing culture, the Muslim character is compared and differentiated from the Hindu character. Sharda Ugra has argued that the Indian cricket has been transformed from a popular sport to a site of national imaginary. Cricket has acquired symbolic significance in the political imagination. As a part of the national imagination, cricketing culture is implicated into the Hindutva politics. Bal Thackeray, the leader of the right–wing Shiv Sena asked the Indian Muslims to pass his own loyalty test: ‘I want them [Muslims] with tears in their eyes every time India loses to Pakistan,’ (qtd. in Ugra 86). Ramachandra Guha argues in his book that “Cricket has always been a microcosm of the fissures and tensions within Indian society; fissures that it has both reflected and played upon, mitigated as well as intensified” (xv). In the year of 1983 when the Indian team won the World Cup, the prime minister, Mrs Gandhi linked the victory with other political aims like self-sufficiency, population control by arguing that the cricket victory proved that ‘India can do it’ (Ugra 2005). In the Indian context, the popularity of cricket has encouraged jingoism which has been termed as ‘hypermationalism’. In this cricketing culture, when connected with national culture, the Muslim identity as ‘Indian’ is often doubted. Cricket series with Pakistan is often pronounced as badla (revenge) and an opportunity to prove one’s deshbhakati. Cricket has been an agent of mobilization of the Hindu masses. As Ugra emphasizes the role of cricket in creating Indian identity:
The fires, tyres and thick smoke looked alarmingly like news footage of riots familiar to most Indians. For a country so used to being told that its differences of religion, language, culture, wealth could pull it apart, there was another subtle message: only two things brought India together – war and cricket. Only two institutions could therefore keep the flag flying the army and the cricket team. War and cricket were to be seen as interchangeable. (86)

In the Hindutva discourse, cricket is perceived ‘not just a game but as a symbol of a nation’s sentiments’ (Ugra 86). In the story entitled ‘Pitch and Paisa’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1369), the Muslim character who is a match fixer and to whom, cricket is not a matter of national pride but a money making business, is suggested as disloyal to the Indian nation. He hatches a conspiracy to change the course of the cricket match. According to his planning, he tries to bribe the patriotic curator Raghu who refuses to betray his nation.

![Figure 20: Match fixing, ‘Pitch and Paisa,’ Chacha Choudhary (No. 1369)](image)

Frustrated by Raghu’s patriotism, he kidnaps him and sends his men to prepare a pitch so that the match can be turned into his favor. But at the right time, the traitor is unmasked and the patriotic Raghu is rescued by Chacha Choudhary. It is generally held that in a cricket match, the Indian Muslims support Pakistan and enjoy India’s defeat. In another story entitled ‘Umpire Fair play’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-1786), the Muslim is depicted as an unpatriot, match fixer who kidnaps the umpire’s son and threatens his son if he doesn’t give decisions against the Indian team. For the Hindu, the Muslim has no emotional connection with the matarbhumi. The match fixer is only concerned with profit. He sacrifices patriotism for money and
hence to be punished for his criminal activity of betraying the nation. In the story entitled ‘Zalzala’ *Chach Choudhary and Jumbo* (Diamond Comics-1739), through ‘cricketing culture,’ the Muslim character is stereotyped as an unscrupulous individual who can go to any extent to satisfy their ego, labeling them sentimental and devoid of human values. The Muslim character’s Zalzala’s team is defeated by Chacha Choudhary’s team, connotating the victory of ‘Indians’ over the outsiders. The cricket stadium is visualized in two different panels indicating two different stages of the game. In one panel both Muslim and Hindu are seen as spectators at the initial stage of the game.

![Fig.21 Match-fixing, ‘Zalzala’ Chach Choudhary (No.1739)](image)

In another panel, which depicts the victory of Chacha Choudhary’s team, carefully excludes the Muslim characters from the spectator, marking their identity as outsiders. Zalzala, who is depicted as bereft of sportsmanship, is determined to take revenge by killing both Chacha Choudhary and Sabu.

In spite of the dominant presence of the stereotypes of the Muslim community as criminal, thief, robber, disloyal and swindler, there are certain Muslim characters who have been depicted as good citizens, who transcend their individual interests and communal affiliations in order to serve the nation. However, such representation of the Muslim community seems to depict the Indian nation as a secular nation in which all citizens, irrespective of their religion, caste and ethnicity, are looked after and equal rights and opportunities are given to them. The Indian citizens, in turn, are committed to serve the nation. It is important to investigate whether such patriotic characters in the comic book are simply marked characters who serve merely as a functional signifier to project the Indian nation as secular one in which all citizens are
equal or they depict the Muslim community’s affiliations with the Indian nation, which dominated by the Hindu values and norms. An in-depth analysis of the stereotypes of the Muslim community in the comic book gives the impression that such few examples among the prominent presence of criminal characters seem to specify only individuals who rise above their emotional ties with their community to serve the nation. The excessive repetition of the stereotype of the Muslim as ‘criminal’ leaves no scope for the few ‘good’ Muslim characters in the comic book to influence the construction of perception about the Muslim community in the representation, as it is repetition through which stereotypes function to generate ideological meanings.

In the story entitled ‘Scientist Dr Kalam’ *Chacha Choudhary* (Diamond Comics-1786) the character of the scientist is directly inspired by the Indian scientist Dr A.P.J. Kalam who is also known as the *Missile Man of India*. His personality has been used in the story in order to represent India as a secular nation in which Muslims like Dr Kalam sacrifice their personal comforts to serve the nation. The charismatic personality of Dr Kalam is compared with the Pakistani Muslims who conspire to assassinate the Indian scientist because his scientific inventions pose a threat to their country’s security.

![Figure 22](image.png)

**Fig. 22.** Enemy of the nation, ‘Dr Kalam’ *Chacha Choudhary* (No.1786).

There is a direct reference to nuclear arm race between India and Pakistan. The Pakistani Muslims hatch a conspiracy to kidnap Dr Kalam in order to check India’s nuclear power. In the beginning of the story, Dr Kalam is seen as India’s greatest scientist who is respected and loved by every citizen of India. Impressed by his national service, the hero Chacha Choudhary decides to visit him to discuss some
national issues. Chacha Choudhary’s coincidental encounter with the kidnappers subverts their conspiracy to kidnap the true nationalist, Dr Kalam. Enraged by the failure of their plot, the leader of the neighbor country orders his men to kill Dr Kalam. A conspiracy is concocted to blow Dr Kalam’s car. The climax is followed by an anticlimax, in which intensity of seriousness of action is turned into farcical action. Dr Kalam is protected by Sabu and the terrorists from the neighbor country are stripped of their power, standing there as powerless as a bunch of tricksters. In another story entitled ‘Chacha Choudhary and Raka on Rampage’ Chacha Choudhary (Diamond Comics-883), the Muslim character, whose honesty is doubted by a rich Hindu boy, asserts himself and proves his loyalty to the Indian nation. In the first two panels, the background of the story is suggested, followed by the introduction of the crucial moment of the story in the third panel, linking the visualized background with the theme of the story. In the crowded market, an insolent son of a rich gangster, who is driving a car carelessly, deriving pleasure in creating panic in the crowd, is reprimanded and arrested by Rahim, the police man. When the arrogant boy tries to bribe him in order to get rid of the police inquiry, Rahim reacts instantly to the boy’s judgment about the policeman as a corrupt man who easily can be influenced with money or power.

Fig.23. The honest Muslim, ‘Chacha Choudhary and Raka on Rampage’ Chacha Choudhary (No. 883)

The panel, which depicts closely the situation from Rahim’s point of view, foregrounds Rahim’s reaction to suspicion of his character. Rahim’s identity as an honest citizen is challenged only to be reaffirmed through his honest actions. The humiliated son of the rich gangster threatens Rahim to be ready to pay with his life for humiliating the son of a rich gangster. For his honesty and undeterred conviction, he
draws himself into life-threatening situation as he is assaulted by the gangster’s men. The honest policeman Rahim is paid for his honesty and national service by the hero and his assistant Sabu. Rahim is rescued and protected by Sabu, every time he is subject to physical torture and persecution. Even the image of the secular India is projected where even Muslims like Kalam serve the nation. Because of his contribution to the nation, the hero decided to visit him. A patriotic Muslim like Kalam is respected well by the Hindu society. In the third panel, Kalam is contrasted with other Muslim characters who conspire to kill him because he has empowered the Indian military force. They receive the order from a neighbor country to kill Kalam and hence prevent India from becoming a powerful nation. The space, in the panel, that depicts the conspiracy, is not specified. Consequently, the place can be either India or another country, projecting the Muslim as both outsider and insider threat. The message that we infer from the story is that Muslims will be protected and respected, provided they submit to the Indian society and serve the nation without any invested interests. In all media forms, the Muslim patriotic personalities have been deployed to suggest the accommodative nature of the Indian state in which all citizens, irrespective of their religion, caste, serve the nation and contribute to its advancement and democratic process.

The Western construction of difference and otherness has been integrated into the discourse of new nation. The nationalists have continued to employ ideologies of exoticism to mark differences between the Hindu community and the Muslim community in order to justify the marginalization of the non-Hindus. The deployment of mechanism of identification through difference is used by the Hindu nationalists to consolidate their own political positions. This binary distinction has become more effective with the rise of Hindutva politics. The desired values are represented as national culture and common sense culture, and all what is to be excluded from the national culture has been transferred to the other. Even the positive stereotypes of the Muslim have been created to further strengthen the discourse of Hindutva. Such stereotypes that seem to project the Muslim as good citizen are essentially a process of appropriation. Such representation projects the Muslim characters as individuals who sever their emotional ties with their community and are committed to the cause of the nation. And because of their contribution to the nation, they are respected by the Hindus.
The historically created stereotypes of the Muslim community find remarkable manifestation in the different forms of popular culture. The historical conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim community still continues to shape the national politics. The striking presences of such stereotypes of the Muslim community in media representations tend to create and consolidate the communal prejudices against the Muslim community. The manifestation of the stereotypes of the Muslim community in the public sphere reflects that there is a strong nexus between class and religion, highlighting the role of communal politics in the production of class identity.