CHAPTER - V

MUSLIM CONTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC LIFE OF AMARNATH
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There is a belief that neither political nor economic factors have kept the Muslims together. The only unifying factor among them was 'Common allegiance to Islam'. Islam exercises such a tremendous influence upon the followers that they forget all other considerations - political, economic and social and feel as one people. It also generates a feeling of self confidence, religious pride and courage among those who adopt it. The Indian Muslims, therefore are, "Indians who call themselves Muslim, who believe in the unity and fraternity of the Muslims as a religious and social community. They have always regarded themselves as a community and primarily a religious community."

One need not emphasise the above image of Indian Muslims. The problems of Indian Muslims are inseparably linked with Indian polity. The Muslims are the major minority in India constituting around 11.21% of Indian population according to 1971 census. All other minorities put together account for not more than 6.07%. Only the scheduled castes and scheduled

tribes (21.5%) outstrip the Muslims in number. No democratic society can live in peace and harmony without solving the problems confronting the community so large in number. The problem gets further complicated. When it is realised that the Muslims, as popularly believed, are not a homogeneous community, but are horizontally and vertically divided into various regional and cultural groups on the one hand, and into castes and classes, on the other. Their response to socio-economic and political problems varies according to their groups interests and have to be carefully studied in order to avoid unfounded assumptions. Their contribution to public life cannot be ignored.

It is important to look at the problem of the Indian Muslim community and their role in the public life of India against the background of its historical development. To understand the growth of Muslim separatism in India, it must be borne in mind that the Muslims were the rulers of the country a little before the British conquest and that the Muslims too wanted freedom from colonial rule. The Muslims were not happy with the British Government. They looked

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upon the British as their bitterest enemies who had usurped their political authority and their privileges which they had so long enjoyed. For about hundred years after the fall of the Mughals the Muslim continued to suffer the Pangs of subjugation. The British also looked upon the Musalmans as their opponents - hostile to their rule - and tried to suppress them.

In the first stage of Muslim politics in India, we find the Muslim reaction to their political and economic ruin finding expression in the Wahhabi Movement and the Mutiny of 1857. The Wahhabi Movement encouraged communal tendencies and attitudes among the Muslims especially in religious thinking. The Revolt of 1857, though a revolt of both Hindus and Muslims, was the Muslims' last bid for the recovery of their privilege. The Hindu-Muslim unity of the Mutiny days disappeared as the revolt was suppressed. The Muslim community stood at a Cross road after 1857.

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"Too proud to cooperate with the victor, too sullen to adjust themselves to the new circumstances, too embittered to think objectively, too involved emotionally with the past to plan for the future, the Muslim Society after 1887 presented a picture of disolation and decay."

Interestingly the British also moved to evolve the outlines of a new policy towards the Muslims. The British were in need of support from the Muslims against the growing restlessness of the Indian National Congress. The British tried to encourage Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and the Muslims to act as a break on the Congress. 'Muslim Politics' and Muslim 'Nationalism' were thus born at this stage in modern India. But the leaders of the new Muslim politics were Muslim Jagirdars and Land Lords who organised themselves as the standard bearers of British imperialism in India. Sir Syed and his colleagues of the Aligarh movement were aligned with these leaders of the Muslims. However, they were realistic enough to associate themselves with such efforts as the spread of western education, Civil service reforms and with indigenous industrial ventures. Their

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approach was constitutional. Now and then the Urdu writers and poets adopted an emotional approach. The style and content of the new Muslim politics thus reached the extreme of equating modern education with the services of the British Raj. Hence, it was no surprise that as India's mass movement and its anti-imperialist fervour began to gain momentum, the Muslim leadership fell back and continued to indulge in the politics of separatism and protectionism.  

The Khilafat Movement:

The unjust treatment of Turkey at the hands of the British imperialists during the first great world war and after led to a sort of Pan-Islamic Unity and the birth of the Khilafat Movement. The objective was to resurrect the traditional anti-British feeling of the Muslims and then to use of religion as a shield. It was a coincidence that the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy occurred at the same time. Thus the way was paved for national unity and a united struggle for independence. Muslim capitalists openly extended support to the Khilafat Movement and the Ali brothers. Gandhiji realised that by extending

support to the Khilafat, Muslims could be won over and be
made to participate in the programme of non-cooperation.
At this juncture, the Mopish Muslims of Kerala established
an independent Government in their own territory, and fought
against the British forces for a month.  

During the war, the Muslim class registered an advance.
Muslim leaders like Jinnah demanded increased Muslim repre­
sentation in the legislatures. But these demands were not
entertained. After the failure of the Nationalist Muslims,
the leadership passed over to big land lords and Nawabs.
This was the time when the Red Shirt movement in the Frontier
and the Muslim National Conference in Kashmir emerged. All
the Muslim majority regions were looking hopefully towards the
Congress. One of the reactions to the failure of the Nehru
Committee was the growth of communalism. Such was the situ­
ation in 1924. In 1930 Dr. Iqbal demanded Muslim dominian in
North India.

**Demand for Pakistan:**

The ideology of 'Muslim Nationalism' got hold of a
respectable leader like Mr. Jinnah. He had returned to India

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Bipan Chandra, Annales Tripathi and Barun De,
from London at the precise moment. He rejuvenated the New Muslim League. When the election of 1935 came, even in Muslim majority provinces the congress established its foothold and the League stood nowhere. Now there was no alternative to Jinnah and the colleagues other than to go to the Muslim masses with a message of national life or death and to revenge themselves upon the Congress. When the Second World War broke out Jinnah formally advanced the demand for Pakistan. He appealed to the Muslims to keep away from the Congress sponsored Satyagraha. The Cripps's Mission set itself on the course for the division of the country. Following the advent of the Cabinet Mission and the unsuccessful Simla Conference, the decision was announced for the division of the country in 1947. The Independence of India and Pakistan came in an atmosphere of Civil war and political suicide.

Role of Amantapur in Freedom Struggle:

The role of the Muslim community in the freedom struggle has not been properly appreciated and the community has been much maligned for its so called separatist politics and opposi-

tion to the Congress movement. Every State had a part to play in the mass movement towards the struggle for freedom. The former Madras Presidency of which Rayalaseema formed a part in general and Anantapur District in particular had its role to play the momentous saga of this heroic struggle. The Muslims of Rayalaseema districts too have been prominent in the National politics at this time. As early as 1932 one of the most noteworthy events of the decades which had some bearing on the practical history of the district, namely the murder of Sub Collector McC donald, took place. Shaik Peer Shah, a blind resident of a village about 20 miles from Cuddapah town played a leading role in the movement started locally. He was sentenced to serve ten years imprisonment with 'hard labour in iron' for his seditious activities. The other districts of Anantapur, Chittoor and Kurnool also patriots and Satyagrahis were active during the Swadeshi, Home Rule, Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience and the Quit India Movements.

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10. V. R. Saxena, *Muslim and the Indian National Congress,* (Delhi, 1985), p. VII.

There are not many noteworthy events in the history of the Anantapur district until the Indian National Congress was established. People of the district like those in the rest of the country, came under the influence of new political ideas like nationalism and democracy and began to agitate for progressive reforms. The Khilafites also were active in the district. District Congress meetings were held. Pattu Kesava Pillai of Rayalseema who took part in the first Congress session in 1885 expressed the excesses of the British administration and condemned the offences by Europeans against Indians.

During the Swadeshi agitation, Home Rule Stir, Gandhiji's non-cooperation struggle and the Quit India movement the district participated. When the Government banned the wearing of Gandhi caps by the students of the Government Arts College, Anantapur, there were violent incidents.\(^\text{12}\)

**Role of Anantapur Muslims in Freedom struggle:**

The Muslim Community of Anantapur did not lag behind in contributing their share to the freedom struggle. It is a matter of pride to the district and a crowning glory to the town that Rabiya Bee from the town had the distinction of

being the first Muslim lady to have participated in the Satyagraha movement. She along with her husband Mohiddin, both members of the Congress, courted arrest in March 1941. Apart from the signal distinction Rabiyabaa had been a member of the district Board for six years, Panchayat Board for four years, Panchayat Samithi for five years. She is a member and President of the Mahila Mandali for ten years. On 28th Oct. 1975 she was felicitated by the District Collector as the International woman in the International year of women.13

Rabiyabaa's husband Mulla Mohiddin Sahib courted arrest during the Individual Satyagraha movement in Anantapur in September 1942. He was imprisoned in the sub-jail from September 1942 to Dec. 1942. He was conferred the Merit Award in July 1986 and is a recipient of freedom fighter's pension.14 Another noteworthy personality among the local Muslims who featured prominently during the Freedom struggle was K.Khaja Hussain of Putikunta. He was at the approved list of Individual Satyagraha chosen by Gandhiji himself. He too was a political sufferer during the Quit India

13Asia Companion, Vol.II, Asia's first who is who of Men and Women - Achievements and Distinctions (Delhi, 1980).

Another patriot named T.M. Fakruddin of Anantapur appealed to the Rayalaseema Muslims to support the Congress party, instead of the Muslim League. He argued that the Muslim League leaders wore foreign clothes and the Congress leaders were dressed in dhoti which gave employment to Indians. Shamsheer Baig was the first Muslim to participate in the Satyagraha movement. He was a native of Kurnool. He was punished with 6 months imprisonment and Rs.500/- fine.

The Muslim League and the Khilafat movement too were quite active in Anantapur. The Madras Presidency Muslim League was founded in 1908. The Muslims of Madras Presidency supported the Khilafat movement wholeheartedly. Every Muslim was convinced that the downfall of the Ottoman Empire was tantamount to the eclipse of Islam and no personal sacrifice was too high for the cause of Islam. Congress men of Madras Presidency supported the Khilafat agitation, sixteenth of October 1919 was observed throughout the State.

as the Khilafat day. The Khilafat agitation became more pronounced with the visit of Shaukat Ali, one of the Ali brothers, to participate in the Khilafat Conference at Madras in 1920. That meeting was addressed by eminent leaders like Mrs Annie Bessant, Kasturi Iyengar, S. Satyamurthi and G. Natesan when Gandhi withdrew his Satyagraha agitation, the Khilafat struggle also declined.

As the development affected the political interests of the Muslims, they formed an alliance with the 'Justice Party' which also collapsed as it failed to meet the demands of the Muslims. The Muslim leaders began to concentrate on communal benefits like appointment of a Muslim Judge to the High Court and a member into the Madras Presidency Service Commission. In 1926, a new party, 'The South Indian Muslim Party' was formed in Madras. To counter this the 'The Madras Presidency Muslim League' was revived. This led to diversion among Muslims. Some favoured Congress, some the Swathantra party and some the new parties.

After 1930 events forced the Madras Presidency Muslims to forge political unity as the constitutional reforms were in the air. The leaders condemned the joint electoral systems.


The Muslims did not support the civil disobedience movement of Gandhi to a great extent. Since 1935, the Muslim League took great strides under Jinnah's leadership. The Muslim politics from this period was a confused picture clearly demonstrating a conflict between national and regional outlooks. Newspapers played an important role in the awakening of 'Muslim Nationalism'. In short, the Muslim role in the freedom struggle was a response to national politics of a regional people.

Muslim Representation in Legislature:

Till the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919, there was no provision for district wise representation on legislatures, either provincial or central. The Act created a Council of State and the Legislative Assembly at the Centre and provided district-wise representation on the provincial legislative council through an extremely limited franchise. Of the elected seats under the Act in the Madras Legislative Council, two were allotted to the Anantapur Non-Muhammadan Rural Constituency and they covered all the voters of the district excepting the Muhammadan and Christian, European and Anglo-Indian voters.21

The District also figured in the elections from the Ceded Districts Muhammadan Rural Constituency of the Central Districts. Indian Christian Constituency, the North Central and Lords Constituencies reserved for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Anantapur formed part of the Ceded districts and Chittoor. Non-Muhammadan Rural Constituency and the North Madras Muhammadan Constituency. The first elections to the Madras Legislative Council in 1920 were contested on a non-party basis. In the second election of 1923, candidates were classed as belonging to various political parties. Due to the formation of the Khilafat agitation, the Muslim voters displayed keen interest. Mr. Syed Md. Pasha Sahib was elected from the Ceded Districts Muhammadan Rural Constituency in 1920 and Mr. Abdul Hye Sahib was elected from the same constituency in 1923. In 1926 Mr. Abdul Hye Sahib was elected as an Independent. In 1930 Mr. S. M. K. Biyabani was elected as an Independent.

The 1935 Act was a turning point in the constitutional history of India with the introduction of provincial autonomy. The first elections to the Provincial Legislative under the new Act were held in the district in 1937, with the candidates from the Congress, the Muslim League and other parties.
In the Anantapur Rural Constituency Muhammad Rahamatullah Saheb, a nominee of Muslim League, was elected. He polled 4,027 votes out of 9,183. This provincial Assembly was dissolved in October 1945. In the 1946 elections to the Assembly Janab Jaffer Mohiuddin saheb Bahadur was elected on behalf of the Muslim League. The new Republican constitution of 1950 introduced changes in the electoral pattern. In 1922 we find Mr. Osman Ali Khan a Congress candidate from Anantapur elected to the House of people.

Muslims and Municipal Politics:

The Anantapur Municipality was established in 1869. In the early stages it looked after the maintenance of sanitation, elementary schools and the local hospital. It had the first elected Chairman only in 1888, while the Councillors were all nominated by the Government. A Vice-Chairman was elected in 1922 for the first time. The Muslims of Anantapur have played a notable role in the local Governments of the town. In 1939, Mr. K. Muhammad Rahamatullah Saheb, of the reputed Kammur family of Anantapur, became Chairman of the Municipality. He defeated the Congress candidate on behalf

22 Ibid., p. 794.
of the Muslim League. The League won 8 out of the 16 seats. Mr. K. Hamiduddin was one of the candidates elected.\textsuperscript{23} In the 1981 elections, S. Fakruddin of Panwala family became Vice-Chairman of the Municipality. Since 1951 Dr. K. C. Sulaiman, Dental Surgeon of Anantapur has been elected Councillor for three terms. In the recent elections held in 1987, Rahamathullah Sahib's son Mr. K. M. Saifulla Rahamathulla has been elected Vice-Chairman.\textsuperscript{24}

**Personalities and Public Life:**

Leading members of the Anantapur Muslim Community have contributed to the public life of the town each in his own way. It is no exaggeration to say that in spite of their small number, their services have enriched the town and borne of public life. It is true that only a few leaders holding social status and to some extent sound financial backing have come forward to participate in the civil life. However a few public spirited Muslims without means and power also have taken to serving their community. The services of a few Muslim personalities in the field of politics,

\textsuperscript{24}Administrations Reports (unpublished) of Municipality, Anantapur, 1987.
administration, education, economic and social life, religion and cultural progress have been commendable and worth recording.

Mr. K. M. Safiulla Rahmathulla, has been engaged actively in education, social service, women uplift and religious service for a number of years. He had served as a second class Bench Magistrate between 1972-78. In that capacity he has taken action against offences like encroachments and unauthorised construction, brothel houses, gambling and adulteration. He has been in the Advisory Board of the Anantapur Central Sub-Jail also.²⁵

His services to the religious community include his term as President of the District Wakf Board Committee, acting member of State, Wakf Board, Hyderabad. Apart from this, he is the Mutvalli (Head) of the Zamia Mosque which controls institutions like the Arabic Madrasas, Masumesbe Makan, Idga-mosque and Shamsheer Durgah. As a leading business man of the town he is closely associated with the Anantapur city Merchants Association.

²⁵Interview with K.M.Safiulla, Sari Enterprises on 7-9-1986.
Saifullah's educational services to his community and the town are impressive. He is the Secretary of the National Industrial Technical Institute, an approved Minority Institution. He is the founder-Secretary of the Nehru Memorial English medium School. He is also the Secretary of the Nehru Balbhavan School at Anantapur.

Safiulla is a prominent personality in the social life of the town. He is a charter member of the Rotary Club and became its President some years ago. He is a member of the Anantapur town club. He is acting as the Honorary organising Secretary of the 'Hind Kust Nivarana Sangh' which under the auspices of the A.P. Health Department has started Leprosy Clinics and Homes all over the State.

Sheik Khaja Hussain is another prominent personality among Anantapur Muslims. He had his Intermediate education in the local Arts College. He passed his B.A from the Andhra University and took his law Degree from the Utkkal University. Later he secured his M.A. Degree in philosophy from the Andhra University by private study. He started his career as a Supervisor in the Military Dehydration factory, Anantapur. Serving for a year as a special Revenue Inspector at Himnacharla, he entered the Indian Meteorotopical department and
retired in 1981, since then he is settled at Anantapur as an Advocate.

Hussain has taken to social service. He is the General Secretary of the Anantapur District Linguistic and religious Minority Association. He is also the President of the District Wakf of Committee, A.P. State Wakf Board, Anantapur since 1984. Hussain is much respected member of the Muslim Community of Anantapur.26

Among the active Muslim dignitaries of Anantapur is Dr.K.C. Suleiman, Dental Surgeon. Besides being Municipal Councillor for three terms since 1951, Dr.Suleiman has been Chairman of the Town Planning Committee and the D.C.C. He was the President of the Noor Basha Association in 1974 and a member of the State Wakf Board simultaneously. Representing the Asar Mohalla Ward, he upheld the rights of the mosque by serving its lands. As early as 1948, Dr.Suleiman had been a member of the All India Dental Association.27


27 Interview with Dr.K.C.Suleiman, Dental Surgeon, Anantapur on 8-10-86.
Mr. M.A. Hameed, a retired postal official is an unassuming and dedicated social worker. He is vowed to serve the student community and the cause of the poor. He has been helping the poor Muslim boys by getting them financial help in order to continue their studies. He is the Secretary of the Religious and Linguistic Minorities Association, Anantapur. He serves as the Secretary of the Idara-E-Taraki-E-Urdu, Anantapur and as the joint Secretary of Anjuman-E -Tariqqi-E-Urdu, Anantapur. He is the Secretary of the Association of Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Anantapur district and Secretary of Rayalaseema Muslim Welfare Association, Anantapur. In his opinion, his work is much appreciated by the members of his community and the general public. He receives financial support from the well-to-do-Muslims for his various welfare measures. He is able to change the conservative and indifferent attitude of his Community to a great extent and get them involved in the general good of all.28

The Educational spectrum of Anantapur has a few luminaries. The Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Department

28 Interview with M.A.Hameed, Social Worker, Anantapur on 30-8-1986.
of Law is proud of having Professor Mohammad Ghouse as its head. As an expert in constitutional law he has won National and International fame. He has been to Nigeria recently on a three year assignment. At present he is a member of the Law Commission of India and has been conferred the honour of being a National Professor. He has published a good number of valuable articles in the learned Law journals of India and abroad and authorised a book on 'Secularism, Law and Society'. Professor Md. Ensaah Mohi-ideen, Head of the Department of Zoology, S.K.University is another scholar and teacher of repute contributing his services to Anantapur. He has been awarded recently 'The Best Scientists' Award by the National Environmental Science Academy. Dr.S.Ghouse-Peeran, Reader in the Department of Chemistry and Dr.S.Hyder Khan, Reader in the Department of Physics are notable scholars in their respective departments, S.K.University. Professor Sheriff Sahab, Head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Anantapur and Mr.Asemuddin, Director, Oil Technological Institute of Anantapur are other notable personalities among the Muslims who were in the limelight of Higher education.

Considering the percentage of Muslim population at Anantapur, the Muslim constitution to public life cannot be
said to be much. Poverty, illiteracy, economic backwardness and lack of public spirited men are a few of the reasons for the tardy progress of the community. However, things are changing for the better. There is a new awakening among the youth to find a pride of place for the largest minority group in the public life of the community.