Chapter 5

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It is interesting to note that the studies on caste by the most scholars have confined to a study of the caste system among the Hindus only and very little attention has been paid even the sociologists and social anthropologists to the form and pattern of caste-like groups among other religious minorities of the country, in particular the Muslims\textsuperscript{1} who occupy an important place in the Indian social structure. The Historians have paid even lesser attention to the issue of caste, particularly among the Muslims.

It is common knowledge that Muslims, with 14% population of India are not only the largest minority community, but also highly noticeable in the entire length and breadth of the country. They are, indeed, a National Community. Nearly one-fourth of the population of Indian Muslims (22% of total population of Indian Muslims) lives in Uttar Pradesh. Muslims of Uttar Pradesh and of other parts of India have contributed tremendously in the evolution, development and transformation of society, culture and civilization of India. Their role in the freedom struggle of the country is unparalleled. This significant minority community has been reduced to the lowest socio-economic stratum in post-independent India. They have lagged behind (and are continuously lagging behind day by day) the Scheduled Caste in many walks of life. They are educationally most backward, economically poor and politically a powerless community of the country. More often than not communal violence is organized against them in which innumerable Muslims are maimed and killed; their women are raped and their hard earned property is demolished and looted. They are forced to live in dingy lanes and slums. Constitutional guarantees are dream for them. Governmental agencies appear to be indifferent and discriminatory towards them. No

\textsuperscript{1} Ghaus Ansari’s \textit{Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh} (1960) has been the only reference on caste among the Muslims for over two decades. Ansari’s source materials were censuses and reports of British administrative officials which were always superficial, and occasionally, not quite accurate. The kind of data which Ansari used led him to view castes as separate entities and he did not realize sufficiently that caste was a highly localized phenomenon and needed to be analyzed within the context of a local community. It must, nevertheless, be admitted that Ansari was the first sociologist to focus on the presence of caste among the Muslims.
political party seems to be sincere for ameliorating their condition and ensuing them safety and security. Indeed, they have become a ‘Colonized Community’.

I. Political Mobilization of Muslim OBCs: 1930-1947

The Muslim elites’ position in U.P. in the mid-1930s appeared to be fundamentally sound. They had guaranteed shares of recruitment to civil service jobs; the education of their children was becoming more attuned to the times; though still possessing a declining share of the rural land in the provinces, the rate of decline had eased and there were three or four mechanism to protect what they retained; they had a large and separate share of the seats in the local bodies as well as in the provincial and central legislatures and they believed they would have a share of the cabinet posts in the new government arising out of the 1935 Reforms.

Sociological studies on the social structure of Muslims in India have emphasized on the presence of descent based social stratification among them. Features of the Hindu caste system, such as hierarchical ordering of social groups, endogamy and hereditary occupation have been found to be amply present among the Indian Muslims as well. The Census of India, 1901 listed 133 social groups wholly or partially Muslim. The present day Muslim Society in India is divided into four major groups: (i) the Ashrafs who trace their origins to foreign lands such as Arabia, Persia, Turkistan or Afghanistan, (ii) the upper caste Hindus who converted to Islam, (iii) the middle caste converts whose occupations are ritually clean, (iv) the converts from the erstwhile untouchable castes, Bhangi (scavenger), Mehtar (sweeper), Chamar (tanner), Dom and so on. But Ghaus Ansari argued that Muslims in India were divided into three broad categories whom he called the ashraf (noble born), ajlaf (mean and lowely) and arzal (excluded). Each of these categories was further divided into a number of groups.

These four groups are usually placed into two broad categories, namely, 'ashraf' and 'ajlaf'. The former, meaning noble, includes all Muslims of foreign blood and converts from higher castes, while 'ajlaf' meaning degraded or unholy, embraces the ritually clean occupational groups and low ranking converts. In Bihar, U.P and

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2 Ansari, Ghaus, *Muslim Castes in Uttar Pradesh*, Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow, 1959, pp. 35-38
Bengal, Sayyads, Sheikhs, Moghuls and Pathans constitute the 'ashrafs'. The 'ajlaf', are carpenters, artisans, painters, graziers, tanners, milkmen etc.\(^3\) According to the Census of 1901, the ajlaf category includes 'the various classes of converts who are known as Nao Muslim in Bihar and Nasya in North Bengal. It also includes various functional groups such as that of the Julaha or weaver, Dhunia or cotton-carder, Kulu or oil-presser, Kunjra or vegetable-seller, Hajjam or barber, Darzi or tailor, and the like.\(^4\) The 1901 Census also recorded the presence of a third category called Arzal: 'It consists of the very lowest castes, such as the Halalkhor, Lalbegi, Abdal, and Bediya.'\(^5\)

In the socio-political mobilization of Muslims OBCs, Muslim weavers’ movement seems to be the first attempt by any such Muslim group. The first convention of Momin Conference was formally held in Calcutta in 1928, mainly by the Uttar Pradesh, Bihar migrants. And from this year onward the Momin Conference gained an all-India stature and became the representative organization of 3-4 crore Momins of undivided India.\(^6\)

Since handloom industry was first to be hit in the Indian cottage industry sector by the East India Company, weavers were threatened by impoverishment. So, social humiliation and struggle for existence seems to be the prime motivating forces behind this pioneering movement. It mobilized not only Momins but also other Muslim artisan castes. It used to hold an all-India convention every year in major cities of India and for the first time, perhaps, Muslim weavers along with some other artisan castes started looking to the future with hope and motivation for empowerment.

In pre-independence days, the only politically organized party of the Muslims with massive support was the All India Momin Conference which representing within its fold forty five million Muslim or fifty percent of the total Muslim population of India openly and aggressively confronted the Muslim League and its two-nation

\(^3\) Ahmad, Zeyauddin, ‘Caste Elements Among the Muslims of Bihar, Delhi’, in Harjinder Singh (ed.), *Caste Elements Among Non-Hindus in India*, National, Delhi, 1977, p. 9

\(^4\) *Census of India*, 1901, p. 543.

\(^5\) Ibid. p. 544.

\(^6\) Hasnain, Nadeem, Muslims in India: Caste Affinity and Social Boundaries of Backwardness in Ashfaq Hussain Ansari (ed.), *Basic Problems of OBC and Dalit Muslims*, Seials Publications, New Delhi, 2007, p. 39
theory and came to the rescue of Congress and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was its President from February 1940 to July 1946. Then the following among Muslims of Maulana Azad was negligent. The Momin Conference under the stewardship of Abdul Qaiyum Ansari by supporting the Congress and its nationalist movement enabled the Congress to retain its national status and secular image or character and reinforced the personality of Maulana Azad as a Congress President with massive support of the Muslims comprising Momins and other backward Muslims. In the absence of the active support of the Momins the image of the Congress would have been reduced to that of a ‘Hindu body’ and Maulana Azad would have been a ‘Muslim show boy Congress President’ and ‘Puppet President of the Congress’ as branded by M.A. Jinnah and the Muslim League. In such a view and the Congress Party were in fact, representative of the Indians irrespective of Hindus and Muslims and Jinnah was patently wrong in claiming the Muslim League as the sole representative body of the Indian Muslims.7

Abdul Qaiyum Ansari8 (1905-74) of Bihar, who belonged to the julaha (weaver) community, challenged, the “two-nation theory” and Muslim League politics squarely, but failed to see through the caste composition of the Congress politics and was ultimately subsumed by it. His political career, like that of Latifur Rahman (who led the Momin Conference affiliated to the Muslim League), began during the Khilafat and non-cooperation movements. He was secretary of the Shahabad District Congress Committee between 1930 and 1931.9 Ansari argued that the Momins wanted nothing less than a ‘proper and legitimate’ share and representation in the services and legislature.10 His Nukate Momineen (Six Points) were as follows: at least one minister of the central and the provincial governments was to be Momin. Half the seats allotted to Muslims in the federal and provincial

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8 Abdul Qaiyum Ansari entered into the national movement in 1919. Then, he was a student in the Sasaram High School. In the wake of the Khilafat Movement, the Ali Brothers visited Sasaram and thus Qaiyum Ansari came into their contact. In 1920, he became secretary of Dehri-On-Some Khilafat Committee and participated in the Congress sessions. Afterwards, Abdul Qaiyum Ansari’s assertive politics in late 1930s and 1940s put a great hurdle before Muslim League in the province by demanding the very same concessions and by putting the very same questions that were put by the League before the Congress.
10 Searchlight, May 23, 1940
legislatures were to be reserved for the Momin biradari, and seats in local self government bodies and government and semi-government services in proportion to their population in the areas concerned. Also, special government facilities were demanded for the technical education of Momin boys and girls and state protection and aid for the handloom industry.\textsuperscript{11}

Commenting on the changing profile of Momin Conference, Ansari (2001)\textsuperscript{12} points out that up to 1937 its activities were confined to promoting social consciousness and welfare among the Momins. The turning point came in 1938 when it started assuming political overtones when the Muslim League came out with the demand for a separate homeland for the Muslims, the backward Muslims adopted an aggressively nationalist posture and opposed the demand for Pakistan. Right from its caste character of the Muslim League and its leaders and it had no doubt that the League and its demand were promoting the feudal and elitist vested interests and the lower strata of Muslims were only being harnessed as cannon fodder. The feudal lords, capitalists, nawabs and jagirdare felt threatened by the mass upsurge of Indian masses and they knew that the Congress Party had not much in its socio-economic and political agenda for these vested interests, its corollary in the post-independent Indian polity may be seen in the form of promotion of Ayodhya issue to blunt the impact of implementation of Mandal Commission’s recommendations. It was an intelligent diversionary tactic. Together with Jamat-e-Ulema-e-Hind (JUH), the Momin Conference exposed the claim of the Muslim League of representing the entire Muslim population and promoted the nationalist secular agenda of the Congress party with partition of the country the Momin Conference aligned with the Congress Party along with the Jamat-e-Ulema-e-Hind backed by the Ulema of Deoband who contributed significantly to the freedom the passage of time, the Momin Conference lost its strength and became almost defunct. Besides the Momin Conference, the Raeen Conference representing the caste of vegetable vendors and the Mansoori Conference representing, the oilseed pressers, also played their role in the socio-political mobilization of Muslim OBCs between 1930-1950.

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., May 16, 1939
\textsuperscript{12} Ali, Anwar, \textit{Masawat Ki Jung: Bihar Ke Pasmand Musalman}, Vaani Prakashan, New Delhi, 2001
II. The Constituent Assembly Debates

However in view of these assurance and in view of the specific mandate to the Constituent Assembly regarding minorities, the objectives Resolution moved by Jawaharlal Nehru on 13 December 1946 included the promise of “adequate safeguards for minorities” in the Constitution, which led to the formation of the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights and Minorities etc.13 Moving the resolution in the Constituent Assembly on 29 January 1947, for setting up the Advisory Committee, G.B. Pant made the following observations:14

A satisfactory solution of the question pertaining to minorities will ensure the health, vitality and strength of the free state of India… So far, the minorities have been incited and have been influenced in a manner which has hampered the growth of cohesion and unity. But now it is necessary that a new chapter should start and we should all realize our responsibility. Unless the minorities are fully satisfied, we cannot make progress; we cannot even make peace in an undisturbed manner.

Under the chairmanship of Sardar Patel the Advisory Committee held its first meeting on 27 February 1947 and decided to set up a sub-committee on minorities. Though care was taken that the composition of this committee was representative of communities and classes, it got a rather plaint Christian member H.C. Mukherjee appointed as the Chairman of the Sub-Committee on minorities. That he was ever ready to play a subservient role became very clear during the debate on the report on Minority Rights, when he went to the extent of declaring that there was no place for the concept of minorities in a secular state.

However after formulating issues regarding joint versus separate electorate, and reservation of seats in legislatures and cabinets, the Sub-Committee made the following recommendations in its Report of 27 July 1947.15

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13 Constituent Assembly Debates, Vol. VII, P. 39
14 Constituent Assembly Debates (hereafter CAD), Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi (Second Reprint), 1989, Vol. II, pp. 310-11
1. Reservation of seats for recognized minorities under any one of the several methods of joint electorates that could be devised.

2. No statutory provision for reservation of seats for minorities in Cabinets, yet providing for such representation through a convention under a schedule to the Constitution.

Accepting them, the Advisory Committee made the following recommendations in its Report of 8 August 1947:16

1. **Electorates**: All elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures will be held on the basis of joint electorate.

2. Provided that as a general rule, there shall be reservation of seats for the minorities shown in the schedule in the various legislatures on the basis of their population.

3. Provided further that such reservation shall be for 10 years; the position to be reconsidered at the end of the period.

4. **Additional Right to Minorities**: The members of minority community who have reserved seats shall have the right to contest unreserved seats as well.

5. **No condition for a minimum number of votes of one’s own community**: there shall be no stipulation that a minority candidate standing for election for a reserved seat shall poll a minimum number of voted of his community before he is declared elected.

6. **Method of voting**: there may be plural member constituencies but cumulative voting shall not be permissible.

7. **No reservation for Minorities**: (a) There shall be no statutory reservation of seats for the minorities in cabinets but a convention on the lines of paragraph VII of the Instrument of instructions issued to Governors under the Government of India Act, 1935 shall be provide in Schedule to the Constitution.

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16 Ibid., pp. 411-22
Piloted by Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel the Report on Minority Rights was discussed in the Constituent Assembly on 27 and 28 August, 1947 which resulted in the adoption of all the clauses of the Report as given above.\textsuperscript{17}

The Constituent Assembly debated the issue of separate electorates in two sessions; on August 27-28, 1947 and on May 25-26, 1949.\textsuperscript{18}

On August 27, 1947, no sooner had Vallabh Bhai Patel moved that all elections “will be held on the basis of joint electorates” than B. Pocker Sahib moved that all elections, “as far as Muslims are concerned, be held on the basis of separate electorates”. Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman also pleaded for it, K.T.M. Ahmed Ibrahim Saheb, Kazi Syed Karimuddin and Naziruddin Ahmad favoured joint electorates but with the proviso that the candidate who won the highest votes of his community was to be elected. Reservation of seats for Muslims “on the population basis” was conceded, at this point of time. Patel was predictably incensed at the demand for separate electorates. He threatened to withdraw the concession of reservation of seats. In May 1949 reservation of seats was, indeed, dropped on a motion by Patel. On May 25, Mohammed Ismail, now President of the Indian Union Muslim League, asked for retention of reservations and for separate electorates.\textsuperscript{19} Z.H. Lari, who later went to Pakistan, asked for multi-member constituencies. Naziruddin Ahmad while opposing reservation of seats, pointedly remarked: “what is more important is that the Hindus have to seek Muslim votes”.\textsuperscript{20}

Begum Aizaz Rasul supported Patel’s motion. Syed Mohammed Sadullah demanded reservation. The next day, May 26, 1949, Nawab Mohammed Ismail of Meerut delivered a statesman like speech opposing reservation of seats as well as separate electorate.\textsuperscript{21} He traced its history and pointed out the tentative character of the safeguard and the harmful consequences of its prolonged retention.\textsuperscript{22} Tajamul Husain agreed with him. This was the only redeeming feature. But the damage was done. Even two years after the partition, the bulk of Muslim representatives were seen

\textsuperscript{17} CAD, Vol. V, pp. 198-285
\textsuperscript{18} CAD, Vol. V, pp. 211-72 and vol. VIII, pp. 277-342 respectively.
\textsuperscript{19} CAD, Vol. VIII, p. 275
\textsuperscript{20} CAD, Vol. VIII, p. 298
\textsuperscript{21} The Times of India, 4 February 1949
\textsuperscript{22} CAD, Vol. VIII, p. 323
to be hankering after reservation of seats and separate electorates. Patel’s response was not pleasant but the home truths he delivered cannot be ignored. He said: “I do not know whether there has been any change in their attitude to bring forward such an amendment even now after all this long reflection and experience of what has happened in this country. But I know this that they have got a mandate from the Muslim League to move this amendment. I feel sorry for them. This is not a place today to act on your conscience and to act for the good of the country. For a community to think that its interests are different from that of the country in which it lives, is a great mistake. Assuming that we agreed today to the reservation of seats, I would The Constitution of India and Muslim Politics consider to be the greatest enemy of the Muslim community because of the consequences of the step in a secular and democratic State. Assume that you have separate electorates on a communal basis. Will you ever find a place in any of the Ministries in the Provinces or in the Centre? You have a separate interest. Herein a Ministry or a Government based on joint responsibility, where people who do not trust us, or who do not trust the majority, cannot obviously come into the Government itself. Accordingly, You will have no share in the Government. You will exclude yourselves and remain perpetually in a minority. Then, what advantage will you gain?  

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made some pertinent observations when, as Chairman of its Drafting Committee, he moved for the consideration of the Draft Constitution in the Assembly on November 4, 1948: “It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognize the existence of minorities, to start with. It must also be such that it will enable the majorities and minorities to merge someday into one.” He claimed that the solution proposed in the Draft (based on the 1947 decision) met this test.  

However, if self-perpetuation of the minorities is to be averted, constitutional safeguards must be matched at the political level by a party system which cuts across the majority-minority divide.

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24 CAD, vol. VII, p. 39
Muslims of India made no effort to promote such a party system. The failure is not theirs alone. There has been a national failure to evolve a viable party system even half a century after the Constitution came into force. For the most part the Muslim leadership pursued the course of communal mobilization in a polity which gives short shrift to it. Muslims have faced an acute problem. They face grave handicaps and gross discrimination. Till as late as 1961, any expression of Muslims’ grievances was regarded as an obscenity. The frowns did not vanish thereafter, disquiet at mention of the grievances lingered. On the other hand, the grievances brooked no neglect, either.

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

Morally and constitutionally, Muslims have every right to do so. The issue is the wisdom of adopting such a course. Little thought is given to devising an alternative strategy which would not incur the odium which communal mobilization does in the context of the Indian situation. Empowerment of Muslims will not be achieved through communal mobilization but as part of a process in which Muslims participate actively in national politics, engage themselves enthusiastically on national issues and bring to the fore Muslim grievances as aspects of the injustices that scar Indian society.
III. Muslim Communities after Independence

The socio-economic condition of the Muslims has not changed much in free India. The various reports and research studies clearly show that the Muslims in India are economically and educationally backward. The economic backwardness of the Muslims is a cyclical and ongoing process leading to educational and social backwardness and in turn to economic backwardness. Moreover, Muslims are not only backward, but also a minority community of the country. Along with the Muslims, there are many other non-Muslim communities in India, which are also suffering from the stigma of backwardness. Disadvantaged sections in India including the Muslims are awakening in recent times and organizing movements for equality and social justice under forward-backward, socio-political set-up of the country\(^{25}\)

Since the Constitutional (Scheduled Caste) Order, 1950, popularly known as the Presidential Order (1950), restricts the SC status only to Hindu groups having 'unclean' occupations,\(^{26}\) their non-Hindu equivalents have been bracketed with the middle caste converts and declared OBC. Thus, the OBCs among Muslims constitute two broad categories. The halalkhors, helas, lalbegis or bhangis (scavengers), dhobis (washermen), nais or hajjams (barbers), chiks (butchers), faqirs (beggars) etc belonging to the 'Arzals' are the 'untouchable converts' to Islam that have found their way in the OBC list. The momins or julahas (weavers), darzi or idiris (tailors), rayeens or kunjaras (vegetable sellers) are Ajlafs or converts from 'clean' occupational castes. Thus, one can discern three groups among Muslims: (1) those without any social disabilities, the ashrafs; (2) those equivalent to Hindu OBCs, the ajlafs, and (3) those equivalent to Hindu SCs, the arzals. Those who are referred to as Muslim OBCs combine (2) and (3).

A. Backwardness and Empowerment

For the sake of achieving equality and as a part of the process of nation building various compensatory policies are directed at the backward communities in India, viz., STs, SCs and OBCs. Some Muslim groups also currently benefit from


\(^{26}\) Later amendments were made for Mazhabi Sikhs (1956) and Neo Buddhists (1990).
such affirmative action’s as they are included in STs and OBCs. Muslim groups are not supposed to be included in the SCs category as it is restricted to Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. There is constitutional support for special policies for STs, SCs and OBCs. STs can be Muslims but Muslim STs are relatively few in India while SCs cannot be Muslims. Thus only the category of OBCs seems to be open to Muslims. Under such a socio-politico-administrative set-up the question of Muslim reservation and affirmative action is a sensitive and debatable one.

For the sake of empowerment and equality some southern states have proposed or implemented reservations for Muslims as a backward community while some states implemented reservations for Muslim OBCs only. The Muslims those specified as backward are usually the occupational groups of traditional ajlaf or arzal category such as weavers, oil crushers, cotton crushers. Carpenters, washer men, barber and so on. The situation of such a complex and contradictory nature leads to arguments and counter arguments between political leaders and social activists of the Muslims. The issue of Muslim empowerment is debatable owing to factions within the Muslims of the country. The over-lapping identities of the Muslims in the form of 'caste like' or 'class like' categories further make the situation more complicated. Some organizations are arguing for Muslims as a whole to be declared as backwards thus demanding reservations for them while Muslim groups already categorised or under the process of categorization under OBCs are seriously opposing these demands.27

B. Confronting Inequalities : Awakening of OBC Muslims

Islam is a theoretically or scripturally, religion where everyone is equal before the Almighty (Allah).28 But in reality, practice or the majority of Muslim population in India faces more or less the same kind of inequality, discrimination and backwardness as faced by the backward castes among Hindus. It is estimated that about 90 per cent of Muslims in India are the descendants of converted forefathers. The conversion had occurred centuries ago, arguably because of social equality in Islam. However, their traditional caste characteristics remained un-changed owing to

28 Engineer, Asghar Ali, Reform Movements in Indian Islam, Mainstream, June 20, 1981., p. 16
their deep root in economic and social institutions. As a result, even after conversion, these groups continued to pursue the same traditional occupations and their social position also remained the same. Thus, for most of the backward castes (classes) among the Hindus we may see the parallels among Muslims.

The neglect of socio-economic dimensions of Muslim backwardness was indeed a major failure of Muslim leadership in the country. In 1955 Kaka Kalelkar Commission's Report of Backward Classes had for the first time recognized the Muslim OBCs at par with the Hindu counterparts. The commission noted the existence of number of communities amongst the Muslims who have been suffering from social inferiority in their own society and also examined the extent of their backwardness. The commission recommended their eligibility for job reservations. But the recommendations remained on paper owing to some handicaps on the part of the government. Later on in 1980, the Mandal Commission Report has given due recognition to the problems of backwardness including the Muslims. The commission treated 90 percent of Muslim population in the country as OBCs and proposed reservations in government jobs and educational institutions. The Mandal Commission had declared 82 Muslim groups to be backward and had recommended them for economic and educational facilities on par with the OBCs among Hindus. According to the data they used, the backward Muslims made 8.4 per cent out of the total 11.2 per cent of the Indian Muslim population. Much later, when Supreme Court upheld the Mandal quota, the Muslim OBCs had attracted the attention of the state. All these processes have awakened the Muslim OBCs which enabled them to organize movements at local, regional and national level. In recent times we notice an awakening among many communities in India, those are categorized as OBCs. They have become aware of the need for political power and socio-economic development of their respective groups. Muslim OBCs in India are also a part of this larger OBC awakening. Many young Muslim leaders of several parts of the country have taken initiative to organize the backward class Muslims as against the traditional so-called upper class leaders of the community and challenging the elitist notion of their

political vision. In fact, their movement is on the ground of socio-economic backwardness rather than emotional and religious issues. Their demand is for empowerment of the subalterns. There is also a conscious effort to relate OBC Muslims and Hindu Dalits and to create a bond of solidarity of subalterns of the country across religious divides and commercial politics. Therefore, it is necessary to enquire the issues of Muslim OBCs, the nature of their struggle, and the role they play in contributing to longer struggle of the 'oppressed'.

The Muslim OBCs raised their voices for application of the recommendations on the ground of social justice and challenging the Muslim leaders on their political stand. They argued that the entire orientation of Muslim politics in contemporary India is towards the higher class ashrafs and ajlafs who used the backward class Muslims for their political goals. It is for this reason Muslim politicians take up abstract and emotional issues rather than issues of poverty, illiteracy and overall backwardness of the Muslim community. In their opinion Muslim leaders acknowledged that Muslims in India are far more educationally and economically backward than others and yet nothing is ever done to focus on this backwardness. Indira Gandhi had appointed a high power Gopal Singh Commission to look into the problems of Muslims. But the Muslim leaders never bothered to look at the Gopal Singh report (1983), instead they spent much time on emotional issues. Another Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi formulated a 20-point programme for the upliftment of the Muslims, but no Muslim leader paid much attention to it. If the Muslim leaders had taken these issues seriously and applied political pressure, the government would have been forced to implement them for the benefit of Muslims. The Muslim leaders' indifference is usually explained by the fact that these programmes would benefit only for the backward classes of the society. This may be considered as partially true, but there are also the other factors, viz., minority syndrome, fear psychosis and communal tension under majority-minority relationship of the country. The rise of OBC Muslims

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33 A Minority Commission was established in post-independent India in 1978, and subsequently in 1980 a high-powered committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr V A Syed Mohammad. Later Dr Gopal Singh (parliamentarian and a noted diplomat) took over as the chairman with Khurshid Alam Khan as the secretary. This Committee submitted its 119 page Report on June 14, 1983. This Report discussed the condition of minorities as well as other backward sections of our society. Dr Gopal Singh Committee made wide-ranging short and long-term recommendations, but the Report never saw the light of the day. Moinul Hassan, ‘Socio-Economic Condition of Indian Muslims’, People’s Democracy, Weekly Organs of Communist Party of India (Marxist), Vol. XXX, no. 50, December 10, 2006
has radical repercussion in Muslim politics as they constituted the majority within the Muslim minority population of the country. The Muslim politics gradually has become more grass roots and issue (socio-economic) oriented. This basic shift in Muslim politics may be examined on the basis of movements or the emerging Muslim OBC organisations in the country.\textsuperscript{34}

The awakening of Muslim backward classes can be seen from a very recent publication by journalist and social activist Ali Anwar. The book, written in Hindustani language titled \textit{Masawat ki Jung} (crusade for equality) vividly depicts the social inequality in Muslim society and the plight of the Dalit Muslims. It focuses on the movement that the Dalit Muslims of Bihar have launched against the 'exploitative' upper class and ulemas in their own society under the banner Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz (PMM).\textsuperscript{35} The author illustrates how upper class Muslims who constitute about 10-15 per cent of total Muslim population in India have been enjoying control over religious, political and social institutions of the country for centuries. The author also identified the Dalit groups in his community and described their pitiable condition. Ali Anwar strongly advocates reservation in government jobs for Dalit Muslims on the line of quotas provided for Hindu Dalits including scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. He describes the Muslim leaders' failure to demand provisions in the Constitution for reservation in government jobs for Dalit Muslims as a 'design' to conceal social inequality. According the book the vested interest of the Muslim leaders has harmed the Muslim society. They also deviated from the path of equality. The book asks why donot the ulemas and Muslim leaders wage a crusade against inequality in Muslim society which go against the basic tenets of Islam.

IV. \textbf{State of Muslims after Partition}

The future of Muslims in Uttar Pradesh in the aftermath of Partition looked vague and shadowy and in the process, the Muslim leadership itself was lost in the wilderness of blood, tears and confusion. The Independence brought a situation in which they were not intellectually, emotionally and politically prepared. The outcome

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\textsuperscript{35} Anwar, Ali, \textit{Maswat ki Jung} (in Hindi), Vani Prakashan, New Delhi, 2001
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proved catastrophic to the independent politics of Muslims in India and most particularly in UP after partition. “Leading industrial families, trading groups, and practitioners of various professions hurried to Pakistan in order to improve their fortunes, leaving behind a socially fragmented and economically depressed Muslim community.”  

No doubt the partition of the country had exposed UP to a greater degree of stress and tension than most other states—“areas most affected by riots, the exodus to Pakistan and a considerable ‘skimming off’ from the professional classes; a process that continued until the early ‘60s.’ thus, following the establishment of and migration to Pakistan, Indian Muslims became a pawn in the hands of political parties and were maneuvered merely to obtain their votes.

The UP government was confronted with the task of devising a strategy to deal with the Muslims who stayed back, although, “the state government took action to prevent a large-scale outbreak of rioting or looting. It was not particularly sensitive to minority fears and concerns. The state government had a poor record in providing the healing touch.” Muslims found that the secular state has not been able to protect their lives, property and even their holy places against Hindu attacks. At the same time, many Congress leaders appeared to suspect Muslim nation, those Muslims who had stayed back should not object to the dominance of Hindus or Hindu nationalism in India.”

What emerges from the actions of the UP government during this period is that it did not envisage the need to remove the sense of community from the center of UP politics; rather, it approached Muslims as a distinct community, which was expected to support the Congress. Congress leaders made it clear that Muslims would be protected, but to maintain that protection they should demonstrate their political allegiance to the Congress. The recognition of the Muslim community as a community defined by its religious commitments, combined with concessions given to Hindu nationalists, altered the ground rule of majority-minority relations and above

37 Hasan, Zoya, Quest for Power, op.cit., p. 23
38 Ibid.
all renegotiated the meaning of secularism which took the form of an accommodation of religious communities.\textsuperscript{40}

It is also important to acknowledge that out of their persistent divisions and diversities, Muslims, in general, could neither harness their inner resources to evolve a common vision nor work as a collective group in pursuit of shared goals. After Independence, in particular, the options of exercising ‘free will’, as it were, diminished. The supposedly monolithic structure of the Muslim leadership and organization does not exist either at national or local level. This is not to deny the absence of community consciousness or of communal solidarity, but to emphasize that a separate communitarian consciousness was not always translated into any tangible political reality.

The political context, “Afraid of an uncertain future and unaware of the implications of the new secular epistemologies, Muslims found no other course left for them but to accept the new political reality or ideology and, at the same time, keep the flame of Islam alive by making it a personal agenda, the individual creed.”\textsuperscript{41} As a consequence, politics for Muslims as Muslims had no raison d’etre. With the Muslim League dissolved in the north, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and its leadership now located in Pakistan, the political trajectory of the Muslims had to be defined within the broad democratic framework that had evolved through a painful and tortuous process and depended on the consensual model that Congress was attempting to create in the aftermath of Independence and Partition.

A. Interrogating Political Consciousness of Muslims

It goes without saying that in free India, Maulana Azad and his protégés had a sole claim to the political and intellectual leadership of the Muslim community. The post-partition situation had placed Azad into prominence and he had emerged as the only cognizable centre for Indian’s Muslims. “The Congress Muslims of Maulana Azad’s generation remained wedded to the concept of composite nationalism and pleaded for greater Muslim participation in nation-building. They envisaged a new role for themselves, not as leaders of Muslims but as the members of a new political

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
To announce a new work-plan for Muslims Azad convened a Muslim convention on December 26, 1947 in Lucknow. Mahatma Gandhi was very much in the background of the convention and had called on Maulana Hifzur Rehman and Ahmed Sayeed for making the event a success.\textsuperscript{43}

The Indian Union Muslim Conference unanimously passed a resolution calling upon Muslims of all shades of political opinion to take a united decision and abjure communal politics. The resolution which was moved by Maulana Ahmad Said, vice-president of Jamiyat al-ulamai-I Hind (JUH), said, “This conference of the Muslims of the Indian Union has surveyed the terrible happening that have taken place in India since August 1947 and come to the conclusion that they reveal an alarming growth of disruptive, antisocial and reactionary ideas and tendencies in Indian political life masquerading under communal and false religious slogans.” Communal parties have, in the past, done immense harm to the country and specially the minorities of India and are pregnant with even greater danger to their future. The time has, therefore, come when Muslims of all shades of political opinion must take the united decision and abjure communal politics.” Another resolution moved by S.A. Brelvi, unanimously adopted by the Conference called upon the Muslims of India to be members only of non-communal political parties and advised them to join the Indian National Congress.\textsuperscript{44} The resolution adopted at this convention should rightly be termed as the new manifesto of Indian Muslims in free India.

At this time when the Congress Muslims were nursing their political wounds after Independence/Partition, the political initiative was wrested from them by the Jamiat al-Ulamai-i-Hind (JUH) and the Jamaat-i Islami (JIH). Though “competing for political supremacy, their members had the same high stakes in making the most of the newly created social and political structure. They recognized to mould their political strategy and to restore their hold over their followers which were slackened by the fragmentation of leadership and by deep ideological schisms.”\textsuperscript{45} The Jamiat (JUH), which had taken the responsibility of leading the Muslim community in the changed situation voluntarily and publicly, purged its political aspirations and

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 207
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 52-3
\textsuperscript{44} Resolution adopted at the Indian Muslim Conference on December 28, 1947. \textit{The Times of India}. December 29, 1947
\textsuperscript{45} Hasan, Mushirul, “The Changing Position of the Muslims…” op.cit., p. 207
remained content in being a mere cultural organization and an appendage to the Congress.\textsuperscript{46} It was founded in 1919 amid the Khilafat enthusiasm, plotted a nationalist, anti-colonial course in alliance with the Congress and was closely identified with the forces of composite nationalism.\textsuperscript{47} In Post Independence situation, initially its leaders acclaimed the democratic and secular principles of the Constitution but latter they demanded separate electorates and reservations of seats for Muslims.\textsuperscript{48}

The Jamiat (JUH) expressed the view that Indian Muslims “should (also) realize that in a country like India it is only this brand of secularism which can provide safeguards for their culture and religious freedom and can give strength to their status as a religious minority. It is, therefore, in their own interest to support the secular ideal envisaged in the Constitution with sincerity and ardor.”\textsuperscript{49} Soon the Jamiat (JUH) leadership stopped talking of politics or taking up a political mode of protest to press their demands, limiting themselves to only cultural and ‘religious’ activities. Above all, the Jamiat (JUH) acted within a broadly secular framework. Its leaders were closely allied with the Congress that, in turn, helped them to secure seats in parliament and in the state assembly. Prominent amongst them were Maulana Asad Madani, Ishaq Sambhali and Hifzur Rahman.

No doubt there were other ideological groups among the Muslim community, which were keeping an eye on the situation, but they were not as influential as the leaders of the Jamiat (JUH) or Muslims of the Congressite hue. Mention should also be made of Syed Abul Ala Mauoodi (1903-79), known for his strong opposition to both composite nationalism and Muslim nationalism, who though himself had shifted to Pakistan, the remnants of his Jamaat-i-Islami (JIH) in India and particularly in UP, were nevertheless, intellectually active in formulating a new strategy for the future which found public expression in Maulana Abul Lais Islahi’s book \textit{Musalamanan-e-Hind Ke Liye Aainda Ka Lahae Amal}, first published in 1957.\textsuperscript{50} But at that time this

\textsuperscript{46} Shaz, Rashid, op.cit., p. 54
\textsuperscript{47} Hasan, Mushirul, “The Changing Position of the Muslims…” op.cit., p. 208
\textsuperscript{49} On April 17, 1949 at an all India session of the Jamiatul Ulema Held in Lucknow, Maulana Hifzur Rahman put forward a resolution saying that hence onward the Jamiat was ceased to exist as a political organization and would limit itself to religious and cultural activities. \textit{The Times of India}, April 19, 1949.
\textsuperscript{50} Maulana Abul Lais Islahi Nadvi, \textit{Musalamanan-e-Hind Ke Liye Aainda Ka Lahae Amal}, Rampur, 1957
voice was so weak that it could not attract many people. Though otherwise “Islamically sound”, this approach failed to generate public debates.

Another important development was the meeting of hundreds of Muslims from various districts of Uttar Pradesh on March 19, 1950 in Lucknow. It was first of its kind to be held in UP after Independence. The meeting was convened by eleven UP legislators, formerly members of the UP Muslim League Legislature Party, and was presided over by Z.H. Lari, leader of the Opposition in the state assembly. The meeting declared that “in order to shake off their present lethargy and frustration and to play due part in the administration of the country and reconstruction of society, the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh should join some non-communal party.”

In this context, a standing committee of eighteen members, with Mufti Fakhrul Islam, member of the UP legislative assembly, was formed to advise the Muslims on this matter. The meeting also appealed to “all Muslim religious or cultural organizations particularly Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind, Muslim League, All-India Shia Conference, and Jamiat-ul-Ansar to merge and amalgamate themselves into one body so that all the Muslims, irrespective of party affiliations, may join it and work for the betterment of the community more effectively.”

The meeting expressed its strong opinion that there must be “one live, common, non-parliamentary organization to promote and safeguard cultural, religious, educational, economic and other rights and interests of Musalmans.”

Hence, there was utter intellectual confusion over the issue of Muslim’s political agenda and its potential future role and identity different from that of other communities of the country in the post-independence India. Each Muslim leader and ideological groupings, about the possible future role of the Muslims, were not only marred by an identity crisis but also by a longing for and pangs of the creation of a new identity.

B. Muslims in the Electoral Process

Since the freedom movement, the Indian National Congress (INC) had been in political alliance with Muslims as represented by the Jamiat al-Ulama-yi Hind (JUH),

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51 Bombay Chronicle, March 20, 1950
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
a party of the ulama associated with the Deoband seminary located in Saharanpur, UP. The Jamiat's (JUH) co-operation with the Congress had involved a political bargain in which the ulama had given their support on the assumption that places of worship, religious endowments, Muslim Personal Law, and other institutions and aspects of Islamic culture would be maintained. The apparent liberalism and secular approach of the Congress leadership toward the Muslims under Jawaharlal Nehru drew to the Congress Muslim politicians of various inclinations. In any case there was no real alternative to the Congress immediately after independence. The once-powerful Muslim League had been dissolved except in the old Madras province, and its members had either migrated to Pakistan or retired from politics or had joined the Congress, where they were accepted despite the protest of 'nationalist' Muslims.

It is indeed hard to discern a common pattern or a unified structure of political activity amongst Muslims. This is not to deny the absence of community consciousness or a sense of communal solidarity. What needs reaffirmation is that a separate communitarian consciousness could not be translated into any tangible political reality. That is why there was no worthwhile endeavour to forge a common Muslim front even on issues of common concern. The All India Muslim Convention, held at Aligarh in October 1953, was a damp squib. Likewise, the initiative taken in 1964, leading to the formation of the Majlis-i Mushawarat (AIMMM), petered out after much fanfare. The Majlis (AIMMM), stigmatized as a sinister, incipient revival of the old Muslim League, legitimized Hindu communalism in Uttar Pradesh and pushed more votes towards candidates who appealed to Hindu sentiments. The message was loud and clear. Political mobilization along communitarian lines carried serious risks, because it hardened communal attitudes among majority segments and deepened the sense of insecurity amongst the minorities. The alternative, then, was to take advantage of the wide-ranging political options available in a multi-party system and not to function as a separate, independent political entity. Given their distribution of population and different levels of consciousness, Muslims could emerge as a critical balancing force between the contending political forces and use their leverage to safeguard communitarian interests.

In the first two elections (1952, 1957), most Muslims had no choice except to back the ruling Congress which, under Nehru's leadership, was the only national party with a secular orientation. Of the total Muslim legislators in 1952, 145 belonged to the Congress; in the next general election 131 of the 159 legislators were Muslim Congressmen. In Uttar Pradesh, Muslim candidates contesting elections on Congress Party tickets constituted the largest proportion among the Muslim political activists and succeeded in getting elected in larger proportions than the candidates put up by other political parties.\(^{55}\) In 1952 and 1957 the Congress swept more than two-thirds of Bihar MLA contests, including in both cases all but one of the constituencies carried by Muslim candidates. The Congress did well in eastern Purnea district as also in those regions of Champaran, Saran, Durbhanga and Bhagalpur districts where Muslims amounted more than 20 per cent of the population.\(^{56}\) In other areas, where the Congress candidates were pitted against the Muslim League or the Ittehad al-Muslimeen, most Muslims favoured the Congress. In so doing, they reaffirmed their faith in the secular option.

There was another noticeable trend in a number of constituencies—a preference for socialist and communist candidates. This was so in the Kanpur city, where S.M. Banerji, the Communist-backed trade union leader, consistently increased his share of the Muslim vote,\(^{57}\) and in Amroha where Maulana Ishaq of Sambhal in U.P. was elected to the Parliament as a candidate of the Communist Party. In Fyzabad, Muslims were inclined to back the socialists, led by Acharya Narendra Deva, in the Municipal board elections. The Socialist candidate's largest vote totals came in the city wards where Muslims constituted more than 20 per cent of the population. Again, in the 1957 parliamentary elections, the Communist candidates did well in those areas which contained the largest proportions of Muslims. When the communal issue was dormant, Harold Gould concludes, Muslims supported 'Communist protest; when the communal issue arose, they shifted their identification from a proletarian to a


\(^{56}\) In 1952, 21 of the 22 Muslim MLAs were Congressmen; in 1957 the number rose to 24 out of 25. Harry W. Blair, *Voting, Caste, Community, Society: Explorations in Aggregate Data Analysis in India and Bangladesh*, Delhi, 1979, pp. 33, 37

religious focus. In the former they were linked to Hindus who shared their economic lot; in the latter their Hindu linkages were severed.\textsuperscript{58}

Such instances do not provide sufficient ground for any generalizations, but the tendency to assume national party identifications and to lend electoral support to secular-oriented parties was a pointer to the effectiveness of the democratic forces among large segments of the Muslim population. Notice, for example, that Muslim candidates contesting elections on the tickets of the national parties improved their share of the total votes polled by the Muslim candidates from 65.41 per cent in 1952 to 75.20 per cent in 1962.\textsuperscript{59}

C. The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM)

A convention of Muslim leaders was held at Lucknow in 1964, Muslim leaders of all shades of opinion had joined hands together to solve their problems, and an organization came into existence known as All India Majlis-e-Mushawarat.\textsuperscript{60}

With the effort of Maulana Hifzur Rahman the All India Muslim convention was concluded at New Delhi on June 11, 1961. The resolution passed at this convention embraced such subjects as national integration; measures to minimize disturbances of a communal nature; restoration of homes, mosques and *inambaras* to Muslims; adequate share for the community in services, trade and commerce; encouragement of Urdu including the establishment of an Urdu university.\textsuperscript{61} It was on the initiative of Maulana S. Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, a prominent divine of the Muslim community, and S. Mahmood, a former Member of Parliament, that an All-India Muslim Consultative Convention was convened at Darul Uloom Naswatul Ulema, Lucknow, during 8-9 August 1964. This meeting was consequent upon review of the situation arising out of communal riots and to devise ways and means to check the increasing influence of the communal organizations like the Jana Sangh and the RSS.


\textsuperscript{60} *The Siyasat* (Urdu Daily) Kanpur, July 13, 1964

\textsuperscript{61} *The Times of India*, June 12, 1964.
which were alleged to have been behind all the communal disturbances in the country. The convention took stock of the situation and expressed grave concern over the alleged anti-Muslim policies and activities of the Jana Sangh and the RSS.\textsuperscript{62}

Dr. Syed Mahmud (1889-1971) drew the attention of the convention to six aspects of the situation in the country vis-à-vis Muslims. “Firstly, Muslim should dismiss the idea that they were unwanted and persuade others to come closer to them. Secondly, the need of the hour was unity among Muslims. This was a basic need without which neither individuals nor society could prosper. The convention should explore all possibilities of unity and integration. If it failed, it would stand convicted in the history. Thirdly, the communal disturbances had put Muslims in a peculiar state of confusion, helplessness, and despair and some were intent upon leaving their homeland. The convention should find ways and means of eliminating the possibility of such disturbances and restore the confidence of Muslims. Fourthly, Muslims had been isolating themselves from the social and political currents of the country. This state of affairs was neither happy for the country nor for the Muslims. Fifthly, it could not be denied that on religious and cultural levels, Muslims were exposed to a number of threats. Finally, Muslims had been lagging behind in the field of education and commerce.”\textsuperscript{63} The convention in its Resolution No. 8 expressed its dissatisfaction on the role of some Muslim members of Parliament and state assemblies. In the opinion of this meeting, “the attitude of Muslim members in this respect particularly disappointing and regrettable, as it was their bounden duty to make every effort to invite the attention of the government to the state of the oppressed Muslims.” It appealed to them to re-examine their attitude. It also appealed to Muslim members that “it is their duty, to voice the problems and grievances of Muslims. The Muslim community can never forgive their avoidance of or indifference to this duty.”

It was strongly felt at the Convention that there should be a common forum for the Muslims to discuss their grievances and to work unitedly for the well being of the Muslims. The organization, thus formed, was named Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat-Muslim Consultative Committee-that is indicative of the fact that this was merely a


\textsuperscript{63} \textit{The Times of India}, August 9, 1964.
consultative body for the Muslims all over the country. The main objective behind the formation of Majlis was as follows.64

1. To bring about better understanding and promote unity amongst the various communities and sections inhabiting the country, especially Hindus, Muslim, Harijans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees, Buddhists, Jain, etc.

2. To organize meetings, seminars, symposium in various parts of the country in order to promote communal harmony and good will.

3. To enlist the support of the members of all communities for the full implementation of the secular ideals of the Constitution of India, that is, the ideals of neutrality and non-discrimination by the state on ground of religion, caste, creed, and colour.

4. To endeavour and bring nearer to each other all the Muslim and non-Muslim organization working for the uplift of communities and the country.

5. To bring to the notice of the government and the people of India the grievances of the Muslims and others.

6. To ensure that Muslims as a community live up to the high ideals of Islam and do not let themselves drift from the mainstream of the social, cultural, economic and political progress of the country’s advancement in the world and of humanity at large.

7. To adopt peaceful and legal measures in connection with the problems relating to the religious, educational, linguistic, cultural, and economic interests of the Muslims in particular and others in general.

8. To organize units of the Majlis at the state level only for the achievements of the above objects.

9. To take such other steps as may be necessary with a view to the implementation of the objects hereinbefore mentioned.

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64 Extracts from pamphlet containing the constitution of the Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM0.)
It is important to note that Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) was a federation of various socio-political organization with different political ideologies, such as the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the Jamat-i-Islami (JIH), etc. as well as of own ideals, objectives, political affiliations and religious attitudes. Thus, the Mushawarat (AIMMM) was an attempt to unite a host of diverse organizations into one whole and, thereby, prepare a united force of the Muslims to pressurize the government for giving greater protection to the minorities. In Uttar Pradesh, the Mushawarat started functioning with the holding of its meetings at Allahabad on March 26, 1966 and at Rampur and Moradabad on April 1 and April 9, 1966, respectively.65

To keep in view the discontents of some of its members on active politics, the Mushawarat decided to plunge into electoral politics with a Nine-Point Manifesto, despite the initial reluctance of the Jamat-i-Islami (JIH). As a token of its impartiality, the Committee ruled that none of its office bearer could be candidates themselves in the forthcoming General Elections of 1967. Instead, it established criteria of acceptability for candidates (secularity, lack of bigotry and discrimination) and proposed to bargain with existing parties and their candidates of whatever religion for the Majlis’ endorsement.

The Majlis’ (AIMMM) demands were a combination of distinctively Muslim concerns such as retention of Muslim Personal Law, election rather than appointment of religious endowment boards, removal of unsecular textbooks, preservation of the Muslim character of Aligarh Muslim University, recognition of Urdu as a second language in Bihar, UP, Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and creation of Minority Boards to redress grievances, along with general moral and welfare improvement measure: prohibition of alcohol, censorship of obscene literature and films, abolition of untouchability, free education and medical care, unemployment insurance and accident compensation, finally it included proportional representation, an obvious device to increase minority and small party strength and bargaining power. This was undoubtedly a new trend in Muslim politics, for this was the first occasion that Muslims had placed certain conditions for supporting candidates and parties.

65 A.J. Faridi, Presidential Address, at Rampur Conference, August 1967, p. 4
hankering for their votes. As a result of its policy, the Mushawarat (AIMMM) supported a number of candidates belonging to various parties (Table 12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>INC</th>
<th>SWA</th>
<th>PSP</th>
<th>SSP</th>
<th>RPI</th>
<th>CPI</th>
<th>CPM</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lok Sabha Elections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Assembly Elections</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.M. Sayed, *op.cit.*, p. 547

It is evident from Table 12 that, barring one, in all the Assembly and parliamentary constituencies the Mushawarat extended its support to the candidates of the opposition parties only. It was due to the strong opposition of the Congress by A.J. Faridi. He held that Congress having been in power since Independence was primarily responsible for the injustices to Muslims and therefore should be thrown out of the office regardless of some meritorious individuals on its ticket. The leaders of the Mushawarat actively campaigned for their candidates. It is impossible to say in the absence of survey data what proportion of the vote for Congress. But there is no denying the fact that in the beginning rural areas. In some constituencies it was due to Mushawarat that a considerable majority unseated the Congress candidates.

However, the overall performance of the Mushawarat in the elections was extremely poor (Table 13). It is also noted that majority of the Mushawarat’s backed elected candidates belonged to non-Muslims. In short, the Mushawarat’s contributed to a net decline in the number of Muslim legislators, but then the Committee’s

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67 S.M. Sayeed, “Role of Muslim Majlis in UP Politics”, in Verinder Grover (ed.), *op.cit.*, vol. 5, pp. 547-548
68 Theodre P. Wright, Jr., “Muslims as Candidates and Voters in 1967 General Elections”, *op.cit.*, p. 250
purpose was not to elect Muslims per se but to put in office candidates sympathetic to
the minority, or at least not prejudiced against it. But once the candidates were
elected, they forgot all the promises which they had made in order to gain the support
of the Mushawarat and under the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (SVD) government which
they joined, the interests of the minorities remained just as unprotected as they were
under Congress regime.\textsuperscript{69} It seems likely that this first effort by a Muslim pressure
group to sway the outcome of an election failed either to “deliver” a solid of Muslim
votes or to increase substantially the number of Muslim and sympathetic Hindu
legislatures.

\textbf{Table 13}

\textit{Candidates Elected with the Support of the Mushawarat in UP, 1967
General Elections.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>SWA</th>
<th>PSP</th>
<th>SSP</th>
<th>RPI</th>
<th>CPI</th>
<th>CPM</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lok Sabha Elections</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Legislative Assembly
Elections                   | 7   | 4   | 17  | 2   | 2   | 1   | 6   | 39    |
| Grand Total                 | 8   | 4   | 21  | 3   | 4   | 1   | 9   | 50    |

\textbf{Source:} S.M. Sayed, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 548

Nonetheless, the 1967 election had one good lesson to teach, and it was that
the Muslims were not a mere vestigial entity but could substantially influence the
results of the elections. It was for the first time that a sizable section of the Muslims
voters \textit{en bloc} exercised votes against the Congress and supported the opposition.
This was also for the first time, on the initiative of the Mushawarat, that Muslims cast
their votes on individual merits of the candidates instead of the ideological basis or
party grounds. This brought a shift for a candidates-oriented pattern of voting instead
of the party-oriented voting behavior.

It is also important to note that the Jana Sangh made capital out of the conflict
between the Congress and the Mushawarat. Jana Sangh secured 98 seats in the
assembly elections as against 2 seats in 1952, 17 seats in 1957 and 49 seats in the

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Sirat} News weekly, Lucknow, July 26, 1968.
1962 elections. The main reasons for the steady progress of the Jana Sangh were the general dissatisfaction of the people with the Congress rule and the division of Muslim votes between the Congress and the Mushawarat-supported candidates. It is in this way Mushawarat electoral policy proved helpful in increasing the power of the Jana Sangh and this quite contrary to the very purpose of its creation.\textsuperscript{70}

It is worth arguing that Mushawarat was an unsuccessful attempt at combining the different Muslim organizations of different shades of opinion and political ideologies. This was a federation formed upon weak ties between the constituent units. There might be certain issues over which there is unanimity among the Muslims but how can there be unanimity among the organizations of differing ideologies with regard to the methods to be adopted for tackling those problems? It is in this light, it was difficult for the Mushawarat to formulate an effective policy without causing injury to the ideological beliefs of its units. At the same time, it was not a tangible decision to formulate a political policy without securing unity of its constituents. If the Mushawarat was formed to protect the interests of the minorities and make efforts for getting certain facilities from the government, it ought to have evolved a definite political policy and strived to help in installing a government under which their interests would be protected properly.

Soon after the general elections of 1967, the leaders of the Mushawarat began to feel that the Mushawarat should be reconstituted and its policies revised in the light of the experiences of the elections. Consequently, a new constitution was drafted and the Mushawarat was dissolved with a view to reorganize it on the basis of the new constitution. This was in reality the collapse of the Mushawarat, at least in UP.

The overall performance of Muslim Majlis was very poor. Constituencies where Muslim Majlis contested had adequate Muslim population but even in those constituencies it failed to secure the support of the Muslims.

\textsuperscript{70} S.M. Sayeed, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 550
Dr. Faridi claimed that the greatest achievement of the Majlis was that it had infused a sense of confidence and courage among the Muslim community and had made them feel that they commanded balancing power in the politics of the country.

Promises made by the Congress were only not fulfilled but the new Amendment Act of 1972 deprived the autonomy and minority character of A.M.U. This act of government completely alienated Muslim Majlis from Congress (R) and a number of Muslim volunteers including its President Dr. Faridi, the SSP leader Raj Narain and Vishwanath Kapoor MLA were arrested. This agitation was against the closure of AMU and for the restoration of minority character. Muslim Majlis then decided not to support the Congress in the Assembly elections of 1974, and made an alliance with Bhartiya Kranti Dal and SSP. These parties entered in an electoral adjustment and decided to contest the election on Bhartiya Kranti Dal tickets. Bhartiya Kranti Dal and SSP included the demands of Muslim Majlis in their manifestos. In 1974 UP Assembly Elections the Muslim Majlis contested twenty six seats, but only three were elected viz., (Masood Khan from Azamgarh, S.A. Faiz from Ghazipur and Nanhelal Kureel from Fatehpur).

V. Politics of Religious Polarization

The decade of 1980s has been a turning point in the history of Indian politics. After three decades of peaceful co-existence, communalism entered the centre stage. It shattered the fond hope of many that with the passage of time, the country will forget the holocaust and the trauma of partition. The process of development that ensued in the 1950s, and that changed the educational and economic profile of the country, was expected to erase the bruises of communal clashes and that a culture of composite culture would, it was hoped, prevail and India will emerge as a good model of peaceful coexistence in the world.

But these hopes were frustrated by later day events. Despite the pronouncements by the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution, that the new State of India will be a secular polity, Indian political parties resorted to playing the

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71 National Herald, Lucknow, May 10, 1973
72 Pioneer, Allahabad, May 16, 1973
73 National Herald, Lucknow, February 25, 1974
regional, linguistic, religious and communal politics to garner political power. The arithmetic of vote motivated the political parties to invoke primordial loyalties in order to create their respective vote banks. Democratic politics, in the process, assumed the colors of a communal politics.

The political situation in the 1980s was auspicious for the growth of communal politics. One of the striking features of this period was the important part played by religion in UP and other parts of north and western India in the redefinition of nationalism and culture. Religion entered politics with a new force. The most dramatic event rather a culmination of this process was the demolition of the disputed Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992. Supporters justified the action as the liberation of a sacred Hindu site to unify the nation. Critics decried the violence as an attack on India’s modern, secular, multi-cultural society.

Demolition was the result of a mass movement intended to promote religiously grounded nationalism. It was situated in a particular historical and political conjuncture with the specific political project of capturing state power and remaking India politically and ideologically. These events and movements raised questions about the past, about the direction in which Indian society had moved and the new directions it should take. In the 1980s, separatist movements in Punjab and Kashmir and sporadic ethnic violence in the north-eastern states challenged the efficacy of the state and the basis of the political unity of India. Then the controversial Shah Bano case raised questions about the secular state which had allowed Muslims to have separate laws.

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75 Arun Poorie, *India Today*, February 15, 1993, commented: ‘Since its gates were unlocked in 1986, Babri Masjid has become a touchstone to secularism and indeed, to the character of the nation…when it was destroyed, so was a symbol of India’s secular identity, the structure was a symbol of the sense of security of Indian Muslims and in its destruction a large proportion of Hindus misguidedly saw a vindication of their right to assert their dominance. The result is that the structure and symbol have been reduced to a heap of rubble, but the issue the Babri masjid represented has been vastly aggravated’.
76 There are different kinds of nationalisms ranging from anti-colonial nationalism to linguistic nationalism. The Hindutva movement calls itself Hindu nationalism but this has little to do with Hinduism and, in fact, invokes religion for political purposes.
77 *The Times of India*, December 18, 1985
Interpretations of these complex events at the national level ranged from Hindu anger against Muslims to the recognition that religious nationalism was articulating people’s culture, identity at a more basic level than other kinds of political affiliations. It has also been argued that at the heart of change is an identity crisis of the urban middle class undergoing rapid modernization and industrialization which had made them receptive to communitarian appeals because it helped them to cope with the stresses of modernity and challenges to their hegemony. This argument could perhaps account for the success of communal-nationalist appeals in Maharashtra and Gujarat. But such an argument would be inappropriate for north Indian states, particularly UP, where neither industrialization nor modernization had advanced rapidly. Rather, the absence of a developmental agenda was used by the political parties to draw people into a cultural discourse of difference. The political dimension was particularly important in UP where politicians had harnessed an extensive influence of religion in society. The specific interaction between cultural differences and political forces was ultimately determined by the political context in the 1980s.

Many of the political movements flowing from this phenomenon had focused attention on the malpractice of secularism. They have created a political lexicon to express the importance of religious values in the relationship to community to civil society and community to state. As a consequence, they have promoted a steady decline of secularism and a weakening in secular commitment and a concomitant deterioration in majority-minority relations. Conflation of religious and non-religious factors played a part in the de-emphasis on secularism which become more marked after Ayodhya movement leading to a separation of secularism and nationalism at the state level came from the mounting pressures of communal politics in civil society.

Symptomatic of the growth of intercommunity feuds was the dramatic spurt in Hindu-Muslims violence. In May 1979, the union home minister announced a threefold increase in deaths caused by communal violence since 1977, with UP heading the list. According to one estimate, 1000 people were killed in communal riots since the Babri Masjid controversy broke out. From February 1986 to June 1987
nearly 60 major and minor riots took place in UP. Over 200 people were killed and 1000 injured. Damage to property was to the tune of 1.5 crores. The significant feature of these riots was its spread to areas which had so far experienced relative communal peace. Riots broke out in Barabanki and Allahabad in June 1986. Riots in the 1980s in Aligarh, Moradabad, Kanpur and Meerut were much more widespread and prolonged and involved greater numbers of people in looting, arson and killing. The worst riots occurred in Meerut. In mid-April 1987 communal riots erupted in Meerut and recurred with greater fury a month later. On 22 May several hundred men were rounded up and taken to the banks of the Banks of Ganga canal and shot, and their bodies thrown into the canal. The next day the PAC personnel launched an attack on the Malliana village in the vicinity of Meerut. This attack lasted three hours. Many of the dead bodies were dumped into the Ganga canal. The death toll exceeded 200. Despite promises, the policemen were never punished for their actions in Moradabad or Meerut.

The Delhi-based Peoples Union of Democratic Rights (PUDR) published a meticulously documented Report on Meerut and other riots which showed how official enquiries ordered by the government under public pressure have remained paralysed or been scuttled by ‘official hesitation’. Reports of at least four enquiries have not been officially placed before the public, and no action is known to have been taken on the basis of these reports. In case of the Meerut riots, the chief minister V.P. Singh claimed that he had been exonerated by the injury commissions whereas, excerpts from the Meerut Report published in newspaper noted ‘negligence and failure of the administration as one of the causes for the spread of riots’. In fact, the UP government made a determined effort to stall legal proceedings with regard to the Meerut riots. This became evident from the chief minister’s approach which was communally prejudiced. He had his own political reasons for not quelling the riots in Meerut, notably that minorities should be taught a lesson for not voting for Congress. Adequate steps were not taken to deal with the worsening communal

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82 ‘Agony of Meerut’, India Today, June 15, 1987
83 The Sixth report of the National Police Commission notes that the recommendations of the commissions of inquiry appointed by the state government, ‘have hardly been followed’, May 27, 1987, p. 1132
85 India Today, June 15, 1987
environment. Instead, government blamed ‘outsiders, foreign money and explosive firearms’ for the Meerut riots.\textsuperscript{87}

Overall, communal violence played a major part in reshaping the political landscape an also economic and social opportunities for different groups.\textsuperscript{88} Various social forces and organizations raised questions regarding the role of the police or the role of minorities in the course of riots and gave their own interpretation of communal events. Some groups clearly extracted material gains through such occasion of violence; others further perpetuated communal stereotypes and helped to polarize communities and slowdown the upsurge of the OBCs or force minorities into submission.

It is concluded that Backward-caste Muslims insist that the Muslim community in India is not a homogenous entity. The community is divided both horizontally and vertically, with caste-like divisions being the most decisive. There is a contradiction between the interests of the Ashraf castes and those of the Ajlaf castes. The backward-caste perspective demolishes the myth of a single collective Muslim mind and takes a different view of the world than that of upper-caste Muslims. The Muslim leadership, which basically comes from the upper castes, takes up cultural and sensitive issues in order to mobilize the people. They harp upon memories of Muslim power and the lost glories of the past. The traditional leaders concentrate on symbolic and emotional demands such as maintaining the minority character of AMU, continuing a separate personal law for Muslims, the status of the Urdu language, and the controversy over the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya. Muslim religious leaders have also been criticized by backward-caste Muslims for being concerned about empty ritualism, acting within the limits of their own little world, living off donations given by ordinary Muslims, and doing nothing for the welfare of the poor.

\textsuperscript{87} Reported in \textit{Pioneer} (Lucknow), July 2, 1987