

# **Social Justice Conference**

Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi

26, 27 November 2011

## **Popular Front of India**

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### **National Milli Convention**

**Together for Empowerment : Dialogue with future**

26 November 2011

### **Muslim as Indian Citizen**

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New Delhi

#### **HERITAGE**

Identity of Muslims in India is deeply rooted in Indian culture, heritage and history. Indo-Islamic identity has evolved over centuries of intermingling of traditions, culture, religion and social contacts. Muslims in India draw their traditions from their scriptures and traditions prevalent in various regions, mostly inside India. Indeed the Muslims of India are descendents of the original inhabitants of India for millennia.

Muslims enriched Indian culture, strengthened administration, and brought distant parts of the country closer. Muslim Period touched deeply the social life and the literature of the land. It modified the basis of Hindu social structure throughout India. Islam had brought to India a light which rescued humanity from darkness at a time when vedic civilizations were on the decline and moral ideals had got reduced to thoughts and concepts of individuals. Islam built up a spiritual brotherhood which up held the Oneness of God and Equality of Human Society.

Indian architecture took new shape with the advent of Islamic rule in India. Muslim contribution to the technology of the country is distinct in introduction of several mechanical devices. Countless magnificent monuments and buildings all across India speak eloquently of the Muslim contribution to India. Muslims made major initiatives in the production of quality products like cosmetics, textiles, metallurgy, glass and ceramics. The development of irrigation, hydraulics and the construction of canals flourished as never before during the long Mogul reign.

Contribution of Muslims to the growth of the Indian culture by the way of art and music is everlasting. Muslim musicians contributed much to the substantial growth of genuine Hindustani vocal music namely Khayal, Taraana, Dhrupad, Thumri, Qawwali, Ghazal, and musical instruments like Sitar, Sarod and Shehnai.

#### **INDEPENDENT INDIA**

Muslim rulers as well as Ulamas and common mass resisted the Portuguese, French and British invasion to the country, at the cost of their lives and livelihood. Struggle

against British rule in India consists of wide range philosophies, literature, movements, political organizations, wars and agitations. Muslim contribution is visible in all these areas of the independence movement. It includes wars led by Nawab

-2-

Siraj Daula, Tippu Sulthan, Bahadur Shah Zafar and others. Millions of Muslim warriors and Ulama's sacrificed their lives in this cause. Contribution of Muslim revolutionaries, poets and writers is documented in India's struggle against the British.

[Titu Mir](#) of Bengal, Warriar Kunnath Kunhamed Haji and Ali Musliyar of Kerala gave away their lives in the fight against British. Syed Rahmath Shah of Ghadar movement in Bhopal, Ali Ahmed Siddiqui of Faizabad, Vakkam Abdul Khadar of Kerala and Umer Sub'hani of Bombay were either hanged or otherwise killed by the British Government for their involvement in the freedom movement. Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan spent 45 years in jail. Among women, [Hazrat Mahal](#), Asghari Begum, Bi Umma contributed a lot to the struggle. In the revolt of 1857 Asghari Begum of Thana Bhawan, Muzaffarnagar fought the British and was burnt alive when defeated. Similarly Habiba and Rahimi who obstructed the advance of English forces were caught and hanged. It is estimated that about 225 Muslim women gave their lives in the revolt. This is not a complete narration, only a glance to the history.

[Allama Muhammad Iqbal](#) was a strong proponent of Hindu - Muslim unity. [Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar](#), [Maulana Shaukat Ali](#) and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad lead the struggle in the forefront, same time worked hard for the emancipation of the Muslims in the overall Indian context. Though Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League pressed the demand for separate Muslim State, the Congress also cannot escape the blame over the partition of the country. Same is the position of Sangh Parivar. Its chief mentor V.D. Savarkar formulated the two-nation theory in his essay Hindutva, published in 1923, sixteen years before Jinnah came up with the demand. It is evident that the partition took place as a result of the social, communal and political pressure prevailed at the time.

India has the world's second largest Muslim population after Indonesia. They have been regularly voting and participating in elections for more than half a century. The positive development of Indian politics has evolved from two important factors; democracy and pluralism. We witnessed several terms where the President of India was a Muslim and the Vice President a Hindu or Sikh and vice versa. The beauty of Indian democracy is not merely the fact that leaders from minority communities have occupied the highest office. Its beauty is multiplied by the majority community's willingness to accept and elect them.

## **DISCRIMINATIONS AND ILLTREATMENT**

Now, Muslims in India feel that they have been rendered second class citizens in the country. In most outbreaks of communal violence the bulk of casualties are Muslims. In most such outbreaks of mass street violence the Muslim victims, have found the police either remaining passive or colluding with the attackers. After such

incidents victims have always been denied justice in courts. Muslims experience difficulty in renting or buying homes in many metropolitan cities. They are also discriminated against for employment in some companies of the private sector. It has now been officially documented that the majority of Muslims are socially and economically disadvantaged.

Areas where Muslims live have been shamelessly neglected by government. One can judge the Muslim areas of a town simply because the streets, sanitation and electricity are so much worse than the rest. Opportunity for studies is denied for Muslims. Muslim areas are deprived of even primary schools. Muslims find themselves not only neglected by the state in terms of housing, healthcare, education, electricity and roads, but denied jobs in the government and military and locked up for no fault.

-3-

Indian social structure is conventionally black-marked with casteism and communalism. These evils have now strengthened influence over all the folds of our society and administration. Hindutwa elements have succeeded in widening the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Hatred and enmity is now on the increase. In addition, our country has now imported hatred from abroad. The most communal force in the world, Israel, is the closest friend and guide of our country now. India started diplomatic relationship with Israel during the year 1992. Ever since this relationship mysterious explosions and incidents, including demolition of Babri Masjid, found place in our country.

Major part of the administration, politicians, social activists, artists and media of the country assert the terms Muslim Terrorism or Islamic Terrorism. On the other hand, they maintain a meaningful silence on the terrorism unleashed, on a far more menacing scale, by the state and by right-wing Hindutwa organizations. Over the years, tens of thousands of people, mostly Muslims, have lost their lives in this terror where the culprits have faced no punishment of any kind. Well-educated Muslims are now being booked by police accusing terrorist activities. In the recent years hundreds of Muslims have been picked up by the police or even killed on fake charges. Media mindlessly repeat the police version to play a big role in spreading anti-Muslim hatred.

Though India is resolved to constitute a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic and to secure all its citizens socially, judicially, economically and politically, it has failed in giving justice to the majority of the citizens, consisting of Muslims and Dalits. One will expect the judiciary as the safest institution for protecting the rights of citizen without prejudice of any kind. But in practice, the experience is different. There now appear to be two judicial systems in this country, one for oppressed communities like Dalits and Muslims and another for the elites. In this context, it is worth mentioning that India and Israel have signed a memorandum to set up a legal colloquium to facilitate discussions and exchange of programmes between the Judges and Jurists of the two countries. Justice K G Balakrishnan, the then Chief Justice of India, signed the memorandum during his visit to Israel during 26 to 31 of December 2008. This is against the spirit of neutrality and impartiality of

the Judiciary. When the administration join hands with anti-Muslim forces it created fear in Muslim minds. There is strong suspicion that plans are being hatched and implemented deliberately to break the Muslims socially, politically and economically. The denial of basic needs and willful negligence of their just demands have resulted in social slavery. Muslim leaders are mostly subdued by the established forces by means of direct or indirect threats or appeasement. Even religious scholars are now available to work for declared enemies.

## **FORWARD STEPS**

A self appraisal would be worthier, at this time, than blaming others. It is time for Muslims in India to think about their role as Indian citizens. We ought to evaluate to what extent we have understood ourselves, our brothers, sisters and kids living in depths of cities and villages of the country. Much responsibility lies upon the educated. Let them identify themselves inside the community and feel the burden of obligations.

Politics is the gateway to important functions of governance, like security, rule of law, economy, finance, health, road, transport, energy, education, culture, agriculture, foreign relationship etc, of the nation. Lack of access to these elements of governance shows the symptom of social slavery. Concept against

-4-

sharing of power, in the secular democratic system, now developing among some of our Ulamas and Youths undermines the efforts for uplift of the community. Individual who are bound to lead the community in the days of difficulties keep away from responsibility on the ground of vague difference of opinion. They blindly leave the community for its fate whatsoever.

Same is the case of general education. Influential elements are still there, inside community, who discourage school education of our boys and girls. Lack of general education has adversely effected the social, cultural, political and economical development of the community. Rate of literacy in Muslim community is 59.1 per cent. It is further worse among women. Without internal thrust and inspiration we would not be able to convert ourselves as a community capable to fetch our due share in power and play an effective role as citizens of India. A movement determined to rebuild the community, with a hand touch in all areas of life, is the call of the time.

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