



POLICY PERSPECTIVES FOUNDATION

# **Understanding the Process of Radicalisation amongst Muslims in India**





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# UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF RADICALISATION AMONGST MUSLIMS IN INDIA

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# PPF

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Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF) was founded in 2005 as a non-profit apolitical think tank on matters of national interest and issues. The organisation's activities focus on complex and inter-connected challenges to internal peace, stability and development in India. It promotes debates and dialogues with scholars, development practitioners, civil society, government organisations and other stakeholders, and implements training, research and advocacy programmes on issues of national interest. Our activities broadly fall under three categories namely spreading awareness, building capacity and promoting resilience.

## Understanding the Process of Radicalisation Amongst Muslims in India

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## A few words on behalf of (PPF)

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**R**adicalisation has always been a matter of concern for India which hosts the third largest Muslim population and has a near and extended neighbourhood where several major violent groups operate in the name of Islam. Activities of these groups have brought untold miseries to the people and destroyed and/or debilitated state structures in the region.

India too has not remained unaffected. At the same time, it is perceived that both the trajectory and the extent of the process of radicalisation in India, even while causing serious concerns, follow a somewhat different path compared to some of the other nations, particularly the western ones. The latter contributed a disproportionately higher percentage of recruits to violent Islamic cause globally than India.

We, at the Policy Perspectives Foundation, felt the need for a better understanding of the process of radicalisation amongst the Muslims in India. We felt the need to identify factors that infused 'Indian Islam' or 'Islam in India' with a greater resilience against the forces of radicalisation and more importantly that of violent extremism. Such a study, we felt, might enable us to open the way for an informed strategy suitable to Indian environment and consolidate/strengthen its intrinsic quality.

We approached Prof. Anwar Alam to undertake this study and we were delighted with his prompt acceptance.

This monograph written by Prof. Alam breaks a new ground by trying to understand the core elements of the process of radicalisation in India. This will help us anticipate the trajectory of radicalisation and its extent in the coming years.

Socio-economic backwardness combined with cultural and identity related issues are often exploited in the name of religion. New and second/third generation youth both in urban and rural areas, are exposed to social media and have different and distinct aspirations. Such youth need attention in every community. Radicals and extremists exploit these sections and their perceived grievances. This phenomenon is visible in the North East or/and Left-Wing Extremism affected areas. This becomes more poignant when religion is added to the extremist agenda.

Despite this, there are some signs of hope. Civil society is waking up to the danger. In the context of Muslim community in India, a counter movement is slowly emerging with several Muslim groups including some prominent leaders expressing their rejection of violent extremism. These are positive signs, but the turning point in the context of radicalisation is still very far off.

There is a need to strengthen and acknowledge those who, from the community, are raising their voices against violent extremism. In doing so, however, it is important to adopt a balanced and positive perspective to avoid sharpening of the religious fault-lines. The latter, otherwise, would negate much of the good work being done through various initiatives undertaken by the civil society organizations and government either jointly or severally to thwart radicalisation at the local or grass roots level.

Prof. Alam has rightly avoided making prescriptive suggestions beyond highlighting the features that are unique to Islam as practised in India and help shape a genuine and indigenous response to radicalisation. This will be a useful addition to the existing literature on radicalisation in India.

This monograph will hopefully be received well by both serious scholars and lay readers.

*P C Haldar*  
New Delhi  
September 15, 2018



# Preface and Acknowledgement

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The idea of undertaking this study on understanding the process of radicalisation amongst Muslims in India first emerged during the informal sessions on the issue at the Policy Perspectives Foundation (PPF), New Delhi. During the course of these discussions, two critical gaps were identified related to the issue of radicalisation, terrorism and de-radicalisation.

The first concern is that moderate character of Indian Muslims and Indian model of democracy did not receive adequate attention in the world despite a degree of international appreciation over the relatively negligible participation of Indian Muslims in the global jihadism. There is little explanatory work to this fact beyond the acknowledgement of limited role of Indian democracy and secularism, while ignoring the significant contribution of Indian cultures, religions and traditions in arresting the growth of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism amongst the Indian Muslims. In fact, a comprehensive explanation pertaining to Indian social and cultural ethos and its impact upon the political culture of India, which greatly constrained and insulated the process of radicalisation amongst Muslim youths in India, was found to be thoroughly lacking.

Europe, too has deep and strong democratic and secular framework of governance, but that did not prevent a good number of immigrant Muslims as well as Muslim citizens to get radicalised and migrate to centre of global jihadism in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

A second concern is that while a number of studies on radicalisation and de-radicalisation has been conducted from the perspective of top-down state-security discourses; civil society perspectives with bottom-up approach on this subject matter either hardly exist or have been greatly undervalued.

When the PPF graciously offered me to undertake a small scale study on this subject, I was more than willing to engage with this research task. This was one of the themes, I have long been engaged with, though not directly in the context of radicalisation and terrorism, but as a part of comparative study on issue of integration of Muslim community in Europe (principally in France, Germany and United Kingdom) and in

India. This study was a part of my Alexander Von Humboldt Post Doctoral Fellowship, Germany, from September 2004 - February 2006, which provided me an opportunity to understand the emerging issue of 'Muslim Question in Europe' and to conduct a field work in the European setting. One of the working assumption of this post doctoral work was that India relatively has a better record in handling the issue of pluralism and diversity within the framework of 'national integration'. Therefore Indian experience could be helpful to European policy makers in dealing with emerging pluralism in the continent, of which Muslim immigrants is the strongest and largest component.

Since then my interest continues in this field of inquiry, which did result in a few scholarly publications along with participation in several seminars and conferences and a few opportunities to deliver lectures in Indian and European academic institutions. However, prior to this current research project, I was mainly approaching the issue of integration of Muslim communities and its subtext of 'Muslim militancy' in terms of implications of state policies.

This monograph titled "*Understanding the Process of Radicalisation amongst Muslims in India*", a PPF research project, provided me another good opportunity to look at the issue of 'Islamicist radicalisation and militancy' and its relative absence in the Indian setting afresh. It provides a society centred approach and holistic treatment to understand the process of radicalisation and its relative absence among Indian Muslims.

The monograph was thoroughly debated and discussed at two days long peer review deliberations. The need for second peer review deliberation arose due to interest that the theme generated in the first round of deliberation and the explicit realisation that another day was required for further debate and discussions. The draft monograph was circulated in 'good advance time' to ensure quality discussions at both peer review meetings. I indeed benefited from these discussions. To the best of my ability, I have suitably incorporated suggestions mooted during the peer review deliberations, in the final draft. I would like to thank all participants for attending the deliberations and airing their views frankly. This has helped in enriching the quality of monograph.

I am grateful to all Board Members of PPF for offering me this project. However, I am personally indebted to Shri K. M. Singh, Shri P. C. Haldar, and Shri Anil P

Bhatnagar. With Shri Singh, I have enjoyed a number of remarkable informal discussions concerning his observations and insights regarding Indian society and politics, particularly related to Jammu and Kashmir. These discussions helped me in relooking at my understanding about Indian state and government and greatly enriched my perspective on Indian society and politics, particularly in the field of national security, radicalisation and terrorism.

Shri P. C Haidar has been the moving spirit behind this project. The endless informal discussions that I had with him over a range of issues related to Indian society, politics and governance and radicalisation, de-radicalisation, terrorism, Muslim politics and others enriched my thought and perspective and provided new insights on these themes. He has been personally involved in this research project right from conceiving the idea to all stages of its execution. I am touched with his keenness and dedication towards this research project. I am further grateful to him for his painstaking efforts in examining the manuscript and making valuable suggestions.

I am indeed thankful to Sri Bhatnagar for his valuable suggestions during in house discussion over the draft. His insight in understanding 'everyday praxis' of Indian state, particularly from the field of Punjab where a majority of Sikh religious minority community lives, proved to be of immense help to me in de-coding the complexities associated with the development of multi-faceted phenomenon of terrorism and militancy amongst religious minority.

Finally, the project would have not been completed in such a short time without the support of Pooja, Nandita and others of the PPF Team, who have been particularly very helpful at various stages of completion of this research project.

*Prof. (Dr) Anwar Alam*  
New Delhi,  
August 15, 2018

# Glossary

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*Ahle Hadith*: an Indian puritanical Islamic sect within *Sunni* Islam. It believes in the literal meanings of *Quran* and *Hadith* as the only sources of Islamic faith

*Ahle-Sunnat Wal Jammata*: the one committed to upholding the basic tenets of *Sunni* Islam based on traditionalist jurisprudence

*Ajlaf*: lower castes in Muslim community

*Amir ul-Mu 'minin*: a title of Islamic rulership

*Ashraf*: high castes in the Muslim community

*Bid'ah*: any religious practice/innovation which was non-existent during the Prophet's era

*Bichua*: a practice of married Indian girl/women putting ring in her toes

*Bindi*: a coloured dot on the forehead of Indian married women

*Darul-aman*: land of peace

*Darul-ahad*: land of pact

*Darul-Uloom, Deoband*: A *Sunni* Islamic educational institution of world fame, founded in 1866 in Deoband of Saharanpur district, Uttar Pradesh.

*Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow*: A *Sunni* Islamic educational institution of world fame, founded in 1894 in Lucknow.

*Fuqahaa*: singular-Faqih, Islamic jurist or scholar of Islamic jurisprudence.

*Hadith*: sayings or deeds of Prophet Muhammad

*Hijra*: Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina

*Ibadat*: worship of Allah

*Jahiliyyah*: period of ignorance preceding the origin of Islam

*Jalabiya*: A traditional Arab garment worn by both males and females

*Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind (JIH)*: The Indian wing of Jamaat-e-Islami- A *Sunni* variant of Political Islam established by Maulana Syed Abul A'la Maududi in 1941.

*Jamaat-e- Ulema Hind (JUH)*: A *Sunni* Islamic organisation bom in 1919 in the context of Khilafat movement. It has been closely associated with Darul- Uloom Deoband.

*Khalifa*: designation of successor Islamic ruler of Prophet Muhammad

*Madrassas*: Islamic religious educational institutions

*Ramzan*: a pious month of fasting for Muslim community

*Salaf*: the early Muslim generation up to fourth century after Prophet Muhammad

*Sharia*: the Islamic Law as deduced from *Quran, Hadith, Sunnah* and Schools of Law

*Sindur*: the practice of Indian married women of putting red powder on her forehead or in the parting hair of the head

*Shirk*: any religious practice in the name of Islam that has implication for associating God with something

*Tasawuf*: sufism, spiritual dimension of Islam

*Tawhid*: universality and oneness of God

*Ulema*: singular, *'aalim*, Islamic scholar

*Ummah*: global Muslim community

*Wahdat ul-Shuhud*: an Islamic doctrine that believes that Allah is distinct, separate and everything flows *from Allah*

*Wahdat ul-Wujud*: an Islamic principle that believes that since all creations belong to God; all things have Godly elements and hence needs to be loved, respected and preserved

# List of Acronyms

ABT	Ansarullah Bangla Team
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
AQIS	A1 Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent
BJP	Bharatiya Janta Party
CSDS	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
HUA	Harkat-ul-Ansar
HUJI	Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami
HUJI-B	Harkat ul Jihad al Islami Bangladesh
HUM	Harkat-ul-Muj ahideen
IB	Intelligence Bureau
IS	Islamic State
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISIM	Islam in the Modern World
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISS	Islamic Sevak Sangh
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JIH	Jamaat-e-Islami Hind
JMB	Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh
JUH	Jamaat-e- Ulema Hind
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
NCMEI	National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions
NCUPLB	National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language Board
NDA	National Democratic Alliance

NDF	National Democratic Front
NIA	National Investigation Agency
NMDFC	National Minority Development and Financial Corporation
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PFI	People's Front of India
POTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
PPF	Policy Perspectives Foundation
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SIMI	Students Islamic Movement of India
TADA	Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act
TTP	Tehrik -i-Taliban Pakistan
UAPA	Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act
UPA	United Progressive Alliance

## Executive Summary

Radicalisation, particularly the Islamicist radicalisation, has emerged the most important concern of policy makers as it affects the national health of the country. Nation States and governments across cultures and societies have adopted a variety of counter terrorism measures, discourses and de-radicalisation programmes. Within the larger ambit of this concern, *this monograph deals with a central question: why did the global Islamicist discourses represented by al Qaida and more prominently by ISIS fail to win over the Indian Muslims?* This seems more paradoxical considering the favourable internal and external conditions in the Indian society for the growth of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism. Internally, Muslims in India suffer from relative socio-economic and political marginalisation and regimes of Hindu-Muslim riots. Further, India has strong tradition of Islamic revivalist movements. Externally India operates within the global and regional Islamic matrix, and shares geographical proximity to the fields of terrorism emanating from pockets of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran and Arab world along with a fact that million of its Muslim diaspora in the Gulf and the larger Arab World are routinely exposed to *wahhabi-salafi* discourses. It was therefore expected that Islamic radicalisation and militancy would find a congenial ground to grow in India which however failed to materialise. The relative absence of reception of Islamicist radical discourses among Indian Muslims earned them and of 'Islam in India' globally as 'moderate Muslim /Islam'.

Before dwelling on the above question, the monograph examines the existing dominant narratives over the understanding of radicalisation and finds them *deficient* for two specific reasons: (a) the bulk of this literatures undertake a secular understanding of religion and tends to ignore the religious understanding of religion which makes the study of religious radicalism as merely one of the responses to the process of modernisation; (b) they often ignore the changes internal to religious traditions shaped through multiple processes of global development, which propel a section of people towards radicalisation. Thus, this study stresses the factor of 'religio-cultural alienation', which is not devoid of its material context. The twin factors of 'economic alienation' and 'democratic deficiency in governance,' though important in themselves, have traditionally been relied upon for understanding of causation of radicalisation. The underlying assumption behind giving due importance to the factor of 'religio-cultural alienation' is that it constitutes the very *being* itself.



The monograph takes a *longue duree* understanding of process of present day Islamicist radicalisation and traces its roots in the historical encounter of Islam with western modernity, which significantly shaped the development of a rigid, closed, hierarchical and masculine understanding of Islam. The modern Islamic revivalist traditions, mostly aroused in response to the western modernity, in order to overcome the 'crisis of Islam', promoted the discourse of *Wahdut al-Shuhud* over the sufistic impregnated discourse of *Wahdut al-Wujud* that brought a significant shift in the understanding of Islamic doctrine of *Tawhid* with a serious implication for radicalisation and violence. It further examines the interpretive field of Islamic conceptual categories and shifts in its meaning in modern times within global context, which has an implication for the growth of radicalisation among Muslims. It then explores the regional Islamic context with reference to Pakistan and Bangladesh and finds that the politics of Islamization in both countries is unable to influence the Indian Muslims towards the path of radicalisation, militancy and terrorism.

The monograph explores the discourse of everyday Islam and *Ulema* legalistic traditions to demonstrate that how their historical encounter with Indian plural traditions has made them very accommodative and tolerant in their everyday life process and produce an 'eclectic Islam', which is fundamentally different from *Wahhabi*-Arab-homogenised conception of Islam. Muslims in India are inheritor of plural legacy of Indian society and civilisation and thus, essentially a plural being (in terms of habit, language, food, everyday life styles, mode of expression and interaction etc.), though this syncretic life style is more prevalent among lower classes/castes than among the high classes/castes of Muslim community. Therefore, a great majority of them are inherently opposed to anything fixed, singularised, essentialised, violence prone *wahhabi-salafi* homogenised understanding of Islam. Further the combined interplay and *fuzziness* of Indian political process and secularism, which in turn has been historically shaped by India's plural-cultural matrix, along with discourse of minority rights provide a 'institutionalised space' that allows Muslim minority to live with full sense of dignity including religious dignity in both private and public life. This explains why global jihadism-represented by al Qaida and ISIS could not make any significant impact amongst Indian Muslims.

A second important feature of this monograph is that it attempts to delve into various reasons, which account for the growth of Islamicist radicalisation and militancy in the southern and western parts of India. The concluding part of the monograph

ends on a note of caution. It underlines that the delicate balance that used to exist between the nationhood, state and social diversities including the Muslim community appears to be breaking down in the light of a few recent public policies which is increasingly being looked upon within the Muslim community with a 'sense of unease' and insecurity vis-a-vis their faith. Such misperception of government policies may be found to be counterproductive from the point of view of the growth of radicalisation and militancy among a section of Muslim community in the long run; if the course correction is not under taken within time. One of the policy prescriptions that this monograph therefore strongly recommends that the government should consider strengthening diversity as value by institutionalising an academic discipline of 'sociology of diversity'.

Finally, the text prefers the term 'Isalmicist' over 'Islamic' to designate the trend of radicalisation, militancy and terrorism prevailing amongst a section of Muslim youths for two specific considerations: (a) it avoids the misunderstanding that radicalisation and terrorism among a section of Muslim youths has its *generic roots in the structure of Islam itself irrespective* of time and space or its spatial context and (b) it refers to violent construction of meaning of Islamic texts and traditions by Muslim actors of radical bent of mind, mostly having 'non-religious life styles' and without sufficient background or training in Islamic jurisprudence and knowledge system.

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## A.1 Introduction

The issue of radicalisation and terrorism among a section of Muslim youth across the globe has dominated the centre stage of global politics at least since the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979). The development of terrorist leaning groups such as Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba and others in Af-Pak zone and al Qaida and ISIS/ISIL/IS/Daesh (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/Islamic State of Iraq and Levant/Islamic State, hereby IS) and their franchise network and collaborative partners across the globe along with series of terrorist attacks in the Western and other cities of the world including 9/11 since mid 1990s posed and continue to pose a serious threat to global order and stability of country despite a significant erosion in their capability in recent years. Nation-States across the world and international organisations have developed various counter terrorist measures, discourses and de-radicalisation programmes to contain the menace of Islamicist terrorism.

India, too, has been victim of Islamicist terrorism of both types: cross border, mostly aided and supported by the state actors, prominently the Pakistani, and the indigenous groups such as Indian Mujahedin and others, often in collaboration with other international terrorist outfits. However unlike the other parts of world, particularly in the Muslim world and in the West, where a good section of Muslim youths have fallen prey to Islamicist ideology-either of al Qaida or ISIS or local varieties and physically participated in the global jihadism-whether in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq or in targeted terrorist operations across many cities of the world. The participation of Indian Muslims in global and domestic jihadism/terrorist activities has been significantly low or even negligible. In other words, compared to other Muslim parts of the world-whether living in majority or minority context-the Indian political and Islamic traditions have successfully insulated its vast segments of Indian Muslims from the global trend of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism

Compared to other Muslim parts of the world- whether living in majority or minority context- the Indian political and Islamic traditions have successfully insulated its vast segments of Indian Muslims from the global trend of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism despite the favourable internal and external conditions.

despite the favourable internal and external conditions. Radicalisation is largely confined to a miniscule section of Muslim youths, particular in the Southern part of India (the reason thereof has been reflected later in the text). The recent breed of security analysts, mostly coming from military security complex, however, continues to project 'IS led Islamicist radicalisation' as 'the biggest growing national security threat' to Indian political stability.

The fact of negligible participation of Indian Muslims in global and domestic Jihadism alone has made the Indian governments-whether Congress led UPA or BJP led NDA to take pride in its model of governance and in the international recognition of moderate character of Indian Muslims. This has also drawn global attention to Indian Islamic traditions, which has long been ignored in the Western academia partly on account of creation of Pakistan.

It must be underlined, however, that radicalisation/ militancy/terrorism being minor in trend does not reduce its significance. The impact of its violent activities causes serious damage to national fabric, sense of order and affects the national developmental priorities. For this reason, the Government of India has remained sensitive and accords top priority to arrest the growth of radicalisation and militancy among Indian Muslims.

In the light of the above, this monograph is principally intended to understand the *longue duree* process of radicalisation, its relative absence among Indian Muslim youths so far and possibility of its future growth, which is otherwise rarely highlighted in the academic productions on terrorism in the Indian setting. In other words, it attempts to explain *why* (and *how*) the Indian society and state has been successful in preventing the 'menace of Islamic fundamentalism/militancy/terrorism', and to see whether India offers any fresh perspective while dealing with the issue of Islamic fundamentalism/militancy/terrorism in particular and the integration of Muslim minority in general.

The monograph is divided in five parts. Section A consists of research questions, scope of the paper, justification of study and methodological notes that underpins the text. Section B reflects upon the meaning of radicalisation, re-examines the causes of radicalisation and critically engages with dominant explanations on the subject matter. This section also critically evaluates and points out serious gaps in the existing literature on the issues related to radicalisation and terrorism among a section of Indian Muslim youth. Section C deals with al Qaida and IS and explains why IS manages to generate more appeal compared to al Qaida, though both have very

limited appeal and impact on Indian Muslims. It also discusses the reasons for the growth of Islamicist radicalisation in the South and in the West. Section D broadly outlines the Islamic global and regional context as well as Islamic conceptual categories and its implications for influencing the process of radicalisation among Indian Muslims, particularly in Southern part of India. Section E highlights the role of three major variables-the nature of Indian political process including the discourse of secularism, nature of Indian Islamic traditions along with discourse and practices of everyday Islam and the government's counter terrorism measures that have significantly contributed to prevent the spread of Islamicist radicalisation and militancy among Indian Muslims. Section F is in lieu of conclusion, which builds a scenario in the light of recent developments that may intensify the process of radicalisation and militancy among a section of Muslim community in India and therefore, cautions the policy makers to take appropriate remedial measures to prevent this scenario from becoming a reality.

## A.2 Research Questions

Any discussion on the issue of radicalisation and militancy among Indian Muslims, no matter how miniscule is the trend, requires an examination of the following questions: How serious is the threat of Islamicist militancy to the Indian nation? What is the nature and scope of Islamicist radicalisation and militant threat to Indian society and nation? What are the causes of growth of Islamicist radicalisation?

How does internet facilitate the spread of Islamicist radicalisation? How and in what manner trans-national Islamic fundamentalist movements impact the segments of Muslim community of India? Which region of India and section of Muslim population is more vulnerable to the appeal of Islamicist ideology emanating from within and outside? What are the social bases of Islamicist radicalisation in India? Which caste/class segment of Muslim population is more vulnerable to the appeal of Islamicist radicalisation and militancy and why? Or is it a trans-class phenomenon? Is threat of Islamicist militancy primarily of import variety or does it have internal roots or modules? Or are they internally linked to each other? What is the nature of this linkage, if there is any?

Within the scope of above stated research questions this monograph is concerned with three fundamental questions: (A) What factors influence the process of radicalisation among a section of Indian Muslims youths? (B) What factors prevent the spread of radicalisation and development of Islamicist terrorism in the Indian setting? and (C) What are the possibilities of its further growth?

### A.3 Justification for the Study

- (i) India has been at the receiving end of Islamicist militancy in recent years, the most important example of which is 2008 Mumbai terror bombings. Between 2000 and 2014 a total of 36 major terrorist incidents<sup>1</sup> took place with the alleged involvement of Islamicist organisations or individuals throughout the country excluding the terrorist incidents in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and North East. These incidents do cast a shadow on the possibility of development of terror cells or modules or full-fledged militant Islamic organisations among a section of Muslim community of India. Some of alleged Islamicist terrorist organisations in India are Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Deendar Anjuman, al-Umma, Islamic Sevak Sangh (now converted first into People Democratic Front and later People Front of India), Indian Mujahedin, Muslim United Liberation of Assam in addition to J&K based several militant organisations.
- (ii) The very demographic and geographical location of India: home of third largest *Sunni* Muslim population and second largest *Shia* Muslim population in the world. Richard M Eaton has called the Indian subcontinent as the 'demographic fatherland of Islam'<sup>2</sup>.
- (iii) India is surrounded by 'Islamic Afghanistan', 'Islamic Pakistan', 'Islamic Bangladesh', 'Islamic Maldives' in South Asia; 'Islamic Iran' and 'Islamic Arab world' in West Asia; and 'Islamic Indonesia' and 'Islamic Malaysia' in South East Asia. The prefix 'Islamic' before these nations and region signifies the current phase of ascendancy of Islamic moorings in these nations, which does influence the foreign policy behaviour of these nations<sup>3</sup> and therefore has an implication for stability and growth of India. Moreover, millions of Muslims who are working in Arab Gulf countries are exposed on almost daily basis to Wahhabi- Salafi understanding of Islam, its value, norms and world view.
- (iv) The relative material, if not cultural, deprivation of Muslim community in India. Report after report including Gopal Singh Report (1980), Justice

1 The data has mostly been compiled from [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/mdia/database/OR\\_9-11\\_majorterroristattacks.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/mdia/database/OR_9-11_majorterroristattacks.htm) and <http://www.nia.gov.in>

2 Referred in Ullekh, NP and Singh, Siddharth, God's Recruits: The radicalisation of Indian Muslim youth in the age of the Islamic State, 23rd June 2017, <http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/cover-story/god-s-recruits>, accessed on 15.03.2018.

3 S. Sheikh, Naveed, *The New Politics of Islam: Pan-Islamic Foreign Policy in a World of States*. London: Routledge. 2002, also, Alam, Anwar, 'Islam and OIC: Foreign Policy Implications for the Muslim States With Special Reference to Iran, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan', *Islam and Muslim Societies: A Social Science Journal*, vol.3, No1, 2007, pp 1-13.

Rajendra Sachhar Commission Report (2006), Amitabh Kundu Report (2008), Rang Nath Mishra Commission Report (2010) and others have confirmed the relative social, economic and political marginalisation of the Muslim community in Indian society. Second, due to increasing communal riots in the post-independence period and the rise of majoritarianism in Indian politics, the Muslim community perceives a severe threat to its identity and security. Events such as demolition of Babri Masjid (1992), Mumbai riots (1993) and Gujrat riots (2002) are considered to have accentuated this perception and believed to have contributed to the process of radicalisation and growth of Islamicist radical organisation in the country.

- (v) India along with the rest of South Asia constitutes one of the major geographical centres of Islamic knowledge productions and therefore, is an integral part of Great Tradition of Islam. Global Muslim's cultural memory tends to visualise/imagine India in this form.
- (vi) Last, if not the least, one of the popular thesis for growth in Islamicist militancy and terrorism worldwide is the disjunction between 'power centred Islamic theology' that was constructed and institutionalised in post Medina phase and perceived relative powerlessness that Muslim world is suffering at-least since mid 19th century. The 'power-centred sense of history' combined with 'Islamic idea of 'shaheed' (martyrdom), is considered to orient a section of Muslim youth on the path of radicalisation and terrorism. However, this widely considered thesis of Islamicist radicalisation does not seem to be working in the context of Indian Muslim youth despite the fact India has been seat of Muslim Empires and Muslims are currently considered as one of the most marginalised communities, relatively speaking, in the power structure of the country.
- (vii) Thus, given these favourable internal and external conditions, as outlined above (i-vii) and in conjunction with the historical traditions of Islamic fundamentalist movements ranging from Shah Waliullah school to Darul-Uloom-Deoband, Jammaat-i-Islami, and Tabiliqi Jammaat along with their worldwide network and influence and to the present day SIMI as well as *brutalisation of life process* of their co-religionists in Kashmir valley, Islamicist militancy and radicalisation is expected to find a congenial ground to grow among the Indian Muslims. However, so far, the Islamicist ideology has failed to develop a good constituency among Indian Muslims.

## A.4 The Scope of the Monograph

The scope of this monograph is limited in three senses. First it does not undertake a detailed analysis of development of Islamicist militancy in Kashmir valley and in parts of North East as these two regions differ significantly from the rest of Indian Muslims. However, wherever it is required the issue of Islamicist militancy in these states will be referred. The trajectory of development of Islamicist militancy in J&K and in North East is completely different and does not have any bearings on the development of Islamicist militancy in the rest of India. The militancy in Kashmir valley or in parts of North East should not be misconstrued as reflection of collective aspirations of the Indian Muslim masses. Neither any significant connection between indigenous home grown Islamicist radical/ terrorist outfits such as SIMI or Indian Mujahedin and Kashmiri Islamicist militant/ terrorist groups have so far surfaced either in academic publication or NIA investigation. In fact, there is a fundamental cultural disconnect between Muslims in Kashmir and North East and the rest of India<sup>4</sup>.

This paper does not dwell on the growth of Islamicist militancy in J&K and in the North East. Rather the Monograph confines itself to the developments related to Islamicist militancy in the rest of north, central, western and southern part of India.

4 In general, the Indian Muslims have hardly ever demonstrated their solidarity to the cause of Kashmiri Muslims. At best they appear to be totally indifferent to the plight of Kashmiri Muslims. There has not been a single resolution that has been adopted by any of influential Islamic groups either condemning the atrocities committed by the Indian state on Kashmiri Muslims or sympathizing with their plight or supporting the 'Islamic cause' of Kashmiri militant Islamic groups. One possible explanation for this indifferent attitude of Muslim populations at large or the stunning silence of various Islamic/ Muslim organisations over 'Kashmiri affairs' lies in the fact that there lurks a real danger in portraying their support to Kashmiri Muslims by a segment of majoritarian Hindu community or Hindu fundamentalist parties/groups as promoting the cause of "Muslim separatism" against Indian national unity and integrity. Therefore, they will be further suspected as 'disloyal' to the nation in the eyes of the majoritarian community— a charge from which they continue to suffer in the backdrop of the Partition of the country. However, at a deeper level it also appears that in the popular imagination of Indian people' including the Muslim communities, the J&K as well as North East has always appeared as separate, apart, not fully integrated and not wedded to the imagined idea of India, unlike the other states and regions. Even the Jamaat-i-Islami (J&K) works independently of Jamaat-i-Islami- Hind in the mainland India. On the other hand, it is also true that even Kashmiri Muslims are hardly concerned with the situations of the Muslims in the rest of the country. Thus, major incidents like demolition of the Babri mosque (1992), issue of Muslim Personal Law relating to Shabano case (1986) and more recently the infamous Gujrat riots (2002) hardly evoked any response in the Muslim dominated Kashmir valley. Commenting on the relationship of Kashmiri Muslims with the Muslims of rest of India, Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, the former chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), stated: "it is a fact that Kashmiris no longer react to anything that happens in India. Although the people are angry over the incidents across Gujarat, they did not react because they see India — including the Indian Muslims — as usurpers of their rights. Indian Muslims are Indians first and Indians last, that is why they have never reacted to whatever has been happening in Kashmir over the past 12 years. We don't hold any grudges against them about that, because we see them as Indians" (*Gupta, Dipankar*, 'Kashmiri Muslims Caught in the Middle', *Religion in the News Summer 2002, Vol.5, No.2*, <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RIN-Vol5No2/kashmir%20muslims.htm>, accessed on . Explaining, the "de-sensitisation" of Kashmiris towards the Muslim victims of the Gujarat carnage Mehbooba Mufti, the current Chief Minister of J&K and leader of the then ruling party of J& K, People's Democratic party, said in 2002: "Kashmiris have seen violence worse than what is happening in Gujarat today over the past 12 years. There is no tragedy that people here have not experienced. That is why we have become immune to all this. The lack of reaction among Kashmiri Muslims is also a reaction to the attitude of Indian Muslims towards the happenings inside Kashmir. They (Indian Muslims) hardly ever extended their support to Kashmiris when tragedies struck them. They never wanted to be aligned with Kashmiris for their own reasons". (Quoted in Jaleel, Muzamil, 'Gujarat bums, but Kashmir Cool', Indian Express, OP-ED, March 05,2002)



For the reasons stated above this monograph does not dwell on the growth of Islamicist militancy in J&K and in the North East. Rather it confines itself to the developments related to Islamicist militancy in the rest of north, central, western and southern part of India.

A second limitation of this monograph is that it does not undertake the empirical survey and structured and non-structured interview with 'focus Muslims', prominent Islamic organisations and Muslim political parties and 'lay Muslims' in order to understand their perception of Islamicist radicalisation and militancy and the underlying reasons behind this phenomenon. This is intended to be undertaken at a later stage.

A third limitation of this monograph is that it does not provide a detailed discussion of a particular Islamic militant/terrorist organisation—its structure, membership, leadership, modus operandi and its linkage with international Islamicist terrorist outfits etc.

## **A.5 Methodological Notes**

There are two sets of methodological clarifications that are required to be stated in order to structure the relationship between Islamic traditions, radicalisation and violence as well as an understanding of Islam itself. First, there exists a common tendency of labeling all kinds of violence in Muslim societies as 'Islamic violence/terrorism.' Part of this confusion arises due to the prevalent dominant intellectual culture of Orientalism, promoted both by the Western and Islamic scholars, that tend to explain the 'happenings' in the Muslim societies with reference to 'Islam', thereby making Muslims and Islam as synonymous. This blurs the distinction between Muslims as social subject with 'fuzzy Islamic identity' (at least in the Indian plural context) experiencing social, political and economic transformation and Islam as rich interpretative normative religious- legal tradition. This is important in order to draw a distinction between 'Islamic differences' and 'Islamicist radicalisation'.

Further, the labelling of 'Islamic violence' also comes from the inability of modern knowledge system to comprehend and analyse the 'protest politics', 'violence' and 'mobilisation' in the name of religion/faith. Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thinking allows little room for faith as linked to politics. In other words, while

modernity is accustomed to deal with ethnic or other form of protest including its violent manifestation that appears to be 'rational', religious protest and mobilisation is at best 'irrational expression of negative collective self, that was once overpowered, controlled, marginalised and privatised, but now threatens the 'peaceful, normal, secular democratic order'. The faithful, thus, becomes identified as a major obstacle to the realisation of secular-democratic goals. No wonder a fairly large number of western scholarships perceive Islam as a 'security threat' and construct a discourse of 'securitisation of Islam' or 'Islamophobia'.

A second set of methodological problem one encounters while addressing the issue of relationship between Islam, radicalisation and violence/terrorism is to do with understanding of Islam in modern context. In this regard I would like to make two submissions.

1. The secular-modern meaning of religion in terms of fixed principles, rituals, piety, personalised inner moral and ethical code having other-world orientation, which is primarily derived in the context of Reformation and Renaissance in Europe, cannot be applied to Islam or other non-Christian religious experiences or even to pre-Reformation Christianity. It does not capture Islam's multi-layered ontological vision as it is premised on a different epistemology and expanded in different historical contexts. Islam defies the private- public dichotomy that explains the relationship between Church and state in modern European landscape. This is partly because of the fact that Islam, unlike Christianity, lacks a singularised conception of Church and its Ulema is not equivalent to clergy/priest. While Church along with its hierarchical structure of clergy stands apart from society and has undergone the process of secularisation with eventual consequences of reducing its activities to the realm of private and social sphere; Islam is essentially a decentralised phenomenon without a single institutionalised centre and its Ulema is embedded within the society. Moreover, the pool of *Ulema*, unlike Church clergy, is open to Muslim from diverse professional background (doctor, engineer, business person etc.) and is not confined to only those coming from Islamic educational institutions.
2. The modern scholarship on Islam is replete with a debate on Islam vs. Islams. In this debate an "essentialised, textual, urban and Great

Tradition” form of understanding of Islam is contrasted with localised, varied and plural forms of understanding of Islam(s). In other words, Textual or Essential vs Sociological or Lived Islam<sup>5</sup> compete with each other in the realm of interpretation of Islam and its associated values and traditions.

In this debate, the issue of class, ethnicity, tribe etc. assumes a major role in experiencing and interpreting Islam. Notwithstanding the merit of this debate, I do not see any oppositional polarity between Islam and ‘Islams’. The two have been continuously interacting and negotiating with each other. It is through this process that an ‘Islamic’ position is arrived on various subject matters concerning human life including the issue of violence.

**T**extual or Essential vs Sociological or Lived Islam compete with each other in the realm of interpretation of Islam and its associated values and traditions.

By ‘Islam’ I refer to the totality of interactive and interpretive process that has been going on between Textual and Lived Islam since the inception of Islam and has produced the multiple Islamic traditions. It is for this reason that this text prefers the term ‘Islamic tradition’ over Islam as the latter is imagined both in terms of value, norms and practices within the particular Islamic tradition.

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5 Ahmad, Imtiaz and Reifeld, Helmut (eds.), *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2004).

Note

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## B.1 What is Radicalisation?

Before dwelling upon the domestic, regional and global forces and conditioning that have implications as well as limitations for the growth of Islamicist radicalisation and militancy in India, a short revisit to the discourse of radicalisation is required in order to make sense of development of radicalisation and its relative lack among the Indian Muslims. Radicalisation is a contested term because of many positive or non-harmful connotations that have come to be associated with the terms 'radical' and 'radicalism'. The notion of 'Progress' itself stems from a radical discourse that has historically advocated the 'rights based approach' leading to transformation of society and state in order to achieve a 'rights based good life'. Notwithstanding this debate and its consequent interpretations, this study has a different focus and adopts the definition applied in the PREVENT strategy: "Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism"<sup>6</sup>. European Commission defines radicalisation as the phenomenon of people embracing opinion, views and ideas, which could lead to acts of terrorism<sup>7</sup>. With regard to terrorism, this study follows the Council of the European Union in defining terrorism, which refers to terrorism as 'intentional acts that were committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation'<sup>8</sup>.

The Government of India and its concerned Ministries, particularly the Ministry of Home Affairs, have never attempted to define the term 'radicalisation' and 'terrorism'. This is in part due to historical moorings of Indian state/ government or

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6 Prevent strategy, Home Office 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-strategy-2011>

7 Commission of The European Communities (2005) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council concerning Terrorist Recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation, quoted in Bajpai, GS1 and Kaushik ,A, 'Thwarting Radicalisation in India: Lacunae in Policy Initiatives', *Social Crimonolgy*, an open access journal, Volume 5 Issue 1,2017, p. 2, pp 1-12 <https://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/thwarting-radicalisation-in-india-lacunae-in-policy-initiatives-2375-4435-1000166.php?aid=90710> access on 15.01.2018.

8 'European Union, Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on combating terrorism, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/GA/TXT/?uri=celex:32002F0475>

the fuzziness of Indian state that prevents it from defining anything including what it considers its core values. It rather believes in the practical play out of a phenomenon in the public sphere and developing a context specific understanding of that phenomenon. However, what is evident from statement made by political leaders from time to time is that Indian political leadership of any political dispensations, unlike the West, have made the strong de-linkage between religion, particularly Islam, and terrorism. Terrorism is one of the worst possible, but nevertheless avoidable, outcomes of radicalisation. In other words, although every terrorist is a radical, not every radical is a terrorist. In a similar manner, in the Muslim context every terrorist is Salafi but not every Salafi is terrorist.

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## B.2 Dominant Explanations of Radicalisation and its Fallacies

What causes radicalisation including religious radicalisation is difficult to speculate. It is a complex process and there is no single theory and causation that accounts for understanding of radicalisation. However, one minimal feature of radicalisation is its ideological component with perception of 'politicised other', if not the 'social other'. How this 'politicised other' will transform into 'enemy other' leading to violence and terrorism would, to a large extent, depend upon the perceived sense of injustice and humiliation arising out of interactive process between acquired ideational structure and local, national, regional and global dynamics. However, literature is replete with 'relative material deprivation'<sup>9</sup>, 'Western occupations of Muslim lands including Palestine and support for oppressive regimes'<sup>10</sup>, 'identity issues'<sup>11</sup>, 'poor political and socio-economic integration'<sup>12</sup>, 'feelings of humiliation'<sup>13</sup>, 'absolute authoritarianism and denial of access to state opportunities'<sup>14</sup> and 'reaction to modernity'<sup>15</sup> as the most common and decisive factors for the development of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism.

9 Gurr, Ted. *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1970.

10 Pape, Robert, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Random House Trade, 2006.

11 Roy, Oliver, *Globalized Islam, The Search for a New Ummah*, Columbia University Press, 2004.

12 Slooman, Marieke, MS Jean Tillie, Ph.D, *Processes of Radicalisation Why some Amsterdam Muslims become radicals*, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies Universiteit van Amsterdam October 2006.

13 Juergensmeyer, Mark, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. By. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000, Richardson, Louise, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat*, Random House Publishing Group, 2006.

14 Hafez, Mohammed M, *Why Muslim Rebels: Repressions and Resistance in the Islamic World*. Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner, 2004.

15 <sup>13</sup> Choueiri, Youssef M, *Islamic Fundamentalism: The story of Islamic movements*, Bloomsbury Publishing 3rd edition, 2010.

Operating largely within these causative factors with special reference to demolition of Babri Masjid (1993) and Gujarat riots (2002), most of the literature<sup>16</sup> traces the development of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism (e.g., Kashmiri militancy, Indian Mujahedin, SIMi, etc.) in India to the externalities (role of Pakistan or what is called cross border terrorism- both state and non-state actors such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, particularly in Kashmir, global jihadism including al Qaida and ISIS). These works do contribute to understanding the nature and discourse of Islamicist radicalism, the internal working of Islamicist radical/militant/terrorist outfits and nature of their leadership in India. However these academic publications suffer from insufficient knowledge of Islamic discourses, being rhetorical and polemical, lack empirical insight, largely follow the 'state security paradigm' and rely mostly on the inputs provided by the intelligence wing of the state, focus on externalities (politics in Middle East, the West, internet, Hindutva, Pakistan etc.) and tend to ignore the internal, historical process of the development of Islamicist radicalisation among a section of Indian Muslims. The scholarly productions on this subject matter are at best scarce, poor and lacking in depth analysis.

Though the above mentioned factors do contribute to the understanding of process of radicalisation, none, however, suffices independently to explain the drastic change in attitudes and behaviour of well-integrated individuals to indulge into terrorist activities whether in the West (London 2005, Paris 2015, Brussels 2016 and many others) or in India, where Muslims youths associated with Indian Mujahedin and other radical Muslim outfits allegedly committed a series of terrorist violence between 2000 and 2014. In fact, a large number of studies on terrorism, particularly Islamicist terrorism, have also pointed out that a good number of 'radical Muslims' come from well off family background<sup>17</sup> having middle and upper middle class, secular mode of life and bilingual roots<sup>18</sup>. Neither the general radicals including suicide bombers<sup>19</sup> show any signs of mental derangement or psychopathology<sup>20</sup>.

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16 Some of the recent publications in this regard are Swami, Praveen, 'The Well-Tempered Jihad: The Politics and Practice of Post-2002 Islamist terrorism in India' *Contemporary South Asia* 16(3) (September 2008), pp. 303-322; Gupta, Shishir *Indian Mujahideen: The Enemy Within (Gurgaon, India: Hachette Book Publishing, 2011)*, Fair, C. Christine 'Students Islamic Movement of India and the Indian Mujahideen: An Assessment,' *Asia Policy* 9 (January 2010), pp. 110-119, Singh, T. Khrushchev, 'Who are the 'Indian Mujahideen?'' *Strategic Comments* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, May 30, 2008); Tankel, Stephen 'Indian Jihadism: The Evolving Threat', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2014, 37:7, 567-585, 'Islamic extremism in India', *Strategic Comments*, Volume 15 Issue 03 April 2009, and Piazza, James "Economic Development, Poorly Managed Political Conflict and Terrorism in India," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32(5) (May 2009), pp. 406-419.

17 Khosrokhavar, F. *Radicalisation*. Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2014

18 Ibid, also Kundani, Arun, 'Radicalisation: The Journey of A Concept'. *Race and Class*, vol. 54. No. 2, 325, 2012, Wiktorowicz, Q., *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005

19 Asad, Talal, *On Suicide Bombing*, Columbia University Press, 2007, Also, his, 'Thinking About Terrorism and Just War', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Volume 23, Number 1, March 2010, 4-24

20 Silke, A., Cheshire-cat logic: The recurring theme of terrorist abnormality in psychological research. *Psychology, Crime, and Law*, 4, 1998, 51—69.

The roots of religious radicalisation lie in the development of religio-cultural alienation mediated through the factors of economic and political deprivations. This refers to the process of inability to relate oneself to space and geography where one is embedded. Depending upon the political context this may lead to development of 'enemy perception' with potential to degenerate into terrorism. The rise of multiculturalism in late twentieth century have exposed the limitations of positivist-politico-juridical understanding of human nature. It has convincingly demonstrated that human beings are primarily cultural entity and religion and culture play a dominant role in shaping one's outlook<sup>21</sup>. Studies on Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism<sup>22</sup> identify the 'religious factor' as the source of radicalisation. This is due to subtle recognition that religious observances are closely tied to a person's sense of dignity and respect, a constitutive element of their very self, and hence experienced as something more than merely an infringement of one's basic freedom of 'choice'.

Religious observances are closely tied to a person's sense of dignity and respect, a constitutive element of their very self, and hence experienced as something more than merely an infringement of one's basic freedom of 'choice'.

Thus, as majoritarianism in India came to dominate the public space in more assertive manner since mid 1980s, a section among all religious minorities felt a sense of insecurity with regard to their religious identity, its preservation and practices. The militancy among a section of Sikh community in India, aided by section of its diaspora, in part, had its roots in the perceived violation of Sikh religious and cultural values, which even costed the life of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Apart of roots of Kashmiri militancy and terrorism also lies in their perceived collective fear of threat to Islam and its practice by the growing imaginary of 'Hindu Indian state' since mid 1980s. Similarly, a trend towards religious radicalisation among a small segment of Indian Muslims began to develop in the aftermath of demolition of Babri masjid on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992. The international global Islamicist discourse also played its part in increasing the religious insecurity among a segment of Indian Muslims. However, a perceived sense of denial

21 Taylor, Charles and Gutmann, Amy, *Multiculturalism and The Politics of Recognition* Princeton University Press. 1992., Kymlica, Will., *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minorities*. Oxford. 1995, Parekh, Bihku., *Rethinking Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, Palgrave. 2000, Modood, T., *Multiculturalism*, Second Edition, Polity. 2013.

22 Sageman, Marc, *Understanding Terror Networks*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press. 2004, Wiktorowicz, Q, *Radical Islam Rising: Muslim Extremism in the West*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005, HM Government, *Tackling Extremism in the UK: Report From the Prime Minister Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism*, 2013, Kundani, Arun., 'Radicalisation: The Journey of A Concept'. *Race and Class*, vol. 54. No. 2, 2012, 3-25.



of 'religious justice' does not necessarily mean, as some scholars, mostly from right, tend to subscribe the view that radicalisation, terrorism and violence in the Muslim context is rooted in the structure of Islam itself<sup>23</sup>.

It is equally important to stress that youth with secular-modern education and having limited understanding of religion feels more 'religio-cultural alienation' than those religious youth who have been either raised in traditional custom bound Islamic environment or have Islamic theological background. According to leaked ISIS records containing details of more than 4,000 foreign recruits, while most of the fighters are well-educated, 70 per cent state that they have only basic knowledge of Islam<sup>24</sup>. It is in this sense that Roy has rightly observed that 'terrorism does not arise from the radicalisation of Islam, but from the Islamisation of radicalism'<sup>25</sup>. This means that a few youths in almost all religious and secular traditions are radical in temperament by nature, shaped by socio-economic-political and ideological factors, and believe in violence as one of the legitimate means to secure their just goal and adopt an explanatory perspective-religious or secular to justify their radical mental outlook and violent actions-whether against the state or members of civil society.

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In this context, it is worthwhile to examine empirically how far the perceived violation of Islamic religious values and identities or its relative decline or absence in public sphere orients the member of Muslim community to indulge in the act of terror? It is not without merit that a growing number of Western scholars are seeking a reconceptualisation or re-visit of the Marshallian conception of citizenship so as to include the right to religion and culture in public sphere with a view to evolve a 21<sup>st</sup> century framework of governance of pluralisation of public sphere including

23 Lewis, Bernard, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', *The Atlantic*; Sep 1990; 47-60, and *The Political Language of Islam*, University of Chicago Press, 1991, Ahmad, Tufail, *Jihadist Threat To India: The Case of Islamic Reformation by a Indian Muslim*, Infolimner Media Private Limited; First edition ,2016, Singh, MS Navroz and Sahay, C. D ' The ISIS Phantamagoria and its implications for India: Building capacity to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism ,1-21, Occasional Paper, March 2017, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, Sahni, Ajai, 'Vulnerabilities and Resistance to Islamist Radicalisation in India, Jan12,2015, Middle East Institute, USA, <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/vulnerabilities-and-resistance-islamist-radicalisation-india>, accessed on 18.02.2018.).

24 Roy, Oliver , ' Who are the New Jihadis', <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2017/apr/13/who-are-the-new-jihadis>.

25 "Ibid.

religious diversities in public sphere<sup>26</sup>. On the other hand, India has traditionally demonstrated a post-modern sensibility towards the idea of pluralism and diversity in the realm of governance, which has received a set back in recent years.

An examination of this question further entails the exploration of what is considered the 'highest Islamic religious value' among Muslims? The pre-modern normative Islamic consensus on the highest meaning of Islam in terms of '*ibadat of Allah*' has today broken. It appears that today there is no consensus on this issue among Muslims and the notion of 'highest Islamic religious value' varies from one Muslim to another; from one Muslim school of law to another. It ranges from universal humanistic value of love, service and compassion in sufist-spiritual narrative of Islamic traditions to the political Islamist's violent, ideological, binary narrative of Islamic traditions—a trend which comes close to Cesari's notion of '*Salafisation* of Islamic norms'<sup>27</sup> and Eickelman and Piscatori's notion of objectification of Islam'<sup>28</sup>.

Another principle lacuna in most of Indian literature on the issue of Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism is that discussions on this subject matter have dominantly operated within the frame of 'discursive tradition of state security' or 'security studies' with 'coercive top-down approach'. Consequently, the scholarship on the issue of Islamicist radicalism and terrorism within India has not moved beyond the 'thesis of securitisation of Islam'<sup>29</sup> and 'Good Muslim vs Bad Muslim'<sup>30</sup>. Hence, the counter terrorist narratives and preventive measures remained focused on the 'hard aspects' of strategies to confront Islamicist radicalism/terrorism (strengthening intelligence, extrajudicial killing, elimination, disappearance, choking finance, targeting leadership, policing over Muslim neighbourhood, military intervention, restricting access to internet

The pre-modern normative Islamic consensus on the highest meaning of Islam in terms of '*ibadat of Allah*' has today broken. It appears that today there is no consensus on this issue among Muslims and the notion of 'highest Islamic religious value' varies from one Muslim to another; from one Muslim school of law to another.

26 Modood, Tariq. *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: a European Approach*, Routledge, London, 2006. *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea, Polity, London 2007*; *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*. Edinburgh Press, 2005, 'Muslims and Politics of Difference' *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 74, No. 1, 2003, 100-115, 'Moderate Secularism, Religion as Identity and Respect for Religion', *The Political Quarterly*, 81: 1-41, 2010 and 'Multiculturalism and Moderate Secularism', in Triandafyllidou, A. and Modood, T, eds., *The Problem of Religious Diversity: European Challenges, Asian Approaches*, Edinburgh, 2017, 52-75, Ramdan, Tariq: *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

27 Cesari, Jocelyne. *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies*. Palgrave Macmillan New York, 2013.

28 Eickelman, Dale F. and Piscatori, James. *Muslim Politics*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.

29 Cesari, Jocelyne, 'The Securitisation of Islam in Europe' Research Paper No. 14, APRIL, 2009, <http://www.euro-islam.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/cesari-2009.pdf>, access 20.7.2016.

30 Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. New York: Pantheon. 2004

etc.) rather than confronting softer aspects (ideas). Thus, while the West-led international community has succeeded in weakening and eliminating the physical and organisational structure/capability of designated Islamicist terrorist outfits including ISIS, the ideational-motivational structure remained intact.

What has been the trajectory of such efforts in India? In this context, as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, has declared 37 groups as terrorist organisations and accordingly imposed ban on their functioning. Among the Islamic/Muslim organisations so banned are SIMI, Indian Mujaheddin, Deendar Anjuman, A1 Badr, al Qaida, Jamiat ul- vMujaheddin, Dukhtaren Millat, Laskare-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Hizbul Mujaheddin, Harkatul Mujaheddin, and Al Umar Majuheddin, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM)/Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA)/Harkat-ul-Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI), IS or ISIS or ISIL; Lashkar-e-Taiba<sup>31</sup>.

Apart from outlawing the militant/terrorist organisations, the central as well as state governments used their coercive machineries. Such uses have heavily depended on the application of TADA (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities) (Prevention) Act, subsequently replaced with more stringent POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) since 2002 and later with the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 2012). The fact that Muslims constitute the largest segment of prisoners under anti-terror laws<sup>32</sup>, many times undergoing protracted detention with or without trial, tends to affect the perception of the community. Whether such coercive measures, in Indian setting, are proving effective in prevention or reduction of incidents of terror perhaps needs a separate academic scrutiny. According to Sahni, the intent to indulge in the terrorist activities remained; though such Muslim individuals and organisations lack the capacity to execute its intent<sup>33</sup>. The prisons often lack adequate space to house prisoners and may be providing a convenient place for radicalisation of the uninitiated. The recent studies indicate that a good number of imprisoned Muslims have been radicalised during their stay in jail<sup>34</sup>.

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31 [https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypijzW3WknFijnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDPlmXWo6uco/wiki/List\\_of\\_organisations\\_banned\\_by\\_the\\_Government\\_of\\_India.html](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypijzW3WknFijnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDPlmXWo6uco/wiki/List_of_organisations_banned_by_the_Government_of_India.html), accessed on 20.02.2018).

32 Eckert, Julia, 'Theories of Militancy in Practice: Explanations of Muslim Terrorism in India', *Social Science History*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Fall 2012, 321-345, Menon, Meena, 'TISS Report Points to Anti-Muslim bias of Police, MUMBAI, JUNE 24, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tiss-report-points-to-antimuslim-bias-of-police/article3563333.ece>, accessed on 15.02.2018., Raghavan, Vijay and Nair, Roshni, *A Study of the Socio-Economic Profile and Rehabilitation Needs of Muslim Community in Prisons in Maharashtra, 2011*, Centre for Criminology and Justice School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai., Farasat, Warisha, Shah, Amod and Prasad, Gitanjali, Law and Justice: 'Exclusion in Anti-Terror Legislations', *Indian Exclusion Report*, 2013-2014, pp 141-165, Book for Change, New Delhi.

33 Sahni, Ajay, 'Vulnerabilities and Resistance to Islamist Radicalisation in India' Institute for Conflict Management | Jan 12, 2015, <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/vulnerabilities-and-resistance-islamist-radicalisation-india>.

34 Neumann, Peter R., *Prisons and Terrorism: Radicalisation and De-radicalisation in 15 Countries*, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR), London, 2010.

The Indian government began to pay close attention to the functioning and curriculum of the *madarassas* institutions and initiated various efforts to control the management of private *madarassas* under the 'discourse of reform'. However, Darul Uloom, Deoband-the premier private *madarassas* institution in the country and many others have consistently opposed the government's regulatory and supervisory mechanism in the name of 'modernisation of *madarassas*'. These institutions fear that the governmental interference in its curriculum and pedagogy in the name of modernisation programme would ultimately lead to the dilution of Islamic faith.

However, what is evident is that hardly any of the prominent Islamicist radicals either belonging to Indian Mujhaeedin or SIMi or any other Islamicist radical organisations has *madarassas* background; rather they are product of modern, secular educational institutions. This is also in sync with the global trend. Why is it so? Is there a psychological factor playing its role. There is a view that this is in part because *madarassas' talba* (student) are assured of their Islamic faith and identity and derive confidence from their Islamic training and are rooted in every-day Islamic practices. On the other hand, urban- modern Muslims doubt their 'authentic Islamic self and therefore are more susceptible to be influenced by the radical preacher or various forms of internet materials. It is this segment of Muslim population who are mostly inclined to understand Islam as 'radicalised action oriented philosophy' including 'the discourse of Islamic state', *Khalifa rule*, *Amir ul Momin*, and *the Sharia rule*. These discourses satisfy their aspiration to remain a 'true Muslim', which in essence is radical version of modernity in the shape of radical Islamic narratives. To this extent, Islamicist radicalisation and terrorism is a modern phenomenon and product of modernity.

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Political Islamists (such as Maulana Maududi, Hasan al Banna and Imam Khomeini), theorised the construction of Islamic state on the basis of hard aspects of modernity (nation-state, homogenisation and centralisation) and rejected the softer

aspects of modernity (freedom, democracy, secularism, nationalism, equality). Unlike them, the present day Islamicist radicals and terrorists, who are mostly inspired by *Jahiliyyah* discourse of Sayyid Qutub, with their discourse of *Khalifa* rule or other version of Islamic rule including IS's *Khalifa*, provide a violent Islamicist critique of modernity and completely reject any of its value and institution and attempt to resurrect the imaginary radicalised version of 7<sup>th</sup> century Islamic rule.

The foundational structure of Jamaat-e-Islami in India and South Asia and Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Arab World is primarily based on modern (western) traditions of late 19<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and have long been in the production of fundamentalists, masculine, authoritarian Islamic discourses. They have produced a large number of Muslim intellectuals in the universities, educational institutions and other professional bodies with such Islamic narratives. A large number of extremist/radical/terrorist Islamic organisations are often the splinter group of these two large Political Islamist outfits. As an ideological force they are constantly in competition with other systems of value or ideas or ideologies.

On the other hand, the Islamic movements and *madarassas* in India, except the *Jamaat-e-Islami* and its splinter groups or its inspired modern day Islamicists, have historically conceived its role in terms of 'reforming the Muslims', transmitting purely religious knowledge and producing *Ulema* in the society so as to protect the Islamic identity and value of Muslim community in Indian society. One of the motivational forces has been to prevent the community, being minority, losing identity into the majoritarian Hindu culture and tradition. All *madarassas* that have proliferated in India since its independence irrespective of its sectarian identity and ideological colour are geared to preserve this goal. Since state, unlike Pakistan, is not the object of discourse in Indian *madarassas*, they are not inherently politicised, rather discourses in *madarassas* through their curriculum at various stages is geared to preserve what they considered 'true understanding of Islam' and preservation of religious identity of Muslim community. This is often a conservative interpretation of Islam, which partly flows from their conviction

The Islamic movements and *madarassas* in India, except the *Jamaat-e-Islami* and its splinter groups or its inspired modern day Islamicists, have historically conceived its role in terms of 'reforming the Muslims', transmitting purely religious knowledge and producing *Ulema* in the society so as to protect the Islamic identity and value of Muslim community in Indian society.

that 'true Islam' can be preserved only in its conservative form. Any idea of reform evokes fear among them<sup>35</sup>.

Another shortcoming of the above existing literature in India on Islamicist radicalism/militancy is that despite empirical evidence of these forces gaining ground in the southern and western part of Indian continent; no detailed study has emerged as to why Islamicist radicalisation is gaining ground in the South and West, in comparison to North where Muslims are relatively more economically, politically and socially excluded, victims of communal riots and educationally backward? This monograph attempts to fulfil this gap.

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35 In this context I would like to add my own personal meeting with a former Rector of Darul Uloom Deoband, now deceased. In the meeting that took place sometimes in 2003, I had urged the former Rector to also use the legitimacy of Darul Uloom Deoband for the educational advancement of Muslim girls. On hearing my plea, the Rector said: We are convinced that Islam can be preserved in the present form (*implying we do not consider education of women as important for the preservation of Islam*), however, you (*pointing towards me*) are free to open educational centre for Muslim girls in accordance with your understanding of Islam<sup>1</sup>.

## C.I Al Qaida and ISIS: Very Limited Impact on Indian Muslims

The Government of India and a critical section of civil society have been concerned about the impact of al Qaida and IS in radicalising of a section of Indian Muslim youth leading to their participation in global jihad. However, these outfits have failed to elicit positive response from Indian Muslim youths on a wider scale. As a result, compared to participation of Muslims from other parts of world including Europe, China, Middle East and North Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives, Muslims participation from India has either been sporadic or almost negligible in global jihadism even in places like Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. In fact, the intense competition that was witnessed between al Qaida and ISIS<sup>36</sup> led to al Qaida Emir Ayman al-Zawahiri to form al Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) in 2014 after three months of the declaration of Islamic State with Abu Baker al-Bagdadi as Caliph in parts of Iraq and Syria with a purpose to prevent the spread of influence of IS in South Asia.

It must be stated here that the differences between the two were/are not in terms of ideas. Both al Qaida and ISIS were/are wedded to closed, regressive *salafi* understanding of Islam and Islamic traditions that abolish the women's freedom, deny the rights to religious minorities, justify every state action in the name of divinity, believes in kind of authoritarian mode of governance that does not permit any kind of dissent. The differences were/are primarily in terms of strategies and tactics to expand their influence.

The AQIS aimed to expand its influence in South Asia, particularly targeting Bangladesh and India, through intense, high Islamicist rhetoric and propaganda using the means of social media. Three of their infamous videos and documents in this regard are: *Bangladesh: A Massacre Behind a Wall of Silence(2013f)*, *Why is There No*

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36 See, for difference between al Qaida and ISIS and their impact on South Asia see, Lynch III, Thomas F., 'The Impact of ISIS on Global Salafism and South Asian Jihad', August 15th, 2015, Hudson Institute, USA, <https://www.hudson.org/research/1608-the-impact-of-isis-on-global-salafism-and-south-asian-jihad>, accessed on 20.02.2018, Alam, Anwar, 'Reflections on 'Islamic' Terrorism with special reference to West Asia and North Africa (WANA)', *Dialogue Quarterly* Volume-18 No. 2 October-December, 2016, pp 34-35.

*Storm in Your Ocean? A Message for The Muslims of India (2014)*<sup>37</sup> and *Code of Conduct: Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (2017)*<sup>38</sup>. It highlighted the alleged brutalities by Indian Government in Kashmir, its support to the Shiekh Hasina Government's anti-terror repressive policy against Islamicist terrorist outfits in Bangladesh, and marginalisation of Muslim community within India including the demolition of Babri Masjid (1992) and Gujarat riots (2002). However, AQIS miserably failed in winning over a section of Muslim youths except bringing a Kashmiri militant youth, Zakir Musa, within its fold to head an *Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind* with some of his supporters.

The AQIS, exercised considerable influence over Bangladesh-based Islamicist militants groups such as Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT)/Ansar al Islam, Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), and Harkat ul Jihad al Islami Bangladesh (HUJI-B). But it could not expand their activities in the state of West Bengal and parts of North East, notwithstanding the media reports that highlighted the danger of Islamicist terrorism in North East through Bangladesh based Islamicist militant outfits. According to South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP) the major terrorist incidents between 1990 and 2017 does not include any terrorist activity related to AQIS or ISIS inspired or AQIS or ISIS linked organisations in NorthEast<sup>39</sup>.

Unlike al Qaida, ISIS is relatively considered more successful in influencing Muslim youth including a few from India. Much emphasis has been placed on ISIS's sophisticated use of internet forums and social media to spread its message and influence the young Muslim mind. It has been argued that the availability of ISIS-related propaganda in the open-domain has increased the risk for radicalisation through internet and social media<sup>40</sup> and succeeded in motivating a section of global Muslim youth including a few from India towards its cause. According to one research, Islamicist Jihadist groups post at least 90 tweets every minute and have more than 90,000 accounts<sup>41</sup> where fighters and supporters are uploading information, photographs,

37 Available on <https://jihadology.net/?s=Bangladesh%3A+A+Massacre+Behind+a+wall+of+silence&submits>, accessed on 28.5.2018, for its Hindi version, see, <https://vimeo.com/85618850>

38 "Code of Conduct: Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent," As Sahab Media Subcontinent, June 2017,, [https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/al-qacc84\\_idah-in-the-indian-subcontinent-22code-of-conduct22-en.pdf](https://azelin.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/al-qacc84_idah-in-the-indian-subcontinent-22code-of-conduct22-en.pdf), accessed on 28.05.2018. For its full text in English, see, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/India/document/papers/Wts.pdf>, accessed on 28.05.2018.

39 Major incidents of terrorist violence in Assam, 1990-2017, SATP, New Delhi, available on [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/data\\_sheets/majorincidents.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/assam/data_sheets/majorincidents.htm), accessed on 20.02.2018.

40 See, Behr, Ines von, Reding, Anais, Edwards, Charlie, Gribbon, Luke. *Radicalisation in the Digital Era: The Use of the Internet in 15 cases of Terrorism and Extremism*, Rand Europe, 2013.

41 Berger, J.M., and Morgan, Jonathon, The ISIS Twitter Census Defining and describing the population of ISIS supporters on Twitter, The Brookings Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World Analysis Paper | No. 20, March 2015, [http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-bergermorgan/isis\\_twitter\\_census\\_berger\\_morgan.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/03/isis-twitter-census-bergermorgan/isis_twitter_census_berger_morgan.pdf), quoted in Desai, Shweta, 'India Turns to a Soft Approach to Prevent Radicalisation', September 28, 2015, Centre for Land and Welfare Studies.



videos and tailored views all as a part of propaganda, in real time. A majority of the ISIS/al Qaida recruits including of Indian origin are believed to have been radicalised by online charismatic handlers. It is considered that these preachers utilised the Islamic resources, principally *Hadith* and (less) Quranic verses on various social media sites including Facebook and You Tube, Snapchat etc. to motivate people in joining *jihad* for a spiritual journey including 'better material life' in hereafter.

Without undermining the role of internet in facilitating the process of radicalisation, however it must be underlined here that 'online radicalisation' has mostly worked in two geographical contexts: the western and Muslim West Asian & North African. In the former, Muslim immigrants or 'convert indigenous Muslims' mostly turn to internet for Islamic guidance in the absence of 'institutionalised Islamic sources for guidance' (mosque, *madarassas*, *Ulema*, Islamic historical traditions etc.) and in the process get radicalised. In the latter, Muslim youths turn to internet in search of 'true Islam'<sup>1</sup> as they highly distrust their own Islamic institutions and media outlets for its complicity to the ruling political authority. In fact, political Islam has arisen in part as oppositional force to the role of 'official Islam' in Muslim majority countries; in part due to authoritarian political context, failure of 'secular state systems' to effectively address socio-economic- political grievances of lower segment of societies and by providing cheap services (food, medical clinic, primary schooling) to them.

Thus, in a recent study on radicalisation in Bangladesh it was found that while 61 per cent of respondents considered the Internet as the most powerful media to motivate the young population to radicalisation<sup>42</sup>, 73 per cent of the respondent mentioned that they have no direct experience regarding radical activities through the internet<sup>43</sup>. Within the Indian context, the online viewers of Jihadi websites range from 150-250, (mostly from the South) according to different sources and are reported to be under monitoring by the government agencies<sup>44</sup>. Similarly, ISIS-Khorasan model and its *Dabiq* magazine (particularly number 12 and 14) with its focus on 'revival of *jihad* in Indian subcontinent failed to elicit positive response from Indian Muslim youth, though it did evoke response from pockets of Afghanistan (splinter group of

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42 Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), 'Local Drivers and Dynamics of Youth Radicalisation in Bangladesh', BIPSS, Dhaka, October 2017, p. 46.

43 "Ibid.

44 V Balasubramanian puts the figure 150. See his, 'Islamic State: The New Brand of Terrorism in India', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 31.2 Apr-Jun 2016 <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/islamic-state-the-new-brand-of-terrorism-in-india/> accessed on 20.04.2018.

Hekmatyar in Afghanistan), Pakistan (Tehrik-i- Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Jundallah group) and Bangladesh (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh and Ansarullah Bangla Team).

However, there is nothing new for 'Indian subcontinent' being featured prominently in the imagery world of jihadi/radical Islam. The subcontinent has been on the radar of global jihadi Islam for two specific reasons: (i) it is considered the 'lost Islamic space' to be recovered again and (ii) it has been seat of Muslim empires and powerful traditions of Islamic revival with worldwide influence, which parallels only to Islamic revivalist movement in the Arab world.

In fact, the appeal of the IS to a section of Sunni Muslim youths across the world including a few from India is due to two specific reasons: -

First, the development of IS in the 'Arab heartland' and restoration of Caliphate in the hand of (*pure*) Arabs is very important factor in the Muslim imagination, particularly for radical Muslims, about its Islamic history. A great number of established *Ulema* including Rashid Rida (1865-1935) and many Muslims associate the 'fall of Islam' with transfer of Caliphate into non-Arab Turkish hands. On the contrary, its restoration into an Arab hand generates a hope for the recovery of imagined Islamic might and good life.

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Second, while all modern Islam political movements have coexisted along with the structure of nation state;<sup>45</sup> the IS successfully questioned the modern notion of territorial nationalism, upon which rests the modern international order. In doing so, IS unsettled state- boundary structures created by the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) in the aftermath of the First World War and unilaterally appropriated the right to represent the global Muslim community in the name of Caliphate of Islamic State. Thus, the IS successfully resurrected the discourse of Pan-Islamism against the modern discourse of territorial nationalism, which has historically been vehemently derided

45 See, Piscatory, James, *Islam in a world of nation State*, Cambridge University Press, 1986, also, *Islam in Political Process*, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

by the advocate of Islmaicist radicalism as the single most satanic/western discourse that caused disunity and misery in the Muslim *Umrna*. However, it may be noted here that Islamic conception of *Amir ul-Mu'minin*, Islamic state, *Khalifa*, or *Sharia* rule has gained a new legitimacy among a section of Muslim youths, particularly in West Asian and North African countries, due to failure of the secular political order in addressing the issues related to democracy, equity, corruption and liberation of Palestine.

The combination of these two factors along with its rapid success over parts of Iraq and Syria partly explains why IS enjoys greater legitimacy over all other radical Islamic groups and attracted a section of Muslim youths from across the globe including India to migrate to Syria and Iraq in support of IS. These youth undertook this journey with an understanding and hope that the newly bom 'Islamic state' under the leadership of 'authentic Sunni Arabs' is a successor to 'Islamic state' created by Prophet Muhammad in 7<sup>th</sup> AD and hence will once again redeem the glory of Islam. Both as a part of ideological conviction and as a part of strategy the self-declared ISIS Caliphate used the exclusive, masculine and violence prone West Asian state tradition as well as of selective Islamic narratives, particularly belonging to *salafi hadith*, for instilling fear, disciplining and coercing people to support the Caliphate. In this sense the ISIS represents the early violent experience of Wahhabi's inspired *Ikhwan* in 1920s and 1930s in Saudi Arabia<sup>46</sup>.

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Even though ISIS has been relatively successful in its ideological appeal and attracting a section of Muslim youth across the globe, its impact on Muslim youths of India has been extremely limited. This has been confirmed from government as well as non-government sources, though they differ in terms of actual number of Indian Muslims having association with ISIS in any form.

In this context NIA (National Investigation Agency, Government of India) - the nodal body for investigation of terrorist cases in India, has registered 20 cases related to ISIS out of 63 cases under 'jihadi' category in its different police stations between 2009 and 1918<sup>47</sup>. In January 2017, the NIA in a press conference stated that

46 <sup>4</sup> Al-Rasheed, Madawi, 'The Shared History of Saudi Arabia and ISIS', HURST, 28 November 2014, <http://www.hurstpublishers.com/the-shared-history-of-saudi-arabia-and-isis/> accessed on 21st October 2016

47 NIA Cases, <http://www.nia.gov.in/nia-cases.htm> accessed on 20.04.2018.

so far it has arrested 52 Indians including converted Muslims from Christianity and Hinduism for their alleged association with ISIS and provided the following educational, professional and religious break up of these alleged persons: 20-graduates or engineers, 13-matric passed, 12-diploma holders, 4-12th passed, 3-post-graduates with Master of Arts or Master of Computer Application degrees, 85 per cent Sunni Muslims and the rest converted, 50 per cent belong to 'Ahle Hadith', 30 per cent to 'Tabligi Jamaat' and 20 per cent to Deobandi<sup>48</sup>.

Another source, writing in December 2017 and referring to NIA and Ministry of Home Affairs stated the following: 103 Indians were arrested for having links with ISIS with State of Uttar Pradesh having the largest numbers (17), followed by Maharashtra (16), Telangana (16), Kerala (14) and Karnataka (8)<sup>49</sup>. According to Shweta Desai, "while there is no centre of gravity where ISIS ideology is at its strongest, the suspected ISIS recruits have come from these 11 states: Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kerala, Assam, Punjab, West Bengal and Delhi"<sup>50</sup>. Telangana has the highest alleged ISIS sympathisers (65) followed by Karnataka (50), Tamil Nadu (48) and Kerala (45) of 200 people under Intelligence Bureau (IB) monitoring for online search related to ISIS<sup>51</sup>. Dhruva Jaishankar and Sara Perlangeli found 142 Indian having confirmed affiliation with ISIS in some way of which 37 recruits or sympathisers belonged to Kerala, followed by Telangana (21), Maharashtra (19), Karnataka (16), Uttar Pradesh (15), Madhya Pradesh (06), Tamil Nadu (05), Gujarat (04), Uttarakhand (03) Bengal (03), J&K (02), and one each from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi and Rajasthan<sup>52</sup>. V Balasubramanian found that at least 27 Indians had joined the Islamic State, out of which six had been killed, one returned voluntarily and around 70 per cent of these recruits had travelled from South India<sup>53</sup>.

48 'Converted Hindus, engineers among 52 ISIS terrorists held by NIA', PTI | Updated: Jan 19,2017,08.07 PM 1ST, <https://economic-times.indiatimes.com/news/defence/converted-hindus-engineers-among-52-isis-terrorists-held-by-nia/articleshow/56670000.cms>, accessed on 20.04.2018

49 'Over 103 Indian Arrested For Having Links With ISIS, UP Tops The List', Outlook Web Bureau, 27 December 2017, <https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/over-103-indian-arrested-for-having-links-with-isis-up-tops-the-list/306045>, accessed on 20.4.2018, also, Chaitanya Mallapur, 103 Indians Suspected Of Being ISIS Sympathisers Arrested, 'Very Few' Have Joined, December 26,2017, <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/103-indians-suspected-of-being-isis-sympathisers-arrested-very-few-have-joined-73290>, accessed on 20.04.2014.

"Desai, Shweta, *India Turns to a Soft Approach to Prevent Radicalisation*, September 28,2015, Centre for Land Welfare Studies, New Delhi, [http://www.claws.in/articles-list.php?authors\\_id=254](http://www.claws.in/articles-list.php?authors_id=254), accessed on 20.02.2018).

51 Nanjappa, Vicky, Which Indian state has the highest ISIS fanboys, December 15, 2015, *One India*, <https://www.oneindia.com/india/which-indian-state-has-the-highest-isis-fanboys-1956343.html>, accessed on 20.04.2018.

52 Jaishankar, Dhruva and Perlangeli, Sara, Assessing the Islamic State threat to India: It is a serious but manageable challenge May 8, 2017, Brookings, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/assessing-the-islamic-state-threat-to-india-it-is-a-serious-but-manageable-challenge/>, accessed on 20.04.2018.

53 Balasubramanian, V, 'Islamic State: The New Brand of Terrorism in India', *Indian Defence Review*, Vol. 31.2 Apr-Jun 2016 <http://www.indiandefencereview.com/news/islamic-state-the-new-brand-of-terrorism-in-india/> accessed on 20.04.2018

In addition to ISIS's linked terrorist cases, the South and West have been target of other major Islamicist terrorist outfits. Out of 36 major terrorist activities conducted throughout India excluding J&K and North East between 2000 and 2014, 18 have been conducted in the Southern and Western states. These states are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Further, a majority of Muslims who attempted or even succeeded to join ISIS or detained or interrogated have mostly come from states in Western and Southern region.

## C.2 Social Profile of Radical Indian Muslims

In terms of profile of those suspected Muslims and have been in custody, jailed, detained, arrested, interrogated for their alleged linkage with terrorist activities, they predominantly belong to upper caste/middle class with secular educational background and living in the urban space. This is not surprising considering the fact the predominant leadership of all Islamic movements in India has ashraf (upper caste) background. It is mostly the ashraf Muslim class who migrated to Pakistan.

## C.3 Growing Islamic Radicalisation in South and Western India

What comes out evidently from the preceding analysis of al Qaida and more so ISIS is that apart from its very limited impact upon Indian Muslims, it has relatively more visible influence in Southern and Western parts of India. In other words, the trend of Islamicist radicalisation, no matter how feeble it is, is relatively stronger in these parts of India. There are several instances of this trend, apart from the above mentioned data. One such instance is chopping of hand of a teacher for asking a question related to Prophet Muhammad<sup>54</sup>. This trend appears to be more puzzling because unlike north, Muslims in this region do not have a legacy of Partition, history of Hindu-Muslim communal riots and socio-economic and educational backwardness. However, there are a couple of factors with substantial differences in the local contexts that orient a section of Muslim youths towards radicalisation and militancy in different parts of Southern and Western India. These factors may be classified as follows:

1. Historically, unlike in the North, Islam in Southern parts of India has neither been a dominant discourse, nor visible in the public sphere or dominantly affected the local life styles (food habits, cuisine, dress,

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54 Philip, Shaju ,13 guilty of chopping Kerala professor's hand, Indian Express, May 1, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/13-guilty-of-chopping-kerala-professors-hand/> , access on 20.4.2012.

languages) and practices. It was the 'discourse of caste' and anti-Brahmanical backward caste (if not anti-caste) movement that historically dominated the public sphere in the South and West India. A majority of Muslims are also designated as backward caste groups and thus, benefitted from affirmation policies pursued by various governments, which contributed towards keeping 'the discourse of Islam' or 'politics of Islamic identity' subdued for a long time.

With the newly gained money from the Gulf and educational advancement, a section of Muslim youth started discovering their 'identity of Muslimness/Islamicness' mostly in the context of their historical encounter with Arabs and their recent sojourn in parts of Arab world. This process has intended and unintended consequences of differentiating oneself with local life practices in which they found Islam and Muslims of the generation of their forefathers totally in harmony with localised plural culture.

The Wahhabi-Salafi discourses, which have already started penetrating the region since 1970s via travel, money, and due to absence of credible Islamic institutions to counter this discourse, appealed in satisfying their aspiration to be 'proper Muslim'. This process further strengthened and politicised in the post Babri Masjid and post 9/11 context resulting in some of them adopting the path of radicalisation, violence and terrorism.

2. Compared to the Northern and Eastern parts, Muslims in Southern and Western parts of India are relatively more well off, formally educated and urbanised. It is this demographic structure of any community that helps in crystallising the perception of individual members about himself/herself, become conscious of their own identity and gradually delve in the process of differentiating from others by consciously displaying the exclusive norms and symbols related to their religion, culture and tradition. This may lead to the process of cultivation of the perception of 'other' vis-a-vis state or people which may degenerate into the 'enemy other' depending upon the political context. The rate and pace of Islamisation among middle class Muslims in South is far greater than in North as exhibited in strong identification with 'Urdu' as language of Muslims, growing phenomenon of veil, increase in observance of rituals and tremendous increase in the publications of Islamic literature. More recently,

the Tabilghi Jammāt held its *ijtima* (Islamic religious congregation) in Aurangabad district of state of Maharashtra from 27-29th February, 2018, which is considered to be attended by one crore Muslims from all over India, the largest ever gathering in such *ijtima*<sup>55</sup>.

3. Unlike the North, the Muslim community in the South and West does not have Islamic institutions of repute that can regulate everyday Islamic value and practices. The existing Islamic institutions have mostly come in the context of Gulf money and are mostly wedded to the discourse of *Wahhabism* and *Salafism*. However, compared to North, these institutions are considered peripheral and therefore part of the Islamic militancy may come from the motivation to demonstrate/assert their Islamic identity.
4. The rate of *salafisation* and *wahhabisation* is much greater in South and West in comparison to North partly on account of their historical connectivity with Arab land. This trend is being represented by the development of Islamic Sevak Sangh (ISS) in mid 1990s led by Ahmad Madani, which was later transformed into People's Democratic Party (PDP) and National Democratic Front (NDF) before becoming the dominant part of People's Front of India (PFI).
5. Among many Islamic outfits, it is Ahle Hadith, which is gaining greater influence in the South, particularly in Kerala. This can be due to its close proximity to Saudi religious establishment and therefore association with this organisation helps in social and economic mobility of the Muslims. Thus, connection with Ahle Hadith helps many Muslims to find a lucrative job in the Gulf. Second, due to its proximity to ruling establishment in the Saudi Arabia it espouses the Wahhabi worldview through various Islamic programmes and events. This in turn gives this particular organisation greater visibility in the public sphere.
6. The educated segment of Muslim population tends to identify more with 'reformist Islam' such as Jamaat-e-Islami, *Salafism*, Ahle Hadith as against the 'traditional' *Ahle-Sunnat Wal Jammāt* that believes in the moderate understanding of Islam and its various local practices such as veneration of dead or alive Sufi saints etc. Reformist Islam considers this kind of

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55 3-day Tableeghi Ijtema begins, Aurangabad witnessed a sea of heads', The Siasat Daily, Feb. 24, 2018, <https://www.siasat.com/news/3-day-tableeghi-ijtema-begins-aurangabad-witnessed-sea-heads-1322452/>, accessed on 21.04.2018.

practices as 'un-Islamic' or corrupt practice of Islam and seeks to establish the direct relationship between God and individual Muslim by obliterating all intermediaries in between. The growing shift from *Ahle-Sunnat Wal Jammata* to Ahle Hadith also reflects among Muslims a shift from rural to urban based economy. Finally, the growing inclination toward Ahle Hadith is also due to a large number of Muslim diaspora in the Arab world who returned home with a new understanding of Islam that prides faith in the Arab understanding of Islam as more original and purer version of Islam on account of symbiotic relationship between Arabs and Islam.

7. Due to the centuries old connection with Arab traders leading to inter marriage of Arab with local Muslim community many Kerala Muslims share a special affinity towards the Arab. This is born by the fact that Kerala Muslims celebrate the most important religious festival of the Muslim community -*Ramzan*, (special month fasting), *Eid* and *Bakrid*, in accordance with the dates and rituals of the Muslims of Arab Society. It is a common feature that Kerala celebrates these festivals on the date and day different from the rest of Indian Muslim population<sup>56</sup>.
8. The opening of a series of Arabic colleges by the Kerala government in 1950s and 1960s though tremendously helped the Muslim community to acquire proficiency in the Arabic language and getting access to opportunity structure in the Gulf, but also exposed them to the puritanical understanding of Islam prevailing in the Arab world.

Having explored the reasons for emerging trend of radicalisation and militancy amongst Muslim youth, though still confined to a small segment, particularly in Southern and Western parts of India, one should understand the global trends as well. This would involve excavating the Islamic macro variable at global and regional levels to get a perspective of the longue duree understanding of radicalisation in the Indian subcontinent.

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56 This differentiation between South and North in celebrating the Islamic festivals can be also due to difference in their respective latitude with implications for sighting the moon.



## D.I The Global Setting: Islamisation, Fundamentalism and Militancy

The global setting is witnessing the ideological movement of Islam or the process of Islamisation. The term 'Islamisation' refers to the process of 'Islamic value added' to all existing things: value, norms, customs, scientific invention, discovery, art, and architecture leading to the creation of Islamo-hierarchicus at the cost of syncretic identity of human civilizations.

Except a few liberal Islamic scholars, mostly those living in the Muslim minority context [Fateullah Gulen (b. 1941)<sup>57</sup>, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (b.1925)<sup>58</sup>, Muhammad Arkoun (1928-2010)<sup>59</sup>, Asghar Ali Engineer (1939-2013)<sup>60</sup>, Farid Esack (b. 1958)<sup>61</sup>, and Tariq Ramadan (b. 1962)<sup>62</sup>], all modern Islamic movements, if not all Islamic legal traditions, share the ontological vision of Islamic life in which diversity and pluralism is not celebrated; rather frowned upon, deemphasised and de-legitimised. In the Indian context it is difficult to argue that *Darul-Uloom-Deoband*, *Jamaat-e-Ulema-Hind*, *Jamaat e- Islami-Hind* and other Islamic movements champion the culture of diversity and pluralism, despite the fact that they advance the argument of *darul-aman* and *darul-ahad* to co-exist with non-Muslim population of India in post independent period. The belief in superiority and absolute supremacy of truth of Islam over all other religious truths with internal desire of Islamisation of India<sup>1</sup> continues to constrain these and other Islamic organisations from fully accepting and internalising the value of diversity, pluralism, democracy, secularism and composite nationalism. At best they are considered a pragmatic necessity to continue the work of Islamic

57 Fateullah Gulen is US based Turkish Islamic scholar, who have inspired a global Islamic movement called Hizmet or Gulen movement. The movement is best known for establishing secular educational institutions and inter faith dialogue centres across the world.

58 Maulana Wahiduddin Khan is an Indian hom Islamic scholar.

59 Muhammad Arkoun was Algerian born French citizen and eminent Islamic Philosopher. His works is widely known in the field of Islamic reformist ideas.

60 Asghar Ali Engineer was an Indian Islamic reformer and activist. He is known for leading a reform in Bohra community as well as promoting the pluralism, secularism and Hindu- Muslim cooperation.

61 <sup>69</sup> Farid Esack is a South African Muslim, an Islamic scholar and is known for his work in the field on inter faith dialogue.

62 Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss citizen and grandson of Hasan al Banna, the founder of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, is best known for his liberal interpretation of Islamic text and work for integration of Muslims in Europe.

dawa<sup>63</sup>. Based on Prophet Muhammad's pact (*ahad*) with the Jews of Medina after his *hijra* (migration) to Medina, the doctrine of *darul ahad*, in Indian context means that Muslims and non-Muslims have entered upon a mutual contract in India since independence in order to establish a secular state under which Muslims would be free to exercise their religious obligations, at least in the personal sphere<sup>64</sup>.

Further some of them, particularly *Jamaat-e-Islami* Hind and Popular Front of India are very active in organising seminars and conferences on themes of inter-faith dialogue, human rights, democracy, secularism and pluralism<sup>65</sup>. These activities at best arise out of the practical contingencies of Muslims being minority in India, which makes them to prefer a secular and democratic India; and as such these values are not article of faith for them. This Islamic process of homogenising Muslim is similar to development of western modernity that views the progress of history through single homogenised lens and privileges the secular values in all domains of life at the cost of other societal values. In fact, the encounter of Islam with modernity has further sharpened its identity and consciousness. The general impact of modernity, at epistemological level, upon the structure of Islam, which has bearing upon the development of phenomenon of Political Islam and has following implications for India:

1. The effect of colonialism on the concept of Islam has been to re-arrange Islamic priorities and identities worldwide, because of the us-versus-them character of colonial ideologies. Advocates of the transnational concept of Islam gave priority to 'Islamic norms' over local Muslim communities, despite the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of those communities.
2. Interpretation by colonial authorities of Islamic law were much narrower and more restrictive than the pre-modern Muslim judicial

63 See a critical piece on Hussein Ahmad Madani's work, *Islam and Composite nationalism* (originally published in 1938, and first English publication in 2005), which is otherwise considered the most authentic Islamic expression of acceptance of pluralism and diversity in Indian context, Alam, Arshad, 'Deoband and Theological Anti-Pluralism: A Critique of Husain Ahmad Madani's 'Islam and Composite Nationalism'', 1 Feb, 2016, New Age Islam, <http://www.newageislam.com/books-and-documents/arshad-alam,-new-age-islam/deoband-and-theological-anti-pluralism—a-critique-of-husain-ahmad-madani's-islam-and-composite-nationalism7d/106179>, access on 1.6.2018.

64 On this aspect see Shabuddin, Syed and Wright JR, Theodore P., "India: Muslim Minority Politics and Society", in Esposito, John L. ed *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.157; Smith, W.C., *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 285; Troll, Christian W., "Sharing Islamically in the Pluralistic Nation-State of India: The Views of Some Contemporary Indian Muslim Leaders and Thinkers", in Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and Haddad, Wadi Z., Gainesville, ed, *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, University of Florida Press, 1995, pp. 245-61.

65 <sup>87</sup> Jama'at Islami Hind, *Policy and Programme* (April 1999-March 2003). Delhi: Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers., also, Popular Front of India : A journey of being the Sentinel of Justice and Freedom ,<http://www.popularfrontindia.org/sites/default/files/PDFDocuments/National%20Brochure%202017%20-%20English.pdf>, accessed on 06.03.2018.

systems. For instance, the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 is socially a very conservative document.

3. The modern colonial context unleashed the process of redefining Islam as an ideology at least since 18th century. All modern reformist Islamic movements since then have contributed to the process of ideologisation of Islam at the cost of its moral and ethical dimensions; making it into an instrumental object to achieve political and social ends.
4. The rapid growth in information and communication technology has increased the pace of Islamisation. The dominant discourse on modernity in Muslim societies is to 'Islamise' modernity, not the acceptance of modern values on its own premises.
5. Gradually Islamic doctrines of *Tawhid*, *Sharia*, *Jihad*, *Jahilliya*, *Dawa* and *Ummah* came to constitute the ideological features of Islamic fundamentalist/militant movements and organisations with varying degree of differences over the interpretation of these doctrines.

## D.2 Conceptual Apparatus of Islam: *Tawhid*

The conflation of Islam and modernity produce a gradual ideologisation of Islam<sup>66</sup>. *Wahhabism*<sup>67</sup> is the first and foremost trend of this process, which resulted in significant transformation of the meaning of doctrine of *Tawhid*-the core of Islam with a serious implication for the growth of Islamicist radicalism and militancy. The *Wahhabi-Salafi* vision of *Tawhid* or what is called *Wahdut al- Shuhud (All is from Allah)*, the origin of which goes back to bitter Islamic theological contestations in 11th century and continues till date. It refers to a very sharp, literal, binary, rigid, ideological, vertical and exclusive concept, as compared to its more fuzzy nuances under

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66 *Malik, Jamal*, Colonialization of Islam; Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan, *South Asia Books; 1 edition (December 1, 1998)*.

67 <sup>65</sup> Wahhabism, a puritan Islamic movement, is pejorative term used by others after the name of its founder Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (d 1206/1792). The followers of this movement call themselves Salafis and Wahhabism has spread in the Muslim world under the banner of Salafism. Salafism is the dominant Islamic paradigm in the Muslim world, which means practicing Islam in accordance with Quran and Sunna (Tradition) of Prophet Muhammad and early Muslim generations (al-salaf al-salih). In Islamic jurisprudence the phrase al-salaf al-salih has different meanings as "every group has defined salaf according to its own orientation and school". At a particular level it has three interrelated meanings. First, it signifies a particular methodology of interpreting the Islamic tradition as a way of distinguishing it from other approaches considered not to be based on the (supposedly) al-salaf al-salih manhaj. Second, it is a political doctrine purporting to bestow an amnesty on all of the Companions of the Prophet in the midst of socio-political chaos that characterized early Islam. Third, it denotes an approach to conceptualizing the Islamic tradition premised on presupposition of a regressive view of the nature of history and time and therefore by implication the authenticity of Muslim identity can only be established by returning to a fixed point in historical time, that of Prophet and the early Muslim community. See for details, Duderija, Adis, *Constructing a Religiously Ideal "Believer" and "Woman" in Islam: Neo-traditional Salafi and Progressive Muslims Methods of Interpretation*, pp,25-48 New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

*Wahdut-al-Wujud (All is from Allah)* understanding of *Tawhid* in premodern times. Under the doctrine of *Wahdut al- Shuhud* the notion of Allah emerged as 'marker' of differentiated Muslim identity vis-a-vis other faith with the following specific connotations:

- a. A vertical relationship between *Allah* via *Quran*, *Sunnah* and *Hadith* and mankind without any mediatory role of Islamic agencies such as learned *Ulema*, *Sufis*, institutions and interpretative textual traditions;
- b. *Allah* has to be imagined as a complete separate uncreated entity from all created things;
- c. *Allah* as the sole source of authority over everything and the soul object of worship, glory, praise and expectation for mankind and;
- d. Any association with *Allah* or expectation in any form from anybody/thing other than *Allah* is considered *Shirk* (unbelief).

By contrast the *wujudis* preached universal humanity and put a premium on *jihad al-akbar*, the greater jihad against the lower self which the Prophet had said was man's greatest enemy. While the Islamic discourse of *Wahdut al-Wujud* figures prominently in the Sufi Islamic traditions, the Islamic discourse of *Wahdut al- Shuhud* has been championed by all Islamic revivalist movements at least since Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

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In the Indian context, one can trace the roots of political ascendancy of the concept to *Wahdut al- Shuhud* to Farooq Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) and Shah Waliullah (1703-1762). All subsequent Islamic reformist movements- both political and nonpolitical have operated within the above discursive meaning of *Tawhid* in terms of *Wahdut al-Shuhud* as laid down in *Wahhabi-Salafi* narratives. Today, this meaning of *Tawhid* has become the standard bearer of Muslim understanding of Islam owing to multiple factors. The most important of such factors is the process of modernisation and urbanisation at least since mid- 19<sup>th</sup> century. This included the improved means of communication and transportation beginning with opening of Suez Canal (1856) and the development of 'petro-dollar' that allowed the *Wahhabi-Saudi* State to 'universalise' its 'local' version of *Tawhid* as narrated above at rapid pace across many parts of the Muslim world, particularly in the urban areas.

Such understanding of *Tawhid* has multiple implications in radicalising a section of Muslim youths. An important feature is developing a perception of lack of legitimacy of any secular rule or law, which contradicts or appears to contradict the fundamental tenant of Islam. In the Indian context, this partly explains the perceptible reluctance in recent years among a good number of Muslims to chant Indian national anthem (*jana gana mana*) or say '*vande matram*' or '*Bharat Mata ki Jay*' or even *Jai Hind* in the belief that doing so would contradict the principle of *Tawhid*- the core of Islam. A consequence of this process has been a gradual acceptance of an idea among a section of Muslims to 'restore' Allah's rule (strictest form of monotheism). According to this perception, Islam is considered to have been corrupted through long process of *shirk* and *bida* (innovations including ideas, practices and institution that was non-existent during the period of Prophet Muhammad) committed by Muslims governments and people alike with or without the association of other (mainly the West). This also tends to reinforce a belief that only by restoring the old practices that the pristine glory of Islam can be retrieved and good earthly fortune of the Muslims be assured<sup>68</sup>.

This 'material' hope, no matter how illusory, sustains the preference of 'Sharia law' over any form of 'man-made law' among large sections of Muslims, as former is forever 'sacralised'. That is why the idea of 'Islamic state', Amir ul-Momin' or other Islamic conception of rule despite its faceless and abstract nature has gained new legitimacy and continues to retain an appeal among large segment of Muslim societies including India.

This 'material' hope, no matter how illusory, sustains the preference of 'Sharia law' over any form of 'man-made law' among large sections of Muslims, as former is forever 'sacralised'. That is why the idea of 'Islamic state', Amir ul-Momin' or other Islamic conception of rule despite its faceless and abstract nature has gained new legitimacy and continues to retain an appeal among large segment of Muslim societies including India. This is particularly noticeable among a section of urban, bilingual Muslim youths. This is also discernible in the context of failure of secular-authoritarian, Muslim republican regimes to address issues of 'equity', 'justice' and 'relative material deprivation' of Muslim masses in the Muslim majority context. In the minority context however, this is

68 An Egyptian Islamicist radical organisation called al-Takfir wal-Hijra in 1970s withdrew themselves from city life in the desert of Egypt with men, women and children to lead a 'pure Islamic life' as imagined to be practiced and prevalent during Prophept Muhammad time. See, Ibrahim, Saad Eddin 'Egypt's Islamic Activism in the 1980's, Third World Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 2, Islam & Politics (Apr., 1988), 632- 657. According to an informal source, a few Keralites Muslims have started going to Sri Lanka to experience early Islamic life by virtue of living under tents with Arab dress, food custom and tradition for a few days. It is organised by some Muslim travel agency and the execerrise is called *jyaarrat* (holy localpilgrimage).

reflected in reluctance of acceptance of political secularism and its inability to deal with perceived danger to their faith in countries like India<sup>69</sup>.

The search for 'Islamic state' or 'Sharia rule' becomes more sharp with the gradual decline of legitimacy of traditional Islamic institutions<sup>70</sup>, which used to confer Islamic legitimacy on political leadership as well as perform mediatory role between ruler and the ruled; and erosion of much of internal sufistic, catholic, syncretic, pluralistic, accommodative, and humanistic traditions of Islam in the name of denouncing them as *shirk* and *bid'ah* by modern Islamic reformist movements as well as by the modern nation-state in the name of obstacle to progress and development. One implication of this process is the development of an understanding of Islam among a literate, bilingual, urban Muslim youth, which pays a very low premium on human life, promotes a binary world view of Muslim vs other (which includes even practising common Muslims), imagines 'homogenised ummatic unity of all Muslims', focuses more on identity discourses and decisively rejects the idea of pluralism, democracy, nationalism, secularism and politics of accommodation and negotiation.

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This leaves a large number of Muslims with a question: how to effectively implement the Commandments of *Allah* as enshrined in *Quran*, *Hadith* and *Sunna*. With this question in mind a tectonic shift-under the condition of colonial modernity took place in the notion of *sharia*, *dawa*, *ummah*, *hijra*, and *jihad*, which made them more literal, ideological, exclusive, technical, legalistic, hierarchical and violence prone. The discursive meaning of such notions is shared by all radical Muslim elements of various political dispensations and many among them even rejects Wahhabi version of Salafism as the 'authentic model of Islam' and adopts relatively far more radical version of particular Islamic tradition as

69 In the late 1990s SIMI holds a national convention in the premise of Aligarh Muslim University with a slogan and Posters 'Destroy Nationalism and Established Khilafat' or 'Islam to Prevail'. Why does SIMI raise the hackles of the govt? July 24,2003 18:131ST, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/jul/24simi.htm>, access on 15.03.2018. Moreover, the author of this paper has himself seen these posters in Aligarh Muslim University.

70 Ibid.

championed by al Qaida, IS and other Islamicist militant /terrorist outfits. The Islamic belief system of such Islamicist groups and individuals has rightly been described as 'Salafism'<sup>71</sup> and Neo-traditional *Salafism*<sup>72</sup> by El Fadl and Duderija, respectively.

The Salafism or Neo-traditional Salafism, is neither Wahhabism nor Salafism nor Political Islam, rather it is a revolt against them (though genealogical impact cannot be ruled out). It comes very close to the pedantic literalism of the Ahle Hadith in the pre-modern period that opposed every rationalist and interpretive orientation in Islam. Collectively all these notions in the hands of modern days Islamicist radical/militant/terrorist youths, served as instruments to implement 'imagined God's laws' with a high degree of violence. This in part explains the cult of 'suicide bombing' and the indiscriminate killings of people, the majority of which are Muslims, by Islamic extremists.

However, notwithstanding the development of exclusivist understanding of doctrine of *Tawhid* in terms of *Wahdut al-Shuhud*, it has not affected the Indian Muslims for two specific reasons. First, Indian Islamic institutions including Darul-Uloom in Deoband and Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama in Lucknow and others, save Ahle Hadith, continue to combine the major principles of Sufism, if not its localised practices (like grave visit, saint worship, participation in local *urus* etc.) classical *Ulema* traditions and practice of the philosophy of *Wahdut al-Wujud*. It is wrong to associate Deobandis with *Wahhabi* School of Saudi Arabia. The *Wahhabi-Salafi* Islamic discourses as influenced by Taqi ad-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) believes in the following principles, which is hardly shared by Indian Deobandi and Nadwa schools:

- Rejection of any possibility of metaphoric or symbolic interpretation of the Divine names.
- Opposition to all innovations (*bid'ah*), which were non-existent during the Prophet time.
- Opposition to any manifestation of Shiism, both moderate and extreme versions.
- Opposition to Philosophy for being considered as an infiltration of Greece culture to Islamic teaching.

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71 El Fadl, Khaled Abou, "The Modern Ugly and the Modern Ugly: Reclaiming the Beautiful in Islam", in Safi, Omid, ed *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism*, Oxford: Oneworld Publication, 2006,57-62.

72 Duderija, Adis, chapter. 2, titled 'Neotraditional Salafism: Its Main Proponents and Its Manhaj', Constructing a Religiously Ideal "Believer" and "Woman" in Islam: Neo-traditional Salafi and Progressive Muslims Methods of Interpretation, *New York: Palgrave Macmillan*, 2011.

### D.3 Conceptual Apparatus of Islam: *Hijra, Dawah, Ummah and Jihad*

Islamic history is pregnant with *hijra* of section of people to other geographical land in search of 'imaginary pure Islamic rule' and living under '*sharia system*' as well as to serve the most fundamental calls of Islam: *dawah* (invitation to call of Islam). Historically, Indian Muslims have also been part of similar trend. Thus, the ideational factor of Islam did motivate a section of mainland Indian Muslims to migrate to other places. In recent times such migration ranges from Afghanistan to West Asia. These include:

- a. under the leadership of Syed Ahmad Barelvi (1786-1831), who is considered to declare India as *darul-harb* in 1803 both to justify the 'interest' as well as making India inhospitable for leading a Muslim life<sup>73</sup>;
- b. a few Indian Muslims migrated for Turkey (*Darul Islam*) during the period of Indian Khilafat movement (1919-1921) with a view to protect the institution of Caliphate and settle down in Turkey<sup>74</sup>;
- c. mass migration to Pakistan and;
- d. a very minuscule number of Indian Muslims also migrated to Afghanistan and ISIS controlled parts of Iraq and Syria<sup>75</sup> in recent years.

All such migrations had been conducted in the name of *jihad*, a highly contested term in modern terms, which will be explained later. What is interesting to note is the conceptual transformation over the years of the term '*jihad*' from its traditional, classical meaning only for the sake of *Allah* (internal struggle for moral and ethical transformation of individual or what is called Greater Jihad or control over *nafs*) to its violent application for non-Godly things: liberation of country, resistance struggle, targeting innocent people and using it as the most dominant method by the radicals to serve the goal of *dawah*. In a conversation with a Saudi visitor to Afghanistan, Bin Laden linked the 9/11 with propagation of Islam (*dawah*):

*"Those youths who conducted the operations did not accept any fiqh [school of Islamic law] in the popular terms, but they accepted the fiqh that the Prophet Muhammad*

73 Jafar, Ghulam Mohamad, 'The Repudiation of Jihad by the Indian Scholars in the Nineteenth Century', *Hamdard Islamicus*, Vol. XV, No. 3, Autumn 1992, pp. 93-100.

74 Hasan, Mushirul, 'Pan-Islamism versus Indian Nationalism? A Reappraisal', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 21, No. 24, Jun. 14, 1986, pp. 1074-1079, 1074.

75 Long before the India media started reporting about the presence of Indian Muslim youths working for IS in Syria and Iraq in 2015, a few Syrian national had told me in 2014 about the presence of Indian Muslim youths working for IS during my stint as professorship in Zirve University, Gaziantep, Turkey from 2013-2016).



brought. Those young men - said in deeds, in New York and Washington, speeches that overshadowed all other speeches made everywhere in the world. The speeches are understood by both Arabs and non-Arabs - even by the Chinese. Some of the said in Holland, at one of the centres, the number of people who accepted Islam during the days that followed the operations were more than the people who accepted Islam in the last eleven years. I heard someone on Islamic radio who owns a school in America says: "We do not have time to keep up with the demands of those who are asking about Islamic books to learn about Islam ". This event made people think-----which benefited Islam greatly ""<sup>76</sup>.

The other significant aspect of Islam that has implications for Muslim's imagination of 'good life' is the notion of *ummah*. Depending upon the context, the nature of Islamic organisations and Schools of Islamic Law, the interpretative field of '*ummah*' ranges from loosely structured sense of 'universal Islamic Brotherhood' to the ideological unity of the Muslim world (pan-Islamism). From this point of view, nation and nation-state are considered a western ploy to divide and weaken the Muslim unity, particularly in the discourse of Muslim radicals. The idea of nation and nation-state created the theoretical crisis in the Islamic epistemology from the point of view of legitimacy of authority, structure of governance and conditions to secure an Islamic way of life. The Islamic notion of *ummah* confers rights upon the Muslims to carry out their actions in other nations to advance the cause of what they consider 'Islamic'. This partly explains Muslim's constant search for 'ummatic unity' based on principle of one *Allah*, one faith and one community.

Everyday diversified Islamic experiences' across the Muslim world lacks sufficient legitimacy in the narratives of the Wahhabi-Salafi discourse of *Tawhid*. It considered them as obstacles in the creation of ummatic unity.

Thus, 'everyday diversified Islamic experiences' across the Muslim world lacks sufficient legitimacy in the narratives of the Wahhabi-Salafi discourse of *Tawhid*. It considered them as obstacles in the creation of ummatic unity. No wonder that local *Sufi* shrines and other such centre of Islamic practices, which do not prescribe the *Wahhabi-Salafi* understanding of *Tawhid*, has been the object of attack of modern Islamic reformism and Muslim extremists alike all over the Muslim world including India in the past and in the present too.

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76 Devji, Faisal, *Landscape of Jihad: Militancy, Morality and Modernity*. New Delhi: Foundation Book, 2005, p.13.

This periodic march of Indian Muslims towards *Darul Islam*, though much lower in number in comparison with such movements of Muslims from Europe, Middle East and North Africa and other parts of world<sup>77</sup>, only indicates that the interpretative realm of Islamic conception of *ummah*, *dawa* and *jihad* has not completely reconciled with the modern idea of nation and nation-state. Also, the transnational loyalty of Islam, unlike the modern Christianity, has not been either effectively divested or controlled or weakened, which is something that territorial nation-states fear most. In the European political traditions including its phases of liberalism, positivism and authoritarianism the nation state has historically emasculated the capacity of the Church, particularly the Protestant traditions, to challenge the secular legitimacy of the state and reduced the idea of religion/Church as belonging to realm of private sphere; though this proposition has recently been conclusively contested<sup>78</sup>.

Beneath the multiple interpretations including radical versions of these conceptual apparatus of Islam lie two paradigmatic discourses among the Muslim community: (a) the tendency to understand 'crisis in Muslim societies' in terms of 'deviation from Islam' with a hope of becoming a great power again by following correct practice of Islam, what I called the 'Great Deviation Theory in Islam'; and (b) Muslim community suffers from 'greater sense of history'<sup>79</sup>, at least in modern times, in comparison to other religio-socio communities. W.C. Smith has long ago noted this 'crisis of history' in Muslim's imagination: "The fundamental spiritual crisis of Islam in the twentieth century stems from an awareness that something is awry between the religion which God has appointed and the historical development of the world which He controls"<sup>80</sup>. Unless these conceptual categories of Islam undergo its pacific interpretation and become a common sense and bring about a significant change in terms of understanding of the 'events', they will continue to have some bearings for the process of radicalisation among some section of Muslim community.

Having explored some of the conceptual terrain of Islam and its implications for the process of radicalisation in the context of relationship between Islam and modernity

77 See for the Muslim migration in the context of ISIS; Benmelech Efiain and Klor, Esteban V., *What Explains the Flow of Foreign Fighters to ISIS?*, May, 2017, <https://scholars.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/eklor/files/w22190.pdf>, accessed on 25.05.2018

78 Casanova, J. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago University Press, Chicago

79 For instance a person of Turkish origin associated with Gulen movement, one of the pacific movement in contemporary Islamic history, told me: All empires (meaning British, French, Russian, American and Chinese) except Ottoman Empire have got a permanent seat in UN Security Council.. Later I discovered that Turks in general suffer from what they consider a 'historical injustice' and discrimination meted out to them. In general Muslim community in India tends to see all Muslim political establishment within India ranging from Mughals to Nizams as exclusively belonging to them and not to other communities.

80 Smith., W.C., *Islam in Modern History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, p 47.

within the global setting, it is also important to examine the regional Islamic context and its implications for the process of radicalisation among Indian Muslims.

#### D.4 Regional Islamic Context

Much has been written about the role of Pakistan and Bangladesh in fomenting terrorism in India. The present government of Sheikh Hasina has taken series of determined actions against both North East secessionist groups as well as Bangladesh based Islamic radical organisations and incapacitated them. On the other hand, Pakistan has remained a source of concern for the Indian establishment. There are at least two specific reasons for this:

- a. Pakistan continues to function as an ideological state and has found a 'strategic depth' in bleeding India through its production and protection of non state Islamicist actors, particularly in Kashmir valley, in view of high asymmetry of power differentiation between India and Pakistan<sup>81</sup> and
- b. A section of military, intelligence and bureaucratic class of Pakistan state has been Islamicised with a consequence that they represent a long-term threat to India's stability and growth through fostering linkage with the disgruntled elements of Indian Muslims.

Pakistan continues to function as an ideological state and has found a 'strategic depth' in bleeding India through its production and protection of non state Islamicist actors, particularly in Kashmir valley, in view of high asymmetry of power differentiation between India and Pakistan

There are two factors that prevent Pakistan from playing greater mischief, except in Kashmir valley, where also it is losing its influence. First its influence in Kashmir valley is confined to the border northern area, (particularly in the districts of Baramullah, Kupwara, Bandipore where most of terrorists are of Pakistan origin) while in the South the Kashmiri movement is relatively free of Pakistani element and to a large extent it is indigenous mass movement (particularly in the districts of Pulwama, Anantanag and Shopian where Islamicist terrorist are primarily home grown). Second with

81 See, Fair, C. Christine, "The Militant Challenge in Pakistan," *Asia Policy* 11 (January 2011), 105-137; Stephen Tankel, *Storming the World Stage: The Story of Lashkar-e-Taiba* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Haqqani, Husain, *Pakistan Between Mosque and Military*, (Penguin : Viking 2016), Kapur, S. Paul, *Jihad as Grand Strategy: Islamist Militancy, National Security and the Pakistan State* ( Oxford University Press, 2017), Dalemymple, William, *A Deadly Triangle: Afghanistan, Pakistan and India*: (Brooking 2013), Cohen, Stephen?., *Shooting for Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum* (Brooking, 2013)

regard to rest of India, Pakistan has negligible influence among Indian Muslims now. It had some appeal till mid 1980s but with growing Jihadi culture and 'Talibanisation of Pakistan', it is hardly a model of appeal to the Muslim community of India.

Unlike Pakistan, the Sheikh Hasina government of Bangladesh has undertaken tough measures against the Islamicist radicals and terrorist. However the re-grouping of JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) and ABT (Ansarullah Bangla Team) since 2014 in Bangladesh after a gap of decade is a matter of concern. This is more so as this regrouping happened in close coordination with international Islamic terrorist outfits such as AQIS and ISIS. This is evident from series of assassination of targeted individuals (foreigner, liberal, secular, communist, member of minority, *Shia*, Ahmaddiya and LGBT community etc.) over one and half year, which reflects a determined approach of al Qaida and IS to expand their influence in the region. This has understandably raised the level of disquiet within the Indian establishment and consequently, the government has taken preventive measures to check infiltration of terrorists in the Indian territory, particularly into neighbouring State of West Bengal and adjoining parts of North East. Thus, the NIA had busted the supposedly local module of JMB in the Burdwan District of West Bengal in October 2014 that led to arrest of more than 17 potential terrorists from the adjoining states of Assam, West Bengal and Jharkhand till now<sup>82</sup>. More recently, in January 2016, the NIA arrested more than 20 suspected terrorists, who were Muslim youth, from states of Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka and Uttarakhand belonging to IS inspired the Islamic terrorist organisation called *Junood-e-Khalifa-e-Hind*<sup>83</sup>.

It needs to be asserted, however, that the growing perception within the Indian ruling elites, security analysts and media establishment regarding the danger of both Pakistan and Bangladesh relapsing into the hands of Islamic fundamentalist forces (Pakistani Taliban and now Hafeez Sayeed's Milli Muslim League in Pakistan and Jamiat-Islami in Bangladesh) is far from reality. Crucial factors that work against the 'Islamist' takeover of these states, if not against the growing influence of Islam on these states, are:

First, even though ethnicity as a part of pluralism is frowned upon in the high tradition of Islam, the 'politics of Islam' is strongly mediated through sub- structure

82 'Burdwan blast: NIA arrests madrasa owner', Feb 5, 2005, The Indian Express, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/nia-arrests-one-more-in-burdwtin-blast-case/>, accessed on 28.05.2018.

83 'NIAArrests 20 Terror Suspects, Hints That Indian Mujahideen Is Regrouping As IS', 23.01.2016, [https://www.huf1Bngtonpost.in/2016/01/23/indian-mujahideen-rears-i\\_n\\_9058564.html](https://www.huf1Bngtonpost.in/2016/01/23/indian-mujahideen-rears-i_n_9058564.html), accessed on 28.05.2016.

of ethnicity (Pakistan-Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi and Pasthun and Bangladesh-the Bengali language). The two-way interactions between the grand narratives of Islam and local-ethnicised form of Islamic practices have produced two consequences: one intended and the other unintended.

- a. The intended consequence is the weakening of ethnic-cultural sub structures in both countries.
- b. The unintended consequence is that the local ethnic practices so far have slowed down the process of monolithic construction of Islam in spite of the fact that the pace of Islamisation has increased tremendously in both countries.

Second, the potential of Islamicist radical movements to challenge, reshape or topple the ruling set-up depends largely on the nature of a specific Muslim state. Unlike many post-colonial states, a kind of “tutelary democracy” prevailed in South Asian nations at the time of independence. Pakistan and Bangladesh are constitutional states, with a colonial legacy deeply rooted in the rule of law as well as electoral democracy, though occasionally disrupted by military rule. No populist revolution, from either religious or class perspective, has upturned a government in any of the Commonwealth countries including Pakistan and Bangladesh in the post war era.

Unlike Shiism, the claim of clerical rule or Ulema’s rule lacks legitimacy in Sunni Islamic theology and therefore partly explains the failure of Sunni Islamic movements to usher into an Islamic revolution leading to creation of Islamic state throughout the history of Sunni Islam.

Third, unlike Shiism, the claim of clerical rule or *Ulema’s* rule lacks legitimacy in *Sunni* Islamic theology and therefore partly explains the failure of *Sunni* Islamic movements, save Taliban in Afghanistan for a brief period in mid 1990s, to usher into an Islamic revolution leading to creation of Islamic state throughout the history of *Sunni* Islam. No wonder Islamic parties in Pakistan and Bangladesh have never enjoyed credible electoral support. The poor electoral performance of Islamist parties in these states has led them to influence the state either through the infiltration of bureaucratic and military establishment or through working in close tandem with government (for instance, the close collaboration of Jamiat-e-Islami with Gen Zia’s rule in Pakistan and Khaleda led BNP’s rule in Bangladesh).

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Note

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## E.1 Role of Islamic Traditions and Everyday Islam in India

Over the years, there has been a greater assertion and strengthening of traditional religious identity among Muslims in India cutting across its class, caste and regional variations. To this extent, the thrust of all modern Islamic revivalist/reformist movements in India is to ‘homogenised and de-syncretised’ Muslims living in India<sup>84</sup>. This process has been strongly manifest in de-syncretising the localised Muslim cultural practices (such as a good number of Muslim married women giving up the practice of putting *sindur* and *bindi* on forehead and wearing *bichua* in toes, preferring *salwar kameez* over sari, lesser participation in Hindu festivals such as *Holi*, *Deewali* and *Durga puja* etc.), in the increasing use of *naqab/burka* and *hijab* among Muslim girls and women, increase in the attendance in mosques, Ramzan observation including its public enforcement in Muslim dominated areas such as keeping the restaurant closed throughout the day by force, keeping beard, adopting the Arabian *jalabiya* dress, strict observance of *halal* meals, transforming Urdu into all Indian marker of Muslim identity, preference of Arab cultural norms e.g. *Allah hafiz* over *Khuda hafiz*, *Ramadan* over ‘*Ramzan*’ etc.

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The context of globalisation and liberalisation, rise of majoritarianism and decline of political secularism along with the bitter Islamic competition along Saudi-Gulf and Iran axis since late 1970s have strengthened the “process of Wahhabi Islamisation”. This is being perceived in declining interest in the *Qawali* tradition. The latter was heavily centred in singing the glory and praise of Prophet Muhammad and Hazrat Ali, from whom almost 90 per cent of Sufi Tariqqa across the Muslim community in the world including India is derived.

84 “ This trend is not specific to Islamic reformist/revivalist movement only, though the degree may be greater in this tradition compare to others. However all modern Islamic and non-Islamic reformist and revivalist trends as well as nation- state centred discourse of modernity has similar effect.

Notwithstanding this emerging trend, the Muslim community in India, save a few, strongly resisted the discourse the political Islam in general<sup>85</sup> and current global Jihadi Islam including the IS in particular owing to multiple factors, particularly the specific nature of historical formation of Islamic traditions and Muslimness in India. The dominant features of which are as follows:

First, what I called the 'Every Day Islam' of great majority of common Muslim mass in India exists in parallel, if not in opposition, to Scholarly Islam of Ulema legal traditions<sup>86</sup>. The notion of "Everyday Islam" refers to the reality of "lived Islam", which is understood as handed down by generation to generation in the form of practices and is connected with the life process of common Muslims who have developed an "internal social code", which is considered Islamic, to interact and negotiate within themselves and with other social groups of the society. One may find the location and representation of this Islam in the form of *Sufi* Islam or in the Muslim community life centered around the local shrines and mosque, but it is far beyond that. It lies between Islamic ideology and theology. It is true that common Muslims in India acknowledge the general concepts of Islam as dictated by *fuqahaa* legal traditions of Islam represented by the major traditional Islamic institutions of learning, but they choose to live according to more particularistic notions of Islam, which conform to the patterns of their daily experience. Olivier Roy remarked, "Although there is long tradition of exegesis and fatwa on what a Muslim should or should not do when confronted with a non-Muslim environment and practices, most Muslims find a way to deal with that without contacting fatwaonline.com"<sup>87</sup>. Muhammad Mujeeb, an eminent historian and longest serving vice-chancellor of Jamia Milia Islamia, long ago commented on the lived Islamic values, which remained relevant even today for large number of Muslim masses in India: "A bird's eye view of the variety of beliefs and practices and customs among Indian Muslims will convince us that

Unlike the fuqahaa tradition of Islam, everyday Islam accepts the logic of pluralism, differences and accommodation as experienced reality through daily struggle of life process.

85 Irfan Ahmed in his doctoral work on Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, which is a prototype of Political Islam in South Asia and is considered to ideological fountain of many of Islamicist radicals and militants across the world, noted that "Numerically speaking, the influence of JIH on Indian Muslims is not very significant. In 2000 it has no more than five thousand members, Arkaam, 25,411 workers and 2,70,146 sympathisers. It has contact with 2,769 non-Muslims". Ahmad, Irfan. *Islamism and Democracy in India: The Transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami*, Ranikhet, Permanent Black., 2010, p.45.

86 Alam, Anwar (2007) "Scholarly Islam" and "Everyday Islam": Reflections on the Debate over Integration of the Muslim Minority in India and Western Europe', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 27:2,241-260

87 Roy, Olivier, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*, New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2005, p20,



it was not the Shariat of Islam that they adopted but the manners and customs and to some extent even their belief that became the Shariat of Islam, of their Islam”<sup>88</sup>. This continues to be the defining feature of the pre-dominant majority of Muslim community in India despite the rise in political Islam in recent times.

Unlike the fuqahaa tradition of Islam, everyday Islam accepts the logic of pluralism, differences and accommodation as experienced reality through daily struggle of life process. Considerable amounts of research with reference to India have demonstrated that accommodations and adjustments bearing cultural exchanges, shared value-orientations and life-styles at the micro level, have been worked out by the people in the course of their everyday life in both the intrareligious (within Islam) and inter-religious (between Muslims and non-Muslims) contexts. However, the greater strength of acceptance of pluralism, tolerance and accommodation of differences that the vast majority of Muslims in India continue to exhibit in their daily life, is primarily due to two historical reasons:

- a. Unlike other parts of the world, Islam’s encounter with pluralism in Indian setting has been deeper. One consequence of this historical interaction between Islamic traditions and infinite pluralism and diverse belief systems of India- pre-dominantly Hindu religious traditions- is that it impeded the monolithic and homogenising thrust of Islamic traditions, if not eliminated. Perhaps, the persistence of internal doctrinal and cultural variety and diversity within the system of Islam and its ability to adapt to local cultural environment has been nowhere more evident than in India<sup>89</sup>.
- b. The great mass of Muslims in India is primarily converts from Hindus; hence they have inherited the tradition of pluralism in their life world. As a result, predominant majority of Muslims both as individual

One consequence of this historical interaction between Islamic traditions and infinite pluralism and diverse belief systems of India-pre-dominantly Hindu religious traditions-is that it impeded the monolithic and homogenising thrust of Islamic traditions, if not eliminated.

88 Mujeeb, Mohammad, *Indian Muslims*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1985, 5.

89 Ahmad, Aziz, *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969. Also see Ahmad, Imtiaz, 'Fundamentalism and Islam', *World Focus*, Vol. XVI, no. 2-3, 1995, pp.24-27.

and social group, save a few, are primarily a plural entity in terms of thought process, food habits, cultural and social habits. This helps in understanding why exclusive, literal, hierarchical, masculine, violence prone, *Wahhabi-radical-Salafi* understanding of Islam represented by fringed Muslim radicals/militants groups and Islamicist terrorist groups could not make any substantial appeal to a significant section of Muslim population of India.

In the above context, Imtiaz Ahmed, an eminent political sociologist of India, has identified this historical form of Islam as eclectic nature of Indian Islam, which according to him, prevented the development of militant form of Islamic fundamentalism in India. He observed the following: Unlike migrant Islam (*Here I do not mean that migrant Islam is more prone to militancy than historical Islam. Rather I wish to make a point that there is very close cultural proximity between Indian Islam and Hinduism which has developed because of the continuous existence of both the communities over a very long period of 13th centuries*) in Europe, Indian Islam is historical Islam and there exists a very close proximity between Indian Muslims and Indian Hindus across cultural lines, which also reduces the likelihood of Islamic militancy in India<sup>90</sup>. On more or less similar line, M. S. Agwani, former Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University, noted on a fundamental disconnect between fundamentalist Islam and every day Muslim practices and rightly observed: “this is because of the incompatibility of a number of fundamentalist doctrines with the beliefs and practices of what one might call popular Islam. Over the centuries, the latter has accommodated, among other things, saint worship, belief in an aura of divinity about Prophet Muhammad, and devotional music, into the social and religious life of the Indian Muslim community. The fundamentalist frown upon all these and condemn them as heresies imbibed from Hinduism<sup>91</sup>.”

Stressing the accommodationist thrust of everyday religious practices among both Muslim and Hindu community, Assayag reached to similar conclusion: ‘this is obvious because Hinduism and Islam, as they were practiced until recently, continue to show a great deal of flexibility and a spirit of accommodation in their mutual relations. In fact, they display an understanding that is infinitely richer than the limited sectarian approach adopted by dogmatic, fundamentalist and neo-traditionalist circles on both sides<sup>92</sup>.’

90 Ahmad, Imtiaz, 'India and the Muslim World', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26th February, 2005.

91 Agwani, M.S, *Islamic Fundamentalism in India*, Twenty-First Century Indian Society, 1986,130-131

92 Assayag, Jackie, 'Can Hindus and Muslims Coexist?' in Imtiaz Ahmad and Helmut Reifeld (eds.), *Lived Islam in South Asia: Adaptation, Accommodation and Conflict* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2004) 55.

The forgoing paragraphs explain the difference between the process of radicalisation in Europe and in India. The difference is *crucial* as in the European context the everyday Islamic practices and discourse tends to imagine 'authentic Islam' and 'authentic Islamic practices' as disconnected with local culture in which he or she lived<sup>93</sup>. Hence, the everyday Islamic practices in Europe is not free of the conception of 'other'. This has contributed to the process of radicalisations among a section of European Muslim youth. However, in contrast to Europe, everyday Islamic practices in India is deeply rooted in the localised custom and tradition and accepting them as Islamic value or what has been called lived Islam<sup>94</sup>. Thus, it lacks, relatively speaking, a 'conception of other' and avoids generating a feeling of hatred.

Second, in recent years, the West led global anti-terror discourses have been attempting to promote Sufist Islam as a counter Islamic narrative against the Islamicist discourses, which is considered to be largely influenced by *Ulema's* legalistic Islamic tradition and institutions of Islamic learning.

In the context of emergence of Taliban in Afghanistan and it's supposedly linkage with Deoband, the government of India began to exercise greater surveillance and monitoring over Deoband and other Islamic institutions and its affiliated network of *madarasas*-whether government aided or private-across the country. Simultaneously the government of India began to promote *Sufi* organisation and its discourses as a possible counter Islamic narrative to contain the Islamicist radicalism in the country. Prime Minister Modi himself attended and spoke in a recently held national *Sufi* conclave in Delhi<sup>95</sup>.

However, such a distinction between *Sufi* Islamic discourses and *Ulema* Islamic discourses is at best erroneous. It is primarily a western construct. It is certainly not an Islamic construct in any Islamic traditions. The secular, romantic idea that *Sufi* Islam is primarily spiritual and humanistic in orientation, which is partly true, and therefore at peace with 'other' under all political contexts is not historically tenable.

In contrast to Europe, everyday Islamic practices in India is deeply rooted in the localised custom and tradition and accepting them as Islamic value or what has been called lived Islam.

93 Roy, Oliver, *Globalized Islam The Search for a New Ummah* pp, 100-117. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

94 Ahmad, Imtiaz, ed., *Caste and Stratification among Muslims in India*, New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1978. Ahmed, Imtiaz, ed. *Social Change and Modernization among Muslims in India*. Delhi: Manohar, 1970.

95 'World Sufi Forum: PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate four-day conclave today', 20th March 2016, <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-world-sufi-forum-pm-narendra-modi-to-inaugurate-four-day-conclave-today-2190347>, accessed on 20.03.2018.

More recently Faisal Devji has demonstrated the *Sufi* roots of present-day Islamic militancy<sup>96</sup>. It is historically evident that the roles played by *Sufi* orders in West Asia and North Africa and that in India had been different. In the former, it worked either in directly participating or inspiring violent rebellion against British or French colonisers or modern day state system<sup>97</sup>. In the South Asia, the role of Sufi orders or localised *Sufi Sheikhs* in either directly participating or influencing the political agitation has been scarce<sup>98</sup>. Even where they indulged in 'politics of opposition' against either British colonialists or modern day ruler the dominant characteristic of such protest has been non-violent.

It must be admitted here that Devji traces the influence of Sufism in the development of militancy in the context of Africa and Afghanistan. However there is hardly any work that has demonstrated any sorts of connection between localised *Sufi* shrines and modern day Islamicist terrorism in the Indian context including the Kashmiri valley where Islamicist militancy has been in existence at least since late 1980s<sup>99</sup>. A more recent work *Jihad in South Asia* by Ayesha Jalal has clearly demonstrated through various narratives, events, and prominent Islamic figures, predominantly the sufi ones, how the notion of jihad in South Asia has historically understood in terms of personal piety and moral and ethical conduct without hardly any underpinning for 'notion of armed *jihad* till the development of the Maududiian Islam and intra Islamic competition between Deobandi and Barelvi sets for the control of state's religious resources, power and influence in the context of Pakistan. This struggle transformed the notion of *jihad* from being a 'pacific discourse' in South Asian context to a radical/militant/ violent discourse, which also regrettably degenerated into terrorism<sup>100</sup> in a few pockets of South Asia. Later the global discourse of Wahhabi-Salafism with Ahle Hadith as its dominant representative in South Asia including India further contributed to the process of radicalisation of the discourse of *jihad*.

A distinction between Sufi Islamic discourses and Ulema Islamic discourses is at best erroneous. It is primarily a western construct. It is certainly not an Islamic construct in any Islamic traditions.

96 Devji, Faisal, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. 2005.

97 Heck, Paule. *Sufism and Politics: The Power of Spirituality* (Princeton, 2007), also, Muedini, Fait, 'Sufism and Anti-Colonial Violent Resistance Movements: The Qadiriyya and Sanussi Orders in Algeria and Libya,' *Open Theology* 2015; 1:134-145, available on <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/opth.2014.l.issue-l/opth-2015-0003/opth-2015-0003.pdf>, accessed on 24.05.2015., Brown, Jonathan, Salafis and Sufis in Egypt, The Carnegie Papers, Middle East, December 2011, :[http://camegieendowment.org/files/salafis\\_sufis.pdf](http://camegieendowment.org/files/salafis_sufis.pdf)

98 Metcalf, B.D, 'A Historical Overview of Islam in South Asia', in *Islam in South Asia in Practice*. Princeton University Press, 2009., Islam, Riazul. *Sufism in South Asia: Impact on Fourteenth Century Muslim Society*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

99 Conversation with Arshad Alam, who was conducting field research in Kashmir valley on this aspect.

100 Ayesha Jalal, *Partisan of Allah: Jihad in South Asia*. Permanent Black, Rabikhet, 2008.

India, however, has largely remained immune, save a very micro segment of urban, *non-madarassas* Muslims youth, from jihadi discourse of Islam due to the following reasons:

1. While urban, legalistic *Ulema* tradition has historically been a part of state power-structure including the European colonisers<sup>101</sup> with an idea to influence the state to implement the Islamic goals<sup>102</sup>, the *sufi* tradition has traditionally kept a distance from power structure and gave more importance to spiritual and humanistic dimensions of Islam;
2. Unlike the *sufi* tradition in West Asia and North Africa, which has primarily arisen in opposition to the legalistic Islamic tradition of *Ulema*, the *sufi* tradition in India has primarily been shaped by local pluralistic traditions in India. This produced a remarkable Indian syncretism under which men and women of letters, art and culture can immerse into each others' religious tradition without being fearful of compromising their respective religious faith.<sup>103</sup>.
3. The *sufi* traditions in West Asia and North Africa has been influenced by power dynamics of state where all states attempted to control the *sufi* order, given its legitimacy and popularity among the masses. On the contrary, Indian *sufi* traditions have largely kept itself away from the power dynamics of state.
4. Nowhere in the world, Islam-whether its *Ulema* or *sufi* traditions-encountered with as much pluralism as in India and consequently it became a part of Indian pluralism.
5. The majority of Muslim rulers in India-the Mughals and others-primarily understood Islam in terms of its moral and ethical principles and incorporated those principles in matter of governance.

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101 <sup>102</sup> In the Indian setting, one of the most dominant example of this trend is the collaboration of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan with the British coloniser- a process that ultimately resulted in the Partition of the country.

102 The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 is one such outcome of the interaction of Ulema legal tradition with state authorities;

103 Such examples abound notwithstanding the long history of communalisation and homogenisation, a process that has significantly diluted syncretic features of Indian society. Thus, the Puri Rath Yatra related to Lord Jagannath, continues to stop, during its annual journey for a few minutes to pay respect at the mazar of Salabeg, a 17th century Muslim devotee of Lord Jagannath, who penned one of the most popular bhajan in praise of Lord Jagannath. Mir Mohammed Muayyinul Islam, (1550-1635), a highly respected Sufi saint figure among Sikhs, was especially invited to partake in the foundation laying ceremony of the Harmandir Sahib, (now known worldwide as the Golden Temple). Parveen Sultana, an Indian Muslim woman, rose to fame while singing bhakti songs. A few Pakistani artists including Sahir Ludhianvi, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Qurratulain Hyder left Pakistan on account of its emerging mono- Islamic- authoritarian political culture and rose to fame under India's democratic and syncretistic traditions. Besides, a simple google search would indicate that there are many examples of Hindu and Muslim families managing the mosque and temples respectively at many places in Indian society in the past and in the present also. One prominent example of this trend is a Muslim family managing the famous Amamath Temple in Kashmir over the last 150 years.

Notwithstanding the greater contribution of *sufi* Islamic traditions in the spread of Islam and making it acceptable among Indian masses, any understanding of inherent opposition between Sufi Islamic discourse and *Ulema* discourse is a problematic proposition. In fact, a balanced, integrated understanding of Islam combines both the Islamic legalistic tradition of *Ulema* and *sufi's* spiritual traditions. All great Islamic figures and Islamic institutions in the past and present too, except the political Islamist, ranging from Imam Ghazali (1058-1111), Farooq Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624), Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960) to Fateullah Gulen (b. 1941) have adopted *Sunni-Salafi-Sufi-Sharia* approach.

The founder of Darul Uloom Deoband, Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi themselves were a *sufi* without belonging to any *tariqqa* like the present day Turkish Islamic sufi scholar, Fateullah Gulen, who inspired many to open secular educational institutions within and outside Turkey. The Deoband Islamic institution and others like Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Nadwa (Luknow)-all combine in varying degrees both sufist principles and *Ulema* legalistic tradition in their pedagogy. What they do not accept is localised Sufi practices (such as intercession between God and individual, visiting saint graves in lieu of some expectation, miraculism etc. which they considered *shirk*) but continue to adhere the sufist principles of remembrance of *Allah*.

While the cross fertilization of Islamic ideas between Islamic institutions in India and Arabia has been going on for centuries, however, unlike Pakistan, the Salafisation of major Islamic institutions in India has not taken place for two important reasons. First, this is in part due to Mrs. Gandhi's 'firm no' in 1970s to the Saudi's request for religious services (construction of mosques and madarassas) in India. Second, in part, Islam's deep interaction with pluralism and local practices in the Indian sub-continent and the functioning of dominant Islamic institutions on the combined principles of sufism and Islamic legalistic tradition of *Ulema*, albeit in varying degree, further prevented Islamic traditional institutions of learning from being favourably disposed to the discourse of Wahhabi-Salafisation and incorporating them in their pedagogy.

Third, one of the reasons for the development of Islamicist militancy/ terrorism is the breakdown in the consensus over the highest value of Islam in the Muslim world, as referred earlier in the text, which existed in pre-modern times. This is partly because that traditional Islamic institutions of learning like Al Azhar in Egypt, Zaitunia

in Tunisia, and many others in the Sunni Arab World hardly enjoys legitimacy and respectability among large sections of Arab youth on account of serving the state interests including their relationship with the West. One example of such a trend is that Sheikh ul-Azhar justifies the establishment of diplomatic relationship and Peace and Friendship Treaty (1977) with Israel during the Sadat regime. One consequence of this process is the development of Political Islam and of late radicalisation of Islamic traditions, which enjoys a fairly good legitimacy among large number of Arab Muslims, particularly among peripheralised Arab Muslims. It is not without reason that ISIS attracted a good number of Sunni Arab Muslim youth; particularly from Tunisia, which is otherwise considered one of the most modernised country in the Arab world.

However, unlike the Arab world, traditional Indian Islamic institutions of learning of all dispensations, except Ahle Hadith, continue to enjoy considerable legitimacy among large sections of Muslims across India. This explains why among large number of Indian Muslims, who otherwise share the anti-west sentiments, only a very few actually join the radical, violent/ terrorist organisations. This is explained by the proposition that the exclusive, binary, violent prone narratives of Islam prove to be alien to the sensibilities of predominant majority of Indian Muslims shaped through centuries of everyday Indian culture of dialogue, negotiation, living with differences and with pluralism.

The exclusive, binary, violent prone narratives of Islam proved to be alien to the sensibilities of predominant majority of Indian Muslims shaped through centuries of everyday Indian culture of dialogue, negotiation, living with differences and pluralism.

In the above context it may be noted that while it is Maulana Maududi, the founder of Political Islam in South Asia, who first pronounced the discourse of *jahiliyyah* (ignorance in pre-Prophet Muhammad period) to understand the decline of 'Muslim power<sup>1</sup> as well as to reject the modern world including the Muslim territory. Later the doctrine was transported to Arab world via Syed Qutub, the ideologue of Muslim Brotherhood. It is interesting to note while the doctrine of jahiliyyah is the dominant Islamic narrative among a large section of Arabs and Arab diaspora living in the West<sup>104</sup>, which propelled a good section to believe in violence as legitimate

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<sup>104</sup> Personal observation.

means to further the cause of Islam. The fact that the concept of Jahiliyyah originated in India but failed to capture the imagination of large majority of Muslims in India and even in South Asia, speaks about their continuing faith in syncretistic and pluralist tradition of Islam.

Finally, as Holy Quran is revealed in Arabic language, Islam has become grand narrative and dominant discourse from the inception of Islam in Arabic speaking world. This has an implication for radicalisation among a section of Arabic speaking people when Islam is linked with the politics of state. However, the same is lacking in India. The great majority of Indian Muslims are non-Arabic speaking and therefore understand Islam as mere religious and cultural values, ethical and moral codes in order to live as 'Muslim' and to be accountable before Allah on the Judgement Day. Even the non-Arabic Muslim rulers clearly drew the distinction between the world of political governance and world of religion and understood Islam dominantly in terms of ethical and moral values.

In the Indian context the Mughal rulers succeeded to rule on the vast territory on such distinction and understanding of Islam as moral and ethical discourse in governance what Muzaffar Alam has called the 'Languages of Political Islam'<sup>105</sup>, which is in direct opposition to Bernard Lewis's Political Language of Islam,<sup>106</sup>. The latter is more textual, based on Arab experiences and traced the roots of political role of Islam to Quran. It may be noted here what Babar in his confidential Will left to his son Humayun, the original copy of which is preserved in the library of Bhopal, advised the following:

The concept of Jahiliyyah originated in India but failed to capture the imagination of large majority of Muslims in India and even in South Asia, speaks about their continuing faith in syncretistic and pluralist tradition of Islam.

*"O my son: People of diverse religions inhabit India it therefore behoves you that you should not allow religious prejudice to influence your mind, and administer impartial justice having due regard to the religious susceptibilities and religious custom of all sections of all sections of the people. Treat*

105 Alam, Muzaffar, *The Languages of Political Islam: India 1200-1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004

106 Lewis, Bernard. *The Political Language of Islam*, University of Chicago Press, 1988.



*the different peculiarities of your subjects as the different seasons of the year, so that the body politic may remain free from disease*<sup>107</sup>.

## E.2 Anti-Terror Campaign by Major Islamic Institutions in India.

Apart from the role of intrinsic cultural quotient of everyday Islam in acting deterrent to the appeal of ISIS and other global *jihadi* discourses, one must also give credit to the antiterror campaign launched by Indian Islamic institutions including Darul Uloom, Deoband, particularly against ISIS. Many Indian religious groups openly condemned IS's 'illegitimate' action and issued *fatwa* against such IS activities. Almost all the sects of *Sunni* and *Shia* Islam such as Deobandi, Baralevi, *sufi's khankhas*, and others have openly and resolutely opposed ISIS and denounce it as un-Islamic creed.

Since 2008, Deoband has been at forefront in denouncing all kinds of violence and terrorism in the strongest possible terms. In May 2008, it even issued a fatwa declaring 'terrorism as un-Islamic'<sup>108</sup>. Since then, Deoband and its sister organisation, Jamaat-e-Ulema Hind, have regularly organised meetings and conferences to denounce, and try to build a movement against, terrorism. Jamaat-e-Ulema Hind even launched an awareness campaign in 65 cities against ISIS<sup>109</sup>.

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Besides Islamic religious groups that did play an important role in delegitimising the IS in Indian society; members of civil society worked tirelessly to dissuade people from visiting IS or other Jihadi linked website. Khandwani, vice-president of the Memon Chamber of Commerce, has hired cyber security experts and joined hands with official agencies to monitor the 'online' behaviour of fellow Muslims<sup>110</sup>. Similarly, Dr Abdur Rahman Anjaria, who heads the Islamic Defense Cyber Cell of India, has volunteers across the country scanning social media—from Facebook to

107 Quoted in Ahmad, Imtiaz 'Legacy of Islam in India: Custom, Dress and Cuisine' (Text of a talk broadcast on July 7, 1981, over All India Radio in the National Programme of Talks, under the series 'Legacy of Islam in India').

108 Darul Uloom. 2008. 'Declaration: All India Anti-Terrorism Conference', 25 February, available online at [www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/index.htm](http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/index.htm), also, Haq, Zia, 2008. 'Darul's Global Fatwa on Terror', *Hindustan Times*, 1 June, available online at [www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/india/Darul-global-fatwa-on-terror/Article1-314490.aspx](http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/india/Darul-global-fatwa-on-terror/Article1-314490.aspx)

109 Jamaat Ulema-e-Hind Holds Protest Across 75 Cities Against ISIS', November 19, 2015, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/jamat-ulema-e-hind-holds-protest-across-75-cities-against-isis-1244972>

110 See, Ullekh, NP and Singh, Siddharth, God's Recruits, 23 June 2017, <http://www.openthemagazine.com/article/cover-story/god-s-recruits>,

Twitter to Instagram and beyond—for objectionable content, jihadist appeals and hate speeches on ‘kaffirs’ (infidels)<sup>111</sup>.

### E3. Role of Indian State and Indian Political Process: A Soft Approach

Having explored the historical nature of Islam in India and its role in thwarting the appeal of global jihadi Islamicist discourses for Indian Muslims, it would be worthwhile to examine the role of Indian state and political culture in arresting the growth of Islamic militancy in India. Indian democracy, secularism, constitutional recognition of minority rights has often been emphasised in the context of understanding why the global Islamic fundamentalism and militancy had limited appeal to Indian Muslims. However, one needs to go beyond these criteria, though important in themselves, in order to examine the role of Indian political culture, historically shaped by social-religious-civilisational factors, in arresting the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and militancy.

Two aspects of Indian political culture deserve attention from the point of view of arresting the growth of Islamic militancy in the country. First, one of the unique feature of Indian nation state is its openness. Prof Mitra feels this is due to the fact that the Indian establishment does not judge any institution and action of individual on the basis of any set of core values<sup>112</sup>, unlike its neighbour Pakistan and Bangladesh (Islam) and Sri Lanka (Sinhala Buddhism). The absence of ‘relative core values’ of Indian nation has allowed socially and religious diverse groups to identify with nation. There might however be some danger from fringe group of Hindutva that may disturb the delicate balance between Indian nationhood and its social and religious diversities including Muslim community that Indian state has sustained so far.

Second, unlike Europe, India has been successful in creating an environment that prevented the flight of a good numbers of Indian Muslims to Afghanistan and IS

One of the notable features of Indian democracy has been that it has allowed its citizen and non-citizen including Muslims to live freely with their identities both in private and public realm, which partly explains ‘its lack of support’ to extremist forces against the state/government despite poverty and backwardness.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Mitra, Subrata.K. 'Constitutional Design, Democratic Vote Counting, and India's Fortuitious Multiculturalism', *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*. Working Paper No.4, 2001:1-33,5.

controlled territory in Syria and Iraq. A great feature of Indian democracy has been its ability to maintain a discursive space to celebrate the collective identities openly despite its relatively contested records of human rights, liberalism and substantial democracy. More specifically, whereas Europe denies the basic religious freedom to its Muslim immigrants and citizens, Indian Muslims enjoy the robust religious freedom (even more than the Muslim majority countries) and freely practice their religion. In other words, one of the notable features of Indian democracy has been that it has allowed its citizen and non-citizen including Muslims to live freely with their identities both in private and public realm. Indian state, unlike Kemalist Turkey and many modern European states, have hardly regulated 'everyday life process/styles' of its people, which partly explains 'its lack of support' to extremist forces against the state/government despite poverty and backwardness.

Third, the particular manner in which the Indian state system functions and relates itself with the various social groups including the Muslim communities in the society. The noticeable features about this particular manner within which the Indian state system has been functioning are its flexibility about norms, doctrines and principles, its being non-definitional, its fuzziness about the things 'political' and decision-making processes. In fact, along with these features its capacity to live with uncertain situations and its tendency to look for context-specific solutions by developing a political grammar that recognises the public-private, formal-informal distinctions but without making it official - a specific political practice that distinguishes Indian governance from other state systems in the world.

For instance, while both the Constitution and the law of the land speak about the rights of the individual and the groups no specific procedure or guidelines was laid down in the Constitution. Neither any attempt was ever made by the Supreme Court nor by the Indian Parliament to determine why the state should support one or the other in case of the conflict between the two. Although many advocates of secular-modernist model of development tend to see this flexibility, accommodative, fuzziness, vagueness and non-doctrinal tendencies of Indian political process as its weakness. However, in practice they have proven to be its strength rather than weakness. This is evident from India's successful record in dealing with the complex issues of integration of large social diversities that exist in India without undertaking the violent route as reflected in the history of modern nation-state in many parts of the world, particularly in Europe.

Another important recognisable feature connected with the functioning of state system is the 'indeterminate' character of Indian political process that does not privilege or de-privilege any social groups in perpetuity. Any student of social transformation of Indian society in the post-colonial period will testify the gradual upward mobility of hitherto excluded social groups of lower caste/class in the higher echelon of state administration and others areas without any large scale violent backlash. The nature of democratic political process in India has helped expanding the domain of equality both horizontally and vertically<sup>113</sup>. Muslims too have gained in socioeconomic terms and a sizeable middle class among Muslims have developed<sup>114</sup>, notwithstanding the dominant discourse of discrimination and exclusion that exists in the public realm with regard to Muslim community.

The most important aspect of the functioning of Indian state system and the larger political process is its ambiguity (therefore context specific) and non-doctrinaire approach to the issue of private- public distinction. Thus, the Indian Constitution and the state neither (totally) accepted nor rejected<sup>115</sup> the principle of private-public distinctions and separation of religion from political, rather preferred something in between: a kind of 'relational neutrality', against the doctrine of 'absolute neutrality' of the state and the principle of 'equi-distance' to all religions and the equal treatment of all religions as against the principle of 'absolute' separation between the two as the governing principles. It seems that there were three larger considerations that influenced the Indian political elite to evolve and adhere to the latter course without acknowledging the same formally:

First was the general understanding of the role of religion in the Indian society, wherein it was, historically, not considered as a threat to the secular order or state, unlike in the West. Therefore, a common recognition of religion and culture and its various symbols in the public arena was considered perfectly legitimate from the governing point of view without conceding them the right to occupy the political role, at least in theory.

113 Jafferlort, Christophe, *India's Silent Revolution: the Rise of the Lower Castes*, Permanent Black 2003, also, Varsheny, Ashutosh, 'Is India Becoming More Democratic?', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol 59, no 1, Feb 2000, pp,3-25

114 Alam, Anwar, Emergence of Muslim Middle Class in Post-Independence India and its Political Orientations, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 1-18., 2015, Also, Khan, Wahiduddin, *Indian Muslims: The Need for a Positive Outlook*, Al-Risala Books, 1994

115 Mahajan, Gurpreet, *Identities and Rights: Aspects of Liberal Democracy in India*. Oxford University Press, 1998 75 <sup>119</sup> Galanter, Marc, *Competing Equalities: law and the Backward Classes in India*, London: university of California Press, 1984, 567, Mathew, P.D., *Do We Need A Uniform Civil Code?* New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1998, 15, Mansfield, John H, 'The Personal Laws or a Uniform Civil Code in Robert D. Baird, ed, *Religion and Law in Independent India*, Manohar, Delhi, 1993, 139-177.

Second, as an agency of modernity the political elite urgently felt the necessity to 'reform and regulate' the religious institution at least in relation to majoritarian community, if not the minority community, without thoroughly subjugating them to the instrumentalities of state, something that happened in the West. However, the Supreme Court, by arrogating itself the right to define what constitutes the "essential" of religion, sets the limit of the Indian state to interfere in the religious affairs. Thus, in many cases the Supreme Court upheld the legislation and executive order to regulate the religious institutions but in many matters the court also struck down the laws made by state, which were considered in contravention to 'essential practice' of religion that is given under the fundamental rights of the constitution<sup>116</sup>.

Third, the praxis of secularism in the Indian political domain has been such that it has come to combine the principle of legal universalism (constitutional notion of citizenship, equality and nondiscrimination) and legal pluralism (personal laws) and strongly came to identify with the discourse of minority rights. This political practice has been considered vital for national unity and integrity as well as integration of minority communities<sup>117</sup>. Over the years the Indian courts, particularly the Supreme Court, has played a key role in expanding and safeguarding the scope of minority rights in this country. Referring to Article 29(1), that deals with linguistic and cultural rights, the Supreme Court declared: This right is more or less "absolute", "unqualified" and "positive" and includes even the citizens' "right to agitate for its protection"<sup>118</sup>. Similarly, in a famous judgement connected with the Article 30, which deals with rights of linguistic and religious minority to administer their own educational institution, the Supreme Court stated that "the minorities, quite understandably, regard it essential that the education of their children should be in accordance with the teachings of their religion and they hold, quite honestly, that such an education cannot be obtained in ordinary schools designed for all the members of the public, but can only be versed in the trends of their religion and in the tradition

The nature of democratic political process in India has helped expanding the domain of equality both horizontally and vertically. Muslims too have gained in socio-economic terms and a sizeable middle class among Muslims have developed, notwithstanding the dominant discourse of discrimination and exclusion that exists in the public realm with regard to Muslim community.

116 Ramesh Yashwant Prabhoo (Dr), vs Prabhakar K. Kunte (1996) 1SCC 130, Manhoar Joshi vs Nitin

117 BhauRaoPatil(1996) 1SCC169, Ramchandra K. Kapse vs Haribansh R. Singh(1996), 1 SCC206.).

118 Wadhwa, K.K.,Minority Safeguards in India, Delhi, Thompson Press LTD, 1975, 98.

of their culture”<sup>119</sup>. More recently, in April 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the power of National Council of Minority Educational Institution (NCMEI) to accord the ‘minority status certificate’ to any educational institution managed by member of minority community, quashing the decision of Calcutta High Court that had denied this power to NCMEI<sup>120</sup>. In the process, in Muslim’s imagination, Indian secularism came to be associated with a kind of political rule that not only guarantees the physical security of the community but also recognises and promotes Muslim’s religious and cultural symbol in public sphere with right to practice their religion freely. It is because of such understanding that Islamic organisations and common Muslims consider the communal riots as violation of secularism in India.

One of the positive implications of the above narrated ambiguous, flexible, vague and non-doctrinal nature of secularism in particular and the larger political process in general is that minority’s, particularly the Muslims, religious and cultural symbols continue to enjoy the due recognition in the public realm as a part of the evolved political culture, if not as an outright constitutional right. This was/is reflected not only in the observance of national public holidays connected with the minority religions, but also in relation to important state ceremonies. Thus, for an instance, *out of 14 declared national religious holidays 10 belong to minority communities (4 Muslims, 2 Christians, 2 Sikhs, 1 Buddhists, and 1 Jain), a , model of governance hardly found in other countries of the world.*

**I**n Muslim’s imagination Indian secularism came to be associated with a kind of political rule that not only guarantees the physical security of the community but also recognises and promotes Muslim’s religious and cultural symbol in public sphere with right to practice their religion freely.

A great deal of ‘Muslim/minority politics’ takes place in India within this ambiguity of state behaviour, particularly in relation to the doctrine of secularism. The Indian model of secularism underscores the relative neutrality of state in which state keeps what Rajeev Bhargava calls ‘principled distance’<sup>121</sup> with all religious traditions and with favourable political attitude towards them as well as reserve a right to

119 The case of Kerala Education Bill 1957, quoted in Massey, J., *Minorities in a Democracy: The Indian Experience*, Delhi: Manohar, 1999, 42

120 Choudhary, Amit Anand, NCMEI can grant minority tag to education institutions: SC, *Times of India*, April 19, 2018, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/ncmei-can-grant-minority-tag-to-education-institutions-sc/articleshow/63822944.cms>, accessed on 21.04.2018A

121 Bhargava, Rajeev ‘The Distinctiveness of Indian Secularism’, available at, [http://www.chereum.umontreal.ca/activites\\_pdf/session%202/Barghava\\_Distinctiveness%20of%20Indian.pdf](http://www.chereum.umontreal.ca/activites_pdf/session%202/Barghava_Distinctiveness%20of%20Indian.pdf), accessed on 5.5.2016.

politically intervene in religio-cultural affairs of the community to promote equality<sup>122</sup>. This practice of Indian secularism have ensured the lack of development of 'majoritarianism' as a political creed and as a basis of governance. Further, the internal structure of the Constitution and the social diversities of the Indian society greatly constrain the possibility of an emergence of majoritarianism, if not the development of majoritarian politics.

Majoritarianism is a fixed and relentless position, which is incapable of alteration, whereas a majority rule is open to transformation and change. The fact that a political decision in a (majoritarian) democracy is democratically arrived at leaves open the option of further representations and the possibility of a reversal of the earlier decision. As the majority opinion keeps changing in the public sphere, what is a majority view today could become a minority view tomorrow. It is through this process that minorities including women have succeeded in getting their due rights in the democratic societies of the world. Needless to say, that majoritarianism should be distinguished from the various shades of majority rule that is constantly under democratic pressure to change.

The 'politics of majoritarianism' is one thing; its transformation into 'creed of majoritarianism' is another. In fact, the alarmist view, that was generated in certain quarters of liberal section, on the possibility of the development of majoritarianism in the Indian politics in the wake of the rise of Hindu Right was found to have been largely exaggerated, if not completely false. 'The threat of majoritarianism' and its comparison to European form of fascism in the Indian context were found to be untrue in the light of the subsequent developments

This inbuilt elasticity of the political process in India, as the above narrative shows, has helped the religious minority groups, particularly the Muslim communities, to realize their goals to a great extent. It needs to be underlined here that the dominant goal of the 'Muslim politics' since the decline of Muslim power in India has been the protection of religious and cultural identity of the Muslim community. Thus, a few demands that have agitated the 'Muslim minds' and the communities in independent

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122 Thus, India Constitution opens the door of temples and other public spaces to members of schedule castes. The Indian government enacted a series of Hindu Code Bills in 1950s to empower the condition of Hindu women. Similarly, The Modi government in 2018 has decided to move a bill to abolish the practice of instant triple talaq prevailing among the Muslim community on the basis of Supreme Court decision in this regard.

India includes protection of Muslim Personal law, promotion of Urdu, preservation of minority character of Aligarh Muslim University, construction of Babri mosque, protection of mosques, *idgahs*, *dargahs*, *madarassas* etc. This can be testified by the number of resolutions and declarations passed by various Muslim organisations such as Muslim League, *Jamaat-i- Islami*, *Jamait-e-Ulema Hind*, *Anjuman Tarriqqi-e-Urdu*, *Muslim Majlis-I-Mushawarat*, *the Majlis-I-Ittihad ul-Muslimin*, *Muslim Majlis*, *Urdu Muhafiz Dasta*, Deeni Talimi Council, Muslim Personal law Board, Aligarh Muslim University Old Boys Association and many others. This does not mean that the issue of educational, economic and social development of the Muslim communities have not been raised by these (mostly) fundamentalist organisations, they did receive their attention but their focus remained confined to the religio-cultural issues of Muslim communities. The political and religious elites within the Muslim communities have mainly tried to articulate these demands through the mainstream secular political parties, mainly the Indian National Congress and later on Congress (I). The attitude of various governments at the centre and the state levels towards these demands has neither been 'outright rejection' nor 'total acceptance' but of a gradual concession' to the community depending upon the 'context' and the 'political weight' of the Muslim communities.

This has been reflected in all the major initiatives of the governments: ranging from the government grants to minority educational institutions as well conferment of minority status to various Muslim educational institutions, extending the benefit of affirmative policy of reservation in government employments and educational institutions to Muslims, inclusion of Urdu in 8<sup>th</sup> schedule of the Indian Constitution that commits the state to protect and promote the Urdu language, declaration of Urdu as the second official language in many states, setting up the National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language Board (NCUPLB) with its headquarter in Delhi, setting up Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, Protection Of Religious Place of Worship Act (1992), Muslim Women Protection of Divorce Act (1987), the Prevention of Terrorism (Repeal) Ordinance, 2004, setting up various commission to look into the grievances of the minority communities, and creation of Maulana Azad Education Foundation, 1989, the National Minority Development and Financial Corporation, 1992, (NMDFC), the National Commission of Minority Educational Institutions, 2006, and the National Commission for the Minority Rights (1992) and Minority Right Commission at the state level.



Moreover, Indian government has hardly ever obstructed to the proliferation of *madarassas*<sup>123</sup> in the country and even recognises the degree of *madarassas* for the purpose of higher education or seeking admission in the university system, which connects a good number of *madarassas* students to governmental opportunity structure unlike many Muslim countries such as Algeria. In Pakistan while the government has recognised *madarassas* degree at national level but the feudal basis of state is so strong that it does not allow the *madarassas* students, who mostly belong to *Azlaf* (lower caste), to enter into the state services, particularly the bureaucracy and military, except those Islamic institutions connected with the state. This partly explains why a section of *madarassas* students in Pakistan became the foot soldier of terrorism in the name of Islam<sup>124</sup>. In Algeria, the civil war between Arabophone and Franco-phone, that was waged during 1990s, as former was legally debarred from pursuing career in science subjects and thus were deprived of large public employment opportunity<sup>125</sup>.

In addition, the government and ruling parties have traditionally ensured the representation of Muslims in decisionmaking bodies through nomination of members of minority communities to elective offices and partly through their promotion to positions of power and authority in government. Whether such practices empowered the minorities to actually influence political decisions remains an open question, this political practice did give the minorities a sense of representation and participation in decisionmaking process. This political wisdom in ensuring representation of Muslim in governing structure has of late been declining.

The underlying thrust of the above narration is that the combinations of nature of Indian secularism, state's responsiveness to the issue of cultural and religious sensibilities and the system of minority rights including the Muslim Personal law provides the 'internal institutionalised space' to the Muslim communities to live freely with their religion, culture and identity without any sense of gratitude and gratefulness to the majoritarian community. Though an overall decline of political secularism

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123 Yoginder Sikand provides the following figures in relation to madrassa in India, according to the Centre for the Promotion of Science at Aligarh Muslim University, in 1985 there were 2890 madrassas in the country. A decade later, the Union Minister for Human Resources Development put the figure at 12,000. In 2002 the Union Minister for Home claimed that the number stood at 31,875. In 2003, a leading Muslim paper claimed that there were some 125,000 madrassas in India, catering to around 3,000,000 students and with a combined annual budget of approximately Rs 14 billion. Sikand, Yoginder, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, Delhi: Penguin Books, 2005,95.

124 See, Malik, Jamal, *Colonization of Islam: Dissolution of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan*,. Delhi: Manohar, 1996.

125 Martinez, Luis, *The Algerian Civil Wars, 1990-1998*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000

and a related rise in communal riots have resulted in a growing sense of insecurity among Indian Muslims and a distrust in state agencies. However, Muslims still don't view the Indian state as decisively working against Islam or their communal interests. In other words, the state has not lost total legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims, it is not perceived as the 'enemy' of Islam and Muslims per se. This space for 'Muslim India' within the Indian nationhood goes a long way in stemming the tide of growing isolation, radicalism, apathy and alienation among the Muslims and help in restoration of their 'wounded' confidence in the Indian state system.

According to a survey conducted by Prof. Mitra in 1996 on the acceptance of democratic and secular political system among the different religious groups, the most vocal support came from the Muslim (72.2 per cent) as against 68.2 per cent among the Hindus<sup>126</sup>. This assessment has been corroborated separately by other independent studies. For instance, the Centre for Studies on Developing Countries (CSDS) in its State of National Survey in 2005 also confirmed the similar trend among Muslims. According to this Survey, which involved 28 states of the country, 98 per cent of the Muslims identified themselves as Indian compared to 97 percent of Hindus and 76 per cent of Muslims as against 78 per cent of Hindus stated that democracy is always better<sup>127</sup>.

It is this common perception of Muslims about Indian state and government that did not allow (so far) the radical Islamicist discourse to gain significant foothold among them, save a few secular, modernist-radical Muslims. In other words, Indian Muslims do suffer from relative deprivation in economic and political spheres but not in religio-cultural spheres, which explains the absence of any development of large-scale trend of radicalisation among them.

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126 Mitra, Subrata.K. 'Constitutional Design, Democratic Vote Counting, And India's Fortuitious Multiculturalism', *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*. Working Paper No.4:1- 33,2001,p. 26.

127 <sup>125</sup> *Hindustan Times*, 10thFeb.2006.

## F.I In Lieu of Conclusion

So far, the combination of factors as enumerated in this monograph including the historical character of Indian Islam, the nature of Indian political process, secularism, minority rights, responses of Indian Islam to the globalised and regional jihadi Islam has prevented the process of radicalisation among the Indian Muslims from gaining momentum. However, the delicate balance that used to exist between the government/state and social and religious diversities including Muslim communities has apparently showing signs of crumbling. If the trend is not reversed, this will have a serious implication for alienating a section of Muslim youth in this country.

The delicate balance that used to exist between the government/state and social and religious diversities including Muslim communities has apparently showing signs of crumbling. If the trend is not reversed, this will have a serious implication for alienating a section of Muslim youth in this country.

As pointed out in the beginning of this monograph that more than any other factor it is the religio-cultural alienation which might strengthen the process of radicalisation among Indian Muslims. The demolition of Babri masjid was a jolt to the faith of the Muslim community. Since 2014 when the present NDA government came into power at the Centre, it has initiated a series of policy measures including the issue of criminalising instant triple talaq and keeping a distance from sharing Muslim/Islamic symbolism in the public domain that deeply concerns the Muslim community: *whether they are any longer free to practice their religion freely in this nation*. The emerging religious concern drove the Imarat-e-Shariat (Phulwarisharif, Patna)<sup>128</sup> along with All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Jamaat-i-Ulema-Hind to held a massive public rally (estimated to 3.5-4 lakh participants) under the slogan *Deen Bachao Desh Bachao* (Save Islam, Save Country) to protest against the government's increasing interference in matter of faith<sup>129</sup>. It may be noted that

128 Imarat -e- Shariat is acknowledged Islamic religious body to adjudicate matters related to Muslim personal law.

129 Wajihuddin, Mohammed Clerics say Islam, nation in 'danger', call protest rally, Times of India, April 14, 2018, p. 16, Azad, Nayeer, .Muslims hold rally against talaq bill *The Asian Age* Apr 16, 2018, <http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/160418/muslims-hold-rally-against-talaq-bill.html>,

all previous Muslim mobilisation in India took place on matters of religious identity-Khilafat (1918-1920), Pakistan (1940-47), Urdu (1960s), Shahabano (mid 1980s) and Babri masjid (early 1990s).

On the other hand, concerned with global demonization of Islam and necessity to preserve 'institution of Prophet Muhammad', its faith, message and identity Darul-Uloom, Deoband, since early 1980s introduced a number of new departments: the Shaykhul-Hind Academy in 1982-83, the 'Defence of the Finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad' (*tahaffuzi khatm-i nabuwwat*) in 1986 and Rabita Madaris Arabiya (the Association of Arabic Schools) in 1994 to supervise the quality of Arabic language and courses' being imparted in various madarassas with eventual objective of 'Arabisation' of the existing indigenous Islamic knowledge production (i.e. bringing more content in textbooks related to Arab Islamic history and culture).

The push towards 'Arabisation of Indian Islam' could be due to combination of factors: intra Islamic competition between Iran and Saudi Arabia, internal competition among various Sunni denominations to attract the flow of money from 'Arab quarters' or growing conviction that Islam in the current situation can be preserved only in the *Wahhabi-Salafi* understanding of Islam. In this regard the government needs to monitor Ahle Hadith, the puritanical Sunni sect, which has developed close institutional linkage with Wahhabi establishment in Saudi Arabia and also functions as representative of *Wahhabi-Salafi* vision of Islam in India. Since its establishment in 1963 with the support of Saudi Embassy in Delhi, Ahle Hadith's premier *madarassas*, Jamia Salafia, Varanasi (U.P) developed strong institutional linkage with Al Jamia Al Islamia (Islamic University) of Medina. This resulted in a good number of students of Jamia Salafia visiting Al Jamia Al Islamia of Medina for higher Islamic studies and upon returning occupying the teaching position in Jamia Salafia and other Ahle Hadith madarassas, apart from adopting curriculum of Al Jamia Al Islamia of Medina and periodic inspection by teachers of Medina university in Jamia Salafia at Varanasi<sup>130</sup>. In this context it would not be an exaggeration to state that the Islamicist militancy in South Kashmir and radicalisation in the Southern and Western part of India is in part linked with supply of Ahle-Hadith Ulema in these regions, which became dominant version of 'correct form of Islamic discourses and practices' in the absence

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130 *AmanuUah, Arshad*, Re-defining Ahl-e Hadis Identity In Contemporary North India: Dynamics of Exchange between Jamia Salafia, Varanasi and Islamic University, Medina, n.d, unpublished

of competition from other credible *Sunni* Islamic Institutions and denominations, unlike in North.

The combination of all these internal Islamic processes operating within Wahhabi dominated global Islamic context has, over the years, contributed to strengthening the Wahhabi- induced religious identity among Sunni Indian Muslims, which, depending upon the context, may lead a section of Sunni Muslim youth towards the path of radicalisation and militancy in future. Thus, any misperception among the Muslim community about the reformist policy measures of the government of the day with regard to what is being perceived as 'faith' might have unintended consequence of unleashing the process of radicalisation among a section of Muslim community, particularly among those Muslim youths with less or non-religious background who tends to understand Islam merely in the sense of identity and heritage. The well-intended purpose of the government (such as abolition of Islamic practice of instant triple talaq) flows from the constitutional conception of equal citizenship. The interest of the Muslim community would be better served if they articulate their demands in the constitutional terms and if the government does not appear to be seen as directly involved in matter of faith.

## **F.2 Recommendation for Further Studies and Researches**

This study of radicalisation amongst Muslims in India has also revealed certain gaps in the existing literature concerning Muslim community. Therefore, in the light of this study, I would like to draw the attention to some of the areas concerning Indian society in general and the Muslim community in particular that needs to be studied. These are as follows:

1. That the trend of radicalisation and its violent forms, though very limited among the Muslim community, in the Indian context partly results from the larger process of homogenisation and de- syncretisation of Islamic belief system and Muslim cultural life. This process holds true for a segment of people of other religio-cultural and secular faith systems in the country. In other words, the greater the thrust of homogenisation and de-syncretisation, the greater is the possibility of weakening of plural social fabric of the country, which may contribute to the process of radicalisation. Thus, it will be in India's national interest and national security that the government pay attention to

strengthening diversity. One of the possible courses of action could be to devise a mandatory course on 'socioology of diversity' at the level of school, college and university. What goes in the name of Indian sociology is a separate treatment of Islamic, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jain and Buddhist religious traditions.

2. That the trend of radicalisation is relatively strong among the Muslim youth in Southern and Western part of India. We need to conduct separate research for understanding the same.
3. That, very few studies have been conducted on the role of Islamic institutions in Indian society with a focus on whether the Islamic institutions have requisite conceptual tools and capacity to fight the menace of Islamicist radicalisation. Also, studies on Islamic institutions in India are very scarce. More studies on Islamic institutions located in various parts of the country may provide a granular picture of the process of radicalisation.
4. That, while Wahhabi Islamisation as source of radicalisation has been acknowledged; no serious study has been conducted on how this external process is affecting the course of radicalisation in India? Ahle Hadith is considered as one of the institutional representative of Wahhabi Islamisation; but no detailed study has been conducted on this Islamic organisation in India.
5. That, Muslims as a minority community in India prefer to live under constitutional democracy and secularism. However, there is hardly any empirical work on Muslim understanding of democracy and secularism. It would be worthwhile to undertake a cross region empirical research on Muslims experience of democracy and secularism in India.
6. That the trend of radicalisation, even though limited, has mostly been found among the *Ashraf* (Upper castes) bilingual, middle class youth. A separate empirical research work needs to be conducted in this regard.
7. That, this study brings out an Indian approach to deal with radicalisation, which is substantially different from the Western approach. The Western approach is based on the supremacy of homogenised

conception of nation-state and its corresponding security discourses demand physical elimination of 'bad Muslims'. The Indian approach differs in terms of its imagination of nation-state, which is not culturally neutral but culturally sensitive. From this point of view, Indian approach includes the negotiation with and accommodation of dissenting culture and voices, while not ruling out the hard options if situation so warrants. There is therefore a greater need to conduct an in-depth study of Indian approach to tackling terrorism, which has not been studied well so far.

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## About the Author



Anwar Alam holds a Master's degree in International Studies from School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Pursuant to his Masters, he did his M.Phil. and Ph.D. from Centre for West Asian Studies in the same institution. His M.Phil. Dissertation was on '*Islamic Revivalism: A Case Study of Egypt*'; while Ph.D. Thesis on '*Role of Religion in State Polity: A Comparative Study of Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia*'.

Dr. Alam is currently Senior Fellow with Policy Perspectives Foundation, New Delhi. Earlier he served as a full Professor at Department of International Studies, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Science, Zirve University, Gaziantep, Turkey, Professor and Director at Centre for West Asian Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Assistant and Associate Professor at Centre for West Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Lecturer at Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

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Dr Alam has published more than 30 articles in national and international journals, in addition to two books, six edited books, one co-edited book and 17 chapters in edited books in the related field of West Asia, Indian politics and Indian foreign policy and Muslim Politics. He has delivered approximately 70 lectures at different academic institutions including universities and Think Tanks within India and abroad, in addition to participation in more than 70 national and international conferences.

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*'Understanding the other is a critical step required to reduce conflict'*

Samantha Duraiappah

Director, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Peace

Red Sustainable development(MGIEP), UNESCO



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