

Dar-as-Salaam

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ABSTRACT

Through thorough research and findings, this paper addresses the concept of Islamophobia in the current political and social setup of the country. It is a politically powerful concept which has been significantly growing in society since India has been dominated by right wing politics. The paper highlights upon various facts and instances that intends a new, more or less obvious hate for the muslims. Being the minority in the state, growing hatred, discrimination and extremism has made it tough for them. The paper also gives insight on the psychological aspect related to Islamophobia in India.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Minority, Discrimination, Right Wing Politics, Extremism.

INTRODUCTION

Concept of Peace

When I was a kid, my mom introduced me to a new word called 'Religion'. I couldn't comprehend at first, but with time I realised its meaning and importance. Sooner I was introduced to prayers, rituals, moral values, ethics, karma, moral code of conduct, and most importantly the supreme power that controls the whole universe 'God'. Belonging to a Jain community, I was taught everything about Jainism. My mom also said, 'Our religion promotes peace.' The word 'our' didn't bother me until when I grew up. I pondered upon this sentence and I realised how beautiful this sentence would sound if the word 'our' was replaced by 'every'.

I believe and I reckon everyone should believe that peace is the essence all religions.

Bhagwat Geeta-66 verse-

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना |

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम्

Meaning- One who is not connected to Supreme power cannot have either transcendental intelligence

or a stable mind, without which there is no possibility of peace. How can there be any happiness without peace?

Hadith 4919-

عَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " أَلَا أُخْبِرُكُمْ بِأَفْضَلِ مِنْ دَرَجَةِ الصِّيَامِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّدَقَةِ " . قَالُوا بَلَى . قَالَ " إِصْلَاحُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ وَفَسَادُ ذَاتِ الْبَيْنِ الْحَالِفَةُ "

Meaning- The Prophet said: " Do you want me to tell you what is better than fasting , prayer and charity? The companions said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah." He said, " Promoting peace among human beings amongst whom there is discord, for the evil of discord is the shaver."

According to the holy book 'Quran', the ideal society is Dar as-Salaam(in Arabic) which means "the house of peace" of which it means: "And Allah guides you to the 'abode of peace' and guides into the right place whom he pleases.

In fact, in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Guru Nanak Dev Ji has emphasised the concept of peace and brotherhood. As the prayer (Ardaas) ends it is said, "Nanak naam chardi kala tera bhanesarbat da bhala", which means "Nanak by your name and blessings, may each person with inside the globe prosper and be in peace."

1 John 4:20 ESV

If all and sundry says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does no longer love his brother (human beings around him) whom he has seen cannot love God whom he hasn't witnessed.

When every religion is working towards the goal of maintaining peace, then why one religion or one community is being defamed and targeted for disturbing universal peace? When every religion wants it's followers to live together in perfect harmony, why it is far stated that Islamic religion encourages human beings to fight ?

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Growing Islamophobia

The concept of Islamophobia is turning into normalised and mainstream particularly in India. A very popular Islamophobia conspiracy theory acknowledged as 'Love Jihad' which was put forward by some right-wing leaders in order to subjugate Muslim men. The theory accuses Muslim men of wooing Hindu women to force them to convert to Islam by means such as kidnapping, seduction, marriage, and deception, as part of a broader "war" by Muslims against India. To curb the cases of Love Jihad, 'Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act 2021' was passed in Uttar Pradesh on 28th November. Under the new anti-conversion law, interfaith couples must now give two months' notice to a district official before getting married. The new law has criminal aspects, too, including a jail term of up to three to ten years if convicted of using marriage to force a spouse to change their faith. The law even allows distant family members to lodge a criminal complaint challenging the conversion and subsequent marriage. Such marriages can be called void. The burden of proof lies on the interfaith couples converting, or those counselling the interfaith couples to convert, to prove the conversion isn't forced. The anti conversion law is passed in 8 states including Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand. India, a nation that is home to a diversity of religious beliefs and practices, passing such laws not only takes away the citizen's right to choose their own religion or partner, but it also penetrates a hatred among one community towards another community.

Instances showing hatred towards Muslims in India

The hate campaign lead by the current government against muslims has crossed it's limits to such an extent that even the 'Urdu' language has started irking the right-wing leaders. Some Indians, including senior Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, had been infuriated that garb brand Fabindia used Urdu – a language spoken by many Muslims – to celebrate a collection for the Hindu festival of Diwali. The collection was titled as Jashn-e-Riwaaz which in Urdu means celebration of traditions. Tejasvi Surya, a right wing leader said, "Deepawali is not Jashn-e-Riwaaz." Some netizens asserted that it's predominantly spoken by the Muslim community and it should not be used to describe Hindu gala's and rituals. They even boycotted one of the brand and also making it trend on Twitter.

Fabindia is a new example to the list of Islamophobic incidents, but it's far in no manner the first brand to buckle under right-wing pressure in recent years

Few months back, a popular jewellery brand by the name of Tanishq was forced to take down a commercial that showed an interfaith couple at a baby shower organised for the Hindu bride by her Muslim in-laws. According to the Right wing group, the ad promoted 'Love Jihad'. The brand was trolled and backlashed. In fact, the names of some of the company's employees were circulated online, and the employees even got physical threats.

BJP government and the right wing groups have left no stone unturned in maligning muslim community. How can we forget the unrelenting vicious Islamophobic campaign in India blaming Muslims for spread of COVID-19? Last year in March. Islamophobic memes and hate speeches were spread saying –'Muslims equated with bioterrorism, with the weapon being the virus' or 'Muslims depicted as the virus and the virus as Muslims'. It all happened when it was found that the people who attended a mass religious congregation organised by Tablighi Jamaat (Islamic Missionary Movement) in Delhi, tested positive for COVID 19. The spreading of the false news lead to calls for social and economic boycotts to muslims businesses and physical attacks on muslims. The anti-muslim supporters couldn't forbear themselves from coining Islamophobic terms like 'CoronaTerrorism' or 'Taliban Crime'.

This incident led to the death of a young man in Una district of Himachal Pradesh. He died by suicide after villagers allegedly taunted him over the spread of coronavirus post the Tablighi Jamaat congregation in New Delhi.

It's not the only incident, another incident in which a newborn baby died after hospital refused to treat 'muslim' mother.

There's no end to the Islamophobic incidents happened in the recent past. Everyone saw the events that took place during CAA-NRC protests and how a sect of population and other protestors were declared terrorists under UAPA act when they protested against these anti-muslims bills, injustice happening against Kashmiri muslims ; the list is never ending . A very common cliché, which you are quite likely to hear even from those who aren't self-proclaimed anti-Muslims is, "All Muslims are not terrorists however all terrorists are Muslims." Uncritical use of a term like 'Islamic terrorism' has created an impression within the minds of a large number of people that terrorists who happen to be Muslims exist because Islam, somehow 'approving' of terrorism, drives them inexorably closer to it. A major role played by all the propaganda channels like OPIndia who with their fake content make the people

around believe that Islam promotes terrorism and muslims are terrorists.

CONCLUSION

Mostly, every article talks about the injustice happened to muslim community in India or around the globe. But, has anyone emphasised how anti-muslim bigotry can be stopped?

This can only be ended if we start treating muslims as human. Two dangerous things that have played a major role in the increase of Islamophobic incidents : ignorance and lack of knowledge about other cultures and beliefs. People ignore such discriminatory incidents just because they weren't or aren't the victims of such events. For once, let's step in other people's shoes and see the world through their eyes. Maybe, it wouldn't look as bad as we thought it would be. Also, learning about other religion and their beliefs wouldn't convert you in their religion. It would only change your perspective towards other religion and their followers.

If we start accepting the fact that other religion is no different than ours. And, motto of every religion is to promote peace. Then, I believe, will be the end of Islamophobia.

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