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Intersectionality of Marginalization and Inequality: A Case Study of Muslims in India

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Abstract

Marginalization is a process that leads to sidelining of a certain community/individual to the periphery of the social space that eventually constrain their life choices at political space, social negotiation, and economic bargaining. It is a complex contested umbrella term is inextricably linked with the concept of inequality within the marginalized communities. In fact, inequality and marginalization are usually at interface in that they both with interacts and reinforces each other. Religious minority groups are amongst those who encounter severe exclusion, discrimination and oppression. In case of Indian Muslims as a religious marginalized community, these two concepts overlap. However, concern with 'marginalization' is relatively recent and it is imperative to check the development trajectory on the marginalized groups. As considerable evidence exists, a process of 'marginalization' of minority communities exists in almost all societies and nothing warrants that the same is not true of Muslims in India to a greater or a lesser degree. While discussing social structure of Indian Muslims prominent scholars like Imtiaz Ahmad and Zoya Hasan brought forth the theoretical debate "Can there be a category called Dalit Muslims"[1]. However, there are different and distinct categories of 'marginalization' which sometimes intersect each other and therefore essentially limit the possibility about a proper and comprehensive diagnosis, thereby, making it difficult to resist the actual power-relations. This study explores the systemic processes through which Muslims are being marginalized systematically in different domains of life.

[1]Imtiaz Ahmad (2007), Zoya Hasan (2009)

Keywords: Marginalization; Inequality; Religious minority; Indian muslims; Dalit muslims

Introduction

In simple words, 'marginalization' is a set of process which ignores or relegates individuals or groups to the sidelines of political space, social negotiation, and economic bargaining. Homelessness, age, language, employment status, skill, caste, race, and religion are some criteria historically used to marginalize. Muslims being the largest religious minority community in India faces difficulties, spatial differences, intolerance, and physical insecurity and so on under the fabric of social, economic and political development. Therefore, it is a modest effort to study why Muslim community in India as a whole has continuously been marginalized throughout Indian history and what are the various factors that lead to their marginalization, discrimination and exclusion. Also, how the processes of 'marginalization' either give birth to their socio-economic inequalities or overlap in various domains of deprivation. The concept of 'marginalization' can be represented through major approaches such as neoclassical economics, Marxism, social exclusion theory and various other forms of marginality. Neoclassical economists trace marginalization to individual character flaws or to cultural resistance to individualism and the presence of 'culture of poverty'. In contrast, Marxists see marginalization as a structural phenomenon endemic to capitalism. For Marx, the "reserve army of the proletariat," a pool of unemployed or partially unemployed laborers, is used by employers to lower wages. Being influenced by Marxism, contemporary social exclusion theory stresses the importance of social networks and symbolic boundaries. Social exclusion theorists like Sukhdeo Thorat, Amartya Sen, Arjan de haan, Hilary Silver etc. argue that social hierarchical structure, persistent inequality, various forms of discrimination; poverty and unemployment are the leading causes of marginalization. In fact, American sociologist Charles Tilly further stresses the importance of economic structures and social networks to marginalization. Therefore, it is argued that the nature of the concept of 'marginalization' is multidisciplinary. However, the social exclusion theory of marginalization well suits the theoretical understanding and historical context of Indian Muslims. As the increasing democratization, citizenship, globalization and development swell the ranks of those "included" in the social order, so the plight of those who are at the road of margins becomes problematic. Therefore, based on secondary sources/data, this paper attempts to assess or reassess the pre and post-Sachar committee report of the situation of Muslims in Indian society in the context of historical, social, economic and political aspects/parameters in order to have a comprehensive analysis of the processes of marginalization and inequality. It will try to locate this argument through conceptual framework of socio-economic and spatial marginality to trace those processes of deprivation, exclusion and marginalization.

According to 2011 Census, Muslims constitute about 14.2 percent of India's total population. But we do not know much about the socio-political dynamics of this theoretically monolithic and empirically diversified community due to lack of sufficient research. There has been an attempt to represent Muslims as a single, monolithic, homogenous

group not only in political terms, but also in social science discourses. These kinds of representations have been facing a serious challenge in recent times owing to the emergence of the perspective of understanding Muslim society from below. Indian democracy, despite its various pitfalls, has over the years unleashed forces of democratization among various social groups including marginalized ones[2]. However, it has not unleashed forces of democratization within the Muslim community. Thus, the initiation of wider social and educational reform within the community is yet to start. Therefore, it is essential to look at the issues related to the silence imposed historically, socio-economically and politically on Muslims, especially Muslim women and how Muslim women have been marginalized, excluded and discriminated throughout the processes of democratization and trajectories of development.

Partition and Indian Muslims: Imposed Identity and Marginality

History is itself a mirror-process which puts various narratives in the world picture of marginalization, exclusion and inequality. Indian history of Muslims depicts how they have been visibly invisible in the processes of democratization and prone to significant decline in socio-economic as well as political terms. Indian Muslims being the lost children of India's partition bear the stigma of the past throughout the history and perceived as the main culprits for Divided India. This has resulted in unprecedented sufferings of deprivation and marginalization process of Indian Muslims. Therefore, this section tries to explore what role has Indian history played in the process of 'marginalization' of Muslims. With the invasion of Muslim rule, the generally accepted belief was that the exclusion of Muslims had its roots in the conversion of dalits and backward classes to Islam but with the imposition of caste system among Muslims. The frequent fight between the Muslim rulers with that of Hindus had widened the communal divide. Though conversion to Islam gave them a sense of identity and equality but it didn't make difference to their socio-economic situations. Rather it pampered the sufferings causing inequalities on the basis of caste structure. For instance, the Hindu dhobi became a Muslim dhobi and he still remained a dhobi. The Varna system of Hinduism became the *jamaats* of Muslims or what Muslims call it '*zat*' or '*biradari*'. Of course, one cannot forget the momentum of the Partition that shook the very existence of Indian Muslims. Since then the vibrations of communal passions turned Muslims into a mere suspicion of Pan-Islamic leanings. In fact, Muslims marginalization was a complex condition of disadvantage that this minority community had experienced before and after the independence in the hands of both, Britishers and Hindu forces. Because of their troubled legacy and vulnerabilities, the systemic marginality of Indian Muslims was created by socially constructed inequitable forces of bias. Muslims who stayed back still face the general suspicion and their loyalty is continuously questioned by different sections such as state, media and political class. They also categorically dub them as "agents of Pakistan". Therefore, it is important to question that why even after 60 years of independence, the stereotypes about Muslims in general and women in particular continue to prevail not only in the minds of political class, media, opinion-takers but in the whole discourse of the processes to democratization, change, equity and development.

When Indian polity was on the way of democratization and processes of development, various official reports and surveys highlighted the socio-economic backwardness of Muslim community such as Panel on

Minorities and Weaker Sections headed by Gopal Singh [1], the 43rd round of the National Sample Survey (1987-88), the Programme of Action, the New Education Policy, 1986 and the Planning Commission Survey of 1987-88. According to *New Education Policy, 1986* [2] "the Muslims along with neo-Bodhs are the most backward component of the Indian population today, in the field of education they are far behind the other sections of society"[3]. After analyzing the 43rd round of the National Sample Survey (1987-88) data on a comparative inter-religion studied, Abu Saleh Shariff concluded, "the Muslims are relatively worse-off than the majority of Hindus which include the STs, SCs, and Christian population in both the rural and urban areas in India"[4]. In fact, Muslims are poorly represented in public employment, occupying only six per cent of state government jobs, four per cent in the central government, three per cent in the Indian Administrative Services and less than one per cent in senior bureaucratic posts [3]. These empirical surveys and data depict that how Muslims as a religious minority has been marginalized in the history of Indian formation.

However, it portrays that Muslim community is often at discontent and dismayed with such a process of marginalization as it deprives them of many opportunities in life. They face unfair treatment in terms of employment opportunities, business opportunities, educational opportunities, housing among various others. Such process further molds into inequality that creates distinct feelings of being left out or being exploited. It is also worth mentioning that a parallel process also takes place alongside marginalization. Cultural chauvinism or religious bigotry intensifies the former process. Cultural chauvinists tend to promote their own culture or religious bigots promote their own religion against the other culture or religion in such a manner that the other feels threatened and fails to find enough space to exist in the society. In such circumstances, the women of the community become extremely important symbols. The incidents of unprecedented wave of communal riots of 1990s, the Gujarat pogrom of 2002 and contemporary issues (recent Dadri lynching of 2015) have seriously destroyed/undermined the fabric of the Indian state's secular and democratic credentials. In the communal – ridden society of India, most of the employers, industrialists and middlemen are Hindus, whereas most Muslims work as employees, workers and artisans [4]. This ominous development has posed a great threat to the Indian Muslims and quest of survival.

Muslims Towards Marginalization: Socio-Economic and Educational Indicators

The determining factor about changing patterns of marginalization relates to the *socio-economic* status of Muslims' religious minority community. It is evident that disadvantaged sections in India including the Muslims are awakening in recent times and organizing movements for equality and social justice under forward-backward, socio-political set-up of the country [1,5,6]. In fact, it is widely assumed that during partition, the heaviest migration of Muslims that took place were from upper and middle strata of society but still there is lack of such empirical or statistical data. This left the remaining Muslim population in India more disadvantaged than before. Subsequently, it has led serious setback in development and progress of Muslim society and even downtrodden their social, economic and educational backwardness. Parameters/indicators like education, employment and income (economic marginalization) are important tools to understand dimensions of Muslims marginalization. It is crucial to understand

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[2] Kohli, Atul (2001), ed. The Success of India's Democracy, Cambridge University Press.

[3] The Government of India (1986) Ministry of HRD, Department of Education, New Education Policy.

[4] Shariff, Abu Saleh (1995) 'Socio-economic and Demographic Differentials between Hindus and Muslims in India', Economic and Political Weekly, Mumbai 30, 46:p.2951

that marginalization in education lies in various forms of persistent disadvantage which is rooted in underlying social inequalities. Hence, to examine the educational backwardness plays a determining role in planned development of a country. Historically educational backwardness of Muslims is seldom a cause and consequence of their marginalization and discrimination. There is a significant disparity between the educational status of Muslims and that of other socio-religious categories (except SCs and STs)[5]. The constitution of a High Level Committee to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India formed and submitted its report in 2006 with Justice Rajinder Sachar as its chair. Popularly known as Sachar Committee Report, it has its base on the notion of development deficit among Muslims, therefore a systematic effort is made to analyze the conditions of Muslims. This Report finds "that Muslims are at a double disadvantage with low levels of education combined with low quality education; their deprivation increases manifold as the level of education rises. In some instances, the relative share Muslims is lower than even the SCs who are victims of a long standing caste system. Such relative deprivation calls for a significant policy shift, in the recognition of the problem and in devising corrective measures, as well as in the allocation of resources" [7].

According to the Sachar Report, the literacy rate among Muslims in 2001 was 59.1 % which was far below the national average (65.1 %) and other SRCs (70.8%)[6]. In general, the state level estimates suggest that the literacy gap between Muslims and the general average is greater in urban areas and for women; Muslims in urban areas, especially Muslim women, have a larger literacy deficit vis-à-vis the average condition prevailing in the state[7]. On the other hand, a comparison across SRCs both by gender and by place of residence also reveals consistently lower levels of Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) for the Muslim community[8]. According to the Sachar Committee's findings, 25 per cent of Muslim children in the 6-14 age groups either never went to school or else dropped out at some stage[9]. It is highlighted that the gap between Muslims and other SRCs increases as the level of education increases, whereas only 3% as a whole is lagging behind in ed of Muslim children among the school going age go to Madarsas[10]. This disparity reflects that how Muslim community ucation sector, which directly or indirectly perpetuates inequalities in this regard. This disparity as a result of exclusion from mainstream depicts the picture of societal marginality of Indian Muslims. Now the question arises when this is the case with Muslim community as a whole, then what can be the various critical conditions of a Muslim woman who is doubly marginalized and excluded group from mainstream arena. NSSO data 1987-8 clearly shows that Muslim women in urban India are much worse off than their rural counterparts, not only in terms of their overall educational status as citizens of India, but also in terms of their relatively poor educational status when compared to Hindu or Christian women[11]. This trend is all the more alarming when this situation is compared to the advances in Muslim female education achieved at the turn of the century. Since education is considered to be one of the foremost indicator to the strategies of inclusive development, then, of course an important tool

for creating a gender just society. Marginalization in education is an important factor in the widening of social and economic inequalities. The interaction between marginalization in education and wider patterns of marginalization operates in both directions. Through case studies one can have a larger picture of the marginalization of Muslim women in the education sector. In a Case study '*Muslim Women and Girl's Education: A Case Study from Hyderabad*', Rekha Pande tries to look at the educational status of Muslim women and their attitude towards the education of their girls in three slums of Hyderabad[12]. According to this survey, the overwhelming finding is of conspicuous and continuing disparies in education for the Muslim women. While 28.66 per cent men were illiterate, 38.66 per cent women were illiterate[13]. Even at the all India level most Muslim women have never been to school. Close to 58 per cent of women reported themselves to be illiterate and the school enrolment rate for the Muslim girl is high at the primary level that is 53.46 per cent, but as we move up the education ladder, there is a significant drop in the proportion of the higher education[14]. The reasons found were economic backwardness of Muslim community and they do not see that the formal system of education providing them livelihood because they are miniscule in government jobs. Of course, through the lens of women, they are at most disadvantage due to cultural norms as well as family livelihood strategies through making the very socialization of women. Through the Case Study of *Jammu & Kashmir* where majority of population is Muslims shows that the educational status of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular is quite dismal. In a paper titled '*Islam, Gender and Education: A Case Study of Jammu and Kashmir*', Fayaz Ahmad Bhat and others reveal that though Muslims constitute the majority community of the state with 67 percent of the total population are at the bottom with 47.3 percent literacy rate[15]. It is clear from this survey that Muslims are educationally a marginalized community in the state of J&K and the situation of Muslim women is much more disappointing. The present educational scenario in the state of J&K clearly reveals that gender disparity exists and disparity between religious groups in education and Muslim women being the worst sufferers in this context[16]. This study further reflects that it is not out of the religious compulsions or Islamic teachings that make the basis for this backwardness and marginalization but due to the lack of social awakening and political consciousness. Hasan and Menon [8] in a survey carried out across the country on Muslim women found that near about 60 percent of Muslim women reported themselves as illiterate. Therefore, there is immediate need to develop various platforms and channels to deal with educational backwardness of marginalization in Muslim community as whole and exclusively Muslim women. Education of women is one of effective tool and channel of measurement to reduce socio-economic inequalities, tackle discrimination and contribute in the process of equity and development. Various studies [8-11] have shown that education has made a significant contribution in improving the status of women.

Spatial Marginality: Ghettoization of Muslims

One of the most striking feature and element of marginalization of Muslim community in India is the influence of space itself, i.e., ghettoization of Muslims. Gradually, the creation of 'otherness' plays a

[5] Robinson Rowena, Religion, Socio-economic Backwardness & Discrimination: The Case of Indian Muslims, Indian Journal of Industrial Relations 44:194-200

[6] Government of India (2006) Prime Minister's High Level Committee, Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India, Cabinet Secretariat, (Chairman: Justice Rajinder Sachar) New Delhi. p. 52

[7] Ibid. p. 53

[8] Ibid. p. 56

[9] Ibid. p. 58

[10] Ibid. p. 77

[11] The National Sample Survey, 43 Round (1987–88) Table 37. Government of India.

[12] Pande Rekha (2006) Muslim Women and Girl's Education: A Case Study from Hyderabad, Journal of Indian Education, Volume 32 No.1.

[13] Ibid. p. 94

[14] Ibid. p.94

[15] Fayaz Ahmad Bhat, Fouzia Khursid and Nazmul Hussain, Islam (2011) Gender and Education: A Case Study of Jammu and Kashmir, Asia-Pacific Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 3 (2) p. 159-187

[16] Ibid. p.173

determining role in the process of ghettoization of Muslims and quest for identity. This 'otherness' is being created not only by society but also by state. The labeling of Muslims as 'terrorist' has been one of the vital factor for their physical estrangement while producing housing market and sentiment of insecurity fostered by communal riots. The explanation of the spatial dimension of marginality is primarily based on physical location and distance from centres of development, lying at the edge of or poorly integrated into system [12-15]. But one must point out that why this ghetto is formed? Is it important to be accumulated spatially to counter physical as well as cultural insecurity posed by government or any other groups of the society? This has become a matter of concern and quest for identity for deteriorating the conditions and deprivation of already marginalized Muslim community. An ambitious effort has been made in order to present an untold story of Muslim ghettos in Indian cities by Laurent Gayer & Christophe Jaffrelot in their book "*Muslims in Indian Cities: Trajectories of Marginalization.*" This book supplements an ethnographic approach to Muslims providing a different angle and insight vision into a little familiar but highly consequential subject. While examining the 'ghettoization thesis', this book tries to look into the Muslim localities and the way they relate to the wider reality of their city. In this book, Gayer, in his excellent study of Abul Fazal Enclave in Delhi, highlights the ambiguity of choice in situations where individuals are bound by multiple constraints. In the perception of physical security and residential security, this area represents the case of self-segregation rather than ghettoization. But it is evident from case studies of other Indian cities that due to increasing communal violence incidents evoke the issue of security in wider context of the experience of risk. The 'choiceless' nature of choice compels Muslims while making their housing decisions. Since the increasing ghettoization of Indian Muslims is a hotly debated but poorly understood subject is one of the constructed ingredients for the marginalization of Indian Muslim in terms of economic deprivation aggravated by physical insecurity and their increasing socio-spatial segregation. The story of backwardness and under-representation of Muslims in various spheres of life add to the dynamics of marginalization and social inequality of Muslim community.

Another influencing and impressive work has been done by Sameera Khan in her excellent piece titled "*Negotiating the Mohalla: Exclusion, Identity and Muslim Women in Mumbai*". By using ethnographic and historical data and analyzing interviews with Muslim women across Mumbai city, the essay inquires specific areas of concern– whether living in 'mohallas' (neighborhoods) dominated by their own community has a bearing on Muslim women's spatial mobility; if the controls wielded by neo-fundamentalist groups limit their participation in public space; if wearing the veil in fact facilitates movement; how the issue of civic safety is framed in the context of Muslim women whose entire community's safety is often at risk; and finally, in what way does their community's growing exclusion from the everyday civic and political life of the city impact them[17]. To sum up, she concludes that the larger discourse that perceives Muslim women as being oppressed by their own culture (and male relatives) obscures the fact that this same discourse exacerbates the restrictions that Muslim women experience. It also obscures the fact that Muslim men as much as Muslim women are excluded from public space[18]. Therefore, it shows that how ghettoization plays a key role in the processes of marginalization with adverse social, psychological and political consequences. As noted by Vora and Palshikar [15] since groups such as Muslims and Dalits often live in localities that are imprisoned either by spatial or community location, their social existence results

in political ineffectiveness. On the other hand, Panikkar [15] suggests that it reinforces tendencies of minoritarianism which promotes a genre of politics based on internal consolidation of the community and also militancy. The above mentioned case studies demonstrate that spatial marginality or topographical divide based on religion persist in the process of marginalization of Muslims. Here, one can question if this spatial discrimination create/cause marginalization then how it can be and why is it so? An emerging & prominent argument can put forward in this regard is known as '*surveillance*'. Because the physical watching has implications for inequality and for justice, surveillance studies also have a policy and a political dimension, says David Lyon[19]. Since surveillance is associated with some objective/purpose and this objective is inextricably linked with social exclusion of Indian Muslims. They are excluded by both society and state as well. In fact, they are excluded by the society that's why they are surveillanced by the state which is further creating exclusion for that specific community. Therefore, they are feeling insecurity not only from society but also by state, thereby, creating a kind of political exclusion and social exclusion as well.

'Monolithism' in Muslim Community: A Political Construction

The most vibrant story of Muslim community marginalization is the general perception of grouping all Muslims in one monolithic homogeneous category, which is not the reality. This paper contends this portray of 'monolithism' in Muslims. Since often Muslims are misunderstood in term of a monolithic/homogeneity community whereas there are heterogeneities within Muslim community. Therefore, there is a need to see those heterogeneities in Muslim community to study comprehensively. That's to say what actually the kind of marginalization they are facing and what actually the factors that leading to their deprivation of physical segregation. This community is just as diversified ethnically, linguistically and culturally as any other religious community in India on similar lines of caste and class. Studies related to Muslims in India often take its religious hysteria and image into picture of socio-economic and spatial analysis. With offset of Mandal Commission recommendations to include Muslims in OBCs list and impart affirmative action policies to this community has exposed the perception of grouping them into a single homogenous unit. It has further posed the awareness of backward classes and the process of democratization of Muslim marginalized community swayed away with politics of reservation. A sociological perspective on Muslims OBCs as a category is being reflected in an excellent book titled "Muslim Backward Classes: A Sociological Perspective" by Azra Khanam. She has done a tremendous job by exploring and reviewing the existing literature on the historical and sociological reasons for the caste like social structure within the Muslim community. Various variables that shape the social stratification and diversification among Muslims include religious conversion, endogamy, occupational specialization, hierarchical gradation of status groups; descent based social stratification, ritual considerations in social gradation and commensal restrictions. But what remains consistent across India is the pattern that members of the lower caste are associated with menial or less prestigious occupation, lower educational status as compared to the members of higher caste. While relative socio-economic and educational backwardness of Muslim community cannot be denied, the social structure of this community has deepened the sufferings and marginalization within itself. Sociologists like Imtiaz Ahmad [16],

[17] Khan, Sameera (2007) 'Negotiating the Mohalla: Exclusion, Identity and Muslim Women in Mumbai,' Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 42, No. 17 p. 1527
[18] Ibid, p. 1531

[19] Lyon, David, 2002, Editorial. Surveillance Studies: Understanding visibility, mobility and the phenetic fix, Surveillance & Society 1(1).

Zarina Bhatty [17] have recently studied that how caste dynamics has become an internal feature at play in Indian Muslims. In a paper entitled *'Social Stratification among Muslims in India'*, Zarina Bhatty observes that Muslims in India are divided into two broad categories, *Ashrafs* and Non-*Ashrafs*. *Ashrafs* are upper castes by virtue of their foreign descent. And Non-*Ashrafs*, being the alleged converts, constitute the lower castes [20]. Further, while the *Ashrafs* are divided into four castes, *Sayyads, Sheikhs, Mughals* and *Pathans*, the Non-*Ashrafs* are divided into a number of 'occupational castes'. In Non-*Ashrafs*, writes Bhatty, 'the superiority or inferiority of a caste is determined by the relative pure or impure nature of the occupation associated with each'[21]. It is believed by many activists and sociologists that there is an urgent need to explore the gender and caste questions among Muslims and the issues of discriminations, social exclusion/inclusion, and recognition. Also, it is essentially needed to focus on how caste becomes a source of discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream not only for lower caste Muslim men, but equally or even more deeply for lower caste Muslim women. Various official reports, for instance, Mandal report, Sachar Committee Report, Satish Deshpande Pande report and recently Kundu report confirm the prevalence of caste hierarchical structure among Muslims. Although Islam does not recognize caste differentiation among its adherents several categories of Muslims belonging to ajlaf section have traditionally been treated as 'low caste' in their occupation and in matters of social relations [17-19]. The politicization of caste has resulted in the awakening of Muslims from lower caste background (Arzal) to unite politically and socially against the hegemony of Ahraf group. Therefore, the question for inclusion of lower caste Muslims into the mainstream is of importance in order to strengthen the process of democratization. The over-simplification of caste-analogous provides a complex picture of Muslim community. Imtiyaz Ahmad's [20] seminal work has convincingly demonstrated the reality of caste among Indian Muslims. The traces of awakening of Muslim backward classes can be found in recent writings of journalist and social activist Ali Anwar [21]. The book titled 'Masawat ki Jung' (Crusade for Equality) vividly depicts the social inequality in Muslim society and the plight of the dalit Muslims. It focuses on the movement that the Dalit Muslims of Bihar have launched against the 'exploitative' upper class and ulemas in their own society under the banner Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz (PMM) [22]. Organizations like the All India Backward Muslim Morcha and All India Pasmanda Muslim Mahaz have developed a platform for lower caste Muslims to protest against unjust social structures and to seek legitimate space for themselves. Apart from various reasons that compel Muslim community at the roads of backwardness, non-recognition of 'Dalit Muslims' in the category of Scheduled Castes (SCs) is of importance [23]. Although National Commission for Minorities and the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities have recommended that the Christian Dalits and the Muslim Dalits be declared as Scheduled caste at par with their Hindu counterparts, the promise is yet to be fulfilled due to the lack of research works on untouchability among Muslims [24]. The inequality, oppression and discrimination faced by Muslim woman from lower caste are visibly invisible within. Therefore, it is an essential need to raise the question and voice of Muslims belonging to Arzal category for the emancipation of Muslim community as a whole and strengthening of democratic values of the country [25]. The Sachar Committee Reports also says: The incidence of poverty is highest among Muslim-OBC (38%) followed by Muslim General (35%) Overall, the conditions of Muslim-OBCs are worse than those of Muslim-General Within the

Muslim community a larger percentage of Muslim OBCs fall in low income category as compared to Muslim-General Within Muslims, Muslim-OBCs are slightly lagging behind the Muslim-General in high income group [26]"[22].

Most importantly, the prime cause for spatial marginalization of Muslims is *Orthodox Islamic Ideology*. One needs to contend orthodox ideology of Islam and provides an internal critique to it in order to present a comprehensive analysis of marginalization. The religious political leaders like mufti, ulemas etc. have upper hands in this hotly contested ideology [27]. The masses or followers are like placards or movable objects deployed on a chessboard in the hands of these politically active religious leaders. The Muslim Islamic leaders portray the politically manipulated Islamic ideologies to group them all Muslims in one homogenous bowl and hide heterogeneity [28-33]. Therefore, the heterogeneity is not only restricted/confined at d level of socio-economic condition but in fact, it is widely at d level of ideology and a politically manipulated menu being served or presented in front of 'others'. In Indian society, the very conception of the term secularism has flattened the heterogeneity and tries to present the specific community/group in a cup of homogenous identity and defining them solely along religious lines. The picturization of Muslims largely as a religious community has unintended consequences. Therefore, political manipulation is being used to sideline/marginalize the specific community projecting as 'other'. Hence, this conception or essentialization often derives from within and need to tackled or handled carefully in order to improve the conditions of marginalization [34-37].

Conclusion

Marginalization of Muslims in India is a harsh reality. Based on the above empirical data and case studies, it is evident that issues of discrimination, exclusion and marginalization of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular is complex but a serious matter of concern. While imparting education to all Muslims is very much required, the causes and consequences of spatial marginality reflects the negative image of the society, which needs to be assessed and examined. It all leads to their severely stigmatised and extremely excluded conditions. Since marginalization is an integral part of the development of strategies for inclusive education, it is important to seek effective measures to improve the conditions of Muslims. Marginalization and peripherialization foster a relational approach to inequalities among marginalized groups. Therefore, an effective and inclusive policy is urgently needed to open up various platforms for absorbing religiously marginalized minority communities to develop a more democratic and secular India. Since it is clearly visible that Muslim Indians share an economic and educational predicament with their vulnerable non-Muslim fellow citizens, therefore, economic and educational welfare are the predominant concerns in the process of democratization of Muslims. The rigid social stratification among Muslims has deepened their vulnerabilities and sufferings. The case of Muslim women is unimaginable in this regard especially women from lower caste. However we should look at the growing consciousness, democratization, assertiveness and political mobilization of lower caste Muslims on order to examine the politics, programmes and broader agendas that advocates of this new identity seek to put forward on behalf of a large section of India's Muslim population. It is essential to understand the changing dynamics of Muslim politics discourse and how the 'politics of inclusion' is at play in the arena of this dynamics. As such there is no sufficient work is done on un touchability among

[20] Bhatty, Zarina (1996) 'Social Stratification among Muslims in India', in M.N. Srinivas ed. Caste: Its Twentieth Century Avatar, New Delhi, Viking Publication . p-242-62.

[21] Ibid: 249.

[22] Government of India (2006) Sachar Committee Report, Prime Minister's High Level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India, pp.211-13.

Muslims but different forms of discrimination, stigma, social distance and structure of domination faced by lower caste Muslims depicts the harsh reality. Therefore, it is crucial to study measures for whom we can call Dalit Muslim women and how the reflections of new ray of light in the form of Islamic Feminism affect.

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