Muslims' Search for Identity in the Subcontinent: A Post-Structuralist Account

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to understand the construction of Muslim political identity in the subcontinent as a consequence of the British colonial rule. Muslims' awareness of themselves as a distinct political community started evolving as a result of changing power structure during the British Raj. In the post-1857 political environment, the Muslim power elite established an identity on the basis of interpretation by linking it to the arrival of Arabs in the subcontinent, and detached and differentiated themselves from the Indian nationalism advocated by the All India National Congress (AINC). In this regard, history, language, religion, social values, heroes, and various interpretations of Muslims as a community and a nation became the main ingredients of Muslim identity which culminated in the establishment of an independent state of Pakistan. This paper deploys Critical Constructivist and Post-Structuralist theoretical frameworks to analyse discursive patterns of construction of Muslim identity in the subcontinent.

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Introduction

Muslims of the subcontinent achieved a sense of identity after the arrival of the British here. In order to justify their position, the Muslim power elites established links between the Muslims of India and those who were living outside. On the basis of interpretation, Indian Muslims' identity was linked to the arrival of Arabs in the subcontinent who detached and differentiated themselves from the Indian nationalism advocated by the All India National Congress (AINC). In this regard, history, language, religion, social and societal values, heroes, and different interpretations of Muslims as a community and a nation became the main ingredients of evolution of Muslim identity in the subcontinent which culminated in the establishment of an independent state. Before independence, Muslims existed as an entity; religiously and culturally distinct from others, but the political aspect to this was not present. The British colonial rule created an environment that paved the way for a separate political identity in the Muslims of the subcontinent.

The discursive construction of Muslim identity in pre-independence era was, however, not without inconsistencies and tensions due to certain internal and external constraints. Indian Muslim identity has been already discussed in detail by various scholars but mostly through the prism of traditional theories like 'Primordialist' and 'Perennialist' or 'Instrumentalist' theories but none has tried to explain it through critical theories particularly through critical constructivism and post-structuralism that adds newness to the existing literature. The paper examines the dynamics of formation and transformation of dispersed and divided Muslims identity into a national and collective group identity under the British colonial rule and the binary created by majority 'other' Hindu through the prism of critical constructivist and post-structuralist frameworks.

Identity, Critical Constructivism and Post-Structuralism

The theoretical premise of the study is based on critical theories, particularly Critical Constructivism and Post-Structuralism. For Critical Constructivists and post-Structuralist, identity is a social phenomenon which means that there exists no objective identity situated in extra-social realm but is always a product of complex interaction of social processes. To them, identities are constructed through sets of collectively articulated codes and meanings.[1] For the establishment of collective identities, inter-subjective agreements are required which are achieved through the process of articulation, interpellation and interpretation. Furthermore, in the construction of identity, language plays a dominant role in order to persuade masses to see reality in alignment with the particular discourse that in turn brings identity into existence. Thus, discourse is the intelligible deployment of language to construct and sustain a dominant regime of truth, which in turn shapes people's preferences to think, speak and ultimately to perform an act.

Discourse is the name of a complex network of texts that brings identities into existence. Identity as a political phenomenon not only discursively constructs the criteria of inclusion and exclusion but also at the same time involves in countering and marginalization of contestant discourse(s). Identity is hence not only a self-referential phenomenon rather a relational one. Similarly, identity is always given meaning through its reference to something it is not. For example, to construct 'Muslim' identity we need a counterfactual identity like 'non-Muslim' identity to make it more meaningful and functional. Here, in this case, binary classification is carried out between a superior identity (Muslim identity) on one hand and degrading and devaluing the other (Hindu identity).

Moreover, different social groups' identities are located in intelligent articulation of history and text which is supported by the language's instrumental role. In order to shape the identity

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1   Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," *European Journal of Sociology* 36, no. 1 (1995): 72-102.

of a particular group, institutionalized power relations use different linguistic strategies to create binary opposite. It is these binary opposites that create/construct the exclusionary and inclusionary criteria, which is carried out at abstract level through the intelligent representation of different objects in a specific language, easily understandable to the concerned masses. The instrumental use of language plays an integral role in the construction of identity through the process of liking and differentiation. Therefore, language and its interpretation play a key role in the constitution of identity of a specific group. However, we must be vigilant to keep in mind that language-based linkages between different representations are inherently unstable and can be reproduced through other different kind of articulations.

In the context of Indian Muslims, multiple ideational factors i.e., Islam, superior values, God's chosen and superior race, moral nation etc. contribute to the discursive construction of identity against the 'other' Hindu, morally corrupt, inferior, believer in superstition, non-believer, etc. These ideational factors/structures have acquired dominant status of 'social reality' in Muslim society, collectively called *Muslaman-i-Hind* (Urdu: Collective Indian Muslim Community) which became opposed to 'Hindu' and the 'British'. In short, once the discursive construction of difference becomes naturalized in a society, it results in the political otherness. This construction of otherness is achieved through the process of symbolization. For example, symbols, pictures, models, signs, consistent and plentiful linguistic strategies, advanced communication technological usage are few influential symbolic processes that help us to generalize superior 'us' against inferior 'other'. These discursive representations are then translated to narratives, which are fundamentally stories. For example, narratives include fairy tales of modern international politics such as the good versus bad/evil, manipulation of history, axis of evil versus defender of the free world, savage versus saviour and so on. It is this juxtaposition or in other words, the binary oppositional relations that help us in constructing/producing a discursive political identity.

However, these narratives in themselves are heavily dependent upon linguistic strategies like metaphors, analogies and figurative speech.

Tracing the Roots of Muslims' Arrival in the Subcontinent

The arrival of Muslims and the introduction and spread of Muslim culture and heritage in the Hindu dominated subcontinent started with the conversion of Cheraman Perumal to Islam in 629 A.D. The first ever mosque in the subcontinent, Cheraman Jumah Masjid, was built after his name in Kodungallur, Kerala.[2] Later on, the Mappilas community was the first community that converted to Islam. Then Hazrat Umar (R.A) in 644 A.D. sent expeditions under Suhail ibn Adi.[3] The emissary brought this news to Hazrat Umar (R.A):

> Oh Commander of the faithful! It's a land where the plains are stony; where water is scanty; where the fruits are unsavory; where men are known for treachery; where plenty is unknown; where virtue is held of little account; and where evil is dominant; a large army is less there; and a less army is useless there; the land beyond is even worse (referring to Sind).[4]

Consequently, Hazrat Umar (R.A), instructed his commander to stop where he was and thus Makran became the easternmost frontier of Islamic Caliphate and no further conquests were made. This was Hazrat Umar's (R.A) policy to consolidate the rule before exploring and conquering other

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2   "Kodungallur Mosque: India's First, Was Built by Prophet's Companion," *Gulf News*, 2015. Retrieved on June 10, 2020 from https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/india/kodungallur-mosque-indias-first-was-built-by-prophets-companion-1.1552755; S. Nambiar, "The Most Beautiful Mosques You Should Visit In India," *Culture Trip,* February 9, 2017. Retrieved on June 15, 2020 from https://theculturetrip.com/asia/india/articles/the-most-beautiful-mosques-you-should-visit-in-india/

3   Muhammad Hussain Haikal, *Hazrat Umar Farooq* (RA) (Jhelum: Book Corner, 2015), 130.

4   Andre Wink, *Al-Hind: The Making of the Indo-Islamic World* (India: Brill, 1990), 26.

areas.[5] Later on, Balochistan was also conquered at the behest of Hazrat Umar (R.A) in 644 A.D. Another expedition was sent during Umayyad Dynasty's rule in 664 A.D. towards Multan.[6] The off and on incursions continued under the reign of Umayyad Dynasty when Muhammad bin Qasim finally defeated Raja Dahir in 712 A.D. and Sind fell to the Muslim empire.[7]

At the start of the 11th Century in 1001 A.D., Mahmud Ghaznavi defeated Raja Jayapala of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty of Gandhara.[8] Then in 1186 A.D. Muhammad Ghori, a Turkic-Afghan in origin, took control of Lahore with the assistance of a local Hindu raja.[9] From 1206 to 1290 A.D. Mamluk (Slave dynasty) ruled Delhi while keeping Lahore as their capital.[10] Another parallel dynasty was founded by Iltutmish, a slave to Aibak, in 1211 A.D. who shifted his capital from Lahore to Delhi.[11] During the first ten years of his rule, he focused to gain power against his rivals. Later on, he annexed Bengal, Bihar, Sind and Multan. He also defeated Rajput revolt and took control of Jalor, Ajmir, Ranthampur and Gwalior.[12] Another dynasty that came and ruled over India was Khilji Dynasty (1290 to 1320 A.D.), founded by Jalal ud din Firuz Khalji. He was the decedent of Turks from Central Asia but they lived in Afghanistan for a longer time and adopted Afghan culture and manners.[13] To rule over Delhi was not an easy task as Turks were in majority there. However, through

5   Wink, *Al-Hind*, 26.

6   Syed Abu Zafar Nadvi, *Tareekh-e-Sindh* (Azamgarh: Maarif, 1947).

7   Nadvi, *Tareekh-e-Sindh*.

8   Satish Chandra, *Medieval India: From Sultanat to the Mughals-Delhi Sultanat* (1206–1526) – Part 1 (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 2004), 17-18.

9   C. Edmund Bosworth, *Ghurids*, (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2012), *https://iranicaonline.org/articles/ghurids*

10   Judith E. Walsh, *A Brief History of India* (New York: Facts on File, 2006).

11   Maren Goldberg, *Iltutmish* (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2009), Online, 2009. *https://www.britannica.com/biography/Iltutmish*

12   Goldberg, *Iltutmish*.

13   Michael H. Fisher, *An Environmental History of India: From Earliest Times to the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 86.

kindness and generosity, he won the hearts and minds of masses. His dynasty was overthrown by Khusraw who was later killed by Ghazi Milk, a noble from Tughluq origin. He ascended to power in 1320 A. D. and thus Tughluq Dynasty (1320-1412) was established.[14] Soon after gaining power, he started a campaign against Hindu Rajas and conquered Bengal which had not been in the control of any central government since the death of Balban. However, following death of Tughluq, internal tussles and the invasion of Timur led to the disintegration of Tughluq Dynasty and arrival of Saiyid's Dynasty, which came to power as a result of collaboration with Taimur in 1414 A. D. Continuous internal dissension and foreign involvement shrunk the sultanate to Sind, Western Punjab, and Western Uttar Pradesh, and at the end of 1451 it was reduced to 10 square miles from Delhi to Palam.[15]

Bahlul Lodhi came to power with the help of Afghans. First, he conquered Punjab and then captured Delhi in 1451 A. D. and laid the foundation of Lodhi dynasty.[16] He managed to take control of all the nearby states who had once declared independence from the empire. The most notable work during this era is the foundation of historical Agra city. Eventually, Lodhis were destroyed in 1526 with the arrival of Mughals in the subcontinent.

Ethno-Regional Heterogeneity among Muslims: Pre-British Era

With the arrival of Muslims in the subcontinent came a new culture that local population was not accustomed to. For instance, Islam as a religion, worshipping one God instead of millions of gods, equality before law, brotherhood, and

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14   Mohammad Arshad, *An Advanced History of Muslim Rule in Indo-Pakistan* (Dacca: Ideal Publications, 1967), 90-92.

15   Khaliq Ahmad, Nizami, and Mohammad Habib, eds., *A Comprehensive History of India: The Delhi Sultanat (A.D. 1206-1526)* (New Delhi: People Publishing House, 1970), 631.

16   Sailendra Nath Sen, *A Textbook of Medieval Indian History* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2013), 122-125.

Persian as a court language were a few of the new concepts introduced by the Muslims in the subcontinent. It is believed that the system of equality before law and justice did inspire the local lower caste Hindus to convert to Islam. However, Muslims were dispersed in different parts of the subcontinent.

Within this context, it should be highlighted that major administrative jobs were controlled by the foreigners i.e., Afghans, Turks, Persians, Central Asians etc., while the locals were kept away from joining the ruling class. The local converted Muslims' entrenched affiliation with their local culture and ethnic roots prevented the Indian Muslims to be identified as a distinct community which was a pre-requisite for them to emerge as a distinct social, religious and political community.[17] This horizontal and vertical division among the Indian Muslims prevented them to emerge as a single cohesive and unified entity.

At this point of time, Muslims did not evolve as a separate community or nation. Socially, indigenous Muslims were divided into vertical and horizontal classes. At the formal level, Muslims were divided into two visible strata that are the foreigners (mostly from North West) and the local converts. The foreigners included Arabs, Turks, Persians, Pashtuns and Muslims of Central Asian origin. Irrespective of their diverse ethnic background, they integrated with the ruling class. As per local converts, they were treated as aliens and never given equal status as if they were from a lower caste or belonged to lower social strata, which resulted in alienation, deprivation and resentment among the local coverts.

On the other hand, at the horizontal level, the indigenous Muslims were further divided along ethnic and regional lines which were determined by economic status and preferences among them. At this stage, it was ethnic identity that was much stronger among the local Muslims than the religious one. For example, Mubarak Ali, quoting Ziauddin Barrani's work *Tarikh-e-Feruzshahi* states that the *Sultan* (King)

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17   Mubarak Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2011), 10.

refused on many occasions to appoint the local coverts despite their intelligence, eligibility and potentials but instead preferred racially pure and thus 'superior' foreign Muslims.[18] Ali further says that the lower caste Muslims were also disadvantaged in acquiring higher education.[19] This 'theory of racial superiority', worked in favour of privileged Muslim class who did not wish to associate themselves with the lower class. This division led to further alienation and resentment among the indigenous Muslims.

The power elites, however, appealed to and exploited the religious, political and social sentiments among masses whenever they were in need of their support to serve their interests. The ruling class exploited religious feelings of their masses whenever they were confronted by ideologically and religiously different class or community. At the same time, the ruling class also suppressed these sentiments of indigenous converted Muslims, whenever they were threatened. The locals were also suppressed over the matters of *Sharia*, whenever they created obstacles in their absolute ruling.[20] Hence, the suppression of exclusive Muslim identity was the power elite's political need. Through the intelligent invoking of Muslim masses' sentiments, the power elite were able to sustain and protect their rule till Jalal ud din Akbar (1556 to 1605 A.D.) became emperor and introduced *Deen-i-Elahi*. The meanings of Islam, adopted by Akbar, were overtly pluralistic and had overridden the concerns of *Ulema*. With Akbar's accession to power, the indigenization process of the induction of locals in administrative set up began, in particular the local Hindu Rajputs. This inclusiveness was achieved by the revision and interpretation of Islamic teachings. According to Mubarak Ali, Akbar dismantled all signs and symbols that differentiate a Muslim from a Hindu. Akbar's attempt to unify Muslims and Hindus was having political motivations. However, despite his attempt the rigid social structure did not

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18   Ziauddin Barrani, *Tarikh-e-Feruzshahi* (Delhi: Idarah-i- Delhi, 1972).

19   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity,* 14-15.

20   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity,* 14-15.

permit the lower caste locals to fill the administrative positions. Here again it was the upperclass Hindus particularly the Rajputs, who were treated equally by the Muslim aristocrats. In other words, "class rather than faith was the true diving line."[21]

Aurangzeb (1658-1707) tried to reverse Akbar's policy of Indianization/ indigenization. He introduced religious reforms in order to create apparent and symbolic homogeneity of Muslim community. However, despite all his attempts, he failed to create a separate Muslim identity. Similarly, despite his dislike for Hindus he had to keep them in his administration. According to Mubarak Ali, this failure was due to the "absence of any common economic interest that might bind the different groups of Muslims, they failed to cohere and achieve homogeneity as a single community. *Biradaries*, castes, professions and class interests kept them politically and culturally divided."[22]

Muslim rule under the emperor Akbar seriously challenged the Muslim identity-based politics that they had inherited from Arabs. His approach was downgraded sometimes by his critics who accused him of being a heretic who had damaged the Muslim identity and nationalism to a great extent. This led him to fall in the category of 'other'. He was juxtaposed in a binary relation against Aurangzeb, who was a symbol of piousness and piety. Aurangzeb was also projected as the true symbol of Muslim nationalism in the subcontinent.

Thus, through the intelligible deployment of language, a discourse was constructed which became acceptable to common people. According to poststructuralists, history is always interpreted in a way to justify respective truth claims and to construct a dominant discourse which also becomes acceptable to the masses. However, post-structuralist also believe that there exist other potential temporal claims about alternative truth which is normally marginalized and

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21   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity*, 15-16.

22   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity*, 16.

suppressed by power elites. Here one needs to follow Hansen's work that Aurangzeb's attempt to promote and protect Islam was nothing but an attempt to exploit religion with an intention to come to power against his rivals i.e. Dara Shikho and Murad.[23]

Dara Shikho took inspiration from his grandfather Akbar and also had inclination towards Sufi Islam. Dara also had support among common people from both Hindu and Muslim communities. Hence, he was popular among the masses. Aurangzeb with special support from the *Ulema* (religious scholars) executed Dara and also his other brother Murad apparently on religious grounds, but to control political power.[24] It was the intelligent use of language by Aurangzeb that dubbed his brothers as heretic and apostate to defeat them. After Aurangzeb, the foreign Muslim invaders stopped to come to India due to no further patronage and also because of greater presence of local converts in high administrative jobs. This led to the weakening of social and political fabric of Muslims and the arrival of Urdu as the language of the subcontinent, which after partition became the national language of Pakistan.

Keeping in view the above discussion, it can be argued that at this stage there was very less or no evidence that the Muslims of subcontinent belonged to a unified nation. Rather, they were divided predominantly on ethnic, linguistic, racial and class basis. Hence, there was no cohesiveness and no sense of collective identity among the Muslims of the subcontinent. This division among Muslims served the interests of power elite by maintaining their privileged position and therefore denied a chance of unity among their respective masses.

However, in the late 18th Century, attempts were made to unite the Muslim population through reform movements by religious section of Muslim society, with the claim to restore

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23   Waldemar Hansen*, Peacock Throne: The Drama of Mogul India* (Asian Humanities Press, 1981), 375.

24   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity*, 113.

the true essence of Islam and Muslim's depleted position in the subcontinent. This Muslim class protested against the Mughal's inter-religious harmony policy and claimed that such a policy is dangerous for the Muslim's rule in the subcontinent. There was a clear rift between the *Ulema* who wished to restore and implement a *sharia*-based community and the Mughals rulers particularly Akbar and Jahangir who were in favour of more cosmopolitan societal harmony. The rulers wished to introduce inter-societal harmony (*Sulha-i-Kul*) while Shah Wali Ullah, Shah Abdul Aziz and Syed Ahmad Barelvi preferred Islamic *Sharia* to be the law of the land.[25]

These reformers agitated against their rulers' idea of interfaith societal harmony and wanted to introduce an essentially faith-based demarcation of Muslim community in the subcontinent.[26] According to these reformers, the primary goal of Muslim rulers should be to struggle for the establishment and implementation of Islamic *Sharia* and no compromise over its governing principles. These reformist movements led to consolidation and establishment of internal coherence among the Muslim masses of the subcontinent.[27] These movements not only assisted in the establishment of internal cohesiveness but also triggered the social and religious consciousness of Muslim masses in India.

Another source of internal cohesion of Muslims was the ascendance of local converts in administration and their replacement of the foreigners which resulted in reduction in numbers arriving to India. It also resulted in the introduction of Urdu as the new language of the elite replacing the Persian. It can be concluded that it was this changing pattern of power structure and the shifting of Muslim religious and political interests that resulted in internal coherence among them. This is exactly what poststructuralists argue, that change in power

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25   Farzana Shaikh, *Making Sense of Pakistan* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2009), 19-20.

26   Shaikh, *Making sense of Pakistan,* 19-20.

27   Triloki Nath Madan, *Modern Myths, Locked Minds* (4th ed.) (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 129.

structure and shift in interests of a group result in the emergence of internal coherence of that particular group.

The British Rule and Muslims' Search for Collective Identity

The British arrived in the subcontinent as traders in 1583 and started to consolidate their power with the passage of time. In 1614, the East India Company was established at Mumbai (Bombay), which further cemented their hold. Then the 'Battle of Plassey' (1757), the 'Battle of Buxar' (1764), the 'Anglo-Mysore War' (1799), the 'Anglo-Maratha War' (1817-19), the 'Anglo-Sikh Wars' (1845-1849), and finally the 'War of Independence' (1857) led the British to become masters of the land. In 1893, with the 'Durand Line' agreement with Afghan rulers their power reached its zenith. This not only led to the downfall of Mughal (Muslim) empire but also resulted in the loss of privileged position of the Muslim power elite, subsequently, altering Muslim position and identity to that of subjects from being the masters.

The British rule changed the social, cultural, economic and political landscape of the subcontinent resulting in the introduction of several modern ideas and practices to the Indian society. These modern ideas and practices also resulted in the redefinition of the status of Indian communities. The objective was to maintain the privileged power position of resident hierarchy under the newly emerged social order. It also resulted in the capitalization of internal coherence of local Muslim elite to preserve their dominant power position within the newly emerged social order. According to Ayesha Jalal, after the War of Independence in 1857, it was the British-led social and political order that led to the emergence of nationalist tendencies among the Hindus and the Muslims.[28]

At societal level, Jalal states that emergence of religious-based communities in the subcontinent was a result of faith-based census undertaken by the British. The British idea of

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28 Ayesha Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (London: Routledge, 2005), 45.

conducting census was thus carried out on religious division, rather than on individual's economic or ethnic background. As a result of faith-based census, both Muslims and Hindus moved towards the formation of inclusive communities. This faith-based census resulted in the awakening of consciousness of both the communities. In addition, at political level, it was the introduction of democratic politico-cultural values that ensured only majority's right to rule.[29] This also instilled fear among Muslim power elite that they might lose their economically and politically privileged position under the auspices of the British.

After the War of Independence in 1857, Hindus were in better position due to their good relations with the British. British restructured the Indian political landscape through electoral reforms which was indirectly an offer to Hindu majority to rule over the Muslim minority. Furthermore, the introduction of the English language by the British Raj also threatened the status of Muslim power elite.[30] This replacement of Persian language with the English language particularly hit hard the Muslim bourgeois class as Persian language was the source of their income and domination in the bureaucracy. The Muslims under the new rule were unable to maintain their privileged position against the rising Hindu middle class who were in better position to converse in English language than the Muslims. Along the Muslim middle-class, *Ulema* suffered the most as a result of replacement of *Madaris* [Urdu: religious schools] with English school system. It was under these circumstances, which compelled the Muslim power elite to respond to the changing social and political patterns.

In case of colonial states, the sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group existed prior to independence in one form or another. It was the renaissance in Europe that led to the rise of nationalism and the enhancement of national identity. The French Revolution slogan 'liberty, equality and

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29   Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty,* 46.

30   Hamza Alavi, *Social Forces and Ideology in the Making of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Democratic Action, Research & Education, 2002), 15.

fraternity' inspired revolutions around the world. It also inspired Indian Hindus, who traced the roots of their national identity in the era of Ashoka and Samudragupta in ancient times, while Akbar in more recent times. However, national identity and national consciousness among the Indians arose in the late 19th Century; the period of the anti-colonial movements. During this time, there were social, economic and particularly political factors that defined their national identity. Thus, the Indian masses began to discover their unity in the process of their struggle against colonial masters. It was the sense of oppression of the Indian people by the British Raj that led to unite different groups. In addition, the introduction of a singular set of laws across Indian people, the economic exploitation at the hands of the British and the control over people's lives and resources, contributed to unite different groups together.

The socio-religious reformist movements also contributed to the feelings of nationalism in the Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent. For example, Swami Vivekananda, Annie Besant, Henry Derozio among others, invigorated the magnificent glory of ancient India. They also incorporated in peoples' mind the love for their motherland and to have faith in their religion and culture. On the spiritual side, intellectuals like Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Aurobindo Ghosh also made their contributions. Chatterji contributed towards Indian nationalism, for example, as his 'Vande Matram' poem became the most incredible source of Hindu nationalism (as shown by the actions of the Indian National Congress) and patriotism. Later on, keeping in view the strong impact of the song, the British Empire had to ban it. Similarly, Saraswati's slogan "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached,"[31] acted as a potent force to promote Indian nationalism. Around the same time, many regional organizations like, 'Bengal Indian Association', 'Bengal

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31 Sribas Goswami, "Swami Vivekananda: A Management Guru," *Journal of Management Policies and Practices* 2, no. 1 (2014): 77.

Presidency Association', and 'Pune Public Meeting', raised their concerns against the British rule.

In order to have more effective representation in legislation and administration and also to address the grievances of Indians, the AINC was founded in 1885 by Allan Octavian Hume, with the support of Viceroy Lord Dufferin. Firoz Shah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Ras Behari Bose, and Badruddin Tayabji were among prominent Indian leaders with Womesh Chandra Banerjee as the first President of AINC. From 1885 to 1905, the AINC's social base was limited only to urban educated Indians, while later on it was opened for all, irrespective of caste, creed, ethnicity and religious beliefs.[32]

Consequently, the Muslim elite's power and future were threatened by this rise of Hindu nationalism and the formation of AINC in particular. This eroded their future support base among the common Muslims because these nationalist movements were not simply for the preservation of Hindu religion and communal beliefs but would also advance their political influence in the subcontinent. Arun Swamy states that the main objective of the Hindu nationalism was to re-mould the state and the society along communal lines.[33] Within this context, Bal Ganghadar Tilak's radical philosophy and other conservative leaders of the AINC helped in widening of Hindu-Muslim division on communal lines. These leaders injected hatred among the Hindu community against the British and the Muslims. They were also at the forefront of anti-cow slaughtering movements and to instigate Hindus to play music in front of mosques. The objective behind such acts was to re-establish the past Hindu glory and supremacy. These efforts not only alienated the Muslims but also pushed them to a path

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32   Belkacem Belmekki, "The Formation of the Indian National Congress: A British Maneuver?," *University of Oran, Algeria* 29, no. 3, (2008), 39; John R. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 89.

33   Arun Swamy, "Hindu Nationalism: What's Religion Got to Do with it?," *Asia Pacific Centre for Securities Studies* (2003): 136.

of confrontation with Hindus in the future.[34] In addition, to construct a Hindu identity, history was reinterpreted by declaring the Muslim rule over subcontinent as an era of subjugation and slavery. The Hindu nationalists were not only successful in construction of a discourse of distinct and cohesive identity for the Hindus but also juxtaposed their own identity against the 'Muslim other'. This construction of distinctive Hindu identity and by exclusion of Muslims from the subcontinent drew a line between Hindu and Muslim communities.

Along the same line, through Shivaji's Philosophy of '*Hindavi Swarajye'* (the indigenous self-government) and the movement to replace Indo-Persian with Sanskrit, an internal cohesion among the Hindus was established. The Urdu-Hindi controversy of 1867 and later on, the division (1905) and reunification of Bengal (1911) further became a source of differentiation among Muslims and Hindus. These Hindu nationalists engaged themselves in injecting social and discursive ingredients to constitute a distinctive Hindu identity.[35] It was in 1867, when some prominent Hindus started a movement in Banaras to replace Urdu with Hindi and the Persian script with the *Deva Nagri* script as the court language and language of instruction in the Northwestern provinces of India with its headquarter in Allahabad. Through this movement, the Hindu nationalists established a formidable link between Urdu and Muslims. The Urdu opposition movement also convinced the Muslims that the Hindus were not ready to tolerate their culture and traditions.

The language consciousness on the part of both i.e., the Muslims and the Hindus also brought attachment to their respective languages. In the words of Aziz, a historian, "though Urdu was in its origin neither the language of the

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34   Sukhawant Singh Bindra, *Politics of Islamisation, with Special Reference to Pakistan* (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1990), 92-93.

35   Bindra, *Politics of Islamisation*, 94.

Muslims nor a Muslim language, it gradually became so."[36] Before language controversy, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was also a great proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity and believed: "We (Hindus and Muslims) eat the same crop, drink water from the same rivers and breathe the same air. As a matter of fact, Hindus and Muslims are the two eyes of the beautiful bride that is Hindustan. Weakness of any one of them will spoil the beauty of the bride (*dulhan*)."[37] In addition, Khan's speech of 1883 in Patna was also conciliatory while talking of two different nations he stated that: "Friends, in India there live two prominent nations which are distinguished by the names of Hindus and *Mussulmans*. Just as a man has some principal organs, similarly these two nations are like the principal limbs of India."[38] Later on, he became an advocate of the 'Two Nation Theory'.

According to Mubarak Ali, among other reasons for communal strife between the Hindu and the Muslim population were, the uneven development of Western education among both the communities, the Muslim demand for separate electorate, quota in government jobs, and a separate political representation. These were the factors that contributed to the construction of a separate Muslim identity in direct conflict with the Hindus. The 1920s' revivalist movements further deepened the communalist feelings. For example, in response to the Hindu's movements like '*Shuddhi*' (purification) and '*Sangathan*' (Hindu unity), Muslims launched '*Tabligh*' (proselytizing) and '*Tanzim*' (organization) to protect their reconversion to Hinduism particularly the peasantry class.[39]

These developments supported by factual confirmations provided an opportunity to Muslim power elite not only to

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36   K. K. Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2003)*,* 126.

37   Aparna Pande, *Explaining Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Escaping India* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 176.

38   Ramchandra Guha, *Makers of Modern India* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), 65.

39   Ali, *Pakistan in Search for Identity*, 21-22.

project Muslim masses as a distinctive community but also to pursue their interests. The contributory confirmations helped the Muslim power elite to differentiate Muslims from the Hindu counterpart because these new updates elevated their position against the Hindu elite. Now they demanded equal shares in power alongside the Hindus. These processes were mutually constitutive, feeding each other by establishing binary classifications to get themselves identified as a distinct entity with the social and discursive realm.

Conclusion

Subcontinent's encounter with Islam occurred as early as the Khilafat of Islam's second Caliph Hazrat Umar (RA) in 644 A.D. Since then, many Arabs settled in the subcontinent and many locals also converted to Islam. However, at that time, Muslims did not perceive themselves as a separate community or nation. It is also a widely held misconception that there was some sort of unity and harmony among early Muslims of the subcontinent. In fact, Muslims were divided on the lines of foreigners and locals, with varying social values and norms. Among foreigners there was also further heterogeneity as there were Arabs, Persians, Turks, Central Asians and Afghans prior to being united as Muslims of the subcontinent. The segregation between Muslims of that era was to the extent that foreigner Muslims were positioned as the power elite, who used and exploited social, political and religious sentiments of local Muslims, who were treated as subjects, to gain support for their rule and to serve their own interests. Islamic identity was merely a tool at the time to exploit the religious sentiments of indigenous Muslims, when there was any threat of revolt or confrontation locally.

It was only in the late 19th Century when not only the Muslims but also the Hindus of subcontinent started to perceive themselves as distinctively different. The driving force behind this new perception was rooted in social, political and economic factors along with the perception of being suppressed by their colonial masters. This sense of oppression among Indians by their British rulers led to the

process of unification of various groups for their rights. During this struggle for independence from their colonial masters, it was Hindus who first started to define themselves as significant 'us', which in turn resulted in a security dilemma for the Muslims of subcontinent as their freedom of speech, right to vote and freedom of religion came under imminent threat. The Hindu nationalist movements and the subsequent Muslim movements led to the widening of social and cultural voids, resulting in a communal strife between the Hindus and the Muslims. This provided the Muslim power elite an opportunity to construct and propagate themselves as a separate and distinct identity with factual and discursive confirmation of Hindu as the 'other', through a binary classification on the basis of 'Two Nation Theory', in the pre-independence subcontinent.