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Thought for the Month

On that account: We ordained
For the Children of Israel
That if any one slew
A person—unless it be
For murder or for spreading
Mischief in the land—
It would be as if
He slew the whole people:
And if any one saved a life,
It would be as if he saved
The life of the whole people.
Then although there came
To them Our Apostles
With Clear Signs, yet,
Even after that, many
Of them continued to commit
Excesses in the land

Al-Quran- S. 5:V-35

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FOCUS

The issue of Empowerment of Muslims is also linked with the ideological thought patterns of Muslims and non-Muslims. The behavioural priorities are set within these ideological paradigms. And, one of the major areas of crisis has been the realm of these ideas and ideologies dealing with the status and placement of Muslims in India. The crisis is old, and in many ways has caused gradual marginalisation of Muslims in different spheres of political life. In this regard, certain facts should always form the base line of objective analysis. First, the number of thinking people among Muslims has been small enough even before partition. In post-independence phase, the number is much smaller due to prevailing conditions and differences in perspectives. Secondly, even most of remaining few could not get adjusted their ways of thinking to the changed physical conditions. They preferred to remain non-competitive and obsessed with high quality of their thought without realising the merit and relevance of their ideas. Their minds were clouded with the past and prejudices that made it difficult to perceive the realities of the present. Thirdly, their thinking could not be translated into any action plan and doing, because frustration for quite some time crippled their power of action. It caused lack of clarity of thought and prevented framing of any definite plan of action. This confession generated ad-hocism and inconsistent schemes adopted by antagonistic groups among Muslims. Fourthly, in the darkness of the vague concept of Pakistan, the Muslim League leadership, particularly from 1940-47, made the Muslims run the sharp-edged political machine with their full strength and got them mutilated in the process. Politics overshadowed all important areas including education, economy, socio-cultural reforms etc. Fifthly, the crisis through which Indian Muslims had to pass in 1947 was in some respects more severe even than that of 1857. For many sensitive Muslims, the greatest spiritual anguish was that they had to see hundreds of thousands of Sikh and Hindu refugees coming in from West and East Pakistan wandering in search of essentials of life and reflected deeply felt hate and injustice. Indian Muslims, particularly in North India, were shocked at being held responsible for creation of Pakistan. This atmosphere put hurdles before Muslims in evolving any practicable strategy. The price paid by Indian Muslims was not restricted to mental and spiritual anguish and frustration but included economic depression, educational and cultural backwardness.

It is seen that devastation of Muslim life and society in 1857 was primarily targeted against the feudal and upper classes, while 1947 caused tremendous pressures on the common Muslim population of North India. Their ruin involved millions of other Muslims throughout the country. An added dimension of their suffering was the existence of vested economic interests, which were active to push them out from their homeland. Non-Muslim industrialists and businessmen from Pakistan demanded that all establishments whose original owners had migrated to Pakistan should be confiscated and distributed among them. Such sentiments and policies had wider implications. These people conspired with local communalists in business centres of Muslims to stir up riots and produced a general atmosphere of panic, frustration and defeatism. In such a situation the government enacted evacuee property laws under which official custodians were appointed to look after the properties left by Muslims and to sell them at a proper time and in a proper way so that Hindu and Sikh refugees might be compensated for the property they had left in Pakistan. Further, in order to prevent general exodus of Muslims from India, the government, besides taking administrative measures, made a provision in law that no intending Muslim evacuee would be allowed to sell his property. It had again multiple adverse effects on Muslims. There was a provision in Evacuee Property Act that if a single member of a family migrated to Pakistan, the whole property was put under the charge of Custodian Department and the remaining members of that family could neither sell shares of their property nor raise loans on them. It was thus a situation of unprecedented economic depression coupled with insecurity, helplessness and discrimination which deeply affected their worldview. An additional impediment was caused by downgrading Urdu as it was not only being pushed out of courts and offices but was also being banished from schools. Urdu had always been a symbol of composite and common culture of Hindus and Muslims, but in post-independence phase it has been pushed into a steady decline and neglect. Lastly, an effective campaign of Hindu aggressive communalism got a favourable political environment, which was further aggravated by organised violence.

(From *Political Empowerment of Muslims in India* by Prof. Z.M. Khan, pp. 57-59)

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

Third IOS Lifetime Achievement Award

Former Governor of Bihar, West Bengal and Haryana, Dr A R Kidwai received the prestigious IOS Lifetime Achievement Award at a function organized on 29.5.2010 at Constitution Club. It was the third award, the first being conferred on Justice A M Ahmadi and the second on Imarat-e-Shariah, Bihar, Orissa and Jharkhand.

The award, carrying a cheque of Rs. 1 lakh, a citation and a memento, was given by Vice-President of India, Mr M Hamid Ansari.

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were Mr Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister of Haryana; Mr Salman Khurshid, Minister of State for Corporate and Minorities Affairs; Maulana Abdullah Mughesi, President, All India Milli Council, and Maulana Asrarul Haq Qasmi, Member of Parliament.

The award, constituted by the Institute of Objective Studies in 2007, is conferred each year on an individual/organisation for contribution to national life and infusing a sense of morality and sanity in the public domain and selfless service to society, especially to marginalised groups and communities.

In his welcome address, Chairman of IOS Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam mentioned his long association with Dr. Kidwai, whom he described as a source of inspiration.

He said by honouring Dr. Kidwai the IOS was honouring the values of Islam and of the Constitution of India that give inspiration for nation-building.

In his acceptance speech Dr Kidwai thanked the IOS and its Chairman, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, for the honour bestowed upon him. The IOS, with its research on socio-economic issues, its advocacy of common people's causes, and its dedication to the building of a fair order in a rising India, had impressed him.

He recollected landmarks in his academic and political life and frequently referred to Dr. Zakir Hussain who, from his stewardship of Jamia Millia to Vice-chancellorship of AMU, governorship of Bihar and as President of India remained a guide and source of inspiration for him.

Jamia was established by national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Mehmood Hasan, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Mohammad Ali Jauhar and others during the struggle for freedom and the boycott of government-controlled educational institutions. Its degree was not recognised, and highly qualified teachers had to often go without salaries, Dr Kidwai reminisced.

Parents were clearly told that their children were unlikely to get jobs and the education it provided was meant only to build knowledge, character and inculcation of the nationalist spirit.



L-R: Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Chairman IOS; Mr. Salman Khurshid, Minister of State for Corporate and Minorities Affairs; Dr. A R Kidwai, Former Governor of Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana and Former Chairman, UPSC; Dr. Hamid Ansari, Hon'ble Vice-President of India; Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister of Haryana; Maulana Abdullah Mughesi, President, All India Milli Council, and Maulana Asrarul Haq Qasmi, Member of Parliament

“Gandhiji used to visit us whenever he was in Delhi”, Dr. Kidwai said. Gandhiji put one of his sons at Jamia to teach us Hindi and charkha, he added.

Born in 1920, Dr Kidwai was admitted to Jamia in 1928. That selfless spirit, “forged in the crucible of the independence movement, stood me in good stead all my life”, he told the audience.

Frugality, constant innovation and improvisation taught at Jamia led him to promote new programmes for livelihood while he was governor of Bihar, West Bengal and Haryana. The Chief Minister of Haryana, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, testified that Dr Kidwai's gubernatorial initiatives led to creation of several

innovative schemes in Haryana for common people.

In his address Maulana Asrarul Haque Qasmi, a Lok Sabha MP from Kishanganj in Bihar, said that during his governorship of Bihar Dr Kidwai had initiated several schemes of dairy, poultry and fishery that went on to improve people's economic wellbeing. One of those schemes was starting tea plantation in Bihar, which did not have the permission to do it before that. Dr Kidwai got the Union government's permission and started tea plantation over 25, 000 acres of land, benefiting local people tremendously.

Salman Khurshid, Union Minister of state for Minority and Corporate Affairs, described reminiscences involving Dr Kidwai. “It is a relationship stretching over three generations, and I hope it will continue to the fourth and beyond”, he said. Khurshid happens to be the grandson of Dr Zakir Hussein.

In some way or other, everybody present was “junior” to the 90-year young Dr Kidwai, including the Vice-President, Dr Hamid Ansari. Before beginning to pay his tribute to Dr Kidwai he said, “I was a student at AMU while Dr Kidwai was a professor there. What can a student say about a professor?” And then he went on to laud the many qualities of

heart and mind of Dr Kidwai. One of his landmark initiatives was the creation of Mewat Development Board

for the development of that backward region with a Muslim majority.

The programme, conducted by Prof. Z M Khan, Secretary General of the IOS, began with a recitation from the holy Quran by Maulana Abdullah Tariq and concluded with a vote of thanks by Mushtaq Ahmad advocate.

Road Map to Political Empowerment of Muslims in India

Institute of Objective Studies organized a day-long workshop on “Road Map to Political Empowerment of Muslims in India” on June 26, 2010 at Deputy Chairman Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi. The occasion also marked the release of a very important

book, "Political Empowerment of Muslims in India" by Prof. Z.M. Khan. The book was released by Mrs. Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi.

The first session of the workshop discussed the ideological paradigm shift. The session was moderated by Prof. Z.M. Khan. He said that empowerment of Indian Muslims required strategic thinking and action on: change in thought; consideration and utilisation of opportunities provided by the Indian political system; the civilisational structures and inter-community linkages and preparation of a political strategy to obtain increased participation in governance.

IOS Chairman, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam, who conducted the day's proceedings and chaired the session, in which the book was released, said that the Muslim community did not lack in trained human resource. "The only issue is how best to utilise it", he asserted.

The second session was devoted to discussing yet another important topic: Opportunity and Space Provided by Indian Political System. Moderating the debate, Prof. M. Afzal Wani emphasized the need to find a paradigm that will take us to the road map which will ultimately lead the Muslims of India to their real empowerment. He said some works had been done to find out the paradigm. Most specially the constitution was adopted after independence that defined the way that India had to walk on. So, the constitutional roadmap is there. The problem, however, is that there are obstacles in the way of its implementation. Prof. Wani suggested that reservations in services can help empower the Muslim community, and this much space must be provided by the state within the constitutional framework.

Participating briefly in the debate Prof. Z.M. Khan suggested some practical ways. He said that the constitution has created and given space to everyone in the country. Our political system is huge, and has varieties of space and opportunities. There is the electoral space that we can make use of

to empower our community. The judiciary provides another space. Then there are decision-making bodies in which the Muslims must have adequate representation. Media space is there which can be used to form favourable atmosphere for understanding the problems of the Muslim community. NGOs also provide space that we need to make use of for Muslim empowerment.

A member of the audience, who hailed from Karnataka, said that there was no denying the fact the constitution was an important document. The problem is that people find ways to prevent its implementation or hamper its functioning. In Karnataka, for example, the Minority Commission is being filled with members of minority groups which do not have sufficient presence in the state.

Mr. Ranvir Singh appreciated Prof. Wani for discussing key concepts like



A view of workshop on Road Map to Political Empowerment of Muslims in India

equality, justice and human fraternity etc. He asked if these principles applied to Dalits in Pakistan. Prof. Wani said that Pakistan does not fall in the purview of today's discussion.

Mr. Basheer from Kerala said that, well, the constitution has provided space. The problem is that we do not have capable leader who can get a better bargain for us. So, we need to develop a sincere, outspoken and dedicated Muslim leadership, he remarked.

Mr. Mauji Khan, a retired police officer, said that the constitution has surely given us all the rights. But within the constitution there are clauses which are used to deny us or delay the implementation of the constitutional rights. He emphasized the need to develop mechanism that can compel the

government to implement the constitutionally-guaranteed rights of the Muslims.

Dr. Rasool Siddiqi agreed with Mr. Mauji Khan and said that the number of Muslim elite was very small and very few of them bother about the problems the Muslim community has been facing. This situation must change, he observed.

Mr. Qayamuddin, Advocate, said that participation in electoral system can solve many of our problems. The problem is that the Muslims are also getting divided on the basis of caste. He urged that the Muslims should act as a religious group which is very effective. Caste-based Muslim politics will weaken them, he said.

Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, Advocate, said that leaders are important but our problem is that students unions are banned in noted Muslim institutions which, as a result, have ceased to produce leaders.

Dr. M. Manzoor Alam intervened in the debate towards the end of session II. He said that the bulk of the space provided by the system was already covered. We have to act intelligently to create our space within and outside the system. This is the only way the Muslim community could be empowered.

Session Three was devoted

to discussing "Civilizational Set-up and Inter-Community Linkages". The moderator, Prof. Refaqt Ali Khan adopted a simple but very effective method of historical narrations to highlight the theme of the session. He said that a ruler of Jaipur did not have a male child. He went to Shaykh Burhan seeking his blessings. The Shaykh prayed and the ruler had a son whom he named 'Shikha' after the Shaykh. It is the descendents of Shikha who are known as Shekhawat, a powerful group in Rajasthan politics. Prof. Khan also said that in the medieval period it was common that a Hindu Raja would have a Muslim as commander of his army and the vice versa. Even Shivaji's army had a Muslim commander. The communal riots are a British legacy; these never happened before, he said. He also said that Aurangzeb, who is often projected as anti-Hindu, gave more grants to

temples than Akbar. He remarked that things changed drastically after independence. Even Muslim leaders of Maulana Azad's caliber were rendered ineffective, he observed.

Prof. Z.M. Khan highlighted the pluralistic character of Indian society which has flourished all through its history. Mr. Basheer said that without doubt the Indian society was plural, though it was not secular in the strict western or philosophical sense of the term. As a result we have this composite culture to which the Muslims have contributed immensely. He further said that as we, Muslims do not have a dynamic leadership, we have failed to use India's pluralism to our advantage.

Mr. Ranvir Singh said that the Dalits, the OBCs, and the minorities form 85% of Indian population. The remaining 15% are the upper castes and they dominate our polity and policy-making. They chalk out a development policy which spends only one rupee out of a hundred for the 85% Indians. This explains the reasons for the backwardness of minorities, Dalits and OBCs. These groups, therefore, must unite to oppose LPG, that is, liberalization, privatization and globalization, the policies our government has adopted, and these have surely harmed the majority of Indians and benefited only the upper caste minority, he asserted.

Mr. Manzoor Ahmad, retired IPS Officer and former Vice Chancellor of Agra University, was the moderator of the fourth session. He initiated discussion on the theme of the session: "Strategies to Utilize Political Processes to Get a share in Governance". He said that India's history has been one of conflict, the conflict of interests. Caste conflict has been the worst. Castes were exploited in the name of religion. In the present political system also caste plays an important role. Political parties have apparent ideologies but it is mainly the caste combination that dominates their strategies and decision-making. Party ideologies are almost dead, practically at least.

Another trouble with the party system is that there is no internal democracy. Anti-defection law has also contributed to the demise of internal

democracy in political parties. As a result members of a political party can not speak against their high command, said Mr. Manzoor Ahmad. He cited the example of U.P. where Muslims are over 18%. Their representation in assembly is less than 9%. The members are slaves of their party and never or rarely speak for their community. They follow the party line.

Mr. Ahmad also said that Muslims should form alliance with other oppressed groups. This is what Islam has also urged. There was collaboration between the Dalits and the Muslims in the past. It was the Muslim League which had got Ambedkar elected to the Constituent Assembly. In post independence period Ambedkar lost election to his little known personal secretary. Mr. Ahmad also said that weaknesses within the political system often go against the minorities:



A view of audience of the workshop

Mr. Manzoor Ahmad also suggested remedies.

- (i) Multi-member constituency system which was in operation even after independence should be revived. This will increase Muslim representation in the political arena.
- (ii) The Muslim-dominated constituencies should not be reserved for SCs and STs. This practice serves none of the two groups.
- (iii) Islam urges to raise a party that champions the poor and the oppressed. Such a party needs to be raised. Tribals and Dalits are the most oppressed and the OBCs, like the Muslims, are exploited. The Muslims should stand for all these groups.

Mr. R.B. Singh appreciated the overall approach of Mr. Manzoor Ahmad but differed from him that the reservation was given to the Dalits by Gandhiji. It was given by the British, he clarified.

Mr. Manzoor Ahmad responded to it saying that he did not refer to that reservation. He was in fact, referring to the post independence debate. A section wanted to scrap the reservation given to SCs and STs. Ambedkar sensed it and urged Jagjivan Ram to convince Gandhiji about the utility of reservation. Thus the reservation for the Dalits continued in the post independence period also.

Mr. Mauji Khan urged to implement the Sachar Committee's recommendations fully. He also said that there must be a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the fund allocated for the minorities are spent on them and not on others in their name. There is also the shameful practice of not spending the minority-related funds which are returned at the end of a fiscal year. This practice must stop, he said.

Mr. Feroz Ghazi said that polarization along caste and religious line was taking place. It should be the oppressed versus the oppressor irrespective of their caste and religion. Such a

political party ought to be set up. If it is not possible to do it immediately, then an NGO should be established for this purpose.

Mr. Abdul Bari Mashhood, Mr. Muzaffar H. Ghazali, Mr. Basheer, Dr. Neyaz Siddiqi and Mr. Aqeel also participated in the debate. Dr. Ausaf Ahmad urged on economic emancipation which would lead to political empowerment. Dr Sandhu urged on the political empowerment of all the oppressed groups. In the end Mr. Manzoor Ahmd answered the questions raised during the debate. Prof. Z.m. Khan read out the following resolution which was unanimously adopted.

Resolutions

1. Efforts are to be made to form specialized NGOs, trusts, voluntary self help groups for the purpose.

2. Formation of cooperatives and professional bodies may be taken up.
3. Suitable institutional mechanism should be created to gain strength in electoral policies.
4. Special efforts should be initiated for healthy inter-community linkages.
5. Relief and rehabilitation schemes should be worked out for victims of political violence.
6. Use of technology should be worked out in gaining strength in politico-social arena.
7. Organise the use of religious infrastructure for taking up issues of spreading awareness among common masses.
8. IOS may be requested to create a Centre for Information to cater to all concerned agencies and organizations.
9. Form a standing committee to evaluate and to formulate the roadmap for political empowerment of Muslims in India.

Book Release

Prof. Z.M. Khan's book, *Political Empowerment of Muslims in India* was released on 26.6.2010 in the Constitution Club by Delhi's Chief Minister, Mrs. Sheila Dikshit. Prof. A.S. Narang from IGNOU and Prof. Mujtaba A. Khan of Jamia Millia Islamia commented on the book. They both appreciated the book, congratulated its author and highlighted the major points discussed in the book.

Prof. Z.M. Khan also spoke on the occasion. He said that this book attempts to deal with the complex situation of Muslims in India and to seek enabling solutions to make them participate in processes of national development and contribute to inclusive societal measures. Political empowerment of Muslims forms the central theme. This volume is distinct on many counts. It is a multi-variant study that presents an in-depth analysis of causal factors of exclusion and remedial action to enable Muslims to have their due place, status and position to participate in governance and acquire a high level of social

acceptability. The dynamics and process of political empowerment are dealt with in the context of the broad parameters of Indian political and socio-cultural systems in which Indian Muslims live. These systems require citizens to be willing to and capable of participating in the political processes, including electoral politics at all levels. These issues are taken up in a proper conceptual framework relating to fundamentals of Indian political system and traditions of Indian social philosophy. It also asks Muslims to strive hard to use the operational space available to them as Indian citizens. It is an attempt to present facts with a sense of compassion, concern and care in dealing with sensitive issues. This volume tries to evaluate and analyse factors in totality, including the systems, the institutions, the environment and strategies of functional value, said Prof.



Mrs. Sheila Dikshit, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi releases the book *Political Empowerment of Muslims in India*

Khan.

In her speech Mrs. Sheila Dikshit congratulated Prof. Z.M. Khan for having written this timely book. She also appreciated the activities of the IOS. She observed that the IOS is an important think tank and its intellectual works are taken seriously. She said the question before us was this: do we divide the country or work to keep it united. She said that the constitution is a sort of "religion" which has given equal rights to all the citizen. She stood for modern education and modern thinking. She also said that the Muslims must demand their rights without fear. This is their fundamental right. They have contributed in the past and must go on doing it even today as far as the development of the country is concerned. She said that *Insaniyat* and

Qabiliyat are two things that all Indians, Muslims included, should stand for.

Dr. M. Manzoor Alam appreciated the speech of the Chief Minister and sought her cooperation in IOS's endeavours to serve the Muslim community as well as the nation. Mr. Kaleem Alam presented the formal vote of thanks.

Communal Violence Bill

A consultative discussion on The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2009 (CVP for short) was organized by the Institute of Objective Studies on June 14, 2010 at India International Centre (Annexe), New Delhi in which legal experts, administrators and academicians participated. After threadbare discussion on the proposed Bill, it was strongly felt by the

participants that the Bill, in its present form, is too weak to prevent and control communal violence as it lacks in fixing the accountability of a communal violence on the perpetrators, conspirators and abettors. A general consensus emerged that the Bill should fix direct responsibility on the local administration like, the District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police and the local SHOs and also responsibility on the politicians and ministers be fixed so that a 2002 Gujarat like situation is averted.

It was felt that the definition of communal violence is insufficient. A wide and broader definition was suggested so as to include various gender based sexual offences. There is no provision in the Bill to tackle a situation where the state government does not declare an area as a disturbed area despite sufficient reason. It was also demanded that the Act should come into force immediately and it should not be left to the discretion of the state government. It was also felt that communal crime committed elsewhere than in the disturbed area should also be taken care of. It was also suggested that the question of sanction for prosecuting the erring government servants should be decided at the trial stage itself. If a communal violence erupts, local officials should be immediately suspended and

departmental enquiry should follow. A great drawback of the Bill, it was felt, is that it does not involve the NGOs in preventing, controlling and awarding compensation/damages to the victims of the communal violence.

It was also suggested that article 21 of the Constitution of India which guarantees right to life and liberty should be made the foundation of the proposed law. Likewise, article 355 which permits central government's interference in a state should be made the basis of the centre's interference in case an area is not declared as a disturbed area or the state government fails to prevent and control communal riots. It was also suggested that reputed NGOs and the National Human Rights Commission should be involved for the declaration of an area as a disturbed area. It was also demanded that the Nuremberg trial liability should be fastened on those responsible for communal violence.

Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, the Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies announced that another meeting of the consultative committee will be held in which some former judges will give their suggestions in order to make the Bill more effective and workable. The proposed suggestions/amendments will then be sent to the Central Government for their proper incorporation. The keen interest of the Congress President and the UPA Chairperson Mrs. Sonia Gandhi to incorporate the suggestions of the NGOs and minority was welcome.

The participants in this consultative discussion included Mr. Manzoor Ahmad, IPS, former Vice-Chancellor, Agra University, Mr. Yusuf Muchhala, Senior Advocate, Mr. Naseem Ahmad, IAS, former Vice-Chancellor, AMU, Dr. Abusaleh Shariff, Chief Economist, NCAER and Mr. Mauji Khan, former ACP etc.

Discussion on Census 2011

The Institute of Objective Studies organized a programme to discuss the various dimensions of Census 2011 on 19.6.2010 at the Constitution Club, New Delhi. Maulana Abdullah Mugheesi,

President All India Milli Council presided over the programme. Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Chairman, IOS, while delivering his introductory remarks, threw light on the need and importance of Census 2011. Dr. Abusaleh Shariff, member, National Council for Applied Economic Research, delivered the key-note address. He said that the coming census would be carried out in three stages. In the first stage house-listing and head-counting would be done and in the third stage the issue of religion would be taken up. Caste-based census would be conducted in the third stage which might be a contentious issue. He then discussed in detail the reasons responsible for the question of caste-based census. The issue came to the fore with the establishment of the Mandal Commission. The Mandal Commission concluded that there are castes other than STs and SCs which are equally



A view of participants of Discussion on Communal Violence Bill

backward and reservation should be extended to them as well. The Commission was set up in 1970s by the Janata Party government and its recommendations were accepted by the V.P. Singh government over a decade later. Muslims were also to be included in the Other Backward Classes but as the certificate to this effect was to be issued by the *Tahseeldar*, they faced a lot of discrimination. Thus Mandal failed to benefit the Muslims.

Dr Shariff also discussed the issue of including Muslims in the OBC category. He suggested the Kerala and Karnataka models in this regard. In Karnataka almost all Muslims have been declared as economically backward. In Kerala almost 99% Muslims have managed to be included in the OBC category. Either

all Muslims, barring a few, are treated as OBC on all India level as in Kerala or they are declared as economically backward as in Karnataka, he suggested. Thus Muslims in Assam and U.P. may demand 10% and 12% reservation respectively.

Mr. Abdul Khaliq, a leader of Lok Jan Shakti Party opined that the atmosphere in the country is not ripe enough to demand reservation for all Muslims. The government also can not declare all Muslims as backward. Also there is no provision for religion-based reservation. He, therefore, suggested that all Muslims should enroll themselves as Dalits.

Mr. Mujtaba Farooq of Jamat-e-Islami, Hind expressed the view that a slightly favourable situation is developing in the country and therefore Muslims should demand reservation. Mr. Mauji Khan, former ACP and member of Milli Council said that we should not forget that initially the reservation for the Dalits was given only for ten years. We may follow the same path. Mr. Musharraf Hussain of the Milli Council said that technically it was wrong to declare oneself as Muslim because it includes him in the other category, hence Muslims should mention their caste during the census.

Dr. Farah Naqvi, a senior journalist, opined that the first need was to have our own voice. She also stressed on taking the matter to the Muslim masses living in villages. Maulana Abdul Hameed Nomani of Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Hind said that caste exists among the Muslims which cannot be overlooked. Whatever strategy we make, it should keep this reality in mind, he said. Maulana Yasin Ali Usmani, Vice President of Milli Council said that we should not fear about reaction which is inevitable. Instead we should march ahead and demand the implementation of Ranga Nath Mishra and Sachar Committee Reports or their recommendations, he opined.

In his presidential remarks Maulana Abdullah Mugheesi said that more meetings should be held to discuss this

issue of census. He suggested to publish a booklet on the subject which should reach the common Muslims so that their apprehensions are removed. Many others like Dr. S.Q.R. Ilyas, Maulana Abdul Wahab Khilji, Mohd. Ilyas Malik, Maulana Arshad Faruqi, Prof. Naushad Ali Azad, Maulana Ghulzar Qasmi, Maulana Yaqub Bulansheri, Maulana Neyaz Farooqi, Dr. Pervez Mian, Feroz Ahmad Advocate and Mr. Khursheed Alam also expressed their views on the issue. A Coordination Committee of Indian Muslims for Census was formed, and Prof. Z.M. Khan, Secretary General of IOS, was appointed its convenor.

appear to fully realize the dangers involved. It is just not enough to dismantle the notoriously inept and corrupt UGC and set up a Higher Education Commission in its place. The most important thing is to provide it with a clean and inspiring leadership which has integrity, vision, clarity of thought and, above all, believes in democratic functioning of academic institutions.

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Instead our Vice Chancellors are cajoled by the UGC to make appointments of its choice even if it involves breaking the rules. Mediocres are not only appointed but they are also given additional increments and rewarded with other favours. With such a sorry state of affairs prevailing in universities and UGC, how can we expect that merit and academic excellence would triumph over favouritism and nepotism?



A view of delegates

It would be really appropriate to take stock of the performance of senior academics in our universities. Professors matter a lot in a university system as they are members of decision-making bodies and also occupy senior administrative positions. What prevents them from discharging their such duties as creating an atmosphere of democratic functioning in various bodies of universities. It is sad to note that, while a good number of academics are busy with their routine works of teaching and research, a great majority is more than eager to secure administrative positions. They help Vice Chancellors in breaking rules in order to curry favour with them. They clamour to grab high offices, not to serve some noble cause but to fulfill their base desires.

As can be imagined, the situation is very bad indeed. The central government seems to have a sense of corruption in the UGC and universities but does not

Mismanaging Higher Education

by Ishtiyaque Danish

The views expressed in the article do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of the Newsletter (editor)

In its previous term the UPA government took a giant step to promote higher education in the country. The decision was prompted by the serious thinking that the country had acute shortage of graduates both in professional and traditional subjects. The central government, therefore, decided to set up more IITs and central universities in various parts of the country. And the HRD ministry has been given adequate funds to meet the financial requirements in this regard.

But it is indeed a flawed thinking that increasing the number of universities and IITs would improve the higher education situation in the country. More universities might increase the number of graduates but would not necessarily ensure a higher quality of education. We need to realize that higher education sector is as much riddled with corruption as any other walk of our collective life. Unless and until corruption is cleansed from higher education, the country should not expect any improvement in this vital sector.

A great Urdu poet has figuratively described the peculiar dilemma as well as the disease our higher education management is suffering from. He says:

*Meer Kiya Khoob Hain Beemar
Huai Jiske Sabab
Usi Attar Ke Laund-e-se Dawa
Lete Hain.*

*Meer (the poet) is wonderfully
naïve to take medicine.*

*From the (fair) boy who caused
disease to him.*

This exactly is the case of our central government. Its diagnosis of the ailment that higher education is

suffering from was right but the agency chosen for providing medical treatment is none other than the bastion of corruption, the University Grants Commission.

The UGC is a pale shadow of what it was originally conceived to be. Its sole purpose was to promote and ensure quality higher education all across the country which it has failed to achieve. The UGC is full of officers who are incapable of seeing beyond their noses. They misuse their high position of being officer in this funding agency to secure lucrative appointments for their Kith and Kin in central/deemed universities and colleges. Deemed universities, especially the ones managed by the minorities, are particularly vulnerable to the manipulative individuals occupying high positions in the UGC. These disgraceful men go to any extent to benefit their near and dear ones and in the process damage the country's educational system beyond recovery. The new UGC guidelines for the teachers is the latest example of manipulating institutional mechanism to favour one's Kith and Kin. Otherwise, how can one justify it that an assistant professor will take 12 years to be promoted to the level of associate professor who will take only three years to become a professor. Can the UGC explain as to how the poor fellow will meet all the high requirements in just three years time to reach the level of a professor. Obviously the UGC has framed the new guidelines to favour those who have been appointed readers/associate professors, legally or illegally, after September 2008.

The office of the Vice Chancellor is the centre of gravity in a university system. The Vice Chancellor has enormous power and becomes more powerful if he/she finds a patron in the UGC or HRD ministry. There are examples where such well-placed Vice Chancellors have done smart things for the institutions they head/headed. But most Vice Chancellors lack vision and leadership quality and mismanage the affairs of institutions they lead. They make and break promises at will and indulge in wrongful practices with full cooperation of the UGC. The Constitution says that everyone is equal before law but Vice Chancellors and the UGC ensure that some are more equal than others. As a result merit suffers and mediocrity flourishes in our universities. The ones who excel in academic publications are subjected to harassment, denied due promotion and tormented in many other ways. Promotions and rewards are accorded to those who are never seen reading a book and yet have authored over a dozen books. Our Vice Chancellors and the UGC never enquire as to how such miracles happen.

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