



IOS NEWSLETTER

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Thought for the Month

The unbelievers will be
Led to Hell in groups:
Until, they arrive there,
Its gates will be opened.
And its keepers will say,
“Did not messengers come
To you from among yourselves,
Rehearsing to you the Signs
Of your Lord, and warning you
Of the Meeting of this Day
Of your?” The answer
Will be: “True: but
The Decree of Chastisement
Has been proved true
Against the unbelievers!”

Al-Quran- 21:83-84

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FOCUS

The madrasa was the Muslim institution of learning par excellence. As such, it was a natural development of two previous institutions: the masjid, •n its role as a • college of law, and its nearby khan, as the residence of the law students in attendance. The development of this college was made in three stages: from the masjid, to the masjid-khan complex, to the madrasa. The masjid involved in this development was that in which the teaching was devoted to law as its primary subject. The basic law course of the masjid, usually lasting a period of four years, required a place of residence for the law students who came to it from out-of-town; whence the development of the masjid-khan complex. From this complex to the madrasa there was but one simple step. The essential difference between the second and third stage of development is to be found in the legal status of the masjid and that of the madrasa. Both institutions were based on the law of waqf, charitable trust. As already mentioned, the masjid, once instituted as waqf, became free of its founder’s control. Its waqf was said to be a *waqf tahrir*, ‘a waqf of emancipation’. The relationship between it and its founder was thus likened to that existing between an emancipated slave and the emancipating master who relinquishes his rights over him. In contrast, the madrasa came under the control of its founder, and that of his descendants, in perpetuity, if he so desired.

[] The masjid was seen to have had its rise with the rise of Islam. The masjid-khan complex developed on a large scale in the fourth/tenth century. The madrasa, developing in this century, flourished in the fifth/ eleventh century. Such was the general development of these institutions as may be seen in the sources available. It is a development which may be traced through Muslim philanthropic activity during these centuries.

From early times on, rulers (caliphs, sultans, maliks, emirs, wazirs etc.) as well as wealthy merchants, and professors with private means, gave support to scholars. Some of these benefactors were possessors of great wealth, and practiced their philanthropy on a large scale; others, not so wealthy, practised it on a more modest one. Isolated charitable gifts by men of modest means may have created an institution of learning earlier than the dates here considered. This should be granted if only to avoid the pitfall of arguing from silence in an area where the sources are anything but adequate. But there is a better reason for granting this: the foundation of certain institutions on a large scale is usually preceded by their prior foundation in isolated instances. Considerable sums of money are usually invested in institutions only after they have proven to be successful and socially desirable.

Throughout the centuries, philanthropists extended great sums of money on objects socially and religiously desirable. Such sums were provided for distribution among the poor, the widows and orphans; for the shrouding of the dead; for the pilgrims to Mecca and their various needs; for camps and relay stations, and wells and supplies of fodder, all along the pilgrims’ road; for the upkeep of the sanctuaries; for individual scholars, or groups of scholars, and such like.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

**International Conference
On
Women's Empowerment: Paradigms,
Sources, Methodologies**

A three-day international conference on "Women's Empowerment: Paradigms, Sources, Methodologies" was inaugurated on 6-8 January, 2012 by economist Dr Abusaleh Shariff with an address on "Gender Empowerment in India: Concept, Measurement and Policy." The conference was organised by the IOS in collaboration with National Women's Front, Calicut, Kerala.

He said on the six measures—human capital, work participation, household decision making, economic resources/assets, reproduction and child care, political participation—women's empowerment in India had a long way to go.

He advised the audience (largely women) filling the Town Hall chalk-a-block to work for the empowerment of women, who happened to be "exactly 50 percent" of the human population." He said God had ensured equality of gender by making men and women in equal numbers.

"Historically, women have been warriors, business persons, teachers. The Constitution of India has given women a status equal to that of men", Dr Shariff asserted.

He said a lot of wealth was being created in India and a lot of development was underway. However, women were not getting their full share of it. Even in the highly-literate Kerala there was a gap of 10 percent between the literacy of

men and women, which was, of course, higher in other states.

"Men come to seminars like this and go home, without much change. There is no follow up," he regretted.

The concept of gender equality evolved at the UN. Gender difference in health and morbidity, opportunity, protection of law and wages were important indicators of empowerment, or the lack of it, he explained.

In her keynote address Prof. Nasneen Begum said that women's empowerment did not mean that women had to "overwhelm men or compete with them," but to work together with men "to reconstruct society." She added that the key to gender empowerment was

sexes and position coming with responsibility. Biological differences necessitate different responsibilities."

He said, "Maqasid-e-Shariah guide the empowerment of Muslims, underlying which is education."

The conference featured eight business sessions, the first of which was scheduled for the inaugural day. The theme of the first business session was "Islam and Gender Justice." This session was chaired by Dr P Ibrahim.

Dr Yousuf Dadoo from Durban, South Africa, spoke on "Muslim Women's Law Against the Backdrop of Maqasid al-Sharia."

He said 350 verses of the holy Quran deal with issues of law, 140 with salat, Hajj and fasting and 70 with issues like marriage, divorce and inheritance.

Islamic law, he averred, is guided by Maqasid-e-Shariah, which facilitates the understanding of issues amid seemingly disparate directives. In this scheme of things adl (justice) is a core value. "If something goes against this, it is not Islam", he asserted.

Fair, equal and just treatment of women is central to Maqasid-e-Shariah, he said. An elaborate discourse on the issue was not possible because of the limited time allotted to speakers, he said.

Dr A.I. Rahmatullah of the Department of Arabic, University of Calicut, in his paper on "Gender Equity in Islam" gave a rather different reading of the issue. Most parts of his paper were in Malayalam, but the English part contained observations like "Western feminists like Ameena Wadud, Fatima Mernissi and Catherine Bullock are Western propagandists." Also, "Islam has been generous to women. Wives get free shelter, free food, clothing and free entertainment."



L-R: A.S. Zainaba, Prof Nasneen Begum, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Dr. Abusaleh Shariff, Dr.P. Ibrahim

education and "Islam is not inimical to economic development."

The welcome address was delivered by Dr A A Vahab, Secretary IOS Calicut chapter.

In his presidential address, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam, Chairman IOS, explained the idea of IOS Silver Jubilee Celebrations, under which 14 conferences had been planned all over India between April 2011 and 2012 under the broad theme of "Knowledge, Development and Peace." The Calicut conference was tenth in the series.

Regarding gender relations he said, "Islam envisages complementarity of

Quite a few of the discussions and presentations were in Malayalam.

Day-II

The theme of the second session, chaired by Dr. Fathima, was "Women in Religions and Ideologies." The speakers scheduled for this session were Shameema Islahiya (MGM State Gen. Secretary), whose topic was "Empowerment of Women: Concepts and Strategies."

Razia Parveen's paper talked about a digital divide corresponding to the gender divide that worked against the empowerment of women.

In a brief intervention, Dr Alam said the equation was undergoing change in the 21st century.

In his turn, Dr Abusaleh Shariff said that the gender division was not natural, but a social construct. Discrimination against women was common in underdeveloped and developing societies. It was, to some degrees, there in developed societies as well. Even in advanced societies, women were getting lower wages than men did for the same work. He asked for a quick end to it.

Shabna Siyad Kochi compared Islam to other religions favourably, concluding that Islam gave women more rights than others religions did.

Hendra Henny Andrese, minister councillor in Indonesian embassy in New Delhi, elaborated upon the national campaign for empowerment of women in her country. The campaign was being run from the national capital and state capital level to district and village level. The Indonesian Prime Minister Ms Meghawati Sukarnoputri was deeply committed to it.

Several sessions of the day were merged together and quite a few

speakers who were not on the original schedule presented their papers.

Among the new speakers were Andrese and Malaysia's Shareefa Shaيدا, who is one of the close associates of former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim.

Shaيدا presented the teachings of Islam in the Asian and global perspective and said Islam did not come into conflict with the highest values of any civilisation.

Jameel Ahmad, in his paper "The Truth About Sex-based Role Divisions in Muslim Societies" said the "true Islam" based its premises on the Quran and the Sunnah. He compared doctrinal Islam's precepts to the aberrant Western ways and the scantily-clad Western woman to the securely veiled Muslim woman. He concluded by saying that



A view of the audience

Islam is "a very grossly misunderstood religion", which makes it difficult for others to understand how helpful it has been to women.

In his address Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam lauded the enthusiastic participation of Calicut's men and women. He said an Islamic perspective and reference to Islamic sources for understanding current issues would be more reliable than Western sources and perspectives.

Day-III

The theme for the sixth business session, chaired by Abdur Rahman

Baqavi was "Representation of Women." The welcome address of the day was delivered by Abdul Malik K.V. The second topic of the session was "The Role of Women in Political Change in the Middle East."

Zulaikha Rasheed compared Western women to Muslim women with advantage to the latter. She said there were trends in Arab and Muslim world of increasing participation of Muslim women in public sphere. She talked about "veiled and unveiled women working together to usher in and sustain the Arab Spring."

Prof. Habeeba Pasha featured as a discussant in this session.

The theme for the seventh business session was "Faith and Empowerment." It was chaired by Ehjazul Haque (SIS, Manjeri) and the presentation was made by A.A. Vahab in Malayalam. Rafeeq Kuttikattoor and Sajidha Rafeeq were discussants.

The eighth session had "Women as Commodity" as its theme and was chaired by Sheeba Sageer. In her paper on "Representation of Muslim Women in the Media" Seema Mohsin lamented that the media portrayed Muslim women as suppressed and subjected to violence. This generalisation was supposed to have been made out of stray events in tribal areas of Pakistan, which were blown out of all proportion.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia was portrayed as a country hostile to women. This portrait had no nuances, no shades. "At best, it is a severely restricted picture. In many cases, it is untrue."

She said presenting stray events in tribal areas of Pakistan as representative of Muslim women's situation worldwide was not fair. "Pakistani society is not run under Shariah, but by feudal lords and tribal traditions."

Aberrations in Muslim society were overblown, but similar aberrations in non-Muslim societies were ignored by the same media, she concluded.

Sajida Begum's presentation "*Muashrey ki Burai aur Muslim Khwateen ki Zimmewari*" (Evils of Society and Muslim Women's Responsibility) was in Urdu. She enumerated social evils and particularly pointed out the evil of dowry among Muslims. She asked for a fatwa banning dowry.

In his intervention Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam said that he had always supported the ban. In fact, the late Maulana Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi had issued such a fatwa. However, he regretted that the mothers of bridegrooms often found out ways to circumvent the fatwa and get dowry on the sly by coercing the daughter-in-laws. "The Quran wants equality of gender, but such practices undermine it," Dr Alam observed.

Dr Fakhruddin Ahmad as a discussant congratulated the organisers for holding such an important conference.

He also congratulated "sisters from Kerala" for having achieved 90 percent literacy, which was a model for the country. He mentioned the remarkable progress made by Andhra and Hyderabad Muslims, having established a large network of good-quality educational institutions.

For the valedictory session Prof. P. Koya welcomed the participants. The chief guest was Minister P.K. Abdur Rab and the guest of honour was Justice A.M. Ahmadi, former Chief Justice of India. Justice Ahmadi also delivered the valedictory lecture. Dr Alam chaired the valedictory session.

In his address Justice Ahmadi congratulated the IOS and wished it a

long life and a "golden jubilee" in decades ahead.

Putting a legal and constitutional perspective on the issues involved, he said, "Muslims are entitled to equal rights under the Constitution and the law of the land." The Preamble promised justice, equality and respect to all individuals and groups, which made it



A view of the book release

incumbent on everyone to be accommodative of others for the plural society to flourish, he said.

"These basic values have, unfortunately, got diluted over the years. Secularism demands a wider vision, not limiting ourselves to our immediate group, but to be part of the wider society as well."

With secularism, socialist ideals of the Constitution, too, had been eclipsed. The Constitution had envisaged an economic order different from what obtained today. "Today's dwarfs have diluted the Constitution created by giants of yesterday."

Justice Ahmadi also talked about "roadblocks in the way of social justice being put up by a certain party that raises the bogey of appeasement."

He said the makers of India's Constitution wanted "a socialistic pattern of economy, but we are moving towards a full-blown capitalist economy." The "party" that Justice Ahmadi referred to opposed secularism on flimsy grounds, one of them being "secularism's Western origin."

He expressed happiness over the fact that among his audience women heavily outnumbered men. Justice Ahmadi took it as an indicator of women's interest in empowerment issues.

"Women suffer within family and outside it," he observed. For the sufferings inside families, the cure too was within families. For this as well as other kinds of sufferings the panacea was education.

He pointed out two major sources of distress of Muslim women: easy divorce and polygamy. The two threats hung on the heads of many Muslim women as a Damocles sword, destroying their happiness and forcing them to live in a climate of uncertainty.

He advised the audience not to run away from problems,

but to face and address them. For that, access to education was vital as it made a life of dignity possible. Human rights represented a set of powerful weapons that had to be employed by the weak in the struggle for justice and equality.

Justice Ahmadi concluded by saying that women were not helpless as they had the power of law and justice on their side.

In his presidential address, Dr Mohammad Manzoor Alam introduced the IOS and its Silver Jubilee programme. He also announced the establishment of an IOS centre for Women's Studies in Calicut in days ahead.

He observed that the Muslim community had not been properly familiarised with the provisions in the Constitution for education, nor with the vital content of Sachar Report, Rangnata Mishra Commission's recommendations, or those of National Knowledge Commission. He advised the audience to familiarise themselves with these documents.

“Muslims, who are equal stakeholders in the country, have been left behind all others.” This was largely because of educational backwardness. He quoted Islamic scholar Yusuf Qardawi’s observation regarding the general educational backwardness of Muslims: “We all are *juhla* (ignoramus).”

Dr Alam expressed satisfaction over the fact that Kerala’s Muslims had achieved a high rate of literacy. However, he warned against confusing literacy (the three R’s) with education. Muslims, including Kerala Muslims, were still far behind others in meaningful education.

“Study medical and engineering, by all means. But don’t ignore liberal education, law, other subjects,” he advised.

He showed concern over a reported rise in divorce rates. “Conduct surveys and find out the facts, not to refute allegations, but to reform society”, he counselled.

Prof. Yousuf Dadoo in his brief remarks on the conference asked everyone not to dismiss Muslim feminists’ views summarily, but to consider them thoughtfully as they had vital points that would benefit Muslim societies.

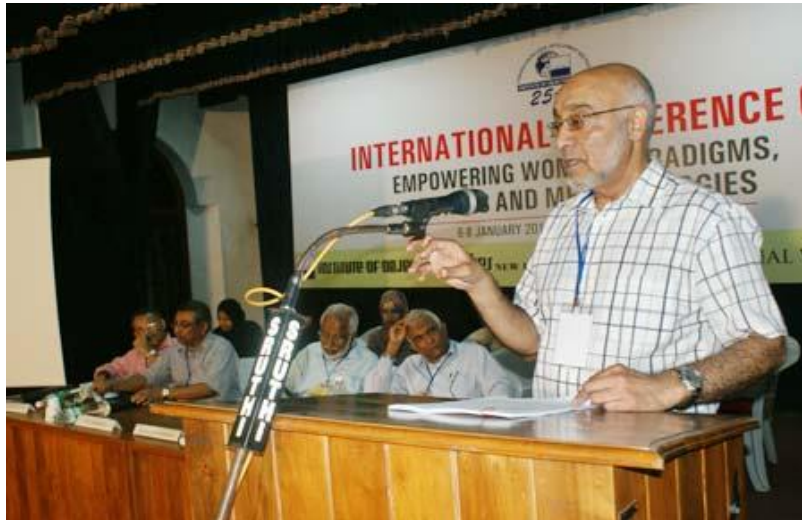
The following were honoured by the IOS over the three days:

List of Awardees

1. Mr. Ali Ashraf, Young Journalist who has changed a traditional religious weekly into a forum for constructive discussion and debate open to all.
2. Mr. P. N. Das, As writer and editor, he has fore fronted environmental issues, problems of medical ethics and alternative therapies, in a language known for felicity and grace.

3. Dr Mustafa Kamal Pasha, Activist, scholar and writer he has written series of books, translated major collections of Hadith, produced videos to put across the contemporary dimensions of the religion of Islam.
4. Mr. Jamal Kochangadi, The writer-editor who has transformed the stale weekend journalism in to a vibrant genre articulating the passion and

9. Mr. N. P. Chekkutty, Veteran journalist and commentator he has always stood up for media ethics and consistently tried to find space for the poor and the unrepresented.
10. Mr. O. Abdulla, Veteran writer, columnist and public speaker he has written and spoken with courage and conviction against rot and decay of social values and misrepresentation of the minorities.



Dr. Yousuf Dadoo deliver his speech

11. Mr. T. K. Ubaid, Scholar and writer he has single-handedly changed Quranic literature in Malayalam by writing fresh, reader friendly interpretation of the Holy Scripture.
12. Mr. V. A. Kabeer, Writer and linguist. He has written some of the most beautiful books in Malayalam; translated stories from his mother tongue to Arabic and vice versa and carved out a literary niche of great felicity and style .

- despair of the common people.
5. Mr. K. K. Baburaj, Activist and writer known for his pursuit of an alternate narration of the social changes in Kerala disengaged from the official, upper caste and hegemonic rendition of history
 6. Shaykh Mohammed Karakunnu, Prolific writer and public speaker he has been instrumental in bringing about the first comprehensive encyclopedia of Islam in Malayalam.
 7. Ms. Jameela A., Scholar, public speaker and activist. She has helped hundreds of women to break shackles of obscurantism and ignorance.
 8. Ms. A. S. Zainaba, Activist and public speaker she has helped build up a radically different women’s movement and in the process instilled courage and vision among the women folk

13. Prof. Nasneen Begum, Political activist and educator, she has introduced a doze of honesty and integrity to electoral politics and proved herself to be the champion of the poor and downtrodden in the city of Bangalore
14. Mr. E. M. Najeeb, Businessman and Philanthropist
15. Mr. Ahmed MP, Businessman and Philanthropist
16. Mr. P. V. Abdul Wahab, Businessman and Philanthropist

Resolution

The conference has forefronted the following points:

1. There is notable increase in the violence against women especially those belonging to urban and rural poor and marginalized sections of the population. Domestic violence has also become a matter of great concern and in this respect no class or community is an exception. This

is a sign of decline in universal religious values and the incursions made by materialist ideologies which consider human beings as merely economic animals

2. The role of men and women are complimentary to each other especially in building up a society based on equity and justice. There is strong evidence in history that this complementarity and, not competition, has brought about creativity and cohesion in the humankind.
3. Better awareness and understanding about Islamic teachings on the position and role of man and woman will help remove misconceptions about gender justice and empowerment. Men and women are not rivals but partners in the process of social progress and harmonious co-existence.
4. The status of Muslim women is affected by the misinterpretation of Islamic laws on women's rights. There is also the problem of influence of Indian patriarchal system on the role of women in society. So, for the real development of women of all communities, there should be a bipartisan committee to study the problems of women's indignities in the model of National Commission for Women.
5. The delegates are of considered opinion that discussions and debate on the theme should be taken forward incorporating different dimensions of gender empowerment in the light of the Qur'an, Prophetic Traditions and modern knowledge. The present decade is witnessing fundamental and paradigm-changing events reiterating the need and

capacity of religious teachings to overhaul the contemporary political and social thought as regards the role of women in the establishment of justice and equity for all people irrespective colour, creed or gender. But further researches, surveys and academic inputs are necessary to strengthen positive trends and to expose the pseudo-libertarian tendencies coming in the garb of modernity. Therefore the delegates call upon the Governing Board of the Institute to establish a centre for women's studies at Calicut to facilitate research and academic pursuit in various disciplines related to the empowerment of women.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations Programmes



L to R: Dr. Yousuf Dadoo, O. Abdulla, Dr. Fakhruddin Mohammad, E. Abubacker, Justice A.M. Ahmadi; Dr. M. Manzoor Alam; Hendra Henny Andrese; Prof. P.Koya,

(April, 2011 – April, 2012)

The following twelve programmes celebrating the IOS Silver Jubilee occasion have so far been organized.

1. **Opening conference on 'Towards Knowledge, Development and Peace – Outlining Roadmaps for the Future'**
On April 15-17, 2011 at India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi

2. **'Prospects for Islamic Venture Capital Fund (IVCF) in Indian Economy'**
On May 14-15, 2011 at Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi
3. **'Interest-free Institutional Mechanism (Banking, Finance and Insurance) for promoting Investment'**
On June 3-5, 2011 at University of Kashmir, Srinagar
4. **'Indo-ASEAN Trade and Investment'**
On July 8-10, 2011 at New Delhi
5. **'Global Trends of Education: Review and Options'**
On September 16-18, 2011 at Patna (Bihar)
6. **'Power of Media in a Globalising World'**
On October 14-16, 2011 at Bangalore (Karnataka)
7. **'Good Governance in a Globalising World'**
On November 18-20, 2011 at Kolkata (West Bengal)
8. **'Challenges Before Youth in Contemporary World'**
On December 10-11, 2011 at Chennai (Tamilnadu)
9. **'Islamic Culture and Art'**
On December 30, 31 and January 1, 2012 at Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)
10. **'Empowering Women: Paradigm, Sources and Methodologies'**
On January 6-8, 2012 at Calicut (Kerala)
11. **'Judiciary, Ethics and Delivery System'**

On January 21-22, 2012 at Cuttack (Orissa)

12. 'Peace and Progress: Role of Religions'

On February 11-12, 2012 at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (UP)

The following programmes will be organized as per the scheduled given below

13. 'Worldview of Development: Challenges and Alternative Paradigm'

On March 9-11, 2012 at Pune (Maharashtra)

14. Concluding conference on 'Minority Identities and Rights: Challenges and Prospects in an Unfolding Global Scenario'

On April 13-15, 2012 at New Delhi

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But this category of philanthropy was of a transitory, fleeting character; good for as long as it pleased the donor to give, or for as long as he lived, but cut off with his displeasure, his dismissal from office, or his death.

It was not this category of philanthropy that brought institutions of learning into existence. These institutions came into existence after the institutionalization of charity for purposes of education by the law of waqf. With the waqf, institutions of learning were made perpetual, and independent, in some cases, of the donor himself, and in all cases, of the donor's life-span. This type of philanthropy occurred on a very large scale in the fourth/tenth century.

The early masjids cited previously belonged to the eighth and ninth centuries, perhaps earlier. How much earlier is not known, may never be known, exactly. What is certain is that the masjid was the first type of college in Islam, and that it was a charitable foundation governed by the law of waqf. As a charitable foundation, it was endowed, and the income of the endowment paid the salary of the

professor who was usually its imam, or leader of the prayer. When the professor was paid from the endowment income, the student benefited in that he had no tuition to pay; but he had to provide for his own lodging and subsistence.

From *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* by George Makdisi pp. 27-29

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It surely convinced sections of Muslims here and there but they too preferred the winning horses of SP and BSP than the Congress candidates.

Many reasons can be attributed to Congress why it failed to succeed in Western U.P. where it had allied with Mr. Ajit Singh? The Jats and Muslims matter the most in this area and they, especially the later, preferred the SP over Congress and RLD. The chief reason that adversely affected the Congress performance in Western U.P. is the arrest of so-called suspected and alleged terrorists from Muslim-dominated areas of Bihar. These arrests were made towards the end of U.P. election when polling took place mostly in its Western part. That was the time when a Delhi-based young Muslim, Mohammad Amir was released after spending 18 years in jail. He was falsely implicated in 19 cases of terrorism by Delhi police, which could not be upheld in the court. The matter has widely been reported in the press including leading English dailies and Urdu newspapers.

At a time when Mohammad Amir's tragedy and Delhi police's 'cruelty' was very much in news, the later went on a hunting spree in North Bihar and arrested many alleged terrorists. The national dailies, especially the Urdu press reported these arrests very prominently which surely influenced the Muslim voters in Western U.P. They started thinking if Delhi police was out again to tarnish the Muslim image. In view of Mohammad Amir's case no Muslim was ready to believe the police story about the alleged terrorists from North Bihar. The Muslims also began to think that Batla House was not an isolated incidence, it was rather a routine

Congress policy to hurt them. They feared that today the target was North Bihar, tomorrow it might be Western U.P. A silent movement of anger and anguish spread in the Muslim community which denied Congress the electoral benefits it had expected from its policy of Muslim reservation.

All is not lost. The grand old party may take solace in the fact that the Muslims appreciate Rahul Gandhi's hard work. They also like his attitude that he wants the throne of Delhi on the basis of his work and not because he was a Nehru-Gandhi. But he and his party must realize that half-hearted policies would never win the Muslim heart and mind.

Calendar 2012

The IOS calendar 2012 has been published. Agents, Shop-keepers and others may place their order with the IOS Headquarters.

The Four-Page calendar has the following feature:

Page-1 Mosque through the Ages Masjid-e-Nabavi Madina

Page-2 India Representation of Muslim IAS Officer 1990-2009

Page-3 World: Military Expenditure selected Countries 2007

Page-4(a) India Share of Muslims in Individual Deposits in Scheduled Banks 2005

(b) Priority Sector Advances of various Social Groups 2005

The calendar may also be obtained from

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Recent Elections: Lessons to be Learnt
by Ishtiyaque Danish

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

The election in five states including Uttar Pradesh is over. The results have been declared and the process of government formation has begun. Also a lot is being said and written about the poor, good or excellent performances of political parties. The performance of Congress in Panjab and Uttar Pradesh is especially being debated. The oldest political party of the country has surprised everyone by its poor performance in Uttar Pradesh. Its star campaigner, Rahul Gandhi worked hard in the real sense of the word and was able to draw large crowds everywhere but failed to convert them into votes.

The Congress failure, as all would agree, owes a lot to its organizational weaknesses. The grand old party, especially the Nehru family, must realize that the era of charismatic politics and campaigning is gone. The voters of Rai Barailly and Sultan Pur have clearly sent this message. Now you have to perform throughout the year as main hero and 'guest appearances' would no longer work.

Everywhere people want development. They also want their leaders, at least, to be seen as working for them. The conditions in rural Uttar Pradesh including Amethi and Rai Barailly are pathetic. Roads are broken and public services, especially the supply of electricity, are so poor that the private sector also shies away from investing in

rural U.P. People want their leaders to work for their development but they are busy in all things except working for them.

Both Sonia Gandhi and Rahul failed to read people's mood in their constituencies. It is not just the local leaders who have failed but the Gandhis have also disappointed people. Can they recall if they ever agitated in Rai Barailly and Amethi against poor governance? Did they do anything, except delivering speeches, to improve the living conditions of people? You may be a national leader but you also represent a constituency and the voters want you to work for their welfare. In sum, you have to continuously nurse your constituency.

Muslims are over 18 percent in U.P and in large numbers of constituencies they play decisive roles in influencing electoral results. Parties like the SP and BSP have developed their own Muslim leadership which consists of Muslims coming from ordinary backgrounds mostly. But these leaders are well-rooted in their constituencies where they work all through the year and remain constantly in touch with people. Congress, on the other hand, still has Muslim faces who reside in Delhi and also have ancestral houses in their home towns where they occasionally go for picnic. Naturally these leaders are not in touch with the common Muslims who, like all other fellow Indians, want

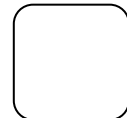
progress and development. There are some emotional issues, like the Batla House encounter, but these have localized impact. Congress must realize that even the Muslims of Azamgarh who are the most adversely affected by the Batla House encounter, want development. They are taking to education in a big way hoping that it would change their lives for good. But they see that the Batla House episode has tarnished their image. One of the two young men killed in the encounter was just over 16. His mother had sent him to Delhi for studies. She wants to know where her upbringing went wrong and how her son became a 'terrorist' during his very short stay in Delhi? As an academic I also want to know how a teen-ager, who had come to Delhi to take admission in class eleven, became a 'terrorist' in a short span of three-four months? Nothing less than a judicial inquiry can satisfy us, the voters. The grand old party must realize it.

Gimmicks rarely pay and yet the politicians have a sort of addiction for it. It is sad to see that Congress is almost unable to give up the politics of gimmicks. Worse, it has started indulging in tokenism. Either it should not have given reservation to Muslims or it should have been in proportion to their share in U.P. population. It was a policy decision without conviction and rationale and consequently failed to deliver.

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