



IOS NEWSLETTER

Vol. 28 No. 12

December 2021/Rabi-al-Aakhir-Jamadi-al-Awwal 1443

Thought for the Month

And verily the Hour will come:
There can be no doubt
About it, or about (the fact)
That Allah will raise up
All who are in the graves.
Yet there is among men
Such a one as disputes
About Allah, without knowledge,
Without guidance and without
A Book of Enlightenment,-
(Disdainfully) bending his side,
In order to lead (men) astray
From the Path of Allah:
For him there is disgrace
In this life, and on the Day
Of Judgment We shall
Make him taste the chastisement
Of burning (Fire)

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

FOCUS

Economic Status of Muslims: During the last decade, the policy framework in India repeatedly exposed the plight of the Muslim population even as the economy soared to unprecedented heights. The national income increased by nearly 10 per cent from 2006 to 2009 and even today the Indian economy is one of the fastest growing in the world. However, Muslims have remained at the bottom by almost every parameter. In the past, too, a number of committees highlighted their pathetic socio-economic conditions. In 1983, the Gopal Singh Report, supposed to be the first on the status of Muslims, stated that a sense of discrimination prevailed among the minorities and that it must be eliminated, root and branch, if Muslims are to be effectively part of the mainstream. In 2006, the Sachar Committee established that the Muslim community was the most backward among all the socio-religious groups. Around that time the Ranganath Mishra Committee, too, held that Muslims are the most backward community in spite of it being the largest with a rich cultural heritage. In 2014, Amitabh Kundu's Report on implementing the Sachar recommendations pointed out that there was some progress, but many gaps warranted attention. It commented that nothing much had changed even after 8 years of the Sachar Committee recommendations. The South Asia State of Minorities Report (2016) found that the improvement for Muslims was dismal on all development indicators. The Sudhir Commission for Telangana in 2016 observed that Muslim poverty is high and that their proportion in employment in the state is well below their population size. A study in 2017 by Rehnuma, in its report '*Minority Appeasement: Myth or Reality?*' found the following:

1. The spending on the minorities by the state governments is woefully low. The lowest is in Gujarat. It spends only 0.029 per cent on them, while they are 11.3 per cent of its population.
2. Housing: Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, only 30 per cent of the targeted numbers of houses for its minorities were constructed. That is, the state's performance on this score was dismal.
3. After the Sachar Committee report, the Union Government started providing scholarships to minority students. However, the amount for these scholarships has been steadily declining since 2014.

Between 1999 and 2011 the change in per capita incomes was the least among Muslims. The rate is half of that for the SCs, STs and OBCs. It is disquieting that, while the monthly per capita expenditure increased by 60 per cent from 2004-05 and 2011-12 according to the NSS, it increased by 69 per cent for the Hindu STs, 73 per cent for the Hindu OBCs and 122 per cent for the upper caste Hindus. The gap is widening, especially in urban India where the proportion below the poverty line is now higher among the Muslim OBCs than among the Hindu SCs. (Khan A.U. and A.A. Akhtar, 2018, p.11).

The NSS data for 1993-94, 2004-05 and 2009-10 reveal that in rural India not much has changed. Muslims are poorer than the other communities and upper caste Hindus and slightly better off compared to the SCs and STs. This may be due to the fact that in rural India Muslims are less dependent on agriculture than the landless non-Muslim population. Data from the NSS 50th and 55th rounds suggest that more than 40 per cent Muslims in the urban areas are in the category of the poorest MPCE compared with less than 22 per cent Hindus. The middle class is absent among Muslims, but the all-India middle class grew at a faster rate during the past decade than ever before.

From Muslim Women in India: Education and Exposure to Media
by Malika B. Mistry, pp. 9-10.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS organises two-day online international conference on “Environment, Social, and Religious Consequences on Human Evolution”

A two-day online international conference on “Environment, Social, and Religious Consequences on Human Evolution” was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies on November 20-21, 2021. Professor Arvind, Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University, in his inaugural address, talked about the changing climate and its effect on human evolution. Prof. Arvind pointed that, in a sense, we have still not absorbed the philosophy of the theory of evolution, therefore dialogues like these play an important role in the evolutionary process. Prof. Arvind also discussed the notion of evolutionary psychology that involves understanding the evolution of standard human behavior.

Prof Seyed E. Hasnain, Honorary Professor, National Science Chair-SERB, in his key-note address, talked about the COVID-19 pandemic as an example of an evolutionary trajectory. He discussed the chaos and tragedy brought by the pandemic, which held the world to a standstill. All of the world and its technological advances stood powerless before the force of nature. He also discussed the problem of evolving variants, which are growing faster than one could imagine. He stressed the need for well-funded public health and infrastructure.

Dr. Md. Asrarul Haq, Former Director, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Govt. of India, in his address

as guest of honour, spoke on biodiversity and examined its importance in our society and the need for conservation of the biodiversity. He said creating awareness among the masses to preserve our biodiversity is needed today as most people are not concerned about conserving biodiversity and even laws related to environment.

Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Vice Chairman, IOS, talked about the non-physical aspect of evolution. He said there is a great shift in human behavior with the advancement of science and technology. He also focused on the social, religious, and political context of evolution. To understand the evolution of thought and behavior, it is



A view of the speakers in the inaugural session

important to take a hold of truthfulness and avoid fabricated truth. A collaboration of natural sciences, environment, religion, social behavior would help understand the evolution process better, he said. In his concluding remarks, he proposed adopting the approach of universality in every system necessary for human survival - one knowledge, one human experience with a little room for behavioral differences rather than placing two ideas in contradiction to each other.

Prof. M. Ishtiyaque, Former Vice-Chancellor, Magadh University, in the

Presidential address, said that the conference presents a platform to discuss the three important aspects of human evolution.

Prof. Haseena Hashia, Asstt. Secretary General, IOS, presented the vote of thanks to all.

Earlier, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Secretary General, IOS, introduced the IOS and welcomed all the participants and speakers, while Dr. Imtaiyaz Hassan, Asstt. Professor, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Basic Sciences, JamiaMilliaIslamia, and Convenor of the conference moderated the session.

Session-1: Chairperson: Prof. S.N. Kazim, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Basic Sciences, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Prof. M. R. N. Murthy, Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, the first speaker of the session, said that much of our understanding of everything comes from science. Science has always evolved with the advancement of technology; for example, until the discovery of

Copernicus, it was believed that Earth was the center of the universe. Later, he talked about Darwin's four postulates. The essence of Darwin's theory is that the way animals behave is a result of evolutionary history; evolution has shaped the behavior of animals. Similarly, human culture and behavior are also a consequence of evolution. On the scope of religion, he said that every religion, in order to survive, has to be pro-science and not anti-scientific.

Prof. K.P. Mishra, President, Asian Association for Radiation Research, spoke on “Spirituality with Science

Can Catapult Humans to Superhuman Capabilities." Humans although made most of the scientific inventions and technological advancements as they progressed but deteriorated the environment with overexploitation and mismanagement of resources. On the discourse of the role of religion, he said that religions unintentionally impeded human progress; the greater purpose of human evolution was hampered by religions all over the world. As an alternative, Prof. Mishra suggested spirituality, which gives power and hope to people. Prof. Mishra tried to connect the dots between science and spirituality. According to him, science and spirituality seem converging. Spirituality, like science, has the capacity to be powerful when followed by scientific methods.

Prof Dinesh Kumar Patel, Head, Dept. of Botany, Harishchandra PG College, Varanasi, talked about the inaccessibility of water for irrigation. Due to this, non-conventional resources are used. The use of wastewater irrigation negatively impacts the produce as well as contaminates the land resource, leading to health-related issues and environmental concerns. In his concluding remarks, Prof. Dinesh pointed out that wastewater irrigation leads to the accumulation of heavy metals in soil and vegetables, depending on the intake of contaminated produce.

Session-2: Chairperson: Prof. Ehteshamul Haque, Dept. of Electrical Engineering, JMI, New Delhi. Dr. Gustavo Zubieta-Calleja, Director, IPPA, President, Zubieta University, Bolivia, in his presentation on "Human Evolution beyond Earth: Adaptation to Chronic Hypoxia and Biospaceforming" talked about the process of human evolution. Discussing the nature of adaptation in blood components at high altitudes, he said that at sea level, red blood cells (porters of oxygen) amount to 36 per cent that rises to 50 per cent at high

altitudes. He further busted the myth of the "loss of adaptation," which has been used with no scientific evidence and facts to back the claim. He said that it takes some time for Hematocrit (red blood cell) to adapt- in his case, around 40 days to adjust from high altitude to sea level. Given the high altitude adaptation formula, he said the more time we have, the better possibility of adaptation we get. Dr. Zubieta-Calleja, along with other colleagues, has overcome the challenges of Hypoxia in areas 4100 m above sea level and coined a related term, "normoxia". He coined the term "biospaceforming," which means the adaptation of all living beings on earth to space.

Prof. Atiqur Rahman, Dept. of Geography, JMI, New Delhi, started the presentation on "Challenges of Water Resources in Present Day Scenario" by explaining the importance of water for each living organism and the need for judicious use of water resources. Prof. Rahman shed some light on the discourse of water pollution globally, with a special reference of India. He said that the increasing GDP of any country is one of the reasons why people are exploiting the resources injudiciously. For example, increased economic activities involve setting up a lot of manufacturing industries, which is one of the main components of water and air pollution. Citing a study conducted on water pollution of Yamuna River, Prof. Rahman outlined some of its findings. It was found that Delhi, which covers just 2 per cent (22 km) of the total length of the river, releases about 70 per cent of the pollutants in the river.

Dr. Bilal Ahmad Kutty spoke on the topic, "Concept of Environment from the Islamic Perspective." Quoting the Holy Quran and Hadith, Dr. Bilal pointed out some of the verses that support the conservation of resources and saving our environment. The Holy Quran has a comprehensive understanding of each component of

the environment, where a total of 199 verses of the Quran discuss about the same. Dr. Bilal said that Allah created everything in equilibrium, and therefore, we must be mindful of spending all the resources. Overexploitation of resources is similar to disobeying the commandments of Allah, prescribed in the Holy Quran.

Alka, Research Scholar, Dept. of Chemistry, SRM-IST, Ghaziabad, spoke on "Preparation, spectral analysis and biological application of Schiff base ligand and its transition metal complexes." Explaining Schiff base ligand, she said that it is a compound that contains carbon-nitrogen double bond. In the conclusion of the report, she said the study shows, from the experimental point of view, that free ligand shows lesser activity.

Session-3 (on November 21, 2021): Chairperson: Prof. Urmila Vajpayee, AND College, University of Delhi. Prof. M. Affan Badar, Indiana State University, USA, proposed an upgrade in the curriculum to inculcate environment-friendly behavior. Delving upon the Islamic perspective, he said the Almighty has specifically mentioned conservation of resources, and reckless use of resources has been viewed as sinful. There is a need to sensitise our students about climate change to slow down the deterioration – educating people at the community (religious and social gathering) as well as institutional (school, university) level. At community level, he said we have to be mindful of the waste. Talking about solving the problem with the global perspective, Prof. Badar mentioned some of the models like the DEJI Systems Model and the CDIO framework. He finished his talk with an appeal to stop wasting and overexploiting the natural resources and suggested a global approach to negotiate with the issue.

Prof. Suhel Parvez, Head of the Department, Medical Elementology and Toxicology, Jamia Hamdard, New

Delhi, started the talk with the discussion on the contaminants in the environment. The issue of adulteration of food impact all humans, physically and psychologically. The suggestions to resist and reduce the issue include chemical analysis of soil and its produce and creating models for field studies.

Prof. R. P. Pandey, Asstt. Professor, Biotechnology and Biomedical Engineering, SRM University, Sonepat, while talking about antimicrobial resistance as a "silent pandemic", said that pathogens are securing a place to survive in our environment. The factors contributing to antimicrobial resistance are environmental, drug-related, patient-related, physician-related factors. Stressing the interconnectedness of humans and the environment, he said we have to give attention to our environment and its component proportionately; toxins in the environment would eventually get to humans, plants, animals, and other living beings.

Dr. Swati Joshi, Asstt. Professor, School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Era University, Lucknow, spoke on "Impact of religion and culture on menstrual practices." Explaining the physiology of the menstrual cycle, Dr. Swati delved into the notion of stigmatising menstruation in our society both from cultural and religious perspectives. The general perception of menstrual cycle is believed to be impure, unclean, and untouchable. Almost all the religions practiced in India label menstruation as "impurity" in women's bodies. Destigmatizing menstruation and starting a conversation around it is the need of the hour.

Dr Kiran, Dept. of Livestock Products Technology, Veterinary College, Nandinagar, Karnataka, presented a study on "Biochemical and proteome profile of layer breeder hen skeleton muscles." Stating the objective of the study, Dr. Kiran said that it was carried out to determine

various physicochemical and biochemical characteristics of thigh and breast muscles of chickens. Out of many parameters explained by Dr. Kiran, it was concluded that pH level was higher in the thigh muscle, R-Value was higher in breast muscle, water-holding capacity was very low in breast compared to thigh muscle, MFI was significantly higher in thigh muscle numerically, etc.

Hina Majid, Research Scholar, Islamic Studies, MANUU, Budgam, J&K, presented her paper on "Islamic Ethics and Its Relevance in Environmental Conservation." She said that Islam offers a pro-conservation outlook to look after the resources and hold accountable to those who are responsible for the devastation of our environment. In her concluding remarks, Hina Majid stated that the protection of the environment is central to Islamic beliefs and humans have the responsibility of safeguarding the same.

Session-4: Chairperson: Prof. M. Z.M. Nomani, Faculty of Law, AMU, Aligarh. Dr. Deepak Moda, Dept. of Geography, Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, presented the paper on "A Critical Analysis of the Performance of MNREGA in Nuh District, Haryana." Dr. Moda explained the geographical, cultural, and social determinants of Nuh District. The objective of the study was to analyse the performance of MNREGA in Nuh District during the financial year 2020-21. It was found that 96.96% of the rural households had valid MNREGA job cards. On average, MNREGA provided a total of 63 days of employment as opposed to 100 days, guaranteed in the act. A total of 2319 works had been completed under it, accounting for 11.37% of the total works completed, with around 3311 ongoing projects. Out of a total fund of Rs. 259.80 crores, 143.26 crores were directly paid to laborers as wages.

Prof. Dr. Thyagaraju Kedam, UGC BSR Faculty Fellow, Dept. of

Biochemistry, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, talked about Selenium, a trace metal, which aids in preventing cell damage. It performs multiple roles such as boosting immunity, controlling thyroid, reducing asthma symptoms, working as antioxidants, etc. On daily dietary allowances in each stage of life, Dr. Kedam said in the US, it is 50-55 micrograms per day and 25-30 micrograms in India, which is very less. Concluding the study done by him, he pointed out how selenium-enriched diet was obtained by the experiment subjects (rats) more than any other element tested via the experiment.

Dr. M A Shah, Special Laboratory for Multifunctional Nanomaterials, P.G. Dept. of Physics, NIT, Srinagar, J&K, explained how science, society, and sustainable developments are connected and the need for a peaceful society for scientific development to occur. According to Dr. Shah, some of the issues of humanity include healthcare and disease, water treatment and remediation, energy storage and production, food processing and storage, environment and pollution, unemployment, poverty and starvation, population, etc. Dr. Shah located the entire sustainable goals and the vices permeated in the name of climate change with special reference to Nanotech science and its multifunctionality.

Mr Gulam Gilani, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Aliah University, Kolkata, started the presentation with a detailed description of the Caliciviridae (CV) family of viruses, which has ss-RNA genetic material. It was concluded that a total of 1317 SSRs and 55 cSSRs were present in the genome – wide scan of six of two Caliciviridae. The SSRs showed ubiquitous presence across the species, albeit varying incidence rates, while several species of Caliciviridae genomes lacked any cSSR. There was a bias towards the occurrence of SSRs

and cSSRs in the coding region compared to the non-coding region.

Sharandip Kaur, Research Scholar, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, presented the paper on "Impact of Climate Change with reference to the reproductive health of women and children." Explaining the impact of climate change, Kaur delved upon the health perspective, especially on reproductive women. As the concluding remarks, she said there is a need for advocacy to enhance the reproductive health and rights of women due to climate change. Introducing gender-transformative measures, setting the target for inclusive, gender affirmative measures by multi-sectoral stakeholders, gender analysis of the available data of those affected by the climate change, investing in the health system to address the underlining causes of vulnerability to climate changes were some of the suggestions given by her.

Session-5: Chairperson: Prof. Anita KamraVerma, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi. Prof. Zafar Mahfooz Nomani, Faculty of Law, AMU, Aligarh, spoke on "Islamic Response to Environmental Sustainability, Equity, and Peace." Prof Nomani emphasised adopting a holistic approach in terms of environmental laws. Not questioning unsustainable technology, policies, development measures, etc., might lead to catastrophe, he stated. Further, Prof. Nomani discussed the Islamic perspective of the environment. He pointed that laws have some limitations; if a law is coercive or oppressive, we can opt for religious and ethical philosophy of environment. The environmental laws might not be inclusive of the diversity a territory has to offer. Quoting the Islamic verses on sustainable development, he said the Quran talks about not just equality but generational equity, along with judicious use of resources – all of which is the hallmark of inter-dimensional equity of the modern-day. The main objective of Islamic law is to

promote a balance of deen, duniya, nafs, and nasl.

Prof Hamidullah Marazi, Dean, School of Social Sciences, Central University of Kashmir, talked about the environmental disasters in the context of Kashmir. Prof Marazi pointed out the shrinking of forests that consequently force the wild inhabitants into the public space. Other environmental concerns include pollution, water depletion, destruction due to the continuous conflict in the region, floods, etc. On the teachings of Islam, he said that Islam had laid a framework to conserve and save the environment. Not just Islam, other religions too focus on saving the environment from exploitation. In his concluding remarks, he said there is a need for a set of robust strategies to overcome the damage and abuse of resources.

Dr. Ajiaz Ahmad, Asstt. Professor, Dept. of Islamic Studies, AMU, Aligarh, focused on "The Scientific Theory of Evolution and the Response of Muslim Scholars." Discussing the theory of evolution, he said in the 19th century, Christian theology formed the basis of the theory of evolution. This view was later challenged by the modern theory of evolution given by Darwin, which became the foundation of modern biology. He said that prior to Darwin's theory, many Muslim scholars provided material on the evolution theory of Darwin. The claim that the evolution of people through common ancestors through the process of natural selection has been criticised by Muslim scholars. He argued many of Darwin's claims in a systematic manner. He also mentioned Muslim scholars who back Darwin's theory with evidence from the Quranic verses. The difference between their claims is that Darwin refused to accept the existence of God. Also, some other Muslim scholars point to the limitations and disparity in Darwin's theory of evolution.

Md Shafiullah, Research Scholar, Dept. of Sunni Theology, Aligarh

Muslim University, Aligarh, presented the paper on "Gender Equality in Islam." Debunking the idea that Islam promotes the oppression of women, he said the Holy Quran has clearly explained the position of women in many verses, which advocates for equality in every aspect of life. The ethical qualities mentioned in the Quran for both men and women have social and political dimensions – the Quran makes no reference to the ethical and intellectual supremacy of women over men. Md Shafiullah competently explained socio-cultural, financial, legal, and emotional aspects – none of which preferred men over women, unlike the societal practices of our society in the name of Islam.

Iqra Fatima Iqbal, Research Scholar, Dept. of Islamic Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, discussed about "Environmental Ethics, Human Evolution, and Islamic Perspective." On environmental crisis and its threat to living beings, she said technical solutions need redesigning and restructuring. Discussing environmental ethics, a discipline and philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to their environmental values, she delved upon Islamic environmental ethics and evolution, formulated by the Almighty, which is the Quran, Hadith, and Sharia. Islam believes that the environment is the creation of Allah, and hence, it is the duty of each of us to preserve nature by using their intellect and power, she asserted.

Tanjeel Ahmed, Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. of Sunni Theology, AMU, Aligarh, discussed the social structure of our society as prescribed in the Quran.

Aal E Fatima, Human genetics and toxicology laboratory, Dept. of Zoology, AMU, Aligarh, spoke on "The pattern of Ocular morbidities in patients in eye hospital." The presentation started with the discussion of the impact of vision loss in people and its effects on their day-to-day activities. The prevalence of the

impairment of the ocular system could trigger by climatic, environmental, socio-economic, literacy factors. Enlisting the details of the study conducted to understand the prevalence of ocular morbidities, she said that conjunctivitis and refractive error are the most common causes of ocular disorder among children, and a majority of the causes were treatable or preventable. Therefore, there is a need for raising awareness among school children to maintain ocular hygiene.

While conducting the Valedictory session, Dr. Imtaiyaz Hassan, Asst. Professor, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Basic Sciences, JMI, New Delhi, gave a brief summary of the two-day seminar.

Prof. Shakeel Ahmad, M.K. Gandhi Chair Professor, Dept. of Geography, JMI, New Delhi, said that evolution is also a long-term procedure that takes place each day as per the

changing times. The best solution, he said, is to adapt to the ongoing circumstances and act accordingly, as resisting change could prove to be disastrous. Every change, he believes, has to be assessed holistically – looking at the positive as well as the negative impact. He suggested converting the conflict into cooperation because unless we cooperate, conflicts do not resolve.

Prof. Faizan Ahmad, Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Basic Sciences, JMI, New Delhi, in his chief guest remarks, said that from the beginning of their existence on earth, humans have adapted to their environment, which has now become a challenge to cope up with the unprecedented change in earth's

environmental balance. Prof Ahmad said that the relationship between science and religion is a difficult one. Some believe that the two can never coexist, while others believe that science provides evidence and backs religious beliefs. The conflict between the two is simply the state of knowing versus the state of unknowing. In his concluding remarks, Prof Faizan Ahmad said religion and science are just different ways of solving challenges of our society.

In the Presidential remarks, Prof. Afzal Wani said that science and religion are tools to explore the



A view of the speakers

creation and understand the creator. The contradiction of religion and science is futile if it does not lead to any action. It is time for the curtain of ignorance, partisan, and partiality to fall. He said that scientists and spiritualists should collaborate to explore, understand, and rationalise to find the truth and gather the knowledge. The resources have to be used as per the need of humans; the sensitivity of bio-diversity should be given the utmost importance and not the superiority of religion over science and vice-versa.

Prof. Haseena Hashia presented the vote of thanks to the participants, speakers, organisers, and all those who were, directly and indirectly, involved in the two-day seminar.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CALICUT CHAPTER

IOS Calicut Chapter's Seminar underlines the Iconic Significance of 1921 Malabar Revolt

A seminar on "1921 Malabar Revolt" was organised by the IOS Calicut Chapter to mark the centennial celebration of the historic revolt by Mappila Muslims of Malabar against the oppressive British rule, on

December 16, 2021 at KPK Hall, Calicut. The scholars and intellectuals who attended the seminar opined that the historic significance of the revolt is to be passed on to generations.

It may be recollected that during the British period, there was a series of uprisings by the Mappillas, especially in the 19th century. Within 18 years from 1836 to 1853, there

were 22 uprisings in Malabar. The uprisings were basically peasant revolts due to the economic deprivation suffered by peasants who were mostly Muslims. The landlords were upper caste Hindus. The most serious of these uprisings was the one in 1921, which occurred in Manjeri and other parts of Malappuram.

To crush the rebellion, the British administration appointed senior police officer R. H Hitchcock, who led raids in the villages to find and kill the revolutionaries. A special paramilitary unit was formed to suppress the uprisings, forcing the Mappila men to flee to the hills, leaving women and children. According to historians, the women and children faced the brutalities of the colonial forces.

Dr P Geetha, a retired professor of history, said that the Malabar Revolt was fundamentally an anti-imperial struggle led by the Mappilas and lower caste Hindus against the British authorities who were giving support to the landlords in their exploitation of poor farmers .She said the current official narrative is drawn only on colonial records which conveniently obfuscate the maladministration and exploitation of colonial bureaucrats. The role of women in fighting the British was also ignored. It is time the researchers go to the villages and collect all records, documents and photographs of such valiant women.

Dr Moin Malayamma, a research scholar said the Revolt was significant for totally destroying the British spy network in Malabar, at least for a brief period. But history is proof that the colonial masters never expected such an armed reaction to their rule as they thought the Muslim farmers were illiterate and leaderless and docile. It was the apogee of a series of struggle which goes to the first decades

of 19th century. But the British wanted to ignore the socio-political and economic reason behind the Revolt and wanted to paint it as a religious response to their rule.

Dr Jameel Ahmed, an eminent historian, said that to be exact, there is no history but only interpretations of historical events. Some cynics may ask for the reason for remembering 1921 in 2021. The answer is to come from the new generation, which is more concerned about their tradition and culture. When lynching in the name of cows becomes a part of people's beleaguered life, when truth becomes the first causality in these post-truth

times, the youth could ask whether the dominant classes remember an event which shook the foundations of the British Raj in Malabar.

Dr P Geetha and Dr Moin Malayamma jointly released the Malayalam translation of the prison poems of Dr G N Saibaba, an eminent poet and academic. RenyAyline, a noted human rights activist introduced the book.

E M Abdul Rahman, the Chairman of the Empower India Foundation, Bengaluru, honoured Mr C Abdul Hameed, a historian who has written four books on the revolt based on rare documents painstakingly collected. He was given "The Writer of the Year 2021 Award".



A view of the speakers

Prof P Koya, IOS Calicut Chapter's Coordinator, presided over the programme. Dr C Habeeba, scholar of Arabic welcomed the audience and Ms K V Jameela, President, National Women's Front, Calicut, proposed the vote of thanks.

KOLKATA CHAPTER

IOS Kolkata Chapter organises Symposium on "Life and Contributions of Peer Abu Bakr Siddiqui (r.a) of Furfura"

An online-offline international symposium was organised on the life and contributions of Peer Abu Bakar Siddiqui (r.a.) – a great preacher and

highly influential social and religious reformer of West Bengal, also known as Mujaddid-e-Zaman, on November 20, 2021 by the Kolkata Chapter of the Institute of Objective Studies at Kolkata.

Kolkata Chapter of the IOS has been organising a series of symposiums under the theme "Remembering the 20th Century Islamic Scholars of West Bengal". This symposium was the fourth in the series. Well-researched papers and lectures were presented by scholars on different aspects of the life of Peer Abu Bakar Siddiqui (r.a.).

The symposium was presided over by Syed Md Bahauddin, President, Shah Abu Bakar Siddique Memorial Committee, Furfura Sharif of West Bengal with Sk. Noor Mohammad Nadvi, Office Secretary, RabitaAdab-e IslamiAalami, Kolkata, performing the role of the anchor. Among the notable scholars who presented their papers and thoughts were Dr Obaidur Rahman Nadvi, faculty member, Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow;

Mufti Munirul Islam, Shaikhul Hadith, Madrasa Anwarul Uloom Darul Hadith, Bangladesh; Dr Mizanur Rahman Kazi, faculty member, Department of Islamic Theology, Aliah University, Kolkata; Mr Saifuddin Nadvi, director, ASGM Mission, 24 Praganas; Mr Sobaan Siddiqui, Islamic scholar; and Mr Khurshid Alam Nadvi, Islamic scholar. Mr Abdul Basit Ismail, Coordinator of IOS Kolkata Chapter, in his welcome speech, familiarised the audience about the academic activities and the contribution of the Institute of Objective Studies under the able leadership of its Chairman, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam.

Mr. Ismail elaborated on the purpose of organising the series of symposiums under the theme "Remembering the 20th Century Islamic Scholars of West Bengal". He reiterated the words of the Chairman, IOS, that today's generation need to be aware of our previous generations' scholars' lives and their services.

Syed Md Bahauddin, President, Shah Abu Bakr Siddique Memorial Committee, Furfura Sharif of West Bengal, in his presidential remarks, appreciated the initiative of the Kolkata Chapter.

Peer Abu Bakr Siddiqui was born on 18th March, 1846 at the village of Furfura Sharif under the Jangipara Block in the Hooghly district of present West Bengal. He received his elementary education at the local primary school in the village and later joined Sitapur Endowment Madrasah and Hooghly Mohsenia Madrasah (one of the oldest madrasahs in Bengal, named after the famous philanthropist Haji Mohammad Mohasin) for higher education, where he completed the degree 'Jamiet-ul-Ula'. He later moved to Calcutta and studied Quran, *Hadith*, *Tafsir*, *Fiqh*, *Faraiz* from the famous Islamic scholars – Maulana Syed Ahmed Shahid and Hafez Maulana Jamaluddin. He went to Madina Manawwarah (Saudi Arabia) and mastered the knowledge of *Hadith* under the guidance of Maulana Syed Ameer Rezwani.

Peer Abu Bakr Siddique received the *Bateni* (spiritual) knowledge from

his *Pir-o-Murshid* (Sufi master) Shah Sufi Syed Fateh Ali Waisi, based in Kolkata. He mastered the knowledge of four major Sufi orders such as *Mujaddedia*, *Nakshebandia*, *Chistia*, *Qaderia* under the guidance of his spiritual master, Shah Sufi Syed Fateh Ali Waisi. He was the founder of the *Silsila-e-Furfura Sharif* (order of Furfura Sharif), which is one of the most influential Sufi religious networks among the Bengali Muslims. An educationalist and philanthropist, Peer Abu Bakr Siddique is also known as a great social and religious reformer of 20th century Bengal. He is remembered as "*Mujaddid*" (Reformer) among his followers. He established numerous educational institutions throughout Bengal.

He was vocal about the problems of dowry, oppression of poor agricultural workers by *Zamindars* (landlords), female education, advocating for modern scientific and technical education etc. The socio-religious reforms by him had certainly shaped and transformed the identity of the Bengali Muslim community from the pure religio-cultural category to the religio-political community.

He breathed his last on 17th March, 1939, leaving behind his unparalleled legacy.

The important highlights of the symposium were:

- Peer Abu Bakr is the most important and notable personality who dedicatedly worked for the

reforms of Bengali Muslims when they were disconnected from their religion and involved in un-Islamic culture and lifestyle in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

- He was not only a peer but a social reformer, educationist, Islamic scholar, Faqeeh, teacher, writer, orator, Muhaddis, and a philanthropist.
- His role in the religious reform movement in Bengal is commendable. He can also be termed as the Sir Syed of Bengal.
- He still has his followers in Bengal, Bangladesh, Bihar, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura etc.
- He was a great scholar, and under him, the spiritual Islam propagated largely.
- He established hundreds of Masjids and educational centers in Bengal.
- He was the first Bengali scholar who pointed out and openly spoke about the inaccurate hadiths (Around 450 Hadith).
- The great personality of Peer Abu Bakr needs to be introduced to the young generation and also to the Urdu-speaking Islamic scholars of the country.
- He should be presented as a great Bengali Muslim personality to the world.

SUBSCRIPTION

Annual : Rs. 20/- \$ 5
Five Years: Rs. 75/- \$ 15

RNI NO. 59369/94

PRINTED MATTER

FROM
IOS NEWSLETTER
162, JOGABAI EXTN.
JAMIA NAGAR
NEW DELHI 110025