



IOS NEWSLETTER

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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,-
 (Disadainfully) 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 Judgement we shall
 Make him taste the chastisement
 Of burning (fire)

Al-Quran- 22: 7-9

EDITOR

Prof. Sanghasen Singh

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Syed Arshad Karim

CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

162, Jogabai Extension
 Jamia Nagar, New Delhi
 PIN-110025
 India

Phone 26981187, 26989253,
 26987467
 Fax : 91-11-26981104

E-mail: manzoor@ndf.vsnl.net.in
 Website: www.iosworld.org

FOCUS

The concept of education in the Egyptian brotherhood was broader than merely teaching and transmitting knowledge ('ilm). It aimed at moulding individual conduct, purifying both soul and body, entrenching faith and righteous thinking, stimulating communal activism and benefitting others. Such attributes would enable the believer to instill his wife's rights and duties and raise his children properly. They would also guide him in his relationship with others towards the common goal of spreading morality and fighting perversion. The linkage between the moral reforms of the individual with that of society reflected in the comprehensive approach of da'wa, beginning with shaping the believer, proceeding to establishing an Islamic government, and consummating in spreading Allah's word throughout the world.

As a political and not just an ideological movement, the Egyptian brotherhood viewed education as a lever to gain the political foothold in the public sphere. Education was a means of recruiting members and expanding the movement's base of support. While the target was the entire public, the main focus was on the young, mainly urban generation, which the movement viewed as engendering change in the future. More than any other sector of society, young people, in the brotherhood's view, was exposed to the corruption of modernity. The educational institutions they attended featured the mingling of the sexes and shrinking proportions of religious subjects. In practical terms, the focus of the movement's da'wa activity on youth was implemented in the establishment of evening school and clubs and the organization of lectures and scout camps. The movement also worked to enhance Islamic and Arabic-language studies in the state schools by influencing government officials. Furthermore, intensive brotherhood activity was evident on university campuses and in student councils.

The education of girls occupied an important role in the movement. The woman was defined as the cornerstone of the family and hence the axis of change in society. The battle waged by the Islamists in promoting the modest image of the woman was perceived by them as a microcosm of the broader battle against base human desires and instinct which corrupt every positive aspects of the community. Managing the family household and educating children constituted the bulk of the curriculum for the girls, although it also included science and several other secular subjects/ the Brotherhood, as a mass movement, also assigned an important role to woman in the communal context, both in defusing the Islamic message and in assuming such welfare tasks as teaching, caring for orphans and attending to needy families. The ideological justification for assigning woman these public roles was that Islam is revealed not only to men but to women, too, and women have the same duty as men to serve Islam in every way that is useful and sanctified. Nevertheless, the access of women to the public space, and especially to politics, was a sensitive issue for the Brotherhood, engendering dispute within its ranks and serving as a political tool for its adversaries.

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Activities of the IOS Headquarters

**International Conference
On
Challenges Before Youth in the
Contemporary World**

Youth are backbone of a society. That's why every organization, whether it's social or political, wills to have its own youth wing. However, there are a very few ones who takes care of the difficulties and challenges they face. From this point of view, the two-day international conference on "Challenges before Youth in the Contemporary World", organized on December 10-11, 2011 by Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) in collaboration with Chennai-based Muslim Educational Association of Southern India (MEASI) as part of a year-long silver jubilee celebrations was important and extraordinary.

It was participated by a number of experts, scholars, other dignitaries and delegates from inside and outside the country. Besides inaugural and valedictory sessions, there were held five business sessions. The most remarkable point in these sessions was that the empowerment of youth got focus besides bringing back the moral values amongst them. The women empowerment was also discussed in detail.

Delivering his address at the inaugural function, Dr Ibrahim Bin Hammad Al Quayid of Riyadh-based

World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) said the youth today in general faced three kinds of challenges. According to him, they were of political, economic and socio-cultural nature.

"An ideal society can emerge only when these three challenges are tackled

Karnataka and a business tycoon said the youth today were running after money and going materialistic. "That's why they are full of tension, stress and strain," he said.

According to him, capitalism and Socialism were only 200-300 year-old whereas the history of Islam and Muslims was of more than a thousand years. Therefore, only Islam could come as a natural remedy to the youth, he declared.

In the words of V R Lakshminarayanan, IPS (Retd), the main issue was how to provide education to the entire Muslim community.

Author of his master-piece "Role of Muslim Youth in the Reconstruction of Contemporary World" published 28 years ago, IOS Chairman and star attraction of the conference Dr M Manzoor Alam said he had discussed the issues 28 years ago in his book but they still remained relevant because situation changed with the passage of time but not the root cause.

Dr Kaviko Abdur Rahman, son of business tycoon and educationist B S Abdur Rahman, discussed the difficulties faced by the Muslim youth in

general and suggested its solution. He said whatsoever was being done at the government level, and how much it was effective, was known to the government, but the Muslim community should itself pay attention towards it.



L-R: Dr. K. Altaff, Prof. Z.M. Khan, Captain N. A. Ameer Ali, Dr Kaviko Abdur Rahman, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Mr. A. Mohamed Ashraf, Dr. Ibrahim Bin Hamad Al-Quayid, Dr. Dato' Mohammad Iqbal, Dr. Christodas Gandhi, Mr. V.R. Lakshminarayanan, H.H. Nawab Mohammed Abdul Ali

tactfully taking them into confidence," the renowned scholar opined.

Dato Mohammed Iqbal, a well



A view of the audience

known scholar and United Nations representative from Malaysia, said Islam didn't differentiate between persons other than piety.

Padamshree Mecca Rafique Ahmed, Chairman, Chambers of Commerce,

In this connection, he dwelt in detail the efforts made by B S Abdur Rahman University and 14 other educational institutions in Tamil Nadu. He said his ageing father B S Abdur Rahman was now not in good state of health but had got concern about the youth even today. That's why he had asked me to convey his good wishes and dua to them, Dr Kaviko Abdur Rahman said.

Muslim Educational Association of South India and New College Secretary A Muhammad Ashraf, in his presidential address, said the enthusiasm of the youth had increased a lot in the age of information technology but left behind the moral values in the race of development from the point of view of technical expertise due to which moral generation and crisis in mind developed.

On this occasion, important dignitaries were given awards and citation. The inaugural function ended with a vote of thanks by Shafi Ahmed Ko. Earlier, the reception committee chairman Captain N A Ameer Ali delivered his inaugural address and IOS Secretary General Dr Z M Khan introduced the IOS.

Similarly, the valedictory function on December 11 was too attractive. Dr M Manzoor Alam, in his presidential address, said the IOS had decided to hold 14 international conferences in different cities under different topic covering the central theme "Towards Knowledge, Development and Peace: Outlining Road Map for Future" out of which the

international conference on the "Challenges before Youth in Contemporary World" at Chennai was the eighth in number. He said IOS got



Dr. Doto, Mohammad Iqbal, Malaysia presenting Award to Dr. Kaviko Abdur Rahman

opportunities to understand different problems faced by nation in general and Muslim community in particular through these conferences.

He said the youth had played their role in construction and destruction both

Madras High Court judge G M Akbar Ali averred before a person passed through ageing, he should give importance to it and use it properly. He said he was not acquainted very well earlier with IOS but its multifarious activities had influenced very much. He hoped it would continue to guide the community and nation in coming year.

On this occasion, Ibrahim Al Quaid of WAMY said his world body of youth looked with much hope and honour towards the activities of IOS. Summing up his view, he said today it was a fact whatsoever dream Dr Manzoor Alam had seen 26 years ago, had come to be true in the shape of this 25-year old think tank.

Tamil Nadu Assembly Member and President of Tamil Muslim Munnetra Kazhaghgam Dr M H Jawahirullah opined this think tank had earned a reputation not only nation wide but world wide too.

On this occasion, former Madras High Court judge Abdul Bari, T Rafique Ahmed and New College Principal Dr K Altaf also expressed their views. The two-day conference ended with the adoption of a resolution presented by S M Abdur Raheem Patel.



Dr. Ibrahim Al Quaid, WAMY speaking on the podium Sitting L-R: Dr. K. Altaf, Justice G.M. Akbar Ali, Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, Mr. M Jawahirullah, Mr. A. Mohammad Ashraf

in every age, and this was happening in this era too. "It is the responsibility of those keeping an eye on the situation and issues to pay attention towards them help in resolving the problems and challenges faced by them," he advised.

RESOLUTIONS

1. It is resolved that serious efforts be taken to set up a specialized 'IOS Global Council for Youth Development' in Chennai.
2. It is resolved that Chennai Chapter shall draw a plan to approach regional institutions and policy

planners to muster support for augmenting interaction with marginalised groups to study their issues and problems within their specific context. Collaboration with other societies to carry out these activities should be a priority.

3. It is resolved that Chennai Chapter should also establish viable linkages with other regional chapters of IOS and try to create coordination with each other.
4. It was resolved that effort should be made to involve the political, social and cultural segments of Tamil Nadu for creating awareness about the plight of Muslim youth and other marginalised sections of society.
5. It is resolved to request the government to make quality education at higher levels affordable to weaker and marginalised sections of societies as it has become expensive and beyond their reach.
6. It is resolved that special efforts be made to initiate programmes of soft and life skills development among youth at all desirable levels. A close contact with state government in these areas will be aimed at.
7. It is resolved that efforts be made to include ethical and moral value systems in the school and college curricula.
8. It is resolved to request the Tamil Nadu government to protect and promote all minority languages in the state.
9. It is resolved that IOS sets up a separate fund to support Muslim youth who appears for IAS, IPS and other central and state services.
10. It is resolved to make a survey of the Muslim youth and their family members who had undergone physical and mental agony during their incarceration in prisons for several years. Efforts should be made to take suitable measures for their rehabilitation.
11. This conference appeals to the Muslim community to pay maximum attention in bringing up

and character building of their children in Islamic perspective and also guide them in the selection of their career.

**Minority Rights and Identities:
Challenges and Prospects in an
Unfolding Global Scenario
April 13-15, 2012 at New Delhi**

Concept Note

Minority groups, defined in terms of numerical strength, race, religion, class or power, have been in existence since the dawn of civilization. In most cases, they were conquered, enslaved, subjugated and even exterminated or were forcibly assimilated into the dominant society. Throughout history, minority groups have generally experienced widespread discrimination, injustice, subordination, exclusion, marginalization, vulnerability and stigmatization.

In certain exceptional cases, religious and cultural minorities were treated with a fair amount of tolerance, justice and honour and were provided with substantial autonomous spaces. One of the distinctive features of the Islamic faith and civilization is its extremely humane treatment of minority groups. The attitude and behavior of the Prophet Muhammad towards the followers of other religions exhibited exemplary tolerance, accommodation and magnanimity. The *Pax Islamica* included not only Muslims but also Jews, Christians and pagan Arabs, and guaranteed to them religious, cultural and judicial autonomy. In the Islamic state, non-Muslims were entitled to preserve and maintain their places of worship and to construct new ones. In some cases, the expenses for the maintenance of their churches and synagogues were met from the state treasury. Similarly, the salaries of Jewish rabbis and Christian priests were often paid from the state finances.

When Amr ibn al-A's, a distinguished companion of the Prophet, conquered Egypt in 640, he allowed the Christian population to remain in undisturbed possession of their churches and guaranteed to them complete autonomy in all ecclesiastical matters. When Khalid ibn Walid signed a treaty

with the Christian population of Hira in Yemen following the city's conquest by the Muslim army, he gave a written assurance to them that their churches would not be destroyed nor desecrated and that they would not be prevented from ringing their bells or from carrying their crosses in their religious processions. During the caliphate of Uthman, Jeserjah, the bishop of Merv, wrote to the Patriarch of Persia, saying that the Arabs, whom God had given dominion over the world, did not attack Christianity. On the contrary, he added, they "helped our religion, respected our priests and shrines, and offered donations to our churches and convents."

Shortly after the Islamic conquest of Spain in the early decades of the eighth century, an agreement was signed between the new ruler, Abd al-Aziz ibn Musa ibn Nusayr, and Theodomir, the last of the Visigothic kings of the Iberian Peninsula, whereby the Islamic state guaranteed the protection of the life, property, beliefs and rituals and religious and cultural institutions of the native Christian population. By and large, Muslim rulers treated the Jews and Christians with tolerance and honour and some of them were even appointed to high offices. The bishop of Elvira, Racemundu, for example, was sent as the caliph's envoy to the court of the German emperor Otto I. Edward Said has perceptively observed that "medieval Spain enacted an earlier version of our own hybrid world, one whose borders were also thresholds, and whose multiple identities formed an enriched diversity."

In the Ottoman Empire, minority affairs were regulated under the "millet" system, which was introduced shortly after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Under the millet system, confessional communities, such as Jews and Christians of various denominations, were granted substantial autonomy to manage their internal affairs, including religious rituals and traditions, marriage, succession and inheritance, education and the resolution of disputes. The millet system provided for considerable tolerance and accommodation of minority rights and sensibilities.

The issue of minority rights and identities has acquired a great deal of prominence and salience in contemporary times, thanks to a combination of factors such as the universal recognition of cultural diversity, large-scale migrations and the growing visibility of transnational diasporas, international conventions and covenants on human rights, and modern information and communication technologies. Most countries have become or are in the process of becoming multiethnic. Of the 192 sovereign nations that are members of the United Nations, more than 160 are multiethnic in character. One of the challenges faced by multiethnic societies around the world is the management of cultural diversity and the accommodation of minority rights, identities and sensibilities in a broad framework of equality, democracy and human rights.

Globalisation, which is being increasingly used as a metaphor for the growing interconnectedness of the world, seems to be a paradoxical phenomenon. Thus on the one hand, it has brought about a great deal of uniformity and homogenization in cultural and behavioural patterns, lifestyles and entertainment. On the other hand, it has also contributed, thanks to modern information and communication technologies, to the strengthening and revival of ethnic, cultural and religious identities and has reinforced the assertion of minority rights.

There is a growing recognition around the world that minority groups that are vulnerable or disadvantaged need to be protected from discrimination and persecution and to be provided with an enabling environment. International organizations and agencies such as the United Nations and the European Union as well as national governments have taken several steps in recent years which are aimed at the protection of minority rights. Minority rights are now an integral part of international human rights law. The United Nations 1966 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that minorities “shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their

own cultures, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.” The 1975 Helsinki Final Act addresses minority issues and problems and the European Union has proposed clear guidelines for the protection of minority rights and sensibilities. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages reflect a clear commitment to the protection of minority rights and cultures.

A significant dimension of the protection of minority rights relates to the elimination of discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or religion. Some countries have developed legal institutions or instruments to combat inequality and discrimination. Britain, for example, has set up the Equality and Human Rights Commission for the purpose while the US has the Equal Employment Opportunity Agency. The Netherlands has the Committee for Equal Treatment while Germany has the Anti-Discrimination Law, derived from Article 3 (3) of the German constitution. The government of India has announced the establishment of a National Commission for Equal Opportunity.

The contemporary discourse on human rights is embedded in the Western doctrine of liberalism, which holds that the individual is the basic source and locus of identity. Consequently, the focus is on the rights of the individual. This discourse glosses over the fact that the individual cannot be disembedded from his/her social milieu and that, in large parts of the world, community remains a fundamental constituent or fount of an individual’s identity. Thankfully, there is now a growing recognition of group-differentiated and community-specific rights, including minority rights. In his widely-acclaimed book *Multicultural Citizenship*, Will Kymlicka argues that ethnic and cultural minorities deserve protection of their culture, insofar as such protection fosters the group’s integration into the wider society.

There seems to be a positive correlation between the public

recognition of the cultures and identities of minority groups and the degree of social and cultural autonomy available to them, and their integration into the wider society. A reassuring and enabling environment—free from hatred, mistrust and hostility—is likely to facilitate and strengthen the involvement of minority groups with the wider society and to channel their capabilities, energies and resources in a socially productive direction. On the other hand, repressed identities are often the breeding ground of resentment, alienation and extremism. One of the serious impediments to the accommodation of minority rights is the evident gap or disjunction between well-intended constitutional and legal norms and provisions, on the one hand, and the reality of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization experienced by minority groups, on the other.

Nearly 20% of the world’s Muslim population live as minorities across the globe. The situation of Muslim minorities in respect of the protection and accommodation of their rights and sensibilities in different parts of the world presents a mixed kind of picture. Muslim minorities enjoy considerable religious and cultural freedom and autonomy in many countries, including India, South Africa, the European Union, North America and Thailand. At the same time, they have to bear the brunt of racism, persecution and discrimination, especially in countries like China and the Russian Federation.

Sub-themes/Sessions

- Minority rights in specific regional and national contexts
- Minority rights in Islamic perspective
- Muslim minorities around the world: Challenges and prospects
- Minority rights in India: Constitutional mandate and social reality
- Minority rights and civil society
- Issues and problems of Muslims in Higher Education
- Minorities and the Minority Commissions: Past Present and Future - {a} Minority Commissions - National and State {b} Minority Development and Finance

Corporation – National and State, {c}National Commission for Minorities Educational Institutions (NCMEI), and {d} National Monitoring Committee for Minority Education.

- The role of IOS in making India great

Activities of the IOS Chapters

Lecture on Food Inflation in India

Aligarh Chapter of the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi organized a Lecture on **Food Inflation in India**, in its Lecture Hall on 30-11-2011 at 4:30 pm, which was delivered by Dr. Md. Tarique, Associate Professor, Dept. of Economics, AMU Aligarh and was attended by a large number of teachers, Research Scholars and Social activists.

Mr. M. Serajuddin Khan, Asst. Coordinator of Aligarh Chapter welcomed speaker, members of the audience and said that food inflation has affected every segment of the society in general and the low income people in particular.

Speaking on the occasion Dr. Tarique said that for the last few years, the main problem of the Indian economy has been the generalized growth of the goods prices, particularly food items. The pressure generated by increasing prices has led to significant distortions in the monetary, economic, political and social environment. Inflation is the main factor of economic crisis which discourages the investments and determines the migration of capital to other countries or real estates.

The present food inflation in India is mainly due to demand pull and sometimes owing to cost push factors. This is sectoral in nature as prices of manufacturing goods are not increasing as much. Sometimes, it has been due to foreign trade induced factors resulting from an increase in prices of crude oil. Even in some years due to high prices of pulses and edible oil in the international market, inflation was seen in domestic market as after signing WTO we can't put much restriction on trade of commodities.

Dr. Tarique was of the view that the recent inflationary trends in the economy mainly caused by food inflation has gone against the interest of the poor masses whereas the increasing cost of production (due to increase in prices of agricultural inputs like fertilizers, seeds, diesel etc.) has gone against the interest of the farmers. Now the question is that who is the net beneficiary? Definitely, the middlemen, traders & hoarders and the govt. has to harden her effort on this front.

On the issue of the solution to the current state of problem Dr. Tarique said that frequent changes in monetary policy/fiscal policy will not give permanent solution. Further, the policy changes have their own negative consequences also. We should work more on the supply side mechanism. Diversification of agriculture is required. The growth of livestock should have to be encouraged. Further, hoarding of commodities has to be stopped at any cost. PDS has to be made target oriented and cost effective. Hence, measure should go in the direction of permanent CURE and not for SQUEEZING.

Presentation of the paper was followed by a warm discussion in which research scholars and students belonging to the departments of Business Management, Commerce and Economics discussed the issues threadbare.

A vote of thanks was proposed by the Assistant Coordinator.

Silver Jubilee Celebrations Programmes

(April, 2011 – April, 2012)

The following eleven 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)

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

12. **‘Peace and Progress: Role of Religions’**
On February 11-12, 2012 at Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (UP)
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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The intensive educational activity carried on by the Brotherhood was viewed as Stage 1, the ta’ rif stage devoted to disseminating Allah’s word among the masses. The goal was to expose the people to traditional and modern Islamic culture and makes them aware of the enemies of Islam. This would be accomplished by means of home gatherings, personal preaching and self- study of a summarized version of the corpus of religious literature. Strict adherence to the Brotherhood’s platform was posited as a pre-condition for joining the movement and moving on to Stage II, that of training the new member (takwin). This training was presented as both spiritual and practical: reinforcing the faith of the new member by intense prayer and transforming him into a social moralist who will spread the message of Islam. Several aspects of Sufism (mystical Islam), such as Puritanism and self-discipline, which al-Banna had absorbed early in his youth when he had become attracted to Sufi orders, were reflected in this training programme, the main frame work of the programme was this small cell, similar to a family unit (usra), based on three foundations: familiarity with one another, mutual understanding and solidarity. The

two first stages- spreading religion and training- were considered a preparation for stage III, the operative one (tanfidh). All three stages were interrelated, reflecting the unity of da’wa which defines the role of the preacher as educator and operative at one and the same time.

The educational strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt sought to create an alternative pedagogic system to that of the state which, it charged, had failed to meet the people’s expectations.

From Meir Hatina, ‘Restoring a Lost Identity’ in Tahir Abbas (ed.) *Islam and Education*, pp. 328-329

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The trillion dollar question, however, is if it can maintain its high level of performance especially in the prevalent atmosphere when breaking of rules by the authorities has become the norm; when Muslims would realize that education is an industry and deserves to be run professionally and democratically by well paid administrators and academics. The subtle move to privatize Jamia Hamdard and deny its employees in future of many benefits that their counterparts have in central universities is not the way to take the university forward.

The main gate of Jamia Hamdard’s Faculty of Science is decorated with two architecturally beautiful candles. They must keep on burning as beacons of hope for the younger generations and as a source of inspiration to the large-hearted men and women who dedicate their personal fortunes to serve humanity at large.

In the aftermath of the Partition Delhi’s rich and educated Muslims were fleeing to Pakistan in panic. In those disturbed times late Hakeem Saheb not only remained cool-headed but also converted his personal fortunes into a Wakf for creating institutions like Jamia Hamdard. He found solution to

Muslims’ problems in building institutions which he realized was more valuable and beneficial than making money. The lesson is loud and clear.

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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Where Do Muslims Stand
by Ishtiyaque Danish

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

Are Indian Muslims putting a spoke in India's wheel of development? The question is disturbing as well as complex. Understandably, the responses to the question would vary based on the bent of mind one has. One thing, however, is clear that owing to their educational backwardness they have already missed the bus, nay, plane of development.

At present there are some 480 Universities beside many thousand colleges which provide higher education to just 12.4% youth in the age group of 18-24. This is very low compared to gross enrolment ratio (GER) in developed countries which is above 40%; in some countries it is above 53%. India's GER falls short of the global average of 23% also. This pathetic scenario becomes more disturbing when viewed in the perspective that India has the third largest network of higher education after China and USA.

India's education leadership believes that the country needs to set up within few years some 800 new universities and 35000 colleges in addition to the existing ones to meet the huge requirements of human resources to maintain its fast growing economy. This appears more a day dreaming than realistic planning. It takes time and requires resources, both human and financial, to set up a university. One has just to look at the slow progress of central universities being set up in various states by the

central government. There was no dearth of fund and as a result many of these central universities kicked off well but their administrators soon realized that physical and human infrastructure cannot be developed overnight.

Where do Muslims stand? Their share in the college going population is understandably very poor. Just about 4% according to 2001 census data which is abysmal by any standard. The central government has launched programmes including multi-sectoral development scheme in 90 minority dominated districts nearly half of which are dominated by non-Muslim minorities. Information available from government and private sources suggests that the scheme has failed to deliver the desired results, especially in Muslim dominated districts.

It is easy to blame the other, and even more easy to criticize the government. But where are Muslim intelligentsia and leadership? Do they really exist? Are they relevant in contemporary India?

The eye that sees everything cannot see itself. It is indeed difficult, both for individuals as well as communities, to find out the weaknesses within. The Muslims are no exceptions; they must realize now that blaming the others has not paid in the past and would not work in future.

State is the main supplier of primary, secondary and higher education in India. But over 20% primary and secondary education is provided by the private sector. Not just the Muslim share in privately run schools is very low, most Muslim managed schools are administered poorly as well. The main reason of failure lies in the management being undemocratic. Muslim intelligentsia and leadership need to do soul searching and see if they have a role to play here.

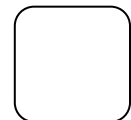
It is unfortunate that most universities in India lack democratic culture and temperament. Institutional mechanism for practicing and promoting democratic style of functioning has been provided in every university. However, it is the writ of the Vice Chancellor that runs everywhere. In officially declared Muslim minority institutions, Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Jamia Hamdard, democratic voices are routinely suppressed. It is a shame that a Vice Chancellor and some professors of the above mentioned Muslim institutions are under CBI's investigation.

It hurts the most that the brain child of great visionary, Hakeem Abdul Hameed, Jamia Hamdard, too, has fallen on bad days. Just a Deemed University, it ranks among top 30 universities of the country.

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