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Thought for the Month

And they (sometimes) say:
 "There is nothing except
 Our life on this earth,
 And never shall we be
 Raised up again."
 If thou couldst but see
 When they shall be mad to stand
 Before their Lord!
 He will say:
 "Is not this the truth?"
 They will say:
 "Yea, by our Lord!"
 He will say:
 "Taste ye then the Chastisement
 Because ye rejected Faith"

Al-Quran- VI: 29-30

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FOCUS

Yet it is difficult to find convincing evidence to support the worry that democracy is threatening to individual rights and liberties. Robert Dahl has recently reminded us that in the century and a half since Tocqueville articulated his apocalyptic fears, political freedoms have turned out to be substantially better respected in democracies than in nondemocracies. The countries in which there is meaningful freedom of speech, association, respect for personal and property rights, prohibitions on torture, and guarantees of equality before the law are overwhelmingly the countries that have democratic political systems. Even if we expand the definition of individual rights to include social and economic guarantees, one could not make a credible case that nondemocracies supply these better than do democracies. This issue is, concededly, difficult to study empirically. Most of the world's wealthy countries, with the resources for meaningful socio-economic guarantees, are also democracies, and the failures of the communist systems arguably had more to do with their economies than their political systems. Yet one would scarcely want the Tocquevillian case to rest on the communist example, where civil and political freedoms were substantially less well-respected than in democracies, and the level of social provision was generally low. At a minimum, one is bound to conclude that the Tocquevillian case has not been established and that the converse of it seems more likely to be true, to wit, that the best way to guarantee individual rights and civil liberties is to work to create and entrench democracy.

Do constitutional courts make a difference among democracies? In the United States there have certainly been eras when the federal judiciary has successfully championed individual rights and civil liberties against the legislative branch of government, that of the Warren Court being the best known. But there have also been eras when it has legitimated racial oppression and the denial of civil liberties. Until recently there has been surprisingly little systematic study of this question beyond the trading of anecdotes. As early as 1956 Dahl had registered scepticism that democracies with constitutional courts could be shown to have a positive effect on the degree to which individual freedoms are respected when compared to democracies without them, a view he developed more fully two years later in his seminal article titled "Decisionmaking in a democracy: The Supreme Court as national policymarket." Subsequent scholarship has shown Dahl's skepticism to have been well-founded. Indeed, there are reasons for thinking that the popularity of independent courts in new democracies may have more in common with the popularity of independent banks than with the protection of individual freedoms. They can operate as devices to signal foreign investors and those who control international economic institutions that the capacity of elected officials to engage in redistributive policies or interfere with property rights will be limited. That is, they may be devices for limiting domestic political opposition to unpopular policies by taking them off the table.

From The Moral Foundations of Politics by Ian Shapiro, pp. 217-219.

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS Felicitates Prof. M. Ishtiyaque and Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed

The Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), organised a felicitation ceremony on February 8, 2014, to honour Prof. M. Ishtiyaque, Member, General Assembly and Managing Editor, IOS Journal of Objective Studies on his appointment as the Vice-Chancellor of Magadh University, Bodh Gaya (Bihar), and Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed, advocate-on-record in the Supreme Court of India, on his election to the Executive Committee of India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi.

Addressing the gathering at the IOS Conference Hall, the Chairman of the Institute, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, described the moment as an occasion to share joy. Calling upon both of them not to underestimate their own prowess, he opined that labour always paid. He disapproved of the theory propounded by the

prophets of doom that "labour does not pay".

Terming labour as Sunnah of Allah, he said that the one who worked painstakingly with Allah in heart and mind, would be blessed with success. He urged both of them to continue expressing gratitude to Allah. Commenting on the niche they carved out for themselves, he insisted that fragrance could never hide itself. He was sure Allah would continue blessing both of them. He especially cautioned Prof. Ishtiyaque against the intrigues that might be contrived against him. He counselled Prof. Ishtiyaque to frustrate any such attempt by strictly adhering to transparency and accountability. He expressed the confidence that Prof. Ishtiyaque would overcome the prevailing crisis of trust with his proactive role. Referring to the IOS, he

noted that the Institute was fortunate to attract best minds to get associated with it. He exhorted the office-bearers of the Institute not to let the Islamic fervour go out of hand. The Institute was not a fiefdom of any individual; rather it belonged to the millat, he concluded.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Ishtiyaque expressed his gratitude to Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam for playing an active role in the shaping of his personality. He recalled his days as a student at the Patna University and the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, he said that he always endeared himself to his teachers. Sharing his experience at the Jamia Millia Islamia as a teacher for a period spanning more than three decades, he listed his



Dr. M. Manzoor Alam presenting a memento to Prof. M. Ishtiyaque

achievements like writing a book on practical geography which was regarded as the first book on the subject in India and the construction of a large hostel for students which was an envy of other universities in Delhi. He noted that he was attracted to the IOS for research on socio-economic issues with special reference to Muslims. He said that he used to consult Dr. Manzoor Alam as and when faced with a difficult problem.

Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed in his frank speech mentioned his rural origins in Gopalganj district of Bihar. Reminiscing about his days in the Aligarh Muslim University, he gave credit to the teachers for his rise. He recounted how he set up his legal practice at lower courts in Delhi only to become an advocate-on-record in

the Supreme Court. He said that Dr. Manzoor Alam had been a constant source of encouragement to him to move forward. He recorded his sense of appreciation of the IOS for extending cooperation to him.

Prof. Refaat Ali Khan, Vice-Chairman of IOS, observed that a great responsibility had devolved on them. They had to prove their mettle. Prof. ZM Khan, General Secretary of IOS in his welcome address recalled his close association with both of them. While assuring them of cooperation from the IOS, he hoped Prof. Ishtiyaque would use his wide academic experience to straighten the university and Mr. Mushtaq would be more actively involved in the affairs of the IICC. He urged both of them to keep their eyes and ears open on the outer world in order to take a whiff of fresh air.

They were presented with a shawl each. While Prof. Ishtiyaque was presented a Certificate of Excellence, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed was presented a Certificate of Appreciation.

Earlier, Maulana Abdullah Tarique recited a verse from the Quran to mark the beginning of the function. While Mr.

Nakhat Husain Nadvi conducted the proceedings, Prof. Hasina Hashia of Jamia Millia Islamia proposed a vote of thanks. Those who were present on the occasion included Prof. Naushad Ali Azad, Prof. Eqbal Husain from Jamia Millia Islamia, Chairman, Haj Committee, Delhi, Mr. Pervez Miyan, Mr. Firoze Ghazi Advocate, Dr. Anisur-Rehman, Dr. Mohsin Ali Khan, Mr. Ashraf Rizvi, Advocate, Mr. Sajjad Imam, Mr. Shahabuddin Husain, Dr. Syed Shakib Arsalan, Mr. Akhtar Saeed Khan and Mr. Waseem Fahmi.

IOS Workshop on the Contemporary Political Scenario in India

The Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, has urged

Muslim leaders, representing different groups, to reach an understanding for working out an agenda to approach the political parties to pledge support to their demands. Presiding over the discussion on the “Contemporary Political Scenario in India” organised by the IOS at its Conference Hall here on February 15, 2014, he admitted that Muslim groups were united and broke up several times in the past. But the current political situation had once again offered them an opportunity to be realistic about their demands.

He asked Muslim leadership and other stakeholders to articulate their stand on various issues confronting the Muslim community. Hailing the Indian Constitution as a saviour of interests of all citizens, he noted that the right to liberty, equality and free speech enshrined in the Constitution could be upheld by affirmative action by government. Expressing serious concern over the present atmosphere of communal peace being sought to be vitiated by votaries of violent Hindutva, he pleaded against forming a united Muslim outfit to enter the election fray. He

cited the country’s demography and other dimensions as reasons for not floating a Muslim party to contest elections.

He, however, underlined the need for thrashing out a common minimum programme for the community to move ahead. The concept of a two-party system in India, he said, was propounded by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel which saw the emergence of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) later. Credit goes to framers of the Constitution who made it sure that the multi-party system operated in India without hindrance. What would have happened if the Constitution had declared India as a Hindu Rashtra under which the minorities would have forfeited their right to universal adult suffrage, he asked. It was the Constitution that guaranteed citizens

the right to life and liberty. It was the Constitution that empowered a citizen in the form of the Right to Information (RTI).

Making an impassioned plea to intellectuals of the community to take common Muslims along, Dr. Alam asked the leadership to evolve a consensus for opening a dialogue with the political parties on their demands without seeking any office for themselves. He said that the IOS was constantly engaged in the study of politico-social and economic empowerment of Muslims. He said that so far, nine volumes of the study had come out and the work on the next volume was in progress. He concluded by saying that the opinions discussed in the workshop would be analysed



A view of the audience attending a workshop

and the outcome sent to different stakeholders.

Earlier, the discussion got off to a start with the recitation of verses from the Quran by Hafiz Nazir-ul-Hasan. Initiating the discussion, the Secretary General of the IOS, Prof. ZM Khan highlighted the activities of the Institute in the field of research, publication and discussion on various issues. He said that an action plan would be prepared in the light of the conclusions drawn from the discussions and sent to other organisations. He called for inclusive attention to the marginalised sections of society. Explaining the concept of liberty and equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution, he said it was an admixture of the features of the Constitutions of US and the UK.

The constitutional structure was good in so far as governance was concerned. Referring to coalition governments, he said that it had come to stay in Indian politics. Calling for electoral reforms, he noted that some people had hijacked the system in their own interests and the media had played the role of a catalytic agent. Quoting the former Chief Justice of India, Mr. Justice AM Ahmadi, he said that the judiciary too was affected by the political environment. In order to polarise voters along communal lines, religion was freely used in polls to garner vote. Even communal violence was sparked off to reap rich harvest of votes, he added.

Dr. Arshi Khan, from the Department of Political Science, Aligarh Muslim University, insisted that two circles – auspicious and vicious, emerged in post-1947 India. While the majority community benefited from the auspicious circle, Muslims suffered under the vicious circle. They still faced the complex problem of dignity. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes,

however, secured dignity. Muslims lacked dignity and liberty due to which they were not proportionately represented in democratic institutions. Favouring introduction of proportional representation system, he said that it was the only way out of the present mess. He commented that democracy could not succeed without the enforcement of the rule of law, adding that legitimacy was the most important element of the state.

The General Secretary of the Lok Jan Shakti Party, Dr. Abdul Khaliq, pointed out that the dividing line between secular and communal had blurred in the current political scenario. Lambasting political parties for making empty promises to Muslims, he said that it was a ploy to divide their vote. Muslim votes among the secular parties were divided, giving

an edge to the BJP. He opined that by promising reservation to Muslims in jobs, education and other institutions ranging from 4 to 20 per cent, these parties were only helping communal forces to corner Muslims.

That was the reason why the promises made in 2004 had not been fulfilled. The RSS had succeeded in its efforts to infiltrate the bureaucracy, judiciary, armed forces and other institutions. Reservation to Muslims was tom-tomed to give a handle to the BJP to convince the majority community of the “appeasement” of Muslims. Reading the writing on the wall, Muslims should understand the ground reality. While reservation to them was a distant possibility, they must articulate their demands. Describing the Rangnath Commission Report as a big mistake, he advised the Muslims to concentrate more on their basic needs that could be easily met.

Mr. Navaid Hamid from the Movement for Empowerment of Indian Muslims, expressed the view that the Indian politics would remain in the churning process for some more time. He wanted to know why the Muslims should take upon themselves the responsibility to protect the Constitution. The duty to protect the Constitution rested with the state. Referring to challenges of exclusive politics, he said that Narendra Modi, who was the most hated man in 2002, had abruptly become a force to reckon with after his anointment as prime ministerial candidate of the BJP.

Advocate and Human Rights activist, Mr. Arun Majhi said that an Indian today was not identified as an individual, but with his caste, religion, and ethnicity. He said that the existing Brahminical system was engaged in the exploitation of Dalits, OBC and Muslims. The Brahminical system was peacefully operating, leaving no room for the working class to assert itself. He observed that corruption was not an issue for the upper castes as they wanted the money to come to them, instead of the pockets of the babus. Hitting out at the civil society, he pointed out that it meant upper and middle castes only. There was no place

for Dalits, oppressed and the deprived sections. Terming Modi as a mascot for the neo-Brahminical order, he said that the Gujarat Chief Minister represented monopoly capital and the Hindutva ideology. He was being projected to seek space in a democracy. Attempts were also being made through Narendra Modi to thrust upon India a presidential form of government. He called for mobilising people against these machinations.

Mr. Qasim Syed, editor of the Urdu daily Khabrein remarked that communal elements were present in the Congress before and after independence. He said that it was puzzling to note that even after sharing power with the BJP, the secular parties claimed to champion the cause of secularism. In this connection, he mentioned the names of Ram Vilas Paswan, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mamta Banerjee and Nitish Kumar. He questioned the logic of permanently supporting a particular political party even though there were no permanent friends and foes in politics. Muslims alone had not taken the onus to protect secularism, he remarked.

The Vice-Chairman of the IOS, Prof. Rifaqat Ali Khan, raised the question of co-existence of Muslims with the majority community in an atmosphere surcharged with hatred and communal bias. Mr. MH Ghazali from the Pasmanda Samaj Sangathan warned of the impending danger from capitalism and neo-liberalism. He said that the meeting of the US ambassador in India with Narendra Modi recently should be viewed in this perspective. He continued that the neo-liberalism offered a big foreign market in India and capitalism was trying to set a foothold in our country. Referring to Anna Hazare’s movement, he said that it had succeeded in diffusing public ire against price rise to an extent, adding that corruption had not yet been defined.

He called for building bridges with the deprived and disadvantaged sections of society. Mr. Rahul Gautam warned of a deep-rooted conspiracy against Dalits, weaker sections and Muslims. He asked why only Muslims

should speak for secularism. He called upon Dalits, the oppressed and the OBCs to come out with an agenda to protect secularism.

Mr. Mujtaba Farooq, National President, Welfare Party of India, reminded Muslims of their strength and called upon them to articulate it at the constituency level. Taking a cue from the experience in Assam where Muslims won 46 seats out of 147 Assembly seats. He said that social concern was futile without an initiative. He suggested to formulate a strategy for the next 5-10 years.

Mr. Kailash Goduka, Secretary, Parivartan, an NGO, emphasised the need for bridging the gap between different communities. He said that religion would sustain as long as humanity survived. Mr. Mirza Zakir Beg from All India Milli Council, laid stress on finding solution to vexatious issues unitedly. This was also the case with fascism which needed to be countered unitedly. Making a fervent plea for Hindu-Muslim unity, he sought to enlist the support of the depressed and deprived sections.

The discussion ended with an announcement to meet again on the issue. Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi, who conducted the proceedings, proposed a vote of thanks. The discussion attracted well-known public figures, academics, leaders from across the political spectrum, social activists and prominent citizens.

IOS Discussion on “Voting Patterns in India with Reference to Tactical Voting by Muslims”

New Delhi, Feb. 27: Participants at the discussion on “Voting Patterns in India with Reference to Tactical Voting by Muslims”, endorsed the resolutions moved by the Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies, Dr. Mohammad Manzoor Alam, at the conference hall of the IOS here today.

The participants unequivocally supported Dr. Alam’s proposal to forestall the march of communal forces, free Muslims of Modi-phobia, defeat the affiliates of the RSS, like the BJP and Shiv Sena, and such parties as

have leanings towards the BJP. His proposal to strike a chord among secular forces, Dalits and other deprived and depressed sections found wide support among the participants who represented academia, political parties, NGOs, social activists, human rights activists, social thinkers, researchers, psephologists and opinion makers.

The participants agreed to vote for candidates with a clean image among the people, and he or she had a clear stand against communalism, was free from corruption charges and he or she had no criminal background or anti-Muslim mindset. It was resolved to ensure success of such candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections. It was decided to take stock of the situation at the state level by identifying the best prospective candidate among the candidates belonging to secular parties. The one who stood a fair chance of winning must be backed in the elections. Emphasis was also laid on sending the maximum number of Muslim members to Parliament this time. The proposal to float a milli political forum to co-ordinate efforts was accepted in principle. It was also agreed upon to actively associate Dalits and other depressed sections with activities of the said forum.

The discussion opened with the recitation of Quran by Maulana Abdullah Tariq. The Chairman in his address, explained the gameplan of the RSS to review the Indian Constitution by abrogating its Preamble that was founded on the basic principles of liberty, justice, equality, fraternity and secularism. These were the pillars on which the Constitution rested and the RSS had been aiming to destroy it for a long time. He observed that its earlier avatar in 1997, the BJP as a minority government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, attempted to re-write the Constitution by appointing a

review commission headed by Justice Venkatachalaiah. Had the Vajpayee government not fallen, the RSS agenda to alter the basic character of the Constitution would have reached-to its logical conclusion, he said.

On the suggestion to expose the misdemeanours of the Modi government in Gujarat and to puncture his balloon of false claims of good governance and the delivery system, he said a lot of work had been accomplished by the IOS on the subject. He informed that the IOS had already undertaken a study of Gujarat government's performance in various fields, including its rating on basic human development indices. He, however, favoured a short book on Narendra Modi to keep the people abreast of his real intentions.



A view of the participants in the discussion

Dr. Alam called for constituency-wise profile of secular candidates; their winnability, their communal background and possible support to some post-poll alliance. Since the time for the elections was only six weeks away, "we have to gear up of our wisdom and the information gathering machinery", he said. Citing the case of Kerala where Muslims always used tactical voting as an option, he said that the same tactics could be employed elsewhere.

He suggested that a region and party-wise analysis be made before arriving at a decision to vote a candidate or a party. While expressing satisfaction that the Muslim electorate was growing wiser, he said that the trend should continue in future as well.

This would increase the voter turnout as had been witnessed in Assam and West Bengal earlier. He underlined the need for channelising information about the constituency through Muslim organisations and this flow of information should also include others like Dalits, deprived and weaker sections. Calling for unveiling of Vision 2029 for the world and the place for Muslims and Dalits in it, he said the IOS was engaged in this stupendous job.

Initiating the discussion, the Secretary-General of the IOS Prof. Z.M. Khan, outlined the lead that had been taken by the Institute in the field of research and analysis of the issues facing the country in general and Muslims and other oppressed sections in particular. He said that the study of about 150 million Muslims of India merited attention. Against this background, elections assumed significance as they offered an opportunity to assert our rights.

He explained that the IOS had been working on a method to transmit the idea of what the intelligentsia thought about the common man.

Today, BJP, Modi and the RSS had spurred Muslims

to think of a well-planned strategy to counter the forces of doom. The threat was not confined to Muslims alone as it extended to other weaker and depressed sections. He said that it was shocking how the so-called secular parties secured Muslim votes by deceit only to align later with rank communal political outfits. Referring to the supreme sacrifices made by Indian Muslims in the past he said that whatever they got was not a concession to them. Everything admissible to an Indian citizen legitimately was applicable to an Indian Muslim also, he remarked. He concluded by urging the Muslims and the marginalised sections to crystallise into a potent force.

Ex-M.P. and former president of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Syed Shahabuddin, objected to Muslims being called merely minorities. He opined that the Muslims had always been tactically voting during the elections. They either voted for the Congress or the so-called secular parties in order to keep BJP away from power. Brushing aside the suggestion to distinguish between secular and communal, he called for the maximum number of Muslims to be elected to the Parliament so as to raise a voice in favour of the community.

In the absence of proportional representation system today Muslim leaders had stooped down to the level of demanding inclusion of Muslims in Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes list. Dismissing the talk of unity among Muslims as a figment of imagination, he called for concentrating on about 45 seats that could return Muslim candidates. He counselled the Muslim leaders not to serve as slaves to their parties and raise issues that mattered for the well-being of the community.

The Associate Editor of the Urdu weekly, Chauthi Duniya, Mr. A.U. Asif underlined the need for setting up a milli political forum to prevent division of Muslim votes. Another point which was often lost sight of was the delimitation of seats. This altered the configuration of Muslim population, putting the community in a disadvantageous position. He called for work on the strategy of tactical voting.

Former OSD to the Delhi Election Commission and ex-Secretary, Delhi Wakf Board, Mr. Azim Akhtar held that the imams of masjids could play a crucial role in imparting the message of tactical voting to the Muslims. Masjid was a place where the members of the community, irrespective of their caste or association with the school of thought collected to congregate. They could be told about whom to vote. But for division of votes, several Muslim candidates could win their seats with hands down, he added.

Associate Professor at the Centre for Dalit and Minority Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, Dr. Tanweer Fazal, dished out the data to prove his point that increase in the participation of Muslims in the polls did not necessarily mean election of the candidate of their choice. He cautioned against the danger of polarisation of Muslim votes as this could lead to counter-polarisation of majority votes. He favoured the preparation of a charter of demands that included strengthening of democracy and secularism, among other things.

Since such a charter could be used by the propagandists of majoritarianism to create the bogey of so-called appeasement of the minorities, it was imperative to include the marginalised sections in it, he added.

Mr. Mohd. Yousuf from the NGO Haryali called for preparing a database of the voters through Haj pilgrims, Muslim NGOs working in different fields and parliamentary committees. These could help increase polling percentage. Advocate and human rights activist, Mr. Arun Majhi emphasised the need for unity among Muslims, Dalits and OBCs to put up resistance to the RSS.

Mr. Rahul Gautam from the Samajik Nyaya Morcha said that fascist forces had not only united against Muslims, but also against the Dalits and advasis. They could be fought against by a united front, he pointed out.

Mr. Hasib Ahmad, a retired IAS officer and now with the All India Milli Council expressed the confidence that like in the past, Muslims were vigilant about tactical voting this time also. Mirza Zaki Ahmad Baig from Tamir-e-Millat Foundation called for taking all the communities discriminated against along to pitch for elections. The General Secretary, Welfare Party of India, Mr. SQR Ilyas stressed the need for identifying those who could cross over to the BJP-led front. This could be determined by going into the past of the parties that vowed to be wedded to secularism, but

jumped on the BJP bandwagon, he said.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Professor of Geography, JMI, Dr. Haseena Hashia, Mr. Nand Lal from the Samajik Insaf, Mr. M.H. Ghazali from Pasmada Samaj Sangthan and Mr. Musharraf Husain, Secretary, All India Milli Council. While Dr. Nakhat Husain Nadvi conducted the proceedings.

Activities of the IOS Chapters

CHENNAI CHAPTER

Sham-e-Muzakarah

The IOS Chennai Chapter organised Sham-e-Muzakara on Saturday, the 25th Jan.2014 at the New College, Chennai-600014.

The meeting commenced with the recitation of few verses from Holy Quraan by Prof.Bakthiary Nadvi,

Asst. Prof. of Arabic, New College. Dr. Major Zahid Husain, Co-ordinator, IOS Chennai chapter welcomed the gathering and Dr. Z. Abdul Latheef, Prof. of Arabic and Vice Principal of New College introduced the Chief Guest Prof. S.M. Tariq, Dept. of Arabic, Dr. Zakir Hussain College, New Delhi.

Prof. S.M. Tariq was kind enough to accept our invitation on behalf of IOS Chennai Chapter to address the gathering.

During the course of his talk he was mentioning that the present day youth are keen in knowing more about worldly matters and neglect the main issues pertaining to Education. He emphasized on Right to Education and also quoted from the Holy Quraan, the word IQRA (to read) and highlighted that educating a male and female is compulsory in Islam. Further he quoted from Quran Yatadabbaroon and Yatafakkaroon which means one should always plan ahead and think over before executing a plan.

He also highlighted that the Indian Education System has shown improvements in the recent decade. But there are still so many curse in our education system that we

have to implement such Right to Education Act.

He highlighted some facts which can not be neglected in terms of implementing Right to Education Act in India

***Access of school to the children

***Child count without Education

***Families and communities needs to play a vital role to make RTE a major success .

He further elaborated that UNICEF is playing a vital role with the Govt. to provide a basic education to Indian children.

Technical support on education quality, school retention and achievement rate is also provided by UNICEF to make the RTE Act a success.

Prof. Tariq also highlighted the key issues for achieving RTE

a) RTE provide a platform to reach the unreached, with specific provision for disadvantaged group, such as child labour migrant children and children with special needs

b) RTE focuses on the quality teaching and learning.

He concluded his talk by saying that UNICEF should mobilise partners to raise the public awareness and provide a call to action. UNICEF should also play an instrumental role in bringing together relevant stake holders from Govt. civil society, teacher's organisation, media and the celebrity world.

The meeting ended with a Dua by Moulavi Hafiz Anzar Sahib.

Contd. from page-8

In Europe modernisation mainly meant a better life.

But in Asia and Africa, including the Muslim countries, modernisation has been less industrial and more cultural. The focus of modernisation in our part of the world in the 19th and 20th centuries was not on industrialisation or having better roads, railways, steamships and even planes, but on wearing Western clothes and adopting their habits. The Muslim exponents of modernisation mistook Westernisation as modernity and their

critics also failed to make a distinction between the two.

Calendar 2014

The IOS calendar 2014 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 Mosques through the Ages

Page-2 World: Global Hunger Index (GHI) Scores 1996, 2001 and 2012

Page-3 World: Country-wise Diabetes Prevalence (%) 1995, 2000 and 2010 for Population (Number of Adults ages >=20 years)

Page-4 India: Distribution of Pre-matric Scholarship for Muslim Minority Community students 2010-11 & 2011-12

The calendar may also be obtained from

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Modernity and Development

by *Ishtiyaque Danish*

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

Modernity and development are generally regarded as cause and effect. That you espouse modernity, development will automatically follow. At least this is what many Muslim leaders, like Suharto, Ayyub Khan, Shah of Iran and Gamal Nasser believed in the wake of independence from colonialism. The conversion of steam into energy that enabled England and some other European countries to invent machines, railways and steamships ultimately changed the world beyond recognition. Till then the world was mainly an agrarian society and mode of production was manual. Machines replaced the manual mode of production and brought about Industrial Revolution in England and Western Europe. This shifting of agrarian society to industrial one was initially considered to be modern or modernity. This modernity brought about many changes in the European society. The most visible one was that what until then was done manually, started to be produced by machines. The change increased the volume of production which impacted on human society, both negatively and positively, in a radical manner. Its negative impact was especially felt in European colonies in Asia and Africa. A naval struggle started between the Muslims and the Romans in late 7th century for supremacy in the Mediterranean Sea. The conflict resulted in Muslim victory and

the Mediterranean Sea served as an Islamic lake for centuries. The trade routes, both via land and sea, came under Muslim domination. The Europeans, particularly the Portuguese began to challenge the Muslims' naval supremacy in the late 15th and 16th century. They, however, failed to outsmart the Ottoman navy in the Mediterranean Sea and decided to find an alternative sea route to India. In the 16th century there were three big Muslim powers: the Ottomans, the Safavids and the Mughals. The Ottomans alone had naval power which, however, was confined to the Mediterranean Sea; they did not have significant presence in the Indian Ocean. However, there were large number of ships, owned mainly by Muslims, which controlled trade between East Africa, West Asia and India. The Chinese were also in the play but their commercial ships rarely ventured beyond Srilanka. On the contrary the Muslims' ships traded up to China. The Portuguese entered the arena in the 16th century and sought to monopolise the trade by force. Later on the Dutch, the French and the British also emerged on the scene. First they mainly fought among themselves and the British were finally victorious. But they still had to contend with the Arabs whose trading ships were all across the Indian ocean and the Arabian Sea since the medieval ages. The steam ships, which the British had acquired in

the 19th century, gave them a resounding victory over the Arabs and others. The steam ships coupled with Railways enabled the British and the French to strengthen their colonial rule in Asia and Africa. When mass movements finally drove the colonialists out of Asia and Africa in 20th century, the newly independent countries embarked upon modernising their countries. In fact, the Europeans had started modernisation in the 19th century itself, though it was mainly educational and judicial. They deliberately withheld economic modernisation because they wanted to prolong the economic exploitation of their colonies. In European society modernisation or modernity was brought about by the Industrial Revolution. It mainly happened in the fields of communication and economy; it was not cultural or religious indeed. Religion and culture had undergone drastic changes in Europe but due to other factors like the Reformation and the Enlightenment and not only because of the Industrial Revolution and the modernisation it had unleashed.

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