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Thought for the Month

Not equal are those
Believers who sit (at home),
Except those who are disabled.
And those who strive
And fight in the cause
Of Allah with their goods
And their persons.
Allah hath granted
A grade higher to those
Who strive and fight
With their goods and persons
Than to those who sit (at home).
Unto all (in Faith)
Hath Allah promised good:
But those who strive and fight
Hath He distinguished
Above those who sit (at home)
By a great reward.—

Al-Quran – 4:95

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FOCUS

The ghost of partition refuses to recede in independent India with religious fanatics masquerading as politicians continue to legitimise their hatred in the name of rights of Hindus in Hindu India. It is ironical that India which rejected two-nation theory based on religion today seems to justify it through the act of majority vandalism over minorities during the past fifty years. A fact which we must ponder as why the political parties and ideologies persistently use the religious hatred as a tool to garner votes. Has India suddenly become communal with the emergence of BJP or Hindutva forces? Why hasn't there been a secular alternative to it. Has the secularism of the typical Indian variety, which our political leadership today demonstrate failed? Is the concept of 'sarva-dharma sambhava', a refuse for the conservatives and orthodox religious leaders in every community to take control over them? I think, the Indian media and particularly the linguistic media has used this brand of secularism for the benefit of a few religious people and spread religiosity of certain brand in their influential areas. Spreading such typical secular brand automatically give the religious rights legitimacy, which ultimately are harmful for a multicultural society. Today, Hindi media use such symbolic secular values by publishing photographs during Id, Holi when Hindus and Muslims 'greet' each other. More importantly, now the media continue to publish speeches of various saints and their congregations. The coverage to religious programmes is quite impressive in almost all the Hindi dailies coming out from states. Some of them from Delhi also have been selling religious curiosity of the Indians. On the negative side, the politics of vote bank has harmed the secular concept. While the Centrist parties made themselves easily exchangeable and were incompetent to take on the fringe elements in the Muslim community, the media in general and Hindi media in particular was instrumental in creating a myth that Muslims are being appeased by the 'secular' parties. That they are unable to contain the Muslim anti social elements and don't condemn their activities and when the issue of Hindus come every one of them is up in arm. Such kind of blatantly mythicised reports and editorial harmed and distorted the notion of plurality. Today minority rights should be considered in the wider international framework and not as an appeasement. Unfortunately, that has not happened and this propaganda continued without verifying the facts as how many Muslims have presence in media, government's services, judiciary, police and administration. Such one-sided and unsubstantiated theories resulted in the legitimising VHP and Bajrang Dal among the middle class Hindus, though finally it is now disappearing because of their activities. However, still, new techniques have been developed to legitimise rowdies. If you cannot say something through editorial then editorialised the news item or make fake letters to the editor. There are various ways to create confusion in public mind and communalise the public opinion.

No doubt politicians have always used religion and caste as a weapon to exploit popular sentiments and get access to power but the intelligentsia of a nation speak at times of crisis against any kind of exploitation of its people. And no doubt some of them spoke valiantly and faced the tyranny of the ruling elite. Of course they were just a minority tribe who faced continuous jibe from their own community who took favour from the establishment.

**From Press & Prejudice – An Insightful Analysis of Hindi Media
by Vidya Bhushan Rawat, pp. I-II**

Activities of the IOS Headquarters

IOS book "Educational Institutions Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)" released

The book "Educational Institutions Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)" was released at a function organised by the Institute of Objective Studies at its auditorium on October 19, 2024. Professor (Dr.) Mohammad Afshar Alam, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard released the book.

The programme began with the recitation of a verse from the Holy Qur'an by Mr. Mansoor Ahmad with its translation in Urdu.

Vice-Chairperson of the IOS, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia introduced the topic and presented a brief profile of the speakers. She also briefly highlighted the activities of the Institute. She explained how Ms. Naaz Khair, who compiled the book, and Mr. Saleem Baig, the researcher, did extensive research on Muslim Educational

Institutions in India by elaborating on the reasons for the choice of the topic by the Institute of Objective Studies. She said that during the last 30 years, geopolitical, geographical, socio-political scenario underwent a change with the BJP rule leaving a strong fundamentalist influence on the Indian psyche.

Naaz Khair, an independent researcher, consultant, activist, and educationist while introducing the book held that the work investigated the efforts of the Muslim community in the field of education in India from 1986 to 2016. The period from the Shah Bano case to 2016 was specifically chosen following the enactment of the Muslim

Women Protection of Rights and Divorce Act (1986), the implementation of Mandal Commission Report (1990), the demolition of the Babri Masjid (1992), passage of the National Commission for Minority Act (1992), the Sachar Committee Report (2006), the creation of the Ministry of Minority Affairs (2006), the Ranganath Mishra Report (2007), the Triple Talaq issue and several major incidents of communal violence primarily targeting the Muslim community. She highlighted the initiatives taken by Muslims in establishing educational institutions which were not highly endorsed in the academic and non-academic sectors by giving a quick rundown to the main

India. Unfortunately, Muslims are often considered as deprived and underdeveloped. Hence it is a matter of concern how 15 per cent of the population is overlooked in the socio-economic and political spheres of institutional education, she noted. She further highlighted the difficulties they faced while making the work possible, especially in the process of RTI by emphasising on several findings, educational institutions identified by "Muslim-sounding names" in compiling a total of 21338 recognised and unrecognised private schools, colleges, institutions and madrasas established during 1986-2016, she added.

It may be recalled that the book is the outcome of a research project of the Institute of Objective Studies which was assigned to Naaz Khair in the year 2015. The book is the latest publication of the IOS.

Researcher, Mr. Saleem Baig highlighted the obstacles in accessing detailed information due to resistance from madrasa authorities,

lack of government data, and bureaucratic hurdles with the special reference to the information under RTI. He further shared the incidents occurred while collecting the wide range of data on Muslim Institutions in India.

Releasing the book, Professor (Dr.) Mohammad Afshar Alam lauded the efforts of the Institute of Objective Studies by bringing out such a marvellous research work, and said how these institutions contributed to the educational and social development of the Muslim minority in India with the particular focus on the challenges and achievements in this field. He appreciated the extensive efforts made by the researchers in **compiling the**



On the dais (L-R): Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, Mr. Saleem Baig, Prof. M. Akhtar Siddiqui, Prof. (Dr.) Mohammad Afshar Alam, Prof. Furqan Qamar, Prof. Madhu Prasad and Ms. Naaz Khair releasing the book titled "Educational Institutions Established by Muslims in India (1986-2016)"

objective, detailed methodological research, analysis of data, and other significant findings.

"The study methodology involved compiling information on educational institutions established by Muslims using both existing secondary sources and RTI. Educational bodies such as NEPA, AICTE, NCMEI, AISES and UGC were approached for community-wise lists of educational institutions", she informed. The study also explored the various aspects of 'Educational Institutions' and Muslims' contribution in recognised and unrecognised sectors of schools, madrasas (both modernised and religious madrasas), colleges, and universities, in the field of education in

data. He referred to the contribution of Jamia Millia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University in facilitating the research. He mentioned "the book also highlighted the efforts made by these institutions to preserve the cultural identity by promoting modern education. The researchers highlighted Muslim educator's strife to maintain between the religious values and secular education".

Prof. Alam explained how the book addressed the governmental policies affecting Muslim education by citing various authentic reports of socio-economic conditions along with the gaps in the attainment of education in India that could improve its access and quality in Muslim-majority schools and colleges. He further hinted at the challenges Muslim-oriented academics faced due to "Muslim-sounding names" by giving the example of Bukhari University in Bihar, which was not issued NOC by the government. He also cited the case of the Crescent and USTM (minority institution) with secular names. Muslims were educationally backward due to their marginalisation. Sometimes biases against the community were witnessed as in the case of the University of Science and Technology in Meghalaya, he noted.

Prof. Furqan Qamar from the Department of Management, Jamia Millia Islamia, congratulated Naaz Khair and Salim Baig for accomplishing such a difficult task, especially in the process of RTI and other challenges. He explained the historical, political, and economic dimensions of Muslim educational institutions, and expressed concerns over "Muslim-sounding names" affecting perceptions and access to education.

Prof. Qamar also focused on child rights in madrasas and the impact of GST, demonetisation, and COVID-19 on educational institutions. He stressed the need for continuing the research beyond 2016 to address current challenges in Muslim education by

suggesting to access database on the IOS and other websites. He said, "the Association of Indian Universities also has done some work on the subject by bringing out two volumes. This book has a list of institutions which may have duplication but they can be rectified". He took exception to the National Child Rights Protection Commission's Chairman Mr. Priyank Kanoongo's remarks that there was violation of child rights in madrasas.

Prof. M Akhtar Siddiqui, formerly associated with Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, thanked IOS for publishing the book. "It is such a historical book that will benefit researchers, stakeholders, and academicians". He extensively explained different themes by making detailed analyses of the book. He explained in detail the issue of Muslim schools, colleges, universities and madrasas. "This is significantly important because it has made the concern known with a good degree of authenticity despite Muslims being economically marginalised", he noted.

Prof. Siddiqui discussed the limitations of study, lack of theory-based analyses, and suggested that Muslim institutions should create data-based platforms for further research.

He underscored that this initiative be driven by 'service to the nation' not impelled by any 'commercial interest'. He acknowledged the same concept and said that this was only a conservative reflection of the Muslims being aware of the value of education and dedication to the cause of nation building. "They are aware, but this is the only contribution of Muslims in nation building. As a matter of fact, it is much more than that", he concluded.

Prof. Madhu Prasad, formerly associated with Zakir Hussain Delhi College, Delhi University underlined the importance of madrasas and made special mention of Madarasa Ghaziudin. She said that it carried its sense of continuity with the importance of the mother-tongue as the medium of

teaching. She said, "It's not only education, in everything Muslims have contributed more than any other community".

Referring to the idea of secularism and the importance of knowledge, she said that there were "Muslim-sounding names" like Zakir Hussain Delhi College. She appreciated Salim Baig for the work he has dedicatedly done by managing lots of other challenges. She highlighted the impact of the events like Shah Bano, Triple Talaq issue, and demolition of Babri Masjid and said that they did not just affect Muslim women, but also disheartened other women. She made a concluding remark, "You all have started an incredible work, and now it is our responsibility to take this work forward. And we all are one."

Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, who conducted the proceedings, extended a vote of thanks to the attendees.

Mujaddid IOS Centre for Arts and Literature hosts *Mushairah*

A *Mushairah* (Poetic symposium) was organised by Mujaddid IOS Centre for Arts and Literature in association with Delhi Urdu Academy at the IOS auditorium on October 7, 2024. It was presided over by the veteran Urdu critic and Vice-Chairman of the Academy, Prof. Shahpar Rasool. Well-known Urdu poet, Moin Shadab conducted the proceedings.

The function began with the recitation of a Qur'anic verse by Mr. Naseem Ahsan of the translation and publication division of the Institute of Objective Studies.

Explaining the aims and objectives of Mujaddid Centre, the Convenor of the *Mushairah*, Mr. Anjum Naim, said that arts and literature played an important role in the life of a man. Poetry was a form of literature that touched upon human sensibilities. Mujaddid IOS Centre for Arts and Literature was set up keeping this in view, he said.

Secretary General of the Institute of Objective Studies, Mr. Mohammad

Alam, while welcoming the participating poets, insisted that the Centre was engaged in focusing on culture, literature and arts. The Centre had so far organised several functions on a variety of subjects, he noted.

Prof. Shahpar Rasool recited his poem with the couplet: “*Ab Ke Bhi Ik Aandhi Chali, Ab Ke Bhi Sub Kuchh Ud Gaya; Ab Ke Bhi Sub Batein Huyin, Lekin Hua Kuchh Bhi Nahin*”. Prof. Kausar Mazhari recited couplet: “*Kab Se Main Chahta Hoon Rooh Se Rishta Jodun; Kya Karoon Beech Ki Deewar Meri Mitti Hai*”. Moin Shadaab recited: “*Hamaari Haar Pe Hai Naaz Ik Zamane Ko; Tumhari Jeet Badi Sharmanaak Hai Sahab*”. Rauf Ramish read: “*Mujaawir Kyon Bane Baithe Ho Ramish; Tumhein Toh Peer Hona Chahiye Thaa*”.

Abdur Rahman Mansoor presented his couplet: “*Yeh Kam Nahin Hai Qaum Ka Itna Khayal Ho; Khane Ko Qorma Ho, Khilane Ko Daal Ho*”. While Hamid Ali Akhtar entertained with his couplet: “*Hazaaron Sitam Sah Ke Bhi Zindah Hai Aaj Tak; Yeh Urdu Zabaan Hai, Urdu Zabaan Hai*”; Khan Mohammad Rizwan read: “*Thaharna Bhool Gayi Hain Lahu Se Tar Aankhein; Bhatakti Rahti Hain Din-Raat Dar-Badar Aankhein*”.

Ajay ‘AKS’ in his melodious voice read: “*Main Apne Daur Ki Sachchai Hoon Isi Ke Sabab; Jise Bhi Dekhiye Woh Hi Khurach Raha Hai Mujhe*”.

Besides Abrar Rahmani presented his Nazm: “*Abaabil Nahin Aayeingin*” and Khursheed Akram read his “*Dar Lagta Hai*”.

The *Mushairah* ended with a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. Anjum Naim. The poetic symposium attracted fairly a

good number of Urdu poets and Urdu lovers. The poets who presented their *asha'ar* (poems) left the audience spell-bound.

IOS Lecture on “Artificial Intelligence (AI) Revolution: Shaping Tomorrow”

A lecture on ‘Artificial Intelligence (AI) Revolution: Shaping Tomorrow’ was organised by the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) in hybrid mode on September 27, 2024. Nilanjan Das, Group Creative Editor, India Today Group, Design Head, Data Intelligence Unit and Chief Creative Editor, CUT and Creator for World first AI new Anchor ‘Sana’ was the speaker who explained the niceties of the AI.



On the stage (L-R): Ajay ‘AKS’, Hamid Ali Akhtar, Dr. Majid Deobandi, Prof. Shahpar Rasool, Prof. Kausar Mazhari, Rauf Ramish and Khursheed Akram

The lecture began with the recitation of a Qur’anic verse by Network Administrator, IOS, Mansoor Ahmad.

Introducing the topic, Secretary General of the IOS, Mohammad Alam, said that the lecture was most significant. Briefly speaking about Nilanjan Das he said that Mr. Das is an expert in the field which had become an important tool to obtain quick results. Then he highlighted the activities of the Institute in detail.

Speaking on the subject, Nilanjan Das said that as an early AI adopter, he leveraged its transformative power across the world. He noted that traditional computers would be

governed by the AI within a year. He explained how the AI would design tomorrow. “It is a tool, rather a brilliant tool. There are unlimited possibilities and it will put single technology into practice”. Referring to AI images and covers, he said it creates visual images and it has to be done quickly. There is no camera involved and it is done automatically. Earlier, photo creators used to take 15 days, but now it was done in one hour. Two years ago also it was so. It created layers and layers of image. Commenting on the AI video, he noted that after the introduction of AI, everything was quick. We can create something out of nothing. As a trailblazer, we changed image with different expressions, he added.

Nilanjan Das observed that key sectors like media, education, health and technology were transforming at an unprecedented pace. “In media, AI is reshaping content creation and audience engagement, enabling hyper-personalised experiences. In education, it offers intelligent tutoring systems and adaptive learning tools that cater to diverse student needs. Healthcare is experiencing breakthroughs with AI-driven diagnostics, personalised medicine and predictive analytics, improving patient outcomes. In the tech. sector, AI is pushing the boundaries of innovation, automating complex processes and driving advancements in fields like robotics, cyber security and software development. Together, these shifts are shaping a future driven by intelligent systems”, he held. ‘Sana’ the AI version of the anchor had been created and TV news channel Aaj Tak had become fastest in India in this respect. He noted that the Group was busy in upgrading a more advanced one which would be its

next version. The group was also engaged in creating an emotion-based version. New version would have more reflections, he said.

Nilanjan Das pointed out that AI music was very interesting. Working on the music version, one need not create an orchestra or musical instruments. There was music and songs and news broadcast music. He said that the creation of MIT Management Revolution Ping was an AI revolution. Crazy people were doing it now. Commenting on the role of AI in primary and secondary education, he held that AI-driven system assessed students' levels and learning styles. It also created customized lesson plans that targeted individual strengths and weakness. Then comes online gaming. He said that AI-powered tutoring systems and virtual assistants enhanced engagement. AI automated grading, attendance and lesson planning and enabled teachers to focus on students' interaction. AI provided universities with insights. AI-powered platforms also enabled remote learning, expanding access to education. Referring to specialised learning and life-long learning, he said that there were AI-powered internships and practical experiences. There was continuous upskilling with the AI. He held that the AI offered a lot of jobs, increased efficiency and enhanced decision-making.

Further, Nilanjan Das focused on negative aspects of AI and said that it led to job displacement. It also created skill gaps and increased surveillance. Automation could replace routine jobs in sectors like manufacturing, retail and administrative roles leading to unemployment and inequality. As far as the positive aspects are concerned, they bring precision in medicine and ensure

efficient healthcare. It is also helpful in early detection of diseases. Use of Robotics in surgery has been made possible by the AI. Similarly, expansion of telemedicine has become a reality today due to the application of AI. It has enhanced user experience. Collaboration in development and improved communication are other positive aspects of AI, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman of the IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, observed that knowledge was something that never ended. "There is action and action turns into project. We are bound to go with AI at this age. There cannot be any law to stop it. There are lots of benefits. AI is more reliable than human perception", he

system, banking, business etc., in a better way. Humanity has a better chance. AI should be learnt by everyone, he stressed.

At the end of the lecture, Prof. Wani extended a vote of thanks to the attendees.

Annual Meeting of Governing Council (G.C.)

The 76th Meeting (Annual) of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) was held on 7th September, 2024 (Saturday) in the Auditorium of the Institute at 162, Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025 in hybrid mode. A total of 22 persons (14 members and 8 special invitees) attended the meeting.

Before taking up the agenda items and starting the business, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, Vice-Chairperson, IOS welcomed all the offline and online members and special invitees of the Governing Council, Institute of Objective Studies. Thereafter, the agenda of the meeting of the Governing Council (G.C.) was taken up.



On the dais (L-R): Mr. Mohammad Alam, Prof. M. Afzal Wani and Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, Mr. Nilanjan Das (in inset) delivering his lecture

said. He warned that AI could also be misused as a knife was misused. He also referred to robotic technology which helped reach the level of precision. He advised, "First record the actions that are harmful. Robot can stand during all seasons. It is more reliable than human mind. It may also signal that the officers are wrong. It is yet to be used in a big way because only about two per cent people in India are AI literate. AI and human environment have to co-exist". He opined that power would come through technology. He asked to look to technology which was useful for teachers and judges. AI can be used in governance, teaching, administration, public distribution

The meeting was initiated with the recitation of a verse from the Holy Qur'an and its translation by Prof. Shamim A. Ansari, Member, Governing Council, IOS.

Condolence resolution was adopted on the sad demise of all those associated with the IOS, who passed away during April to August, 2024 and *dua* was made on behalf of the G.C. of the IOS.

The minutes of the 75th meeting of Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS, held on 7th March, 2024, were presented and confirmed.

The Follow-up Report (Action-taken Report) of the last Governing

Council meeting was presented before the G.C., which was considered and got approved with certain information/suggestions/decisions.

The 38th Annual Report of the IOS (along with its Executive Summary) for the year 2023-2024, was presented before the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS. The same was considered and recommended to the General Assembly of the IOS for its approval.

The Audited Financial Report of the Institute for the year 2022-2023 (assessment year 2023-2024) and the Estimated Annual Budget of the IOS for the year 2024-2025 were presented before the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS. The same were discussed and recommended to the General Assembly of the IOS for its approval.

In regard to the 12th IOS Lifetime Achievement Award, the members were briefly informed about all the earlier eleven recipients of the award. Thereupon all the members and special invitees of the G.C., were requested to recommend suitable names for the same by 30th September, 2024 with their CVs.

A brief about the conferences organised by the IOS under the 'National Personalities' series, in the past was presented and the members and special invitees were requested to suggest the names for the same, by 30th September, 2024.

In regard to organising a two-day International Conference on 'The Challenges and Emerging Paradigm of International Relations in a Post-Covid World', the aims and objectives about this conference were presented in brief to the members and special invitees of the G.C., with the request to send their

opinion/suggestions over the same, if any by 30th September, 2024.

An organising committee was formed consisting of—Mr. Mohammad Alam, Prof. Arshi Khan, Prof. Furqan Qamar and Mr. V. B. Rawat, to work out the formalities and plan of action for the said conference, to be held sometime in Oct./Nov., 2025 in offline mode at New Delhi.

In regard to the name of the international personality for organising the two-day International Conference in the year 2025 it was reported that a two-day International Conference under the said series will be organised on Dr. Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, USA, in online mode sometime in April-May, 2025.



A view of the Governing Council Meeting

The 'Concept Note' for the same will be prepared by Prof. Mohammad Ishaque, Member, General Assembly, IOS.

After going through the report about co-hosting the 2nd International Conference on *Applied and Social Sciences (IICASS)*, organised by Ibn Khaldun University, Bogor, Indonesia on 28-29th August, 2024 in hybrid mode, all the members and special invitees of the G.C., expressed their appreciation for the same.

After going through the report about the renewal of the 2 MoUs by the IOS signed with Ibn Khaldun University, Bogor, Indonesia, and AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic

Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM, Kuala Lumpur, the members and special invitees of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS expressed its appreciation and emphasised on its proper implementation and execution.

Further, a three-member committee was formed consisting of Mr. Mohammad Alam, Prof. Furqan Qamar and Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, to channelise the signing of MoUs and collaboration with other like-minded institutions and organisations of India and abroad.

After going through the report about the conferment of this year's 'NGO of the Year Award (National Category)' on the IOS by the Association of Muslim Professionals, Mumbai, the members of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS and special invitees applauded the IOS with their full appreciation and satisfaction.

On the report about the 15-day internship programme of the students of B.A. Islamic Studies from Jamia Hamdard, at IOS, New Delhi, the members of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS and special invitees expressed their appreciation about the diligent performance of IOS in this new field.

The reports of the upcoming programmes of the IOS from September 2024 onwards and the on-going research projects undertaken by the IOS headquarters were presented before the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS, which after going through both the reports expressed its satisfaction.

The progress reports of the translation of IOS books from English

to Urdu and Hindi as well as the translation, review and editing of IIIT books were presented before the members of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS, who after going through the above reports expressed their satisfaction.

The detailed report of the programmes organised by the IOS and the list of the journals/books/reports brought out during April to August 2024 were presented before the members of the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS, who, after going through both the report and the list, expressed their satisfaction.

The progress report of the work done in the IOS Data Bank during April to August, 2024 was presented before the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS, which after going through the said report expressed its satisfaction.

The reports about the hits of IOS Website, Current Affairs, Data Bank and Nuqta-e-Nazar during April to August, 2024 were presented before the Governing Council (G.C.) of the IOS. The G.C., after going through the above reports, expressed its appreciation.

Thereafter Mr. Mohammad Alam, Secretary General, IOS requested all the G.C. members and special invitees to contribute article(s) for the IOS Current Affairs (in English) and *Nuqta-e-Nazar* (in Urdu) on regular basis.

Lastly Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Chairman, IOS in his concluding remarks said that the IOS is open to receive contribution from scholars from all over the country. He stressed the need to strengthen different academic committees of the IOS and organise its frequent meetings in order to thrash out ideas, and plan of action. He concluded

by thanking all the members and special invitees for their active participation and valuable suggestions extended by them in the meeting.

Annual Meeting of General Assembly (G.A.)

The 38th Annual Meeting of General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS) was held on September 8, 2024 (Sunday) in the Auditorium of the IOS at 162, Jogabai Main Road, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025, in hybrid mode. A total of 40 members & associate members attended the meeting.

Before taking up the agenda items and starting the business, Prof. (Ms.)

The minutes of the 37th Annual Meeting of General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), held on 27th August, 2023, were presented and confirmed.

The Follow-up Report (Action-taken Report) of the last G.A. meeting was presented, which was considered and got approved with certain information/ suggestions/decisions:

The 38th Annual Report of the IOS (along with its Executive Summary) for the year 2023-2024 was presented before the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS. The same was considered and approved.

The Audited Financial Report of the Institute for the year 2022-2023

(assessment year 2023-2024) and the Estimated Annual Budget of the Institute for the year 2024-2025, as recommended by the Governing Council (G.C.), were presented before the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS. The same were approved by the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS.



Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, Prof. Syed Jamaluddin, Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Mr. Mohammad Alam, Prof. Furqan Qamar and Prof. Mohammad Ishaque releasing the book titled "The Making of India: A Journey through Eight Centuries"

Haseena Hashia, Vice-Chairperson, IOS welcomed the members for attending the meeting. Thereafter, the agenda of the meeting of the General Assembly (G.A.) was taken up.

The meeting was initiated with the recitation of a verse from the Holy Qur'an with its translation by Mr. Mansoor Ahmad, Multi-media In-charge, IOS.

Condolence resolution on the sad demise of all those, associated with the IOS, who passed away during September, 2023 to August, 2024 was adopted and *dua* was made on behalf of G.A. of the IOS.

The composition of newly constituted office-bearers of the IOS, as decided in the meeting of Governing Council of the IOS, held on 7th March, 2024, was informed to the members. The General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS endorsed and approved the above decision.

After going through the report about co-hosting the 2nd International Conference on "Applied and Social Sciences (IICASS)", being organised by Ibn Khaldun University, Bogor, Indonesia on 28-29 August, 2024 in hybrid mode all the members and special invitees of the G.A. expressed their appreciation.

Further it was suggested that the IOS may plan and organise a conference, in compliance with the SDGs in collaboration with Ibn Khaldun University, Bogor, Indonesia.

After going through the report about the renewal of the 2 MoUs by the IOS signed with Ibn Khaldun University Bogor Indonesia, and AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, IIUM, Kuala Lumpur, the members and special invitees of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS expressed its appreciation and emphasised on its proper implementation and execution.

After going through the report about the conferment of this year's 'NGO of the Year Award (National Category)' on the IOS by the Association of Muslim Professionals, Mumbai, the members of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS applauded the IOS with their full appreciation and satisfaction.

On the report about the 15-day internship programme of the students of B.A. Islamic Studies from Jamia Hamdard, at IOS, New Delhi, the members of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS expressed their appreciation about the diligent performance of IOS in this new field.

The reports of the upcoming programmes of IOS from September, 2024 onwards and the on-going research projects undertaken by the IOS headquarters were presented before the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS, which, after going through both the reports, expressed its satisfaction.

The progress reports of the translation of IOS books from English to Urdu and Hindi as well as the translation, review and editing of IIIT books were presented before the members of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS who, after going through the above reports, expressed their satisfaction.

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the list of journals/books/reports brought out during April to August, 2024 were presented before the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS, which, after going through both the reports expressed its satisfaction.

The progress report of the work done in the IOS Data Bank; the reports about the hits of IOS Website, Current Affairs, Data Bank and Nuqta-e-Nazar during April to August, 2024 were presented before the members of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS, who, after going through these reports, expressed their appreciation.

Thereafter two important publications of the IOS were released during the meeting, which are as under:

1. *The Making of India: A Journey through Eight Centuries*, edited by Prof. Syed Jamaluddin
2. *Inter-Religious Understanding for Universal Equality and Fraternity*, edited by Prof. M. Afzal Wani.

Thereupon, Prof. Furqan Qamar, Centre for Management Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, delivered a lecture on the topic "*Affordable Access to Quality Higher Education and Muslim Minorities*", which was presided over by Prof. M. Afzal Wani, Chairman, IOS. The lecture was followed by an interactive question-answer session.

Prof. M. Afzal Wani, congratulating Prof. Furqan Qamar for delivering such an insightful lecture, presented his concluding remarks.

In the end, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia thanked all the members & associate members of General Assembly (G.A.) of the IOS for their full support and cooperation.

IOS lecture on "Affordable Access to Quality Higher Education and Muslim Minorities"

On the occasion of 38th annual meeting of the General Assembly (G.A.) of the Institute of Objective Studies (IOS), held on September 8, 2024, a lecture programme on 'Affordable Access to Quality Higher

Education and Muslim Minorities' was organised by the Institute at its auditorium.

The lecture was delivered by Prof. Furqan Qamar from the Department of Management, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Introducing the speaker, the Vice-Chairperson of the IOS, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia, said Prof. Qamar is a former Vice-Chancellor of the Rajasthan University and the Central University of Himachal Pradesh. He is also ex-Secretary General of the Association of Indian Universities. He is a well-known academician and his contribution in the field has been recognised in India and abroad, she noted.

Delivering the lecture, Prof. Furqan Qamar, expressed concern over declining proportion of Muslims in education. One of the reasons for this decline was that education had become a costly affair which majority of Muslims no longer afforded. Both the government and the community leaders were worried that 15 per cent population of the country was lagging behind in education, leading to the lack of employment opportunities for them. What was happening since the last 12 years was also causing concern. But, one must not get disappointed and hope that good days would return. He said that if a community wanted to progress, it must participate in politics. It was also a matter of concern that the Muslim representation in politics was declining. The Sachar Committee report in 2006 showed mirror to the plight of Muslims. The report described Muslims as the largest minority and the second largest majority in the country. Despite this, there were only 58 IAS officers in the country as against about 150 if taken into account their numerical strength. Referring to the latest edition of the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, he said the number of Muslims in higher education declined from 21.10 lakh in 2019-20 to 19.22 lakh in 2020-21. Thus, 1.79 lakh Muslim students are

missing from the country's higher education system. As a result of this, the share of Muslim students in higher education decreased from 5.45 per cent to 4.64 per cent during the corresponding year.

Prof. Qamar held that it was for the first time that the enrolment of Muslims in higher education declined on a year-on-year basis. Until 2019-20, their numbers had been increasing though varying and gradually increased from 6.97 lakh (or 2.53 per cent of the total enrolment in higher education) in 2010 to 21.01 lakh (5.45 per cent). He noted that before 2014 and after the Sachar Committee report, the enrolment of the Muslim students in higher education

registered 11-12 per cent rise. But, according to the 2021-22 report, this came down after 2014. A decline in Muslim enrolment in higher education by 8.53 per cent in one year was simply inexplicable. He questioned if the pandemic caused it. But, if it was so, why only the Muslims were affected. They were not the only social group which

was economically poor and socially disadvantaged. "While it may be perplexing to pinpoint the reasons and causes for the sudden drop the low enrolment of Muslims in higher education in India. It is generally attributable to a combination of socio-economic factors. Educational disparities, natural and perceived discrimination are some of the factors that contribute to the drop in their enrolment". He further said that socio-economic conditions played a pivotal role in determining access to higher education. Most of the Muslims in India came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and faced access barriers due to poverty and the lack of financial resources. Economic challenges also

restricted their ability to pursue higher education due to rising costs of receiving education, he added.

Prof. Qamar pointed out that the real barrier was ostensibly seen after 2014 when the new government at the Centre was installed and it took oath of office to uphold the Constitution. But the question was whether it acted as per the spirit of the Constitution. Their indifference to the community was one of the reasons for Muslims' inaccessibility to education. In this context, he referred to Assam chief minister's diatribes against Muslims. He also took note of an analysis which said that Muslims wanted to give education to their children but financial

their children to Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) either and engaged them in other occupations. He said that out of 21 lakh, 5 lakh Muslims took admission in various institutions.

Prof. Qamar maintained that the other reason for the higher rate of drop-outs was non-implementation of the Sachar Committee report which recommended that Muslim students should also be awarded scholarships. Scholarships being given to Muslim students had since been discontinued. The number of Muslim students studying in various institutions stood at 5 lakh. While 3.4 per cent students were studying in central universities, 90 per cent and 10 per cent Muslim students

were receiving education in colleges and other universities respectively. Fifty to sixty per cent colleges had vocational courses. He said, "They do not get education in the institutions from where they could progress. Institutions where they study cannot ensure a job to them". Muslims opened a number of schools. In UP, there is a chain of Islamia colleges. There were a number of schools from

where the functionaries entered politics. More often than not principal and the manager in Islamia Colleges are at the loggerheads with each other. In order to make them more viable, quality of education should be improved. Besides, facilities for teacher's training and technical support should be put in place. He urged the community leaders to convince the community that they had equal rights before the eye of the law.

Prof. Qamar opined that there were two goods – merit good and public good. While the activity like planting trees comes under merit good, benefiting himself and others, falls under the category of public good.



Prof. Furqan Qamar (on the podium) delivering his lecture

constraints and government's apathy prevented them. This also led them to send their wards to madrasas. A mere 2.5 to 3 per cent children are enrolled in madrasas. Some of the madrasas are recognised by the Madrasa Board. He said that the ratio of girls in enrolment was higher than the boys. Girls were performing better than boys. This trend was visible across religions. Under the Right to Education Act (RTE), enrolment from class 1 to 10th was compulsory. But, till the children reached class 10th, a large number of them dropped out. Significantly, the rate of dropouts declined in 11th and 12th classes. He held that economic weakness was the main cause of drop-outs after 8th class. They did not send

Education also comes under this category because, besides benefiting oneself, it benefits society. A substantial amount of money should be spent on education. According to the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, 6 per cent of the GDP should be spent on education. Out of this, 2 per cent each should be spent on primary and secondary education. Today, instead of being public good, education had become a public responsibility. This was why education entered the domain of private sector. About 90 per cent medical colleges and 70 per cent technical institutions were in the private sector. Private institutions were subsisting on the fees from students. Some philanthropists made donations to certain private institutions like Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. Today, higher education is beyond the reach of the common man. Referring to the universities in the private sector, he said that private universities were replacing government-run universities. They were subsisting on loan and heavy fees, instead of government grant. Universities like Aligarh Muslim University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University charge less fees from the students but due to the lack of hostel facilities, they are forced to take private accommodation in the town, he noted.

Prof. Qamar pointed out that education today was very costly and most of the parents were unable to afford it. There is mushrooming of coaching institutes for preparing candidates for admission to IITs and medical colleges. These coaching institutes charge exorbitantly from the candidates. Since quality education is very costly, it poses a big challenge before the parents, he said. Members of Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes did benefit from reservation, but for Muslims it remained elusive. Laying stress on the need for good schools, he urged the management of Islamia colleges to end politics and raise the standard of teaching. There were about one lakh seats in medical colleges and an amount ranging between Rs. 1 crore and Rs. 4 crore was being charged by

the private medical college as fees. This leads the candidates to seek admission to medical colleges in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc.; where fee structure was cheaper compared to India. While calling for the identification of the problems and their resolution, he felt the reasons were either structural or financial.

Prof. Qamar commented, "Muslims in India suffer on account of the misconception of being outsider, invader, anti-national, pro-Pakistan, descendants of cruel rulers who committed atrocities on Hindu natives of India. Sadly, NEP 2020 hardly does anything to break this stereotype. It may be hoped that the just constituted steering committee for the national curriculum framework would address". He further said that what the community needed was handholding and support to make it to the mainstream higher education in a much larger numbers commensurate with their share in the population. Silence on or sidelining these issues on the part of the policy, did not go with '*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas*'. The majoritarian overtone in the policy might not only alienate its own nationals from contributing their might to national development, he concluded.

In his presidential remarks, the Chairman of the IOS, Prof. M. Afzal Wani observed that Prof. Furqan Qamar's lecture provided hints that could be helpful in solving problems. They could also serve the vision document for Muslims. He said that the IOS would give it wide publicity for the benefit of Muslim educational institutions. His speech ignited a new spirit in the community. He urged Muslims to take his speech to heart. He suggested to the Muslim institutions to invite Prof. Qamar for his lecture on the subject that was so vital for the benefit of the community.

At the end of the lecture, Vice-Chairperson of the Institute, Prof. (Ms.) Haseena Hashia proposed a vote of thanks.

IOS Condoles the sad demise of Abdul Rasheed Agwan

A condolence meeting to mourn the sad demise of the scholar, writer, researcher, social activist and the founding Secretary General of the Institute of Objective Studies, Abdul Rasheed Agwan, was organised by the Institute at its auditorium on August 24, 2024.

The meeting began with the recitation of a verse from the Holy Qur'an by Maulana Abdullah Tariq. Mr. Mansoor Ahmad, in-charge of the IOS multimedia division, in his opening remarks said that Abdul Rasheed Agwan was gifted with several qualities. He served as the Secretary General of the Institute of Objective Studies since its inception in 1986 till 1993. He later became the Finance Secretary of the Institute from 1993 to 1995, and remained member of its general assembly till 2003. He authored a book *Islam and the Environment* for the Institute. He combated his serious illness successfully. Shaka was the last book he wrote in Hindi, a novel which was released a few days before his death. He never recovered from a road accident which he met while travelling in Rajasthan.

Noted scholar, Mr. Kaleemul Hafeez, expressed his sorrow over the passing away of Abdul Rasheed Agwan and held that a close friend said good bye to his friends. He was not an ordinary man, he was extra-ordinary in many ways. He left a rich legacy of activism, research, writing and thought. He was an inspiration to everyone who came into contact with him. He was worthy of emulation. What alienated him from others was that he possessed a scientific temper and never bragged. He said that Agwan was a great man whose love for the service of humanity and unflinching faith in Allah was unparalleled. He spent his life in simplicity. He treated old and young alike. He was a visionary who looked at the things from a scientific prism, Mr. Hafeez added.

Dr. M. A. Jauhar noted that he was associated with Abdul Rasheed Agwan for about 23 years. He disclosed that both of them drew a plan for the politics and change. They dreamt of working in 20 different fields. He said that both of them called the local MLA to discuss their plan on these 20 points. He attributed the Shaheen Bagh Bridge and the hospital in Khadar area in Delhi to his unceasing efforts. Besides, sewage treatment plant in Okhla was built due to his efforts, he remarked.

Ms. Shaheen Kausar said that she had no words to praise Abdul Rasheed Agwan as a dynamic and a well-meaning person. His services to the Muslim community could not be lost sight of. It was he who got her admitted as a member of the Social and Democratic Party of India (SDPI). He made 'Volunteers of Change' in her school. That is the reason why his personality was unique. He never nursed a grievance against anybody. She added that he was always concerned about the youngsters and women.

Editor of the Urdu monthly, *Afkaar-i-Milli*, Dr. Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, observed that Abdul Rasheed Agwan died two days after his last book was released. He said that he was associated with him since the last 40 years. He was selfless in working for the uplift of the common man. "He always thought of doing something new and big, and I worked with him on several projects". If in a meeting the decision was not in accordance with his wishes, he would raise the issue in the next meeting. He was instrumental in building Ayesha Shelter House for women for their skill development. Milli Model School was another project which was launched at his initiative. Whatever he did, he did it

for the pleasure of Allah. He guided people by his high character and noble deeds, and whoever came into contact with him, he did not remain uninfluenced from him. He said pious is one who feeds the poor. He used to search for the poor people to feed them. Besides, he was a mobile encyclopaedia of Qur'anic knowledge. During the fasting month of Ramadhan, he used to invite 250-300 people daily for Iftaar. He urged those who were close to him to fulfil his unfulfilled tasks. He also called for measuring up to the expectations of the Holy Qur'an.

Vice-President of the Delhi State
All India Muslim Majlis-e-



A view of the Speakers

Mushawarat, Dr. Idris Qureshi, said that Abdul Rashid Agwan involved him in several social activities. He used to work on several fronts and connected himself to the like-minded people. He expressed the confidence that his labour for the uplift of the poor and the needy would not go in vain.

Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies, Prof. M. Afzal Wani recalled his association with Abdul Rasheed Agwan in 1986 when the former was studying in the Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was staying at the Jhelum Hostel of the University then. Two persons came to him by the scooter which was driven by Abdul Rasheed Agwan. The pillion rider was none else

but Dr. M. Manzoor Alam, the Chief Patron and founding Chairman of the Institute of Objective Studies. That was the time when the IOS was in the process of being established. He said that he handed over his dissertation for Ph.D. to Dr. Alam for its publication by the Institute of Objective Studies. The dissertation was published later in book form by the Genuine Publications & Media Pvt. Ltd. "Both of them talked to me on Muslim issues. From the time on, whenever I happened to be in Delhi, I met them without fail". He expressed concern that both judiciary and legislature were eroding the principles of *Shariah*, and called it intellectual poverty. He strongly believed that there

was no dearth of scholars who had ideas but that needed to be translated into action. He insisted that those who gave the idea of understanding, must make it public, so that some work could be done on it. He also called for remaining alert on *Taqwa* (purity). There should also be mutual understanding.

Abdul Rasheed Agwan's son, Rafiq Agwan, thanked all those who attended the meeting and paid homage to his

father. He described his father as his mentor, friend and soul and his love for children would continue to inspire them. He spent his entire life for the pleasure of Allah. He would always be remembered for his efforts to the Muslim community. His work in the field of empowerment of the minorities and environment was noteworthy. He wrote 13 books and produced more than 100 papers, Rafiq Agwan added.

Social activist, M.H. Ghazali said that when he came to Delhi, he had the first meeting with Abdul Rasheed Agwan. It was on his advice that he joined the Institute of Objective Studies.

Later on, he met the late Maulana Amin Usmani, Secretary of Islamic Fiqh Academy, New Delhi. Abdul Rasheed Agwan was the embodiment of love and kindness. He never got enraged with anybody, he noted. Javed Rahmani, observed that Abdul Rasheed Agwan always encouraged the youth. His work for youth empowerment and women empowerment was the hallmark of his commitment to social uplift.

In his presidential remarks, the Patron of the IOS, Prof. Z.M. Khan, observed that Abdul Rasheed Agwan's name was continuously ringing in his ears. Dr. M. Manzoor Alam used to refer to his name very often. It was anybody's guess if a man could work in so many areas. His profile was multifarious. Despite ailment, he worked according to the role cut out for him. He was ceaseless in his efforts to do something tangible for the society. Ultimately, he earned the pleasure of Allah who is Omniscient. He assured that the IOS would not be found wanting in fulfilling his vision. He also said that the Institute would do in the best of the possible capacity to take his work forward.

The condolence meeting ended with the special congregational *dua* held by Maulana Abdullah Tariq for his salvation and a place in *Jannah*.

A large number of Agwan's friends, admirers, scholars and social activists attended the meeting.

Obituary

A Doyen of Pali and Buddhist Studies passed away

(July 3, 1933 – March 27, 2024)

Professor Sanghasen Singh, an illustrious personality, a man having versatile qualities, a man embodying the finest values is no more. He was associated with the Institute of Objective Studies since its beginning, and was the founding member of its governing council. He also served as Secretary General of the Institute from 1993 to 1998. He was the editor of IOS Newsletter, and was associated with different academic committees of the IOS. He edited a book for the IOS titled *Language Problem in India*, and contributed several research papers in the conferences and seminars organised by the IOS.

He was an expert of Sanskrit and Pali, and truly deserved the Certificate of Honour awarded to him by the President of India in 2001. It is indeed a great loss for the Institute of Objective Studies and academic community, at large.

Beyond his scholarly achievements, Prof. Sanghasen Singh was known for his admiration of revolutionary ideas, particularly those of Rahul Sankrityayan. His editorial work on texts such as "*Sphutārthā S'rīghāṇācāra-sangrahaṭīkā*" and his dedication of "*Dhammapada: A Study*" to Rahuljee underscore his reverence for intellectual vigor and the courage to challenge societal norms. His efforts in revising and editing texts like "*Abhidharmakos'a*

with *Nālandikā Tīkā*" further highlight his commitment to preserving and advancing Buddhist scholarship. Prof. Sanghasen Singh's collaboration with esteemed institutions and scholars exemplifies his role as a guiding force in the field of Buddhist Studies, inspiring countless researchers and students. His simplicity, clarity of thought, and logical reasoning continue to resonate with those who had the privilege of learning from him.

May his soul find eternal peace, and may his teachings continue to illuminate the path for generations to come.

Calendar 2025

Agents, Shop-keepers and others may place their order of the IOS calendar 2025 which has following features:

- Page-1 World: Mosques through the Ages (started from 2011) Five Oldest Mosques of Indonesia.
- Page-2 India: High Courts–Muslim Chief Justices, 1947-2023
- Page-3 World: Press Freedom Index-2022 and 2023
- Page-4 India: Percentage of Illiterate Population, 2022-2023

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