

ISLAM: A JOURNEY THROUGH SECOND MILLENNIUM

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Religion is generally said to be stagnant. Changes in the religious approaches are not possible or desirable according to one school of thought. But there is also the other school of thought which encourages changes in religious approaches. That is, for some, religion is dogmatic and for some others it is pragmatic. This is how religious conflicts arise. Islam is the youngest religion and it is generally dogmatic as Mullahs are firm not to allow any changes in religious matters. But the liberals among Muslims hold a different view. Islam has to move with the changes in the society. But they take a cautious stand that what is fundamental, what is the core aspect of religion could remain un-changed. Wherever there is scope for changes, there is no harm in welcoming changes.

The modern forces of science and technology have devastating effect on human behaviour and thinking. Islam can not escape from this. Islam is flexible not rigid. Islam is dynamic not dogmatic. Islam is scientific, not superstitious. There are many issues open to interpretation. Every century has witnessed changes. From the first millennium to the second millennium changes become inevitable.

A study was undertaken by the author of this article to assess changes, direction of the changes and relations to the changes. A summary of this study is presented here.

The study of modernization among Muslims has sociological significance in contemporary Indian society because of the radical transformation, which is taking place now in Indian society. It is generally felt that the Muslim society is too rigid and conservative giving rise to strongly entrenched traditional attitudes and values. Socio-cultural systems in Muslim society have their own identity as distinct from those of the other social groups in India and therefore Muslims find it difficult to join the main stream of the society. It is further argued that social

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modernization is generally lacking in Muslim society and hence in terms of adoptiveness, the ability of a society to confront, overcome and indeed prepare itself to new challenges by re-arranging its social structure is rather a difficult process.

It is also of interest to examine whether the challenges in Muslim society originate from internal social dynamics or from external social contact, from the impact of natural forces or from any other source. It is comparative that societies are able to accommodate the need for change when it occurs.

Muslim society, just as any society, has to confront the challenges, strains and conflicts to which it should ultimately adopt. It is immaterial whether such challenges originate in the process of attempts to change the external environmental conditions, because of internal strains or because of external contacts made. If the Muslim society does not admit the character of the challenges in contemporary society and tries to reinforce the traditional social structure and the values adopted, it can hardly be contested that such a Muslim society is non-modernizing. If, on the other hand, Muslim society is prepared to undertake re-arrangements of its structure aiming at efforts to meet the challenges, then it deserves to be called a modernizing society.

But it is often argued by both adherents of Islam and non-adherents too that Islam does not permit radical changes in values and attitudes; as this if allowed, would kill the very spirit of Islam. Islam does not permit changes that would alter the basic structure of the religion. It is argued also that Islam has everything within itself and there is no need to borrow any strength from other religious groups. Its principles are immutable and universal, applicable to all times. It would thus mean that the devastating, social changes observed in present day society have no relevance and should not have any relevance to the Muslim society. In other words, according to this school of thought there is no scope for modernization in Muslim society.

To counter this trend of social thinking, there is a third school of thought according to which the concept of modernization is not something totally alien to Islamic thought. It advocates that Islam is a dynamic religion and as such in its broad perspective, its dynamisms does permit coverage of many concepts and issues involved in and around

modernization. The origin of Islam itself is in the nature of modernization. When Islam was born, the social attitudes and values of society at that times were too conservative and traditional and had a degenerative influence on mankind. It was left to the Holy Prophet to crusade against these dehumanizing and degraded social values and attitudes. The changes brought about by the Holy Prophet in many spheres of peoples' thinking and activities in his time were revolutionary by any standard and these changes were not looked on with tolerance by those with vested interests. The Holy Prophet desired certain changes in the social system, which would safeguard the interests of the masses from a humane point of view.

The Holy Prophet's broad-based social philosophy is the foundation of the socio-economic doctrines of Islam. Since Islam is a dynamic religion, its principles guide the destiny of mankind from time to time. Islam therefore permits the adjustment of its adherents to the changing needs of society from time to time. Whenever such changes occur in Muslim society, it is natural to designate such changes as modernization. Thus modernization is not anti-Islamic.

It is also observed that modernization of Muslim society has received adequate attention from time to time and thus, any study on the relevance of the continuation of certain traditional attitudes and values is of much significance to Muslim social thinkers in particular. However not every change is considered to be desirable nor is every individual or group prepared for the modernization of Muslim society in the contemporary social scene. What are the changes Muslims want, what are the changes they do not want and what forces account for such sharp variations in Muslim thought, form the core aspect of the present study of *Modernization Among Muslims*. The empirical evidences advanced in the study provide ample material in spite of certain research-methodological limitations to draw certain broad conclusions touching the various issues of a controversial nature in the analysis presented here. In order to make this concluding chapter clear and precise, the following issues are answered here:

1. Whether the concept of modernization in general is regarded by Muslims of the present generation as being pro-Islam or anti-Islamic?

2. If there is a divided opinion, which of these are pro-Islamic and which are anti-Islamic?
3. Of the several social groups among Muslims, which groups support the concept and which groups oppose it? And
4. What are the social forces, which account for such variations in the approach of the Muslims to the concept of modernization?

Modernization

Modernization is better accepted than westernization. It is the contention of the majority of the respondents that Islam does not mean or expect Muslims to retain the same style of life that was practiced when Islam was born. The wind of change is blowing strong. Though it is possible to withstand its force, it is not always necessary to do so. The blind belief in modernism as a way of life, hoping thereby that man will have better status in the society, seems to be a fallacy. A distinction has to be made between what is vulgar and what is decent. If modernization means vulgar, unethical practices, it needs to be condemned. But if it has no such stigma, there is hardly any justification in condemning it and voiding it. In fact, there remains no facet of life in the current Muslim society where there is no sign of the influence of modernization. Even in the mosques, many innovations with modern influences are observed. The private lives of some moulvies also betray such evidence.

But what has to be avoided, according to the findings of the present study, is the common and crude aspect of modernization. On the other hand should Muslims adopt this dimension of life they will undermine the Islamic foundation of dignity, modesty and decorum. Islam was founded in an age when man was barbarous and uncivilized and it attempts to uphold the dignity and status of man. Its dictates deal with most subjects and this covers dress, personal appearance, public life activities and so on. As long as a Muslim attempts to guard himself/herself against the temptations of degradation, a certain amount of modernization is permissible. It is here that one has to make a careful distinction between what is ethical and decent, and what is not. We live in a society of relative, not absolute values. Hence what is good for one may not be good for another; one has to view it from the Islamic point of view.

The expressions of certain Muslim organizations have led to the emergence of the feeling that attempts are being made to take Muslims back to the early days of Islam, which will cut them off from the mainstream of the society. The present study does not provide any substantial material in support of this desire. Even the most orthodox of Muslims have not advanced this theory.

However the social situation cannot be totally de-lined from the organized attempts at Islamization in some parts of India. The idea of Islamization needs to be properly and fully understood. If narrow and rigid parameters are used, then the outcome will be negative and destructive. Islamization is and should be a process through which the undignified and dehumanizing effects of modernization and westernization are weeded out and men as well as women are enabled to lead a decent life of dignity and purposefulness. This social movements has a useful impact on youths who are on the wrong track. Because of ill-bread early socialization and lack of religious training, the modern youth have become notorious deviants so that the expected normative life is paralyzed. Though Modernization definitely means social change, not every change is for the better. If changes in human behaviour are impediments to healthy social values and attitudes and cripple our social foundations, then such changes need to be probed, examined and arrested. It is in this sense that the Islamization movement may be welcome.

The danger of carrying on this movement beyond certain limit and creating a chauvinistic and parochial atmosphere, however, is not conducive to the healthy growth of Muslim in contemporary society. Restrictions that are made on some behavioural aspects will be appreciated, but too much interference will make life intolerable. This thinking emerges in the present study where the vast majority of Muslims are for a blend of traditional values and attitudes with modern social needs.

The ultimate compromise formula presented in the study does not require Muslims of today to go back to the past. They can hopefully look ahead. A blind belief in traditional values and attitudes may be substituted by a more rational and scientific approach provided that the basic tenets of Islam are not sacrificed or diluted in the process. Islam is a dynamic religion and as such has vast scope for adjustments and also re-adjustments with contemporaneous changes made in the society. But this should

neither mean nor result in a debased or dehumanized social foundation on which the Islamic society cannot stand.

Westernization

Westernization has been both accepted and rejected by the respondents, depending upon the nature and degree of westernization. Western civilization does not suit the requirements of modern Muslims without a certain amount of modification. They argue that blind, total and uncritical adoption of modern science and technology which has its roots in atheism and materialism is nothing but a destructive and negative surgical operation which annihilates the rich tradition and culture of Islam.

The study reveals that there is no blind opposition to westernization either. As long as certain good qualities are imbued which will contribute to better understanding in community life, there should be no opposition in it. For instance, consider the Indian standard time which is notorious, Muslim standard time is criminal but western time is set on punctuality. Islam does not permit time killing. In short, the Muslim mind is not prepared to defend and imitate western civilization if it is likely to pollute and corrupt the behavioural pattern of the Muslim and tarnish the image of Islam.

There is not much variation in the attitudes of several categories of Muslims included in the study. While the priestly class takes the lead with total opposition towards attempts of westernization, even the public men who are drawn from the higher circles of professional and educational background also do not support westernization without condition. There is hardly any difference of opinion between male and female respondents.

Emancipation of Women

The question of emancipation of Muslim women gets top priority in our attempts to understand the impact of modernization on the Muslim society. To some it is regarded as indispensable for social progress; to some others as an attempt to lower the status of women. Islam has already emancipated women who were worse than slaves in the earlier days. The credit goes to the Holy prophet who crusaded against the exploitation of woman. Woman in Islam has dignity, status and power and she is not an animal created solely for satisfying the sexual needs and passions of man. Yet in contemporary Muslim society, there exists a perpetual controversy about the status of Muslim women. Seminars, workshops and debates are

organized to highlight the lower and subordinate status of women. Some argued that her status has to be enhanced and that she should be given more freedom, while some others argue that woman needs to be controlled and made to behave.

If attempts to emancipate Muslim women are meant to develop their minds through education and use their capacities, skills and resources to earn their livelihood whenever such a situation warrants, these attempts are justified. There is not opposition as revealed in the study, for even higher education; though opinion is divided on engineering education for women. There is, of course, a total opposition to NCC and a strong resistance to allowing Muslim women to mix socially with men in public activities including sports. There is no opposition in general, though the priestly class has different views, to women participating in many kinds of activities among themselves. Similarly, it is evident from the study that it is not the intention of the Muslims to keep their women backward. They want women also to march forward; but this marching ahead is fettered with conditions. In this, often the women also support the men. While women should not be made to spend three-quarters of their lifetime in the kitchen, it is also argued that they should not spend their time in clubs.

While western dress for men is allowed, the western dress like mini-skirt, sleeveless frocks, tight dress, pants, etc., is to be opposed. The reason advanced is that such dress would provoke the men and create unnecessary problems to the women themselves. There is no opposition to fashion as long as it is not used to attract the man. Thus, the orthodox in particular is of the view that there is no question that modern fashions which are created to attract attention, violate the principles of both Quran and the Sunnah.

Modern Dress

A person's dress varies from country to country, as well as from time to time. The social norms have the force of regulating the type and manner of dress one should or should not wear. The question is whether dress and religion go together. The discussion of this issue with the respondents of the present study reveals modern as well as traditional attitudes. Islam has not prescribed any particular dress. The view that the saree is a Hindu woman's dress and hence the Muslim woman should not wear it, is totally disagreed with the respondents. Even the priestly and highly religious

classes do not oppose the wearing of the saree. Hence the attempts made by some in recent times to discard the saree as a part of Islamization finds no support.

At the same time, the results of studies indicate that modern dress like mini-skirts, sleeveless frocks, tight pants, etc., do not find favour with Muslims. They think that such dress will distract the males. Though to some, such Muslims may seem quite rigid and backward, from the reasons they advance for their views, they do not appear to be traditional. In all, the most significant objection made with regard to dress is that wearing silk clothes by men is still considered to be a social taboo.

Indianization and Secularization

The concepts of Indianization and Secularism find favour with the vast majority of Muslims. The fact that Indianization is not equate with Hinduisation lends valuable support to their thinking and acceptance. In fact, this acceptance comes only after a careful cross-examination of the concept in the context of Islamic injunction. The support comes from all sections of the Muslim population including the priestly and highly religious classes. In other words, Islam and secularism are not parallel, but are mutually compatible. This argues well for the Muslims as a whole since they have to live in multi-structured Indian society where religious pluralism prevails. Secularism is a positive support to the Muslims of India where the vast majority the population are converts from Hinduism.

Economic Doctrines and Modernization

Islam has its own well founded socialist society where the interests of the have-nots are well taken care of. Humanism as the final goal of Islamic injunctions is not permitted. This traditional thinking seems to remain intact among the respondents. This would mean that the neo-economic influences and pressures have very little impact on the Muslim mind. This is accepted by and large as a healthy sign in a world of competitively tempting opportunities.

However, there is a wide discrepancy between what is professed and what is practiced. The ethics of giving zakat and charity is generally found to be wanting. Even those who give zakat are rarely known to adhere to the principles of Islam. The accumulation of wealth is a guarded secret and it denies opportunity to the poor to have a share in it. Similarly, the hoarding of wealth takes place in actual practice.

It is thus seen that there is much contradiction in principle and practice of the Islamic way of life. Though apparently not much change is to be noticed in the theoretical consideration of Islamic economic doctrine, a lot is left undone in practical life.

Marriage System and Modernization

One of the new trends observed in contemporary society is the emergence of a favourable opinion on the need and significance of inter-religious marriages. Islam does not permit inter-religious marriage subject to certain condition and procedures. The study reveals that inter-religious marriage is still a social taboo. More men than women are not in favour on inter-religious marriages. Meaning thereby that women are slightly less prejudiced. Women have been influenced by mounting pressures for dowry. However, they would prefer to encourage inter-religious marriages only within the framework of Islamic norms. This therefore means that modernization in relation to the marriage system and practice is only partial and conditional. The priestly class however, is not prepared to encourage inter-religious marriages and they insist on conversion before marriage. Their conservatism stems from the traditional Islamic restrictions placed on such marriages.

Islam permits a Muslim man to marry a Christian woman even without conversion since both the religions have revealed books and common religious traditions. But even in these cases, inter-religious marriages are discouraged. Thus, the Muslims mind is by and large against the modernization process in relation to marriages.

However, there seems to be a genuine concern for promoting inter-sect marriages among Muslims. The traditional restrictions, though contrary to Islamic injunctions, continue to prevail even among the educated Muslims. This is one of the barriers to the practice of the concept of egalitarianism in the Muslim society and leads to controversial thinking that a caste system exists in Muslim society. Although this was somewhat true before, the situation is changing now.

'Romantic' marriages and dating are considered to be the outcome of modernization in present society. The impact of western culture on Indian society may be visibly seen today. 'Romantic marriages' have been associated with immoral behaviour and it is in this context that Muslim are against romantic marriages in the western sense of the term. Islam permits

mutual agreement between boys and girls for marriages if they are majors. This is as far as romance before marriage is approved. But the Muslim society is dead set against western style of romance.

Even in regard to dating, there is absolutely no sign of change in the attitudes of Muslims, whether priests or professors. In fact, this evokes greater opposition to 'romantic' marriages.

Modernization and Education

The latter part of the twentieth century is witness to the rapid changes, which are taking place in the field of education. The demand for science and technology is on the increase. Boys and girls are competing for admission. Stress is being laid on NCC and physical education. One consequence of all this is that co-education is found to be inevitable. To what extent have the Muslims responded to the needs of education in modern society? The findings of the present study reveals that Muslims are not totally opposed to the needs of the changing society. At the same time certain new dimensions of education have not been approved. While physical education for girls are partly appreciated, NCC for girls is totally opposed. The objections are based not only on grounds of waste of money or irrelevance on grounds of decency and morality. Similarly, whereas medical education for women is favoured by and large, engineering education for girls is frowned upon by the respondents.

The different attitudes adopted by Muslims towards education for women and men clearly indicate that certain traditional notations are still strong ad that women's education is not as liberal as in the case of men's education. This definitely amounts to placing restrictions on the rights of women in the modern era. Surprisingly, the females seem to be more conservative than the males with regard to their responses. The priestly class is totally opposed to all kinds of modern education excepting medical education. Even this limited support stems from the consideration of protecting Muslim from being examined by males. However, the public men display a different attitudinal approach. They generally welcome new dimension of education excepting NCC for Muslim girls.

Modernization and Religion

Questions pertaining to the religious aspects of the Muslims also reveal very interesting and significant results. For a long time, there has been strong oppositions to the display of photograph of family members

and others in Muslim homes and this opposition had been based on religious considerations. The study reveals that the majority of respondents continue with this thinking even today. The fact that more men than women voice this opposition reveals that women are a little more liberal than men. In fact, among the women, the opinion is equally divided between those who are for displaying photographs and those who are against. What is interesting to note from the study is that those who say that there is no harm in displaying photographs at home argue that they neither worship nor garland them and that the photograph is just a remembrance of person, kith and kin who are dead and gone, and also of eminent persons like national leaders, famous poets and scholars. Yet those who oppose the display of photographs still raise the issue of indirect worship of persons. Anyway, what emerges from the study is the traditional oppositions to photographs still found intact in a majority of cases; but at the same time there has been a rethinking in the minds of some. In other words, the traditional barrier is broken.

The rigid notion that was prevalent for long time among the Muslims that the temple is a prohibited place, is anti-Islamic, and that no Muslim should even visit a temple under any circumstance, does not favour in the minds of majority of the Muslims today. What is revealing is that a vast majority of the Muslims, more men than women, feel that a casual visit to a temple is not an anti-Islamic act and this rethinking is very healthy today in the context of the growing communal tensions between the Muslims and the Hindus, which is often based on false psychological fears. The argument of those Muslims who say that a casual visit to the temple under special circumstances without the intension of offering prayers cannot be taken to be an un-Islamic act since Islam is not that rigid. Islam does not permit idol worship, but has not prohibited visits to non-Muslim religious institutions, depending upon the circumstances and within certain limits. It is also interesting to note that those who argue against even casual visits to temples advance the reason that visiting temples may often tempt Muslims to offer prayers in the temple and therefore, the best thing is not to enter such premises at all. Anyway, the interesting conclusion here is that the traditional notion no longer prevails in the Muslim society by and large. Similarly, it is heartening to note that respect to all religions is given by Muslims; and it is pointed out that the Prophet himself has advocated the idea that it is the duty of every Muslim to respect other religion. This sort

of thinking on the part of the Muslims is relevant for promoting better understanding between Muslims and Hindus, particularly in the pressing social situation.

Modernization and Women's Activities

The traditional notion is that woman has no place outside her home and that she has no right to participate in public activities. Slowly this attitude is being changed today in the context of economic compulsion and educational advancement among women. How does the Muslim society react? It is as backward today as it was in the past? These questions finds suitable answers in the study. The priestly class and the highly religious class totally oppose the idea of Muslim women working in offices and factories along with men. However, the only change noticed in their attitudes is that there is no opposition as long as women worked in place exclusively meant for women. However women have different views. The would like to take up jobs even in places where men work. The public men lend support to this thinking.

Women's participation in sports or social activities is generally opposed by all categories of respondents as long as men are also participating. However if exclusive arrangements have been made no objections are raised. What is interning here is that even Muslim women feel this way about it.

Thus the seeds of change may be perceived to be present in the various approaches made by the Muslims. However the traditional restrictions on women's participation in economic and social activities seem to be strong still.

Modernization and Culture

The reactions of Muslims to certain cultural entertainment programmes indicate that modernization has no relevance. The repeated objection to seeing films has been cited over and over again. There is, however, a distinction made between the males and females. Excepting the priestly and highly religious classes, the rest of the respondents have no objections to either the male's or the female's right to witness films. The priestly and highly religious class are not in favour of film and their objection is made on the ground that Islam does not permit seeing of films which have the power of corrupting minds of the people.

However, the fact that there is almost unanimous opposition to Muslims acting in films is contradicted in actual life as some of the most popular films stars are Muslim men and women. There has been absolutely no public opposition to this even from the religious people.

Dancing or seeing a dance performance by Muslims has total oppositions from all categories of the respondents. This is again based on the moral principles of Islam. At least from the attitudinal point of view, there appears to be no change.

There is a significance in matters relating to music. The discrimination against women attending a music performance while allowing men is generally disapproved of by all. Women are more vocal in their oppositions to restrictions only on females. There is no objection to a woman learning music; but giving a performance before the males is totally opposed. This would imply that there is a discriminatory approach apart from the traditional views against women's right to participate in some of the cultural programmes. Another important inference is that Muslim women are still not supposed to enact such programmes in the presence of men.

Modernization, Pork and Animal Slaughtering

Islam has prohibited certain types of meat and has also specified certain ways of slaughtering animals. These prescribed methods are as old as Islam. Whether there was any change in modern times because of the influence of science and technology was the question raised with reference to the consumption of pork and modernization of slaughtering animals. There is practically no sign of change in the attitudes of Muslims. Pork remains to be a prohibited food despite the argument that the tapeworms present in the meat can be destroyed by cooking the meat well and no harm done to the consumer. This would mean that the traditional prohibition remains unquestioned and unaltered. There is absolutely no difference in the attitudes from among different categories of Muslims.

Similarly, the argument in favour of modernization of slaughtering processes does not find favour with all categories of Muslims. The logic behind the supporters of this theory does not appeal to the Muslims to whom any change in the established practice is found to be anti-Islamic. It is here that faith can not be subjected to the acid test of scientific temper.

Modern Appearances

Urban women, particularly the educated are more fashion conscious and have a tendency to make themselves more attractive by applying bindi, nail polish, lipstick and by using western hair-styles. Some Muslim women too follow these practices. This is considered to be bad since this will lead to women making themselves attractive to men and ultimately the women themselves would become the victims.

While the priestly and religious classes vehemently oppose these practices, there is hardly any difference in the attitudes and values of others including the public men who are well educated and well placed in public life. The study reveals that, however the educated Muslims, the bindi is considered to be anti-Islamic in appearance and practice; lipstick and nail polish make a woman less worthy to offer prayers. Thus, on grounds of religious sanctity also these ought to be avoided.

The fact remains that the respondents are not prepared to call those who do not observe or support these practices, backward or traditional. In their opinion such modern practices are harmful and hence should be discouraged.

Women and Male Doctors

Women by and large feel shy to appear before male doctors for consultation. But when necessary they have to employ their expert services even for maternity. Muslim women who are generally in seclusion avoid male doctors as much as possible. In times of emergency also, they have to be examined by male doctors, and Muslim males have no objection to this. Even the priestly class and highly religious class have no reservations. They properly quote from Islamic tradition that if it is a question of life and death, male doctors can be consulted.

Though such attitudinal changes are notices in matters relating to consultation and treatment by male doctors under special circumstances, there is no such flexibility in regard to the use of liquor on medical grounds. This apparent contradistinction is justified by the majority of the priestly and highly religious classes. Liquor once taken on medical grounds might lead to continued use later on. Further, there is no risk to life if liquor is avoided. Thus the traditional opposition to drinking liquor in any form and for any purpose continued to prevail, at least theoretically among some section of population. But by and large other groups do not

object to drinking liquor under special circumstances. Women in particular have less objection than the males, perhaps because they are used to taking liquor during the post-delivery period.

Religious Festivals

Inviting guests for dinner to celebrate religious festivals is a common feature. Some of the religious festivals are treated as more sacred than other. There has been a traditional notion that non-Muslims should not be invited for dinner connected with festivals like Gyarvi or Barvi. Of late some Muslims have invited their non-Muslim friends and this has been severely opposed by those who do not agree with this thinking. This has given rise to a conflict of opinion and varying interpretations among Muslims themselves. Thus, what could not be challenged on religious grounds is now permitted.

A significant feature of this newly emerging trend in attitudes is that the priestly and highly religious classes support the new thinking more than any other groups. However, this is again based on the Islamic text only.

Similarly, the traditional opposition to allow non-Muslims to have a share in the sacrificial meat on the festival of Bakrid is slowly losing ground. The priestly and highly religious group interprets the issue more liberally than others.

Financial Assistance from non-Muslims

Another area of emerging changes in the attitudes of Muslims is the acceptance of financial assistance from non-Muslims for religious purposes. This issues, as seen in the study, has resulted indirect and sharp differences among several groups of Muslims. The conservatives like the priestly class and highly religious class do not support acceptance of any financial assistance from non-Muslims for the construction or renovation of mosques. Their opposition comes from Islamic injunctions, as they interpret it.

It is equally interesting to note that there are some that feel that Islam is not so narrow-minded as to prohibit financial assistance from non-Muslims. Their argument that only a distinction between halal and haram income is to be made meaning that the former is justified and the latter is not. Halal income is earned through fair means, whereas haram income

comes from sinful or immoral or even illegal means. This section argues that financial support from non-Muslims is far better than from Muslims if the former have halal income and the latter haram income.

This social situation indicates that traditional, conservative interpretation of some experts in theological matters is subjected to the acid test of reason, logic and fairness. No one wishes to go against the Islamic prohibition if logically interpreted and presented.

Housewarming Ceremony

The housewarming ceremony is widely observed in Indian society. Muslims also generally practice it. Does this conflict with Islamic traditions? Normally housewarming is observed without wondering whether it is Islamic or un-Islamic. It is only when questioned that some clue of change surface. The fact that nearly half of the respondents in general concede that Islam does not permit such customs lends support to the theory of emerging attitudinal change. The priestly and highly religious groups are totally opposed to this practice.

However, in the absence of total opposition to this practice on the ground of Islamic prohibition, it is implied that still a sizeable section of the Muslim population feels that there is no such opposition to it in Islam. More women than men express this view which would mean that women are less traditional.

It is further revealed that the opposition or support to the practice of housewarming ceremony is based on rationality. Those who oppose it hold the view that Islam directs its adherents to avoid expensive practices as this would often force people to resort to loans. The supporters of this customs feel that there is no prohibition to it in Islam but then it is left to the individual judgment. When people spend large amounts on the construction of houses, a relatively small amount spend on this ceremony would not make much difference. In any case this group does not consider this practice to be un-Islamic.

Thus, the conflict again is in terms of how one understand what is Islamic and what is un-Islamic. In spite of all this, it is seen that a certain amount of modernization has taken place in Muslim attitudes and that there are grounds to justify this change.

Religious Procession

One of the traditions or convention observed fully in the past and still being observed in some way or other, is the avoidance of taking out religious processions in front of a mosque. This convention, was fully respected almost unconditionally by the Hindus. However, the situation has vastly changed today. Values and attitudes of some of the Hindu sections have changed so much that they insist on taking out processions in front of mosques. This results often in communal conflicts. This question of who is right and who is wrong depends upon the attitudes and intentions of both the Muslims and the Hindus.

It emerges from the study that there is an attitudinal change on the part of both the religious groups. The Hindus emphasize that they have a legal right to take out the procession. Muslims insist on the observance of conventions, which cannot be claimed as a matter of right. Conventions were, no doubt, the normative force in the past. But in the changing society where norms are gradually losing ground, insistence on their observance creates problems. Between conventions and law, the latter prevails.

This conflict has resulted in some attitudinal change among the Muslims including the priestly and highly religious groups. Taking out processions in front of mosques is not opposed; but the playing of music is resisted. It is the sound of music, which disturbs the congregation offering prayers. The legal stand is that music per se cannot be ruled out since it is again the traditional practice of the Hindus to play music when walking in processions. But Muslims are not fully prepared for allowing Hindu religious processions to pass in front of mosques. Also, the Muslims are not aware of Court decisions that music can be played even in front of mosques without raising volume. In other words, the playing of music depends upon the bona-fide and mal-fide intentions of the procession.

Thus the emerging trend is the opposition to taking out processions in front of mosques on the authority of traditional values and attitudes is no longer relevant today and the Muslim mind is slowly getting adjusted to this social reality. The public men extend maximum support to this new trend, whereas the priestly and highly religious groups do not effectively oppose. A sort of 'Continuity and Change' appears to be the compromise formulae at the moment.

Purdah and Burkha

One of the most serious and sustained criticism against the Islamic way of life is the observance of Purdah and Burkha. These two cultural ingredients are the tab of backwardness to Muslim women in particular and Muslim society in general. The general argument advanced, often by the non-Muslims, is that the continuance of these two inter-related systems is totally irrelevant to modern times. The Muslim answers to this are seen in the present study.

There is a growing tendency among Muslims to discard the Purdah, and more readily the burkha without the demand or the influence of non-Muslim's. Muslim's realize that though these two customs have their distinct advantages, a strict observance of them is not practical in the given social situation. Advances made in the field of education and the participation in economic activities seem to have exercise some pressure on the Muslims.

Women are more opposed to purdah and burkha than men because they are the affected persons. The chastity and safety of women depend more on their will power than on mere seclusion and coverage of their bodies. The argument advanced is that purdah should be more internal to women than outward pretension.

It is also interesting to note that often women are compelled to observe purdah and wear burkha, much against their own will. There also exists a conflicting social situation. The same woman cannot appear in public without burkha in one area but can do so in another area. She has to wear a burkha when she appears in a predominantly Muslim area, but perhaps not in a non-Muslim area. Sometimes the reverse of this is true.

The priestly and highly religious classes are strongly in favour of purdah and burkha. Whereas the public men have different views. The merchant class is also slightly flexible. This would mean that with changes in the educational and economic status of women, the observances of purdah and burkha will gradually disappear. This is further confirmed with reference to the situation two decades ago. Another significant conclusion is that the burkha is not a sign of backwardness according to its supporters who argue that a woman can participate in educational, economic and other activities while dressed in a burkha.

Family Planning

The changing minds of Muslims are studied with reference to the concept and significance of family planning. It is generally alleged in the non-Muslim circles that Muslims do not want to practice family planning for various reasons which include religion. It is true that there is some opposition in the Muslim circle to family planning on the basis of religion; but the study reveals that both these camps have not assessed the situation properly. The fact that a vast majority of the respondents including women have no opposition to family planning is a positive sign of social change. They rule out the prohibition imposed on it in Islam. This would mean that certain sections of Muslims are inclined to follow their own interpretations. This is further confirmed by the fact that it is only the priestly class and highly religious class that opposes family planning on religious grounds.

It is further revealed that even this limited opposition to family planning stems from the fear that certain methods, which are, advocated lead to the practice of immorality. Hence it is likely that if there are certain better methods which can be used that do not create problems of immorality and abortion, even this limited opposition might vanish.

However, the most significant feature is that compulsion in family planning methods is vehemently opposed by all sections including the liberal Muslims who support family planning.

The attitudinal changes are not uniform in several areas of social thinking as well as among different sections of the Muslim population. Modern thoughts generally prevail, at least to some extent, in economic and educational sphere. In so far as religious and cultural areas are concerned, changes are relatively limited. Extremely conservative notions prevail in abundance in certain areas. Women are less concerned with modernization, as men in general are opposed to the unfettered freedom of women's thoughts and actions.

So far as the various groups are concerned, the process of modernization differ significantly from group to group. Women are generally modernized compared to men. The priestly class is the most anti-modern class. Highly religious groups other than the priestly class is much more liberal than the latter. The merchant class, though generally against-

modernization processes, is much better than the priestly class. Of course, as expected, the public men form the most liberal minded groups.

Attitudinal changes depend largely on two factors, namely (1) the exposure to modern education as against theological education and (2) intensive social contacts with different sections of the population. This is what emerges from the present study. Muslims who profess and practice the same religion have different attitudes on several issues primarily because of these two reasons. It would therefore demand a certain amount of compulsion for providing access to modern educational theories and advancement.

Conclusion

1. Though the Muslim perceptions of modernization is not as liberal as it should have been in the present social context, the general notion that Muslims are adverse to modernization does not appear to be valid. Objections to modernization get minimized if modernization is contained within certain rational and decent limits. However, ultra-modernization is totally rejected and considered to be anti-Islamic.
2. Though the concept of westernization is not resisted by the Muslims, this is welcome provided the spirit of Islam is not sacrificed. Similarly, secularism and Islam can go together with necessary re-definitions and re-adjustments. There is total support for the theory of Indianization since it has nothing to do with Hinduisation.
3. The concepts of neighbourly relationships and the oneness of man are stressed by Muslims. Their attitudes are changing fast when compared to the past. Social contact, social functions, public charity, participation in religious functions are all accepted to be the instruments of changing attitude. The urge for universal humanism and patriotism is well recognized. Similarly, the urge for communal harmony and reciprocal assistance is manifest in the changing attitudes of the Muslims.
4. The process of Islamization is favoured and is found to be neither anti-secular nor anti-modern. It is intended to enable Muslims to readjust themselves to the noble guidelines of Islam when opportunities present themselves. At the same time, it should not aim at imposing restrictions, which are not relevant to modern times.

5. The advantage of modern education and other facilities for women's progress is approved of as long as these do not result in immodest and controversial behaviour.
6. The desire to adopt certain restructured and value-based rethinking on matters like bank interest, accepting the services of male doctors including gynecologists as life saving measures is also a positive sign of modernization.
7. Muslims have strong urge for maintaining (at least to the minimum) a 'Muslim identity' which reflects the essential characteristics of the followers of Islam. This might be considered by some to amount to revivalism; the consensus among the Muslim is that such revivalism per se is neither anti-Indian nor anti-secular. Thus, the need for retention of certain basic traits that distinguish a Muslim from a non-Muslim is found to be desired and is advocated.
8. 'Change and continuity' seems to be the order of Muslim thinking. A balance is struck between the forces of change and the forces against change. In social matters, male dominance and superiority are not only recognized by both males and females, but are also conceded by the latter. Equality of opportunities and status is not claimed by Muslim women beyond certain limits.
9. Forced changes, if attempted by the state in matters like mechanization of slaughter of animals, compulsory family planning etc., are resisted by the Muslims. Since the majority of the Muslim masses are illiterate and ignorant, they are likely to be carried away by the sentiments expressed by the educated Muslims. Therefore, it seems to be advisable to allow Muslim intellectual to have a dialogue among themselves for the possible and permissible alternatives in the changing society without affecting the basic Islamic text.
10. Finally, the study, which is more attitude-oriented, reveals that the educated Muslims have no opposition by and large to modernization as long as it is within the limits of human dignity, decency and necessity. Liberty is not license, so modernization cannot take place as laid down in Islam at the cost of basic human values.