

## INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON BODO CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF THE BODO CHRISTIANS IN ASSAM

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### ABSTRACT

*Bodos, one of the early settlers in Assam, India, are agriculturists. The tradition and the culture of Bodo are two sides of one coin that is they are interlinked to each other. For centuries Bodos have been influenced by other neighboring cultures and vice versa, yet they are able to preserve their main culture and language. The influence of Christianity is another significant impact on Bodos and their culture, which contributed Bodos towards social and cultural assimilation and development. Out of total population in Assam, 1.58 million belong to Bodo tribe and 9.40% have accepted the Christianity and 90.31% still follow the animism or Bathousim. The acceptance of Christianity by Bodo people can be mirrored in two opposite angles. One as insider's perspective, the culture has been influenced by western teaching hence intercepted by other culture and taken away from the main culture and as outsider's perspective it has been enriched to take forward for development towards transformation. Education is one of the examples where otherwise Bodos would have to still combat few more years to compete with other tribes in Assam. The impact of Christianity on the Bodo culture cannot be kept aside if history of the Bodos is to be ever kept alive. Cultural development as well as ceases of the practice of certain social customs due to the coming of Christianity among Bodos have to be examined with great consideration if we want to know the present and the past states of the Bodos..*

### Keywords

Hermeneutics, Islam, India, Hindus-Muslims, Universal Principle

### INTRODUCTION

Man is a social animal who cannot live outside the stream of society. Most Political Philosophers, from Plato to Harold Laski have accepted the freedom of democracy as the vital source of success for individual and society. Violation of human right, no matter from which community one belongs, destroys the very basic fundamental principles of civic culture. Evolution of institutions and the lust of egoistic desire transformed the traditional character of human values into a corrupt society promoted by material culture. Social dimensions like religion, race, ethnicity and culture, major constituents during the formation of nation building, became the misguiding principles during the formation of nation states. Empowerment of religious community, therefore, become necessary to examine the fast changing socio-political environment especially in the context of hermeneutic theory and practice which remain the true expression of knowledge. It is a process of new world of thinking that helps to create new dialogue and dialectic process between the nation states. Hermeneutics ideologies within the Indian Islamic perception were duly shaped by the historic and social realities of life and co-habitated by simultaneous operation of Pan-Islamic movements.

Hermeneutics in Islam differs in terms of application of Oriental and Middle East faith but are very much shaped by Indian values of Sangam(Confluence): a harmonious blending of multi religious faiths in India. Besides, it also supported the pan-Indian ethos heritage-be it religion, bhakti (devotional) tradition or the Vedic culture. These are the true co - ordinations with Christian Scripture and other Scriptures of the Indian Muslim tradition. Truly speaking, hermeneutic belief in Christianity and Islam broadly fall within the same parameters and inter changeably called as the 'true messenger

of Prophet Mohammed' whereas the Christian faith differed significantly after the renaissance and reformation in Europe during medieval period. Consequently, there was a division between various sects, beliefs and professes. It was crucial phase when the Islam was alienated but successfully managed to develop powerful identity based on principles of Prophet. Indian Muslims, clerics and Hafiz (full knowledge of Quran) broadly did follow the same path though there was a major shift in Hermeneutic Islamic Philosophy.

### INDIAN HERMENEUTICS: CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIMENSIONS

Cultural and religious dimensions in India have been duly shaped by the traditional character of Islamic thought which led due impact on the psyche of Indian Muslims to commit for specific goals and principles of hermeneutic. Modus Vivendi of Islamic reformations in India have been slightly difference from the Islamic States of Middle East, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Consequently, the apologetics and traditionalist opinions were seriously questioned by several reformers in India as the Islamic pillars remain divided in profess and practice. In fact, the specific Indian tradition mingled with spirituality remained under the serious revision. In common practice, Hermeneutics Philosophy of Islam and India has been a subject of constant revision of change due to dialogical differences between various groups, communities and education. Today, the Hermeneutic belief in India are very much shaped by changing social and political environment. Undoubtedly, even the cyber and online information attacked and modified the true contents of Islam in India. Messages through social media are received repeatedly about the changing contents of Islam so as to misinterpret true Islamic Hermeneutic beliefs. Such messages

and twisted forms of Islamic contents are being manipulated by several western scholars who want to alienate Islam by any means. But those who truly understood the depth of Islam, either became followers of Islam or changed their religions and became Muslims. Same is true about large number of countries in South Asia (mainly Islamic states: Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives) where the Islamic Scholars continue to send e-alerts thorough social media about the misinterpretation of Islam which can never be changed in any way and in any condition. The very basic and fundamental question about the judicial theology and ethical formation of Islam in India and the world therefore remain a subject of controversy ever since. Hermeneutic Thoughts in Islam needs clarity and clear vision to understated the chemistry of deeply rooted substances.

### ISLAM DURING POST INDEPENDENT INDIA

Ever since India became independent in 1947 and the partition of Pakistan based on Mohammed Ali Jinnah's 'Two Nation Theory' many changes and reformations have taken place. India is often called as birth land of Hinduism, while other religions like Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity are believed to be originated from non-Indian soil. In terms of numerical strength, Hindus constitute the majority while other communities like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism have been given minority status. Important dimensions like language, region, race, caste and culture have been deliberately kept on political toes while deciding the status of minority. In dilemmas and political developments Muslims, the followers of Islam, miserably failed to make proper adjustment that frequently resulted in distortions and simply misunderstandings. Islam, the most scientific religion as proved, was found isolated on Indian soil during the post-independence era where hermeneutic Hindu thoughts were widely popularized through literary and media sources. Ironically, however, the true Islamic values were misinterpreted where both media as well as government policy collectively worked to eliminate Muslims and Islam from the Indian soil against the powerful mythological belief of Hindu God and Goddess. Continued psychological fear that the true Islamic values may change the mind of non-Muslim communities as it is happening in many western countries, became serious concern for Hindu majority.

Class conscious, hierarchically organized and religiously monolithic Muslims were often considered as the blood of Arabs and Afghans who ruled over 800 years in India. Some historical evidences also reveal that Muslims Rulers in India used authoritarian means, attacked on Hindu temples and religious establishments which presumably continued till the last Mughal Ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar. While British India decisively persuaded the policy of 'Divide and Rule' which ended following the independence of Pakistan in 1947. Indian Muslims during post-independent India failed to understand the difference of administrative mindsets. India being a secular state does not support any religious based organization in theory.

### HERMENEUTICS IN ISLAM AND INDIA: FAITH AND REFORMATION

Hermeneutics refers to a complex theoretical, methodological and operational concept, a very fundamental to investigate the socio-philosophical base. Quran, the sacred text ever since the days of Prophet Mohammed, has prompted the scholars to examine the wealth of its meaning by developing a variety of different systems of hermeneutics. Some scholars believe that Quranic hermeneutics based on Tafsir (interpretation), consistent methodology and examination of specific value in Islam still remain in infancy, while others accept Quran as the best source of knowledge and true practice of life. Thus, the hermeneutic principles in Quran are based on application of Islamic Power Bank, historical reception and practical realities of Life. Quran is the word of Allah the Almighty Power, and true governance which the new hermeneutics philosophy is yet to explore the hidden meanings and realities of life.

Muslims of India or anywhere in the world broadly believe in the true governance of Allah, the Universal truth about Quran and its global character. Indian Law stands for liberty, equality and justice while giving due weight age to secular liberal tradition. Even Fundamental Rights under Indian constitution (article 12 to 39) and the preamble do support all Indians as one. Independent India promoted equality of religion within the broader democratic and secular fronts but with weak and fractured mandate. Unfortunately, historically rooted Islamic laws of Persian and Arab Rulers in India failed to win the larger sections of Indian community mainly the Hindu Majority. Then the Sharia (Islamic Law) became as an essential prerequisite for accepting the proposed change toward a more anthropological view of Islam. A hermeneutic approach to Islam and human rights, must acknowledge the idea of historical change where India's case is increasingly important. Muslim Personal Law Application Act, 1937 remains a source of inspiration which truly reveals the message though Hadish (sayings of Prophet). Truly speaking, no one in the world has any right to change even one word of Quran. The wordings of Quran are well connected and miraculous with distinct language in many verses. It is neither supernatural nor mythological, it is a complete science of knowledge and practice. Large number of Indian Islamic scholars like Sir Syed, Iqbal, Maulana Azad, Khushrao, and the contemporary scholars like Dr Zakir Naik, Maulana Madni, Mohmmad Ashra, Zakaria, Imam Farooqi, Ahmad Raza and many more have commonly followed the hermeneutical applications.<sup>3</sup> Explanations and translations have accepted the suitably placed intellectual linguistic context of Quranic hermeneutics. The biblical exigency, methodological foundation, phenomenology of understanding, systems of interpretation, and organic whole wherein the verses are integrally connected. Quran should be interpreted in the light of its own rather than by any other external authority.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Islamic foundation of Quranic hermeneutics is characterized by spiritual understanding, be it Indians, Middle Eastern, Southeast Asians or Muslims of Western World. Sharia (Islamic Law) reforms, religious sects and ideological divisions; all are important considerations to assess the hermeneutic beliefs in Islam that remains a universal truth. Muslims of India therefore cannot be

alienated from the core Islamic values as proudly depicted on many occasions and archaeologies of Muslim rulers: be it Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Golkunda Fort, Red Fort, Humayun Tomb, and hundreds of more. These archeological monuments are the symbols of Indian beauty, history and most importantly the reality of life. By some report, India's tourism department is earning millions of Dollars per day through exhibits of such historical moments apart from many other artisans and cultures derived from Muslims and Muslim Rulers in India. Hermeneutic beliefs about Islam and Quran in India is therefore not simply limited to one community. To be more precise 'Hermeneutic Model of Secular India' is the best alternative to incorporate all communities irrespective of religious and ideological differences. Let hermeneutic interpretations of Islam bloom the soul and mind of Indians to end hue and cry.

### ISLAM IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Islam in India has had a fascinating, and powerful impression, a fabric of civilization and ever lasting impact on mind and action of sizeable sections of Indian community. It gradually helped to strengthen the belief of Indians to adopt Islamic ideals of Prophet that consolidated as the hermeneutic missionary on Indian soil through Arab and Persian merchants and traders. It was the first foot prints of Muslims in India that began during early 6th Century. However, hermeneutic Islamic reforms in India till the end of 11th Century remained in immature stage due to scattered religious, regional and cultural differences. Advent of Turko-Muslim invasion during medieval period made significant religious, artistic, philosophical, cultural, social and political contributions to Indian history. By the end of 1857, the Muslims of South Asia have had a turbulent history within the region. During the Mughal Rules (1206 till 1857) for over 651 years, Islam was on climax when India experienced the first mutiny during the early phase of English rule in India. During the earliest phase, the advent of Syrian Arab Muhammad bin Qasim conquered the province of Sindh (now in Pakistan), becoming the easternmost province of the Umayyad Caliphate. It was the second of the four major caliphates established after the death of Muhammad and the caliphate was ruled by the Umayyad dynasty. In the first half of the tenth century, Mahmud of Ghazni annexed the Punjab to the Ghaznavid Empire, conducting several raids deep into India. Muhammad of Ghor conducted a more successful campaign at the end of the twelfth century, leading to the creation of the Delhi Sultanate.

Historically, Kerala state of India became the first one to establish Islamic Mosque in 629 AD with support of several devotees of Islam. Gradually, Islam spread in different parts of India where Arab Rulers socially co-habited with local Indian women and converted them into Islam. Substantial followers have been the Hanafi group of Islam which continues to remain the largest sect in Islam all over India and the world. Local rulers and kings trusted in Islamic ideologies and invited several Arab and Persian rulers for trade. Several archeological depicts and constructions took place when the cultural assimilation became easy exercise. By early 1300 AD, the Arabs settled mostly Kerala and Sri Lanka including Southeast Asian regions like Indonesia,

Malaysia and Brunei which are now the Islamic states. Within Islamic communities, the Marakkars (distinctive Tamil and Malayalam-speaking Muslim people) became one of the largest Islamic communities with almost 2.5 million peoples although other Islamic communities like Hanafi, Rowthers, Anatolians and Safavid were also present representing some three millions.

### HERMENEUTICS UNDER THE MIRROR OF SUFISM IN INDIA: SECULAR PHASE OF ISLAMIC REFORMATION

Sufism is believed to be secular and revised form of Islam that attracted large number of non-Muslim communities too to accept Islam. Several historians believe India as the real birthplace of Sufism in terms of messages and number of followers. Interestingly large number of Sufi Saints like Hazrat Khawaja Muin-ud-din Chisti, Nizam-ud-din Auliya, Shah Jalal, Amir Khusro, Sarkar Sabir Pak, and Waris Pak trained Sufis for the propagation of Islam in different parts of India. Several institutional arrangements of Dargah (Sufi Tomb) at Ajmer, Delhi, Bombay, and many other cities of India has largest networks in the world which serve the 'wish and desire' of commons. Sufi groups and trustees in India helped to give finishing touch of Dargah through beautiful sculpture, architects and artisans, probably nowhere in the world. As a matter of fact, Sufism in India worked as a powerful mechanism to change the mind and soul of large number of Hindus to accept Islamic one the soft line of Sufism. Preachers like Ahmed Sirhindi Sufi and Naqshbandi Sufi passionately advocated peaceful conversion of Hindus to Islam. Broadly speaking Sufism in India is extensively followed and practiced by large number of Islamic Sect representing roughly one thirds of India's population. Today, Sufism remains the source of inspiration ever since whose followers run somewhere fifty millions in India today though exact number of devotees still remain a secret.

Another diametrically opposed group Deobandi (followers of Islam through spreading brotherhood) with over 189 million Muslims in India remains more powerful representing some 50% of India's population. Unfortunately, however, there are disagreements between Barelvi (Neo-Sufi sect & follower of Dargah) and Shia (followers of Prophet Hassan Hussein) that constitutes the question of hermeneutic beliefs as who are the real Muslims of India. Today, there are 72 sects within the Muslims across India and the world. The prominent ones include: Sunni, Ahmadiyya, Shia, Bohra and Nizari. Unfortunately, the Muslims in India remain divided in terms of ideology, profess and practice of Islam. It is therefore rather difficult to identify a universally acceptable hermeneutic among the Indian Muslims. In short, the division within the Islamic sects in India remains subject of interesting hermeneutic debate about the status of Muslims and practice of Quran in India.

### HERMENEUTICS SOCIOLOGY AND MUSLIMS REFORMERS OF INDIA

India is the birthplace of large number of social and educational reforms giving the emergence of large number of schools of Islamic thoughts. Wahabi (Orthodox Sunni

Muslim sect) Movement as the first legacy of Islam in India was started by Shah Waliullah based on the principal of Quran and Hadis. Another group: Ahmadiya Movement led by Mirza Gulam was an initiative to enlighten Muslims of India thorough promotion of Western Education. The Deoband School was started against the liberal movement by the orthodox Muslim Ulema (Islamic Scholars) to teach the real essence of Islam on the basis of Quran and Hadis, which was also designed to preach the concept of Jihad against the foreign rule. 19th century was the period of awakening not only for the Hindu-Muslims but the entire community irrespective of ideological and religious differences. A number of reformers came forward to eradicate the mal-practices performed in the name of religion and preached about the greatness of India's culture and philosophy. The ideas of self-reliance, self-respect and national pride were propagated. Let us have a very brief outlook of Sir Syed and Maulana Azad as the best selected Muslim Reformers in India.

#### 1. Sir Syed: Symbol of Muslim Hermeneutic in India

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a blood of Arabs and Mughals has been actively associated with Islamic philosophy and highly regarded the revival of Mughal dynasty in different forms. A man far ahead of time, knew that Muslims of India traditionally associated with art, architecture and religion were left far behind in the field of education. Establishment of Mohammedan Anglo Oriental (MAO) College on 24 May 1875 was the constructive initiative of Sir Syed. He was the first Indian in true sense to establish Western-style scientific education where MAO College was the main platform. It turned into Asia's largest residential academic body popularized as Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in 1920.

It is widely believed that Sir Syed's Aligarh Movement was highly inspired by the Christian missionaries and the naturalistic thoughts of west despite some ideological differences. Sir Syed was the true interpreter of holy Quran who was educated in the noble city of Jama Masjid- Old Delhi. Muslim scholars and writers such as Sahbai, Rumi and Ghalib were the sources of inspiration for Sir Syed who had the knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, medicine apart from Islamic jurisprudence. Sir Syed's religious genealogy sources also include: Abut Talib, Imam Murtaza, Imam Zafar, Syed Abu Abdullah, Ahmad bin Musa, Ali bin Salah, Husayn Yaar and Imaduddin Khan. Establishment of modern Madaris (Islamic School) in Moradabad (1859) and Ghazipur (1863) were among the first religious schools to impart scientific education. Sir Syed was too conscious that sectarianism within Muslim (Shia and Sunni) do not meet any clash except some ideological differences, and always prayed to Allah for inter religious and communal harmony. Sir Syed's new institution earned rich dividends from a larger students' community, mainly drawn from the Muslim gentry and middle classes society. Syllabi at the schools and colleges involved scientific and Western subjects, as well as Oriental subjects and religious education that began at MAO College. Sir Syed stood for the amalgam of true Quranic values for Indians and knew that the real contents of Islam are being diffused and diverted for political and ideological gains at the pretext of western media and minds just for material gains. Hence, Sir Syed suggested and even warned that any change in Islam and Quran can astray and misguide the Muslim

Community of India. In a nutshell, Sir Syed wanted to reform through Quranic values which the world came to realize only after 9/11 Episode. Hidden contents of Islam need to be examined only through a multi dimension approach to realize the dreams of Sir Syed who looked both Hindus and Muslims as a part of same soil, land, blood and culture. Both communities are co-habited, co-existed and have co-religious sentiments since generations. In fact, Sir Syed supported for fresh orientation of Indian Muslims and reconciled modern scientific thought with religion by rationalistic interpretations. Some scholars believe that Sir Syed's 'Hermeneutic Model of Secular Education' is the best way to understand Islam in India.

#### 2. Abul Kalam Azad: Symbol of Secular Hermeneutic in Modern India

A great secular scholar and statesman, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has reserved a due place in the history of modern Indian political philosophy through nationalist Muslim who challenged the separatist assumptions of the Aligarh School. A great cementing force between Hindus and Muslims, Azad sought to bring the Muslims into the national mainstream. Azad realized at a very early period of life that religious intolerance and dogmatism was not comprehensible. Azad developed doubts and at one stage rejected his faith in God. Consequently, as a rebel against his father and the family tradition, he wandered for some years as a skeptic. With bold and reckless efforts, Maulana Azad's renewed faith in Islam helped to combine with the development of broad mindedness in the matters of religion. Azad realized that the Muslims of India must come out of their isolation and join the national mainstream for India's freedom. Against the odds and challenges of Aligarh Movement and secular commitment to promote social journalism, Azad developed broad perception through powerful writings, created a stir in the Muslim world and forced Indian Muslims to see the error in their thinking. It was only Maulana Azad who brought Hindus and Muslims on one platform during Rowlatt Act (1919) and Khilafat Movement (1919-1922) and thus became the brain behind the struggle against the British along with other important leaders like Maulana Mohammad Ali, Hakeem Ajmal Khan, Mahatma Gandhi and Gangadhar Tilak. Azad came forward as the great champion of Hindu-Muslim unity and asked the Muslims to see the reality of the situation. He said: "Eleven hundred years of common history have enriched India with our common achievements... As a Muslim, I, for one, am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life". In a nutshell, Maulana Azad's Hermeneutic Thought about India and Islam is based on strong pillars of secularism and socialism that became integral to Indian constitution. As a matter of fact, Maulana Azad was not only one of the great scholars of the Quran in modern times but due to his command over Arabic and Persian. Maulana Azad was held in high esteem as a Quranic interpreter in the countries of the Middle East and Africa. After independence, he helped in the formulation of India's foreign policy under Nehru Cabinet as the first Education Minister of India.



## ISLAMIC REFORMS UNDER THE THUMP OF HINDUISM IN INDIA

Since independence, India has been the birthplace of large number radical forces in forms of reforms, amendments, social purification and cast hierarchy to protect the Majoritarian State. Hundreds of social reforms, school of thoughts and political organizations like Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, Hindu Sena, Ram Sena, Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Swamyasevak Sangh, etc, gradually became the decisive forces. During the freedom movement, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of Nation strongly favoured to unite all Indians to end socio-religious differences. When Gandhi launched Quit India Movement (9 August 1942), in one of the public speeches, he said: "Free India will be no Hindu Raj based on majority of any religious sect and community, but on the representation of whole people without distinction of religion". Creation of Pak (1947), Bangladesh (1971) and the narrow approach of 'Constituent Assembly' left millions of nationalist Muslims insecure at the cost of hostility and contempt of separatism. Muslim dominated Jammu & Kashmir became the bone of contention while Muslims scattered in different parts of India remained hungry for want of administrative justice. Paradoxically, even the intelligentsia and elite Muslims were least preferred in administrative services and other top ranking organizations. Sentiments of Muslims brethrens to promote socio-cultural unity continue to suffer for want of identity crisis, despite deep rooted interest with Indian soil.

## A HERMENEUTICS AND CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN ISLAM: SELECTED CASES IN INDIA

Hermeneutics as a complex, methodological and operation remains an interesting subject of contemporary debated in India. Three important and controversial issues: Triple Talaq, Hijab and Love Jihad are now becoming the hot topics. While considering India primarily a Hindu propagated state by rightist forces do not fully support the objective investigation of Hermeneutics Sharia (Islamic Law). Hence the basic principles of Islam in India and its authenticity was not truly embodied. Let us have a brief ideas about the Hermeneutic relevance of these controversial issue in India.

### 1.1 Hermeneutica Reading of Triple Talaq in Islam: Indian Scenario

The hermeneutical reading of Talaq (divorce) remains a sensitive issue in Islamic Family Law which is not supported by Quran as it stands for gender injustice. In fact, regulations of the Quran on the subject of divorce are designed to restrict the practice which had prevailed among the Arabs where the men are at liberty to divorce wife by saying Talaq Three Times. Since the days of Prophet Mohammed, it remains in practice although some 24 Islamic states have already banned the practice of Triple Talaq and modified the Sharia (Islamic Law) as per local conditions. In Indian, the first concrete initiatives affecting the application of Muslim Personal Laws were brought about by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939. The Act continues to be operational on Indian Subcontinent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) with a number of modifications and alterations. Injustices caused by the application of the

classical Hanafi law were removed by expanding the grounds of divorce for women. Husband's discretion, failure to provide maintenance, cruelty, maltreatment, chronic illness and impotence were grounds appended to the existing provisions for seeking divorce Talāq using hermeneutical approach where the controversy exists as while considering the status of women as Islam, does not approve the application of Talaq.

In India, Triple Talaq has raised serious doubts as large number of intellectual and women organizations strongly oppose the practice. Triple Talaq as the most uncomfortable for wife and the issues of constitutional liberty remain debated in the gallery of parliament, supremecourt and Muslim Personal law. Unilateral divorce by husband neither finds due place in Quran nor the constitution of India. Politically motivate and hidden agenda of ruling BJP (a rightist political force) to outlaw Triple Talaq by any means is 'Broad Thought' of Rightist Hindu Wings to alienate Muslims from the mainstream of India or otherwise. The duplicity of media image and exaggerated version of Triple Talaq among the Muslims in the context of ongoing political development with administrative support of present ruling government, continues to remain questionable about the stand on Islamic organizations. Application of Triple Talaq requires social balancing by considering pros and cons of irrespective communities, religion and race.

### 1.2 Politics and Hermeneutics of Hijab in India

Woman is the most beautiful creature of God who needs love, share and care in society. Hijab, literally an 'Islamic Dress Code' represents the security, respect and confidence largely followed by Muslim Women and remains the most visible Islamic mandate. Since the days of Prophet Mohammed, the application of Hijab went on changing depending on flexible laws, legislations and social conditions. India is the birthplace of large number of religious reforms presenting both traditionalism and modernity. Hijab has become an arena where Islamic and secular feminist rhetoric have divided stands. The question whether Hijab depicts women's oppression, a patriarchal mandate that denies women the right to control their bodies and to choose what to wear, remain debated topic now and then. Interestingly, selected regions of India like Jammu & Kashmir, part of Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal have been prime site for the emergence of 'Islamic feminist' discourses that speak of Hijab not as a 'duty,' but as a 'right,'. It is considered as a social rather than a religious mandate and finds juristic arguments to support this position. More recently, Hijab is being practiced by large number of Non-Muslim women believers too in India to protect from environmental pollution or otherwise. The whole issue of Hijab has opened an academic and scientific debate. But the establishment of common ground between secular feminist and Islamic discourses remain a subject of major discussion in the hermeneutic of Hijab under Hindutva lobby where Muslim women under Hijab have laughing and negative image.

### 1.3 Women in India and Controversy Behind Love Jihad

Terminology of Love Jihad refers to marriage of Muslim men against the wish and will of Hindu women that has gained political controversy ever since BJP Government came into power in May 2014. It is a movement to target

against a particular community at the pretext of Love Jihad and Ghar Wapsi (Back to Hinduism). Since Yogi Government came into power in Uttar Pradesh (northern state of India), the issue is being misinterpreted by Indian media and several right wing organizations. Questionably, the voice of secular democratic forces and intelligentsia community is virtually ineffective on the issue of Love Jihad. States like Kerala, Karnataka and UP have witnessed large number of Love Jihad cases which are pending before several judicial bodies. A transparent universal consensus has to be made to scrutinize the hidden philosophy behind Love Jihad in India and to interpret true hermeneutic thoughts.

### CONCLUSION

The term "hermeneutics" has been generally used to describe the 'technique' of interpretation of texts in Indian context in varied ways. The process of application and narrative justifications went on changing with the passage of time. India, often called as the 'Land of Hindu God and Goddess' has hardly followed the hermeneutic thought because Hinduism is based on mythology and non-historical facts. Several Indian Hermeneutic Hindu reformers like Raja Ram, M.N. Roy, Lohia, Ambedkar, Nehru and Gandhi were not the radical Hindu supporters rather they fought against the evils like child marriage, dowry system, killing of girl child, Sati System (sacrifice of wife for husband after death) and shaving of heads by elderly women, prevalent among the Hinduism. Islam in India appeared not by force but by Hermeneutic realities: science and Islam, and therefore it remains the most tolerant religion in the world which Hindu community hardly accepted. In Indian religious heritage, particularly among the schools of Islamic thoughts: Deobandi and Barelvi who follow diverse paths but unilaterally accepted Allah as the final authority. The fundamental concern of the Islamic philosophy has always discovered inner truth in a holistic and dynamic manner that empowered and unified even Hindus who came under the vision of Islam being a powerful hermeneutic belief. Islam neither forced nor converted any community to accept Islam rather it came through inner feeling, truth seeking and common understanding. Islam provided conceptual clarifications, and help us to become sensitive to what happens in –the interpretative process among Indians: past, present and even future.

Islam is a faith and a complete code of life that provides guidelines for a prosperous life. Almighty Allah and the last prophet Mohammed some 1410 ago had delivered the message of peace and universal love. Since then, Islam became the source of inspiration be it education, human rights, neighbourhood, parents, society, and is applicable in all departments of practical life. Holy Quran became the basis of law which was translated by Sharia. In a nutshell, the hermeneutic interpretation of Islam based on traits, global vision and Islamic way of life, as all are important to understand. In a country like India, the Sharia interpretation is often confused as large number of organisations follow different paths where the authenticity of Islam is lost. In true sense, Islam is the manifestation of guidance despite diverse hermeneutic expressions.

### FINDINGS

Today, both Muslims and Islam in India have become a subject of major controversy and debate. Several rightist forces have access of political freedom to attack on Islamic monuments and claim to be Hindu temples of Bharat Desh (India) and reclaim as lost glory and openly boycott of Islamic Invaders. Rightist Hindu Hermeneutics are falsely being claimed as open, tolerant and inclusive of varying forms of religious devotion. Hermeneutic Hinduism despite hierarchically divided is considered to be spiritual source of inspiration by large number of radical Hindu thinkers. On the contrary, Islamic practices are based on exclusive worship of Allah and is believed to be highly egalitarian where the religious practices are mandatory. The fate of Indian Muslims therefore remains at the loggerheads, and fate of Indian Muslims remain questionable. Democratic transition in Muslim World and the pertinent issues: religion and state as two sides of same coin and the second thought on Islam and democracy; all are important for India. Controversy continues to exists about the understanding of patriarchal interrelation of Quran which is often mistaken textually towards the sociology of Muslim practices and hence the reconstruction of religion through Islam is increasingly important. Hence, the hermeneutics of Islamic Thought in India constitutes the reality which needs to go into the deeper understating between Indian Muslims and Islam across the world.

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