

Social Exclusion is the Basis for Stratification in Muslims

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Abstract: This research paper discuss social exclusion of Muslim community in India.

Social stratification is defined as the process by which individuals and groups are ranked in more or less hierarchy of status. The term social stratification come into general sociological use from 1940.(Saha D.,2006 : 12) Islam is a revealed egalitarian religion, it advocate equality, devotions and fraternity. It is against any privileges being given on accounts of birth, race or creed. Dignity of a man is based on his piety and conduct.

The idea of brotherhood is the main social ideology of Islam. In the sermon of Arafat what Prophet Pbih said is most important for the entire Muslim society till the Day of Judgment he said “Know that all Muslims are brothers unto one another, Ye are one brotherhood, Guard yourself from committing injustice. (Guillame, A,1955:651)

Islam is against any kind of stratification in society. Early Arab Society in which Islam Evolved was very simple and was not have great difference of wealth and was marked by simplicity and inspiration towards justice and equality. Irfan Basha also explains the two aspects of the basic egalitarian Principles of Islam and the development of social stratification in Muslim society. He pointed out that Islam developed in a nomadic, socio –cultural atmosphere with distinct tribal egalitarian characters. The structure of this early society was not much stratified, but as it enters Madina Munawara it exposed to the more complex mercantile agriculture based altogether different society. As Islam expanded to Iraq, Syria and Iran it came under heavy Persian influence (the Persian society was already stratified on hierarchal basis) The Muslim society got affected and to this added the new converts to Islam, who carried with them the structure and cultural characteristic that preexisted in the societies before conversion to Islam, were added to Islamic structure. (Basha M.I., 2005) And another reason being the early Muslim conquests, Islam expands and with establishment of “Umayyad Khalifat (671 A.D) wealth and power grew, which can be taken as the

point from where the simplicity, justice and equality departed from Muslim society.

Ghaus Ansari, Who is pioneer in the study of Muslim society, traces the origins of inequality in Muslim society as contra-distinct from Islamic Ideology even before arrival to India it has been to some extent affected by the social structure and patterns of social behavior existing in each country before arrival of Islam and formation of Islamic societies, he particularly refers to the deep rooted social segregation in Persia. (Ansari Ghaus, 1960:66)

Imatiaz Ahmed explained that no society beyond the most primitive can be truly and fully egalitarian. He cites, viblen (1932) that as societies generate economic surplus, some form of social stratification develops, further he says that Muslim societies also exhibits some caste like characters of Hindu caste system, but it is on the basis of professions, further states that Muslim Society is divided into Ashraf, Ajlaf and Arzal. (Ahmed, Imatiaz, 1978:22)

The caste system is a unique feature of Indian society. It is considered as the most rigid and clearly, graded type of social stratification membership in a caste is determined by birth, caste is a permanent basis of stratification.

It consists of rigid hereditary placement of the person irrespective of personal attributes.

Professor Laxmanna states “Indian Society is a most condemned and fragmented society than any other in the world. Even in one caste there are many other sub-castes and classes with respective traditional occupations and binding social relations.(Laxmanna,c., 1977)

Presidential address of the first sociological conference, held at Hyderabad

Hulton Scholar, administrator says that when Muslims and Christians came to India, Caste was in air and the followers of these egalitarians Ideology could not escape the infection of caste. (Hutton, J.H, 1946).

Zarina Bhatta states that Muslims in India are sharply divided into two categories Ashraf and non Ashrafs. The former have superior status derived from foreign ancestry the ashraf or those

who claim a foreign descent are further divided into 4 caste Syed, Shaiks, Mughals and Pathans in the order of rank the non ashrafs are alleged to be converts from Hinduism and are therefore drawn from the indigenous population they in turn divided into number of occupational caste.

(Bhatta Zarina, 1996:44)

Islam as know and practiced by the Indian Muslim, is not a replica of Islamic society envisioned and given a concrete shape by Muhammad P.b.u.h. it is conditioned to a great extent by historical and socio cultural forces operating in the Indian environment. In other words, the Indian Muslim society is the product of prolonged interaction between the Islamic great tradition and indo Islamic little tradition which is largely based on folk, unwritten customs, conventions and habits handed down from generations to generations. (Momin, A.R., 1975:580-582)

The Muslims no doubt have developed those traits in their communal and social life which are not directly related to their religion, having accidentally developed during the turko- Persian rule over India but fundamental faith is common to all. If one talks of difference one finds them among the northern Bengali and other Muslims. For example, In Kerala the Muslim prayer (Namaz) is called "Namaskaram" and the Muslim fast is called "Vardam" Sometime in most of the region the Muslims name bear a regional orientation like the Mohammad Koya, Bafaki Thangal in Kerala. Deshmukh, Patel in Maharashtra. The Muslim culture in Indian society in its details is not at all uniform throughout the country. (Soze, A.A., 1970:57)

Asma Zubaida says that Muslims society is certainly stratified but it is not due to existence of caste but on the basis of class system (Economic difference) and stratified into high, middle and low. (Zubaida, Asma, 1980:121).

The word social exclusion was first used by Rene Lenoir in mid-1970 in France.

According to him every tenth person of the total population is suffering from social exclusion, those excluded are mentality retarded, physically handicapped, People having suicidal tendency, Aged people Single parents abused children marginal labour and other social misfits.

In 1980 the concept of social exclusion adopted by the European Union, and in 2003 it got recognition in Nepal, and included in 10th five year plan and used for the reduction of poverty.

Amratya Sen (2001) said that there are wide range of issues which are responsible for exclusion out of them is Socio-economic issues exclusion is different from Lenoir. (Sen, Amartya , 2007)

Arjan De Haan (1998) said that social exclusion is the process through which an individual or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society, within which they live, and deprived from their rights.

The power is responsible for the exclusion in the society and also doesn't allow the excluded people to exercise their rights.

(Arjan de Haan, 1998:222)

Asland and flotter (2000) said that the poverty is the main reason for social exclusion. (Aasland and Flotten , 1999:121)

According to Jackson(1999) A social summit is held in Copenhagen to discuss and understand exclusion and poverty, they came up with an idea of consumption of calories per day per person, and they Fixed a standard of 2300 calories, per person, consuming less than this is called poor. They also mentioned that this is not the only reason for poverty and exclusion.

(Jackson , 1999:156)

Gore (1998) who studied different forms of social exclusions states that

1. Social exclusion is a negative process. In allocation of the resources / Material, certain people are excluded and deprived, and 20% people of the total populations have the wealth / resources of 80% people which leads to exclusion and disparity.
2. The exclusion is a process which leads to inferiority and materially deprived sense which leads to exclusion. (Gore, M.S., 1967:21)

Evans (1998) States that Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional concept and it occurs because of

1. Democratic legal system failure.
2. Labour market, where certain community is deprived and other allowed getting benefit.
3. Welfare state provision – Some place you are protected and some other place you are deprived.
4. Family and community Safety are at risk.

(Evans, Martin, 1998)

Class System is a Unique form of Social Exclusion and is one of the main Criterion to judge Social exclusion. One's economic position is found to be an important criterion in one's cultural, social and personal development. Rich, Middle and poor have their own circles and altogether different life styles. Lives are Marked by the society remarketing one class from the other that leads to exclusion, deprivation and stratification.

Hillary Silver (1995) presented her idea of 3 paradigms which determines social exclusion in society

1. Solidarity in paradigm.

2. Specialization paradigm.
3. Monopoly paradigm.

It is evident from the above that Stratification is caused due to Social Exclusion in society.

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