Political Dis-Empowerment of Muslims in India: Role of the State

By **Dr Mohammed Ghouse**[1]

"Modern democracy offers the prospect of the most inclusive politics of human history. By the same logic, there is a thrust for exclusion that is a by-product of the need for cohesion in democratic societies; hence the resultant need for dealing with exclusion 'creatively' through sharing of identity space by 'negotiating a commonly acceptable political identity between the different personal and group identities which want to/have to live in the polity.' Democracy 'has to be judged not just by the institutions that formally exist but by the extent to which different voices from diverse sections of the people can actually be heard.' Its 'raison d'être is the recognition of the other."

(Hamid Ansari, Former Vice President of India 2007-2017)

Abstract

Meaningful participation of ethnic minorities in political life is an essential component of a peaceful and democratic society. Experience in Many democratic countries has shown that, in order to encourage such participation, governments often need to determine specific arrangements for national minorities. This argument implies that the inclusion of minorities within the State and enable them to maintain their own identity and characteristics, in so doing promoting the good governance and integrity of the State (OSCE, 1999). After India achieved its independence, policymakers, founders of the constitution, politicians and the social reformers were concerned about the upliftment of the downtrodden masses through the inclusive strategies to integrate them into the mainstream for fulfilling the constitutional obligations of a democratic, socialistic and secular country (Hasan, 2009). In contemporary India, the issue of the Muslim minority is still a policy of exclusion and inclusion. It is discussed by many political scientists that religious minority, particularly Muslims, are lagging in the overall development of the country. The necessity of the hour is to revisit the notion of development and to re-evaluate the entire discourse of inclusion within the ambit of the liberal

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[1] Assistant Professor and Head of the Department, Department of Political Science, Government Degree College for Women, Sangareddy, Telangana 502001

democratic process. The attempt of institutional political exclusion of Muslims in India shall lead to the disempowerment of the community and destroys the democratic and constitutional principles.

1. Introduction

This article examines and attempts to explore the participation of Minorities in general and Muslims in particular regarding political discourse in India, through the prism of representation in Parliament from 2004 to 2014, i.e., Fourteenth General Elections to Sixteenth General Elections. India has a considerable population of Muslims consisting of around 15 per cent of its total population. Politically India is governed through federal structure guided by written constitution having separate legislative and executive body both at Central level and state level. With the recent capture of power at the centre and majority of states by the right-wing party having worldview of majoritarian view to rule the country has raised the question about the security and political relevance of Muslim in the country. Such recent political change has questioned the credibility of democracy and its institutions. The cultural identity related to the Minority and the idea of Inclusion becomes a distant dream as the idea of majority rule replaces democratic values. Several questions are unanswered during the recent incidents of cow vigilantism and slaughter ban where the party in power has maligned the Right to Food (Choice of Food).

The deliberative model of democracy where Majority-Minority relations are addressed through pluralistic norms, i.e., equality, participation and consensus are the significant factors and tools to achieve the higher model of prosperity. While the disempowerment of Minorities or cornering them in the political landscape. The nation cannot prosper in terms of social and economic fields without their proper share and participation. Participatory democracy gives the spaces for the voice of voiceless communities. Hence the role of the state and its institutions are crucial for the safeguard of minorities and their rights at all levels. The fundamental right of Minorities is political right where they can convey and communicate their voices for the protection and progress as par the majority communities. Ruling Political party having a hidden agenda of annihilating Muslims is the real challenge to the nation inclusive model of development. Hence a comprehensive model for deliberative and participatory democracy is a need of the hour where the Minorities of the state can be heard nationally and internationally.

It is possible only when they are empowered and included in the political activity of the state. This study could be one of the tools for the establishment of "The State of Accountability".

2. Methodology

This study covers the primary and secondary data to conclude the objectives of the paper, i.e., "Political Dis-Empowerment of Muslims in India: Role of the State". The popular journals and writings have been quoted or referred. The interviews of the public representatives also have been referred to while drafting this paper. Apart from the empirical data of political empowerment/ political representation of Muslims from 2004 to 2014 General Election of House of People (Parliament) and party-wise analysis; theoretical perceptions of Inclusive concepts and Policies for the participation and representation of all groups and communities in the country has been focused. These perceptions have been generalised for democratic dynamics as the role of the state in general and India in particular.

3.   Concept   of   Political   Empowerment   and   Political   Engagement

The concept of political empowerment is related to an argument that there is the exclusion of any such entity/group which needs some organised effort according to their conditions to come as per the other empowered class. It relies predominantly upon the capacity of groups and the favourable environment to facilitate positive change. In human culture, Power should not be understood by the mere exercise of power, but instead, it must be perceived as an exercise of power according to the aspiration and motivation of the excluded community. Accordingly, at the point of planning, arranging, and actualising, propose of policies should conform to the appropriate aspirations of the excluded groups.

The bottom line is that an excluded community should be part from the primary stage of the development process, i.e. at time of definition, planning and design so that one can ensure project development process meets one's needs. This insight does provide a democratic set up in approaching the social and other problems arising out of growing inequality. It redefines the problem in a much more egalitarian mode. The main arena for fundamental change is at the policy level itself; wherein there must be included through project development.

4. Concept of Dis-empowerment

Growing uneasiness and social unsteadiness among disempowered subjects raise questions on the existing political setup, which ultimately undermine a nation's political soundness. The term "(dis) empowered native" portrays the dynamic that is rising out of the exchange of two patterns: one enabling, one undermining. People feel enabled by changes in innovation that make it less demanding for them to assemble data, impart and arrange. In the meantime, people, everyday society gatherings, social developments and nearby groups feel progressively avoided from significant investment in conventional primary leadership forms and debilitated as far as their capacity to impact and be heard by foundations and wellsprings of energy.

With progressively (dis) empowered natives sorting out and activating, governments and organisations alike need to deal with the routes in which they might be compounding the main drivers of national discontent. They should comprehend the dangers and work out how to acclimate to a changing working condition and another societal scene. Past financial vulnerability, the dangers for nations include:

> *Undermined authenticity of the administration order; increased social polarisation; Political impasse and the difficulty of inciting changes, where applicable; and – under more severe conditions –Possible breaking down of a nation's administrative framework and other falling dangers that may effortlessly develop in a genuinely globalised, interconnected and complex world* (Christian, 2016).

An inclusive society which enabled societal performing artists who are adjusted behind a joint vision for the nation is a solid flag that a state is steady and precise, with more prominent straightforwardness, bring down debasement and a more grounded the rule of law – exceedingly essential variables for working together. From a monetary point of view, organisations advantage from a steady social and political condition for running their operations. They work as per gauges and situations that factor in socio-political dangers and flimsiness build their operational expenses, diminish edges on speculations and undermines nearby systems. Social and political turmoil can cause misfortunes in income, property harm, barricades, bureaucratic postponements, general financial lull and an un-favourable trade condition.

5. Discrimination and Democracy

Discrimination strikes at the core heart of being human. It treats someone differently merely because of who or what they believe. The question of discrimination, as far as it is considered in the field of philosophy, cannot be perceived as a problem which can be effectively combated. Even the most precise diagnosis of human nature will not restrain people from defining others as evil and inferior (Wypych, 2013). The idea of democracy and the practice of a liberal political system is the very base on which it is included that discrimination and other social evil will be eradicated from the human society. Most of the liberal democracy in the world governs through a formal constitution which specifically criminalises all type of discrimination based on religion, race, gender and caste. However, unfortunately, in practice, among all the liberal democracies from Europe to the US and also India, there still some prejudice and discrimination exist. The discourse of Discrimination and Democracy are counter-beneficial. Democratisation was comprehended to allude to a procedure of opening up roads of more broad political interest to a larger population because of objectively gathering the support with the prominent opportunity of articulation and data and open political contestation with specific lawfully ensured procedural structures. Henceforth majority rule government ought to be challenged and comprised covering all social and social gatherings of a state with the goal that the separation can be tended to through protected system (Schlosser and Kersting, 2003). In the case of India, several reports argued that more than 70 per cent of Muslims in the country living in deplorable conditions and suggested many affirmative actions. Therefore a comprehensive policy design is necessary by involving Muslims in national political activity.

6. Political Participation and Political Equality

Most law based on political frameworks is fundamentally equalitarian. They depend on all-inclusive suffrage whereby every individual has a stake expecting some output. Practically speaking, it does not work that way. There is a wide discrepancy in the political outcome practised by the ruling elite. One purpose behind this is most-likely all-cutting edge vote based systems are neither on a fundamental level nor practically speaking equalitarian with regards to social and monetary issues. A stark contrast exists among people in wage, instructive achievement, and word related status. Such contrasts imply that subjects are differentially

invested with assets that can be utilised for political action and impact. As natives change over such assets into political impact, political imbalance shows up. By political investment, we allude to those lawful demonstrations by private natives that are pretty much specifically went for affecting the determination of legislative staff or potentially the moves that they make. The historical backdrop of majority rules system is in a large piece of the historical backdrop of the advancement of logical and legitimate channels through which residents can express their inclinations and apply weight on the legislature to agree to the inclinations. Hence without political participation and representation, accurate idea of political equality cannot be achieved (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978). It is possible with the concept of representation in the policy framework.

7. The Concept of Constituency

A constituency is an area for which a person is elected as the representative in a parliament or government. *The constituency* is the portion of a nation, state, or locality represented by a particular elected official or other political leaders. The term can refer to a cluster of people or a geographic area a substantial number of citizens resides. Political scientist Richard F. Fenno Jr. (1978) praises the term more finely, to incorporate four types of constituencies. A *geographic constituency* is described by boundaries fixed by legislative or court action; it can be established on a district's size, location, industrial or business character, the socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or other characteristics of the population. A *re-election constituency* consists of the people in a district whom a representative considers his or her supporters: that is, those likely to vote for the candidate's re-election. A *primary constituency* includes a representative's most reliable supporters his or her "base" commonly including activists for groups that support themselves with the candidate. Lastly, the term *personal constituency* refers to a representative's closest advisers and confidants, who may influence his or her decision-making. When a representative speaks of the *constituency*, then, a social scientist must determine how the representative defines that term. Power of a constituency to decide on its representatives is vital to the working of a democratic system, in that it offers the possibility for popular control over the government.

The Parliamentary constituencies in India have been reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and even Anglo Indian Communities to achieve political equality and adequate representation in the country. As such Muslims' representation in the country not

adequately elected and represented since the first general election of the Lok Sabha. As such specific Muslim majority populated, parliamentary constituencies have been reserved for the SCs and STs as mentioned and reported in the Sachar Committee Report. On 30 November 2006, the 403-page report of the Sachar Committee, on the social, economic and educational condition of Muslims in India, was tabled in Parliament. This committee was chaired by former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Rajinder Sachar (Sachar Committee, 2006). Hence a positive intervention is required for the next delimitation of the parliamentary constituencies so that more demographic representation could take place rather geographic representation. Presence of Muslims according to its proportional numbers, will help in substantive deliberation on any policy is to be formulated by the government.

Former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari has emphatically upheld the privilege to disagree in a pluralistic nation like India, keeping up any endeavours to contradict "lessens the just substance". Ansari's comments come surprisingly close to his unequivocally pitching for governmental policy regarding minorities in society for Muslims as essential to guarantee the achievement of the administration's 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' vision (The Economic Times, 24 September 2015). Further, he added that in a democratic society, including our own, the need to acknowledge the difference of opinion is a basic element of plurality. In that sense, the privilege of contradiction (dissent) likewise turns into the obligation of a difference since strategies to disagree a tendency to lessen the popularity based pith," Ansari said in a discourse in Gwalior. The former Vice-President included that the world over the part of civil society in the explanation of dispute keeps on being thoroughly talked. "Each native of the Republic has the privilege and the obligation to judge. Thus lies the vitality of difference" (The Indian Express, 24 September 2015). Democracy and deliberation are contemporary to each other. In true democracy expression of views and ideas should be encouraged. Prominent Muslim Member of Parliament from Hyderabad Lok Sabha constituency Barrister Asaduddin Owaisi has asserted that socio-economic issues can be addressed if the community has a political voice. He has expressed in an interview that Muslims have politically disempowered (Live Mint, 8 October 2015). Hence the political argument which is debated in any political circle within India is how to bring the concept of inclusion of Muslims at the implementation level.

8. Participatory Pluralism

They are addressing the issues of extending the meaning of democracy beyond voting and representation value and feasibility of what he calls "participatory pluralism. Political pluralism is a participatory form of government in which the needs and wants of many define the politics of the country. In a politically pluralistic society, one can say that there is no majority. The fundamental ideas of government are perceived through the ideas of individuals and groups to make sure that all the needs, as well as the wants of society, are taken care of. In embedding inclusive political participation and representation, it is informative to interrogate the spaces and avenues available which contribute to or impede the realisation of this ideal. In this regard, political parties are a critical vehicle for ensuring that party politics adhere to and respect diversity and indeed offer favourable opportunities for political inclusivity. Pranger's extremity of 'Politics of Power' versus "Politics of Participation' is misrepresented, since the motivation behind interest is to practice control, yet it significantly accentuates a crucial element of every present-day society: a couple of administering the numerous. Subsequently, the majority of subjects are moderately weak to impact political decision making (Sachar Committee, 2006).

The political journey of Muslim community in India we can say "Power to Poverty" can be traced to centuries of Pre-Colonial Period. British India and Post-Colonial India have witnessed severe backwardness of the community in all socio-economic fields. The political leadership has not emerged after the demise of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad. Though many National and Regional political parties originated, leadership has not yet emerged.   The powerlessness of the Muslim community leads to backwardness and community has cornered in all developmental parameters.

9. Political Representation of Muslims in India: An Overview of 2004,   2009 and 2014 General Elections.

As of late, a large number of nations have set up reservations to increase the representation of women and minorities in a democratic form of governments. Arrangements for women exist in more than one hundred nations. Individual political parties have received vast numbers of these arrangements. However, the more significant part includes legitimate or established changes requiring that all gatherings select a specific extent of female candidates. Policies for minorities are available in more than thirty nations. The data of political representation of

Muslims for the last three elections of House of People (Lok Sabha) are elaborately discussed hereunder. Muslims elected for the Lok Sabha during the elections of 2004 to 2014 are 36, 28 and 23. The lowest Muslims representation is recorded in the year 2014 after independence. This data is evident that Muslims have minimum representation share (43 Percent) in the house and overall deprivation and dis-empowerment ratio of Muslim community is 57 per cent. Such political shift can be alarming towards to Muslims community regarding their security and future.

TABLE - 1 Muslims in Lok Sabha				
No.	Year	Total Elected Members/Constituencies	Muslims Elected	The ratio of Representation on Population Basis	The ratio of Disempowerment /Deprivation
XIV	2004	543	36	66	**45.45**
XV	2009	543	28	66	**57.56**
XVI	2014	543	23	66	**65.00**
Total			**87**	**198**	**57.00**
Source: Based on Ansari 2006, 99-102 & Updated figures derived from the Reports of Election Commission of India					

Political Representation of Muslims (Party Wise) for the last three General Elections of Lok Sabha 2004 to 2014

The story of political disempowerment or political exclusion of Muslims in India is as old as political history of Indian democracy during 2004, the United Progressive Alliance under the leadership of Indian National Congress has the total M.Ps from Muslim community are 36 out of which ten are from INC which is double-digit scored in 2004 elections, the second-highest 7 Muslim MPs elected from Samajwadi Party. The Worst performance has been recorded by the BJP which has no Muslim M.P in the country though the party has allotted tickets to 8 candidates. No political party has allotted tickets more than 10 per cent, which has a lesser share in terms of demographic share to Muslim in the country to contest elections except Muslim parties like AIMIM, PDP and NC.

Table - 2

No. Of Muslim Candidates Contested (Provided Tickets) by Major Political Parties (National/Regional/State/Registered) and their Success Rate

During 2004 General Elections

Sl. No	Name of the Political Party	Total No. of Constituencies Contested	No. of Muslims fielded by the party / given tickets	No. of Muslims M.Ps Elected	Success Rate of Muslim and Overall share
1.	Indian National Congress	417	25	10	40% (6%)
2.	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	02	02	01	50%
3.	Telugu Desham Party	33	01	-	- (3%)
4.	Samajwadi Party	237	25	07	28% (10%)
5.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	69	08	05	62% (7%)
6.	Bharatiya Janata Party	364	08	-	- (2%)
7.	Janata Dal United	73	03	01	33% (1.36%)
8.	Bahujan Samaj Party	435	47	04	8.51% (1%)
9.	Rashtriya Janata Dal	42	04	03	75% (7%)
10.	Nationalist Congress Party	32	01	-	- (3%)
11	Janata Dal (Secular)	43	04	-	- (9.3%)
12	Indian National Lok Dal	04	01	-	- (25%)
13	Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	06	03	01	33% (50%)

14	Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party	03	02	02	100% (67%)
15	Jammu & Kashmir National Panthers Party	07	02	-	- (28%)
16	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	16	01	01	100% (6.25%)
17	Rashtriya Lok Dal	32	03	-	- (9%)
18	National Loktantrik Party	18	02	-	- (11%)
19	Communist Party of India	34	01	-	- (3%)
20	All India Trinamool Congress	33	02	-	- (6%)
	Total			36	

Source: Election Commission of India (www.eci.nic.in)

The elections of 2009 have decreased the representation of Muslims in the Lok Sabha from 36 to 28. As such the Congress has not increased its Muslims candidate figure of M.Ps in the election. This election has got one Muslim M.P by BJP. Most of the National Parties and Regional Parties have not opened the account. Again UPA has got the power in central government.

Table - 3

No. Of Muslim Candidates Contested (Provided Tickets) by Major Political Parties (National/Regional/State/Registered) and their Success Rate

During 2009 General Elections

Sl. No	Name of the Political Party	Total No. of Constituencies Contested	No. of Muslims fielded by	No. of Muslims	Success Rate of Muslim

		the party / given tickets	M.Ps Elected	and Overall share
1.	Indian National Congress	440	26	10	38% (6%)
2.	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	01	01	01	100%
3.	Telugu Desam Party	31	02	-	- (6%)
4.	Samajwadi Party	95	21	-	- (22%)
5.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	82	08	01	12.5% (10%)
6.	Bharatiya Janata Party	433	03	01	33% (1%)
7.	Janata Dal United	27	02	01	50% (7%)
8.	Bahujan Samaj Party	500	58	04	7% (11.6%)
9.	Rashtriya Janata Dal	44	10	-	- (23%)
10.	Nationalist Congress Party	68	04	-	- (6%)
11	Janata Dal (Secular)	21	03	-	- (14%)
12	Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	03	03	03	100%
13	Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party	06	03	-	- (50%)
14	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	22	01	01	100% (5%)
15	Communist Party of India	56	06	-	- (11%)
16	All India Trinamool Congress	27	03	02	67% (11%)
17	Praja Rajyam Party	40	05	-	- (12.5%)

18	Assam United Democratic Front	16	12	01	-	(75%)
19	Lok Janshakthi Party	94	06	-	-	(6%)
20	Muslim League Kerala State Committee	15	08	01	12%	(53%)
21	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	30	02	-	-	(7%)
22	Biju Janata Dal	18	01	-	-	(6%)
23	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	23	01	-	-	(4%)
24	Telangana Rashtriya Samithi	09	02	-	-	(22%)
25	IMUL	01	01	01	-	(100%)
	Total			**28**		

Source: Election Commission of India (www.eci.nic.in)

The election of 2014 gives a clear mandate to BJP and defeat of secular parties. Rise of right-wing politics weakened secular and democratic politics. The representation of Muslim M.Ps in this house has further deteriorated from 28 to 23. Most of the candidates of secular and regional parties have been defeated. The consolidation of national parties resulted in the weakening of regional parties.

Table – 4

No. Of Muslim Candidates Contested (Provided Tickets) by Major Political Parties (National/Regional/State/Registered) and their Success Rate

During 2014 General Elections

Sl. No	Name of the Political Party	Total No. of	No. of Muslims fielded by	No. of Muslims	Success Rate of Muslim

		Constituencies Contested	the party / given tickets	M.Ps Elected	and Overall share
1.	Indian National Congress	464	27	04	15% (6%)
2.	All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	05	02	01	50% (40%)
3.	Telugu Desam Party	30	01	-	- (3%)
4.	Samajwadi Party	78	14	-	- (18%)
5.	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	82	11	02	18% (13%)
6.	Bharatiya Janata Party	428	09	-	- (2%)
7.	Janata Dal-United	38	05	-	- (13%)
8.	Bahujan Samaj Party	503	49	-	- (10%)
9.	Rashtriya Janata Dal	29	06	01	16% (21%)
10.	Nationalist Congress party	36	02	02	100% (5%)
11	Janata Dal (Secular)	26	01	-	- (4%)
12	Jammu & Kashmir National Conference	03	03	-	- (100%)
13	Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party	05	04	03	75% (80%)
14	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	35	02	-	- (6%)
15	Communist Party of India	47	01	-	- (2%)
16	All India Trinamool Congress	45	04	04	100% (9%)
17	YSR Congress Party	38	04	-	- (11%)
18	All India United Democratic Front	10	04	02	50% (40%)

19	Lok Janshakthi Party	07	01	01	100 (14%)
20	Jharkhand Mukti Morcha	21	01	-	- (5%)
21	Indian Union Muslim League	02	02	02	100%
22	Aam Aadmi Party	432	05	-	- (1%)
23	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam	40	01	01	100% (2.5%)
24	Telangana Rashtriya Samithi	17	04	-	- (23%)
	Total			**23**	

Source: Election Commission of India (www.eci.nic.in)

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

The political empowerment of Muslims in the country is very low and more than half of the community is under-represented. It has resulted in further marginalisation of the Muslim in the country. All the parties have used Muslims merely as the vote bank and hence with the rise of BJP Muslims become even more irrelevant politically. Moreover, the major issue of public life in the country is the over-representation of upper castes and economically dominant classes. The indicator of socio-economic development is also not satisfactory and alarming to adopt affirmative action and to achieve political equality. When the constitution has been provided political reservations to SCs, STs and Anglo-Indians, then why it should not be extended to Muslims, hence a comprehensive policy shall be adopted to achieve political empowerment. To protect the identity and security of Muslims and the democratic principles, the Muslims should be adequately represented. This study also shows that India has not achieved a genuine democracy where the norms of inclusive democracy shall be respected. The political parties are also equally responsible for the disempowerment of Muslims. Their attitude towards the Muslim community is arrogant and not commendable. The parties are using the Muslim community as a vote bank and have never tried for addressing their issues. Thus community has pushed to margins at all levels. The general perception of the Muslim community in the country perceived that Indian democracy has only shaped the power, not

sharing the power. The data shown above is also evident that the performance of the political parties at national and regional levels is not appreciable. Democracy runs by political parties and their agents. Hence the role of the state is inevitable to adopt a policy measure to achieve participatory democracy. Without the presence of Muslims, political deliberation and discourse in the country cannot progress. The voice shall be protected as this is a necessary device of democracy. Separate constituencies shall be created for Muslims in populated areas through the delimitation process. The present strength of Lok Sabha shall be enhanced to 900 so that the Muslims and women can be accommodated simultaneously. Reserved constituencies for Muslims will create an atmosphere of trust and confidence in the democratic system of governance. It will create leadership in the Muslim community.

All political parties shall allot tickets and provide B forms to contest elections as per the population share of Muslims. The contemporary politics has emerged new threats to Muslims to their lives, properties and cultural identities. Recent deadly attacks of cow vigilantes and growing intolerance and hatred are also made the biggest challenge to Muslims in the country. Muslims should initiate the process of dialogue with the majority community. Community is hopeful for their representation in upcoming general elections of 2019. Interfaith dialogue is one of the solutions and strategies to bridge gaps between the communities. Muslims should establish alliances with major regional and caste-based parties so that the share of representation shall be increased.

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