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LEFTIST MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN**
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PUNJAB (1849-1947)**
MUHAMMAD SHAFI



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY, LAHORE

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THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE LEFTIST MOVEMENT IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the major developments which profoundly influenced the nature and direction of Leftist movement in the United Pakistan. One may isolate these developments as: (i) Communist party's decision to recant from its support to Muslim right of self-determination; (ii) The fallouts of partition on the Leftist movement; (iii) The Calcutta Congress and the establishment of separate Communist Party in the West Pakistan; (iv) Communist Party's (uncritical) acceptance of Ranadive's thesis; (v) The fallouts of Rawalpindi conspiracy case on the Leftist movement; (vi) Communist Party's strategy of establishment of United Front, after imposition of ban on its activities in 1954; (vii) The establishment of NAP; (viii) Imposition of 1958 martial law; (ix) Impact of Sino-Soviet schisms on the Leftist movements; (x) 1965 war and its fall outs on Leftist movement; (xi) The establishment of Pakistan Peoples Party in West Pakistan in 1967, and its impact on Leftist movement in the region; and (xii) Difference

within the Leftist movement regarding the issue of provincial autonomy.

KEY WORDS

Leftist Movement, Pakistan, Communist Party, Muslim League

Communist Party's decision to abandon its support, to Muslim right of self-determination in 1946, had disastrous implications, as regards the relationship between the Leftist movement and the Pakistan's state was concerned. In early 1940s the Communist party decided to explore new possibilities of proliferation of Communist ideology, in the newly created state in the subcontinent. Consequently, CPI began to take a new view of the political situation in India, particularly of the Muslim political movement. For instance, it "no longer viewed the growth of AIML, in terms of growth of communalism but the rise of anti-imperialist consciousness among Muslims".¹ It did not imply that it had decided to support partition on the religious lines,² rather it was actuated by party's decision to view both Congress and League as national bourgeoisie parties, therefore, it was considered desirable by the Communist party to work in both parties.³

Renowned Leftist activist and intellectual, Ahmed Saleem attributes two reasons for this decision : First, CPI's desire to muster AIML's support against the fascist and imperialist powers; second to bring together AIML and Congress demands" and to "weld them in to firm anti-imperialist unity".⁴ Jamal Naqvi, a veteran member of Communist Party and author of history of Communist party, construes this approach not as support to Pakistan movement, but rather Communist party's decision to support delegation of limited powers to center, and more subjects to provinces, which came to be called as "zonal federation Line". It was considered closer to the policy of All India Muslim League as compared to Indian National Congress.⁵

This policy fructified in the resolution of enlarged plenum of the CPI Central Committee on 19th September 1942, and confirmed by Congress of CPI in May 1943.⁶ It went a long way towards bridging the gulf between the Leftist movement and AIML, by paving the way of entrance of Communists in the latter. However, after two years certain Leftist elements decided to give second thoughts about party's decision to support Muslim right of self-determination, as Dutt realized that, the determining factor behind Pakistan, was not the nationality, but the religion. It implied that their perception of Muslim League once again underwent change, as they began to label Muslim League not as the representative of progressive elements, but as the supporter of reactionary feudals. This realization also found manifestation in the self-criticism on party, which highlighted that, Communist party in fact, had played in the hands of imperialists, by equating Congress and League.⁷ This reversal of support to Muslim right of self-determination not only indicated erratic decision making, but also led to the construction of a negative image of Leftist movement, in the newly created state of Pakistan, and provided its opponents particularly in the establishment, to label the leftists, as "unpatriotic", "foreign agents" and "fifth columnists".

The partition of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent also played a major role in shaping the structural appurtenances of Leftist movement particularly in the West Pakistan. For instance, the enmass migration of non-Muslims, particularly Hindus and Sikhs, proved to be a shattering blow for Leftist movement in West Pakistan, as these communities constituted the nucleus of the movement. It was considerably less organized among the Muslims. Moreover, their migration further decreased the strength of middle class. Similarly, the trade union movement, which was considered to be the vanguard and the harbinger of the Leftist movement, was also organized around the radical elements of these communities. More significantly, communal frenzy accompanied by partition, created such as an

atmosphere that the Communist Party's head quarter in the West Punjab, came to be labeled as "Sikh head quarter". Therefore, it had to be liquidated. The most disastrous implication of partition was that, class politics came to be submerged by communal politics.

The establishment of separate Communist Party, for West Pakistan, may be described as a milestone in the history of Leftist movement in Pakistan. This party was established in accordance with the decisions of Calcutta Conference 1948. While taking such decisions, the conference did not take into account, the issue of establishment of a unified Communist party in the both wings⁸, which could have proved to be a cohesive force for the Leftist movement. The Central Committee of the party remained ineffective, due to the hurdles created by the establishment, which prevented effective contacts between the Communist parties of the both wings. A regional Central Committee was established 1949, to bring coherence in the activities of the CPP. However, no contacts between East and West Pakistan Communist parties could be established until July 1957. Only the establishment of NAP paved the way for more effective contacts between the democratic and progressive elements.

In order to further strengthen these bonds, a Coordination Committee of CPP was formed, which comprised representatives of both wings. It was not meant to be a Central Committee of Pakistan Party, rather its underlying motive was to facilitate the exchange of experiences and views on different questions of national importance. It met thrice between 1967 and 1970. The brief description of the extent and level of coordination, exemplified by the instances of different mechanisms of cooperation within the leftist parties of both wings, evidently points towards absence of effective chain of command within Communist Party that could have ensured sustenance of a unified movement. Unfortunately, the Calcutta Congress failed to acknowledge the prospective benefits/ utility of the establishment of such

mechanism, which was only possible, if the Leftist movement had been organized on unified lines. This decision went a long way towards preventing the emergence of a strong and unified Communist Party.

Another important development that affected the nature and course of Leftist movement was the adoption of Ranadives' thesis by the Communist Party of Pakistan. It had depicted partition and creation of Pakistan, as an outcome of connivance between bourgeoisie - landed aristocracy and the British Imperialism. It described the establishment of the state of Pakistan as a "treacherous compromise of capitalist landlord leadership of the League with Imperialism. A compromise, which enables it to fool the masses with myth that freedom has been won".⁹ Under this line, the Communist parties were instructed to adopt the course of revolutionary struggle, by organizing peasants and proletariat against the national bourgeoisie.¹⁰ The CPP adopted this ultra-radical line, which Jamal Naqvi, describes as BTR line,¹¹ on various fronts which, not only pitched the CPP against the League, but also established its negative image before the establishment, and by the same token allowed the latter to project it, even in more negative hues, to the people of Pakistan. Therefore, while alluding to its implications, Iqbal Leghari points out very succinctly that "right from the very outset, the CPP cast upon itself an unpatriotic shadow".¹² While referring to its incompatibility to the ground realities of political situation in the subcontinent, Jamal Naqvi maintains that, the rigidity of this line was soon exposed; therefore, it had to be abandoned within one and a half year in India.¹³ The CPP continued to adhere this line till 1954.

The exposure of Rawalpindi conspiracy case in March, 1951, had grave implication of CPP as it disastrously affected the Leftist movement in Pakistan. Pindi conspiracy was first abortive attempt to stage *coup d'etat* in Pakistan, and the four members of Communist party were also implicated in this conspiracy. The opinions of Leftist activists are divided

whether Communist Party was actually involved in this conspiracy or not. For instance, Jamal Naqvi opines that it was not involved in this conspiracy; even the government did not accuse the party of conspiracy, but rather of not informing it about such plans.¹⁴ Iqbal Leghari on the basis of interviews of veteran Communist leaders, who were at the helm of affairs of Communist Party since 1950s argues conclusively that conspiracy enjoyed the support of Communist Party, but the party reached at this decision after a very heated debate, and only through a divided vote.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the propaganda about the alleged involvement of Communist Party in this conspiracy, proved very harmful for the Leftist movement in Pakistan. It allowed the government, to crush the leftist movement, right from its very inception. According to Leftist leader and intellectual Eric Cyprian, "The whole leadership and the Central Committee of the Communist Party were put behind the bars, according to Security Act of Pakistan. The underground organization of the party was completely destroyed".¹⁶ Prof Khawaja Masood a renowned Leftist (who also remained Secretary General of CPP), while assessing its constricting fallouts on party argues that "this so-called conspiracy damaged the party severely, that it could not get united after this episode".¹⁷ For Jamal Naqvi, "its weak organization grew further weaker".¹⁸ Major (Rtd) Ishaque Mohammad (who was also implicated in this conspiracy), while analyzing its impact on Leftist movement takes a broader view, in his estimation not only the Leftists but the liberals by and large, could not escape from consequences of crackdown by the establishment "In those days whosoever, claimed to be a liberal or considered himself a liberal, feared that he might be interned or labeled as communist".¹⁹

The long-term fallouts of Pindi conspiracy, culminated in government's decision to declare CPP illegal in 1954. After imposition of this ban, its party was left with few alternatives, but to change its strategy, as now it became virtually impossible for it to survive as an "open political party, in this

undemocratic environment".²⁰ Therefore, it decided to enter in the political arena, as a multi-class party. The following of this strategy is called "the united front line" through which it decided to lend support to the various regional and democratic and progressive forces. Though Communist Party was following this policy since the establishment of Azad Pakistan Party and its manifesto was also drafted by Sajjad Zaheer - who was the Secretary General of Communist Party, yet in the official parlance it got fructified in its decision to lend support to Awami League.²¹ It hoped to transform it into a socialist party. In the following years 1956 - 55, it "attempted to move out of its state of isolation, by pursuing the policies of broad united front, with regional parties".²² In the next stage it extended its support to National Awami Party, which was established in 1957. This policy had a profound impact on future course of the Leftist movement in Pakistan. For instance, this strategy enabled it to extend the scope and influence of Leftist movement in Pakistan, to those areas and regions where it could not have gotten access, while functioning in capacity of Communist Party faced with all odds. But on the other hand, this policy had its costs, which in the long run imposed weighty limitations for the Leftist movement. For instance, in the case of Awami League, this policy backfired, as Awami League ended up as an organization of Bangali petty bourgeoisie".²³ As a result of Suhrawardys' pro-western stance, the upper crust of Bengali bourgeoisie was left in Awami League, the other classes and segments established a party of their own called NAP. Though the latter, proved to be a veritable bond between the democratic and progressive forces across the country, yet over the period of time its "emphasis shifted from class politics to bourgeoisie parliamentary democracy".²⁴

During late sixties the Communists also came to realize that NAP's leader Bhasani was constitutionally incapable of carrying forward class politics.²⁵ Major Ishaque, while highlighting another caveat of the 'United Front Line' argues

that this "experience was valid only in East Pakistan as a communist party existed and it formed a united front with Awami League".²⁶ Another limitation of this decision was that though it helped in the development of the Leftist carders in political parties, such as NAP and Awami League, yet these were not under Communist Party's discipline. Similarly, its control over their parliamentary wings was even more fragile. The establishment of NAP (National Awami Party) constitutes another significant episode in the history of the Leftist movement in Pakistan - NAP came into being as a conglomeration of nationalist forces. It represented a unified front of the regional Left against the establishment. It proved to be an effective instrument of communication between the democratic and progressive elements. Most of its leaders had their political following in their respective regions, in this context, it represented popular forces as well. Moreover, through the proliferation of literature on various issues such as agricultural problems, land reforms, peasant struggle, foreign policy as well as other anti-imperialist themes, it served as a veritable tool of dissemination of Leftist influences. Another significant aspect of NAP, which distinguishes it with other Leftist parties, was its incessant efforts to mobilize peasantry. Furthermore, it also played a role in the development of parliamentary democracy, which implies that it represented a facet of Left in the assemblies as well.

The imposition of Martial law in 1958 and the postponement of 1959 elections may also be described as an important development in the history of the Leftist movement, in terms of its implications on the former. The elections were postponed, ostensibly out of the apprehensions of the establishment, concerning the prospects of victory of progressive and nationalist forces, such as NAP and Awami League, which were increasingly coming under Leftist influences. Mohammad Waseem refers to these as the non-statist parties. The ruling elites apprehended that after coming into power through elections, these might initiate such

changes in the domestic and foreign policies of the country, that would be detrimental for the vested interests of the ruling elites, as well as metropolitan bourgeoisie. Therefore, in order to pre-empt such an eventuality, it resorted towards imposition of 1958 martial law. There is sufficient evidence to corroborate this contention. For instance, the declassified documents of the US State Department shed enough light, on the visits of Commander-in-Chief General Ayub Khan and other high ranking Pakistani officials in April 1958 and later summer, to America during these visits, the Pakistani officials drew the attention of US authorities towards the prospects of such change in Pakistan. Hamza Alavi's writings also highlight US role in the imposition of 1958 martial Law. For instance, he refers to the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State, after the imposition of Martial Law in Pakistan by the President Iskandar Mirza on 8th October, 1958. He also underscores, how the American Official advised Ayub Khan for military takeover. According to Hamza Alavi, the Americans by then were reposing more trust on military as they believed that bureaucracy had thoroughly discredited itself before the public, whereas military's legitimacy was firmly intact. Therefore, it could prove to be a reliable partner, for the protection of metropolitan as well as US strategic interests in the region. The most important of those was the containment of Leftist influences of Soviet Union and China. The declassified documents high light how US kept a vigilant eye on the developments concerning Leftist movement in Pakistan.

The postponement of elections and the imposition of Martial Law, profoundly altered the course of politics in Pakistan. It also indicated state's hostile attitude towards Left. More significantly, it also signified a configuration of a new alliance against the Left, comprising ruling elites (which represented propertied classes and military bureaucratic oligarchy) and the metropolitan bourgeoisie. These dynamics continued to structure states' response towards the Leftist movement. This development, besides causing further

resentment among Bengalis, also increased their disillusionment towards the federal structure and consequently pushed them to demand maximum provincial autonomy, which the state structure could not allow to provide. Therefore, over the period of time, this issue acquired such a silence in East Pakistan that it came to overwhelm the question of class, which was the focal point of Leftist politics. Thus, the imposition of Martial Law, on account of its deep implications cannot be disentangled while assessing the factors or developments affecting the course of Leftist movement in Pakistan.

The split in the world Communist movement on account of Sino-Soviet Schisms, also had its profound effects on the course of Leftist movement in Pakistan. It not only affected the CPP but also divided the Leftist elements within NAP. The impact of these cleavages was more conspicuous during the period 1963 - 66. These first appeared in East Pakistan Communist Party in 1963, when two members tendered their resignations as the openly expressed disapproval of the Soviet Line. This split became more manifest in August 1966, when pro-Chinese faction of East Pakistan Communist Party, convened a secret separate Plenum, in which a new party was created. It came to be called East Pakistan Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).²⁷ In West Pakistan this split more profoundly affected the factions of Communist party in Punjab and Karachi, however "Communist party in Sind remained relatively unaffected from this split, though this deviation certainly had its fallouts" opines Jamal Naqvi.²⁸ He goes on to suggest that, "since 1960s, and particularly after 1962, the internal tussle within Communist party, can be seen in the backdrop of collision between World Communist Movement and Maoism".²⁹ In his estimation the wave of Maoism, emerged in 1962, and it continued to gain momentum till 1966. By the year 1971, it got splintered into various fragments. The Maoist faction explicitly separated from the party in 1966. This process of

breakup which started from Karachi culminated in the secession of Bengal party.³⁰ This faction, after parting ways with Communist party, also tried to establish a separate trade union of the Left wing.³¹

As regards its impact on NAP is concerned it came to be divided into two factions: (1) Pro-Moscow (Muzaffar Ahmed); and (2) Pro-Chinese (Bhashani) The prominent leaders of the former were Wali Khan, Bezinjo, Khaur Baksh Mari and Atta Ullah Mengal. The other faction was represented by C.R Aslam, Sardar Shaukat Ali, Abid Hassan Manto and Major Ishaque. The stances of pro-Moscow faction within NAP, as well as the opponents of the One Unit among the nationalists were closer to the Communist to the CPP, which identified itself with World Communist Movement.³² With the split of NAP into two factions, there also started a tussle between the Leftist elements within NAP Bhashani.³³ It led to the withdrawal of Pro- Moscow Communists from the NAP Bhashani. While referring to this aspect, Jamal Naqvi concurs that "we parted with NAP Bhashani when Maoist and petty bourgeoisie elements brought an end to its democratic functioning and made for us impossible to remain in NAP."³⁴ He further writes that in those days the Communist party published a detailed analysis which was entitled as "NAP Mein Phoot" (The fissures within NAP).³⁵ While focusing on the impact of Sino-Soviet schisms on the Leftist Movement, it would not to be out of place to compare these with Indian Left. One may identify their contrasting patterns in Pakistan and India. For instance, the impact of Chinese Left was more divisive in India, as compared to Pakistan. In latter's case the traditional Left as well as regional Left in West Pakistan, by and large, remained under Soviet influence. The impact of Chinese Left was more conspicuous in NAP Bhashani, a faction of East Pakistan Communist Party, some groups of traditional Leftists in Punjab and Karachi as well as the New Leftist elements, which emerged in 1960s.

Another significant development, which further caused division within Leftist forces, was the outbreak of Indo-Pak War 1965. It had its divisive impact on both Communist party as well as Leftists within NAP. It contributed towards sharpening the cleavages within Leftist elements, in more than one manner. Interestingly, the perceptions of Leftists from different regions, varied quite conspicuously on this issue. For instance, the Left in Punjab considered India "the aggressor" and took this conflict as an act of "national self-defense".³⁶ They extended their all-out support to the war efforts. While alluding to this aspect Iqbal Leghari mentions the reactions of Leftists like Raza Kazim, Ishaque Mohammad and C.R. Aslam. "Raza Kazim thought that war could lead to a people's war and the Left should therefore, form People's war Committee. Ishaque Mohammad (Ex-Major) at this time wrote directly to the President to offer his services in the Army. The C.R. Aslam group formed a war council to mobilize public opinion and to inform the people with facts that this war was a result of American Imperialism, who were out to teach Ayub's government a lesson".³⁷

The Pro-Moscow group in Left, held altogether different view, as it did not label India as the aggressor. It attributed the outbreak of war to "Ayub regime's provocative action in Indian held Kashmir".³⁸ While depicting it as "anti-people", it construed it as a factor which intensified "chauvinism".³⁹ It also raised the issue of "drain of war costs on common people".⁴⁰ It espoused peace with India, in the larger interest of the people. The East Pakistani Pro - Moscow Leftists, reminded the fact that this war had exposed the vulnerability of East Pakistan. It accorded more primacy to the issue of East Pakistan's security to Kashmir issue.⁴¹ The regionalists in NAP, particularly from the minority provinces, opposed war. They argued that it would divert attention towards "need for a strong army and strong center to counter the Indian threat".⁴² They were in favor of peace and friendship with neighboring countries. In this manner the 1965

war, also expedited the process of factionalism with NAP as well.

Jamal Naqvi, while commenting on CPP's reaction on this issue writes that "immediately, after the outbreak of the war, the initial stance of party's secretariat was that, party should extend its support to the defense activities. This incorrect line was outcome of the Maoist moth. The committees of Karachi, Nawabshah and other cities, raised their objections on this wrong line. Party also realized its mistake and the Central Committee tried to rectify this line. It devised the line that the interest of the people of both countries lies in the fact that, there should be ceasefire and the issue of Kashmir should be resolved through the negotiations between Pakistan and India."⁴³ It further speculated that to brand India and Pakistan the aggressors would be tantamount to play in the hands of the *Jansanghis* and the *Jamatias*".⁴⁴

The establishment of PPP in 1967 also marks an important development in the history of the Leftist movement in West Pakistan. Notwithstanding this debate that whether its leader Z. A. Bhutto may be described as a socialist or an enlightened feudal, "PPP had a left progressive streak in its formative years".⁴⁵ For instance, since its emergence on political scene during anti-Ayub movement, it succeeded in drawing new Left in its fold to the extent that the latter "actually became "its part".⁴⁶ Besides this, in its initial years it had a vibrant Left wing, which comprised "all left learning and petty bourgeoisie elements".⁴⁷ More significantly, the peculiar aspect which distinguishes it from the other Leftist parties in West Pakistan, was the introduction of innovative concepts in the Leftist movement. these include: (i) dialectical approach towards religion; (ii) indigenization of Socialist Ideology in its manifesto and slogans; and (iii) construction of a patriotic image of Leftists. As regards the first concept is concerned, it did not altogether reject the religion like other Leftist parties, instead it owned it, in fact, it tried to appropriate it in a skillful

manner, as exemplified by the use of the term "Islamic Socialism" and "Combination of the issue of religion with that of food".⁴⁸ Iqbal Leghari sees it as Bhutto's main contribution towards Socialist movement, which implied that "Socialist must not fear religion".⁴⁹ Similarly, PPP's manifesto contained the main essence of Socialist ideology in an ingenious fashion. For instance, its main agenda was:

"Democracy is our politics. Islam is our Religion. Socialism is our Economics. Allpower to people".⁵⁰ encapsulated the gist of Leftist ideology, in an ingenious form

The same can be said about Bhutto's slogan of "Roti, Kapra aur Makan" (Bread, Cloth, and Housing). It affords an example of indigenization of the Leftist programme in the local idiom. PPP's success in construction of a patriotic image of Left also contributed towards its success. For instance, Bhutto projected himself as the son of the soil, moreover, through the tactful use of anti-imperialist and anti-India stances, he managed to project the "image of a socialist without the stigma of being anti-Pakistani".⁵¹ This issue according to Iqbal Leghari was quite "important" in context of the Socialist movement in Pakistan".⁵²

Besides these aspects PPP's mobilization techniques also play a key role in its electoral success. In this context, one may highlight Bhutto's peculiar antics / style of identification with masses, his use of language, dress, imbrication of local issues in his speeches, his association with folklore and local cultural idioms - introduced a new culture of political rallies. Through the use of these techniques of mass mobilization, he succeeded in spreading Leftist political consciousness not only in quite loud and clear terms, but also in communicating a "sense of dignity and self-respect" among the poor and marginalized classes which "they previously lacked".⁵³ PPP 's mobilization and rallies gave the people "a glimpse of the collective strength in streets and villages".⁵⁴ and showed them the way to become an agency of change. Apart from introduction of these innovative techniques of mass

mobilization, the establishment of PPP may also be construed as a significant political development in the history of Leftist movement in this sense that it ensued new debates between the traditional Left and the New Left, ranging from the issue of class to the question of participation of Left in the parliamentary democracy, to debates involving the approaches towards political challenges.

Another development which cast its profound impact on the Leftist movement since the mid-1960s, was the divergent responses of the Leftist movement towards provincial autonomy. Sheikh Mujibur Rehman tried to resolve this problem through six-point agenda, which was a sort of extreme reaction against the over centralizing tendencies of the state. He even declined to accept Yahya regimes offer of more provincial autonomy in which the latter showed willingness to concede all these demands, except centre's control over defense and foreign affairs. NAP Bhashani did not support Mujeeb's six points, rather it proposed its own fourteen point programme. During Toba Tek Singh Kissan Conference, its leader Maulana Bhashani, while alluding to the gravity of this issue warned the establishment that it should not hold elections without resolving this issue through consensus, otherwise Mujeeb would get mandate on this issue in this eventuality he could not be dissuaded from this issue through negotiations.⁵⁵ Bhutto's stance was closer towards West Pakistan establishments' stance. Certain nationalists from West Pakistan also opposed Mujeeb, "they were not ready to be slave of Bengali majority. They were of the view that, if they had to fight they would do so for their own sake, not for Bengalis".⁵⁶

The Pro-Moscow wing of NAP (Wali), NAP (C.R) group and Young People's Front (YPF) of Dr. Aziz ullah viewed Mujeeb's struggle as "a national liberation movement and therefore to be supported".⁵⁷ While referring to CPP's stance on this issue, Jamal Naqvi argues that

In 1969, the East Pakistan Party Congress was held, which was also attended by the observers of West Pakistan Communist Party. Among the issues, which were discussed in this Congress, the most important pertained to the question that given the political and economic inequalities within different regions of Pakistan, whether the whole country could move towards national democracy? Whether it would be more appropriate for the region faced with this situation to move ahead individually, without waiting for the other regions? This line is called the line of liberation in pieces or segments. Our party's representatives, keeping in view Pakistan's specific situation, advocated the line of line of liberation in pieces and this line was subsequently approved.⁵⁸

Naqi, further justifies this stance through different arguments, which include: (1) It was advocated by the party to check Mujeeb's "opportunism" and it played an important role in this context;⁵⁹ (ii) The party adopted this line, on account of the fact that, all the Bengali masses had become united behind Mujeeb's six points, therefore party's line proved instrumental in associating the proletariat with this movement".⁶⁰ (iii) Had East Pakistan's Communist Party not endorsed this line in its Congress, it would not be able to support Mujeeb's line of "six points otherwise independent" not it was possible to resist military action through the support of World Socialist Community for the liberation of Bengalis".⁶¹ Thus according to him, this line enabled the World Socialist movement to support Bangladesh, which proved decisive.⁶² He further acknowledges that on account of this militant line, the party fell victim of oppression from the government.⁶³

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¹⁰ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 15.

¹¹ BTR stands for B.T. Ranadive.

¹² Leghari, "Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 223.

¹³ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 15-18.

¹⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹⁵ Notwithstanding these controversies, this fact cannot be denied that, it was not conspiracy in the real sense of the word, as the conspirators were not caught red handed while executing their plans what actually happened was that, its actors made plan but later abandoned them. These were never executed. By the time of their arrests, these had been shelved almost two years ago. However, when government came to know about this plan, through certain informers and other means, it decided to take political mileage out of it, by construing it as a conspiracy. It not only succeeded in magnifying its gravity through propaganda and spinning, but also succeeded in purging the armed forces, from those cadres

of officers, who were known for their anti-imperialist bent of mind. More significantly, it also used it as a convenient pretext to curb the nascent Leftist movement in Pakistan.

¹⁶ Interview with Eric Cyprian, 10-08-95 cited in Irfan Waheed Usmani, "Kashmir ki Jung 1948 aur Pindi Sazish Case" (Kashmir war 1948 and Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case) (Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Punjab, 1995), 212.

¹⁷ Interview with Khawaja Masood, 9-7-95 cited in "Kashmir ki Jung 1948 aur Pindi Sazish Case", 211.

¹⁸ Naqvi, "Communist Party of Pakistan", 20.

¹⁹ Major Ishaque cited in Samina Akbar, "Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case: An Analytical Study", (Unpublished M. Phil Thesis, G.C. University Lahore, 2008), 92.

²⁰ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 19.

²¹ Ibid., 19 while tracing its origins Naqvi maintains that it had its beginning as a provincial organization as East Pakistan Awami League, which was founded by Maulana Bhashani on June 23, 1949. Later it was subsequently merged with Jinnah Awami League in established by H.S. Suhrawardy.

²² Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 223.

²³ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 25-26.

²⁴ Iqbal Leghari, "Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 125.

²⁵ M. Rashiduzzaman, "The National Awami Party of Pakistan: Left Politics in Crisis" *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 43, No.3 (Autumn, 1970)

²⁶ Leghari, "Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 87.

²⁷ Badruddin Umar, *The Emergence of Bangladesh Vol 2: Rise of Bengali Nationalism (1958-71)* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 127.

²⁸ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 34.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 43

³¹ Ibid., 47

³² Ibid., 35

³³ Ibid., 49.

³⁴ Ibid., 50

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Leghari, "Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 113.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 114.

⁴³ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 43-44.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁵ Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 157.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 185.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 157.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 230.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 142.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 227.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Unfortunately, Bhashani's saner advice could not be heeded and his apprehensions proved prophetic.

⁵⁵ According to Yahya Bakhtiyar, the former Attorney General of Pakistan, Bhutto agreed to accept five and a half points of Mujeeb's six points agenda, but due to latter's insistence on all six points, the agreement could not be reached. Yahya Bakhtiyar's statement, cited in Sattar Tahir, *Martial Law ka White Paper* (Martial Law's White Paper) (Lahore: The Classic, 1985).

⁵⁶ Naqvi, *Communist Party of Pakistan*, 64-65.

⁵⁷ Leghari, "The Socialist Movement in Pakistan", 170. He further writes that, Young People's League later changed its stance and began to brand Mujeeb as an Indian and Imperialist agent and started supporting the guerrilla movement in East Pakistan, Ibid., 170-171.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 62.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 61

⁶² Ibid., 62-63

⁶³ Ibid., 65

BOLLYWOOD: A STUDY INTO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

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ABSTRACT

The inter-subjective social life of Bollywood India finds itself within the competitive market economy where the significant thing is to move upward. The primary group identity seems to be constructed on the religious line, that is, to be Hindu. The Hindu identity considers itself a dominant category and leaves little room for the "Other", namely the Muslim. It does not acquire this role but only lately in certain historical time and space, namely after political division of India and entering into free market economy. The Hindu identity constructs on recalling of its historical repression that drives it to take certain orientation while encountering its Other. The orientation remains prevailed with the foregrounding of dominating its very other. The co-existence that was driven initially through Nehruvian ideological domination is shifted to the religious competitive identities playing on a religious ground in a time when religion becomes a private concern. Bollywood lives on an introjected Otherworld providing the very breathing ground to the old ideological traces, that is, of Indian nationhood where plurality co-exists. However, this very ground is tortured with the reflection of one's repressed self. All the alternative spaces are becoming redundant due to the homogenizing cultural tendencies and the increasing over-shadowed holding of hierarchical power structure within interpersonal space.

KEY WORDS

Bollywood, Religious Pluralism, Ideology, identity constructs

This article intends to explore Indian cinema to find out the mode of construction and inter-play of religious identities. For this, two ways are employed: one is to analyze, briefly, the name of the Indian cinema, Bollywood, within the context of shifts and changes in its life; and the other is to analyze and interpret the structure of a movie, *Anwar* (dir. Mahesh Jha, 2007). This article does not venture to enter into an elaborated description of the history of Indian politics, religious groups or even Indian cinema. The article limits itself to a humble goal, that is, to provide an instance of understanding religious identities through and within the discursive environment emerged through a movie.

There are multiple theories to understand cinema. Auteur theory brings out the need to understand movie while understanding the producing authors. This theory has its merits but it limits our understanding to the ideas and intentions of the author itself. However, how author himself developed and constituted within its environment is neglected. Also, it gives emphasis upon author while reducing the importance of audience and the multiplicity of the possibility of interpretation.¹ While *Genre Theory* helps us to understand the otherwise discreet elements of the movie through placing them in an environment already understood and defined by categories. For example, in a scene of two persons holding pistols to each other and ready to shoot each other can only be understood if the westernized conception of duel comes into play as a defining category.

Even *Genre Theory*, however, has its limitation. This theory makes us, though, understand the

fragmented scene of a movie, and figure out the dominated theme of a movie, yet the theory can't guide us to the structural and/or depth understanding, and/or unconscious motives driving to come out as symbolic expressions within the life-world of a movie.² In the following I have used structural and depth interpretive strategy to unearth the otherwise hidden meaning of the surface symbolic expressions. This strategy holds cinematic experience as a structure of reality and places constituting elements of this reality in a struggle to attain a coherent picture.

The world of cinema is located within larger social and political environment that change with the developmental compulsions. The changed socio-political environment produced peculiar form of religious nationalism and thus religious identity. In the context of subcontinent, it is not uncommon to interpret religious politics through two nation theory. This article however follows the theory³ that shows the construction of religious identities with the shifts in discursive environment. The religious political discourses however may recall the collective memories,⁴ yet these re-callings remain embedded in their mode of employment within the politics of present.⁵

Indian cinema presents a reality within which religious pluralities compulsively find their place. In each shift and change within the life of Indian cinema, especially after 1947, it has to cope with the answer of plural religious conditions permeating within the social life out of which it has to create its reality. This paper would also see what type of answer the Indian cinema has provided and how it deals with the existence of religious plurality. The attempt will be made to show answers to the religious tensions emerge out of the socio-political environment within which the Indian cinema finds itself existing historically.

The term “Bollywood” that stands for the Indian film making industry has emerged only recently. About industry that is more than hundred years old no one knew of Bollywood even only twenty-five years ago. The term “Bollywood”, however, is a modern India’s shift towards owning a new dominating ideological expression. It is a shift from Nehruvian’s socialistic Indian state⁶ to a capitalistic competitive westernized way of earning and living. It provides a clear indication of the Indian film industry’s deep-seated urge to be counted at par with Hollywood if not better than that. The effort shows the wish that already determines the way of looking and that is to consider oneself living in and with the modernity.⁷

Bollywood, the name and the new space with it, provided Indian film industry to reflect in the Hollywood mirror to create a new identity while ignoring at the very same time its fragmented body tormented with its historical conflicts and tensions. It must have been a joyous experience, yet the “beance” between the fragmented body and her assumption of a unified imaginary produced a lack.⁸ Many of the attempts of the Indian cinema, shifts and changes in technique and story making remained an effort to overcome that lack, the horror of the fragmented body, that is, of its true-self.

The seat of horror, however, that is also its very own self has to subsume under a fictionalized identity. To realize this self, it has to sublimate and own the very self generated through mirroring in the Hollywood. It looked into what it is not, in order to realize one’s new imagined identity. The tensions and conflicts, the essence of the seat of horror, subsumes within the imagined identity, however only through repression. The imagined self, with its repressed ground, gains the movement to realize it-self, and it has started given this way. But in this process of realization the previous

owning does not vanish away. In the realizing of its identity as Indian B-(ollywood) the repressed identity prevails beneath even in the presence of sublimated identity. To realize new identity, it compels to hide, though, at the very same time, manifest the latent traces of previous, but, now repressed identity.⁹

The industry that was already moving on the style refracted from “great artists”, already a shifted position from Nehruvian socialistic ideal, in the late 80s, the transition from Hindi films to Bollywood remained undisturbed.¹⁰ What was to be added was the Englishization of the environment, emphasized technology, increased glamorization and followed story making and stylizing on Hollywood pattern. With each next step, it happened successfully. The success arose not only due to the inherent changes in the orientation of Hindi film industry but also increasingly audience’s changing expectation and audience’s life-world at large.

Hindi film industry, centred in Bombay, attained a significant position soon after its existence within multilingual India, due to its ability to display and express forcefully the dominant ideology of the state and through a language that is universally communicable.¹¹ Indian film industry remained Hindi film Industry for almost ninety years amid multiple regional and international film industries. Hindi film industry remained centred at Bombay in a competitive environment with Tamil, Kannada, Marathi and many other regional film industries.

The efforts to superimpose ideology on the fragmented and unpleasant experiences of Indian nation started with the establishment of the *Film Enquiry Committee* in 1949.¹² Schulze says:

The ministry of information and Broadcasting defined its role clearly within the framework of nation building. Indian film producers and

directors were urged to strive for what was considered a suitable cinematic representation of the young nation.¹³

Yet the most elaborated expression came in Mehboob's *Mother India* (1957). *Mother India* or *Bharat Mata*, as it was called in Hindi, brought out the construction of being Indian striving to be happy in its toil and suffering under a socialistic state, or as Schulze says:

India is a hymn of sacrifice and suffering... idealizing the struggle of India's hardworking rural population it represents basis, and above all the necessary moral foundation for the blossoming of the young Indian nation.¹⁴

The shift from Hindi film industry to Bollywood is a shift towards un-owning the dominant ideology that remained the underlying construction of Indian-self and produced new ground for the expression of both newly emerging and establishing business class with its renewed international, exclusively western ties. The turning of Hindi Film Industry into Bollywood marked the ideological departure to be what it wants to be; to participate within the new globalizing world¹⁵ while hiding the existing tensions in its identity. Because every film is part of the economic system it is also part of the ideological system, for cinema and art are branches of ideology. None can escape; somewhere, like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle all has their allotted place.¹⁶

The birth of the term Bollywood, in India, coincides with the simultaneous emergence of neo-nationalism. The emergence and prevailing of neo-nationalism, centred upon one Hindu Nation,¹⁷ also brought forward the very repressed element only whose repressing could enable the original nationalism possible. For this neo-nationalism, the Indian nationalism, even in its secular

guise, became possible only by pushing away from its own boundaries the very element of religiously dominated "warrior-like" Muslim nationalism that could endanger its rule.

Hindu-nationalism that kept its popularity, initially, among a small group of religious devotees found its popular grounds in the emerging middle class of India, as a neo-nationalism, in the late eighties of twentieth century. The neo-nationalism, however, could not prevail but only with the corresponding encounter with its "Other". It found its "Other" on two planes; one was global while the other was local. In order to enrich itself it projects its ideals into the image of its global, though largely western "Other". It opens itself for the struggle and engagement with the rather symbolic life patterns to let transform its living-condition.¹⁸

On a local plane, it was not hard to locate its "Other" in the form of non-Hindu and that remained Muslim. There was no charm in owning this "Other," rather it was taken as historical resistance, or a scar, within the possibility of development. It would have been ideal if the whole scar could be cut off and thrown away. Yet it was not possible and even after cutting off the scar many others were there and still prevailing and co-existing in India. Hindu/non-Hindu (largely Muslim) is not only a binary opposition it is also a concomitant relation, a complex, though antagonistic, with each other.

The Hindu neo-nationalistic complex, if it is to prevail in its presence had to face its other and developed strategies to overcome or coexist with it. The overcoming found its expression in the violent battle with the "Other". As could be read in the paper India Today on June 15th, 1984, Bal Thakery, the *Shiv Sena* Leader of Bombay compares the Muslims to a disease which already had been spread in India: "The Muslims

were spreading like a cancer and should be operated upon like a cancer...The country should be saved from the Muslims...". Another similar voice, in his article *Politics of secularism*, published in *Statesman Weekly*, the writer and columnist, Amar Zutshi stated:

Rightly or wrongly, the Congress in fact robbed the Hindu majority of its legal right to succeed the British Raj. With Hinduism as its religion, India could have been a truly secular state...Intentionally or otherwise the move of Nehru's reduced the Hindu majority to an impotent political entity, a game that has been played by successive Congress regimes to perpetuate its rule ---and that too on the strength of Hindu vote.¹⁹

At the same time, new strategies to co-exist came to fore. Hindu nationalism found its softer voices in the personalities like Girailal, the influential pro-Hindu editor of *The Times of India*. Contrary to the view that minorities posed threat to the Hindu culture and identity he maintained that in order to forge a strong Indian nationalism it must be culturally rooted in Hinduism and Hindu civilization.²⁰ What was demanded from minorities by Hindu nationalism is not to move out of India but to integrate by owning very culture of Hinduism and its civilization.

Softer or harder, Hindu neo-nationalism has to live in a plurality that is the historical condition of its existence. Only within this plurality the presence of this ideology is possible. Nowhere else, but in Bollywood and with Bollywood, the aporia of living in plurality came out significantly. The logic of business to reach maximum audience, irrespective of religious background, and present the simulation of reality made Indian cinema once again acquire its historical task of constructing and displaying national Indian identity through its cinematic

reality. In the changed social conditions, the compulsion to accept and encounter religious composition of simulated reality that otherwise remain secularly disguised came out significantly.²¹

Before the rise of Hindu nationalism, the Indian cinema was constructing an image of plurality where multiple religious groups seemed to be living harmoniously. Movies like *Amar, Akbar, Anthony* (dir. Manmohan Desai, 1977), support this point. Even earlier the song *Tu hundi banai ga na musalman banai ga, insane ke aulad hai tu insane banai ga*, of a movie *Dhool ka Phool* (dir. Yash Chopra, 1959) suggests a syncretic movement. The difference however is significant. In the later case, the effort was to merge religious identities together to subsume under a transcendental category of Human being, displaying the projective goal of the socialistic state of newly independent India. While in earlier position the acceptance of religious identities is taken as given fact and the effort is to show their living peacefully and even friendly. The environment had been showing shifts, the emphasis upon socialistic ideals seemed to be losing its strength and instead the market forces were finding their way into the already closed economy of India. The transcending category of Human-being seemed to be losing its force and instead a new ideal of living harmoniously, rather friendly while owning one's religious identity finding the place.

Movies like *Roja* and *Bomba* (both dir. Mani Ratnam, released in 1992 and 1995 respectively) provide the moments of another shift when conflicting identities are placed against each other without any strong effort to minimize the tension. The shift that was sublimated and subsumed under the name of Bollywood has tried to move away, after displaying the tension among multiple religious groups. The sublimated self of Indian cinema, Bollywood, tried to keep the ground of conflicts hidden

beneath the romantic westernized self as one can see in many of triple Khan's movies, especially in Shah Rukh Khan's fame and the movies in which he worked. Almost each of them ignored the repressed hidden tension and remained in a newly built space of B(ollywood). However, the back-ward movement of self-realizing let loose the repressed consciousness to come out, though in a hidden structure.

The development of Bollywood's identity having westernized form also carries on within the compulsion of business-world. The emergence of the industry of the information technology, increased entrepreneur relationships with western businesses²² and high income generating returned-Indians supported new strategic direction to manifest new rationalized ideology in late eighties and early nineties of the twentieth century. Finding itself within new competitive environment Bollywood relates with the rationality that engendered through this environment. This relationship helps producing new identity for the Bollywood transcending the previous oppositional self.

It is, however, not that Indian film industry started interacted with the global world, only after owning Bollywood as its name. In the age of "Great Artists" in late 60s and 70s, and even earlier in the age of "Mother India", the movement towards international world was present.

Bollywood movies may only recently have begun to be noticed in the west, but they have long defined the very concept of cinema for many millions across the globe. While the name Bollywood echoes and acknowledges its bastard American parentage the son has long since taken over from the father.²³

The interaction between Indian cinema and the world however remained like shaking hand, a meeting

without changing one's identity. The movies of Raj Kapur, not only employed technical assistance but also actors and actresses from Russia.²⁴ The famous song, *maira juta hai japani, yai patlun Hindustani, sar par lai topi rusi, phir bhe dil hai Hindustani* (my shoe is from Japan, this pant is of India, the cap on my head is Russian, my heart is still Indian), of a Raj Kapur movie, *Shree 420*, brings forward the existence of an Indian living within market economy that is open for International products. The song was clear in sending its sense of layman simplicity though with a contradiction that arose because of the claim of Nehruvian socialistic economic self-dependency while still using the foreign products.

With the shift in the social and economic conditions the meanings of the same words changed. In the context of moving towards its western Other, the remake of the very same song *Phir Bhe Dil hai Hindustai* ("But the heart is still Indian"), of a movie with the same name (dir. Aziz Mirza, 2000) brings forward the contradiction of competing self and the compulsion of meagre living conditions. It is an expression of a rationalization in which the fragmented self is embedded in a competitive environment to get success. The song sarcastically accepts the contradiction of self already moved to another plane that is westernized in form though incomplete in content. Bollywood though carried on its function of constructing nation's identity yet instead of accepting *toil and suffering* for the *whole nation* as it was the case during the Nehruvian model, the movement is towards constructing identity in the context of competitive world market. Indian cinema is increasingly forging its identity against and within the imagined "Other" as the western world. Movies like *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* (dir. Ashutosh Gowariker, 2001) "tries to meet Western production

standards, conduct filming overseas, adopt some English in their scripts or incorporate some elements of Western-style plots".²⁵

The movie, though a dialectical encounter between British Raj and colonized locals on the field of cricket, further, casts the British actress Rachel Shelley, and many others to meet the best western movie production. Earlier than *Lagaan*, like that of *Dilwale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* ("The Brave-heart will take the Bride", dir. Aditya Chopra, 1995) and later than it like that of *Kal Ho Naa Ho* ("There May Not be a Tomorrow", dir. Nikhil Advani, 2003) deals with the Indian's experience in the backdrop of the western world. This backdrop does not only remain only a backdrop but becomes the whole ambience within which a movie generates its simulated reality. For example, the showing of an airport, flats, plazas, roads, even villages remain sometimes influenced and some other times the European or western at large.

To show and develop within and against the western world, however, is not the Bollywood's complete movement of realization. As B(ollywood) is grounded in the "B", saying with a pun, the turning towards its very own ground was essential. There is a clear shift to get back to its own very self, the seat of horror. Movies like *Zakhm* ("Wound", dir. Mahesh Bhatt, 1998), *Vaastav* ("The Reality", dir. Mahesh Manjrekar, 1999), *D* ("Underworld Badshah", dir. Vishram Sawant, 2005), *Anwar* (dir. Manish Jha, 2007) and *Haasil* ("The Gain", dir. Tigmanshu Dhulia, 2003) are instances of the very movement towards one's very own self. The conflicts and tensions of the very society that is the ground of the produced movies found their way through such movies.

For almost ten to fifteen years, the showing of real life in movie making kept dichotomized the film industry

within “commercial” and Art movies. With the shit in socio-economic life of India, in late 1980s and early 1990s, the merger of Art movies with Commercial cinema started taking place. Within few years the distinction between Art movies and Commercial movies disappeared due to the process of commodification. The process of commodification makes it incumbent for production to appear as homogenized productions. However, the commodification process, though reduces differences can not eliminate the imminent need of the film industry to show simulation of reality with each of its production. The simulated reality or the constructed reality as we may call it transforms a movie into a discursive environment. The movement towards commodification, to make each movie a selling entity, corresponds with the techniques of differences that could de-familiarize audiences and give the commodified-entity a popular ground. The need of de-familiarizing generates the usage of multiple techniques to bring forward form of a story in different mode. However, the content (structure) prevails, most of the time hidden, to make commodified-entity show not only its internal competitive environment but also conflicting discursive environment at large.²⁶ The structural reality comes out almost in a compulsive way with each commodified movie, whether it claims to be an Art movie or a commercial one.

To elaborate the structural reality, we can single out some of the significant elements of the reality. These elements are: Sexual or Romantic; Religious plurality; Laws; Justice; Power; Sublimation.

Each of these elements is to be understood in their own dichotomies: Sexual or Romantic has Hero and Villain; Religious plurality has Hindu and Non-Hindu (though most of the time Muslims); Laws and Conventions has Police and Criminal; Justice has Judicial institution and

exploiters; Power has Politician and Public; Sublimation has World and the Other-World.

The imagery of reality that comes out in the form of a movie may be understood as a structure intertwined with dichotomies of elements both horizontally and vertically. What do I mean by horizontally and vertically? In each movie, the characters move within the dichotomies to perform what the structure makes them perform. Yet at each instance the character may own and engage within multiple dichotomies. It is possible to be Hindu, loving one's wife or mother and crying for police injustice while at the same time showing enmity for a Muslim. (For example, in *Zakhm (The Wound, 1998)* Anand (Akshay Anand) the brother of Ajay (Ajay Devgan) remains motivated for the betterment of justice, loves his mother despite knowing that she was from other religion, and shows enmity for Muslims).

The movie, *Anwar*, though could not make the expected business yet it remained a movie telling something significant. "Crushed under the heavy-weight *Guru's*" (dir. Matiratnam 2007) simultaneous release, this otherwise small film *Anwar* – director Manish Jha's next after the "sledgehammer piercing" *Matrubhoomi, a nation without women* (2003) – put to an unexpected and "untimely death." It wouldn't be completely right to correlate *Anwar's* failure with the simultaneous release of *Guru*. One must blame the "extraneous flab in the script which thwarts the film's flight - a whooshing rocket whose steam and fire is wasted on the ground instead of hurtling it into a spiritual and scathing universe".²⁷ Based on Priyamvad's (1952) short story *Phagun Ki Ek Upkatha* (A story from the local month of *Phagun*), the film *Anwar*, however, enjoys those "moments of sensitivity which is far beyond the normal stuff scene in commercial cinema".²⁸ Further, its relevance to the contemporary

conditions, “when the inter-religion tolerance is hitting a vile nadir”,²⁹ cannot be ignored.

STORY OF THE MOVIE

Below is a story of *Anwar* published at the cover of the movie and as well as on a movie website. It is interesting to see how the religious conflicts and tensions of the story remain hidden, that are mentioned in brackets only to highlight the obliviousness that otherwise remain active beneath the story of the movie.

The movie *Anwar* is a “story of a young man (Muslim),” an artist, who leaves his town and his familiar world with which he got alienated. He desired to get engaged in love. Yet that engagement resulted in bitter events and he had to face few bitter realities. His “mentor (*religious identity unknown*) abandons him and his best friend and his one true love betrays him.” In painful and tortured mental condition, “he takes refuge in an *old building (old temple)*.” And when he wakes up next morning his world already got “turned upside down.”

“Mistaken for a terrorist (a Muslim terrorist),” *Anwar* wakes up in strange position “that resonate deeply with the modern Indian condition” (fragmented body having poverty ridden hierarchically structured society with power as the primary interactive moving force) and “indeed with the Human condition in this present day Global village.” Crowded and “surrounded on all sides” by multiple social characters who “try and engineer the situation to their profit, *Anwar* becomes the central character upon which the others base their hopes and their deepest desires” (to kill him to move upward in the power hierarchical structure).

“A rabble-rousing Minister” (a Hindu) consolidating his political position by constructing this event into a moment justifying his popular ideology; two

journalists; “one a nationally renowned TV reporter (a Hindu) and the other a small town scribe,” playing hard to improve their careers, and further their social positions; “a priest” (a Muslim priest who was brought to the scene by the police to negotiate with the alleged terrorist Anwar with the advice to get himself killed otherwise the whole Muslim community will be in trouble by the Hindu administration) “whose concern is to operate within the status quo” because of its already dominated position; and “a senior police officer” (a hindu) whose primary concern remains through out the movie away from the scene, but his salvation can not be possible unless the situation get resolved. Each social character has its own story along with the developing story of the major characters of the movie. In these overlapping, crisscrossed stories, “we discover a huge love story, plastered against the canvas that is India. And that above all is what Anwar is about. About the simple human need to connect, to love and to be loved, and to believe” (But all these needs remain in the background, always in the secondary positions, not allowing major plane of social interaction get touched by them)...What is now left are “Faith, Hope, Love, these three...And the greatest of these is Love.”³⁰

The story is taken from the title cover of the movie, *Anwar*. The significant point here is the forgetfulness of the religious identities and the tensions of religious groups in the very narration of the story. This forgetfulness is the very element of the conscious life of the Bollywood identity and the very ground on which it stands, that is the Indian Life world. But forgetting does not evaporate the tension; its there and would keep on coming to the surface.

Following I have traced the dichotomies in the story and try to reinterpret the story to bring out the structure of the movie. This very structure, from the

perspective of the religious pluralism, surfaces the very repressed complex that becomes, at the very same time, not only the reason of the forgetfulness but also the tensions and conflicts in the Indian psyche.

DICHOTOMIES OF THE STORY

Hindu/Muslim
Politics/Public
Hate/Love
Media/non-media (hidden-ness)
Power/suppression
Freedom/non-freedom
Ideologue/self-interests

SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS IN STORY

The Movie, Anwar, depicts two spaces; a Hindu space (a power-structured-dynamic space), a Muslim space (a space of guilt and crime). Movie brings out two projections of life; the power dynamism and its hierarchy the Love as a best way to lead a life. Movie brings out two forms of truth; truth is that works and enhances one's power truth as the un-concealment and the occurrence of the unconcealed within human-self bringing out transformation of self. Movie brings out multiple stories in the Hindu world yet each story is structured on two forces, power and love, working within the world and with its "Other" as well. The other story, that moves around and with Muslim world as an "Other" of the Hindu world: the tradition-loving Muslim Boy starts loving a Muslim Girl after understanding the teaching of love of his mentor as the best way to lead a life; the Muslim Girl is fascinated by US-Charisma as her mother is addicted and remained asleep, the Secular Hindu Friend of a Muslim Boy is also fascinated by US Charisma, the Secular Hindu friend got attracted and ran away with the Muslim Girl; Muslim Boy tipped the antagonistic relatives; secular Hindu boy got killed by the hard-minded Muslims arrived from the concealed world;

Muslim Girl committed suicide and with it end the possibility of Muslim-completeness); guilty-ridden Muslim boy pursuing the old habit of loving tradition took refuge in old temples; the fore-understanding of power-structured-dynamic Hindu activity considers him terrorists; guilty-ridden Muslim Boy was revealed by another reverend Muslim of his being convicted; the Guilty-ridden Muslim boy, in the identity of terrorist, after spending some time in seclusion hand him over to the power-structured-dynamism of Hindu world.

INTERPRETATION

In the power-structured-dynamism of Hindu space the only way open for Anwar, the Muslim boy is to kill himself. It (to kill himself) was revealed to him by another Muslim (a Muslim priest). The Muslim boy had committed crime. He tipped the Muslim warriors that arrived from no-where. These warriors killed Hindu boy, Uddit, and got back the Muslim girl, to its original position. The Hindu boy, Uddit, was eloping the very girl that was otherwise “justified” girl of a Muslim boy. The Muslim girl was running away with Uddit because Uddit was a forward looking and a practical person energized to transform itself after taking modern western education and even willing to merge into western life-world to improve material conditions of his life. While Anwar, the Muslim boy, fell in love with old temples and language having no cash value. The Muslim boy, Anwar, felt guilty after committing crime and left his homeland in wandering. Incidentally he stayed in an old Hindu temple at night. After getting up he observed his prayer within the temple. A village child took away his bag having drawing of the map of the temple made by his mentor, Master Pasha, in order to realize his dreams of developing the sign of love as did Shah Jahan. The power-dynamism of Hindus understood him as a terrorist

because of his Muslim identity that was disclosed through his bag that contained unfinished drawings of the temple. Despite few soft voices, he was declared terrorist. The Power-structured-dynamism of Hindu world decided without hearing his voice. The decision was justified through ideologue and intensified through the underlying power-dynamism of the Hindu world. The decision sought his death. He was to be killed and he got killed.

This story that mostly remained a flashback story within the movie seems not to be un-heard of. Let us reconstruct the story once again with different categories. "The Muslims", instantiated as Anwar, committed a crime. They let their hard-minded relatives fight with their otherwise secular minded Hindu friend, Udditt, whose only crime was to take away the very wealth, Mehru, who was otherwise "justified right" of Muslim. The secular Hindu was killed by the hard-minded. The Hard-minded went back the wealth yet the success remained only of the Hard-minded and the Muslims (the Muslim boy in case of movie) could only get sorrow, grief and guilt. The effort of a Muslim, to relieve himself from guilt, is to go back to Hindu history. Yet the time has changed and the power struggle among Hindus has changed the way of looking. The world around has turned into the world to be used only to increase one's power. In this world, as the words revealed by an Imam, the Muslim priest, who was brought and sent towards the entrapped Muslim boy in the temple for gathering information. The Imam, the Muslim priest, brings out his views as:

I have weak eyes. Please come close to me... I want to tell something... The Muslims living nearby have enclosed themselves in their houses. Your one mistake will endanger their life...For god sake kill yourself...don't get arrested alive...don't

do any damage to this sacred temple...if you come out to get yourself handed over, the mob would kill you...I just know this that you will get killed...when these people couldn't fight with poverty they fight with us...your death may give them a temporary smile...kill yourself.³¹

To an ear of a student of the history of the subcontinent this story may produce a familiar effect. The whole reconstructed story seems to be the repressed historical complex still existing and en-living in the unconscious of the Indian self. This new historical time has only surfaced it to become a constant element of tension. The Hindu/Muslim categories are still a binary opposition and in this opposition Muslims are already guilty party and already convicted. Their only way of survival, at-least as it emerges through movies like *Anwar*, is to live like a dead. Their options are either become subservient of Hindu police to act as per its command as Imam Sahib, the Muslim priest does in the film *Anwar* (it may also take form of supporting or helping Hindus while remaining as a marginalized group. For example, in the movie *Haasil* when the escaping Hindu couple found shelter in a Muslim shrine for a short time)³² or be considered as criminal like *Anwar*. Whether *Anwar* was a criminal or not in actuality it won't matter. What matters here is the very fore-understanding of the Hindu power-structured world for an active Muslim-being. In a movie like *D* this is very clear where Muslims character appear, though in a powerful, yet in a criminal guise. There is also a third way open for a Muslim boy (though its better to be deaf and dumb in this case) and that is to take a guidance of a Hindu teacher who may take them to the power-corridors if and only if the Muslim boy stays upright, be secular and heedful. The movie *Iqbal* shows it clearly. The Muslim boy acts through out his life upon the instructions of his coach but in the condition of being

deaf and dumb. Only in a condition when Iqbal, the Muslim boy, can not speak and therefore can't express himself, he finds success within the power-structured-dynamism of Hindu-world. Holding the similar wisdom, the Muslim priest, in the movie *Anwar*, advised Anwar to kill himself. Anwar, however, has already expressed himself through beating police, drawing paintings, making love and locating the running away couple. Further, Anwar did not heed the advice of a bus driver, offered pray in the temple and fatefully left his mentor who abandoned him after himself getting failed.

SAVIOUR SPACE OR THE ALTERNATIVE SPACE

The movie, like many other (Bollywood) movies provide alternative space where tension turns into co-existence. These are imageries of Krishna -----Mira; eccentric space of Master Pasha (Hindu or Muslim not known); and devoted love. In Hindu mythology, Krishna, the Hindu god, came on earth in response of the prayers of demigods who were terrified with the administrative control of the tyrants. In its very birth lie the possibility of freedom and a life free of coercion. Krishna came for the re-birth of spirituality and moral values in the otherwise materialistic and corrupted society. Krishna acquired the expressions of dance, art and devoted love as the counter positions of materialistic and morally corrupted society.³³

The imagery of Anwar, in the movie, as Krishna, makes him a transformed figure of love and devotion. It happens in the beginning when the flash back scenes are taking place in the troubled mind of Anwar, also it appears when Anwar falls in love, in the middle of the movie. This transformation, especially its underlying contrariness in a Muslim youth's fascination for a deeply Hindu mythology, surfaces briefly in a movie, displays his rebirth and romance with Hindu religious mythologies. Following the teachings of his mentor, Master Pasha, he

lets himself integrated in the religious and cultural tradition of India. Yet this transformation could not rescue Anwar from his death. And why should only this transformation can save him? Time has already changed. (Anwar's sleeping in the night in the temple and his getting up in the morning in the different world fully prevailed through power dynamism gives us sense of understanding regarding changed time. Further, his whole story appears as his past, appears as flash backs, haunting and fascinating at the very same time). He did not do much to avoid violence took place in the historical unconscious of Indian religious life. In fact, he let it happen. In the movie, while even being in the condition of pain and grief after losing his love, he never wishes the death of his friend, Uddit, and the girl, Mehru. It is only after the arrival of "warrior-like" relatives of Mehru and with the emergence of fuss and wail of her mother that he decides to give information regarding the run-away couple. Though he never wishes yet his letting facilitates their death. He was convicted like a Krishna because, as the story goes, Krishna died due to the curse of Gandhari who thought Krishna did not do enough to stop the bloody violence in which her one hundred sons got killed.³⁴ Anwar faces the similar fate in the changed world.

Mira remained another imagery of fascination in the movie for which Anwar desires and long for. The mentor of Anwar, Master Pasha, advises him to make love as this is the best way of spending life. Master Pasha shows Anwar the sketch of the building, a synthetic beauty of temple and mosque, that he was drawing and that also, later on, becomes the evidence against Anwar as being a terrorist, in the scene when Anwar meets him second time in the movie. There Master Pasha expresses his love of Mira and his hope that one day he would find his Mira for whom he will construct this building as the

Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (d.1592-1666) constructed the Taj Mahal for his Mira.

Historically Mirabai remained a devotee of Krishna. She started developing love for Krishna even in her childhood, that is in early sixteenth century India. Though she got married at the age of 13, she never lost her love for Krishna. It is said that she neglected her marital responsibilities. When queried about it, she said that it was impossible for her to be married to the king when she was already married to Krishna. She wandered the whole Rajisthan in search of Krishna Lord with the devotion of a faithful when her husband died. She refused to commit Satti³⁵ as it was Krishna to whom he was already married and not the mortal being that died.³⁶

It is interesting to see, however, that Mira, in the movie, always evades the Krishna almost contradictory to the historical truth. Anwar imaginatively transforms himself into Krishna with the lot of love but his Mira always evades her. She comes on the sound of Krishna's Flute in the movie yet she runs away as soon as Anwar, in the guise of Krishna looks at her. Also, Master Pasha, after finding her Mira lost her love. Both Krishnas sought for their Miras but both couldn't find their love. It seems that Mirabai of current time has lost her traditional duty of devotion and turns her attention towards objects taking her away from Krishna.

A popular web site on film critique interprets the figure of Master Pasha as: Master Pasha is an artist and a theatrical genius who has turned his back on the world after the death of his one true love. As an artist, he has surrendered himself to the world-he now begs for a living, turning it into the highest form of performance. He is also Anwar's mentor-inculcating in him his deep love of architecture and of classical art; and instructing him on love and life.³⁷

Master Pasha, interestingly displaying syncretic religious identity (having Turkish name and fascination of archaic Hindu temples and love mythology as well), surfaces as the mentor of the Muslim boy, Anwar. Master Pasha is a devotee of love and lives at the margin of society. He earns his living through begging and keeps his abode in small cottage. He appears as a symbolic holder of sufistic and syncretic tradition of India. As a holder of that tradition he teaches love and devotion as a best way to lead a life. Yet he himself finds himself alienated in the society of the changed time. His encounter with "Britney" craze and his visit to the music shop in the city with Anwar, in the middle of the movie brings out his alienated expression regarding modern art of music and poetry and especially their way of presentation.

His emphasis upon art and teaching of love seems to provide a way out for the co-existence, at least, historically. Yet In the changed world, even the holder of tradition lost his way. Even he couldn't find his way and therefore could not provide the way out to Anwar. With the changed time even the hope of syncretism, as an alternative space, seems to be dissolved and vanished for Anwar, the Muslim.

Love appears in the movie as a concern for all. In the Hindu and Muslim world, however, it manifests differently. In the Hindu-space this love is problematic. Almost every significant character in the movie, like the hard-core politician, modern reporter, police chief, movie director, etc. are engaged in their specific love relations. And almost for everyone this love stands problematic, giving them pain more than pleasure.

In the Muslim-space, however, love appears as less problematic. Other than Anwar's failure in love the Muslim-space seems to be related with itself in a more cordial and less competitive relationships. For example,

the Imam, a Muslim priest, in the movie, talks with the alleged terrorist Anwar with very polite and loving mode. Also, when the warrior-like relatives of the Muslim girl, Mahru, appears in the movie, they act only for the sake of relations even though they have all the looks of criminals.

Love appears, in most problematic form, in the meeting of Hindu and Muslim spaces. Either the antagonistic and insulting mood prevails, for example when two constables appear in the movie to insult Anwar and Mehru. Or the dominating and suppressive mood prevails, for example when police brings in Imam in the movie for negotiating Anwar in a controlled and suppressed way. There is, however, another mode of encounter in the mood of love. This encounter seems to be idealizing ones very "Other". It is the encounter of love with awe. For example, Uddit, the Hindu friend of Anwar, falls in love with Mehru, at first sight. In other movies, like *Haasil*, the troubled couple took shelter in the otherwise serene and homogenized shrine.

Love, in any case, remains a condition of living for all, in every space and encounter. All the characters remain engaged in love but as soon as they get engaged in public life they start following rules of hierarchical power. Love, in a way, is there but reduces to their private life. This reduction coincides with the privatization of religion in the increasingly competitive state in the ideology form.

The inter-subjective social life of India seems to be ravaged with power dominating hierarchical structure. In this competitive environment, what matters is the movement that has to keep its direction upward. The primary group identity seems to be constructed on the religious line, that is, to be Hindu. The Hindu identity considers itself a dominant category though leaves little room for the "Other", namely the Muslim. It does not

acquire this role but only lately in certain historical time and space. The Hindu identity constructs on recalling of its historical repression that drives it to take certain orientation while encountering its other. The orientation remains prevailed with the foregrounding of dominating its very other. The co-existence that was driven initially through Nehruvian ideological domination is shifted to the religious competitive identities playing on a religious ground in a time when religion becomes a private concern. There is another space, as enlivened by B(ollywood), that is a space of introjected Otherworld. It is built, in the Other-world, yet it provides the very breathing ground to the old ideological trace, that is of Indian nationhood where plurality co-exists. However, this very ground is tortured with the reflection of one's repressed self. All the alternative spaces are becoming redundant due to the homogenizing cultural tendencies and the increasing over-shadowed holding of hierarchical power structure within interpersonal space.

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²*Ibid.*, 106.

³Peter Van Deer Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (London: University of California Press, 1994), x-xii.

⁴To maintain an identity.

⁵*Ibid.*, xii.

⁶Nehruvian Socialism: The myth that the nation state's progress provides better living conditions for the marginalized and the needy. The multitude of an existing conglomeration of cultures within the recently carved out state borders should be understood as "unity in diversity". Indian tradition became the central motif of Nehru. It is projected as the idea of Indian men and women united in their struggle against the British Colonial governance, and thus fulfilling their historical task to be one in the formation of India. Nehru elaborated on how he "discovered long existing Indian cultural tradition" in his book. Nehru's *The Discovery of India* written between 1942 & 1945 and India's first five years plan embodies this conception further. For further readings see, Brigitte Schulze, "*The Cinematic 'Discovery of India': Mehboob's Re-Invention of the Nation in Mother India*," *Social Scientist*, 2002 (Retrieved on March 20 2007).

⁷There are multiple views regarding the origin and prevailing of the very word Bollywood. It appears that in late 1970s few journalists started using this term in their film reviews. Till mid 80s this name got popularity and in late 80s it established as a synonym for Indian film industry. For further details, see Lee (year: 18f.)

⁸For the concept of *Beance* and self-construction through mirroring see the concept of "imago" of Jaques Lacan. Jonathan Scott Lee, *Jaques Lacan* (Boston: Twayne publishers, 1990), 13.

⁹This position can also be understood through the concept "Aufheben" that normally has two meanings, one negative (annul, abolish) and the other positive (supersede, transcendence). The German philosopher Hegel (d. 1770-1831)

exploited this duality of meaning and used the word to describe that action whereby a higher form of thought or nature supersedes a lower form, while at the same time "preserving" some of its moments.

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¹¹Kavita Surya, *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*, review of *Bollywood Cinema: Temples of Desire*, Vijay Mishra, 2003 Film Quarterly < <http://www.jstor.org/journals/ucal.html> > (Retrieved on 10 March 2007), 43.

¹²In 1949, June 30, Indian Government re-introduces compulsory exhibition of 'approved' documentary films. The countrywide closure of cinemas took place in protest against the Government's taxation policy. The Entertainment Tax was raised to 50% in the Central Provinces and 75% in West Bengal. Indian Cinematograph 1918 amended to include new censorship classification for 'Adult' and 'Unrestricted' exhibitions of films. Protesting taxation, the film industry staged an all India protest day. In response, the government formed a Film Enquiry Committee appointed under the chairmanship of S.K. Patil and many other movie persons.

¹³Brigitte Schulze, "*The Cinematic 'Discovery of India': Mehboob's Re-Invention of the Nation in Mother India*," *Social Scientist*, 2002 (Retrieved on March 20 2007), 72.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁵The Bollywood movies, not only getting noticed in the cinema of the western world through the increasing interest of diaspora of subcontinent from the early 90s but also started attracting business interests of western corporations. See, Alyssa Ayers & Philip Oldenberg, *India Briefing: Take off at last* (New York: Asia Society, 2005), 174-177.

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¹⁸One can see in the policies of BJP, the political harbinger of Hindu-nationalism, the openness towards free competitive

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²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰One India. "*Bollywood Cinema; Anwar*", November 21 2006 <http://entertainment.oneindia.in/movies/bollywood/previews/2006/anwar-211106.html> (Retrieved on Feb 14 2008)

³¹It is interesting to see the contradiction here between killing oneself and exhorting to kill one-self as suicide is forbidden in Islam. The concept of killing, however, should understand here in a way following the existentialist understanding, as that of Sartre. For the concept here means not the literal physical

killing but to kill one's being. It is like suppressing one's potentiality to become free as an active being engaged in its world of projections through constructing its self. The advice of a Muslim priest, therefore, should not be understood in physical sense and thus killing oneself remains away from the liability of religious forbidding.

³² In *Haasil (The Gain)*, the Hindu couple that run away from their local area due to the pressures of a hooligan opposing their marriage takes refuge in a Muslim shrine.

³³ "Krsna", *Gale Encyclopedia of Religion*. 2nd ed. vol.8.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Satti is the old tradition of Indian society in which the widow immolates herself on the husband's funeral pyre.

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**ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS OF THE BRITISH COLONIALISM ON
EAST BENGALI MUSLIMS**

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ABSTRACT

This paper ventures to study the impact of British colonialism on the East Bengali Muslims. Within a short span of time, East India Company turned itself from trading monopoly to territorial ruler. It introduced various piece of legislations in East Bengal in order to govern and to get firm control over the land, natural resources, trade, industry and commerce. The Permanent Settlement Act 1793 not only changed the economic conditions of Muslims in East Bengal, but, also redefined their relations with other community. There emerged a new powerful class of Hindus landlords and wealthy merchants. Moreover, through unfair capitalist policies, East India Company got 'competitive advantage' over East Bengal's economy.

Key Words

Golden Bengal, British colonialism, East India Company, Economic exploitation, The Permanent Settlement Act 1793, *Zamindar*

Akbar Ali Khan, a Bangladeshi economist and educationist, in his insightful article *Golden Bengal: Myth*

and Reality describes that the historical interpretation of the 'Golden Bengal' is consistent with standard economic theory. Economists of all major schools despite their schisms dismiss a priori the theory of a 'Golden Age' in the past as myth. The historians on the other hand, maintain that their interpretation is based on solid facts. It is, therefore, essential to examine the historical evidence related to the notion 'Golden Bengal'. In the historical interpretation, there are four essential corollaries of the theory of 'Golden Bengal'. Firstly, before the East India Company, Bengal enjoyed sustained economic affluence and its economy was free from famines as well as economic stagnation as compared to other contemporary Indian societies. Secondly, Bengal was a land of plenty and cheapness. Thirdly, poverty was unknown to the common masses of Bengal who were truly the beneficiaries of economic prosperity. Fourthly, Bengal in the pre-British period was more prosperous than other contemporary societies.¹ Pre-colonial Bengal had achieved considerable advancements in agriculture sector, industry, trade, commerce, communication and consequently general economic condition improved so much so that Bengal was rhetorically described as realm of paradise, paradise of India, and paradise of nations.²

This paper is divided into four sections. First, economic exploitation of east Bengali Muslims under the East India Company (EIC), sheds light on the evolution of EIC's power and how it turned it from trading monopoly to territorial ruler. Second, The Permanent Settlement Act 1793 and its impact on the East Bengali Muslim's economy, uncovers the repercussion of different legislations such as The Permanent Settlement Act 1793,

over the *zamindars* of east Bengal. Third, East Bengali Muslims and cultivation of indigo, enquires about the forced cultivation of indigo in the east Bengal and its impingements on Muslims. Fourth, economic exploitation of east Bengali Muslims under the British Raj (1857-1947), reveals the impact of British policies regarding east Bengal and Hindus response such as the partition of Bengal in 1905.

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF EAST BENGALI MUSLIMS UNDER THE EAST INDIA COMPANY (1757-1857)

In the beginning, through perceptive diplomacy, well equipped military skills and modernized navy, the East India Company (a mercantile company of England) managed to be successful in exploiting the circumstances in India in general and Bengal in particular. In 1620s, cunningly, it succeeded in getting permission from Emperor Jahangir (1569-1627) to build forts and to conduct trade in *Surat*, *Agra* and *Ahmedabad*. In 1633, the East India Company entered in Bengal by establishing a factory at *Ahariharpur* on the Mahanadi delta. In the same year, it got a '*Farman*'³ from Emperor Shah Jahan (1592-1666) to conduct trade and commercial activities in Bengal. In 1668, a factory was opened at *Dacca*, the capital of Bengal. The 1690 treaty between the Mughals and the Company was a full-fledge license for trade which legitimized the presence of the British, as well as to do business in India. From this time onward, the Company systematically organized its strength in Bengal. It vehemently and secretly tried to make an alliance against Mughals.⁴

A major mishap in the turbulent history of Bengal happened on June 23, 1757 when the EIC became the sole ruler of Bengal by defeating Nawab Siraj-ud Daulah. The importance of Bengal can be imagined from the fact that it was the earliest region to be colonized by the East India Company. Within a short span of time, trading monopoly of the company thus resulted in the commercialization of power which left many disastrous effects. The victory of Plessey 1757 was probably the result of Anglo-Hindu alliance against Muslim *Nawabs* in general and against all Muslims of India in particular. Thus from the very start of the East India Company rule in India the supports and partisans of the British were almost Hindus and protégés of the Hindus.⁵ "The British set their original tax assessment so high that many estates were soon sold for arrears, and as a result land rapidly changed hands, passing from the old Muslim aristocracy to a rising class of Hindu merchants".⁶ The new capitalist form of economy brought by the East India Company in the 18th century was a form of loot and plunder. It proved to be disastrous for the traditional economy of Mughal's India. British gradually depleted the stocks of food and money.

A rapid decline in the Dacca's trade and commerce started from 1765 when the East India Company became the sole ruler of Bengal. The successive replacement of the previous Mughal administrative cadre by a fresh body of government servants was the main force which pushed city to lose the most important patrons of its valuable manufactures.⁷ The British finished goods had competitive advantage over local products. Although the home-made cloth was more durable than those of

England, but, it did not find considerable place in the Indian market because of the cheapness of British's cloth. However, Bengal thus ceased to be a flourishing centre of cloth industry. The weavers as a class lost their source of income neither was their land enough to fall back upon. There was also no industrial revolution and no consequent growth of factories or cloth mills in the country to absorb these displaced weavers, most of them were Muslims.⁸

Right from the beginning of the rule of East India Company, the East Bengali Muslims were more exploited as compared to Western Bengali Hindus. Ramkrishna Mukherjee, a renowned Indian sociologist, is of the view that the economy of Bengal suffered many serious reverses in the first phase of British rule. During this time, Muslims were exploited more adversely than their counterpart Hindus. The former were deliberately discriminated in administration, civic organizations and in economic conduct related to the interests of East India Company and especially its officials, who governed the country in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The East Bengali Muslims were held in suspicion and the Company officials looked towards with scepticism. Moreover, they were considered as direct representatives of the prior rulers.⁹

The rule of East India Company left enormous negative impacts on the all the layers of Muslim society which mainly include *nawabs*, aristocracy, and lower classes such as peasants and weavers. The effects of this state of affairs and working of the British administrative machinery during the first half of the 19th century upon the Muslims society can best be realized by taking into consideration the position of its three main constituents:

nawabs, the aristocracy, and lower classes. The *nawab* after the Battle of Plassey 1757 had become a tool, a cypher in the hand of foreigners who were allowed to govern, never to rule.¹⁰ *Nawab's* income, pensions, grants and *Jagirs* had considerably declined. Moreover, the stripped of his political influence and his income alarmingly reduced. The indigent *nawab* of Bengal could no longer, as his predecessors had done, offer beneficial employments to Muslims. Grants and *Jagirs* to the upper class and favourites of the Mughal court ceased and a segment of the Bengali Muslim aristocracy was thus hard hit.¹¹

W.W. Hunter in his book ' *The Indian Musalmans*' gives a very comprehensive analysis of the pathetic conditions of East Bengali Muslims. There were three diverse streams of wealth: military command, collection of the revenue, and political employ.¹² The army which had a considerable number of Muslims, but, with the loss of the political power they were forced to quit. Mir Jaffar (1691-1765) himself disbanded eighty thousand soldiers and Siraj ud-Daulah (1733-1757) was allowed to maintain no more than what was necessary for the dignity of a person.¹³ As a result hundreds and thousands of Muslims in East Bengal and Bihar lost their jobs. Some military chiefs, who had grants of lands, left the capital and settled down as landlord, with their followers and soldiers as peasants. Others, having no such grants, marched into the hitherto inaccessible parts of East Bengal and there settled as military colonialists and adventures reclaiming the waste lands.¹⁴

Prior to East India Company, the land Revenue was one of the fundamental source of income of the Muslim aristocracy. Aziz Rehman opines "the higher

fiscal posts controlling revenue administration remained in the hand of the Muslims and direct dealing with the husbandmen, a troublesome job, vested in the Hindu revenue collectors, the latter thus forming an essential, through subordinate, link in the revenue administration".¹⁵ But, after the arrival of East India Company, a severe blow to the Muslims aristocracy was dealt by a series of changes introduced by Lord Cornwallis (1738-1805) and Sir John Shore (1751-1834). Under the new system, the higher executive offices were reserved for Englishman and the subordinate posts left to the natives.¹⁶

THE PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT 1793 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE EAST BENGALI MUSLIM'S ECONOMY

The Permanent Settlement Act 1793 was one of the unjust pieces of legislation which left enormous repercussions for East Bengal. Hoping to create a class of loyal supporters as well as to finance their administration, the British, in the Permanent Settlement of 1793, vested land ownership in the *zamindars*, which were henceforth required to pay a annual tax to the British rule.¹⁷ In one stroke, land became private property which could be bought and sold. If a *zamindar* failed to pay his land taxes, the government could auction off his land for arrears.¹⁸ The *zamindars* who had so long been mere collectors of revenue were made the permanent owners of the land, subject to the payment of a fixed sum to the British which was about 10/11th. There was no doubt that it protected the financial interests of the East India Company and gave stability to their administrative machinery. Moreover, it also

created a body of Hindus *zamindars* in Bengal who were loyal to the British. A large number of Muslim *zamindars* lost their proprietary rights to the new emerging Hindu *zamindars*.¹⁹ The remaining Muslim *zamindars* were fraught with severe consequences if they were found in holding the possession of non-registered land under the Permanent Settlement Act 1793.²⁰

The Muslim revenue officers and the actual proprietor of the soil were displaced by natural alliance between East India Company and the Hindu *marwari banias* which proved to be very cruel for the East Bengali Muslims at all stratum of society.²¹ The lower classes of Muslims in East Bengal such as peasants and the weavers were also badly affected and suffered a lot under new conditions. They formed a bulk of population of the Muslim society and The Permanent Settlement 1793 further aggravated the suffering of peasants by creating *zamindars* in perpetuity out of collectors and destroying ancient and private rights of hundreds and thousands.²² The East Bengali Muslim weavers, on the other hand, extremely exploited by various unfair means adopted by their new masters (colonizers). In the words of an English merchant, 'various and innumerable were the methods of oppressing the poor weavers such as by fines, imprisonments, floggings, forcing bonds from them'.²³ Moreover, the British cut off the thumbs of the weavers in order to destroy their craft. The decimation of local industry brought great hardship to the East Bengali people. In 1835 the Governor General of the East India Company reported to London, "The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton weavers are bleaching in the plains of India".²⁴ Furthermore, the brutal ways and means of

economic exploitation left enormous impacts on Bengalis. They were compelled to leave their homes. The populations of Eastern Bengal's cities declined rapidly as the weavers were thrown back to the land. Sir Charles Trevelyan (1807-1886) of the East India Company filed a report that the population of the town of Dacca has fallen from 150,000 to 30,000 or 40,000.²⁵

The British granted unlimited powers to collectors by introducing various rules and regulations. These collectors were mostly new emerging administrative class of Hindus. Regulation VIII of 1811 made the Collector both 'prosecutor and judge' in the trial of resumption cases. The Regulation II of 1819 further fortified the collectors with extensive powers. Considerable resumptions were then made but they were made with great irregularity.²⁶ *Sanad* (land registration letter) became one of the compelling needs of *zamindars*. Collectors were the primary but important administrative body for the registration of *sanads*. They showed negligence in their responsibility, however, a large number of the cases were decided in favour of the Government East India Company solely on grounds of non-registration of the *Sanads*, and these illegal proceeding of the over-enthusiastic Collectors were approved by the Government of Bengal and the Government of India was constrained to remark that not a single part of their proceeding which were they justified by law, or the appearance of law.²⁷ The peasants had not enough money to meet the demands of the *zamindar*, which was extensively increasing day by day due to more revenue demands by British. 'Exorbitant rents had a disastrous effect on the peasants, forcing them to borrow from moneylenders whose

usurious interest rates further impoverished them'.²⁸ Aziz, in his book, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856* concludes that the greatest misfortune from which the Muslims suffered was the very slow growth of a middle class among them---a class which has always, in modern times, been at the back of the progress and prosperity of a nation. Muslims of the East Bengal had not taken to commerce or trade after the loss of power and failed to produce the much needed Muslim middle class.²⁹

The Hindus, on the other hand, were favoured by the East India Company and its officials, although most of the previous Hindu revenue farmers, merchants, etc., were removed from the social scene.³⁰ There were, however, other Hindus who closely aligned themselves with the Company and its officials; as their agents (known as *banyans* or *gomostha*), this group gained a strong footing in the economic organization of East Bengal through dealings in its merchandise and other products.³¹ But eventually, unlike their English counterparts, these agents were unable to thrive as merchants or to invest their gains in industrial production, because, the foreign ruler's policy was not conducive to such a course of development.³² They could, however, turn themselves into a landed aristocracy, especially after the Permanent Settlement of Land in Bengal from 1793.³³

EAST BENGALI MUSLIMS AND CULTIVATION OF INDIGO³⁴

The British used East Bengal as a trade partner as they did with most of the other parts of India. The Muslim peasants of Bengal were compelled to cultivate indigo

which was no more available to British from their American and West Indian Colonies. It is interesting to note that by the mid of the 19th century the plantation of indigo under the British supervision had become more extensive in Bengal and Bihar, especially in the Muslims majority districts of East Bengal such as *Faridpur, Decca, Raja Shahi, Pabna, Nadia, Murshidabad and Jessore*. But, it was counterfactual that the price which was being offered by the English planters was very low. Even a cultivator with a good crops and harvest had still put up with a loss of Rs.7 per big which was comparable to seven times the rent of the land. Thus, indigo became an extremely forced crop, with implying oppression.³⁵

A cheap labour was easily available due to escalating poverty. Using a contract labour system not far from slavery, European planters forced the Bengali peasants to grow indigo. In 1859 a great peasant's revolt swept Bengal, and after this 'indigo mutiny' the planters moved west to Bihar. Jute, the fibre used to make rope and burlap, soon became the region's main cash crop. By the turn of the century, eastern Bengal produced over half the world's jute, but 'under British rule not a single mill for its processing was ever established there. Instead, the raw jute was shipped for manufacture to Calcutta, the burgeoning metropolis of West Bengal, or exported to Britain and elsewhere.'³⁶

The directors of the East India Company encouraged the manufacture of raw cotton and silk at the cost of local products of India.³⁷They also directed silk dealers to remain in the Company's factories rather than working in their own looms.³⁸This policy excessively affected the weaving industry of the country. The demands for Dacca's cloth manufacture showed rapid

sings of declining since 1789. The value of goods for export, manufactured at Decca alone, fell from 12 million of rupees in 1799 to only 3^{1/2} million in 1813. In 1817, the export of Decca muslins to England almost ceased.³⁹The exports of East Bengal gradually declined. From 1817 to 1835, the decline in the volume of cotton goods export was alarming. The price of cotton goods that passed from Dacca customs, for consumption outside was 152,497 in 1817-18. The amount went on declining every year till in 1834-35 it stood at 38,122. The manufactured of muslin had, by then practically ceased.⁴⁰

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION OF EAST BENGALI MUSLIMS UNDER THE BRITISH RAJ (1857-1947)

After the unsuccessful War of Independence 1857 by Indians, the direct rule of British Raj was established over India. The Hindus managed the course of events of the war in such a way that British became convinced that the Muslims were solely responsible for the outbreak of war. They termed this War of Independence as 'Indian Mutiny' against British, denying the fact that its immediate cause was Hindu soldiers of 19th regiment of Barham Pur.

The post 1857 East Bengal, saw the rise of severe resistance from lower classes especially peasants. One of the main events was the indigo rebellion in 1859-60. The indigo disturbances started in the autumn of 1859 when peasants refused to accept advances from the planters in a wide region in the districts of *Nadia*, *Murshidabad*, and *Pabna*. The *Jessore* peasants joined hands in the spring sowing season of 1860, by which

time the entire region of Bengal had become affected. As the planters' men tried to coerce the peasants to sow indigo, they went with stiff resistance and sometimes their Indian agents were subjected to organized social boycott.⁴¹This movement ended in 1863.⁴²

At the end of the nineteenth century, Bengal had a population of 85 million (54 million Hindus and 31 million Muslims). Hindus were in majority in the West Bengal and Muslims in the East Bengal. Bihar and Orissa were also included in the Bengal. Bengal was as large as France. The province of Bengal had an area of 489,500sq.km. The opening years of 20th century were very critical for the British Raj. The political scenario was undergoing a change. The British were beginning to feel a bit uneasy. George Nathaniel Curzon, viceroy of India (1899 to 1905), presided over the affairs of British India in perplexing conditions. In 1905 he partitioned the administratively unwieldy province of Bengal into East Bengal and Assam and Bengal, *Bihār*, and Orissa. The main argument of Curzon was that Bengal could not be administered efficiently by single Lieutenant-Governor.⁴³

Through partition of Bengal an effort was made to resolve the economic problems of East Bengali Muslims. The partition of Eastern Bengal brought happier prospects of political and economic life for the Muslims. The Muslims turned into majority. The partition provided chances of great progress to the Muslims who were being exploited by Hindu business and landlords. In the combined province of Bengal, the Muslims were a suppressed class of society. The Hindus had monopolized trade and government services which aggravated the economic condition of the Muslims. The partition of Bengal provided them with a chance to

rehabilitate their social position. They hoped that their social and economic status would get an impetus in the new province. In the same years, Muslims in meetings adopted several resolutions and sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State to declare the Partition as a 'settled fact'.⁴⁴

The Hindus severely criticised the partition of Bengal. The Hindus could never support a move which was to bring prosperity and happiness to the Muslims. The reasons for Hindu opposition to the partition were as follows. Firstly, "the Hindus wanted to have the stage of things which existed before the advent of the Muslims and of the lower castes for jobs".⁴⁵ Secondly, they believed that they would come under the domination of the Muslim majority in the new divided province and their superior position would be in jeopardy. Thirdly, as the provincial High Court and its subordinate judicial bodies were to be shifted to Dacca, the Hindu lawyers feared that their legal practice would be weakened. Fourthly, they also feared that their income would seriously be lessened because Dhaka would become the centre of journalistic and other academic activities. Fifthly, the Hindu landlords, capitalists and traders did not like the partition as it was to put an end to their exploitation of the poor Muslims. Lastly, the Hindus were in a better financial position and professional qualities as compared to the Muslims and Hindu landlords of Bengal also used to collect rent from Muslim peasants of East Bengal.

Some Hindu leaders called for a boycott and *swadeshi* movement⁴⁶ was started against foreign goods, especially textiles. This movement spread in the other parts of India as well and proved to be an effective tool.

There were two main aims behind this movement: Firstly, to put economic pressure on the British in order to force them to undo the partition and secondly, to promote local industry. The British Government of India could not defend the mammoth agitation by Hindus and annulled the Partition of Bengal in 1911 and again left the Muslims especially poor peasants of East Bengal at the mercy of Hindu *zamindars*. In 1940s, the Bengal Provincial *Kisan Sabha* (BPKS) was the organization through which the peasants of northern, eastern, and central Bengal were mobilized regarding radical agrarian issues such as payments of toll at village marts collected by the Unions Board, illegal *abwabs* (taxes) imposed by the *zamindars*, abolition of the *zamindari* system, and finally the sharecroppers' demand for a two-third share of the produce.⁴⁷ The Bengal famine of 1943 further intensified the situation. Amartya Sen figured out that around 3 million died.⁴⁸ Bengali public opinion was unanimous that it was a 'man made' famine.

After the encounter between the traditional, but, the rich economy of East Bengal and the British colonialism, the former went under a great change. The connection of East Bengal's economy with the capitalist world not only changed the economic outlook of Muslims, but, also affected its political and social structure. The distribution and confiscation of land through the Permanent Settlement Act 1793 redefined the political relation between the colonizers and the colonized and on the same token it also transformed the social and political relations among the natives especially between the Hindu landlord and Muslim peasants. A new distorted colonial economy of East Bengal was built on the ruins of its traditional economy. The chief

features of which were stagnancy, disparity, scarcity and chronic famines.

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¹⁶ Ibid; 33.

¹⁷ More or less comparable to the European feudal system, in East Bengal *zamindar* was given a large tract of land by the British. In turn, *zamindar* was expected to pay annual tax to the central authority, British. He (*zamindar*) was allowed to divide land into small pieces and to lease to the landless peasants.

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²⁴ Ramakrishna Mukherjee, *The Rise and Fall of the East India Company*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 304. British wanted to stop the local production of cloth in the East Bengal and also wanted to sell their own manufactured cloth in India.

²⁵ Ibid; 537-8

²⁶ Aziz Rehman Malik, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856*, 37.

²⁷ Ibid; 42.

²⁸ Betsy Hartmann and James K.Boyce, *A Quiet Violence: View from a Bangladesh Village*, 14.

²⁹ Aziz Rehman Malik, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856*, 69.

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³¹ Ibid; 403.

³² For detail see R.C. Dutt, Chapters 2-5

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³⁴ Indigo means a blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.

³⁵ Aziz Rehman Malik, *British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal 1757-1856*, 37.

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROVINCIAL AND GRASS ROOT PERSPECTIVES IN COLONIAL PUNJAB (1849-1947)

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ABSTRACT

Scholarship on the history of colonial Punjab may be categorized into provincial and grassroots perspectives. The scholars such as Ian Talbot, David Gilmartin, Imran Ali, Murid Ullah Mukherjee and Tan Tai Yong primarily focused on archival data to study colonial Punjab history. While the grassroots perspective is elaborated by scholar Tahir Mahmood who uses district level records to engage historical debates about colonial Punjab. These scholars and their perspectives are although different in their approach and methodology however they have provided additional insights about the history of colonial Punjab without challenging each other altogether. The stream of scholarship in provincial perspectives is further divided into ameliorative and critical approaches, the former present the benefits of British Raj to the Punjabis and the latter describe the negative aspects of British Raj in India. This paper focuses on how these provincial perspectives on socio-economic transformation, political control, army recruitment compares with the grassroots level work of Tahir Mahmood on colonial Punjab which in fact enrich the provincial level perspective after engaging complex historical process and structural dynamics working at the

local level. Both the macro –level view provided by of provincial perspective and the micro-level studies of grassroots perspective are indispensable to comprehend the different dynamics of colonial Punjab.

KEY WORDS

Colonial Punjab, Political Control, Army Recruitment, Communalism, Socio-economic Transformation

The scholars like Ian Talbot and Imran Ali contested their views regarding the effects of colonial rule in the Punjab.¹ According to Talbot the Punjab under the British Empire experienced tremendous economic development as a result of the canal irrigation system. He argues that economic transformation and the military requirements made Punjab significant particularly in the context of Russian threats. Talbot is of the view that since its annexation in 1849, the British rule exerted a profound impact on Punjab's life. The importance of Punjab in the economy due to its agricultural wealth, political stability through social progress and above all the recruitment for the Indian army, it became crucial to imperial interests. To understand British rule in Punjab, it requires an examination of its agricultural wealth and military importance. In Punjab, the British head constructed the world's largest irrigation system which transformed the region into the most productive part of the British Empire in economic perspective as well as the leading recruitment center of the Indian army. The canal colony system brought multi-layers advantages to British Empire. It proved the ways for cross-communal cooperation among the land owners; it enhanced the loyalty of its rural population to

British and Punjab became the richest farming area of the Empire. Statistically speaking by the 1920's Punjab produced 1/10 of total cotton and 1/3 of wheat of colonial India. The canal colony system was spectacular began from lower Bari Doab canal which irrigated the Amristsar and Lahore districts, then the lower Jhelum and Chenab canal systems which irrigated the Jhang, Lyallpur and Shahpur Districts, one of among its multiplicity of advantages was to give the relief to overcrowded districts of center Punjab. There was great connection developed between the canal colonies and military recruitment because the recruitment policy had great incentive of awarding lands to ex-military which was offered to the martial races of Punjab only. In order to maintain law and order for political stability, to strengthen British influence in empire, the threat of Russians attack through Afghanistan, the Indian army was of immense importance of British imperial interests. In Talbot's words since the Punjab became the major center of recruitment for Indian army, the collaboration between British Empire and landed Muslim elites further strengthened. This collaboration and clan wars in which the leaders of Muslim landed elites played a pivotal role in raising recruits. The Indian army continued to be dominated by the Punjab which reached its greatest strength during II world war, when a million Punjabis (The sons of soil) served for British Empire. The collaboration between British and the landowners was further institutionalizing when in 1923, the unionist party was founded; hence the impact of army recruitment on Punjab's social and political life was considerable. On the other hand, after studying the structural transformations of Punjab's rural economy by the

British,² Imran Ali argues that the interests of Empire were the primary motives for British policies and he explains the long term economic and social backwardness of Punjab.³ Imran Ali argues critically that although the

Punjab's economy obtained benefits from agricultural colonization; the pattern of growth had also negative sides. In his opinion that all steps taken by the British for modernity whether in modern irrigation technology or refined administrative system were not meaningful in transforming or altering its economy. Instead of developing industrial infrastructure in Indian Punjab, the surplus of Punjab colonies utilized in strengthening military and administrative structure. The British took every measure to retain the agrarian structure of Punjab's economy. Imran Ali is of the view that the colonial structure was conservative in the sense that it denied the economic redistribution to the masses, because the colonial empire was more interested in class hierarchy and class division, so far, this purpose they established alliances with upper layers of society and these connections were developed through land allotments. In support to his arguments he gives example form post-colonial state (Pakistan) that even after passing half century of decolonization, the colonial legacy is reflected in agrarian economic structure of the state. In this way, he links the backwardness of Punjab with the roots of colonial agricultural growth. The indigenes capital was shifted by the British to meet the metropolitan needs, so the losers or gainers of this world no to be related with growth in certain areas and absence in others but through different patterns / natures and impact of growth in different parts of world. The economic development was highly meaningful for

certain regions, similarly malignance for others. He explains development of underdevelopment argument in this perspective. Imran Ali and Ian Talbot contested their views about the patterns, facts and impacts of the colonial rule in the Punjab. According to Talbot the Punjab under the British Empire experienced tremendous economic development as a result of the canal irrigation system. He argues that economic transformation and the military requirements made Punjab significant particularly in the context of Russian threats. On the other hand, Imran Ali focuses on the political agendas of the British, there shift of capital form Punjab to global economic needs, so he mentions the negative effects on Punjab's economy and society. Imran Ali argues that the interest of the empire were the primary concerns for their policies in Punjab and he explains the long term economic and social backwardness in Punjab which in his views the existed backwardness of post partition Punjab had rooted with the British pre-partition Punjab policies. While Ian Talbot relying British policy documents and local archives he shows how the creation of canal colonies and the strategic importance of Punjab near to Afghanistan made it significant for the British Empire. The martial traditions of this region and hub of military recruitments Punjab had got a political significant which was disproportionate to its size in the British Indian army.

After studying the district level primary data, Tahir Mahmood's positioning himself in between these provincial perspectives of the scholars. Tahir Mahmood's recent work on the economic life of Jhelum's market towns differs such generalizations about British rule. Instead he argues about

the differential impact of British Empire in Punjab which means the certain Punjabi areas and communities benefited differentially at the cost of others. Tahir Mahmood's work elaborates and refines rather problematises some of the ideas and angles used by Talbot and Imran Ali to study Punjab's social and economic transformation during British rule. As a micro historian, using district record as his source, Mahmood specifies that Hindu communities particularly Khataris, Aroras benefited from the increasing trade while new market towns flourished at the expense of previous centers of trade. He further argues that the reason behind Hindus communities as beneficiaries in new market towns because of their access to capital and British legal system. Only the capitalistic trading classes which were largely Hindus could purchase residential and commercial areas in these new towns since they were sold through auctions. The new developments like railways connected new market towns to India and the global trade network. Similarly, local investments in property and cotton shifted capitals to now market towns. This new capital shift had also influenced the political shift to the new market towns as the British built administrative headquarters in these areas⁴.

Mahmood's work successfully challenged the simple city of provincial perspective of Imran and Talbot but this work also has some of its limitations. Mahmood's article colonialism and locality: economic life in the markets of Jhelum canal colony contains district data and being and micro historian he greatly contributed in the existing literature on colonial Punjab.

POLITICAL CONTROL

The scholars like David Gilmartin⁵ and Ian Talbot⁶ have strongly built connections between the British rulers and the local Punjabi aristocracy (landed elites) developed after the 1857 uprising. While Mahmood's⁷ problematizes their discussions further by providing details of ignoring historical processes and structural dynamics working at the local level. Gilmartin argues that in order to understand the British rule in Punjab and relationship between colonial state and locals, it requires an analysis of the structures of power through which the British controlled the Punjab. The structures in which the politics of Punjab developed in the 20th century and the classified hierarchies reflected in customary laws introduced by British and the introduction of land alienation act. Before the implementation of customary law over religious laws, they deeply studied the social order, difficult patterns of marriage in Punjab and understanding of Punjabi rural organization/structure in which "Tribe" declared the center the Punjabi rural identity. C.L Tupper was the principal author of customary law based on tribe which reflected from Punjabi assumption of tribal integrity and cohesion.

The British administrators and policy makers had connected the "Tribe" identify with their structures of administration. In agrarian society, the Tribe heads were their natural leaders. They were entitled with the designations of "Zalidars" privileges of few administrative powers and political authority. This tribal relationship was further connected with land holding, the Tiwans, Noon of shahapur district rewarded huge land grants. The new landed gentry emerged as the most loyal alliance of British

in the Punjab. Their ability as land cultivators, their family associations and above all their proven loyalty to the British were the key criteria. The collaboration between the British and landed elites was further strengthened by the introduction of Land Alienation Act of 1901. Through this act the population of Punjab was divided into agriculturist and non- agriculturist classes. This act prevented the transfer of land to men outside the tribes. The agriculturist tribes were Zemindars, land holders above the distinction / identification of Mohammeden, Hindu or Sikh which was the result of new identity promoted by the colonial masters. The Land Alienation Act although criticized by the different circles of society, particularly due to the exclusion of important segments of society, the dominance of agriculturist classes in politics, new identify constructed by the British, however the British imperial power remained enact with the real intention to ensure that the protective remained firmly in place. The court of wards act, the agricultural debt limitation act exemplified at best the paternalistic attitude of the British officials towards the agriculturalists classes.⁸

Tahir Mahmood's article, Collaboration and British Military recruitment: fresh perspective from colonial Punjab is closely connected to Talbot and Gilmartin opinions, however being a micro historian, he uses district level state archives which include the war time files of Shah pur's district and FIR records. His work provides details in the collaborative process which had not been previously studied after using local level sources. Mahmood forcefully argues that how there was serious rivalry between Shah pur's collaborators like Tiwana's clan in supplying soldiers

for the British war efforts during first world war as they competed intensively for securing their positions under Raj. Nawab Umer Hayat Tiwana, Khuda Baksh Tiwana and Malik Mubariz Khan Tiwana the collaborators were working hard during war years to win the race of collaboration as Mahmood mentions when Umer Hayat Tiwana was away fighting and his relatives tried to replace him by offering more recruitments and funds for the war involvement. Mahmood indicates that how Izzat and competition played a crucial role in motivating collaborators, for instance Malik Khuda Baksh Tiwana sent his sole son in war to compete with Umer Hayat Tiwana. Here Tahir Mahmood disagree with Gilmartin and Talbot that the internal rivalries instead of ideological affiliation with the British Raj was the core reason of enthusiastic collaborations by locals. In Mahmood's analysis the internal rivalry between collaborators identify historical processes missed by macro scholars.

ARMY RECRUITMENT

One of the most distinguished features of colonial Punjab was that Punjab became the core recruiting place of the British Indian Army. The scholars like Gilmartin, Talbot and Tan Tai Yong have tried to trace out and examine the connection between the military and colonial state in the Punjab, including the motives and concerns of imperial state which made Punjab the recruiting hub of the Empire. In his book *The Garrison State*⁹ Yong describe the establishment of imperial authority through peace and order, the post mutiny (1857) scenario, and the emerging

threats from Russians on North Frontier Border, had eventually promoted new ideology known as “Martial Races” means particular casts, clans, tribes and localities inherited martial qualities. Initially in British Indian Army, there were three leading centers of military requirements, Madras, Bombay and Bengal but within a period of fifty years the things were entirely changed, in the end of 19th century half of the army in colonial India recruited from Punjab. The British Annexation of Punjab in 1849 after two Anglo-Sikh wars had brought few serious questions in the mind of British administration regarding the Sikh soldiers’ involvement in British army. The long turbulent history of Punjab, a restless violent-militant society, the presence of 60000 Sikh soldiers who became violent and disbanded after their defeats brought problems for the rulers, particularly the question of Sikh soldiers back in British army. In the first step, the British had disarmed and demilitarized the violent Sikhs; Lord Dalhousie decided to recruit Punjabis for service at the frontier which provided jobs to disbanded Sikh soldiers and other Punjabis.

The mutiny of 1857, started in Bengal army had brought immense impact on the approach of military authorities in India. The 1857 uprising realized British about new military arrangements in India which resulted the emergence of Punjab as a bigger part of British India military recruitment. During their rule in India, the British never forgot mutiny of 1857. The post mutiny period started the involvement of large numbers of Punjabi troops in Raj army and it was of course reversal of the policy of demilitarization which earlier started after British annexation of Punjab. The Punjabis who came to the side of

British during the crises were rewarded by jobs in the colonial army. Another factor which changed the mind set of British regarding Punjabis inclusion at maximum numbers in British army was that in 1880 after the second afghan war the Russian threat to extend their imperialistic intention into India. The British military “managers” war conscious about the “Great Game” with Russia, so the military was given another function the protection against foreign attack including maintain internal law and order of the state.

The main assumption behind this theory of Martial Races was that certain “races, tribes and social groups” in India namely the Sikhs, Punjabi Muslims, Pathans and Gurkhas had inherited qualities of better warriors/military men and kept physical standers required for military assignments. Let General George Mac Munn one of the principal originators of this theory convinced that tradesmen, artesian and goldsmith cold never became good military men. The districts of Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Shahpur, the tribes like Gakkhars, Janjuas, Awans and Tiwanas were classified in the categories of Martial Races.¹⁰ Similarly, the Ameritsar for Sikhs, Jallundhar for Dogras and Peshawar for Pathans were remained the centers of military recruitment in colonial Indian Army. Furthermore, when Lord Kitchener became commander-in-chief of Indian Army, he was more convinced that non-martial elements from the army replaced with martial classes. By 1900 on ward, Punjab had provided more than half the soldiers of the total Indian army under Raj. The changes were made in British recruitment policy in response to the interests of imperial state and the way it could best serve their imperial designs.

By the end of the nineteenth century and onward Punjab had got pivotal position in military recruitment and replaced by the existing centre of recruitment like Bombay, Bengal and Madras. Keeping in mind the wake of 1857 mutiny, in case of recruitment of the soldiers the British had followed the policy of Mahraja Ranjit Singh in composition of army. Ranjit Singh had wisely recruited the Muslims, Afghans, Pathans, Dogras, Hidustanis and Europeans to ensure that no single group monopolized the army. So that British had also decided to enroll different groups of Punjab separated by religious, caste, ethnic and geographical differences allocated them in different regiments or companies.

In order to understand the relationship between military collaborators and the Raj in the Punjab, Ian Talbot and Tan Tai Yong deeply highlight the incentives offered to martial classes of the Punjab to choose the British. Why were the Sikhs, Muslims, Jats and Dogras prepared to join military services for rulers when they were offered services? Tan Tai Yong argues that their decision in military service was mainly linked with their economic needs and social status. In 1929 when Malcalm Darling asked the people whether they joined the army due to shauk (keenness) or Bhuq (hunger), most of there in a village visit replied "Bhuq first and then Shaur". Either they were Punjabi peasants in Jhelum district and salt range or Jat Sikhs of Amritsar and Hindu Jats of District Rohtak, all were connected with their socio-economic background. There was strong nexus between economic condition and their military career. There was very limited agricultural scope in salt range tract, uneven and inferior quality soil where

cultivation depended on rain fall and less than one third of the total area was considered cultivable. According to Ten Tai Yong the economic depression was a powerful “push” factor for men from salt military districts to enlist in the army. The frequently famines occurrence in south – eastern districts of Punjab where mostly Hindu Jats recruited in military has made military service essential for them to their economic uplift, so military service was extremely popular to Hindu Jats who belonged to un irrigated areas, for them army pay and pension was very meaningful. In central Punjab where Sikhs came in military service, although fertile plains, however the average size of land kept by peasants was only four and a half acres. Consequently, members from economically and socially less dominant Sikhs castes like the Labanas, Kambohs and Mahtaus were recruited with the Army.

As Talbot and Yong mentioned that the land was the symbol of honour and social status of Punjabis which became great incentive for the loyalty to Raj when it attached with their military services. When the canal colonies were flourished, it opened the gates for allotment as “Fauji Granst” to soldiers, pensioners and ex-soldiers. The bulk of military grants were given in four large canal colonies, The Chenab, Jhelum, Lower Bari Doab and Nili Bar. The incentive of rewarding lands had dual advantages attracting the military career and also ensuring the loyalty of the military collaborators to the state.¹¹ According to Ten Tai Yong in a rural hierarchy where land and social status was closely linked, the soldiers became not only land owners but also good agents of the state. The real motive behind Land Alienation Act of 1900 was to avoid any

possibility of agrarian unrest, particularly in military recruited districts of the Punjab became the Raj had serious concerns with these areas. When colonization bill passed which resulted unrest in Punjab, the British Govt. after great reluctant ultimately withdraw because it was great conviction that Punjab must remain loyal at all costs because the support of Martial Races was strength of the Raj in many ways.¹²

Tahir Mahmood's work 'Army Recruitment and Pattern- Client relationship in Colonial Punjab': a grass roots perspective adds different insights by using different sources and approach to Punjabi history. Instead of focusing on larger perspective and international concerns, he argues a micro historical perspective to study military recruitment in a particular district in Punjab. He compares recruitment practices in rural and urban localities of Punjab's district Shahpur to argue that recruitment was more effective in rural areas because of extensive pattern, client relationships in a hierarchal organized political economy. As compared to the work of Yong which emphasizes military recruitment and collaboration at larger scale, Mahmood describes the detailed recruitment dynamics at the local level. Mahmood's work provides us a ground level view of recruitment dynamics in Punjab's district Shahpur. He defines that how the recruitment process was more intense and effective in rural areas compared to urban regions. To define his study, Mahmood takes help mainly from district level colonial archives and compares the recruitment figures and histories of the urban Mohalla of Ahiranwala with the rural estate of Kalra dominated by the Tiwana

biradari. Both Ahirs and Tiwanas supplied military recruits but with different scale.

COMMUNALISM

Provincial perspectives on this issue are represented by the works of Ian Talbot and Richard Fox who study the development of communalism during British rule of Punjab.¹³ Richard Fox links communalism with the Marxist view of class conflict as he defines it in a Marxist framework of class conflict and class consciousness. The core argument of Richard G Fox is to study the social forces that emerged in colonial Punjab under the influence of world economy. He draws relationships between rising social conflicts in colonial Punjab and impact of world economy. The genesis of class consciousness and limited response of urban classes of Punjab are also the debates which engaged by Fox. He highlights the class structure of urban Punjab which consists merchants, owners of factory, money lenders and urban professionals like lawyers and physicians. He calls this class intermediate regime of India which developed as a result of the production and colonial political economy. The land alienation act of 1900 given by colonial masters was criticized by urban lower middle class because this act divided the Punjab's population into agriculturalist and non-agriculturalist tribe identities. The victim of this act was the urban lower middle class which brought serious resentment among middle urban class. The history of communal resentment had started from 1887 onward when the British had pursued a policy to accommodate Muslims into government services at the cost of educated Hindus.

However, Richard Fox¹⁴ argues that above any other factor it was the impact of world economy at the end of 19th century that Punjab under British colonialism faced great socio-economic and political challenges which threatened the urban lower middle class. Although the urban middle class was facing collective class challenges in different terms, this class lacked ideology and an organization which filled by a reformist Hindu movement Arya Samaj, founded by Dayanand Saraswati. He started campaign for simple marriage, permission widows to marry and set aside idol worship. Arya Samaj had channelized itself with public through establishment of schools providing education to lower middle class in both Vedic and Western modern knowledge. Initially it challenged the Christian missionary activism but later on in Punjab, the communal riots start among the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus due to their class conflicts.

The mercantile representation was dominated by the Hindus whereas the artisans who provided services to urban population were Muslim according to 1901 census 60% of Hindu merchant castes belonged to Khatri, Aroras and Baniyas. So, the Punjab urban middle class of Hindu merchants identified it separated from those of other urban classes because of their separated class interests. The Arya Samaj became the representative of this urban Hindu class in Punjab which distinguished the urban lower middle class from the rural classes of the Punjab. In order to promote the economic interests of urban Hindu middle class, the Arya Samaj took the position of political militancy and nationalism. The religious identity also reflected very clearly in the way this movement worked. The increasing religious

policies and revivalism eventually led to Sikh and Muslim communal identity. The Sikh middle class in urban localities of Punjab although belonged to traditional merchant class realized the competitive environment and their class interests which ultimately resulted in communal riots in the Punjab's urban sites.¹⁵

Ian Talbot argues that the history of developing communalism in Punjab was started when the competitive economic conditions introduced by the British in urban areas. Talbot identifies the causes of communalism in Punjab after a brief a comparison of the political economies of rural and urban Punjab. The political economy introduced by the British in rural Punjab obliged communal cooperation whereas the political economy introduced by them in urban Punjab encouraged communal competition. After the detailed description of the political economies of rural and urban Punjab¹⁶ Talbot claims that seeds of communalism are grounded in an analysis of British policies and the communal politics that developed in response to the evolving urban political economy. He draws his conclusions after using the data of colonial archives and local press reports. However, Talbot ignores the other aspect of these developments which become very popular among nationalist historians that instead of economic competitive conditions in urban areas the communalism was logical result of the policies of which were deliberately adopted by the Raj popularly known as Divide and Rule. After comparing these two major voices on history of communalism in Punjab¹⁷ Tahir Mahmood's article 'Communal life in the market towns of Jhelum' depending on new sources makes a useful contribution to prior

scholarship by reconstructing the urban conflict after using archives from Sargodha's Deputy Commissioners office to show how the pursuit of communal interests at the expense of other communities by privileged Hindus gave rise to communalism in the urban areas of Jhelum canal colony.¹⁸ Mahmood's work is based on sources which were ignored by previous scholars. He provides description of the lying tensions between Sikh Akailis and Namdharis over religious spaces, between Hindu revivalists and the local government over construction violations, and between Muslims and Hindu members of municipal committees over extensions of religious institutions. Despite his limitations as he mainly focused on local district records as macro historian he draws new sources and maintain clarity and consistency in his method.¹⁹ Mahmood's work is a fresh addition in existing Literature regarding developing communalism in colonial Punjab. He provides the complex and deeper picture about the nature of prevailing internal communal conflicts particularly in the perspective of communal life in the market towns of Jhelum Canal colony.

After comparing provincial perspective with the grassroots aspects of colonial Punjab it can be concluded that how historical process was more complex with different structural dynamics at grassroots level with generally oversimplified by the larger domain of scholarship of colonial Punjab .Tahir Mahmood elaborate that how colonial rule benefited certain areas of Punjab and communities differently at the expense of others as he used the term differential impact of colonial rule on local regions and communities .

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