

Impact of Islam on Indian Culture

Dr. Abdul Latif Ansary

HOD & Associate professor of Moirabari College, Moirabari, Morigaon, Assam

ABSTRACT

There is a close relation between Islam and Indians. Islam is a religion which is based on Qur'an and the Holy Qur'an is the constitution for Muslims. Islam is the second largest religion in the world and it is still growing fast. The supporter of Islam is considered as Muslim. Islam's prophet is Muhammad (sm) who was born in Mecca. There are five important pillars of Islam which are the basic tenets of worship, explaining Islamic laws as well as every side of society and life. It is also provides instruction about many things of environment, welfare, banking etc. There are five pillars of Islam viz- Faith, Prayer, Ramzan, Charity and Hajj. Recitation of Qur'an is highly recommended for Muslims. In Islam, God is called Allah. There is a well-known sentence which people call Declaration of faith. It is "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah". Muslims believe that God is incomparable and the purpose of existence is to perform and serve Allah. Most Muslims are either Sunni or Shia and approximately 13 percentages of Muslims live in Indonesia, the place with the largest Muslim majority country and they have influenced on Indian culture heavily.

Key Words: *Culture, Islam, Qur'an, Muslim, Indian, Ramzan, tenets, Muhammad (sm), Allah, Sufism, Shia, Sunni, Devine ethics, impact, messenger, Declaration of faith, ethnic complexity.*

INTRODUCTION

Islam in India has fascinating and powerful impact. Indeed, Islam has become woven into the very fabric of Indian civilization and culture. Muslim arrived in India during the life of Prophet Muhammad, establishing mosque and organizing missionary endeavors in the seventh century C.E. Those missionary efforts proved successful, rooting Islam firmly into Indian life. Islam entered India in the 10th century and created more ethnic complexity. Islam also brought Sufism to India. Sufism began as teaching religion more deeply in the Middle East about the Truth of Islam from Mohammad. Sufism involves an actualization of Devine ethics.

Muslim Rule in India:

India had faced many invaders, but no substantial challenges on both a military and cultural level. The Persians and Greeks had confronted India with highly developed civilization. Muhammad bin Qasim in A.D 712 after the foundation of Muslim rule in India, Islam spread far and wide and brought about a great change in the social and religious outlook of the people. Muhammad bin Qasim introduced Islamic system and left an indelible impact on Indian society by the example of his character and generosity. Islam as a faith and system of life won many followers in subcontinent because of its simple and humanitarian principles. Before the advent of Muslim many foreigners had come to India, but all of them had been assimilated into Indian society. The basic social and religious ideas of Islam differed so widely from those of Hinduism that Muslim invaders could not be absorbed in Indian society. Islam was a well-defined faith and monotheistic belief and exclusive religious outlook made its absorption into Hinduism impossible.

During their stay in India, the Muslims converted a considerable number of native people into Islam. Yet throughout this period the Muslims remained a minority community. However, gradually Hindus and Muslims came in close contact with each other in various fields like administration, literature and in religions. The Idea of brotherhood of man, the belief in one God, a total surrender to God, which are basic principles of Islam and made a deep impression on the minds of Indian thinkers and reformers of the prior. Finally, as a result of Hindus and Muslims interacting with each other two religious movements developed, namely Sufism among the Muslims and Bhakti among the Hindus.

Major Islamic impacts on Indian society:

Before the coming of Islam to India, the people were divided in several religious factions and an intense struggle was going on between Hinduism and other religions. When Islam was introduced to the people of the subcontinent attracted many followers because of its simple and easily understandable principles. The introduction of Islam completely transformed the Indian society into a well kind social fraternity. Islam came as blessing for the oppressed classes in India whose life had come miserable because of the deep rooted caste system. Most of Indian Muslims converted to Islam were belonged to the lower classes of the Indian society. Besides, these Muslims are also belonged to the ruling families of the different Indian kingdoms. Some of these rulers were Hindus who actually belonged to the warrior castes of Hindu society and adopted Islam. Islam brought a new way of life for them which they had never experienced before in the Hindu society. The respectable way of life which shown to them under Islam, gave them a feeling of being human beings. Islam infused a different thinking and sentiments among the people of the subcontinent.

Social Impact:

India was divided into several sects and class when Islam reached here. Islam had its deep impact on the social life too. The practice of purdah has been the result of the impact of Islam since the Hindu society was living in isolation for several thousand years under a tight Brahmin control; it had lost its vigor and vitality.

Cultural Impact:

The impact of Islam could be seen on the cultural life of the Indians too. The Hindus to a great extent have adopted the thoughts and belief of Islam. The impact of Islam on Indian culture has been inestimable. It permanently influenced the development of all areas of human like language, dress, all the art forms, architecture, urban design, social customs and values. Conversely, the languages of the Muslim invaders were modified by contact with local languages to Urdu, which uses the Arabic script. The Parsi language was introduced in the subcontinent by the Muslims. At the time of Mughal, Parsi became the official language in the whole subcontinent. Even the Hindus used this language for communication. By the interaction of these languages, new language like Urdu and Hindi emerged.

Islam in India:

Islam is the second largest religion in India with 14.2 percent of the country's population. Islam first came to the western coast of India when traders as early as the 7th century C.E. came to coastal Malabar and Konkan- Gujrat. Islam arrived in north India in the 12th century via the Turki's invasions and has since become a part of India's religious and cultural heritage. Over the centuries, there has been significant integration of Hindu and Muslim cultures across India and Muslim have played a notable role in economic, politics and culture of India.

Arab Indian Interactions:

There is some historical evidence to show that Arabs and Muslims interacted with India and Indians from the very early days of Islam or even before the arrival of Islam in Arabia. Arab traders transmitted the numerical system developed by Indians to the Middle East and Europe. Many Sanskrit books were transmitted into Arabic as early as the 8th century. Sanskrit texts began to be translated during the reign of Abbasid caliph al-Mansur in 754-75. It has been generally accepted that Persian and Sanskrit texts, few as they were indeed the first to be translated.

Denominations:

There are many denominations amongst Indian Muslims. The majority belongs to the Sunni branch of Islam, while a substantial minority belong the Shia branches. There are also small minorities both Sunni and Shia are also considered to be Sufis.

Sunni:

Indian Sunnis largely follow the Hanafi School of Islamic laws. The majority of Indian Sunnis follow the Bareilly movement which was founded in 1904 by Ahmad Razi Khan of Bareilly in defuse of traditional Islam as understood and practiced in South Asia and in reaction to the reformist attempts of the Deobandi movement. In the 19th Century the Deobandi, a revivalist movement in Sunni Islam was established in India. It is named after Deobanda small town northeast of Delhi, where the original madrassa or seminary of the movement was founded. From its early days this movement has been influenced by Wahhabism. A minority of Indian Muslims also follow the Ahl-e Hadith movement.

Shia:

Shia Muslims are a large minority among the Muslim in India. However, there has been no particular census conducted in India regarding sects, but Indian sources like times of India and Daily News and Analysis reported Indian Shia population in mid-2005-2006 between 25 percent and 31 percent of entire Muslim population of India. According to some national and international sources Indian Shia population is the world's second largest.

Khojas:

The khojas are a group of diverse people who converted to Islam in South Asia. In India, most khojas live in the states of Gujrat, Maharastra, Rajasthan and Hyderabad. Many Khojas have also migrated and settled over the centuries in East Africa, Europe and North America. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, particularly in the aftermath of the Aga Khan case a significant minority separated and adopted twelver Sunni Islam.

Sufi:

Sufis (Islamic mystics) played an important role in the spread of Islam in India. They were very successful in spreading Islam, as many aspects of Sufi belief systems and practices had their parallels in Indian philosophical literature in non-violence and montheism. The Sufi's orthodox approach towards Islam made it easier for Hindu to practice Hazrat Khaja Muinuddin Chisthi, Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, Nizamuddin Auliya, Shah Jalal, Amir Khusrow, Alauddin Sabir Kaliyari, Ata Hussaain Fani Chisthi trained Sufis for the propagation of Islam in different parts of India. One of the Islamic empire was established in India, Sufis invariably provided a touch of colour and beauty to what might have otherwise rather cold and stark reigns. The Sufi movement also attracted followers from the artisan and untouchable communities; they played a crucial role in bridging the distance between Islam and indigenous traditions.

Ahmadiyya:

The Ahmadiyya movement was founded in 1889 by Mirza Gulam Ahmad. He claimed to be promised messiha and Mahdi waited by the Muslims and obtained a considerable number of followers initially within the united provinces, the punjab and Sindh. Ahmadi claim the Ahmadiyya movement has also been seen to have emerged as an Islamic religious response to the Christian and Arya Samaj missionary activity that was widespread in 19th century India. After the death of Gulam Ahmad, his successors directed the Ahmadiyya community from Qadian which remained the headquarters of the community until 1947 with the creation of Pakistan. Ahmadiyya have been identified as sect of Islam in 2011 census of India apart from Sunnis, Shia, Bohras and Agakhanis. India has a significant Ahmadiyya population. Most of them live in Rajasthan, Odisha, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab in the area of Qadian.

Negative Impact:

Under the impact of Islam Continuous progress disappeared from the life of Hindus.

(1)The Purda System: Islam and Muslim rule seriously affected the position of Indian women. The birth of a girl was looked upon as an inauspicious event. Consequently, female infanticide spread widely among the Hindu. The purda system, seclusion of women from men, unknown in early days of Hindu rule which was introduced in the Hindu Society women generally lived in seclusion in sphere of their homes.

(2) Child Mariage and Sati System: Child marriage was introduced in society. Gradually, child marriage was enforced. Early marriage of Hindu girls to avoid their knapping by the Muslims became the custom. Sati system was another social evil of this period. During the Muslim rule women were expected to observe strict fidelity in their conjugal life. The condition of the Hindu women deteriorated considerably dependence of women on their male relatives or husbands become the prominent feature of the Hindu society.

(3) Slavery: Slavery was common in the Muslim tradition. It was a practice among the Sultans, Amirs and nobles to keep both men and women slaves. Hence, slavery appeared in India due to Muslims.

(4) More Rigid Caste System: The missionary Zeal of Islam which aimed at converting the Hindus to Muslims compelled the Hindus to be orthodox in outlook and practice to protect their religion and culture from the onslaught of Islam Restrictions regarding Caste and marriage had become more stringent among the Hindus. New rules with regard to caste and marriage were also prescribed.

(5) Conversions: When Hindu society became more rigid and conservative, the miseries of lower castes increased to a great extent. Due to reason lower caste Hindus particularly the untouchables converted to Islam.

Positive Impact:

The negative aspects of the impact of Islam on Indian society discussed of the following:

(1) Religious Impact: Islam brought to India a conception of human equality, pride in one's religions, and a legal system. Islam gave the message of universal brotherhood, introduced equality in society, rejected Caste system and untouchability.

(2) Impact on upper class Hindu: Upper classes of Hindus were influenced by the Mohammadan dress, etiquette, recreation and other activities. The art of war fare was also influenced and developed as a result of Islamic contact. Food of Muslims like Biryani, Kabab and Palan etc. were adopted by the Hindus.

(3) Music: Indian music and musical instruments were also influenced by Islam. Indian musical instruments were modified and new instruments were produced the Tabla which was produced by modification of Hindu musical instrument and Mirdenga. A fusion of Hindu and Iranian system of music led to the evolution of light songs. Classical vocal music of India underwent radical changes as a result of the contact with Muslim singers.

(4) Architecture: Assimilation and synthesis between Hindu and Islamic culture led to evolution of new styles of architecture. According to Tara Chand, "The craftsmanship, ornamental richness and general design remained largely Hindu, the arcaded form, plain domes, smooth faced walls and spacious interiors were Muslims impositions. In the field of architecture new styles started of which Red Fort, Delhi Jama Masjid, Qutub Minar, Taj Mahal etc. are living examples.

(5) Language and literature: Hindu-Muslim contact led to linguistic synthesis. Urdu is the outcome of a mixture of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and of ideas with the concepts and languages of Sanskrit origin. The Urdu became language of the people. The Hindu language was also influenced by Muslim contact. Hindu culture turn influenced the Islamic elements. It is a fact that the Hindus and the Muslims have contributed to the evolution of common cultural heritage in India.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion we may say that the impact of Islam on Indian society has to make smooth. Long association brought the two distinct groups of the Hindus and Muslims closer and closer with the result that the evolution of the Hindu culture was colored with Islamic things. But the Hindu culture in its own turn influenced the Islamic elements. It is a fact that the Hindu and the Muslims have contributed to evolution of common cultural heritage in India.

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