

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND MUSLIM IDENTITY: A STUDY OF THE POST 9/11 SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM MINORITY IN THE WEST

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Abstract

Islamophobia existed before the September 11, 2001 events, but the intensity of violence, hate speech, and discrimination had increased subsequently after this in the West. In the light of events of 9/11 in the US and 7/7 in the UK, the implicit racism persisted substantially long afterward and the subsequent actions and reactions on the part of nation-states in the West and "terrorists" in the East gave rise to faith-hate crime. This paper discusses the concepts of Islamophobia and Muslim Identity in the British context where Islam and Muslim identity were stereotyped terrorists and extremists in media and public discourses extensively right after 9/11. Rising Islamophobia, state actions and media reactions to 9/11 have prompted changing meanings of the "good Muslim" to a stereotyped one. British-Muslims are caught in a quandary where their loyalties are questioned and polity that is still in the processes of establishing its "Englishness" from its "Britishness," while developing Islamic political radicalism undermines the already precarious relations between British Muslims and the state.

Keywords: Islamophobia; Muslim Identity; Post-9/11 UK; Englishness; Britishness; Implicit racism

Introduction

In the beginning of the new millennium anti-Muslim rhetoric and a prominent mode of prejudice have become commonplace in western countries. The social media and the internet sources also provide the platform to spread such a prejudiced view regarding Muslims and their religion. The coverage of Muslims and Islam in Media is associated strongly with extremism and violence especially in post 9/11 scenario that has consequently given birth to the concept of

Islamophobia¹, which implied to the creation of this horrific sense of fear that politicized the position of Muslims particularly in the West and elsewhere in common. The unsubstantiated fear, prejudice, and antagonism against Islam and Muslims; which is commonly known as Islamophobia, have a great socio-political significance. This concept seems to be rather recent, but historically, the prejudice against Muslims and Islam can be traced back to the period of its formation. This denunciation comes straight from Christians and Jew albeit many historians trace anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim pulse being originated from the same spring (Said, 1985). The Media is being scrutinized critically nowadays for initiating Islamophobic sentiments and stereotyping of Muslims; albeit the interpretation of Islam and Muslims in Media recently has acquired its climax sophistication that it is hard to detect.

This paper aims to address the primary two objectives; firstly, to examine the rationale and reasons behind the increase of Islamophobic sentiments in Europe particularly after 9/11 incidents. Secondly, the impact of Islamophobia in constructing Muslim identity in situations where Muslims live in minority and Islam has been seen as a violent, extremist, and terror symbol. Throughout the west the sentiments of Islamophobia are viewed especially after 9/11 and 7/7 incidents, however, this paper only discusses in detail the situation of Muslims and Islam in the United Kingdom as a case study. This paper also attempts to discover how the incident of 9/11 and the following events and their reactions worldwide have led to alter the definitions of 'Good Muslims' and their loyalties with Europe are questioned. Moreover, the incident of 9/11 radically changed the western opinion and perception about Islam and Muslims, and a dramatic escalation of Islamophobia and stereotyping Muslims and Islam has been incited.

Islamophobia as a term is very difficult to trace before the 1990s, consequently, it misleads many researchers to believe to be a modern phenomenon. However, Green (2015) and Richardson (2009) state that the term used for the first time in a French book; *La Politique musulmanedansl' Afrique Occidentale Française*, by Alain Quellien, in 1910. The book is a criticism of French colonialism and the treatment of French Administration against 'other' states and belittling of cultures of 'others'. Then, Eteinne Dinet used 'Islamophobie' in his writing. In English, however, Edward Said used this word as late as in 1985. He realized this in making a comparison of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia historically (Said, 1985). This term now has assumed a universal status in the socio-political discourse, primarily because of the researches conducted by Runnymede Trust in 1997 and their citation. The Runnymede defined the term in a report in 1997 on three foundations; "unfounded hostility towards Islam", "practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities", and "Exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social affairs" (Runnymede Trust, 2017, p.7). According to British novelist Martin Amis² (2006);

¹ Islamophobia has been defined as "dread or hatred of Islam - and, therefore, fear or dislike of all or most Muslims". The Runnymede Trust, *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (London, 1997) p. 1,

² Martin Amis, in Ginny Dougary, "The Voice of Experience: Martin Amis," *Times Magazine*, September 9, 2006.

The Muslim community will have to suffer until it gets its house in order. What sort of suffering? Not letting them travel... Curtailing of freedoms. Strip-searching people who look like they're from the Middle East or Pakistan... Discriminatory stuff, until it hurts the whole community and they start getting tough with their children. (Amis, 2006)

Islamophobia as Portrayed in Media

Media is said to be playing a pivotal role in igniting Islamophobia in masses; disseminating stereotypes of Islam and Muslims in Media. The demonization of Muslims is contained in a variety forms Poole (2003) denotes the manifestation of Muslims essentially in three forms; Firstly, Muslims are portrayed as 'other' and a threat to the culture and ideals of Western civilization; secondly, Muslims are a threat to the values as are represented in secularism and liberalism, and lastly the cultural differences between Muslims and non-Muslims would pave the way to socio-political transition. The vilified and negative depiction of Muslims and Islam on part of Media has certain evidence. A research article (1994-2000) about misrepresentation in Media of Muslims in Britain deduces that Muslims are demonized and symbolized as 'other' and are considered to be a great threat to the Western norms and culture (Pool, 2004). Furthermore, a study, 'Media Representation of Muslims and Islam from 2000 to 2015' argues that Muslims are portrayed negatively and Islam as a religion is symbolized as the proponent of violence and intolerance (Ahmed and Matthes, 2016). These perceptions, ironically, as portrayed by the Media are based upon 'closed' opinions and characteristics of Islamophobia. The Runnymede Report concluded certain 'closed' opinions being the chief features of Islamophobia: Firstly Islam is a monotheistic religion and static; secondly, Islam is isolated and 'other'; thirdly, Islam is low-rated and inferior; fourthly, Islam is hostile; fifthly, Islam is devious and manipulative; sixthly, the discrimination and hostility are acceptable; seventhly, the criticism of Muslims against West is outdated and invalidated; and lastly, the demonization of Muslims as discourse is but natural (Green, 2015, p.12-18). The common masses depend upon the Media to obtain certain information about Islam as their primary and secondary sources (Pool, 2009).

Role of Politics, Culture and Majoritarianism in Construction of Islamophobia

The social grounds for a minority and its identity are strongly linked to culture and politics. Politics has been dependent upon culture for long and as consequent; every politicized cultural issue is invariably the part and parcel of masses. There are significant discussions of majoritarian ideology over issues of the majority against the minority, the stress upon the cultural hegemony of the majority, and the vilification of the culture of the minority; crises and loss of identity faced by the minority, etc. This paves the way for reciprocation; the cultural impact on the political boundary and cultural contents being politicized: this represents the force of the culture as a source of great motivation in the life of the general public.

Politics as a tool to manipulate culture is a complex political process that has to initiate political mobilization with the assistance of massification of the forms of the culture resulting to give way to popular cultural representations which lead to various purposes. Popular culture is symbolic of the mass culture; a majority of a society tastes identical communal cultural experience. This identical and uniform cultural experience mingles and entwines the masses into one organic

whole. Mass media with a global influence and power have become a powerful agent of restructuring and reorganizing cultural boundaries (Kumar, 2013, p. 458). All forms of creative art, performing arts, literature, traditions, and folk forms reflect this; popular culture through its exposure of Media turns into global value. The powerful representation of culture through cinema is the best example that can become a global character and penetrate the minds of masses and change their fancy (Kumar, 2013).

Commercialism with the technological revolution has added to the power of film industry; it has been swiftly assuming the center to study and examine the popular culture; it has, not only, become a great tool to represent the popular form of culture but to give a certain shape and form to it as well. In consequence of having such capability, cinema offers a golden opportunity for the politicians to fill certain cultural gaps to the advantage of a certain majority. In the process of reconstruction of cultural aspects, the world of present and past is intermingled and the cultural gaps are filled through cinematography. In this way, the socio-political context is engineered to suit a certain purpose. The cultural diversity is subject to the cultural formation through cinema, and cultural boundaries are defined with new pretexts. In India, the Hindu majority and the protection of its cultural borders from the influence of 'foreign' interception influence the mindset of the Film Industry (Kumar, 2013). Therefore, after 9/11 throughout Europe, a majoritarian thought propagated regarding the nature and significance of transnational Muslim political identity and the status of 'Muslims in Europe' in particular.

Muslim Minority [Identity] in [Britain] Europe

The concept of Muslim identity in Europe is quite complex to be explored analytically as it is interpreted variously from one end of Europe to the other carrying series of controversies to test modalities that either Muslims are compatible with Western values or not? (Gole, 2015/2017). Since 'Muslim' is a vast term and broadly implemented in socio-political and socio-religious discourses, it is necessary to specify it from the artificially imposed socio-political images of unified religious community, undifferentiated and monolithic ones. Therefore, it is a quite challenging task to figure out that "who counts as a Muslim in Europe, and what is at stake in regarding European Muslims as 'Muslims'" (Mandaville, 2009, p.492).

The history of Muslim presence in the UK has been witnessed when the Muslim traders and seamen from Middle Eastern regions traveled across British seaports at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Halliday, 1992; Ansari, 2004). The people from other parts of the Muslim world other than Arabs also came to Britain during the colonial era before World War I for trade as well as studies. The British Raj in South Asian region inspired the elite to seek the latest knowledge and fashion of the world from the UK for instance almost all influential political leaders in colonial Indian subcontinent i.e. Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938), Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah famous as Agha Khan III (1877-1957), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Subhash Chandra Bose (1897-1945), Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950) and many others received their higher and professional education from European universities, particularly from the British universities. However, the South Asian Muslim community's actual migration started after World War II when one of the British Colonies Indian-subcontinent got independence in 1947 and divided into two separate states like India and Pakistan and later 1971 Bangladesh. They flocked to Britain in search of good financial opportunities as well as to seek political asylum and also to fill the

human resource demand in the rising industrial revolution in the north, southeast, and midlands of Britain (Kettani, 1986; Anwar, 1994). Moreover, the Muslims from the Middle East and Eastern Europe in the 1990s also rushed to seek political asylum along with settled in refugees' campuses emanating from Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Somalia, and Kosovo (Abbas, 2004a). However, in Britain the discourses on the transformation of minorities' radicalization have been witnessed, although conceptual overlaps subsist, through a series of ideological shifts from 'color' to 'race' in the last half of the 20th century from the 1950s to 1980s subsequently (Banton, 1955; Rose, 1969; Rex and Moore, 1967; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979) while from race to ethnicity in 1990s (Modood et al, 1997; Hall, 1992). Moreover, the biggest transformation in British discourse on racialized minorities after 9/11 has been observed is in 'religion' based minority identification and categorization persists in the present scenario (Runnymede Trust, 1997; Abbas, 2004). Throughout this religious discourse building, Islam gained the prominent status to deal with along with other discriminations among the minorities such as British discourse adopted various ideological shifts to determine the status of minorities. After the 1990s, the seeing minority's ideology has been transferred to homogenous entities where they discerned differences within and between the Asians and 'Blacks' and then from Asians to South, Central, Middle and Southeast Asian, whereas, the more popular category of differences among South Asians as Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Indians have imposed. This discourse finally touched the baseline of inter-religion discrimination among the minorities in Britain among Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus and gave rise to religion as a prominent social signifier (Abbas, 2004a).

Due to a huge increase in Muslim population in the UK as they have grown from about 21,000 in 1951 to 4.1 million in 2016 whereas according to the projections of the Pew Research Centre Muslim population would rise to 13 million in 2050 (Rudgard, 2017) has developed burgeoning interests in Islam and Muslims in Britain. The living condition of the Muslim groups is in the most terrible and inferior places where there are no significant health, education, and employment opportunities as compared to the non-Muslim groups from the same South Asian region. The majority of such inhabitants are from the developing regions of their native countries such as immigrants from the northwest part of Bangladesh, Sylhet and rural areas of Azad Kashmir, Pakistan and due to financial issues are forced to work in highly competitive textile factories, catering sectors and living in old, narrow and needs to be substantially maintained and repaired buildings "with large joint families in small restricted zones of ethnic and cultural maintenance" (Abbas, 2004, p. 27). However, the state policy of Britain, in terms of anti-discrimination legislation, for the Muslim community has always been remained inconsistent and the role of Muslims in socio-economic and socio-political aspects of British society, especially from the immigrants of South Asian region, has been counted in minimal. Although there are some positive aspects have been materialized for the Muslim community such as the provision of Muslim food [Halal products] and permission to wear the *hijab* (headscarf) for the Muslim ladies working in Britain's public departments (Anwar and Bakhsh, 2003).

Generally, the British Muslims allege that they have been deprived of their rights and faced discriminatory and neglected behavior perpetuated by all structures of government machinery and also amidst the legislative lacuna, the persistent deficiency of laws to control and protect religious discrimination, recognition of Muslim funded religious-schools and limitations of

blasphemy laws to Christianity (*Choudhury v Chief Metropolitan Stipendiary Magistrate*, 1991; Boyle and Sheen, 1997). Therefore, the rise in Islamophobic ideology and Muslims' commitment towards religious harmony and non-violence emerged during international political disputes and war crises started from the *fatwa* (a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority) against Salman Rushdie (Mayer, 1995), the deportation of Arab Muslims from Europe during Gulf War (*Chebalck v Secretary of State for Home Affairs*, 1991) and finally, the situation was changed radically after the 9/11 incident, where a huge amount of complaints regarding discrimination, neglecting behavior and persecution were recorded as well (Rehman, 2003/4).

Islamophobia and Post 9/11 British-Muslims' Identity

The terrorist attacks of the 9/11 incident gave a sever and heinous shock to the whole world along with a new wave of international terrorism that associated the reactions of this incident between Islam, terrorism, and the concept of a 'west versus east' and 'Christian versus Muslim' conflicts. Such notions added more fuel to the existing anti-Muslim and anti-West sentiments after a long history of various international socio-political and war conflicts such as the first Gulf War (1990-91), Bosnian genocide (1993-96), the bombing in Oklahoma (1995), the Taliban war in Afghanistan (1997-2002), Kosovo and Grozny (1999), Palestinian Intifada (2000) and also Iraq war (2003) all have significantly affected the Muslim solidarity globally (Abbas, 2004). Therefore, the notions of Islamophobia are based on the history of various incidents happened globally to fill in the substance of its stereotypes. The experiences of colonialism, anti-colonialism, decolonization, freedom revolutions, immigration, and racism after World War II set the fear of the Muslims in a contemporary milieu that has its idiosyncratic distinctiveness associated with post-WW II experiences. According to the Runnymede Trust report (1997), Islamophobia has formed analogously to xenophobia where everything with a 'foreign' tag is disdained or disliked. This report highlighted seven various features of Islamophobia identified the think tank of this trust in their flagship report of 1997: Islamic culture is considerably different from other cultures; the believers' of Islam use their religious faith to gain military and political gains; Muslim culture is seen as monolithic; Islam and its culture are considered implacably threatening; Muslim critique of western society and culture is rejected out of hand; Islamophobia is supposed to be unproblematic and natural, and finally racist hostility to immigration is muddled up with the fear of Islam (Runnymede Trust, 1997, p.5). The following table shows the open and close views about various distinctions about Islam in Europ, particularly in Britain.

Table 1: A comparison of closed and open views of Islam in Europe.³

Distinctions of Close VS Open sentiments about Islam		Closed views	Open views
a	Islam as Monolithic and Diverse	Islam is seen by some Europeans as static, monolithic, and unresponsive.	Islam is considered as progressive and diversified, despite having internal

³. This study is first conducted by The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia set up by the Runnymede Trust in 1996 under the supervision of vice chancellor of the University of Sussex, Professor Gordon Conway. This Runnymede Trust published recently a 20th-anniversary report titled "Islamophobia: Still a challenge for us all" in 2017 which describes the issues still Muslims have been facing in Europe especially in the UK.

			differences, debates, and development.
b	Separate Islamic culture and Interacting with others as well	Islam is seen as separate and other (i) not having any aims or values in common with other cultures (ii) not affected by them (iii) not influencing them.	Islam is seen as interdependent with other faiths and cultures (i) having common goals and aims (ii) pretentious by them (iii) inspiring them.
c	Both opinions Inferior as a minority in the West but Different as one of the equally influential religious philosophy	Islam is seen as mediocre to the Europeans; barbaric, unreasonable, primeval, and sexist.	Islam is seen as idiosyncratically diverse, by not deficient, and as equally worthy of respect.
d	The enemy as clashed with western values and Partner as well to seek solid solutions for common issues	Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, and supportive of terrorism, engaged in 'a clash of civilizations'.	Islam is seen as an actual or potential partner in joint cooperative enterprise and the solution of shared problems.
e	Politically Manipulative but at the same time Sincere religious faith	Islam is seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantages.	Islam seen as s genuine religious faith practiced sincerely by its adherents.
f	Islamic critique about West is always discarded while Criticism on Islam is considered	The criticism made by Islam of 'the west' rejected out of hand.	Criticism of 'the west' and other cultures are considered and debated.
g	Discrimination defended/Criticized	Hostility towards Islam used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.	Debates and disagreements with Islam do not diminish efforts to combat discrimination and exclusion.
h	Islamophobia natural reaction for the west but too problematic for Islam	Anti-Muslim hostility accepted as natural and 'normal'.	Critical views of Islam are themselves subjected to critique, lest they are inaccurate and unfair.

The above table shows both sides of the picture presented by a distinguished group of scholars featured this comparative analysis about the two different mindsets of the peoples through open and closed views analysis.

The taxonomy of Islamophobia, in the present day, is much relevant to post 9/11 incidents and significantly highlights the non-Muslims reactions towards Islam and Muslims because the words like extremist, fundamentalist and radical are frequently the part regular media discourse across the British electronic and print media particularly in apocalyptic headlines. In shaping British-Muslims existence and identity media played the role of 'evil demon' due to its biased coverage of "Islamic terrorism" and "extremist groups" discourses (Abbas, 2000; Abbas, 2001; Ahmed and Donnon, 1994). To counter the prevailing discourse of Islamophobia in the UK, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) emerged in 2001 to raise the awareness regarding Islamophobia. This organization, on behalf of Muslims and their communities in Britain, also sought to campaign and struggle within government institutions to tackle the issue of Islamophobia. In so doing, this organization started dealing inclusively Islamophobia issues

and successfully got the Act 2006 of the Radical and Religious Hatred passed, however, this organization didn't stay longer to resist for Islamophobia and defunct within a decade.

The post-9/11 political and social discourse in Britain damaged Muslim identity especially through media Muslims and Islam are characterized as extremists, angry and barbaric (Meer, Dwyer, and Modood, 2010) while using the discourses of contemporary stereotypes and historical archetypes. The anti-Islam wave rose alarmingly due to two consecutive incidents of 9/11 in the US and 7/7 in the UK in five years and along with xenophobia, Islamophobia was also propagated. Islamophobia and hate speech for the Muslims in Britain has become more frequent in the public discourse and the identity of the Muslim community has been taken as "Muslim 'other'" (Collect, 2013, p.1) and they have been considered culturally dangerous as threatening the British way of life and civilization (OSI, 2005, p.19). In Europe, for many Muslims, the tag of Islam is indeed a very important and crucial reference point to show self-identity whereas the meanings and strengthens of such identity are dependent on the circumstances rather than permanent. The construction of the public identity of the Muslims has been seen on various occasions to be politicized and taken not according to Islamic values but under certain social and political conditions. The examples of Salman Rushdie's issue in 1988-89 when Muslim Identity was associated with the vocabulary of protest (Mandaville, 2001; Piscatori, 1990) while the incident of a Danish Cartoonist's propaganda created problems for Muslims' religious emotions at the name of freedom of expression. Therefore, the Muslim identity after all such incidents had become highly polarized and stigmatic especially in cases of post-9/11 and 7/7 contexts (Mandaville, 2009).

The Muslim identity, in terms of socio-political orientation in the UK, falls somewhere among the four foremost currents; liberal-pluralists, communal-pluralists, communitarians, and radicals. The propagated post-9/11 radical Muslim identity and the tension between moderate and radical types of transnational identities in the British young Muslims can be understood to search for universal Islamic identity. Moreover, the understanding of Islamic universalism is, on one hand, related to the concept of moderate Islam where the emphasis is given to values and norms such as pluralism and tolerance while on the other hand, the idea of Islamic universalism is attached to the idea of authentic, single and rigid. The incidents of 9/11 and 7/7 and socio-political discourses had associated the later concept of universal Islam and Islamic solidarity with radical, anti-systemic movements like global *jihad* [holy war] and the re-establishment of the Caliphate. Therefore, the socio-political identity of the Muslims in Europe falls between the above mentioned two poles; moderate and radical and these two factors construct the supposed four major currents of British Muslim identity. 1) Liberal pluralists focus the affinity between Islam and other religious and social value systems such as Progressive British Muslims and Sufi Muslim Council. 2) Communal pluralists believe in the individuality of Muslim identity and adaptation of the tradition. This group also considers the interaction of Islam with other religions and faith systems along with participation in the public and institutional life of the society such as the Islamic Association of Britain and Young Muslims in the UK (Mandaville, 2009). 3) The communitarians emphasize the significance of religious practices and basic Muslim identity where the interaction with other social systems is confined and limited except the Muslim circles. To this group, Muslims and non-Muslims' co-existence is also considered possible for the sake of human rights, and this thought is associated with Deobandi religious schools in the

UK and Arab European League (Mandaville, 2009). 4) Radicals, the most propagated group, lays stress on the basic Muslim identity concept and usually interpreted as conservative where the interaction with non-Muslims is considered illegitimate and any dealing with them is frowned upon. This group is supposed to be labeled that they work to gain political goals to establish an Islamic political system such as Al-Qaeda etc. (Mandaville, 2009; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Mandaville, 2007).

Historically, Islam, Islamic ethos, and Muslims have been taken as the subjects of hot debates, intrigue, and controversies for many reasons (Denny, 1994; Mayer, 1995; Huntington, 1996; An-Naim, 1999; Baderin, 2003). The recent example of this perception is the reaction of the West after 9/11 incidents which radically mobilized the opinion of the western world and changed the perceptions of Islam and Muslims. There had been witnessed a dramatic intensification in Islamophobic sentiments and Islam is not only associated with terror, hatred, and extremism but also the Muslims have increasingly faced persecution, hostility, discrimination, and intimidation (Diene, 2004)⁴. The bitter remarks of European political and religious figures attest the above statements right after the September 11, 2001 events such as in an interview to the Sunday Telegraph Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi⁵ said;

We must be aware of the superiority of our civilization, a system that has guaranteed well-being, respect for human rights - and in contrast with Islamic countries - respect for religious and political rights. Islamic civilization is stuck where it was fourteen hundred years ago. (Berlusconi, 2001, p.14)

In another article of the newspaper published in Daily Telegraph, Patrick Sookhdeo⁶ the director of the Institute of Islam and Christianity remarked:

Many horrific acts have been, and continue to be, carried out in the name of Islam, just as they have been in the name of Christianity. But unlike Islam, Christianity does not justify all forms of violence. Islam does. (Sookhdeo, 2001, p.22)

Despite political rhetoric, the Muslims as a minority in Europe has been the primary target of Islamophobic sentiments, and their Muslim identity is also associated with this Islamophobia (Diene, 2004). The susceptible and vulnerable Muslim minorities assume dominated by the constant fear of hostility and the considerable threat of persecution. Their basic human rights and violation of civil liberties have been recorded under the guise of the war on terror and at the

⁴ Report submitted by Doudou Diene, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (E/CN.4/2004/19), [accessed on February 23, 2004], <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/chr60/19AV.pdf>.

⁵ Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, "Is the West Really Best", Sunday Telegraph, 30 September 2001, p.14.

⁶ Patrick Sookhdeo, A Religion that Sanctions Violence", Daily Telegraph, 17 September 2001, p.22.

name of freedom of speech and media (CERD, 2003). This panic situation further leads the Muslim minority population to the dismal situation where they will be further blamed and targeted at the name of war of terrorism and their basic civil rights being a distinct community, due to Islamophobic sentiments, will be violated.

Conclusion

This article, from a thorough study of the incident of 9/11 literature, highlighted Islamophobia and its effect on British-Muslims particularly South Asian Muslim immigrants' social and political identity. Islamophobia had also piled up socio-economic marginalization and alienation for the Muslims in the West. This study concluded that following the incidents of bombings in Europe 7/7 and 9/11 in the US, Islamophobic mentality and anti-Muslims' sentiments accelerated. Therefore, Islam and Muslims have been largely stereotyped as threatening and risky for national security and normal life in Europe. British society has become uncritically receptive to negativity about Islam and the media discourse also portrayed the situation as not different than the common perception. Instead of exposing and specifying the guilty and terrorist groups and motives behind 9/11 and 7/7 events, the British society and media raised concerns over the integration and radicalization of the Muslims in Britain.

Undoubtedly, post-9/11 political and social discriminated milieu hurt the standing of Islam and Muslims' identity in the whole of Europe equally. This situation added more fuel to fire by connecting the concept Islamophobia that was already existed even before 9/11 and subsequent incidents with terrorism. However, the antipathy increased abruptly just after the Al-Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Center led to the trope of Muslims as a symbol of terror through Western media discourse. These circumstances put the British-Muslims at the crossroads in their history of settlement in Britain and their religious solidarity; where Islam is linked to terrorism and the Muslim minority is constituted one of the misunderstood groups in British society. Therefore, the Muslims' identity remains marginalized, socioeconomically deprived, discriminated, isolated, and perceived as alien to British culture. Unfortunately, there has always been a specific soft target either a social or religious that is stereotyped and misrepresented through public discourse and media news. Therefore, the Muslim population in the UK is trying to negotiate a set of identities and realities kept on changing and also has developed a strong allegiance to Britain and rejected terrorism.

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