



**TWO-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR  
IN COMMEMORATION OF IMTIAZ AHMAD  
ON  
CONTEXTUALIZING 'MUSLIM STUDIES'  
IN INDIAN SOCIOLOGY**



**11 & 12  
March 2024**

**ORGANIZED BY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF ARTS & SOCIAL  
SCIENCES, MANUU, HYDERABAD.**



### About University

Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) is a central university established at the national level in 1998 by an act of the Parliament of India to promote women's education, develop the Urdu language, and impart vocational and technical education in the Urdu medium through conventional and distance modes, as per Section 4 of its Act 1996 (No. 2 of 1997). The headquarters campus is over 200 acres, located in the heart of Hitech City at Gachibowli, Hyderabad and has fourteen off-campus colleges (CTEs, Polytechnics and Satellite Colleges).

### About the Department

The The Department of Sociology started at Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) in 2014 and has been offering an M.A. and PhD in Sociology, including courses under NEP 2020 (FYUG) at the undergraduate level. The department has students from across the various states of India, representing it at the national level, with six teaching faculty members and two support staff members. A very young department in the university has hosted national and international discussions whereby eminent scholars gave inputs and their interactions with the students, contributing to the growth of sociology in the newest minds.

### Introduction

Sociology and its practitioners aim to investigate and analyse varied dimensions of society to evolve a better and more correct understanding of social phenomena. Incorrect information and partial knowledge often lead to an imbalanced and biased interpretation of society and its processes. Sociologists have contributed significantly to understanding the idea of India as it evolved and exists today. The beauty of the Indian nation-state lies in its pluralistic traditions, multiculturalism, diverse religion and communities. It becomes essential to comprehend India's vast and varied aspects to get a well-informed yet broader understanding of Indian society and its composite nationalism. Themes such as caste, social stratification, religion and religiosity, secular traditions, multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence need to be examined in detail with the appropriate contextual lens. It is also important to note that Muslims are the second majority community next to Hinduism at a national level, according to statistics from the Census of India (2011), and they form a majority in population in a few states and Union Territories like Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, West Bengal and Assam. Is it not pertinent to study and understand the diversified and embedded community of Indian society?

### RELEVANCE OF THE SEMINAR AND IMTIAZ AHMAD

The relevance of studying and debating Indian Muslims' presence in the Indian sociological domain is necessary for contemporary social sciences and sociology. Over the past five decades, the work produced has had an immense impact on Indian sociology, credited to Imtiaz Ahmad, the tallest and one of the most vocal social scientists India has had until recently.

Imtiaz Ahmad (1940–2023) was one of the first academicians in India who studied the Indian Muslim community through a sociological lens. His remarkable and insightful work on the Indian Muslim community broke the 'limiting' perspective through which Muslims were seen as a homogenous or monolithic community. This insider's view got recognition and attention, inspiring many to follow. Apart from his seminal work on caste and social stratification among Muslims in India (Ahmad, 1978), he also wrote extensively about Indian sociology and South Asia, minority rights, Muslim empowerment, the practice of religion among Indian Muslims, Muslim women, communalism, etc.

Apart from Indian Muslims, his area of interest was also social stratification, communalism, ethnic conflict, social movements, child rights, child labour, etc. He always stood for critical inquiry and motivated students to raise questions. His firm belief in equality, communal harmony and secularism was crystal clear. In addition to numerous publications and awards, the Indian Sociological Society presented him with a prestigious lifetime achievement award in 2014 in recognition of his significant contributions to Indian sociology. In his own words, in an international seminar on ethnicity and minority studies in India, Imtiaz Ahmad rethought how minority studies currently stand and questioned the silence and apathy of social scientists towards various minorities who didn't find attention in significant research. While writing about minority studies in India for an edited volume on 'Reading Minorities in India' by Ziyuddin, 2022, he asks, 'Are there any minority studies in India (Ahmad, 2022)?'

Muslim, as a term, is a most diversified faith-based community that practices diversities in their everyday socio-cultural life and belongs to hundreds of lingual families in specific geographical locations in India. The Muslim is visibly a diverse social group in India with a range of plural practices in kinship, marriages, rituals, social interactions, and preferential marriages within caste-like hierarchical social arrangements in all practices, making them a distinct community in India and not only a faith-based community. The sociological explorations to locate and contextualise Indian Muslims are rooted in the nature of their socio-cultural life and not in their faith in the Oneness of God (Waines, 2004). The domain of the Sociology of Muslims in India seeks to study social institutions, religion as an agency that influences the social-cultural life of families and individuals and how they manifest their religious practices through various festivities, rituals, inter-faith conglomerations, and the historical significance of Sufi shrines in every region of India. People following and believing in the Oneness of God are globally referred to as Muslims, and the religion they adhere to is Islam. However, they barely show any other similarity in the social and cultural index. The context of the present debate is to use a sociological lens to understand Muslims and not solely focus on religious aspects of Muslims in India or even in South Asian society. This perspective, therefore, remains the primary concern through this write-up and aims to generate questions and empirical evidence. The studies on Indian Muslims on some of the untouched dimensions and facets of the communities seek attention from social scientists globally and sociological research in particular. It is also essential to understand the difference in the paradigm used to understand the sociology of Muslims in India, which is genuinely rooted in studying communities in India as one of those social groups, as they were initially studied by Imtiaz Ahmad, Ghous Ansari, and Zarina Bhatti in Uttar Pradesh and provided the first genre of sociological study in India. This discussion around various studies on the Muslim community provides a significant platform. It is undoubtedly different from what Charles Kurzman (2019) writes about the sociology of Islam that emerged in the fourteenth century with the work of Ibn Khaldun. However, the term itself appeared first in 1931. The other way around is that, quintessentially, Muslims are wrongly referred to as Islam or Islam is referred to as Muslims in everyday usages, and commonsensical discussion needs more studies to break this stereotype between religion and community that both are pretty different. The recent academic orientation to study Indian Muslims as one of the minority groups is a diligent and visionary effort coming through the Indian Sociological Society, and this academic body functions as an institution catering to the research and teaching interests of society as the second largest country in the globe.

The sociological inquiry into the domain of the Muslim community as a most diverse community in the globe has found some critical writings in anthropological and historical studies but less in sociological studies in India and to mention a few are Imtiaz Ahmad, Talal Asad, Nasreen Fazolbhoj, Yoginder Sikand, Arshad Alam, Masood, Ashfaq and Ansari, whereby Muslim from the framework of minorities and in the context of nation-state, credible list of studies have emerged in the recent past, providing in-depth analysis of Muslims as a community and a citizen of a democratic nation and society of India (Robinson, 2012; Ansari, 2014; Tanweer Fazal, 2012 & 2013); Shaban & Jain, 2018; Shaban, 2012, 2018; Abdur Rahman (2013, 2019, 2023); Amir et al. (2021); Ziyauddin (2013, 2022). The intensive surveys (K. S. Singh, 1993) and microstudies conducted in the past 20 years, such as the Kundu Committee Report (2014) and the Sachar Committee Report (2006) published by the Government of India, highlighted the sincere efforts required to give Muslims in India a variety of layers of life. Unravelling those research domains demands a series of discussions and debates in academia and civil society to strengthen the knowledge base about India's rich community and population group and add empirical value to the development process of India as a promising nation of the twenty-first century. A detailed analysis of the Sociologies of Islam in Annual Review of Sociology by Charles Kurzman (2019) shows the necessity to explore the sociology of Muslims, an unexplored area of study, rather a well-argued area known as "The Sociology of Islam" that emerged with the work of Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, the North African social scientist of the fourteenth century (Ibn Khaldun, 2015). 1902 the first professorship of 'Muslim sociology and sociography' was created at the Collège de France (Burke, 2015). A very relevant write-up It looks apt while citing Kurzman; it is found that Pertev Hakki (1907) points to the historical point during the Ottoman period while addressing Ijtihad; the term would have "Islamic sociology," from which he hoped "to extract the viable elements suitable for the uplift of the nations of Islam." The term "sociology of Islam" first appeared in 1931 in the title of a two-volume book by Reuben Levy (1931, 1933), a British medievalist. The early focus of Orientalist scholarship on the early centuries of Islam projected Islam and that era's social structure, political institutions, and cultural orientations onto the current period. Levy argued that Muslim societies would share commonalities peculiar to their origin to the religion Levy (1931), but such detailing did not continue in South Asian countries over the next century.

In this reference, Islamic sociology or Sociology of Islam takes the route of studying the community from the point of view of their faith and the origin of religion and religiosity. However, the Sociology of Muslims demands explorations into a much broader context in Indian Sociology in a way that Dalit and Adivasi sociology found attention, for instance (Parvathamma, 1978; Kumar, 2005) and dedicated work on Parvathamma (Indira, 2018) The epistemology of everyday life of Muslim community has yet to be empirically examined and presented in universities, colleges, and civil society discourses. So, is it not relevant to question why Indian sociology stands vastly on producing sociological literature but not equally addressing all social groups and communities? Since its beginning, sociologists in India have focused mainly on studying Hindu society, caste, social stratification, culture, living patterns, family and kinship structures. This restricted academic tradition has resulted in a vast amount of ethnographic work on Hindu society all alone, leaving other religions and communities under-researched. However, as the discipline grew, many academicians later observed this 'limiting' and 'exclusionary' pattern. Voices were raised to develop sociology as an accommodative and inclusive domain of scholarship. Nasreen Fazalbhoy (2005), in her work titled India's 'Was sociology in India more Hindu sociology than the sociology of India?', also raised similar questions. In sync with these critical voices, while we argue for the 'Sociology of Muslims as a domain for subtle scholarship on diverse Muslim communities in India, it is essential to scrutinise the conceptual frameworks, theoretical underpinning and approaches for suitability to study Muslims in India. The possibilities of diverse and different perspectives may evolve and be applied to understand Muslims, their culture, religion, religiosity and community traditions. The current status of Muslims in India has a strong connection with history and a contentious past, especially in the past two hundred years. One has to keep the contributions of KS Singh by the project of the People of India, who provided and contributed enormous contributions to Indian anthropology and social sciences in general with his exceptional ability, infinite fertile imagination, and the courage to take the initiative to generate this landmark document.

Researching world religious communities poses several theoretical and empirical issues. One such earliest writing to put forth the case of studying Indian Muslims comes from Nasreen Fazalbhoy (2005), published in Sociological Bulletin. She also emphasises that the definition of Islam is crucial to anthropological studies of Islam. In the 1970s and 1980s, the diversity of Muslim behaviour globally stimulated theoretical studies into how a religion with one scripture could have varied practices in different places. Studies on Indian Muslims supported several diversification theories. Her emphasis was to demonstrate that these problems in India had repercussions in a changing political atmosphere. and needed to make a focused description in light of a shifting political atmosphere. In India, the term 'Muslim' has increasingly become synonymous with both social and religious identity. Fewer people realise that Muslims are as diverse as Hindus (Fazalbhoy, 2005).

We may ponder that, being different from the discipline of history, we can offer new paradigms, perspectives and empirical nuances to locate Muslims' political and socio-economic conditions in India. Various studies and commission-based reports highlighted the plight of Muslims, which needs further sociological inquiry (Shaban & Jain, 1999; Sudheer Report, 2016). In the present scenario where majoritarianism is reconfiguring the long-standing historical diversity of not only the pluralist nature of Indian social structure but also changing the 'idea' of pluralism, composite nationalism, how can Muslims, being a minority, be studied and also make part of the scholarships, classroom practices and discourse in sociology in India? The onus lies upon the sociologists who struggle to address the enormous vacuum left in Indian Sociology. Similarly, along with other ethnic and linguistic minorities and caste groups in India, studies on Muslims deserve special attention. The vivid and nuanced studies of Dalit Muslims, or Pasmanda Musalman, have also been a core of political sociology. However, it has yet to pave the way for conclusive ideas and remains an intra-community debate (Ahmad, 2003; Jain, 2013; Sattar, 2013; Akbar, 2013; Bhagat, 2013; Engineer, 2013; Puniyani, 2013). The attention to doing the least qualitative work on the question of education among the Muslim community has also left an enormous vacuum and allowed falsehood and narratives about traditional schooling and Madarsa education as a learning centre. A few landmark studies are opening and making this area an essential part of the sociological domain (Alam, 2011; Sikand, 2005).

## Objectives of Seminar

The Department of Sociology, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, commemorating and tributing Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad, proposes to organise a two-day National Seminar on the theme "Contextualizing' Muslim Studies' In Indian Sociology". As the theme indicates, the seminar aims to introspect and explore sociological studies on Muslims in India. Theoretical foundations and methodological nuances related to this theme will also be discussed. The seminar will provide a platform for interested scholars, especially young researchers and students, to discuss their ideas related to the theme. The established scholars working in this area would be invited to deliberate upon untouched and less studied areas within the sociological studies of Muslim communities in India. It will also help develop a comprehensive understanding of the discipline and approach for future research. The paper presenters will be asked to submit their full paper for publication in a volume planned to be brought out by a reputed international publisher. The seminar's purpose follows the following sub-themes:

### Sub-themes;

1. Sociology of Muslims: challenges and critical questions
2. Methodological framework for studying Indian Muslims
3. Caste and Social Stratification among Muslims
4. Reservations and Questions of Pasmanda Muslims
5. Identity, Politics and Stereotypes
6. Media representation of the community
7. Globalization and Change in South Asian Society
8. Work and occupational preferences
9. Education and employment among Muslims in India
10. Literacy, schooling and State Policies
11. Poverty, marginalization, and Community empowerment of Muslims
12. Religious life, inter and intra-community dialogues
13. Muslim minorities and nation-states
14. Health status of the community and state
15. Gender Questions and Civic Rights
16. Practices of Digital Society and New Technology
17. Culture, Arts and Artifact
18. Ethnicity and Linguistic Questions among Muslim
19. Any other relevant theme to the seminar



### Organizing Committee

**Chairman:** Prof. P. H. Mohammad, Head, Deptt. of Sociology

#### Members:

Dr K. M. Ziyauddin, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology  
Dr Bibekananda Nayak, Associate Professor, Dept. of Sociology  
Dr Saheed Meo, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology  
Dr Malik Rehan Ahmad, Assistant Professor (Sociology-DDE),  
Dr Md Ehtesham Akhtar, Assistant Professor (Guest), Dept. of Sociology  
Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Assistant Professor (Sociology-DDE), MANUU  
Dr Hilal Ahmad War, Assistant Professor (Guest), Dept. of Sociology  
And PhD Students of Sociology, MANUU.



### The abstract must include the following sequence:

Title of the paper,  
author's name and designation,  
institutional affiliation,  
e-mail address,  
and mobile number.

The length of the abstract should be a maximum of 250 words.

### Structure of the Full Paper:

Title with author details (Name, designation, Institutional affiliation, email inside the MS Word file), Abstract, Introduction, Main text, Conclusion, Reference

**Word limit: 5000–7000 words.**

File format: **MS Word**

Front Style: **Times New Roman**

Line Spacing: **1.5**

Front size for text: **12**

Front size of the title of the paper and headings: **14**

Front size of sub-headings: **12 in Italic**

**Reference Style: APA 7th Edition**

Use in-text citations and detailed references at the end of the text.

**Note: Don't use footnotes and endnotes.**

### Important Dates:



Last Date for Abstract Submission: 22 February 2024

Last Date for Abstract Acceptance: 26 February 2024

Last Date for Full Paper Submission: 05 March 2024

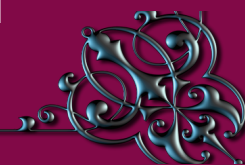
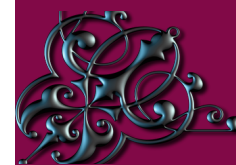
Acceptance of the Full Paper: 06 March 2024

### Note:

The organising committee will be able to arrange local hospitality, accommodations during the seminar, for the delegates whose papers have been accepted and upon request. Due to financial constraints, all the participants and delegates have to arrange their travel. The seminar will be held on university premises at the headquarters of MANUU in Gachibowli, Hyderabad.



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Please feel free to contact us with any  
queries!

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