

**Minority Politics of Bengal Muslims in Late Colonial Era and Their Understanding of
Pakistan**

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1. Abstract

This thesis reviews how the idea of Pakistan was accepted and explicated by the Bengali Muslims in late colonial era. The question of cultural autonomy was resolved by them based on linguistic, cultural and religious aspects in this period focusing on formation of Muslim identity. Amid the tension of unified and divided India, partition was seen as a political agenda to address the matter of self-determination for a larger of part Bengal Muslims. Both the Muslim League and the Congress postulated the idea of identity separately and claimed their notion as grounded on non-sectarian policy in terms of their expediency. For Muslim League, a group of young writer, journalist, and politicians named East Pakistan Renaissance Society emerged to defend the idea of Pakistan as a minority problem with their intellectual and historical understanding. Abul Mansur Ahmed was one of the central characters of this organization, though he joined the organization in later phase. Conceptualizing the idea of minority in socio-political and cultural frame clearly split the respective notions of identity by Congress and League. Nationalistic history has often imputed EPRS and its associates as communal in ideology. This paper tends to show East Pakistan Renaissance Society's idea embedded on distinction of religion, language and culture was a step towards secular state. These ideas of identity associating religion, culture and language were addressed and resolved through the notion of Muslim as a minority in undivided colonial period. Thus, formulating the concept of minority politics basically paved ways to address identity conflict based on language, religion and culture. This paper seeks to understand the parameters of secular politics and notions of identity proposed by the Congress and the East Pakistan Muslim League's supporting organization EPRS and how their ideological differences were emerged based on addressing minority as a political form.

2. Acknowledgement

I'm really indebted to my supervisor Prof. Samia Huq, She helped me to frame my discrete thoughts on secularism and gave a distinct character to classify and rearrange the inherent flow of contradicting thoughts without changing my focus point. Prof. Dina Siddiqui has also helped a great deal with essential books, articles and valuable insights over time. Earlier conversations with her as a sophomore made me interested to the point of late colonial Muslim politics that I finally chose as this thesis. My heartfelt gratitude to Fahima Durrat, Asst. Professor of Peace and Conflict, Dhaka University to provide me with Abul Mansur Ahmed's English writings.

3. Introduction

Bangladesh's history prior to its independence is fraught with a tension around its pre-independence relationship with Pakistan. The relationship is most often understood through the amnesia of a historiography that serves the dominant repertoire of the nation state. The question is two wedged because if we answer it from the traditional history maker's perspective then there we can get an answer satisfied to the point of 1947 August. But, the truth is Pakistan was born out of India as a nation with a full collaboration and support of mass Bengali Muslim heavily relied upon two nation theory and Lahore resolution. Moreover, the forerunners and politicians of Muslim League Bengal province eventually shifted towards the ideology of Awami Muslim League, later Awami League. So, denying the fact that once Bengali Muslim wanted Pakistan would distract the chronology of political history of this region itself. History of Bangladesh is often presented as a segmented and sectarian form as if Pakistan was never necessitated and demanded by this region. The proponents and supporters of Pakistan are sent to the tribunal of experience in this case accused of fundamentalism and communal politics. To remind the public imaginary today that Pakistan was indeed a Bengali-Muslim demand too is tantamount to treason and evokes accusations of fundamentalism and communal politics.

The basic ideological ground on which Bangladesh parted with Pakistan was the question of language and culture. Bengali Middle class aspired to create an identity based on Bangla language and culture. It wasn't a new phenomenon for the people of this region as the same question was raised before partition of 1947 under the ideology of Pakistan. However, the transnational/statist Islam had difficulty accommodating the linguistic aspect of identity before 1971. But the aptitude of transnational Islam to be accommodated within the constituents of identity was lesser in 1971. Of course there was a sense of deprivation and despondency in both 1947 India partition and Bangladesh's Independence from Pakistan's case. But the modalities and prospects of the question related to identity and independence were changed dramatically. It is generally perceived that, within a gap of decade, Bengali Muslims with sheer sense of disappointment posed their identity question into complete opposite direction as if it's better to be amnesiac about the Pakistan.

These drastic changes at least ideologically are often imposed for the nationalistic purposes. Keen observation towards the late colonial era politics offers a wide range of flow of incidents and insights that suggest the questions of language and culture are central to both of the 1947 and 1971's active participants of history in the same spirit, but on a different dimension. These dimensions were shaped by political, cultural and social deprivation. But these dimensional changes of how Bengali Muslim should address the question of nation formation, its relation to religion and idea of secularism are only the products of different experiences. From this point, Pakistan movement by Bengali Muslims is often cited as a communal and backward movement, residing nothing about progressive politics. They are often depicted as political Mullah's and had nothing in common with modern secularism. Nevertheless, these claims are oversimplified and overshadow the progressive Endeavour of Bengali Muslims who wanted Pakistan. There were various organizations, intellectuals and political leaders for Pakistan. East Pakistan Renaissance Society was one of them. In this thesis, I'll bring to light the parameters of secularism that a progressive Muslim call for Pakistan had in its fold.

In early 1940, this group envisioned a Pakistan quite unfamiliar with the idea of 1960s' emerging middle class Bengali people. EPRS had a clear vision of how Jinnah was a great minority leader, their stance on secularism, what should be the nature and attributes East Pakistan Bengali language, state, religion, and etc. Abul Mansur Ahmed was one of the central figures who wrote on and documented these ideas and their shifts over time both in English and Bengali. What emerges is an expansive vision of Pakistan as a secular state, the problems of minority Muslims and formulation of secular politics which have nothing in common with the hearsay of traditional nationalistic history. Most interestingly, their tension of identity between unified and partitioned India were associated with the question of self determination via culture and language first, what they called 'total freedom'. The idea of Pakistan to them wasn't only political mobilization and power, rather they pinned it on the board of minority politics, secular identity and the language, culture question.

Bangladesh after independence is still trying to ascertain the political question of the Bengali language, its parameters and distinctions from the Bengali of Kolkata. With such debate, the question of how far we can avoid standardization of Kolkata based literary tradition and

Bangladesh's own unique pattern is often contested in terms of communal debates. The reason for these debates not only stands on the ground of regionalism. It manifests through the form of religion as well which has a long history. The pinnacle of Bengali literature has produced so many luminous writers and poets from that part of Bengal that it would be naive to disown that tradition. But, at the same time when the identity politics are placed associated with literature, it's been a great deal for Bangladesh to construe a history balancing both the sides with an objective morality. Personally, being an aspirant writer, often I had to deal with this question of language form, the standardization of Bangla and relegation of colloquial dialects. On this line, prominent writers like Akhtaruzzaman Elias, Shahidul Jahir, Shahaduzzaman, Ahmed Sofa expressed their valuable opinions. Sofa in one of his essays asked:

বর্তমানে যে সকল পণ্ডিত লেখক অধ্যাপক এবং রাজনৈতিক নেতৃবৃন্দ বাংলাভাষা চালুর পক্ষে কলম ধরেন, সভা সমিতিতে বিবৃতি পাঠ করেন, মুখে মুখে বাংলাভাষা প্রেমিক বলে জাহির করেন, তাঁদের কাছে যদি জিজ্ঞেস করা হয়, আপনারা কোন বাংলাভাষাটি চালু করার কথা বলছেন? কলকাতার যে বাংলাভাষাটি চালু আছে সেটি নয়তো? যদি বলেন, কলকাতার বাংলাভাষাটি যদি মেরে তাড়ানো না হয় তাহলে বাংলাদেশের মানুষের উপযোগী বাংলাভাষা তো তৈরি হতে পারবে না। এ সম্পর্কে আপনাদের মন্তব্য কি প্রকার?

It is clear from Sofa that this query of language had gathered momentum even if in his lifetime and wasn't resolved with proper attention. So, what I noticed that literature is not only individualistic, rather it talks of the collective consciousness of masses, their histories and experiences from day to day life which is somewhat hard to place in scholarly discussions with that artifice of detailing and mood. I would like to mention Jahir and Sofa who invoked me to push the boundaries of identity as being a Muslim for that reason. Jahir, with his unique style of colloquial and decentralized postmodern fashion, and Sofa's so many political essays on the politics of language fed my thought. Right now, in 2017 as we have no visible aspirant political goals like the turmoil of 40s to 70s and first generation of intelligentsias has even pushed forward their basic line of thought, it's easier and at the same time very important to identify those discourses that has been deliberately obliterated and often termed as communal. This topic indirectly implies on the political trends and understanding of Bengali Muslim and how far the

¹A. S. (2015). Banglabhasha: RajnitirAloke. In *NirbachitoRajnoitikProbodnho* (p. 57). Dhaka: Khan Brothers and Company.

delimitation of Muslimness should be harnessed in the politics of identity and sphere of literature.

The first part of the essay gives an analytical framework on how the creation of identity could be captured starting from 1920s to the end of Colonial Raj. The creation of identity in late colonial era with specifications of Islamic elements, as mentioned before is mixed with religion only. I explained how this formation was necessitated in the public realm transformed from public rituals to modern mode of print capitalism based political and civil spaces. These spaces dictated Bengali Muslims to construct their identity in a manner unique in modern realm with a background of minority politics. At this stage, the impact of Modern education upon East Bengal Muslim was delineated. I explained how question of inequality later turned into the question of communal identity. The annulment of Bengal Pact in 1929 enhanced this identity question as Muslim had nowhere to respite on representational politics. As a result Praja Shamiti was formed with influential political figures like Maolana Akram Khan, Sir Abdur Rahim etc who had a stronghold in Bengal Congress. However, due to internal feuds of leadership between East and West Bengal Praja Shamiti, Krishak Praja Party was formed in 1936 July retaining the same ideologies under the leadership of AK Fazlul Huq². They won 33 seats in 1937 elections being the representational party of East Bengal. But internal feuds and power politics led to decline of KrishakPraja Party. So Bengal Muslim only had to rely upon Muslim League. With distinct sense of peasant Muslim identity in early 40's, East Pakistan Renaissance Society responded along with two basic points- the political formula that stemmed out of Jinnah's minority concern and East Bengal as a unique ground for the contestation of regional vs. universal politics of undivided India. These points were explained on the ground of literature and boundaries of national culture. The next part deals with modernist critique like Humayun Azad and Seerajul Islam Chowdhury and their views on EPRS and Abul Mansur Ahmed. This segment basically presents the common trend of decoding Pakistan Politics as religion oriented. Their views are often posed on territorial history formation which parallels Pakistan only as a religious concept.

²Ahmed , A. M. (2013). ShadhinSharbobhoumo Bangladesh. In *Amar DekhaRajnitirPonchashBochhor*Dhaka: KhoshrozKitabMahal.

In next part I've explained the philosophical underlying tone on Jinnah's politics whether it was based on sheer communal politics, or minority politics emerged from the realm of reasoning and creating a safeguard for Muslims. Jinnah is often accused of being ambitious for Pakistan, and an ill-motivated communal politician. But I tried to explain how rational reasoning uprooted Jinnah from his history of Indian subcontinent and painstakingly he chose the unseen rational way for a new state without any history. The next portion explains the activities and statement of EPRS and Abul Mansur Ahmed on language and culture question within a frame of Pakistan ideology and Jinnah as the supreme leader. The tension between Unified Indian identity and regional identity, the hegemony question with West Bengal culture are narrated. West Bengal being the birthplace of modern Bengali literature optimized various sets of standard regarding what ought to be Bangla language and culture. EPRS and Mansur took the challenge of language very politically, centralization vs. regional to be precise. Dissatisfaction embedded with the history of creating hegemony over East Bengal dialect fueled the intensity of the momentum. I explain why a separate Bengali for this part was needed to fulfill the agenda of self-determination. In this debate attempts are often made to mark this endeavor as 'Islamisation of Bangla Language'. But I highlight how the questions at that moment were posed by underlying factors whose reach and depth were larger than religion only.

As I've mentioned earlier, Abul Mansur Ahmed had written his ideas on religion and secularism throughout his lifetime. In order to understand the East Bengal Muslim's negotiation with religion in the political sphere, we must look into Mansur's work. There we find that Pakistan was never to be a theocratic state. This brings me to the last part of the thesis which deals with the place of religion and politics in Abul Mansur Ahmed's writing and an analytical explanation of how he managed to do that distribution and delimitation of both. In short, I would like to explain the Pakistan Identity politics proposed by EPRS was in no way a communal theorization of a theocratic state as often subscribed by the nationalist historians and theorist. The relation between Jinnah's Pakistan idea and EPRS proposal were on the same thread resonating the minority demands and self-determination which was taken as impossible under a central rule of India by minority leaders. Furthermore, expounding the work of Mansur gives a view of relation between state and religion as not sectarian, rather built on his experience of late colonial era Bengal politics. But these experiences are often ignored by staunch secular nationalist position,

overshadowing the nuances of historical trajectories. Dissecting these relations and reexamining their ideas gives a scope to revise the question of language and culture rested on the forefront of Bengal minority problem. By reviewing these set of variables, it is quite clear that the solution of identity formation in independent Pakistan was envisaged from a secular political understanding.

4. Methodology

There are various kinds of discourses from separate nationalist perspective of India, Bangladesh, Pakistan. The primary and dominant stream of discourse espoused from the secular point of view, to value partition as a mere communal product. This idea also stands in a row with national discourse of Bangladesh as it is very easy to procure a history with relatively objective stand. But the question of this objectivity is itself a liberal and secular myth, as the growing tension between region vs centre was at its full flow at that period. The question what was primarily in my mind, that is it possible to offer a narrative which validates all the realities of partition? The question is itself distorted as there was no unitary perception of partition and identity politics. In this course of time, the relative importance of what was accused as ‘communal’ and ‘sectarian’ politics clinging to Islam suddenly reserved its own meaning and challenged the moral boundary of liberal views of partition history. What I would like to reflect on in this paper is the Muslim politics, and the parameter of identity, politics and state and politics subsumed within the Muslim question. Its proclivity to Muslimness demanded a certain type of academic attention that hasn’t been given for congruent liberal discursive formation. If the question of class doesn’t rely upon only its economic stratification, rather neo-Marxist like Gramsci postulated the idea of hegemony transcending the class question, then the power relation of cultural sphere should be evaluated in terms of contextual history which is even evaded by classical Marxist not considering other forms of inequalities equally important for self-determination. This question of self-determination is often overlapped with a sense of communal and sectarian politics if someone doesn’t consider the specificity of self-determination. Throughout the whole paper, I try to elaborate the specificity of this self-determination of Bengali Muslim more often considered as sectarian and non-progressive politics. Furthermore, I argue that on Islam at this very junction was only a translation of liberal rights and emancipatory politics and disinclined to any form of radical propensity towards religion that was envisioned by EPRS. Methodologically this paper

draws on a discursive analysis of literary and political writing of the 1940-47 era assessing their deliveries and critiques to gauge the contours of nationalism and the place of language and religion within it.

5. The Shaping of Muslim Identity in Late Colonial Era: Analytical Groundwork

5.1. Idea of Muslimness as a Collective Homogenous Entity

Why East Pakistan Peasant Muslims wanted Pakistan could be drawn from the example of the Mubarakpur incident elucidated by Pandey.³ In Pandey's essay, he examines that in the town of Mubarakpur the idea of Muslim community and an overall social structure was intertwined with each other which started forming in nineteenth century.

We have in all these some glimpses of the Mubarakpur weavers' outlook on nineteenth century world. This outlook differed in certain significant respects from that of the elite Muslims of quasba but shared with it an important area of common concern. In common with exploited classes elsewhere in pre-capitalist societies, the weavers of Mubarakpur appear to have been further removed than their economically or culturally more privileged neighbor from direct political dealings with the colonial bureaucracy, and consequently somewhat more hazy about their relation with the rulers. They were more ambivalent too in their response to the putative 'Muslim' community; more concerned about the bare problem of survival; yet in some ways more 'independent' with their reliance on the Panchayat and their faith in the power of 'tradition'; and at the same time deeply concerned about the honor of the community⁴.

There were significant class tension and differences, and stigmatization of Ashraf and Atrah. However, as far as case of local identity formation goes, the community of Muslims had its own internal pathway of authority and sets of subordination and conflict. It means this formation somehow gave a susceptible transcending Islamic identity and existence. Underlying class

³Pandey, Gyanendra (1983), 'Encounters and calamities': the history of a north Indian qasba in the nineteenth century. In 'Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society', edited by Ranajit Guha. Vol.3. Delhi: Oxford University Press

⁴*ibid*

tension and politics were nested at the same time which didn't overlap with each other and Muslim identity and religious division evolved maintaining this broad line.

Freitag (1989) suggests that to comprehend the order of society according to Pandey, it is necessary to understand the how public performances and collective activities in the public spaces shared a mutual place to shape the moral order and subsequent identity formation. The Muslims and Hindus could mark their distinct identities through the performance of these 'collective activities in the public spaces'⁵ such as Muharram or Ram Lila. A sense of commonalities could be achieved and irrespective of the structure of the activities, these sacred public performances were attached to a realm of 'special time' as Victor Turner has suggested. By special time he refers a particular frame of phenomenon that becomes important with its subsequent motives and becomes important within a time to express its validation. This special time and its activities, rituals creates an 'other' to identify 'self'. This performativity not only marked their particular mood of competence and performance to create a social order, rather it would also create the division where they were different from other community which would transcend all other structure. Most of the religious riots grew out of these tensions within the performance of the public activities. It emphasized upon a symbolic 'other' leading to be violent conflicts sometime. Sometimes, British government, with its census and modern mode of governmentality sort of demarcated the periphery of the community. 1871 census was one of the most important turning points of this demarcation.⁶

In Bengal, the situation was quite the contrary anyway, as permanent settlement and other means of exploitations decisively subordinated the Muslim peasants. But along with the timeline of first partition of Bengal in 1906, uprising of mufassil middle class and the other subsequent upliftment of the peasants through cash crop jute made conscious themselves about their public appearances and fed the tension of their public appearances⁷. These participations through

⁵Freita, S.B. (1989). *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁶Ludden, D. (2003). Presidential Address: Maps in the Mind and the Mobility of Asia. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 62(4), 1057-1078.

⁷ Jute played a vital role for upward liftment of peasants classes of Eastern Bengal and somewhat it created a bizarre response from the Swadeshi movement participants as the local commodity and foods price were growing higher and living cost of hindu middle middle class on that period was at high stake. Ali Tariq Omar in his 'The Envelope of Global Trade: The Political Economy and Intellectual History of

different kinds of performativity weren't confined within the traditional kind of performativity and public appearances as seen before, rather they vented for their identity through the pockets of 'print capitalism'. As the Bengal Muslim was heading towards a transition towards well off economic class, these senses of cultural self-definition captured an important point for their moral and social identities. This shift from collective activities in public spaces and debates in print media on the ground where communal identity emerged had been constructed by their sense of economic shift. The Muslim in Bengal wasn't aware of the public debates and spaces that were already in vogue there in Calcutta Hindu and Brahma society ever since colonialism started impact on Bengali social life at large.

5.2. Class Relation and Identity Formation

For an explanation of the Muslim predicament of the late colonial era, I find Akeel Bilgrami's position on identity useful. Akeel Bilgrami went beyond a crude discussion of class to argue about identity. However, one has to pay heed to features such as disrespect, elimination and exclusion and how they become constituting elements of identity⁸. 'Practical reasoning' which is mobilized in political and cultural arena creates a sense of 'fundamental commitment' towards the self-conception of any groups can be vitally important for ushering the community identity. By 'practical reasoning', Bilgrami refers to a set of political and social variables transcending the conventional mode of logic and discourse and conventional mode of logic and discourse are superseded by newer 'practical reasoning' in different time and context. This center of reasoning, validation assented by a group might shift in course of time. The greatest example of this reasoning could be drawn from Bengali Muslims who wanted Pakistan and proposed a holistic view of how and why Pakistan is needed for East Bengal and by and large these ideas were based on colonial experiences in different sectors- political, financial etc. The sense of deprivation and minority were construed towards the idea of Pakistan, a 'fundamental commitment'. But after 1947, in Bengali Muslims case, it was broken into pieces and prior discourse of identity as a 'Pakistani' disillusioned. So we can see different sets of reasoning arising in mid fifties,

Jute in the Bengal Delta, 1850s to 1950s' showed this rise and fall of jute production and it created a sort of communal tension between Hindu and Muslims. Humayun Ahmed in his critically acclaimed novel 'Madhyano' depicted this rise of peasant class as well.

⁸Bilgrami, A. (2014). Notes toward the Definition of Identity. In *Secularism, Identity, and Enchantment*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

channeled by mostly Awami League and its patronizing middle class who classified themselves as 'Bengali', albeit different from West Bengal.

The history of shift of sovereignty and allegiance toward states and are often evaluated from the perspective of nationalism. These kind of nationalistic tendencies further fails to understand historical nuances of 'practical reasoning' of the previous term. Nevertheless, the obliteration happens because the shaping and structure of 'fundamental commitment' as a citizen changes. Historians are often not free from the prejudice of this 'fundamental commitment' as a citizen which creates a hindrance for objectivity. Thus, the neutral revision of EPRS ideas' by historians is impartial broadly because of EPRS allegiance was toward Pakistan: thus communal and religious. Quine termed this tendency as 'tribunal of experience'.

At the end of colonial era, a large portion of Bengali middle class Muslims mobilized their identities through EPRS. Bengali Muslim's subjectivities of identities that they deliberately chose to posit on their social and cultural realm were triggered by oppressive circumstances of dissent by the Hindus. Bilgrami used the word 'chose' with emphasis because of how this 'choosing' of attributes of identity is never given to any independent condition, rather it always relies on a ground where political mobilization heavily influences under particular circumstances. So, Bilgrami, of course in a Foucauldian manner expressed his opinion that what a group or community ought to identify as their part of identity is not only given to them, rather what they conceive of being themselves. So, in this case, the formation of identity is very fluid. To understand the psyche of Bengali Muslim, it is very important to understand their 'choice. The most influential and opulent Muslim League created a huge impact to achieve Pakistan, but at the same time in the first election of Pakistan they lost terribly⁹. Identity are always conceived as 'unrevisable' when it tries to achieve a particular goal or destiny, but with its own inherent contradiction fall apart while a cause of 'revisability' emerges with new form of political mobilization. This 'revisibility' came out as 'secular Bengali middle class' emerging in 1960s, omitting 'Muslim' from the phrase.

⁹ Soon after independence, in 1949 Awami Muslim League was formed under the leadership of Maulana Bhashani and Shamsul Huq. This party dropped the 'Muslim' from their name in 1953 targeting the massive Hindu count and won 223 out of 237 seats. This practically marked the symbolic end of Muslim league in East Pakistan.

5.3. Emergence of Urban Bengali Muslim: Sense of Deprivation in Public Spaces

Broadly after 1920s, the emerging sense of community identity by Bengali Muslims was induced basically by modern education. Bengali Muslims, introduced themselves with new technologies and commercial spaces, a modern political sphere to strive within along with the row of class and social division. Most of the stalwarts of KPP, Congress and later on Muslim League followers like Abu Mansur Ahmed, Kazi Abdul Wadud, Motaher Hossain Chowdhury, and even Nazrul came to urban Calcutta and established themselves roughly in between 1920-1930 for educational and occupational purposes from mufassil towns of East Bengal, notably the greater Mymensingh which was the centerfield of jute production. They not only became successful in their respective fields, rather the creation of public realms and urban base literary values were pioneered by these people. In 1927, the government of Bengal marked that, ‘the numbers of Muslim writers are fairly increasing and some are fairly on their way to making their mark in literature.’¹⁰ In this period, they recurrently felt the sense of ‘elimination’ and exclusion that primordially paved the way for creating a sense of disrespect. Language guile was central to this sense of alienation. Along with this one, in 1920s the British colonial government introduced separate electorate for almost all the elections which, for the first time in this region created an inflated and homogenous treatment for Muslims with a high spirit of localized form of subjective thought processing. In late colonial era, the whole sense of this community was consolidated within the idea of Pakistan- a moral outcome that invoked and linked Bengal local Muslim politics towards the question of past and political future. This consolidation of moral binding, political liabilities spurred various forms of societal structure that helped Jinnah to become the symbolic unity of Pakistan parted independent of Delhi, London, Karachi ‘high politics’. However, there were dispute among the leadership of Muslim League as well, AK FazlulHuq was the leader of one group, and the other consisted of Maniruzzaman Islamabadi’s leadership.

Abul Mansur Ahmed, in his political autobiography, mentioned the public space debates and pattern of sectarian literature he encountered during his stay in Calcutta. Bangla as a language,

¹⁰ V/10/82, Reports on Administration of Bengal, 1932-33, taken from Neilesh Bose’s ‘*Recasting the Region: Language, Culture, and Islam in Colonial Bengal*’

under the influence of colonial ruler flourished in the hand of middle class Hindus with the rigorous supervision of modernity. The question of standard Bangla (Promito Bangla) was crafted and evolved under what was daily experience of Hindu society. Mansur, in his biography mentioned how he was advised to change the words like ‘Pani’, ‘Allah’, ‘Behesht’, ‘Dojokh’ to ‘Jal’, ‘Bhogoban’, ‘Swarg’ and ‘Narak’ respectively once he got to publish one of his book in his Calcutta days¹¹. Later on, in his essay he made a comparative explanation regarding this question of standard language. Referring to Gertrude Stein he showed as British English had its own distinct locality and British dialect and diction got their true nature in their territory, but however the Americans had their resolute ambition to write in their own dialect and their own standardization was done by dragging those words to the harsh land of America, the standard language of East Pakistan Bengal is meant to be Bangladeshi¹² in qualitative manner in the same way¹³. As Kolkata was the centre point of the whole of Bengal in colonial time, Bengalilanguage and literature had since flourished through the nourishment of Kolkata. However, with partition, the change of territory also effected the course of literature and language

What didn’t happen in the case of Mubarakpur that, in Bengal most of the peasants were Muslims and due to historical chronology of this region, the Hindu landlords not only became their religious opponents in public realm, rather it was further driven by the sense of class consciousness which was somewhat unique in the subcontinent. The moral structure above mentioned was particular not only in the day to day encounter in public space and debates, rather it also infuriated by the motive of class conflict when the first set of Muslim politics launched in Bengal. Class, along with religious identity diffused throughout the life of first generation Muslim Mufassil youth. So separate identity consciousness and political motive easily got their places in modernized urban mind, and furthermore fuelled by the Muslim identity as oppressed

¹¹Ahmed , A. M. (2014). Chapter 13- SahityaShadhona .In *Atmakotha*(pp. 217-238).Dhaka : New Society Press. Mansur in his another writing, published as ‘Our Language and Our Literature’ showed how Dravidian, Maghd, Prakritetc language had admixture at the same time, but deliberately Muslim terms were outcaste during colonial period.

¹²Mansoor changed the name of his book ‘Bangladesher Culture’ from ‘Pak Bangla Culture’ after 1971. However, before Bangladesh he was an ardent proponent of distinct ‘Pak-Bangla’ Bangla from that point tried to create a ‘Bangla’ different from ‘Kolkata Ghoti Dialect’. Kolkata dialect was credited standard Bangla whereas ‘Bangal Bangla’ was merely a dialect. So his content of the books never changed much as the question of language to him, was always an distinct and autonomous

¹³Ahmed , A. M. (2011). SahityerPran, Rup o Angik .In *Bangladesher Culture* (pp. 41-69). Dacca: Ahmed Publishing House

by Hindus in each and every aspect of their daily life. Middle class Mufassil Muslims with their agricultural background came to realize a modern sphere of debate and discussion had emerged where, in the first place the participation of Muslims was inconspicuous, and when they tried to participate eloquently, there were barriers of standardization of language which happened under colonial rule in the hands of Hindus. Secondly, not only language, a regional contrast can also be observed from the bottom of medieval period literature where Sree Chaitanya ridiculing the language of ‘Bangalees’¹⁴. The Bengal Muslims had either the option of accepting the modernized Bengali standard from where they felt left out on so many grounds, or with accession of changing motives with their forthcoming cultural challenges and aspirations- steer the vehicle of Bangla in a different regional Muslim way adhering to their day to day life. So, this long-term tension between the two regions loosely based on religion had its own contention which wasn’t fully communal, nor was it a whole regional motivation. Rather lying in between these two, Bengali Muslims, in their first wake of middle class awakening realized the only way to establish their voices was to follow political leads like AK Fazlul Haque and later on Muslim League. It creates no wonder why Bengali Muslims at the end of colonial era envisioned a different idea of literature and cultural renaissance to harken back their identity inspired from their ancestors that hadn’t had any connection with modern realm of political and public realm debates. From this earnest query of their past, they construed their political and holistic moral ideas engrossing every aspect of livelihood. The language of homogenous community thus only gained their momentum by Pakistan ideology where the ideas of East Pakistan Renaissance society tried to play a ‘revolutionary’ socio literary role. The local subliminal processes and again in public realm was pivotal for emergence of a distinct Bengali Muslim identity, not only for they realized an 'imagined' opponent, rather tensions in so many levels which eventually forced to shape their moral orders. As Gilmartin mentions, the new public realm was not only a site for self-definition, rather it included other forms of public identities like sectarian, linguistic, regional as well. The idea of Pakistan only loosely gave these penchants a territorial and ideological ground where autonomous self-defined group of individual communities of Bengal Muslims could ripe their taste of intellectual reflection without any sense of domination and

¹⁴Ahmed, A. M. (2011). *BhashaAndolonerMormokotha*. In *Bangladesher Culture* (pp. 70-92). Ahmed Publishing House . Sri Chaitanya basically ridiculed the pronunciation of ‘Bangals’ who can’t even pronounce ‘Shatayu’, instead they say- ‘Hatayu’. So Chaitanya advised not to take blessings from Banglas.

identity under the century long suppression of regional and class-based opponents where religion only played a 'causative' role, not an instrumental one. Pakistan as suitable place for Muslims didn't radically challenge the mode of production in a new state, neither they had any such intentions, (though East Pakistan Renaissance Society claimed Pakistan as a "revolutionary space' in a mild tone) rather an order with sense of belongingness was central to this identity formation which was channeled through the political aspirations of Muslims.

6. Critiques from Various Corners and Evaluation of EPRS from History

A classic example of how EPRS is evaluated in progressive, nationalist circles can be found in the response of Humayun Azad, a prominent scholar and self-proclaimed progressive, atheist. Azad's opinions came out in a vast collection of scholarly essays on the Language movement where Humayun Azad was given the task of delineating literature by elaborating the basic trends of EPRS, and Pakistani inspired literature of 1940. This volume was edited by Atiur Rahman and prominent scholars like Syed Hashemi, M M Akash, Lenin Azad took part in this collection. Without any further introduction, it is clear that what Azad failed to understand is the junction of 40s as an important phase of Bengali Muslim politics and literature, nationalist history makers, Azad couldn't rise above the impulses of and a view of history laden with amnesia. Though Mansur had his own reasoning to this failure and he saw emergence of Bangladesh as a betrayal of Lahore resolution namesake of his book. I look both Azad and Mansur to delineate the different paths they thought language should follow in search of linguistic nationalism. This brings to light the role of the common factor of language and its capacity to create different strands of vision of a polity.

The emergence of Bangladesh didn't produce any sense of astonishment to Mansur as he thought wasn't the failure of forbearers, rather a 'deviation' of the plan. The basis of his confidence was grounded on Lahore Resolution proposed by AK Fazlul Huq, which demanded 'geographically contiguous units are to be demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustment as may be necessary'. Clearly it indicates that there two-nation theory as a political proposal came much later on. The federal autonomy was the basic response as Pakistan ideology. Jinnah himself was bit of irritated with this 'moth eaten, truncated' Pakistan.

Mansur and his fellows thought that, as an excuse maybe, after election of 1946 whose victory was based on Lahore resolution, the Delhi legislator's eventually will provide two constituent assemblies according to Lahore resolution. But as that never happened, Jinnah himself initiated a federal state with provincial autonomy that miserably failed to fulfill the aspirations of Bengali Muslims. Bengali Muslims of Pakistan had little power to the question of self-determination that they thought of before and after partition. The first outburst was seen in 1954 election and before that the outburst in 1952. The federal state mode took Mansur aback as he thought Jinnah was an admirer of parliamentary system of democracy as Mansur did, but presidential form of government was introduced.¹⁵ The question of economic deprivation arose at the same time. Mansur stated this presidential form of election phenomenon and distribution of power through constituent assemblies as the internal cause to split Pakistan. It makes clear that, Mansur supported Pakistan on the basis of a parliamentary form of democracy. Mansur stated:

Indeed, when in April 1946, after the general election which had been fought and won on the basis of Lahore Resolution, one Constituent Assembly instead of two for the two zones, was demanded by the Delhi Legislators' Convention, many of us were of the view that the proposed Pakistan Constituent Assembly would finally frame two Constitutions for the two zones according to the Lahore Resolution which was neither rescinded nor amended.

But in actual practice nothing of the sort was ever done or thought about. Qaid himself in the short span of life that he lived initiated one federal state of Pakistan on the basis of so called provincial autonomy, thereby reducing Eastern zone to the position of a province from that of a region in violation of clear language of Lahore Resolution. Qaid could, if he so wanted, have set up two Govts for two regions making himself Governor-General of both, spending six months at Karachi and six months at Dacca. He did not.¹⁶

¹⁵Ahmed , A. M. (1975). Quaid E Azam the Democrat. In *End of A Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution* (pp. 227-230). KhoshrozKitabMahal. Jinnah joined Congress with a good complacent and guidance of DadabhaiNaorojee that eventually made him an admirer of British Parliamentary system. But the internal politics of Pakistan somewhat got riddled according to Abul Mansur Ahmed.

¹⁶Ahmed, A. M. (1975). Preface. In *End of a Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution* (p. 5). Dhaka: KhoshrojKitabmahal.

The 'spirit of partition' as described by Mansur was a policy to ameliorate the Hindus and Muslims of this sub-continent who respectively had been the ruler of this land. Through division the dispute between Hindu and Muslim was resolved as both agreed to be a secular and democratic state. They didn't think of transfer of people from India to Pakistan or vice versa as per their religion. And the most terrible feature of Pakistan in this post partition period was harping on the 'Islamic state' Pakistan and Muslim nationhood that was vehemently opposed by Jinnah and Mansur as well and the Hindu Muslim riot somewhat turned out to be Indo-Pakistan war. Mansur, with his idea of 'spirit of partition' answered that partition of Indian happened not because of Hindu Muslim division, rather minority Muslim demanded Pakistan and majority Hindu accepted it as a solution. To Mansur, the liabilities of failure of spirit of partition and emergence of Bangladesh were caused by the failure of leadership. So it was a minority question and Pakistan failed to come up with a resolution to the minority question, thereby necessitating the way for Bangladesh. It was not a communal or religious question.

From a relative class oriented analysis, Hamza Alavi in his classical essay explained why Pakistan as a state failed to adhere to the basic promises of democracy and leadership. The class that existed in colonial era metropole, for his own existence subordinated all kind of indigenous classes¹⁷. East Pakistan, as a result of thus subordination saw minimum level of industrialization. The high developed bureaucratic structure of state and well-equipped control of military had eventually overturned the political representatives and turned Pakistan in a different direction. This circumstances and bureaucratic military oligarchy played the role of mediator of post-colonial state and within this power relation, there were less representation of indigenous bourgeoisie of Bengal. So, the structural body was given to exploit East Pakistan which created a distorted and alienated feeling that eventually boomed in 60s lead by the first generation of educated middle class. This middle class eventually snatched out Bangladesh and without any conformist rule, vehemently criticized who were against or at least historically paved the way for Pakistan. This class, albeit modern and progressive with the categorical functionality of a classical middle class moved towards a more radical and asserting an anti-Islamic sentiment as

¹⁷H. A. (1974). The State in Post-Colonial Societies : Pakistan and Bangladesh . *New Left Review*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/download/5321/2222>

they often equated Pakistan with Islam. What they missed was the politics of minority and how the Muslim identity was a leap towards forming a secular state.

An elision of the Muslim issue as a political question is reflected in Humayun Azad's assessment of EPRS and its agenda. Azad, unable to follow the historical roots of Islamic identity and political mobilization, annulled the whole artifice of Bengali Muslim literature and pre-colonial literature as not well-defined example of artistic creation without discerning the context, societal condition and politics. To him, those works of literature were proof against their 'confined creativity'. Azad says:

উন্নত শিক্ষা উনিশ ও বিশ শতকে বাঙালি হিন্দু কবি ঔপন্যাসিক নাট্যকারদের যেমন উন্নত সাহিত্য সৃষ্টিতে সমর্থ করেছিলো, সে উন্নত শিক্ষা বাঙালি মুসলমান লেখকেরা বিশশতকের মধ্যভাগ পর্যন্ত পান নি; তাই তাঁদের সৃষ্ট সাহিত্য প্রধানত স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত প্রতিভার বিকাশ। বিশ শতকের তৃতীয় দশকে যে আধুনিকতা দেখা দেয় বাঙলা সাহিত্যে, বাঙালি মুসলমানেরা শিক্ষাগত কারণে তার থেকে দূরে থেকে যান। মুসলমান লেখকদের সামাজিক অবস্থান, তাঁদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও সমকালীন রাজনীতি তাঁদের আধুনিকতা আয়ত্ত করা থেকে বিরত রাখে। তাঁরা যে সাহিত্যশাখা-স্রোতটি সৃষ্টি করেছিলেন, সেটিকেই এ সময়ে সজীব রাখার চেষ্টা করেন তাঁরা, এবং উনিশশো চল্লিশের পর সেটি বেশ তীব্র হয়ে ওঠে। ১৯৩০-এর দ্বিজাতিতত্ত্ব ও ১৯৪০-এর পাকিস্তানপ্রস্তাব বাঙালি মুসলমানকে সাম্প্রদায়িকতায় উৎসাহী করে তোলে, এবং সাহিত্যক্ষেত্রে পড়ে তার প্রবল প্রভাব। ১৯৪০-এর পর থেকে বাঙালি মুসলমান লেখকেরা উদ্যোগী হয়ে ওঠেন সাম্প্রদায়িক পাকিস্তানবাদী সাহিত্যসৃষ্টিতে, যাতে শিল্পকলা ও জীবনের থেকে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার পরিমাণ অনেক বেশি।

পাকিস্তানবাদী সাহিত্যসৃষ্টির প্রত্যক্ষপ্রেরণা ছিলো পাকিস্তানপ্রস্তাব; এবং যারা এতে উদ্যোগী ভূমিকা নিয়েছিলেন, তাঁদের অধিকাংশ সৃষ্টিশীল লেখক ছিলেন না। কেউ ছিলেন সাংবাদিক সাংবাদিকই ছিলেন অধিকাংশ, কেউ রাজনীতিক বা রাজনীতিপ্রবণ, কেউ প্রাবন্ধিক; এবং তাঁদের পরবর্তী জীবন প্রমাণ করেছে যে তাঁরা সবাই ছিলেন প্রগতিবিমুখ। তাঁরা সবাই মুসলিম লীগের রাজনীতিক দর্শন বিনাপ্রশ্নে গ্রহণ করেছিলেন; এবং উগ্রভাবে তাতে বিশ্বাসী ছিলেন।¹⁸

He rather preferred the literary realms of Hindu poets, novelist, and playwright¹⁹. Being a progressive, he didn't notice two things that the literature he was referring was dominantly created by Hindu and Muslims were absent from that period due to education. But there no

¹⁸ Azad, H. . (2000). BhashaAndolon: ShahityikPotobhumi (Rahman. A., Ed.). In *BhashaAndolonerArtho-ShamajikPotobhumi* (pp. 1-3). Dhaka: The University Press Limited.

¹⁹ *ibid*

answer could be found of this concrete political question. So in a way he makes the political question of the then Muslim context irrelevant by focusing on ‘style’ and ‘aesthetics’.

Azad, on a different note, dejected with condescension that, EPRS compared them with Irish literature in contrast with English and this reformist brought the golden age of Irish literature and so do EPRS invoked to create a difference from Kolkata. Humayun Azad saw this contrast and ambition only as an alien Islamic endeavor with no contextuality and uprooted from the ground. Though he doesn’t clarify here whether this particular Islamic endeavor in 1940s was alien to Bengali culture or it was Islam as whole bizarre in Bengal. Formerly I’ve shown that Islam was a vital source of our cultural growth with a specificity of social and cultural embodiment. Azad also sternly criticized the point of introducing Muslim words. But language as the hotbed for cultural identity, Mansur or EPRS never suggested these so called ‘Muslim words’ as alien to the epistemology of East Bengal’s colloquial language. Thus, it derived not from Islam, for the ambience of the language Bengali Muslim is living for hundreds of years. Azad, on the other hand preferred modern Bangla that was created from Fort Williams under supervision of British Raj and later on flourished by English educated middle class of Kolkata. Mansoor used so called Islamic words like ‘Pani’, ‘Allah’, ‘Namaj’, ‘Roja’ instead of ‘Jal’, ‘Bhagaban’, ‘prarthona’ not because any religious motive, rather these were the words Bengali Muslim used for a long period. But standard language debate on late colonial era time marked out these as a sign of ‘communalism’. The inspiration from punthi, of course not in a revivalist form, was ridiculed by Azad. Azad with a stigmatization of modernism and being an admirer of progressive attitude in his own form, wasn’t able to find out the contextual political spirit and metaphysical cause as he was dead against Pakistan. But however, he never questions the role of Hindus that relegated Muslims an inferior place in literature. Hinduism and modernity categorically submerged in this point are what EPRS considered as an obnoxious affront to Muslims. This might be the point that Muslims in late colonial era was exasperated with the burden of alien Bengali language, Bengali identity.

Serajul Islam Chowdhury, another celebrated scholar, professor emeritus of Dhaka University correctly justified the political consciousness subsumed in Mansur’s writing of which he is an

admirer and remarked this attribute as ‘exquisite’²⁰. Instead of this, he criticized Mansur for his whimsical use of foreign language words like Arabic, Parsi, Urdu etc. Mansur mentioned, the de-Islamisation of revenue system by permanent settlement and de-islamisation of Bengali language started at the same period and that was replaced by Sanskrit. Anyone who read Bankim or Sharat, Tagore would find these harsh truths how highly Sanskritised it was at that point. However, Seraj doesn’t consider Sanskrit as alien, but with a colonial hangover still rejoices over the change of Aryanisation of Bengali Language. The political view of Mansur against De aryanisation is connected through the same spirit, the spirit which caused for a demand of autonomous identity, language and the very peak of this is a territorial state. This is how Mansur is still relevant to the politics of language in a postcolonial framework. He is widely celebrated as a political conscious writer who wrote some of the finest farce of Bengali language, but his politics of language is still undiscovered. Isn’t that the great farce itself?

7. Pakistan Question: Out of Communal Politics or Minority Problem?

The creation of Pakistan has been one of the most important phenomenon in the history of 20th century Indian sub-continent, yet any of the proposed broader narratives hasn’t accepted widely as state enunciations differ from each other. Reason behind this trend could be posited on different traditions of history writing and various aspects of tension between higher level and grass root level experiences²¹. My question and research hover around the Bengali Muslim of 1940s EPRS and later discursive formation of Bangladesh history which excludes the endeavor and understanding of the prior, delimiting them with reasoning that hinders to create a discourse with historical fluidity. These all striving forces don’t synthesize for an outcome of thesis because traditions and perceptions are highly contradictory, twisted and reasoned in their own way. This paper doesn’t offer any valid and objective narrative of partition, but tries to mark out

²⁰Chowdhury, S. I. (2015). JekhaneAbul Mansur Ahmed Shatantra. In *Abul Mansur Ahmed Sharakgrantha* (pp. 14-15).ProthomaProkashon

²¹Gilmartin, D. (1998). Partition, Pakistan, and South Asian History: In Search of a Narrative. *The Journal of Asian Studies*,57(4), 1068-1095. doi:10.2307/2659304

the tension, reciprocal relation and mutual attributes of identity formation perceived by Bengali Muslims in the corollary of late colonial era.

7.1. Endorsement of Jinnah by Bengal Muslims and Its Interpretation

Focusing upon this, this construction of cumulative identity and layers of identity formation in historical bends explains the political propensity of the Bengal Muslims. For some specific ‘Pakistan’ collaborators and organizations cases, undoubtedly their spokesperson was Muhammad Ali Jinnah²². Their recognition of Jinnah and the idea of Pakistan were weaved in the same thread to some extent presented by a multi-dimensional reality of regional politics. So, it is important to comprehend how the ‘secular, pork eater, alcoholic’ Jinnah became the symbolic capital of Muslim League in East Pakistan instead of embracing hundreds of years of mutual relation and cultural exchange with neighborhood Kolkata, West Bengal and Congress politics. There were efforts to retain Bangla undivided but that aid not stand more than a sham after the death of Chittaranjan Das²³. However, to focus on Jinnah, of course, doesn’t suggest

²² Mansur had in severe occasion expressed this view that the liquidation of Pakistan came along with the liquidation of Jinnah. In his article, ‘What Quid-E-Azam Means to Pakistan’ strongly explained the easiest way to destroy Pakistan is to disfigure the image of Jinnah.

²³ With the initiation of Bengal Pact in 1923, Chittaranjan Das, an ardent follower of ‘Ahimsa’ and leader of Bengal non-cooperation movement, cordially wanted to share the political power with majority Muslims that was unprecedented at that time. This proposal of Bengal pact was opposed vehemently by middle class Hindus as it goes against their interest. Bengal pact proposals in short: Representation in legislative council on population with separate electorate, local body representation would be on 60 percent of majority community, Government appointment should be 50 percent by Muslims and before attaining that, in 80 percent rate Muslims will be appointed, music in procession in front of the mosque wouldn’t be allowed etc. Congress, along with middle class Hindus for obvious reason was dead against it but it was the only way to recuperate the Hindu Muslim relation. This kind of initiative wasn’t taken further later on. Abul Mansur Ahmed has written on this occasion, an excerpt from that particular chapter summarizes the demands and psyche of Muslim Bengalis and their mental transformation towards Muslim Identity during this period: ‘১৯২৫ সালের ১৬ জুন দেশবন্ধু চিত্তরঞ্জন দাশের নিতান্ত আকস্মিকভাবে পরলোক গমন করেন। বাংলার কপালে দুর্ভাগ্যের দিন শুরু হয়। ঐ সালের শেষ দিকে মুসলীম লিগের আলীগড় বৈঠকের সভাপতিরূপে সার আবদুর রহিম হিন্দুদের সাম্প্রদায়িক মনোভাবের নিন্দা করিয়া ভাষণ দেন। তাতে হিন্দু নেতাদের অনেকে এবং হিন্দু সংবাদ-পত্রসমূহ সাধারণভাবে সার আবদুর রহিমের উপর খুব চটিয়া যান। হিন্দুদের এই আবদুর রহিম বিদ্রোহ এতদূর তীব্র হইয়া উঠে যে ১৯২৬ সালের গোঁড়ার দিকে লাট সাহেব যখন সার আবদুর রহিমকে মন্ত্রী নিয়োগ করেন, তখন কোন হিন্দু নেতাই সার আবদুর রহিমের সাথে মন্ত্রিত্ব করতে রাজী হন না। ফলে সার আবদুর রহিম পদত্যাগ করতে বাধ্য হন। In 1927, a conference was arranged headed by the Muslim League and the Congress leaders in Bengal, particularly to resolve the question of Bengal pact and demands of Bengal Muslims. This conference of both the parties was supervised by Pandit Matilal Nehru and widely known as ‘Nehru Committee’ for discussion on dominion status of India. Mansur writes: ‘মুসলমানদের দাবি

that the history of Muslims in this sub-continent was fated in one hand, but he was the agency to get connected with the rest of the Muslims in unified India that had been, more or less, experiencing a sheer sense of minority under the majoritarian Hindus. Jinnah envisioned an imagined Muslim political community under the unsettling and disorderly condition of hitherto India.

But creating this historical narrative with an essence of identity formation of Bengal puts forward a basic question- how the Muslims understood themselves to be ‘Bangali Muslims’ and what was the self-imposed driving force of this momentum. This question could be answered in two ways, the first one to explain the politics of Jinnah as a minority leader, that presupposes a contrast with ‘unified’ and ‘local’ tension and how Bengali Muslims delved into this question in peripheries of cultural and political life. At the same time, divisions among Muslim leaders wasn’t only a reality, rather it has enforced the momentum of this tensions and supplied the energy of critical political synthesis that rested finally on Pakistan in 1947²⁴. Of course, if we consider this as Pakistani nationalism, the grasp of nationalism varied from region to region that can be explained in both ‘imagined community’ or ‘the product of transformation of modernity’ from colonial to postcolonial model for any varieties of endeavor of Bengali Muslim politics²⁵. Interestingly, Karl Marx in his early youth engaged in a debate with Bruno Bauer which can be brought to understand the inherent meaning of Mansur’s work which can be used as an analytical tool to understand the parameters of a society aspiring for independence through the vision of minority. Marx’s stature has been established as a staunch ‘modernist thinker’ who eloquently declares ‘religion’ as ‘opium of the people’ or an ardent supporter of relegating religion from politics. This propensity has been widespread all over the world where Marxist philosophy was in practice and theory, especially in the former USSR. But contemporary interpretation of some

দাওয়া সম্পর্কে নেতাদের বিভিন্ন যুক্তির উত্তরে ডাঃ বিধান রায় (কংগ্রেস) তার স্বাভাবিক কাটখোঁটো ভাষায় বলিলেনঃ তা হলে মুসলমানদের কথা এইঃ ‘ স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে যাব না, কিন্তু চাকরিতে অংশ দাও । পাল্টা জবাবে উম্মাদ সার আবদুর রহিম সংগে সংগে উত্তর দিলেনঃ তা হলে হিন্দুদের কথা এইঃ ‘ চাকরিতে অংশ দিব না, কিন্তু স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে আসো । সবাই হাসিয়া উঠিলেন। অতঃপর সার আবদুর রহিম সিরিয়াস হইয়া বলিলেনঃ ‘লুক হিয়ার ডাঃ রায়। ইউ ফরগেট দ্যাট ইউ হিন্দুজ হ্যাভ গট অনলি ওয়ান এনিমি দ্যা ব্রিটিশার্স টু ফাইট, হোয়ারআয উই মুসলিমস হ্যাভ গট টু ফাইট থ্রি এনিমিযঃ দি ব্রিটিশার্স অন দি ফ্রন্ট, হি হিন্দুয অন দি রাইট এন্ড দি মোল্লায অনদি লেফট । ... ১৯২৮ সালের প্রজাস্বত্ব আইনের প্রশ্নে দল নির্বিশেষে সব হিন্দু মেম্বাররা জমিদার পক্ষে এবং দল-নির্বিশেষে সব মুসলিম মেম্বাররা প্রজার পক্ষে ভোট দেন। আইনসভা স্পষ্টতঃ সাম্প্রদায়িক ভাগে বিভক্ত হয়। পর বৎসর সুভাষ বাবুর নেতৃত্বে কৃষ্ণনগর কংগ্রেস সম্মিলনীতে দেশবন্ধুর বেংগল প্যাক্ট বাতিল করা হয়’ । (Mansur September 2013)

²⁴Shaikh, F. (1989) *Community and consensus in Islam: Muslim representation in Colonial India, 1860–1947*, (South Asian Studies, 42.) xiv, 257 pp. Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press

²⁵ ibid

of Marx's earlier writing has given new perspective on religion and identity in a different way. I proceed to the next section with a nontraditional Marxist interpretation of how religion and minority issue takes a divergent turn in case of Bengal Muslim minority politics.

8. Marx's View on Political Identity of the Minority: Pre and Post Pakistan

In Marx's writing of 1844, he elucidated the limitations of the political emancipation in a liberal state and its relation to human emancipation. Bauer argued why the scheme of citizenship and equality should not be given by dint of their 'Jewish' identity rather the state should treat all the citizens as German. Marx was agitated by the idea of Bauer and already had signed a petition being widespread that time that claimed for the rights for Jewish community similar to the rights enjoyed by the Christian one. The main objection of Bauer was without the renouncement of respective communities' religious identity that would not lead towards a Prussian identity. Marx however was enlisted as petitioner and in his writing, expressed his disavowal with Bauer. To him, a secular state is no less pernicious than religion. One of his observations was a state can have emancipation from religion, even if the overwhelming majority is still religious. But he further argued the attitude of the state and republic to religion is only the attitude of the man who composes it. The second point I would like to mention, if liberals consider political emancipation thus achieved by relegating religion into private sphere, it necessarily doesn't stand as the spirit of the state. It becomes the expression of man as a difference within a 'civil society. Marx never believed in this genteelism of public private distinction in a way Bauer perceived it. However, the division of public and private, the displacement of religion doesn't count as a political emancipation. Thus any non-religious status privilege given to Jews is no more than euphemism. Emancipation of Jews by Prussian identity neither abolishes the real religiousness, nor intends to do such. This means, Jews should be treated as Jews to form a sense of equality. Marx stated:

Man, as the adherent of a particular religion, finds himself in conflict with his citizenship and with other men as members of the community. This conflict reduces itself to the secular division between the political state and civil society. For man as a bourgeois, "life in the state" is "only a semblance or a temporary exception to the essential and the rule." Of course, the bourgeois,

like the Jew, remains only sophistically in the sphere of political life, just as the citizen only sophistically remains a Jew or a bourgeois. But, this sophistry is not personal. It is the sophistry of the political state itself. The difference between the merchant and the citizen, between the day-laborer and the citizen, between the landowner and the citizen, between the merchant and the citizen, between the living individual and the citizen. The contradiction in which the religious man finds himself with the political man is the same contradiction in which the bourgeois finds himself with the citizen, and the member of civil society with his political lion's skin. (Marx: 1844)

Here what he tried to imply was the religious identity of the Jews are merely and identity like any other contradictory identities within a civic liberal state. Marx, in later years repetitively expressed his comments on the idea of people's freedom and its relation to inequality. What Bauer was unable to decipher is the demarcation between political emancipation and human emancipation at large. The negation of religion is unnecessary for a state as it constitutes minute details of public and private both, but the human emancipation along with political has often labeled with communal connotation in a coarse way when a 'religious' community tried to identify themselves as the result of historical courses, especially in late colonial era politics of Indian sub-continent. The universalization of citizenship also claims a distinct resolution for religious difference and minority as a political form. But nonetheless this retains the political demand as well. The separation of religion from politics in an uneven context of level playing goes no further than a nullified resonance of oppressive tool. In that case, treating them with special consideration is a leap towards particular to universal. Mansur, spontaneously was aware of these ambiguities provided by the integrationist structure that provoked a civil awareness based on 'secular' composure and identity. That's why before partition he was eloquent about the nature and attributes of identity they were forming which became obsolete after partition as that parity had been resolved through partition. The same idea was possessed by Jinnah as well. Moreover, his views on religion and socio-cultural reciprocity hovered around to push forward the periphery of normative secular views that should be analyzed with comparative new lenses of analysis of secularism. It wasn't only a question of whether religion should be there in state or not, rather encompasses the nuances of mundane and daily life to the higher political state of state-machine. It is historically evident that modern state machine doesn't negate religion; rather

it controls how religion is placed within the frame of modern state²⁶. Within this regulation of controlling and delimiting the role of religion within state machine, the degree of centralization and localization was a complex and multifaceted political question that brought out the contestation of culture and language at the same time for Bengali Muslims.

9. Unification of India vs. Islamic Identity: The Theme of Minority

9.1. Nehru's Idea of United India and Its Failure in Bengal

The difference and politics of Bengali Muslim were chiefly driven by identity and representational politics. Question of identity incorporated minority problem which started looming from 1920s and stabilized in 1940s with focusing idea of a state 'Pakistan'. Jinnah himself was a modernist, but if it is put down generally, the differences that marked Jinnah different from Nehru was incorporating the question of minority as a Muslim. Nehru never permitted this idea to his politics as his western secular ideologies would suggest a better nationalist model of united India. But integrationist model by dint of its imperialistic countenance was bounced back by Jinnah and Muslim League. Nehru on this occasion of minority and Muslim league demands writes:

The Congress made many mistakes, but these were in relatively minor questions of approach or tactics. It was obvious that even for purely political reasons the Congress was eager and anxious to bring about a communal solution and thus remove a barrier to progress. There was no such eagerness in the purely communal organizations, for their chief reason for existence was to emphasize the particular demands of their respective groups, and this had led to a certain vested interest in the status quo. Though predominantly Hindu in membership, the Congress had large numbers of Muslims on its rolls, as well as all other religious groups like Sikhs, Christians, etc. It was thus forced to think in national terms. For it the dominating issue was national freedom and the establishment of an independent democratic state. It realized that in a vast and varied country like India, a simple type of democracy, giving full powers to a majority to curb or

²⁶Asad, T. 'Secularism, Nation-State, Religion' (1999). (pp.190-191) in *Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, ed. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

overrule minority groups in all matters, was not satisfactory or desirable, even if it could be established. It wanted unity, of course, and took it for granted, but it saw no reason why the richness and variety of India's cultural life should be regimented after a single pattern. Hence a large measure of autonomy was agreed to, as well as safe-guards for cultural growth and individual and group freedom.

But on two fundamental questions the Congress stood firm: national unity and democracy. These were the foundations on which it had been founded and its very growth for half a century had emphasized these.²⁷

But the question of national unity seems vague from the regionalist point on different levels and misses some vital points of what Muslims of Bengal then were thinking and construing their identity. Nehru writes:

A Bengali Muslim and a Bengali Hindu living together, speaking the same language, and having much the same traditions and customs, belonged to different nations. All this was very difficult to grasp: it seemed a reversion to some mediaeval theories. What a nation is it is difficult to define. Possibly the essential characteristic of national consciousness is a sense of belonging together and of together facing the rest of mankind.... There was a fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and that of the religious-communal organizations. Of the latter the chief were the Muslim League and its Hindu Counterpart, the Hindu Mahashabha. These communal organizations, while in theory standing for India's independence, were more interested in claiming protection and special privileges for their respective groups. They had thus inevitably to look to the British Government for such privileges, and this led them to avoid conflict with it. The Congress outlook was so tied up with India's freedom as a united nation that everything else

²⁷J. N. (2004). *The Discovery of India*. Gurgaon, Hariyana: Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd.

was secondary and this meant ceaseless conflict or friction with the British powers. Indian nationalism as represented by the Congress opposed British imperialism²⁸.

The frame of national unity didn't attract Muslims as whole because East Bengal Muslims with two hundred years of colonial oppression were unable to accept the euphemism of Indian nationalism. Nehru and Congress conflated the idea of Bengali culture, its internal differences and didn't observe a separate sense of consciousness was growing among Muslims of Bengal. The idea of Pakistan as a solution of minority problem thus suited them more, gave them hope to stand for their rights than that of Nehru's 'national unity and democracy'. Nehru's ideas particularly failed to attract Bengali Muslims because they were striving for 'protection and special privileges'. They felt that special privileges were needed for their community to uphold a common ground and status with their counterpart Hindus who had already a stronghold in Indian politics and bureaucratic system. This urge to equate their Muslim community with Hindus reached beyond the questions of 'national unity' democratic ideas prescribed by Nehru. Farzana Shaikh mentioned the Muslim politics of Indian sub-continent sort of devoid of any liberal democratic ideology in 1920-40s. In her opinion, she prescribed the vision of separate Muslim sensibility prone to different sets of political representation²⁹. The shaping of this political representation was commenced in Bengal after the failure of Bengal Pact. The Muslim members of Bengal congress boycotted Congress and formed 'Nikhil Banga Praja Shamiti' in 1929. The question of class as religious demarcation emerged in politics of Bengal strongly at this period. Mansur stated:

১৯২৮ সালের প্রজা-সত্ত্ব আইনের বেলায় কংগ্রেসী মেম্বররা যে একযোগে প্রজার স্বার্থের বিরুদ্ধে জমিদার-স্বার্থের পক্ষে ভোট দিয়েছিলেন, ওটা কোন এক্সিডেন্ট বা বিচ্ছিন্ন ঘটনা ছিল না। কংগ্রেস নেতারা প্রজা-আন্দোলনকে শ্রেণী সংগ্রাম বলিতেন। শ্রেণী-সংগ্রামের দ্বারা দেশবাসীর মধ্যে আত্মকলহ বিভেদ সৃষ্টি করিলে স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলন ব্যাহত হইবে। এটাই ছিল তাঁদের যুক্তি!...তাঁদের যুক্তির মধ্যে প্রজা-আন্দোলনের বিরুদ্ধে তাঁদের আসল মনোভাবটা ধরা পড়িত। তাঁরা প্রজা-আন্দোলনকে সাম্প্রদায়িক আন্দোলন বলিতেন এবং যুক্তিতে বোম্বাই-বিহারের কৃষক আন্দোলন

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ Shaikh, F. (1986). Muslims and Political Representation in Colonial India: The Making of Pakistan. *Modern Asian Studies*, 20(3), 539-557.

হইতে ময়মনসিংহ তথা বাংলার প্রজা-আন্দোলনের পার্থক্য দেখাইতেন। বাংলার জমিদাররা প্রধানতঃ হিন্দু এবং প্রজারা প্রধানতঃ মুসলমান। জমিদারিতে যা মহাজনির ব্যাপারেও তাই। মহাজনরা প্রধানতঃ হিন্দু এবং খাতকরা প্রধানতঃ মুসলমান। সুতরাং এদের হিশাবে, এবং কার্যতঃ সত্যই, প্রজা আন্দোলন ছিল হিন্দুর বিরুদ্ধে মুসলমানদের আন্দোলন³⁰।

Nehru's idea of national unity thus failed to address this historical complexities that was evolving out of Bengal Muslim politics at that period. Failing to comprehend the internal differences of Bengali Hindu and Muslims, Nehru in broad stroke avoided or failed to understand this historical differences in disguise of class. Nevertheless, it was stirring the mind of Bengal Muslims and with Jinnah's guideline and proposal of minority resolution, Bengal Muslim gathered their hopes and political aspiration.

9.2. Jinnah's Idea of Minority

Faisal Devji pointed out an interesting view of Jinnah about his philosophy of political career based on a witty term 'mystic secular faith'³¹. In a radio interview when Jinnah was asked soon after independence that, how these two wings of Pakistan could remain united? Jinnah short answer was 'faith'. The pattern of this faith is not easy to comprehend. Being a secular and westerner how could he rely on faith assuming that he is not a communal, sectarian politician as often he is accused of by classical state patrons of congressman politician, like Nehru. Jinnah always expressed his disgust regarding the theocratic version of state³². In turn, he placed the question of minority as a political form and Hindu-Muslim as a separate cultural entity as well. Jinnah addressed in 1940s All India Congress Session:

The Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, and literateurs. They neither intermarry nor interdine together and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspect on life and of life is different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Mussalmans (Muslims) derive

³⁰Ahmed, A. M. (2013). Mymensingh e Sanghatan. In *Amar Dekha Rajnitir Ponchash Bochor* (p. 52). Dhaka: Khoshroj Kitabmahal.

³¹Devji, F. (2007). *From the Colonial to the Postcolonial: India and Pakistan Transition*

³²S.M. Burke, *Jinnah : Speeches and Statements 1947-1948*, Karachi: Oxford University Press (2000)

their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built for the government of such a state³³.

As the question of class with religion was present already, the idea of distinctness embodied the flow of spirit of Pakistan for Bengali Muslims, Probably this junction of distinctness, class and religious question fueled the question of minority. Though Jinnah in this session declared that Muslims are not minorities, rather they are separate nations. However, the emphasis of separate nation came out as a failure to resolve the minority Muslim problems. There might be generalization a bit in this quote, but Mansur saw partition as an obvious and negotiating chronology of practical reasoning with a sense of mutual respect to both the parties that achieved two separate states.³⁴

For Jinnah again, Islam was situated in the realm of modern India as a question of rights and representation, not exactly to mark the distinction. There were other Muslim leaders who never wanted partition for a theological cause like Hussain Ahmed Madani whose proper enunciation was to preach Islam in undivided India from a relatively feudal sense. With this line, Gandhi as well invoked the religious identities of people in the heart of modern politics to attract the susceptibility of religiosity. Jinnah opposed it and left congress to create a unique identity channeled through modern political framework. This partial representation as a political entity, to Jinnah's opinion would eventually make Muslims clinging to more Muslimness and Hindus to Hindutva. But being a minority, the majoritarian representative politics would drag Muslim towards the mercy of Hindutva. Making the question of Muslim identity political was Jinnah's contribution in this case. Because, being political majority, Hindu could easily wipe out their religiosity, but Muslims only as a minority and without any political character threatened their political identity. For this, when Nehru was emphasizing on the historicity of all Indian identity,

³³*Address by Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah at Lahore Session of Muslim League, March, 1940* (Islamabad: Directorate of Films and Publishing, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 1983)

³⁴Ahmed , A. M. (1975). *End of A Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution*. Dacca: KhoshrozKitabMahal .

Jinnah would focus more on distinct characters of both the Hindus and Muslims. So after partition, he liquidated any sort of differences among the citizens of Pakistan. In presidential address of Pakistan in 1947, he declared:

Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.

I cannot emphasize it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community, because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on, and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris, also Bengalis, Madrasis and so on, will vanish³⁵.

Identity of these two categories under colonial rule was bureaucratized by British Raj to create a modern order of politics and democracy. It's nothing like there were no Hindu Muslim disputes before British came. But in a modern frame of political system, the problem of Hindu Muslim and their political rights, state, demographic drive couldn't be solved by endorsing the history of harmony and identity starting from as old as Indian civilization. The outcry for national unity thus came as an obsolete question for Muslims, particularly for Bengali Muslim. Bengali Muslims in that case channeled the question of identity in a different way and any unitary proposition stood as hindrance. The communal category was new as the complex layers of problems regarding partition. Jinnah with his political merit understood if someone wants to make a way out of this unintelligible problem of communal politics, then separate state for

³⁵ G. Allana, *Pakistan Movement Historical Documents* (Karachi: Department of International Relations, University of Karachi, nd [1969]), pp. 407-411.

minority is the solution, as Nehru/Congress's suggestion digressed from the question of self determination and emphasized on national unity. Reason and rationality would suggest him not to be indulgent with ever since identity as united Indian. It didn't answer distinctly about the privileges and rights offered to a vast number of people considering themselves as deprived under colonial subjugation. Minority as a political category for both Congress and Muslim League was dealt with different parameters and importance and Nehru failed to understand the gravity of that sensuality of minority question. To Nehru, it was rather a communal demand presented by leaders of a feudal and backward mentality group with no understanding of modern polity and he often compared League as counterpart of Hindu Mahashabha. Nehru's comment on these demands:

The communal organizations, whether Hindu (Mahashabha) or Muslim (League), were close associated with the feudal and conservative elements and were opposed to any revolutionary social change. The real conflict had, therefore, nothing to do with religion, though religion often masked the issue, but was essentially between those who stood for a nationalist-democratic-socially revolutionary policy and those who were concerned with preserving the relics of a feudal regime³⁶.

Jinnah was practical, if not ambitious, to create a state dissenting everything given from the past and only based on reason- that reason was the way out to this communal problem. At the same time, reason and practicality drove him to cut thread with what he was given as an Indian, Indian's rich history, culture etc. Furthermore, he was fully aware of the notion that the upcoming nature of modern state named Pakistan constituted with no homogenous group, but Pakistan would cut short the problem. This pattern of reason, as Devji stated, could be seen in Enlightenment philosophy to be rational, but sometimes not aware of crossing the line between fanaticism and rationality. Jinnah had two choices- whether he could go with the flow of Indian identity given by history under united India, or draw a separate line for the Indian Muslim to meet the modern political demands of minority. He chose the latter. This minority with two hundred years of colonial subjugation was dispersed, but suddenly at the end of British Raj

³⁶J. N. (2004). The question of Minorities, The Muslim League: Mr M.A. Jinnah. In *The Discovery of India* (pp. 433-434). Gurgaon, Hariyana: Penguin Random House India Pvt. Ltd

demographic politics gave their voice, otherwise not heard as a population with rich culture and distinct identity.

10. Abul Mansur Ahmed and East Pakistan Renaissance Society

Abul Mansur Ahmed, one of the prominent Bengali Muslim journalist, writer, scholar and active politician who had experienced his political career through partisan politics of Congress, KPP and lastly Muslim League, extended their hand for the support of Pakistan. By creating a discourse of state adjacent to Pakistan, its culture was for equating the historical imbalance of colonial and Zamindari system. Pakistan was the ground free from any hindrance to self-determination. Nothing was given to regulate virgin territory for new beginning. So it was crafted like any other nation state history and its ideology. Jinnah with the Pakistan Proposition grounded the logic behind Pakistan and political mass endorsed his broader outline, contextualized it within their own terms of political and cultural identity.

10.1. EPRS's Understanding of 'Self': Linguistic and Cultural Perspective

This portion explains on which point and how Bengali Muslim perceived the notion of Pakistan and their difference with nearest Kolkata culture and United India politics. One of the core reasons behind Mansur's stand was to oppose the centralized proposition of Congress politics and his idea was grounded on political and cultural demands. This notion of his secularism was practically functional, espoused from his caliber attached with first hand Bengali peasant experience and brewed from three decade spanning political career including Khilafat movement, Krishak Praja Party and Muslim League politics. Mansur's approach was thus a historical continuation of attempts to answer the Muslim (minority) question as it had translated through the decades. Being an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi, which was never placed in his negative disposition till the end of Mahatma's death, he didn't ascribe the normative course of western civilization secularization for his own sense of minority experience in socio cultural sphere³⁷. But however, Gandhi as well didn't ascribe the modern sense of secularism. Mansur's

³⁷ Mansur in 'Amar DekhaRajnitirPanchashBochhor' expounded how Muslims believed and relied on Gandhi blindly and he point blank wrote a remorseful response after the assassination of Gandhi where he vehemently criticised the fanatic hindus who were not able to understand the magnanimity of Gandhian philosophy.

understanding didn't permit him to stick with the idea of integrationist secularist proposition incorporated with United India ideology, and to him. As Bose suggested, he turned to religion out of a negative politics of celebration and opposed literature, and socio cultural standardization in so many aspects that were a hegemonic process of Bengal Hindus³⁸. So, for obvious reason, division of the country was the division of literature as well and this division, to Mansur, should be very well defined and distinct from the colonial Bengali literature. He envisioned an autonomous cultural space, albeit with a cultural change and to his idea, political freedom couldn't be achieved without the freedom of culture and literature.

The basic tension between 'regionalized' vs. 'centralized' version of cultural and political identity played a vital role to give birth the autonomous space for Bengali Muslim identity formation of late colonial period. This tension could be observed not only in political or cultural space, rather it envisaged and demarcated the basic ideas and propensities of some congruent perception. This also dictated the degree of 'universal' and 'relative' tendencies that could be endorsed under the rule of a loosely held colonial government where Muslims as a minority can find their own place. Lahore resolution, as an idea for minorities of Indian sub-continent, guaranteed the safeguard of demographically minor to protect their religious, cultural, economic, administrative and other sorts of materialistic interests over the whole subcontinent. In this era of multifaceted political junctions, what Congress tried to harness in disguise of 'universal' and 'secular' identity formation could easily be accused of a cultural hegemony and neo-colonial exploitation. It wiped out the variations of minority problems that stemmed out the vital force of 40's politics. In that case, East Pakistan Renaissance Society adopted 'two nations theory', though not aware of its consequences, as to oppose this challenge and envisioned a holistic idea that covers the moral spirit of internally understood mechanisms of culture³⁹.

³⁸N. B. (2014). Conclusion .In *Recasting the Region: Language, Culture, and Islam in Colonial Bengal* (pp. 281-282).Oxford University Press.

³⁹Ahmed , A. M. (1944). *MulShobhapatirObhibhashon*, East Pakistan Renaissance Society .*MashikMohammodi*.

10.2. The Idea of Swatantra of Self-Determination in the field of Culture: Unified India as Hegemonic Tool and Revolutionary Pakistan

EPRS frequently hovered around and addressed the issue of ‘particular’ and ‘universal’ philosophical problems and the central solution to this was clearly decentralization of state power. The integrationist model of social change often offered by Congress wasn’t revolutionary and in disguise it was an eye washing and substituting the old formula and structure of colonial state. But the trend and notions EPRS was making evaded the universal humanistic idea of any sort of political formation as it would eventually flatten down the differences among the powerful and the powerless. Continuous bargaining and negotiating with power to a limit was an instrument that paved the way of their political strategy. Otherwise, appeal of universal humanism might be used as a tool to pacify any kind of unjust hegemonic approaches as Bengali Muslims had experienced so much at the end of colonial eras with minority representation in politics, constituencies and other forms of political stratification.

EPRS declared on that point ‘Swatantra’ which means the practice of difference in literature, culture and to some extent, any sort of legitimate moral bounding that incorporates the life and motive of those Muslim, whose late participation in the public discourse of modernity and identity politics were hindered back by the exploitation of colonial rule, its division and subdivisions of social order and euphemism of undivided India and its emotional demand.⁴⁰ Pakistan idea gave them a sturdy ground where the literature of Bengali Muslim should be different, radical and on a different spirit free from the influence of Hindu literature. There should be mentioned two points on this ground. The literature they were deliberately targeting to refuse and evade had its own communal look which gave the Muslim literacies a sense of vulnerability and non-existence. To share some keen tendencies and rhetoric, Professor Abdur Razzak in a conversation with Ahmed Sofa shared an insightful remark where he suggested it was obvious that Muslims wanted a different literature space as the character representation numerically in modern Bengali literature up to that point was below 5% or less instead of having a majority demographic in this part of Bengal⁴¹. They were oblivious about Muslims and their

⁴⁰Shamsuddin, A. K. (2001). *Atit Diner Smriti*. Dhaka: Khoshroz KitabMahal .

⁴¹A. S. (1998). *Jodyopi Amar Guru* . Dhaka: Maola Brothers.

representations in literature if we consider literature as the representation of a collective's social life. Nevertheless, by 'Modern Bengali Literature' I don't subscribe to the 'Modernist Movement' that started under the influence of numerous modern poets and fiction writer in 20's and 30's and so forth. By modernism, it means here general sets of ideas, forms and patterns of literature that evolved as an outcome of coming in contact with the western forms and varieties of art like novel, general form of poems published by printed medias, short stories. I would suggest, the specific 'Modernist Movement' had little to do with hitherto political turmoil and heat produced by tension between what generally could be called 'Hindu' and 'Muslim Literature'⁴². Mansur observed two different kinds of spirit subsumed in these threads. Hindus basically practiced their sense of asceticism, womanly love and devotion whereas Muslims were geared up more with the value of truth, justice, martyrdom etc.

From this intellectual following, this idea of culture and its milieus didn't indicate the humanistic, if not modern, notion of refined way of life, a pursuit to achieve a qualitative shift in commoners, but it clearly was a site for resistance against the burdening weight of hegemony. A hegemony that not only hinders the cultural autonomy of the region, but it associates with the line of political independence simultaneously. EPRS pioneers clearly expressed their view that without cultural autonomy it's not possible to achieve the political one and the politics of culture which includes literature to any national semblance of unity ultimately uplifts the total political conditions as well through awareness and a sense of heightened consciousness.⁴³ With this pathway, ultimately Renaissance would be forthcoming through revisiting the long-forgotten tradition of Bengali folk culture. Mansur, at the same time apprised the young leaders not to consider this phenomenon as 'revival', as revival suggests a more imaginative past to his comprehension. Bengali Muslims, in this point retained that confidence not to be overwhelmed

⁴² This strand of literary groups who neither prescribed to any kind of communal identities like Buddhadeb Bose, Sudhindranath Tagore, PremendraMitra, Jibanananda Das were not mentioned in Neilesh Bose's book 'Recasting the Region'. Somewhat it gives a wrong vibe to this, as he includes a chapter on Dhaka's literary environment. Many of the modernist poetry stalwart passed their youth in Dhaka, like Buddhadeb Bose who was the leader of this movement noticed by so many literary critics and who patronized Jibanananda. It's a matter of research whether this group were only submerged into deep existential and Boudlairist darkness and negativity of life or they somewhat had reflection on this ongoing turmoil of literary sphere.

⁴³Ahmed , A. M. (1944). *Mul Shobhapotir Obhibhashon*, East Pakistan Renaissance Society .*Mashik Mohammodi*.

by their past, rather a new and instrumental revision could formulate a new sphere of cultural autonomy along with independence.⁴⁴ It was, for them, never a question of community development, but a deliberate attack on the unjust majoritarian governance from a revolutionary and all humanistic perspective.

Mansur, personally an admirer of Jinnah in the beginning of 40's saw EPRS as a communal one opposed to how Jinnah was secular and opulent about minority rights and reservations. But his close acquaintance and concomitant Abul Kalam Shamsuddin pursued him to take his attraction towards the whole realm of ideas put forward by EPRS.⁴⁵ The dealing of Congressman politics by EPRS cleared out by one of the major figures Mujibur Rahman Khan. Mujibur Rahman Khan basically pointed out two main views about Pakistan⁴⁶. The first one as followed by the passion to create Pakistan as nation whose ground would be based on language and literature. Secondly, to create this space the Congress was only following the British imperial pattern of creating a hegemony over minority. Furthermore, he not only proposed two wing based Pakistan, rather his idea was beyond this dichotomy. He stated to create 'Dravidistan' and 'Sikhistan' to preserve their rights. It is to be mentioned that, though they were very particular about their own identity, but they proposed their ideas on a different course of universal manner espousing from the all India Muslim minority experience. Mansur elaborated that, this is the only way from where Renaissance could take place.

'Pakistaner Biplobi Bhumika'⁴⁷ one of the most important texts that outwardly expressed their views and understanding about religion and how to deal it for a cultural change. This essay proclaims Pakistan wasn't derived from the idea of communal politics or religion, but yet it was somewhat relatable to Islam for historical reasoning. This essay viewed religion as more understandable way as a part of the culture. This cultural pattern and importance of religion bears truth about historicity and society. This historical background is well written and explained in the

⁴⁴Ahmed, A. M. (1975). Cultural Renaissance of East Pakistan. In *End of A Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution* (pp. 529-531). KhoshrozKitabMahal .

⁴⁵Shamsuddin, A. K. (2015). Renaissance Society o Abul Mansur Ahmed.In *Abul Mansur Ahmed Sharakgrantha* (pp. 119-121). Dhaka: ProthomaProkashon

⁴⁶Khan , M. R. (1942). *Pakistan*. Mohammadi Press.

⁴⁷Ahmed, A. M., &Karim, S. F. (1968).PakistanerBiplobiBhumika. In *Pakistan Andolon o Muslim Sahitya*. Dhaka: Bangla Academy.

writing of Richard Eaton's 'The Rise of Islam in Bengal Frontier'. To mention an example from Eaton and clear out what EPRS tried to imply could be exemplified by the following excerpt:

In Murarbond, in the Habiganj region of Sylhet District, Shah SaiyidNasir al-Din is said to have come from the Middle East in the Mughal period and instructed the local population in clearing the land and planting rice; before him, the land had been jungle. He also taught them the rudiments of Islam. In Pail, several miles from Habiganj, stands the shrine of another pioneer holy man who is said to have come from the Middle East and taught the local people the techniques of rice farming and the fundamentals of Islam. Later, his sons settled in what are now the Comilla and Sylhet districts, where they did the same. In Pingla, Midnapur District, a Muslim holy man named Khondkar Shah 'Ala is said to have founded a settlement on land donated by Sultan Taj Khan Karrani (r. 1564–65), who instructed the pīr to let a horse roam from dawn to noon, with the understanding that the enclosed area would be his spiritual and terrestrial domain for life. Arriving and settling in the area with his family, Khondkar Shah cleared the area of its forests with the help of the local people, whom he converted to Islam. Both during and after his lifetime the community honored him as their pīr. (Eaton 1993)

So being a keen observer of history, Mansur and EPRS had this insight that this history and its attachment to the identity reality of agrarian East Bengal couldn't be erased by the blow of modern identity formation however 'communal' it might look like. This tradition of folklore, mediaeval in style held the gist of collective consciousness of Bengali Muslims. The modern tool of identity based on a secular faith and universal humanism squeezed realities of the past as this form, tales, collective experiences had no place to posit in the heart of modern discourse other than transforming this hegemonic approach to create an own space. And if there was, that was represented only by fistful of Hindus to whom Muslim was only peasants and devoid of any delicate cultural taste. Sometimes the religious identity overlapped regional one. Ahmed Sofa in his brilliant writing 'Shatabarsher Ferari' remembered an old story of encounter between Dineshchandra Sen and Bankim⁴⁸. Meeting upon Dinesh who for the whole life fought against the Brahmanical structure and stature of Bengali Identity postulated by Bankim, he asked Dinesh

⁴⁸Ahmed. S. (2011). Shmaran :Dineshchandra Sen. In *NirbachitoOrajnoitikProbondho* (pp. 317-319). Dhaka: Khan Brothers and Company.

what was the price of fresh vegetables and other staple foods consumed by Bangalees, but Bankim was disinclined to discuss about literature as he didn't consider East Bengal 'Bangals' competent for that. Not to be surprised, Dineshchandra Sen was a common target for the first generation of Bengali modern linguist like Sunitikumar Chatterjee who propagated his views of Bengali Language as derived from the family of Indo European Language, whereas Dinesh Chandra for his whole life, philosophically generalizing, stood against it and silently expended his life to show the later generation how the language Bangla wasn't categorically of that lineage or this stratification of standardization is obsolete, as language like Bangla has its own nature of assimilation with other language family. Mansur also believed in this category. What this Indo-European link provides is it gives a base for creating an identity with the Arya past and brings the cognitive identity politics closer to be a part of undivided India and its languages.

10.3. The Relation of Religion with Culture

However, Mansur and EPRS didn't blame the Hindus as they had been merely part of an obsolete system. But they were just dead against the vilifying social trend of integrationist/united India as it would eventually swallow up the smaller, marginal and inadequately politically conscious groups in an imperialist manner. Mansur never considered Pakistan as a nation which represents all the minorities, furthermore safeguards for the self determination of all the groups. They shared their empathy towards the anti-colonial rebel and eloquent about fascism, but their prime goal was by any means, resist this neo-colonial aggressive agenda.

Mansur in his writing of EPRS society stated that, the pattern and characteristics of religion is trans-regional that means which exceeds any territorial boundary. A nation which is subsumed to a particular religion will fall in the pit hole of its political unity that binds a nation together. Much of these religious state relations were well written in his later writings. But like the radical secularist, he never prescribed to cease the utilities of religion by any means as that would be against the prudential norms. Even he convinced the BTV to broadcast Quran recitation when it was being forcefully stopped after 18 December 1971 by, borrowing from Mansur's phrase, 'ultra-progressive' masses of government in exile. He had clear premonition about this 'ultra-

progressive' nature of secularist.⁴⁹ However, he suggested to interpret the most liberal part of Quran as the basis of religiosity to be endorsed by state if needed.

Opposed to religion, culture, to be specific 'Tamuddun' doesn't have any trans regional boundaries and its very much specific in its own context and history of particular territorial, linguistic and sub linguistic region. Tamaddun was not coined as synonym of 'Sanskriti' as it was embedded in Bengali Muslim elements of language and landscape. The idea of 'Purba Pakistan' what Mansur frequently mentioned as 'Pak Bangla' was a philosophy of life this philosophy ventured the solution and aspirations of modern political life with respect to its complexities of cultural and trans regional elements of identity formation.

11. Mansur's Conception of Secularism and Religion in Politics

Much of objection from modernist historian and nationalist against EPRS and Pakistani movement pioneers of Bengal arose from the point of mixing religion with politics giving an extra facility to convince and imbue the political conscience with religion. However, it was demand of that polity and in so many levels this doesn't give any fixed shape to critique or doesn't reply how this degree of measurement is standardized and what their idea of secularism is. Talal Asad in his 'Secularism, Nation State and Religion' showed the intertwined necessary condition of church and state paved the way for this historical category whose very spirit lies in Christianity⁵⁰. Without conditioning the reciprocity of relation for the social location of religion in 18th century, anyone just can't hold a stand about secularism. So, when modernist progressive critique looks around for critic EPRS and its associates, they don't consider two basic aspects. The first one, chronological evolution of Secularism as a category in the west embedded with Christianity and its relation to the church. The second one, how normative framework of secularism could be essentialized in a postcolonial state like late colonial Pakistan ideology. Islam as a political entity in late colonial era and particularly for Bengali Muslims attracts more historical attention for this revision of minority politics and how it took shape on that period.

⁴⁹Ahmed , A. M. (2013). ShadhinSharbobhoumo Bangladesh.In *Amar DekhaRajnitirPonchashBochhor*(pp. 594-595). Dhaka: KhoshrozKitabMahal.

⁵⁰Asad, T. 'Secularism, Nation-State, Religion' (1999). (pp.190-191) in*Nation and Religion: Perspectives on Europe and Asia*, ed. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

11.1. Configuring the Pattern of Secularism Proposed by Mansur

Hussein Ali Agrama prescribed for two alternative approaches which helps to understand the process of secularism historically⁵¹. The first one suggests observing secularism as the expression of states sovereign power. Secondly, it debunks any possibility of deterministic attributes of secularism and its processing is highly contextual and historically entrenched with particularity.⁵² He supposes a line of power indeterminate to any kind of presupposition. To understand the view of Abul Mansur Ahmed about religion and secularism, anyone should be considerate not to evaluate his ideas based on any dichotomies of nationalist and ultra-secular loophole. Bangladeshi post history formation after independence has largely been based on to create an opposition between Pakistan vs. Bangladesh history formation that fulfils one of the ‘natural’ attributes of nation state history formation.

Mansur evaluated secularism based on the principle that it’s neither religious, nor anti- religious, rather it has some commonalities with the religious injunctions. It doesn't even encourage for sheer materialistic opportunisms for worldly gain in whatever method. Adding this, he just mentions a separation of practical religion from practical politics⁵³. This practicality indicates the commonalities between religion and politics as marking both ascribes a moral view towards world for life principle which might collide with each other. Before the expansion of colonial rule where rulers and his subjects used to be from same faith were interrelated with each other as but the colonization process made it complex and the earlier rule of ‘secularization’ marked by the race dissimilarities between Emperors and his subjects gave the sheer importance of impartiality to be a benevolent monarch. To him, the world once was divided into realm of Christian world, Muslim world and Buddhist world in Eastern Asia, but due to rational advancement and internal strife among the religious groups and the rise of Arab and Egyptian

⁵¹Agrama, H. (2010). Secularism, Sovereignty, Indeterminacy: Is Egypt a Secular or a Religious State? *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Agrama, by and large suggested that the periphery of secularism itself continuously shifts its position from religion to politics and explained it with a contextual example of Egypt, and embedded with the specificity of state and history.

⁵²Agrama, H. (2010). Secularism, Sovereignty, Indeterminacy: Is Egypt a Secular or a Religious State? *Comparative Studies in Society and History*

⁵³Ahmed , A. M. (1975). Secularism vs Religion in Politics. In *End of A Betrayal and Restoration of Lahore Resolution* (pp. 73-75). Dacca: KhoshrozKitabMahal

nationalism replaced the sanctity of the monarchs as the spiritual head of the collective. This sense of nationalism, albeit not the normative modern state evolution, rather he clearly indicates that one of the striking forces which impelled to substitute religion from political power was growth of nationalism under colonial rule. His personal experience of nationalist politics was also shaped by the worldview of colonial resistance; thus, the experience was remarked under the dynamics of colonial rule. This experience of colonial rule and nationalism specified his position regarding religion and its role to the state. Mansur was well aware of the fact of using religion as a political vehicle could draw drastic frenzy in the realm of national politics. While writing this essay, the nationalist movements of Bangladesh was mounting at their peak and he was just observing the breaking of what he aspired in his late youth, cherished by heart's content. The Pakistani military while using the identity of Muslim to derail the toiling Bengali mass, Mansur was ever concerned about its consequences.

What makes Mansur different from the dominant nationalist discourse of post 1971? The first thing is he never tried to forget the political history of Bengali Muslims that ran over three decades and created a permanent impact on the course of history. In his book, *Pak Bangla Culture*, Mansur with enthusiasm expressed his own unique Muslimness in different segments-starting from an array of literature, music, sports to an evasive account of detailed national life. This sense of being Muslim marked his cultural consciousness and he referred to Malinowski while explaining the relation of religion with culture as 'Religion is the master force of human culture' and if culture is tree, then religion must be its fruit.⁵⁴

But he was reluctant to master this fruit in the ground of practical politics. Mansur never was a revolutionary like Bhashani who would place Islam in the heart of national politics by changing its substantive meaning with a complete Islamic discourse. Being an ardent admirer of Jinnah, he maintained this clear distinction between these two in a peculiar secular manner. Before partition what was the driving force of unity in a specific manner to create a political space for Muslims was really a question of minority problem. He never left that spirit, but as a secular humanist specific to its own historical course he was reluctant about 'ultra-progressive stand' in contrast to

⁵⁴Ahmed , A. M. (2011).*Bangladesher Culture*. In *Bangladesher Culture* (pp. 16-17). Dhaka: Ahmed Publishing House

what he called a natural expression of livelihood. As we are brought up in different religious background and our social world encompasses festivities and practices of many other religious rituals, Mansur believed in no ultra secular stand to omit these festivities. Participation and practicing these religious ceremonies were the natural expression of livelihood. Furthermore, hegemony to sense a feeling of inferiority due to his Muslim identity was never in his whim. Person's moral and spiritual progress is the concern of religion, but the nation and state are directly concerned with the material progress and it offered a moral sense of citizenship. The interplay between these two remains safe when they are unattached as religion works as an organized brotherhood, in contrast to the organized coercion of the state and that coercion strictly demands recourse to the law. The first one is associated with social life, the second one as citizen of the state.

This proposition disposes religion to the point of higher personal level and within social life of citizens. The complex nature of the life of a modern nation state is understood through the division of minority and majority. This free-floating question of minority and majority by dint of religion, if placed in the moral conscience of national politics, that would alter the equation of moral liabilities of his past political life where being a minority he had to struggle for self-determination. The spirit of self-determination, once Pakistan was achieved lost its credential to practical religion in political sphere or, to be more precise, it was never there, just before partition it congregated people of this region with audacious mystic secular faith of emancipation with keeping a safe distance from intermixing religious beliefs. Muslim identity with its specific contextual history, subjugation and class disparities just fuelled to obtain a unity of the minorities, a mere category highly relevant to political past and future.

12. Conclusion

Through my paper, it was impossible to mention all the pros and cons of the identity politics that submerged in cultural sphere. However, my focus was basically the idea of territory and nationhood with a particular kind of citizenship very close to the individual and the state, mentioning an all-encompassing pathway for life. The public realm was, thus dictated by the very nature of Muslim character, and not to be mixed with communal in a sense. It later on

played out contradictions in so many levels, but ideally the symbol of moral order and its transcendence of division among Muslim provided a particular integrity with bilateral relations with other Muslims facing the dilemma more or less fervently. The linguistic recognition of state was, soon after Pakistan got independence, challenged and this was the first blow where East Pakistan realized the importance of self-determination was never accomplished and an intermittent process of redefining itself, as Bilgrami implied. The centre of gravity changed along with new political and cultural challenges coming out of time. Mansur himself didn't stick to so many of his previous notions of identities and culture as Professor Anisuzzaman has correctly noticed it⁵⁵. Ahmed was more radical in his division of literature in 40s, but in 1962 with the disillusionment of Pakistani juntas, declared how East Pakistan owes a great deal and indulgence towards the literature of undivided Bengal as the question of language was looming a proficient place in public places and discourses by middle class Bengalis. This wasn't a deviation of his ideology I suppose, but the practical reasoning was changing so swiftly that he had to keep pace with his surroundings. But however, he never compromised with the basic spirit of politics and identity. Nationhood and its relational mode with its citizen was always a central concern, he was of course, a modern visionary at the end of the day because, his form of full state controlled cultural renaissance only resonates a rigid regulation and endowment of state power. But his negative politics out of Islam in pre-Pakistan period only reminds of Afro-Americans, and notably Malcolm X. The 'all whites are evil' didn't come out of shrilling negation of whites as a whole, or hatred towards white individual, but it presupposes the history and culture that produce a reflexive behavior of resistance of higher level. This resistance and encountering the hegemony of centralization enraged him, like any individual with sense of political emancipation to determine his course of fate. Exploring the sources and motives of local struggles in contrast to sources of cultural hegemony provides a guideline of complete understanding of changes and junctions in Bengali Muslim politics. Bengali Muslims connectivity with Islamic identity manifested a variety of regionalism, not to be a communal statement and difference from Hindus, neither it proves the historicity of Bengal as more Muslim than Hindu in any way. The purpose of this was not to propagate communalism, or to mark sharp ethno-religious distinction from Hindus. The politics envisioned a future where Muslims would draw on their past, the kinds of

⁵⁵Anisuzzaman, (2015). Abul Mansur Ahmeder Rashtrachinta: Ekti Ruprekha. In *Abul Mansur Ahmed Sharakgrantha* (pp. 193-194). Prothoma Prokashon.

discriminations that afflicted them, to go deep in finding avenues for self-determination. While many challenges have taken place since then, with politics being affected by new forces, the question of language and religion continue to be brought to the fore in various cultural and political contestations. I believe these contestations will be a part of the political reality for even longer. My exploration of the 1940's and a bit of 50's thus illuminates certain parameters of such contestations with the hope that an objective analysis of the past can prove to be helpful today as well as into the future.

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