

Editorial

During the last 50 years a large number of Muslim countries have gained independence. However, the problem of Muslim minorities has remained a thorny one. In a number of countries they are being persecuted, and hence agitating for independence. Syed Serajul Islam has taken up a comparative analysis of two Muslim liberation movements—the Rohingyas in Myanmar (Burma) and the Moros in the Philippines. He shows that the national political conditions, organizational structure and ability to internationalize the minorities' problem have been the major factors responsible for the success or failure of these liberation movements. This is an area which has theoretical as well as policy implications for the Muslim world and the Muslim liberation movements.

Relationship of Islam with the West has been the subject of a number of scholarly studies during the recent years. Kamal Hassan presents the perspective of a Muslim. He analyses the role of a revitalized Islam as a sociopolitical force in Muslim countries. He believes that religious extremism is a threat. However, in his opinion the threat should not be considered as coming from just one religion. It should also be realized that stereotyping through media is also a problem. Islam, according to Kamal Hassan, is not a threat for the world—it is a challenge. This challenge needs to be defined and understood more clearly. Similarly further analysis is necessary to understand why Muslims, rather than people belonging to some other religion, have been depicted as a threat to the West. We expect more contributions in this area from Muslim as well as non-Muslim scholars.

Ibrahim Ragab has been writing on various aspects of Islamization of Knowledge movement. In an article published earlier in this journal he took up the issue of utilizing the existing social science knowledge. Is it possible for Muslim social scientists to benefit from the current social science literature? Should they throw

out all such knowledge as un-Islamic, and start afresh? In the present article Ibrahim Ragab examines the issue in greater depth, and shows that there is much in modern social sciences that can be used by Muslim scholars. However, this utilization has to be creative, not imitative. This issue needs to be debated further because the case for rejecting the present social sciences has not been fully presented. There is also a need to present specific instances or case studies, of "creative" engagement.

Shaheen Majid and Alfia Abazova have come up with an interesting study regarding computer literacy among International Islamic University Malaysia academic staff. The authors show how important it is for educators to develop computing skills. The research indicates that while the level of computer literacy is low, and the use of computers is very limited, the faculty is highly motivated to learn more about computing. We would like to publish more empirical studies on such problems of Muslim societies.

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