

MUSLIMS IN MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "MUSLIMS IN MULTICULTURAL BRITAIN" submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY is my own work and has not been previously submitted for the award of any other degree of this or any other university.

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To my beloved

Daddy, Mummy and Sony

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATCSA	Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BMMS	British Muslims Monthly Survey
BNP	British National Party
BTP	British Transport Police
COIM	Council of Imams and Mosques
COM	Council of Mosques
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CRER	Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations
CRONEM	Centre for Research on Nationalism, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUMAP	EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme
EUMC	European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia
FAIR	Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism

FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IHRC	Islamic Human Rights Commission
IPPR	Institute for Public Policy Research
IRA	Irish Republican Army
MCB	Muslim Council of Britain
MOD	Ministry of Defence police
NF	National Front
NHS	National Health Service
NNF	New National Front
ONS	Office of the National Statistics
PCC	Press Complaints Commission
PET	Preventing Terrorism Together
UK	United Kingdom
UKACIA	UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs
UMO	Union of Muslim Organizations of UK and Ireland
USA	United States of America

PREFACE

Identity issues and claims hold considerable attention in the contemporary world, both in the realm of theory and practical policies. Such issues, claims and counter claims arise out of diversity which characterizes all states and societies though of course the extent of that diversity is itself diverse. Diversity per say does not presuppose conflict but it does provide possible arenas of clash. Since all modern societies have organized their political life and activity through the state how states address the question of diversity and claims emerging from it becomes crucial. According to Charles Taylor 'modern identity is inherently political because it ultimately demands recognition.' And settling this demand for recognition arguably has been and continues to be a major preoccupation of the contemporary liberal democratic states. Francis Fukuyama in a recent article has argued that 'modern identity politics springs from a hole in the political theory underlying modern liberal democracy' (Fukuyama: 2006). This study attempts to identify that lacuna by focusing on the Muslim community's experiences in Britain. It is in this context that it revisits the multicultural debate and its functioning in Britain.

The study is based on the following hypotheses - that the government policy of multiculturalism has empowered Muslims and made them more assertive in Britain; though far right groups like the British National Party (BNP), have intensified their anti- Muslim rhetoric following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7 in London, but they have been unable to convert this to concrete electoral gain at the national level; the curtailment of civil liberties and newly enacted anti-terrorism laws particularly after 9/11, which specifically target British Muslims heighten their sense of identification with the community making integration difficult.

In Europe, after France and Germany, Britain is home to the greatest number of Muslims. They are the second largest religious community after Christians. The first chapter of the study begins with a historical account of Muslim migration to Britain. Although Muslims were present in Britain from the beginning of the nineteenth century there migration increased in the post Second World War period. This

presented a new challenge to the British society. On the one hand with the influx of immigrants there were increasing reports of incidents of racial discrimination which they encountered. On the other hand as the migrants became citizens in the light of such discrimination they became concerned with ways to sustain their community life which meant they would increasingly become conscious of issues like education, would prefer to live by their religion's prescriptions, uphold their culture and traditions. Adopting multicultural policies was the British states' response, the understanding being that the society would benefit from a tapestry of differing cultures.

The Muslim community became assertive and visible only in the aftermath of Salman Rushdie's publication of *Satanic Verses*. This book offended the community's religious sentiments and succeeded in forcing open hitherto settled issues like freedom of speech, blasphemy laws and the protection of non-Christian religions in Britain. Further this chapter studies the issues like education, political engagement and the acceptance of community practices which in case of Muslims are intimately linked to their religion. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the evolution and growth of Muslim organizations in Britain and its impact on community mobilization. By focusing on these various aspects of composition, demands and organization the attempt is to ascertain where this community stands vis-à-vis the British state.

As indicated adopting multicultural policies was one concrete response of the state to deal with the diversity and ensuing demands. The second chapter focuses on two dimensions of multiculturalism. One dimension is related to multiculturalism as understood in theory. It tries to discern whether and how multiculturalism takes care of liberalism's group right deficit. In this context various positions of theorists like Parekh, Kymlicka, Taylor, Halev and Modood are discussed. Thereafter the chapter traces the evolution of British multiculturalism policy in particular. It provides an overview of the existing socio-cultural situation in Britain by going back to the 1950s and 60s, which occasioned the adoption of this policy. Multiculturalism of late, however, has been coming under the scanner for having undermined commonality that binds diverse groups to each other and ultimately holds the state

together. A widespread feeling that common values necessary for a functioning society are undermined by an excessive tolerance towards cultural diversity is gaining ground especially after the onslaught of terror attacks involving British citizens of immigrant Muslim origin. The chapter focuses on some of the criticisms leveled against multiculturalism. For states that have adopted multicultural policies the possibility of abandoning them would be slim and possibly create more problem than what they set to rectify.

The critique and attack on multiculturalism as a policy and Muslims as a community reached a strident note post-11 September terror attacks on American soil and subsequent terror attacks in Spain and London. Enoch Powell's apprehension vis-à-vis the immigrants appeared to be gaining greater acceptance. In today's world of unparalleled opportunities of communication and interaction media representation of events plays a vital role in forming, shaping and reinforcing public opinion. The third chapter thus begins with a discussion of media representation of Muslims and Islamic practices in Britain. The treatment of Islam in the British media has been by and large negative reinforcing Islam's image as a one dimensional and monolithic religion that poses a threat to Western democratic values. The media in other words reinforces Islamophobic attitudes in the majority community. The tendency is to elevate the fringe figures of the community to a place of mainstream importance, by projecting their extremist views while neglecting the opinion of learned scholars among Muslims. This chapter also analyses the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Britain. It details the definitional aspect to understand the phenomenon of Islamophobia and by citing various reports and studies argues that in the aftermath of September 11, Islamophobic attitudes in Britain are on the rise. Another important dimension that this chapter addresses is the stand of extreme right wing parties such as the British National Party. The anti-Muslim rhetoric of the BNP following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7 in London has predictably reached a high, but especially after the Northern riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford it has been able to make inroads into local councils in the form of electoral gains. The final section of the chapter explores the contentious issue of terrorism and anti-terror laws and its impact on Muslims in particular. Britain has been toying with the anti-terror laws since .The 2001 Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA), passed by

Britain is analyzed to show the curtailment of civil liberties and how it has negatively affected the Muslim community. This section concludes by highlighting how the political loyalty Muslim community has always been questioned and how this question continues to trouble them post 9/11 and 7/7.

Taking cue from the analysis made in the previous chapters the last chapter attempts to make a short summary of the major arguments. It concludes that with the introduction of multicultural policy Muslims in Britain emerged as a powerful component of the social and political system of the country. Muslims have been able to maintain their identity and many of their demands have been fulfilled by the British Government. However, the journey has been far from smooth and the association of community members with terror against state and innocent civilians whatever be the provocation the journey is likely to get tougher.

CHAPTER I

Muslims in Britain

Muslims in Britain

Introduction

The Muslim community in Europe in general and Britain in particular are increasingly being looked upon as a community intent on maintaining its identity and in the process taking extreme steps if so required. Reservations are being aired whether Muslims can be full members of liberal democratic societies given their strong communal identity. Some scholars like Anne Phillips (1991) have pointed out that participation in the democratic process mandates a capacity to distance oneself from one's identity, to put oneself in the position of another. Genuine dialogue is only possible thereafter. However, Muslim individual identity for a majority of them is encompassed in their community identity from which they do not wish to distance themselves. Does the rising assertiveness of the Muslims indicate the beginning of their dialogue or its breakdown? Before trying to delve into these complexities this chapter studies how Muslims became part of Britain, how and when they migrated, the aspirations they had and the situation they encountered.

Migration of people is a global phenomenon. It denotes the movement of human beings from one locality to another, often over long distances. Migrations are caused by push and pull factors. A push factor relates to the country the person is migrating from. It is generally a problem which results in people wanting to migrate. Push factors range from political dissent to natural disasters. In the past, it was largely military operations, political oppression and religious persecution which caused major exodus of people. A pull factor relates to the country a person migrates into. It is a positive factor, with a strong economic component which attracts the migrants, as they look for better life prospects than their homeland can offer. Impact of migration is far reaching and it is not only on the migrants but also on the society at large both in the place of origin and destination. Ravenstein (1885 and 1889) pioneered the theoretical analysis of migration and according to him 'movement is mainly to the centres of trade and commerce which accelerate over time as a result

of the increase in the means of locomotion'. Everett Lee (1964) observes that migration involves 'a set of factors at origin and destination and a set of intervening obstacles and a series of personal factors'.

By and large the onus of adapting to the new environment is on those who migrate, of course the receiving state may create conducive conditions for mutual accommodation and adjustment. This process, however, as the following pages reveal is neither quick nor straightforward. The present chapter's aim is to comprehend the conditions of Muslim migration to Britain. It will also focus on the various challenges they faced and trace the increasing assertiveness of this community since the Rushdie Affair which subsequently generated discussions on freedom of speech, blasphemy laws and the protection of non-Christian religions in Britain.

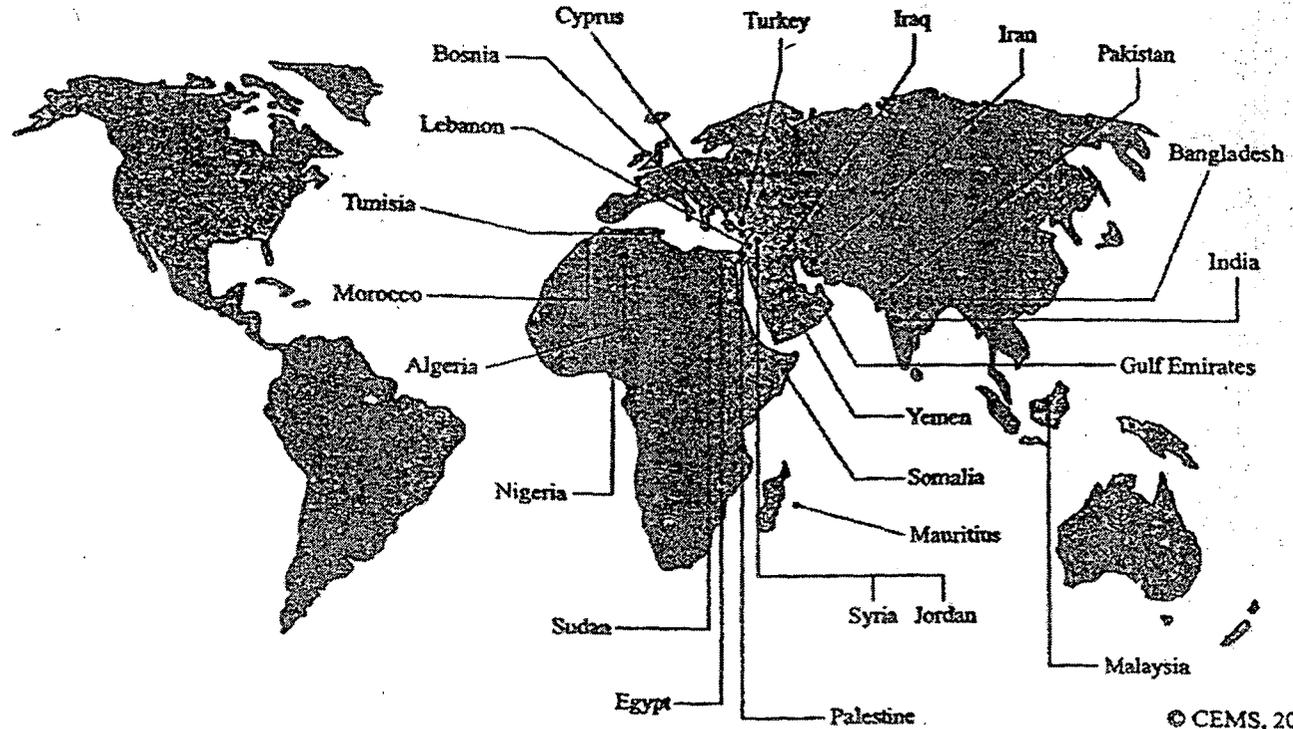
1.1 Muslim Migration to Britain

Muslim presence in Britain can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century when a small number of Muslim seamen and traders from the Middle East began settling around the major British ports (Peach 2005: 18). For example, Yemeni Muslims settled in South Shields and established a Muslim community there. Similar Yemeni and Somali communities grew around the ports of Liverpool and Cardiff. Although Muslims in Britain are associated first and foremost with a South Asian background, a Moroccan merchant community was already well established by the end of the nineteenth century with its own *halal* butchers and places of worship (Ansari 2004: 2). This clearly shows that Muslims in Britain can trace their origin to diverse historical settings with distinct cultures and languages, even coming from places, that at times have been politically antagonistic to Britain. Contrary to stereotypical and popular perceptions of Muslims as a monolithic 'fundamentalist' group, one of the most striking aspects of Muslims living in Britain today is their diversity. This is clearly reflected in the wide range of ethnic backgrounds that they encompass, and is directly related to the fact that Muslim migration to Britain from many different parts of the world has been an important feature of the last one hundred and fifty years. Although Muslim migration to Britain began from the nineteenth century, the immediate opportunity was brought

about in 1869 by the opening of the Suez Canal. This facilitated increased trade between Britain and its colonies, and a contingent force of labourers to work on the ships and ports. The obvious choice of such labourers was the Yemenis. They were the first group of Muslim migrants, who arrived at the British ports of Cardiff, Liverpool, Pollockshields and London. During 1890-1903, nearly forty thousand seamen arrived on the British shores and about thirty thousand of them, spent some parts of their lives in Britain (Ataullah Siddiqui 1995). While the Muslim migration was largely due to economic reasons, a combination of complex factors led individuals to leave their homes and families and finally settle in Britain. The vast majority was in some way connected with the Empire and so came from the colonies or protected territories, such as the Aden hinterland, British Somaliland, Malaya and the Yemen (Ansari 2004: 25).

Since the Second World War Muslims have migrated to Britain in much larger numbers than before 1945, with the majority still coming from South Asia, parts of Middle East, Africa and Cyprus. This migration differs in scale and composition from those that took place earlier-not only did its volume shoot up, but also its character changed. The postwar migration to Britain from the Caribbean and the Asian subcontinent, while based on imperial ties, was very much driven by economic imperatives. The rebuilding of the war shattered economy created a demand for labour that could not be satisfied by the British population alone. The demand was particularly acute in the National Health Service (NHS), in public transport, and in many sectors of manufacturing. Qualified and unqualified labour from the Caribbean and the subcontinent, especially young single men, were invited to fill the vacancies (Modood 2005: 60). It was part of bigger global movement of labour from poor countries to the rich industrialized societies.

The post-1945 migration of Muslims to Britain can be divided into two main phases: from 1945 to the early 1970s, and from the 1973 to the present time. In the first phase the economic strategy of capital investment and expansion of production in Britain called for a large number of migrant workers from the less developed countries, many of them Muslims. This first phase ended and the second began with



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Muslim Migration to Britain.

the oil crisis of 1973-74, which resulted in recession leading to the restructuring of the world economy. Technological innovation also reduced the need for manual labour in manufacturing. It had a negative effect on the demand for migrant labour, and so from the early 1970s any organized form of recruitment of migrant workers, particularly from the New Commonwealth ceased (Ansari 2004: 145-146).

The economic climate in post war Britain changed rapidly. There were fewer jobs and opportunities for people compared with the early 1950s. Inevitably the government began to restrict migrant workers and in 1961, the Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed which came into force the following year. Arguably, this Act was the turning point in the growth of Muslim population in Britain (Ataullah Siddiqui 1995). It led not only to the reunion of families but also had the effect of bringing Islam consciously into the British society (Nielsen 2000: 110). Commonwealth Immigration Act 1962 was aimed to restrict the entry of migrant workers to Britain as it imposed restrictions on adults intending to work in Britain and by 1964 the Ministry of Labour stopped granting permission for the unskilled to work in Britain. The impact of this legislation was such that each single male who formerly shared a house with others, now began looking for houses for their families in a nearby neighbourhood. Once their families arrived, the immediate concern of the parents was for their children. They wanted to impart religious education by teaching the Qur'an, basic beliefs and the practices of Islam to their children. This meant allocating a house for their children's education in the neighbourhood and using the same house for the five daily prayers. Muslim dietary laws saw the development of halal butcher shops and the import of Asian spices. In this way the growth of Asian neighbourhood had begun (Ataullah Siddiqui 1995). The family reunion was thus the route as well as the cause and locus for the immigration of Islam to Britain (Nielsen 2000: 113).

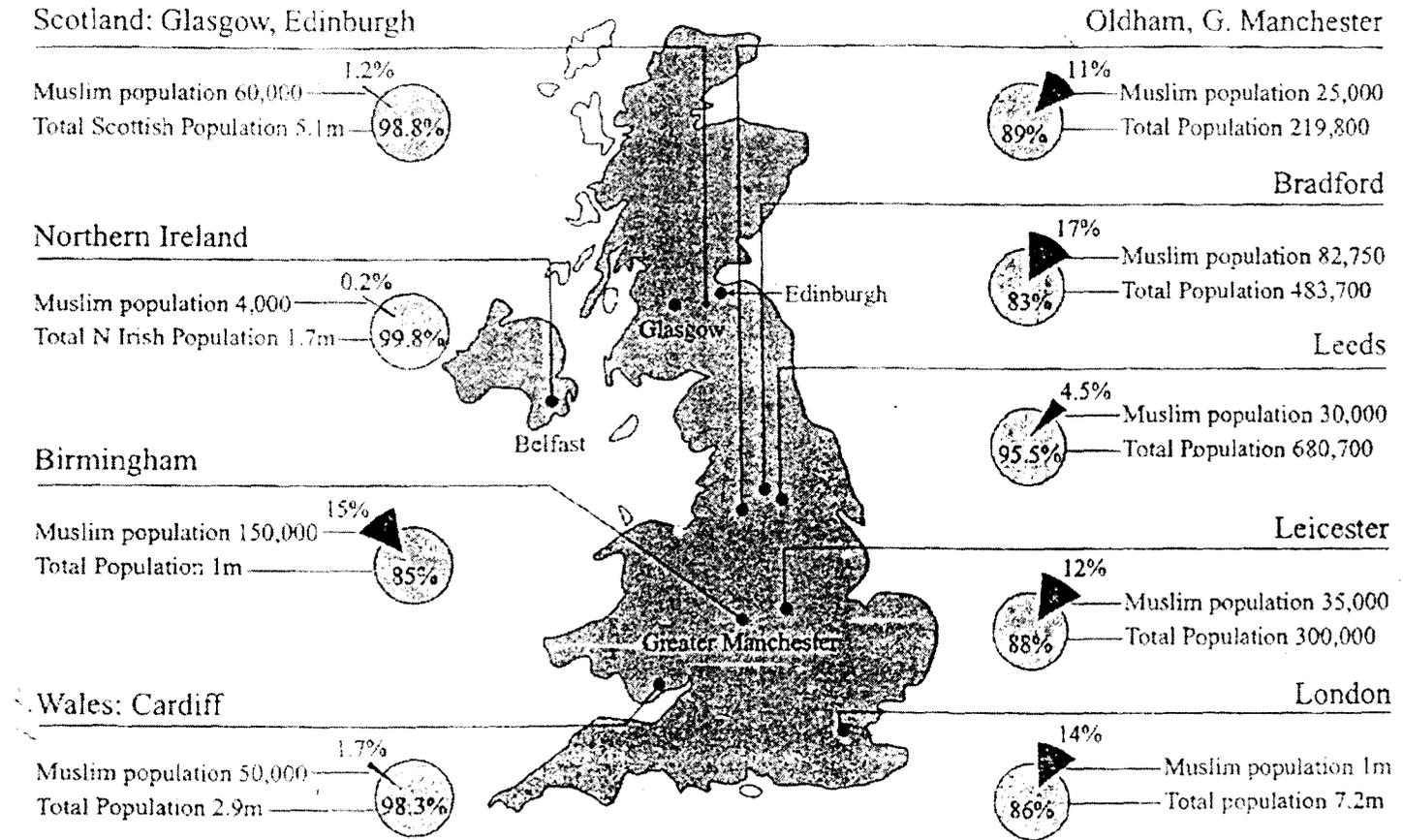
Despite the virtual halting of primary migration and even some movement back to migrants' countries of origin, the reunion of families and movement of refugees and asylum seekers has seen Britain's migrant population continuing to increase in the 1980s and 1990s. This trend is reflected in the ebb and flow of migration from South Asia, the biggest source of Muslim migration to Britain from the mid to the late

twentieth century. For Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims the combined number, according to the consecutive censuses from 1951 to 2001, rose from 5,000 in 1951 to 24,900 (1.2% British born) in 1961; there was then an unprecedented seven fold increase in this population between 1961 and 1971 to over 170,000 (23.5% British born) ; it more than doubled in the next decade to 360,000 (37.5% British born) by 1981 and then to 640,000 (47% British born) by 1991 (Lewis 1994: 15) and 917,215 (59.3% British born) according to the 2001 census (Peach 2005: 21).

The patterns of Muslim migration to Britain since 1945 suggest that the changing material circumstances of Muslim peoples from a variety of social and cultural environments have influenced their decisions to move much more than any particular aspect of their religious identity or life (Ansari 2004: 165). Taking it into consideration, Muslims migrating to Britain since the Second World War have behaved no differently from any other group of migrants, although how they viewed themselves as communities had implications for their subsequent engagement with British society. Kalim Siddiqui, looking back in the late 1980s, regarded Muslim migration as a socio-economic and cultural consequence of imperialist devastation (Kalim Siddiqui 1990).

1.2 The Size and Composition of the British Muslim Population

The size and composition of the British Muslim population have been debated ever since Muslims first made their presence felt, and especially from the early 1970s. No reliable statistics exist on religious affiliation on the national level, though, for the first time, a religious question was included in the 2001 Census. Recent surveys have suggested an increase in Britain's Muslim population throughout the 1990s. The largest group of British Muslims, South Asians predominantly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, had grown from 640,000 in 1991 to around 1 million, an increase of 36 per cent (Ansari 2002). A more definite estimate of the British Muslim population has emerged from the 2001 Census data, since the Census for the first time included a question on religious affiliation. According to the figures published by the office of the National Statistics (ONS) on 13 February 2003, the Muslim population of the UK (in April 2001) was 1.591 million (ONS: 2003; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004).



Muslim population in Britain by regions and cities (adapted from *The Guardian*, 17 June 2002).

The Muslim population of Britain is highly concentrated into a small number of large urban areas. Around two fifths of Muslims (38 per cent) live in London. After London, the regions with the next biggest share of the Muslim population are the West Midlands (14 per cent), the North West (13 per cent), and Yorkshire and the Humber (12 per cent). Even within these regions, Muslims are highly concentrated spatially. Muslims make up 8 per cent of London's population overall but 36 per cent of the Tower Hamlets and 24 per cent of the Newham populations (ONS 2004; Peach 2005). Ten of the twenty local authorities with largest totals and highest proportions of Muslims in Britain are London boroughs. Tower Hamlets in the East End of London has the highest percentage of Muslim population of all the local authorities in the UK (36 per cent) and is also the third largest in size. It is the centre of the Bangladeshi population in Britain and the borough contains nearly a quarter of the total Bangladeshi population of the UK.

Table 1: Local authorities in England with the highest proportion of Muslims

Local Authority	Number of Muslim residents	Proportion of residents who are Muslim
Tower Hamlets	71,383	36.4
Newham	47,673	24.3
Blackburn	26,670	19.4
Waltham Forest	32,904	15.1
Luton	26,955	14.6
Birmingham	140,017	14.3
Hackney	27,909	13.8
Pendle	11,986	13.4
Slough	15,895	13.6
Brent	32,301	12.3
Redbridge	28,493	11.9
Westminster	21,337	11.8
Camden	22,911	11.6
Haringey	24,379	11.3

Source: Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004

The census of 2001 showed that 71.6 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom considered themselves Christian. Muslims were the second largest religion with 2.7 per cent. Hindus accounted for 1 per cent, Sikhs for 0.6 per cent, Jews for 0.5 per cent and other religions for 0.3 per cent; just under a quarter of the population had no religion or did not state one (ONS 2004; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004). The 2001 census also showed that 68 per cent of the Muslim population was of South Asian origin. Pakistanis alone accounted for 43 per cent of the Muslim population and are the largest and the dominant individual group. Most Muslims in Britain belong to the Sunni tradition of Islam, which accounts for 90% of Muslims worldwide. Only a small proportion of British Muslims are Shi'as. Muslims in Britain are from diverse ethnic backgrounds: 43% have origins in Pakistan; 17% in Bangladesh, and 9% in India; 6% have Black origins; 4% White, and 21% other origins. Around a quarter of Muslims in Britain have origins in the Middle East and North Africa (Peach 2005).

1.3 Racial and Religious Discrimination

As a result of anti-immigrant diatribe in British society (Enoch Powell's *Rivers of Blood* speech is the classic example), the migrants encountered discrimination in matters relating to housing, employment, education and the use of public places. Initially the British government adopted an ambivalent attitude regarding discrimination. Continued segregation from the public sphere coerced the migrants to the periphery and they remained at the margins of British society. Absence of effective laws to prevent discrimination perpetuated the crisis. Eventually the British government was forced to include racial discrimination in the Statute Book as a crime.

Tariq Modood (2005) argues that anti-racist struggle in Britain has failed to take into account the existence of cultural racism, which is significant for the Asians and West Indians. It only drew a contrast between White/ European/ British and "coloured"/ black/ non-European, and was a distinction based on skin colour. A further subdivision of the coloured group into Asians and West Indians was also essential for the identification and definition of racial groups. Despite the different political and cultural histories that this cleavage represented, British anti racism,

having accepted the first opposition between black and white, continued to deny any political or anti racist strategic significance to this internal division. Modood *et al.* (1994) further argues that South Asian immigrants to Britain believed, and taught their children to believe, in the uniqueness of their culturally distinct beliefs and practices and felt that this cultural heritage was of value and under threat.

It is in this context that one should analyze the different manifestations of the Race Relations Act in Britain. The first Race Relations Act in Britain was passed 41 years ago in 1965, the second in 1968 and the third in 1976 (current Race Relations Act). The Race Relations Act deals with both direct and indirect racial discrimination. However it was felt by academics and practitioners in the field of race relations that the 1976 Act was weak because the Act considered 'Racial groups' as defined by reference to colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin (Race Relations Act 1976) and that it needed strengthening. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which came into force in April 2001, has strengthened the 1976 Act and extended it to include some public bodies and government functions that were not included in the scope of the 1976 Act. The new Act strengthens the 1976 Act in two major ways: it extends protection against racial discrimination by public authorities and it places a new, enforceable positive duty on public authorities (EUMAP 2005:269-270; Anwar 2005: 39-41). Under the 1976 Act, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)¹ was set up and now there is a network of over one hundred local Racial Equality Councils, largely funded by the CRE. Many local authorities also have their own equalities and / or race relations units. These units are expected to work more effectively under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act because of the new duties of the public authorities. The same applies to hospitals, police and government ministers. It is also expected that standards of dealing with public bodies will influence practice in the private sector (Anwar 2005).

Apart from the category of Asians and West Indians, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a third racialized grouping emerged in the public discourse as a target for racist graffiti and attacks. A group apparently suited to focus the unease evoked by

¹ The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was created by the 1976 Race Relations Act as a permanent body to enforce, review and make recommendations in relation to anti discrimination measures and to promote good race relations.

alien cultures and their seeming lack of respect for, and incompatibility with, the British way of life. This group is the Muslims who are at the heart of contemporary British and European cultural racism (Modood 1992; 2005). The Race Relations Acts of 1976 and 2000 was passed to prevent any discrimination on the basis of race in opportunities for employment and any such discrimination is now a criminal offence. Religious discrimination can take different forms beginning with religious prejudice or there may be a deliberate act of direct discrimination based on religion. Muslims are also discriminated against as a result of institutional practices or procedures that are seen as indirect discrimination. For example, BBC Radio 5 sent almost identical curriculum vitae from six fictitious candidates to fifty firms in 2004 and found that while the two candidates with “white” names were invited to interview on 23 percent of the applications, the results for those with “African” and “Muslim” names were 13 percent and 9 percent respectively.² For many Muslims, racial and religious discrimination is fact of life.

Despite the existence of legislation in Britain against racial discrimination for the last 41 years, ethnic minorities including Muslims are still victims of discrimination. The Race Relations Act of 1976 does not fully protect Muslims because religious discrimination is not unlawful in Britain. Religious discrimination was declared to be an offence as mentioned in December 2003, but that too only in the realm of employment (Modood 2005: 152). Protection on the basis of race does not address the essential problem that the Muslim face, where harassment and discrimination is related to their religious identity, the BBC exercise mentioned above is a case in point. Religious community like the Sikhs and Jews were, however, covered by the Race Relation laws as they are recognized as ‘ethnic’ groups (Baxter 2006: 170). Given the ethnic diversity of the Muslim population such recognition was not viable.³ To protect their religious identity and prevent harassment it is, therefore, necessary to basically go beyond the Race Relation Laws.

² See ‘Shocking Racism in job market’, BBC News, 12 July 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-hi/business/3885213.htm> accessed on 20th January 2007

³ The House of Lords judgment on *Mandla v. Lee* (1983) contains the fullest statement of what the law understands to be an ethnic group. Legal judgments have included Sikhs, Jews, Gypsies, Rastafarians, and others within the term, but *Nyazi v. Ryman Ltd* (1988) specifically excluded Muslims. In 1991, the Appeal Court, by a majority decision overruled the recognition of Rastafarians

Muslims are a faith community and do not fit into a strict racial definition. It is to be noted that their needs and priorities are different, more to deal with religion rather than race. According to the Race Relations Act, Muslims do not constitute an ethnic group and, therefore, in order to prove religious discrimination, Muslims have to prove that they have been discriminated against as a racial group in which their religion is a dominant factor. The victim's geographical and ethnic origin has also to be taken into consideration to establish the discrimination and this is extremely difficult. But even in this situation, a significant number of British Muslims, such as European or Afro-Caribbean Muslims could not be protected. An Asian Muslim woman, for example, can claim protection under the law to adjust her uniform or apparel in a High Street shop according to Islamic norms and most likely the employer will accept this. But, European or Caribbean Muslim women will not be able to make similar appeal. This right is granted only to women from those ethnic groups in Britain in which Muslims are a significant number. White Muslim women, for instance, had no rights in this regard, as young converts discovered (Modood 2005). Meanwhile, in Northern Ireland, religious discrimination is unlawful under the Fair Employment (Northern Ireland) Act 1989 (Anwar 2005). A close examination of this Act shows that there is nothing in it that could not be implemented in Britain for Muslims and other religious groups. In Northern Ireland the Equality Commission has very strong regulatory, investigative and enforcement powers, alongside a tribunal system, which can award unlimited levels of compensation to people who have experienced discrimination on the grounds of their religion (Ansari 2002). This anomaly in Britain could be removed if there was political will.

1.4 Rushdie Affair and British Muslims

The publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* was a watershed event in the history of British Muslims. Muslim community in Britain became more assertive of their religious identity following the controversy over *The Satanic Verses* in 1988-89. Issues such as freedom of speech, blasphemy laws and the protection of non-Christian religions in Britain were hotly debated. Bhikhu Parekh states Rushdie

as an ethnic group, and *CRE v. Precision* (1991) made it clear that direct discrimination against Muslims (as opposed to, say, Pakistanis) is not unlawful

became a 'potent symbol of the survival of the British way of life', a comment which reveals the complexity and irony of this entire situation (Parekh 2000: 303)

Various passages in the *Satanic Verses* relating to the Prophet Muhammad, his wives and the Qur'an caused deep offense to many Muslims who mobilized, especially in India, Pakistan, Britain and South Africa, to have it banned. In Britain, petitions and street marches achieved very little publicity until a copy of the novel was symbolically burned at a mass rally in Bradford on 14 January 1989. It was seized on by the press as an evidence of an "uncivilized" and "intolerant" Muslim nature. The February 1989 *fatwa* of Ayatollah Khomeini, calling for the death of Salman Rushdie, was taken as further evidence of this intolerance, which was portrayed as a worldwide Muslim threat that had infested the body Britain. Little attention was ever given to Muslims' own perceptions and feelings of offence and hurt beyond the public demonstrations. Media treatment of the Rushdie Affair, which included some irresponsible and inflammatory statements by some alleged "Muslim leaders", created or bolstered an image of a Muslim population that was homogenous in antimodern values, dangerous in its passions, posing a challenge both to nationalist ideologies of "Britishness" and to liberal notions about freedom and human rights (Asad 1990: 455-480; Modood 1990a: 143-160).

Not long after the Rushdie Affair died down, the Gulf War again focused public attention on the British Muslim population. British Muslims were portrayed generally as somehow linked to a worldwide antiwestern, Islamic fundamentalist movement; their loyalty to the allied cause against Iraq was questioned (Khanum 1991: 12-13). Since then, newspapers have given considerable attention to a great variety of Muslim-related matters. These include education, and especially the battle for government funding of the Islamic school in Brent; various mosque disputes; and almost anything to do with the so-called Muslim Parliament, which was an unsuccessful attempt under the controversial leadership of Kalim Siddiqi in the mid-1990s to unite British Muslims after the Rushdie Affair.

According to Tariq Modood, the anger against *The Satanic Verses* was not so much a Muslim response as a South Asian Muslim response. It was not the exploration of religious doubt but the lampooning of the Prophet that provoked the anger. This

sensitivity has nothing to do with Qur'anic fundamentalism but with South Asian reverence of Muhammad and cultural insecurity as experienced in Britain and even more profoundly in India (Modood 1990a). Apart from Tehran, the demonstrations in Johannesburg, Bradford, Bombay and Islamabad, were all by South Asians. Not only were there no major demonstrations in other Muslim countries, but the only country in Western Europe or North America to have seen ongoing protest was Britain. This cannot be because of the size of the Britain's Muslim population (just over a million in 1990), for there are more Muslims in France, Germany, and the United States (two to three million each in 1990). Rather Britain is the only Western country to have a significant Asian Muslim working class. Khomeini's uninvited intervention was purely political. A *fatwa* is a learned legal opinion it is not a trial, not a verdict, not a sentence. By turning it into a sentence Khomeini placed himself outside Islamic law, and though by doing so he spoke to the hearts of the many Muslims who felt despised, powerless and without recourse in law, he nevertheless in one stroke jeopardized community relations in Britain (Modood 1990b: 127-134). However, another study by Lewis (1994: 170) points out that a local radio poll in Bradford carried out in 1991 'suggested that 90 per cent of Muslims were against the *fatwa*'.

1.5 Muslims, Incitement to Hatred and Blasphemy Law

The ensuing crisis generated by the controversy over *The Satanic Verses* opened up Pandora's Box in the British society. There was a major debate about the right and wrongs of this controversy and what it meant for freedom, racial equality, and multiculturalism. The 1980s saw Muslims in Britain struggling for official acknowledgement of religious rights against a backdrop of increasing anti-Muslim sentiment in wider British society. This peaked during the Rushdie affair, when British Muslims, outraged by the perceived blasphemous content of *The Satanic Verses*, petitioned the government to ban it. The demand for the banning of the book was opposed by the majority of the British establishment as well as the public at large, who saw it as an attack on the principles of freedom of speech, thought and expression. Muslims were condemned by the more extreme elements as 'intellectual hooligans', and their actions were compared with those of the Nazis (Baxter 2006).

The blasphemy law in Britain comes under the legal provision of Criminal Libel Act 1819. According to it, blasphemy constitutes ‘the publication of contemptuous, reviling, scurrilous or ludicrous matter relating to God as defined by the Christian religion, Jesus, the Bible or the Book of Common Prayer, intending to wound the feelings of Christians or to excite contempt and hatred against the Church of England or to promote immorality’.⁴ Blasphemy laws do not protect the non-Anglican Christian denominations or any of the other faiths communities in Britain. Nor do they protect against incitement of religious hatred directed at individuals (including Anglicans) or against harassment, violence and/or criminal damage to property resulting from such incitement.

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) also acknowledges the need for changes in law concerning blasphemy. At present, only Christianity is protected under such law (or perhaps the Anglican Church only). The CRE and others believe that either the blasphemy law should be extended to other faiths or that it should be abolished altogether. Many Muslims prefer the former option, since this, they say, would remove *The Satanic Verses* from British bookshops. In its Second Review of the Race Relations Act 1976, the Commission concluded that

while the blasphemy law is concerned with certain forms of attacks on *religion* as such, a law of incitement to religious hatred is concerned with stirring up hatred against persons, identified by their religion. Arguments that freedom of speech should include the right to stir up hatred against persons inevitably seem limp, and the more so when this is done on grounds of religion, since the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice is itself recognised in international law. No country can be said to guarantee the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice if, at the same time, it permits others lawfully to stir up hatred against those doing just that. (CRE 1992: 60)

With the support of Muslim organizations and Muslim newspapers, the Commission for Racial Equality has advocated measures to redress the situation. These include a

⁴ For more details on this see Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) website <http://www.fairuk.org/publications> accessed on 5th January, 2007.

call for legislators to consider enacting special laws (as in Northern Ireland) against religious discrimination and incitement to religious hatred, similar to existing laws that pertain to all of the United Kingdom with regard to racial discrimination and incitement to racial hatred (CRE: 1992). Britain is in an anomalous position among liberal democracies in confining its group libel laws only to racial groups and in not including religious groups, whereas France, Germany, the United States and Canada cover a wide spectrum of social groups than those defined by race. In each of these countries religious groups are protected, and in Germany the law extends to cover cultural associations and political parties (Modood 2005: 114-117). The call for the banning of *The Satanic Verses* and a change in the blasphemy law did not succeed because Muslims failed to present their case in ways that were accessible to the non-Muslim majority.

The law on incitement to hatred in the United Kingdom has developed since the *Satanic Verses* affair. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the concept of a “racially aggravated” offense that covers the intention of an act and its consequences as well. It involved, amongst other things, an amendment to the section of the 1986 Public Order Act that deals with threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour. Although Jews and Sikhs enjoy protection from this offence, the protection is not extended to multi-ethnic religious communities. Thus, Christians, Muslims and most other faith communities in Britain remained unprotected from this offence. In autumn 2001, as a consequence of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA), the phrase ‘racially aggravated’ was expanded to ‘racially or religiously aggravated’. The great significance of this was not immediately appreciated for the principal debates and headlines were around the less important question of whether or not to amend the section of the Public Order Act dealing with incitement. The significance began to be apparent in summer 2003 with a landmark ruling at the High Court. The court handed down a judgement which involved drawing a distinction between (a) insulting the tenets of a religion and (b) insulting and intimidating its followers (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004: 31-34). The latter – ‘threatening, abusing or insulting, within the hearing or sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress thereby’ – may now be considered a religiously aggravated offence under the Public Order Act 1986, as

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amended by the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Moreover, the High Court made clear that the amended legislation is not concerned narrowly with insulting people with a religious affiliation. Much more widely, if 'any right thinking member of society' is likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress by an attack on members of a specific religion, a public order offence has *prima facie* been committed. Between December 2001 and March 2003, there were 18 prosecutions in England and Wales of religiously aggravated offences, of which ten involved Muslim victims. The others were: two Sikh victims, two Hindu victims, one Jewish victim, one Jehovah's Witness victim, one Christian victim and one victim whose religion was not stated. (See: Crown Prosecution Service, Annual Report 2002-2003).

In October 2003, the Attorney General's powers to challenge unduly lenient sentences were extended to include racially and religiously aggravated offences, following a recommendation by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate. In July 2004, the Home Secretary announced the Government's intention to introduce legislation to outlaw incitement to religious hatred⁵. This resulted in introducing a new bill Racial and Religious Hatred Bill 2006 which received Royal Assent to become *the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006 (c.1)* (HMSO 2006). The Act contains following sections to amend the Public Order Act 1986: (HMSO 2006: 3).

- Section 29A
 - Meaning of "religious hatred"
 - In this Part "religious hatred" means hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief.

- Section 29B:
 - (1) A person who uses threatening words or behaviour, or displays any written material which is threatening, is guilty of an offence if he intends thereby to stir up religious hatred

⁵ See Home Office, "Sideline the Extremists – Home Secretary", Press Release 222/2004, 7 July 2004, available at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=993 accessed on 5 January, 2007.



The Act extends the provisions entailed in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to multiethnic religious communities, and thereby closes a lacuna in the law creating a hierarchy of protection for different faith groups.

1.6 Muslim Identity Issues

Yael Tamir (1993) argues that the concept of welfare state has not only led to a normative, but also to a cultural bias. Liberals, fascinated by the ideal of welfare state, abandoned the notion of the minimal state and replaced it with that of a caring state. This caring state having acquired the character of a community, shared an ethos of a common past and a collective future. Liberals claimed that, in spite of its communal features, the welfare state can adopt a neutral standpoint regarding culture thus allowing all its members an equal chance to pursue their particular cultural allegiances. Unfortunately this claim entails a fallacy, as the chances of members of minority groups to promote their cultural life are more restricted than those of the majority. According to Tamir, continued adherence to the notion of cultural neutrality prevents the modern welfare state from acknowledging the disadvantages suffered by minorities, and the need to ensure them special rights and protection. It is in this context that education, political engagement/ representation and community practices become important in terms of identity maintenance of Muslims in the contemporary British society.

1.6.1 Education

Education is crucial to integration and social cohesion in a diverse multicultural and multi-faith society (EU Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (EUMAP) 2005: 104). Education represents a major site of struggle for equality of opportunity and the assertion of a distinct identity for British Muslims. It was over education that Muslims became increasingly vocal in raising their demands from the early 1980s. It is on educational issues that Muslims in Britain have been most successful in having many of their needs recognized in the face of considerable opposition from broad sections of British society (Ansari 2004: 298-299) Muslims began to express unease with state provision of education in the 1960s. A two-pronged approach was adopted. First, supplementary schools were set up to provide religious instruction

within the communities themselves. Second, organizations like Muslim Educational Trust, Muslim Parents Association in Bradford (Jenkins: 2002) were established which concerned only with the education of Muslims. These operate across a spectrum of issues from the provision of Islamic education in a variety of forms in state schools, to the production of Islamic knowledge and research. Some organizations helped to finance and manage the establishment of independent 'Muslim schools' (i.e. schools with an Islamic ethos) as an alternative to the state system, offering academic and vocational qualifications in religious and secular studies.

The state education system in Britain during the 1960s followed a policy of assimilation. It did not cater to the special needs of different communities who migrated to Britain. The academic attainment levels of many Muslim children remained abysmally low and their general progress was unsatisfactory. They generally lagged behind both their white peers and many other religious/ethnic minorities, in particular Hindus and Sikhs (Ansari 2004: 302-322). In the 1990s, the gap between Muslim pupils and the rest persisted. Indeed, the overall gap in educational achievements had widened between Indian and white children on the one hand, and Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African-Caribbean children on the other (Ansari 2002: 21-22). Yet it has not just been the poor academic performance of their children that concerns Muslim parents. They question the values imparted in the state school environment, and whether there were aspects of disadvantage and discrimination that affected their children's capacity to build a positive sense of their identity. By the 1990s Muslims had become more assertive about what they wanted from the educational system. Those who were disillusioned with state provision, and had the means, established independent Muslim schools, Islamia School in Brent which was founded in 1983 and Feversham College in Bradford, in which Islam permeated the curriculum and established the schools' ethos (Fetzer and Soper 2005: 43-46). The government's refusal to give state funding to Muslim schools, while voluntary-aided status was granted to the schools of other religious minorities, convinced Muslims that they were being unfairly treated.

The 1944 Educational Act in Britain allowed church schools to remain under church control while they would receive the bulk of the running costs from public funds. By the mid-1980s, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church each had over 2000 such 'voluntary aided' schools, while the Jewish and the Methodist had a few dozen each. However, when the Muslim Parents' Association of Bradford in 1983 applied for five local schools with a large majority of Muslim pupils, to be made into 'voluntary aided' schools, they were flatly rejected (Nielsen 1992: 57; Ansari 2004: 326). The debate over Islamic schools demonstrates how the extension of religious education laws to the Muslim community can generate resistance before being finally accepted. Under British law any religious organization or school of thought has the right to create private schools (Cesari 2004: 73). To be accorded the status of "Voluntary-Aided School", however is a different matter. To receive the State funding that voluntary-aided school status confers, the school must both conform to a state issued curriculum and be open to all students. Yusuf Islam, a.k.a folk singer Cat Stevens, was one of the first to get involved in the Muslim fight for state authorization. The government several times refused funding to the schools he founded, on the basis of arguments that had never been applied in other minority cases.⁶

Schools and education has been a field of much Muslim mobilization over the past twenty years or so in Britain. Most concerns and actions have aimed to ensure that Muslim pupils need not act in ways, or participate in activities, contrary to their and their parents' religious beliefs and cultural traditions. Key areas of concern for Muslim Parents include: (Jenkins 2002; Ansari 2004: 302-334; Fetzer and Soper 2005: 39-43; EUMAP 2005: 106-160)

- Preference for single-sex education, especially for girls
- Modesty in dress and in physical education activities (such as swimming, showers, and changing rooms) again, especially for girls. All schools in Britain have been sent guidelines by the Department for Education and Employment urging that

⁶ Some of the arguments cited include the idea that state aided schools must provide for the development of critical and analytical thinking (which Islamic schools, according to this argument, fail to do); and the idea that just because other religions can claim this privilege does not mean that the Muslim minority is equally entitled- particularly as state policy has leaned toward phasing out of such schools.

schools be sensitive to making “arrangements for Muslim girls, who are required by their religion to dress modestly, providing they wear appropriate clothing in school colours.” However, cases still regularly arise of schools at which Muslim girls are told to remove their *hijabs* (headscarves).

- Prayer times and religious holidays in the school timetable and calendar
- *Halal* food in school cafeterias
- Sensitivity to the interests of parents in aspects of curriculum, including sex education, forms of art, dance and music, and religious education
- Exemption from school fundraising activities involving lotteries and gambling
- Recruitment of more staff members and governors of schools from minority/Muslim communities

Such concerns for establishing sensitivities, accommodations, and provisions concerning Islam in the educational systems has led Muslim organizations to call for state support for separate Islamic schools. In 1997, when the Commission’s report was published (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 1997), there were no state-funded Muslim schools. Since then, five Muslim schools have become state-funded. The Islamia Primary School in Brent, London, became Britain’s first state-funded Muslim school in 1998, and was followed by Al Furqan Primary in Birmingham the same year, Feversham College Secondary school in Bradford in September 2001 and Al Hijrah Secondary in Birmingham in September 2002 (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004: 49). A further school – Gatton Primary School in Wandsworth, south-west London joined the state sector in September 2004 and plans have been approved for a school in Leicester ((EUMAP 2005: 124). There are currently about 120 Muslim schools in the UK, all of which – apart from those mentioned above– are funded by parents and the community. There are about 750,000 Muslim children in the UK. About one per cent attend Muslim schools and 0.5 per cent are in non-Muslim private schools. The vast majority are in the mainstream state sector (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004: 50).

The community cohesion reports into the disorders in northern cities in summer 2001, together with the Ouseley report on Bradford, (Bradford District Race Review Team 2001; British Muslims Monthly Survey (BMMS), September 2001) have not

helped key debates, for they implied or claimed that Muslim schools would be unacceptably divisive (Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) 2002; Runnymede Trust 2002; 2004). Muslim schools have been perceived as a source of the problem of divided cities, cultural backwardness, riots and lack of Britishness and breeding ground for militant Islam (CRE 2005). Garrod (2003: 33) also makes the point that Sir Herman Ouseley, former Head of the Commission for Racial Equality has said that single faith schools pose a significant problem and can add significantly to the separation of communities. It is also criticized on the ground that the social and cultural cohesion of British citizens is not best served by the state funding of faith schools but by enriching the school curriculum with the wealth and diversity of the various faiths (Gokulsing 2006). Also they muddied the issues by failing to distinguish between state schools that are secular in their ethos but happen to have high numbers of Muslim pupils as against voluntary-aided schools that are formally committed to Islamic values and which aim to provide an Islamic ethos. The issues have been further muddied by the misleading term 'monocultural schools' to describe state schools with high numbers of Muslim pupils. Of nearly 7,000 state faith schools in England, 4,716 are State-funded Church of England schools; 2,110 are Catholic; 33 are Jewish; two are Sikh, one Greek Orthodox and one Seventh Day Adventist. The Jewish community in Britain numbers just under 260,000 and the Sikh community just under 330,000 – compared with a Muslim population of 1.6 million. The disparity between numbers in the population and numbers of faith-based schools in the state education system continues to be a source of great grievance (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004: 53).

With the continuing disproportionate under-achievement of Muslim children, the complex issue of adequate and appropriate language instruction and acquisition, because of its implications for the learning process, continues to generate controversy, as does the matter of school-parent interaction. Much, therefore, still needs to be addressed. Despite such issues Muslims have achieved state funding for schools, even though there are only five which currently receive it. The government's decision is the result of protracted struggle by Muslims for the last fifteen years. It is going to be a contentious issue in the future with such trenchant criticism levelled against state funding.

1.6.2 Muslim Political Engagement in Britain

For a minority community, political engagement and representation acts as determining factors in accommodating their various demands relating to social, cultural and economic. The case of British Muslims is no different and by actively participating in the political process of the country, they can highlight those issues which affect them and claim for recognition from the majority. Growing numbers of Muslims have come to regard formal political mechanisms as an effective way of getting their problems addressed, if not solved. Their involvement has also been motivated by the belief that the values of equality and justice, which are highly regarded in Islam, might be better promoted through the application of democratic strategies (Ansari 2002). In contemporary Britain, the level of political incorporation of Muslims in mainstream political processes has been less than that of the majority population (Purdam 2001).

Until the 1970s it was ethnicity and culture, rather than religion, which dominated the way in which Muslims entered the public sphere. As agendas widened in the 1980s, Muslims participated more extensively in the public sphere but still on the basis of distinct community organizations, whose establishment was at times encouraged by the state as part of the desire to reflect Britain's emerging multicultural, plural society. A number of citywide Muslim bodies, constituted in the early 1980s, were supported by their local councils through grants. These organizations exercised their strength in local politics to achieve agreement on specific issues through negotiation and compromise. Muslim organizations mushroomed, coming together from time to time to lobby local authorities to change policy and take action on particular areas of concern (Ansari 2004: 234-239). They realized that, for some issues, local efforts were insufficient and they had to apply political pressure at the national level to make an impact. The campaign against proposals to abolish exemptions to regulations governing slaughter of animals for food, and the debate on religious matters addressed in the 1988 Education Reform Act, were some of the first attempts at national coordination. By the mid-1980s, an active involvement in local politics was developing as younger Muslims realized

that lack of participation was detrimental to Muslim interests. Their involvement grew, and alliances were developed with mainstream parties (Ansari 2002; 2004).

Muslim political participation has taken a variety of forms: voting, party membership, and standing as candidates for election. The first indicator of their participation is the extent to which Muslims have been registered to vote. The number of registered voters increased from around two-thirds in the 1960s to three quarters in the 1970s. Reasons for early 'non-registration' included language difficulties, fear of harassment and racial attacks from the far right groups, and of visits from the immigration authorities, who could identify Asians from their names on the electoral register. By 1991, only 15 per cent of South Asian Muslims were not registered. Relatively fewer Pakistanis and Bangladeshis – the predominant Muslim groups in Britain – turned out at the 1997 general elections to cast a vote (76 per cent and 74 per cent, compared with 82 per cent of Indians and 79 per cent of white people), perhaps indicating a greater degree of political alienation. However, the turnout among South Asian Muslims reflects an encouraging level of political participation (Anwar 1996: 141).

The available evidence suggests that British Muslims have not voted on the basis of 'religious' allegiances alone. Successive general election results showed that Muslims did not simply vote for Muslim candidates. From 1974 onwards, the majority of British Muslims have supported the Labour Party. Muslims are loyal to the Labour Party because they believe it to be for the working class and also the Labour Party is far less racist in both attitude and practice than the other parties, particularly the Conservative Party (Purdam 2001). Labour policies on employment and services have resonated with Muslim ideas on these issues. Nevertheless, analysis shows that Pakistani support for the Labour Party has fallen from over 80 per cent in the 1970s to just over 50 per cent in the 1990s (Anwar 1996: 123). More affluent Muslims have switched their allegiance to the Conservatives. The importance placed on self-employment, home ownership and family life by many first-generation Muslims, resonates with the philosophy of the Conservative Party. Also, some Muslims have become disenchanted with the failure of the Labour Party to represent their interests and respond to their demands – for example, the national

Labour Party's lack of support for Muslim protests against *The Satanic Verses*, and the support of some Labour Party MPs for Israel (British Muslims Monthly Survey (BMMS) 2001). In the 2001 general election, only one of the seven Muslim Labour candidates made any gains, as opposed to five of the eight Muslim Conservatives. However, by the late 1990s, an estimated 90 per cent of Muslim political party membership was still in the Labour Party (Purdam 2001).

British Muslim participation in national mainstream politics has grown steadily since the 1970s. A record 53 Muslim candidates stood in the 2001 general election, a sea-change from the 1970s and 1980s, and a substantial improvement even on the 1990s.⁷ For the first time in history, a Muslim, Mohammad Sarwar, was elected from a Scottish constituency to the British Parliament in 1997. There are, at present, two Muslims who are MPs and one who is a Member of the European Parliament (Bashir Khanbhai, Conservative, Eastern Region); and there are four Muslim peers (Lord Ahmed, Lord Ali, Lord Patel and Baroness Uddin). Participation in local politics has expanded even more sharply. The rate of increase of Muslim councillors was slow and erratic, but a breakthrough took place in the late 1980s: 160 Muslim local councillors (153 Labour, 6 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative) were elected in 1996 and by 2001 this figure had risen to 217. In terms of party affiliations, however, a significant change had occurred: the number of Labour councillors had increased only by eight, the Liberal Democrat ranks increased by 21 and the Conservatives by 22. These councillors represented areas with high Muslim concentrations, such as London, Birmingham and Bradford, and were predominantly male. By 1996, London had 49 Muslim councillors. This figure rose to 63 in 2001 (Purdam 2001).

However, while Muslim influence and involvement with mainstream parties at the grassroots level gradually increased by the late 1990s there had still been no Muslim leaders of local councils, and only a handful of deputy leaders. Some councillors occupied high-profile but largely ceremonial roles such as Mayorships, others have filled positions with arguably little real power, despite their experience of local politics (Anwar 1996: 127) Discriminatory attitudes have played a part in this.

⁷ Twenty-three Muslim prospective parliamentary candidates stood for election in 1997, up from only 11 in 1992, *Q-News*, 14 March 1997, p. 16.

Muslims have faced resistance in selection processes because of negative stereotyping, including their assumed lack of professionalism and ideological commitment to democratic practices. Muslim networking has been seen as undemocratic, and Muslims have been accused of opportunism, illegal recruiting practices, bribery, corruption and using politics for personal gain, though there is little evidence to show that their conduct is any more open to suspicion than that of their non-Muslim counterparts (Purdam 2001).

Muslim councillors have been like typical politicians in Britain, predominantly middle-aged and male, belonging to economic, occupational and educational elites (Purdam 2000: 47-64). There has been considerable variation among Muslim councillors regarding the significance of religious practice in their lives; many have described themselves as 'secular Muslims' (Purdam 2001). For example, they rarely go to the mosque, certainly much less than recent estimates for the wider Muslim community, something that perhaps reflects their desire to move the communal focus away from the mosque to the wider institutions in society (Modood *et al* 1997). The main British political parties appear reluctant to advance ethnic minority (including Muslim) participation beyond certain 'acceptable limits'. They have acknowledged that Muslims have the potential to influence electoral outcomes in a number of constituencies, but the fear of a 'white backlash' has discouraged these parties from selecting Muslim parliamentary candidates (Purdam 1996: 139-142). Consequently, Muslims feel betrayed.

Out of 77 minority candidates who stood in the 2001 general election, 24 were Muslim, mostly in unwinnable constituencies, and of the 12 ethnic minority candidates elected to Parliament, only two are Muslim, both from constituencies with large concentrations of Muslims, thereby reinforcing the argument about increasing 'political ghettoization' (Saggar 2001). Yet, despite this, Muslim membership of all the mainstream political parties, especially in constituencies with high Muslim populations, seems to be increasing. Many Muslims have decided that they need to engage with wider institutions to secure their own rights and those of their families. But Muslim politicians have not been a homogeneous group in terms of countries of origin, generation, ideological tendencies and attitude towards

'Muslim' demands. They are aware that they have been elected to represent *all* their constituents. Khalid Mahmood, on his election as MP for Birmingham Perry Barr in 2001, stated that he was 'first and foremost' a representative of all his constituents. While stating that he would look 'especially at the underachievement of ethnic minority children in the education system' as well as 'speaking out on human rights issues ... in Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Chechnya', he insisted that his focus would not only be on Muslim issues, but on the concerns of all his constituents (Chapman 2001).

Although many British Muslims have demonstrated their commitment to the principles of a democratic, pluralist state and society, others have supported 'withdrawal into cultural ghettos', with still others keen to 'initiate mass conversion to Islam' and, if possible, have the *Sharia* (Islamic legal traditions) incorporated into the legal framework for Muslims in British society. In the early 1990s, the Muslim Parliament, founded by Kalim Siddiqui, suggested the creation of a separate political system running parallel to the dominant one. Any attempt to work through, within or in cooperation with the establishment, Siddiqui believed, was bound to fail in the long run.⁸ The Muslim Parliament, considered too radical and too separatist by many Muslims, only attracted support among a small minority of Britain's Muslims. Hizb-ut- Tahrir (Akthar 2005: 165-176) and Al-Muhajiroun (The Emigrants), (Connor 2005: 119-135) again marginal in terms of support among British Muslims, are two religio-political organizations that have gone further in their aims. Their key objective is:

'to change the current corrupt society and transform it... by establishing an Islamic state (not just in Britain but all over the world ...) in which the Sharia would be implemented in its entirety'.

According to them, since the democratic system is 'based on the creed of separating religion from life', it is un-Islamic, (Akthar 2005; Connor 2005) and political participation in general, in a democratic but non-Islamic state, is forbidden to Muslims (Bleher 2001). Nevertheless, most Islamic groups in Britain seem to agree

⁸ See the Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought website <http://www.islamicthought.org> accessed on 22nd January 2007.

that Muslims must participate in British political life and regard the election of Muslim candidates as a positive achievement. As a result, there is high engagement of Muslims in civic and political arenas of Britain and they have also contributed immensely to the enrichment of British society. They have been traditionally associated with the British Labour Party but the policies adopted by the government are not in sync with the aspirations of Muslims, which nowadays advocate a diluted version of integration through highlighting policies such as 'community cohesion' and the highly arbitrary and controversial term 'Britishness' (Modood Winter 2004-05; Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) 2005).

1.6.3 Muslim Community Practices

For the Muslim communities in Britain there are many other areas of concern for recognition and public accommodation of specific practices, values, and traditional institutions which have been voiced or defended following some form of public condemnation. In recent years, cases have arisen in which these issues were debated in court, in Parliament, in local government, or in the media (Charlton and Kaye 1985:490-503; Pearl 1987: 161-169; Nielsen 1988: 53-77; Parekh 1991: 183-204; Parekh 1994: 289-308; Parekh 1995a: 203-227; Vertovec and Peach 1997:1-29) These cases have dealt with the following kinds of concerns:

- Polygamy, practiced by some Muslim communities. Polygamous marriages are, on the whole, banned for persons domiciled in Britain.
- *Talaq*, a form of Islamic divorce initiated by men. The call for acceptance of this in British law is still highly contested.
- A wide range of forms of arranged marriage practiced by a variety of South Asian communities. These are generally accepted in the eyes of British authorities, unless considerable coercion (on occasion evidenced by kidnapping or deceit) is demonstrated.

- Marriages within various degrees of relationship—for instance, among first cousins. This is widely practiced among Pakistani Muslim families in Britain.
- Time off work for religious purposes (such as going to mosques for Friday prayer) or appropriate prayer facilities in the workplace. Some employers are addressing such demands; in factories with large numbers of Muslims, prayer facilities are often allocated. The CRE has been approached on several occasions where discrimination is suspected in cases of refusal of demands in this area.
- Beards: since meetings with MCB representatives, the Ministry of Defence allows Muslim military personnel to wear trimmed beards.
- Chaplaincy in prisons and hospitals. Following consultations with Muslim representatives, the Prison Service and the National Health Service have drawn up guidelines surrounding the provision of Imams in these institutions.
- Provision of *halal* (sanctioned) food in public institutions such as prisons, hospitals, and schools.
- Islamic ritual slaughter (*dhabh*), which is abhorred by many non-Muslims since it is often interpreted as prescribing that the animal remain conscious when its throat is slit. The most vocal opponents of *halal* food provisions and *dhabh* emerged as the unlikely pairing of animal rights activists, who were against the method of slaughter, and right-wing nationalists, who were against accommodating seemingly alien customs of minorities. According to the terms of the Slaughter of Poultry Act of 1967 and the Slaughterhouses Act of 1979, Jews and Muslims may slaughter poultry and animals in abattoirs according to their traditional methods. The right to engage in ritual slaughter in inspected abattoirs was maintained, largely through the political lobbying of Jewish, rather than Muslim, groups.

- Matters surrounding burial, such as gaining designated areas of public cemeteries for specific religious communities, obtaining permission for burial in a cloth shroud instead of a coffin, and urging issuance of death certificates for burial within twenty-four hours (MCB has held consultations with the Coroner's Office and the Association of Local Authorities regarding these matters).
- Taking oaths on scriptures. Under the Oaths Act of 1978, Muslims may swear on the Qur'an (although, when Lord Ahmed requested a Qur'an as he was sworn into the House of Lords in 1998, nobody could find one).
- Altering work and school uniform codes to allow Muslim women to wear traditional forms of dress, especially headscarves (this is still one of the most contested issues among Muslims. Almost every issue of the monthly *Muslim News* highlights cases of discrimination, especially among employers, against Muslim women wearing *hijab*).

Beyond mere accommodation of practices, values, and traditional institutions, however, many members of Muslim communities have called for explicit legal measures to protect their rights and to help safeguard against discrimination. Each effort in mobilizing and lobbying—whether successful, unsuccessful, or still in process—has brought new experience and, thereby, new confidence in Muslim organizational efforts (Vertovec 2002).

1.7 Muslim Organizations in Britain

Since the late 1980s, Muslim organizations have become more visible in the public sphere and more robust in their representation of wider Muslim interests. Muslim organizations that were set up during the 1960s and the 1970s frequently found it difficult to get off the ground. The Union of Muslim Organizations of UK and Ireland (UMO), an 'umbrella' organization established in 1970, made little headway in terms of securing changes, nor was it able to mobilize significant support on international issues of concern to Muslims, such as Palestine and Kashmir (Union of Muslim Organizations (UMO) 1995) Until the 1980s, government and institutions

sought to promote cultural, rather than religious identities, through policy and allocation of resources, encouraging the formation of organizations on ethnic lines.

With the rise of the new right in the 1980s the funding of multicultural initiatives was slashed, which left room for specifically Muslim organizations to emerge with renewed strength. By the mid-1980s, several Islamic groupings had recognized the need for nation-wide coordination on issues such as *halal* food and education. The British establishment, finding it confusing and impracticable to negotiate with myriad bodies claiming to be the authentic voice of Muslims in Britain, applied pressure on Muslim communities to create a unified Muslim organization, similar to the British Board of Jewish Deputies, which could represent their interests and with whom negotiations could take place. The establishment in the early 1980s of the Council of Mosques (COM) in the UK and Eire and a Council of Imams and Mosques (COIM) represented attempts to do so (Ansari 2004: 361).

The Rushdie affair provided further impetus to efforts to bring British Muslims organizationally under one roof. The negative fall-out of this controversy made it clear to many Muslims that, without unity, they were unlikely to achieve support or effective influence 'in the seats of power, in the media or in economic circles' (UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) 1989). To achieve this, they had to build a national coalition on the basis of commonly agreed issues. The agreement to mobilize protests against *The Satanic Verses* brought about the foundation of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA) in 1988. But, even as it was being conceived, other Muslims were challenging its authority. The Muslim Parliament, inaugurated in 1992, was presented by its founder, Kalim Siddiqui, as an alternative to more conventional Muslim formations. The experiment of the un-elected Muslim Parliament largely failed, however. After Siddiqui's death in 1996, the Parliament declined, but, even at its peak, it proved unable to mobilize enough support to realize its strategy to any significant degree (Ansari 2004: 361-364). This may have been in part because it by-passed established Muslim organizations, handpicking individuals to represent Muslim groupings from across Britain. It may also have been because Muslim communities in Britain are too socially, ethnically and culturally diverse to develop an effective self-contained institution.

Organizational unity among British Muslims could not be achieved during much of the 1990s. During the Gulf War, Muslim organizations failed to organize effectively in their demand for a halt to what they perceived as the Western-led alliance's aggression against Muslims. Their prioritizing of loyalty to the Muslim *umma* over national interests clashed with the views of the majority of the British population, for some of whom this appeared tantamount to treason (Ansari 2004: 361-364). Some Muslim organizations and leaders expressed sentiments which only served to create public perceptions that damaged community relations. British Muslims did unite, on occasion, to combat challenges to their deeply held values, but this unity proved fragile and, once the immediate threats subsided, it waned.

Efforts to establish a national organization which was not closely aligned to any particular tradition, which worked within the mainstream of British society and its institutions, and which the British state would be prepared to acknowledge, resumed with renewed vigour by the mid-1990s. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was formed in May 1996, and, by May 2001, the Secretary General of the MCB, Yousif Bhailok, was able to claim that it was 'the largest umbrella organization of Muslims' and that its status as a representative body was recognized by all top mainstream politicians. However, it made no claim to be the 'sole' representative of 'true' Islam or the 'whole' of the British Muslim community, although it did embrace a range of ethnic groups.⁹ Its aims were

to promote co-operation, consensus and unity of Muslim affairs in the UK; to encourage and strengthen all existing efforts being made for the benefit of the Muslim community; to work for a more enlightened appreciation of Islam and Muslims in the wider society; to establish a position for the Muslim community within British society that is fair and based on due rights; to work for the eradication of disadvantages and forms of discrimination faced by Muslims and to foster better community relations and work for the good of society as a whole.¹⁰

⁹ See text of speech by Yousif Bhailok on Muslim Council of Britain website http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/speech/_20_3_01.php accessed on 10th January 2007.

¹⁰ See Muslim Council of Britain website <http://www.mcb.org.uk/aim.php> accessed on 15th January , 2007

The needs of British Muslims have been poorly resourced from the public purse. As the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) has stated:

the building and maintaining of mosques, Islamic schools, Muslim community centres and facilities and the wide range of Muslim institutions that help to cater for British Muslim needs, preserve Muslim identities and keep the Muslim community together, are essentially an achievement of Muslims themselves with little support from mainstream funding sources.¹¹

Today, while some assistance from the government is forthcoming, many Muslim voluntary organizations continue to find themselves in a double bind, particularly with regard to lottery money. While some British Muslims have accepted funding from the National Lottery, (BMMS October 2000: 5) others are unable to benefit because of religious barriers. For example, UKACIA strongly deplored the introduction of the National Lottery and refuses to consider it as a funding source.¹² And, because they are faith-based, Muslim organizations are denied government funding because of the absence of a race element in their work.

In conclusion one may say that, in the initial years of migration the Muslims as other migrants found themselves at the receiving end of discriminatory policies, the onus as it were was on them to adjust and accommodate. Over the years with the families joining in issues of identity gained greater prominence, education, place of worship and religious practice and prescriptions thus became important. The British state and society in view of these developments had to muster an adequate response. Liberal democracy's majoritarian thrust was found wanting to deal with the questions diversity had raised. Multicultural policies were found to be more appropriate and adopted. Theoretical foundations of multiculturalism, its adoption in Britain and its impact on British Muslims, is what the next chapter focuses on.

¹¹See FAIR homepage <http://www.fairuk.org/introduction> accessed on 30th January, 2007

¹²UKACIA, 'For a fair and caring society', <http://www.ukacia.com/text.html#9>, accessed on 30th January, 2007.

CHAPTER II

**The Multicultural Policy Response
in Britain**

The Multicultural Policy Response in Britain

Introduction

Diversity characterizes the great majority of countries in the world, and with the end of Cold War and bipolar international order, identity-based claims of ethnic, religious and cultural varieties are becoming stronger. Such developments which sometimes lead to conflictual situations and tragedies such as Bosnia and Rwanda seriously challenge the states which respond to it with different policies, ranging from assimilationism, and integrationism, to differentialism. All three neither accommodate nor encourage diversity rather they are aimed at making differences disappear. They try to unify various groups into a single community and may employ discriminatory measures. Multiculturalism is an attack on assimilation, the view that social cohesion rests on the promotion and enforcement of a unidimensional set of values. Integration is different from assimilation as it provides equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance. Differentialism, though not always intentionally conceived, involves indirect exclusion, implicit in cultural and institutional practices and active exclusion which may go as far as apartheid and even genocide.

The past three decades have witnessed the emergence of a cluster of new social movements led by such diverse groups as the indigenous peoples, old and especially new immigrants, women, national minorities, gays and lesbians. These movements, generally subsumed under the capacious term *multiculturalism*, attack the dominant culture for taking a demeaning view of and discriminating against the groups involved, and demand regulatory policies to ensure equal public recognition and legitimacy for their distinct cultural perspectives or ways of life. Agitations of the indigenous peoples in Canada, Australia, the USA, and Latin America, of the ethno nationalist groups in such places as Quebec, Catalonia and Basque, the protests by Muslims against Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* in Britain, the controversy in France about Muslim girls wearing headscarves in school, and so on are all examples of this. (Parekh 1997)

This chapter will provide a theoretical framework of multiculturalism, study how it evolved in Britain and its subsequent impact on the Muslim community. It will look at how the policy of multiculturalism succeeded in becoming the official doctrine in Britain, which received a large number of migrants, as discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter will trace how the multiculturalism as a policy option gained ground in Britain, what were the reasons for adopting it as a policy and finally study the current discourse on the multi-ethnic Britain and the British Muslims.

2.1 Theory of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism begins with the understanding that granting equal civil and political rights is an important achievement of liberal democracy but it has failed to adequately address the issue of discrimination in society. The concept 'multiculturalism' emerged in the 1960's in Anglophone countries in relation to the cultural needs of non European immigrants. The *Oxford Dictionary of Politics* (2004), defines the term multiculturalism as 'the political accommodation by the state and/ or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race or ethnicity; and more controversially, by reference to nationality, aboriginality or religion, the latter being groups that tend to make larger claims and so tend to resist having their claims reduced to those of immigrants'. Multiculturalism is a normative doctrine advancing a specific view on how we should respond to cultural diversity, and entailing significant regulatory policy recommendations. A multicultural society is one that includes several cultural communities with their overlapping but none the less distinct conceptions of the world, systems of meaning, values and forms of social organization, histories and practices. According to Bhikhu Parekh, a multicultural society is one that includes two or more cultural communities. This society might respond to its cultural diversity in two ways which in turn may take several forms. It might welcome and cherish diversity, make it central to its self-understanding, and respect the cultural demands of its constituent communities; alternatively it might seek to assimilate these communities into the mainstream culture. In the first case, it is 'multiculturalist' and in the second 'monoculturalist' in its orientation and ethos (Parekh 2000: 6). Hellyer observes that, there is a difference between multicultural

and multiculturalist country. A multicultural country is one where there is more than one culture; a multiculturalist country is one where those cultures are treated in a positive manner. For example Nazi Germany might have been a multicultural country, but it certainly was not a multiculturalist one (Hellyer 2006: 330). Multiculturalism is a conscious and deliberate policy measure adopted in a country and calls for the celebration and recognition of difference as well as the principle of equality between all. It evokes the idea that today's society is a 'post-modern' one – more multiple, complex and perhaps hybrid.

As an alternative to assimilationism and differentialism, multiculturalism emphasizes that acknowledging the existence of ethnic diversity and ensuring the rights of communities to retain their culture should go hand in hand with enjoying full access to, participation in, and adhesion to, constitutional principles and commonly shared values prevailing in the society. Although terms such as 'pluralism,' 'diversity,' 'heterogeneity' etc. are used to denote the existence of two or more cultures in a society, proponents of multiculturalism maintain that it makes a shift from the old concepts as the term 'multicultural' covers many different forms of cultural pluralism (Kymlicka 1995: 10). By acknowledging the rights of individuals and groups and ensuring their equitable access to society, advocates of multiculturalism also maintain that such a policy benefits both individuals and the larger society by reducing pressures for social conflicts based on disadvantage and inequality. Contemporary multiculturalism is, therefore, more than a theory of minority rights. It is a conception of democracy in which members of diverse cultures are represented as equals in the public domain (Mahajan 2002: 11-18). Multiculturalism, as a systematic and comprehensive response to cultural and ethnic diversity, with educational, linguistic, economic and social components and specific institutional mechanisms, has been adopted by Australia, Canada and Britain as their official policy.

The conceptual framework of multiculturalism encapsulates a number of interrelated perceptions. It underscores the need to have a stable identity, emphasizes the contribution of cultural communities to the fulfillment of this need and brings out the link between identity and recognition. It stresses the importance of cultural

belonging and legitimizes the desire to maintain difference (Bhargava 1999: 1). The concern about accommodating differences or diversity in a democratic nation state starts from the premises of identity. The recognition of one's identity is important for his/her life. It is socially constituted and carries the assumption of equality also. Charles Taylor argues that there are two trajectories of equal recognition. The first, emphasizing the equal dignity of all citizens - a politics of universalism and the content of this politics has been the equality of rights and entitlements. The second trajectory is the politics of difference, which means that everyone should be recognized for his/her unique identity in the public domain. These two trajectories produce different kinds of policies. While one fought against discrimination, other wanted distinctions to be recognized in constituting politics. To Taylor, the politics of equality or rights require that people should be treated in a difference-blind fashion, which has often led to reverse discrimination so that disadvantaged groups can establish a competitive edge over others. On the other hand, the politics of difference suggests that differences be cherished. The difference blind principle can not but uphold the hegemonic culture and such a society turns out to be highly discriminatory. The role of the state, according to Multiculturalists therefore, is to affirm identities and uphold their rights (Taylor 1992: 33-44).

Multiculturalism, according to Bhikhu Parekh, should be understood as perspective on or a way of viewing human life. It is composed of the creative interplay of three important and complementary insights, namely, the cultural embeddedness of human beings, desirable interaction of different cultures, and the plural and multicultural constitution of each culture. The first principle implies that the human beings grow up and live within a culturally structured world and organize their lives and social relations in terms of a culturally derived system of meanings and significance. It does not mean that they are unable to rise above their cultural structures and institutions, but they are deeply shaped by it, and necessarily view the world from within a culture. Second, that since different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of good life, it is desirable that cultures interact with each other so that one can understand his/her own culture better, expand its intellectual horizon, stretch its imagination and so on. The last principle is based on the assumption that every culture is internally plural and reflects a continuing conversation between its

different traditions and strands of thought. A culture's relation to itself shapes, and is in turn shaped by, its relation to others and their internal and external pluralities presuppose and reinforce each other. A culture can not appreciate the values of others unless it appreciates plurality within it. Thus a multicultural society, according to Parekh, cherishes the diversity of and encourages a creative dialogue between its different cultures and their moral visions. Such a society will last only by developing a common sense of belonging among its citizens (Parekh 1999: 14-17).

Multicultural theorists, it is thus evident, attribute positive value to cultural diversity. For another exponent of multiculturalism Will Kymlicka, human beings are "cultural creatures," that cultures are essential to their development as human beings; culture presents them with meaningful options, defines and structures their world and also gives them a sense of identity (Kymlicka 1991: 161-165). Kymlicka attempts to reconstruct the Liberal discourse on multiculturalism with an emphasis on community and culture. He tries to find out the fair way to relate cultural identities and distribute power in a multicultural society. What constitutes justice in multicultural society is his primary concern. For him, incorporation of national minorities and immigration are the two sources of cultural diversity in modern states (Kymlicka 1995: 24). National minorities necessitate the coexistence of more than one nation within a state. And by 'nation' he alludes to a historical community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territorial homeland, sharing a distinct language and culture. So a country which contains more than one nation, according to Kymlicka, is not a nation- state but a multination state, and the smaller cultures form 'national minorities'. The second source of cultural pluralism is immigration. A country would be culturally plural if it accepts large numbers of immigrants from other cultures, and allows them to maintain some of their ethnic particularity. This makes a country polyethnic. In Kymlicka's opinion, many of the modern nation states are multinational and polyethnic. He says that by the beginning of 1970's immigrants in many states started asserting their right to ethnic particularity, and under pressure from the immigrant groups, countries rejected their old models of cultural pluralism such as assimilation, integration and segregation, and adopted a more tolerant and pluralistic policy, which allows and encourages

immigrants to maintain various aspects of their cultural heritage, emerged (Kymlicka 1995: 11-17). This resulted in the emergence of multicultural policies around the world. He argues that the vast bulk of the multiculturalism policies demanded by the immigrants involve improving the terms of integration to make them fairer. Fairness requires an ongoing, systematic exploration of institutions to see whether the rules, structures and symbols disadvantage the immigrants. The idea of multiculturalism can be seen as precisely an attempt to negotiate such terms (Kymlicka 2001: 162-165).

One important argument of the advocates of multiculturalism is that if the equality for diverse cultures is to be ensured, the liberal democracies have to go beyond the notion of universal citizenship rights by providing some special group-differentiated rights to its minority cultures. Thus, multiculturalism argues that democracies would have to give institutional and public recognition to minority cultures through a system of group rights to provide opportunities to immigrant cultures to survive themselves in society. In this context, Kymlicka speaks of three kinds of group differentiated rights to the minority cultures, namely, self-government rights, polyethnic rights and self-representation rights. In his opinion, self-government rights to the national minorities can be ensured through the mechanism of federalism; group-specific measures by the state can ensure the rights of ethnic groups, and special representation rights for the minorities should also be guaranteed (Kymlicka 1995: 26-33). The question here is why should liberals endorse group-specific rights? Because, Kymlicka replies, no state can be completely 'neutral' with respect to various national groups that form the society. States systematically privilege the majority nation in certain fundamental ways for example the drawing of internal boundaries, the language schools, courts and government services, the choice of public holidays. All of these decisions, Kymlicka argues, can enhance the power of the majority group at the expense of national minorities. Group specific rights, on the other hand, help ensure that national minorities are not disadvantaged in these decisions (Kymlicka 1995: 51-52).

However, Kymlicka draws a clear distinction between national minorities and immigrant groups. Immigration and incorporation of national minorities are the two

most common sources of cultural diversity in modern states. Kymlicka observes that 'a country which contains more than one nation is not a nation-state but a multination state, and the smaller cultures form national minorities' (Kymlicka 1995: 11). National minorities demand for more rights and autonomy which sometimes even lead to separation and formation of new states. As he points out self-government rights are extended to national minorities to accommodate their various demands. Polyethnic rights are guaranteed to the immigrant groups to protect them from the threat of assimilation. It is adopted as positive steps to root out discrimination and prejudice, particularly against visible minorities such as Jews and Muslims in Britain. For instance Muslims in Britain have sought exemption from Sunday closing or animal slaughtering legislation. Kymlicka further argues that these 'group specific measures called 'polyethnic rights' are intended to help ethnic groups and religious minorities express their cultural plurality and pride without it hampering their success in the economic and political institutions of the dominant society' (Kymlicka 1995: 30-31).

In this context Bhikhu Parekh discusses the significance of cultural pluralism and the limits of diversity. He argues that whenever there is a conflict between minority practices and the majority values in a multicultural society, it should always be decided on the basis of 'operative public values'. They are values because the society cherishes them, endeavours to live by them, judges its members' behaviour in terms of them and condemns their lapses. They are public because they are embodied in its constitutional and legal practices and define the principles of its public life to which all its members are collectively committed. And they are operative because they do not represent a utopia- society's vision of ideal or perfect society-but govern its practices and are a social reality. The operative public values of a society constitute its basic or primary moral structure (Parekh 1995b: 437). It clearly points out how far minority practices can be accommodated in a multicultural society. Minority communities have to follow certain norms by which they should justify their practices in the public sphere. Parekh enumerates four interrelated considerations which need to be weighed in any disputed minority practice (Parekh 1995b: 440-441).

- Its importance to the minority way of life
- The minority's ability to offer a reasonable defence of it
- The wider society's operative public values-or, what comes to the same thing, the importance of the relevant value to its way of life
- The society's ability to offer a reasonable defence of its values

The importance of citizenship in a multicultural society is matter of concern here. Does multiculturalism threaten citizenship? Jeff Spinner-Halev argues that strong forms of multiculturalism tend to threaten citizenship, while inclusive multiculturalism usually enhances citizenship (Halev 1999: 65-67). By and large when minorities demand changes to the education curriculum to recognize their history and ensure that their contributions are acknowledged or that their culture and cultural practices respected and permitted, these demands are primarily directed to ensure effective exercise of the common rights of citizenship and do not really qualify as group-differentiated citizenship rights (Kymlicka 1995). There are also certain insular groups which maintain a cohesive group identity, and make very few claims on the state. They too do not threaten citizenship. Halev introduces the concept of partial citizenship (Halev 1999: 71) to categorize these groups of people who are not actively involved in the mainstream society unlike other citizens. For him, they make few or no public claims, they do not press the state for financial favours or funds to establish institutions for themselves and they do not ask for anything that will harm other citizens, they need not be thought of as full members of the state. Communities such as the Amish and the Hutterites can be categorized as partial citizens by applying these criteria. He further argues that partial citizens can be accommodated when it comes to education but they should not be in his opinion exempted from paying taxes, as they receive protection from the state's military and police, benefit from its regulation of air and water and receive other public goods as well. Partial citizens contribute to a multicultural society, they do not threaten citizenship. The multicultural threat to citizenship comes, he argues, when groups want to retain their identity like partial citizens do, but want the state to help them do so. This is where the line between cultural pluralism and the inclusive multiculturalism becomes blurred (Halev 1999: 78). According to Ayelet Shachar, multiculturalism presents a threat to citizenship, however, if pro-identity groups

policies, aimed at leveling the playing field among minority groups and larger society, systematically allow the maltreatment of certain categories of group members, such as women, effectively annulling their citizenship status (Shachar 1999: 88).

In debates it is now recognised that minority communities have specific needs and requirements that should be significantly considered. The major arena of discussion, the “citizenship–civic virtue debate”, has two tendencies, which Modood describes in the following way, each of which emphasises certain rights: (Modood 2002)

- i. The right to assimilate to the majority/dominant culture in the public sphere; and toleration of “difference” in the private sphere alone.
- ii. The right to have one’s “difference” (minority ethnicity, etc.) recognized and supported in the public and the private spheres

The first is generally portrayed as the “assimilation” tendency, whilst the latter would be called the “integration” tendency. The first approach might also be called “liberal” but its important feature is the assumption, as Modood notes, “that participation in the public or national culture is necessary for the effective exercise of citizenship, the only obstacle to which are the exclusionary processes preventing gradual assimilation” (Modood 2002). Modood insists, in a compelling case, that this should be supported to a point, with a confirmation that one may keep one’s distinct ethnic identity as it merges into the national culture through time: “Grounding equality in uniformity also has unfortunate consequences. It requires us to treat human beings equally in those respects in which they are similar and not those in which they are different” (Parekh 2000: 239-240). Hence, equal treatment to scholars such as Modood does not mean assimilation to the national culture in all things, and the national culture should gradually change to incorporate the culture of ethnic minorities as time goes on.

If we return to the debates of “multiculturalism” and “citizenship–civic virtue”, adopting Kymlicka’s model for ethno-cultural groups, there emerges an intriguing route that can be taken, which should be examined more closely (Kymlicka 1995).

There are two important features common to all minority rights claims, and if we apply them to religious minority rights claims in general and Muslims in particular, with keeping the above considerations in mind, the following can be noted:

- these rights go beyond the familiar set of common civil and political rights of individual citizenship which are protected in all liberal democracies;
- they are adopted with the intention of recognizing and accommodating the distinctive needs of religiously defined groups.

What religious minority rights advocates intend to do is to reach a point whereby existing legal rights, public policies and constitutional provisions accommodate and facilitate their community's religious practices. As Kymlicka notes, quoting other philosophers, "Policies which increase the salience of ethnic identities act 'like a corrosive on metal, eating away at the ties of connectedness that bind us together as a nation'" (Kymlicka 2002: 366). Even Kymlicka, a multiculturalist practically "par excellence", admits that this is a "serious concern". Whether it is the salience of ethnic identities or religious identities, the fear is that it will displace and make irrelevant the common identity that is the basis of citizenship and thus the state will crumble into a "spiral of competition, mistrust and antagonism" (Kymlicka 2002: 366-367).

2.2 The Idea of a Multicultural Society in Britain

In the late 1960s, it was Enoch Powell, a Conservative MP and a member of Edward Heath's shadow cabinet until 1968, who was the first to make a number of insidious statements which used the language of racism to fuel the hate of ethnic minorities and whip up anti-immigration frenzy (Abbas 2005: 154). This era, which was accompanied by radical social, political and cultural change in many Western liberal democracies, is an important one in defining multicultural societies, and individual and collective identities. Powell was not just anti-immigration but he also supported the common concern with the unassimilability of ethnic minority individuals and groups (Parekh 1997). To Powell, "immigrants" (as well those already somewhat settled at the time) represented a threat; a body of people alien and antithetical to the interests of dominant society, individuals and groups, lacking inherent cultural

qualities and the desire to “integrate” with indigenous society and polity. What this negates, however, is the poverty of the sending regions (often a function of imperial and colonial aftermath), the rationalization of non-white groups in an effort to legitimize capitalist aggrandizement, and the unequal nature of inter-ethnic social relations, predicated by racism, discrimination and prejudice (Abbas 2005: 155).

In the early 1970s, issues in the “management of diverse societies” led to the development of a “race relations problematic”; questions of how to deal with issues emerging in relation to the experience and treatment of ethnic minorities in terms of theory, policy and action. Parekh, describes how the 1970s marked the emergence of multiculturalism, at first in Canada and Australia and then in the UK, Germany and elsewhere (Parekh 2000). Multiculturalism can be best understood not as a distinct philosophical school with a specific theory but as a perspective on or a way of viewing social life (Rex 1996: 49-74). Although the idea of multiculturalism is only around three decades old, certainly as part of its postmodern conceptualization and application, for Parekh it has three central tenets. First, humans are “culturally embedded”; that is, they exist in a culturally-structured world and organize their social relations in a culturally-derived system of meaning and significance”. Second, “different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of the good life”. Here, it is argued that one’s way of life is likely to be enriched if there is access to others, and, more crucially, a culturally self-contained life is virtually impossible for most humans in the modern world. Third, every culture is internally plural and reflects a continuing conversation between different traditions and strands of thought. This does not suggest that it is removed of any coherence or identity but that it is fluid and open. In essence, multicultural societies in their current form are new to our age and give rise to theoretical and political problems that have no parallel in history. The political theories, institutions, and vocabulary that have been developed in the course of consolidating and conducting the affairs of a culturally homogeneous state during the past three centuries are of limited help and sometimes even a positive handicap in dealing with multicultural societies today. The latter needs to find ways of reconciling the legitimate demands of unity and diversity, of achieving political unity without cultural uniformity and cultivating among its

citizens both a common sense of belonging and a willingness to respect and cherish deep cultural differences (Parekh 2004).

2.3 Multiculturalism as a Policy Option in Britain: A Historical Analysis

The British multicultural experience is rather different from that of other countries which have adopted similar policy. This section is intended to give an overview of how this policy has evolved in Britain, going back to the 1950s and 60s and especially taking into account the existing socio-cultural situation that witnessed these changes. When the first generation of Afro-Caribbean and Asian immigrants began to arrive in the 1950s, there was a wide spread view that they should and would indeed want to assimilate into British culture. Their languages were not taught in schools, they were discouraged from speaking them on school premises, and if their number exceeded a certain percentage, they were bussed to schools where there were fewer of them (Fenton 1999: 159-167; 203-211; Parekh 1997). Sikhs refusing to wear helmets were not allowed to ride motor cycles, and the courts of law refused to take account of cultural differences. Several surveys and the 1958 riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill showed that black and Asian assimilation was rendered difficult by two factors: wide spread discrimination against them in such areas as employment and housing, and the white anxiety about the presence of too many immigrants. Successive governments therefore settled upon the dual strategy of anti- discrimination and restricted immigration as ways of facilitating minority assimilation (Grillo 1998: 167-180).

From the 1960s onwards, as in the US, the debate took a cultural turn. As the second generation of Asians began to go to school, their dietary habits, dress, reluctance to attend religious assemblies and to take part in certain sports and so on, attracted attention. Like their US counterparts, their parents feared for the stability of their family and communal structures, and began to demand greater respect and some institutional provision for teaching of their languages and cultures. The prolonged Sikh agitation for the right to wear turbans when riding motor-cycles or working on building sites, the Asian women employee's refusal to wear required uniforms in preference to their traditional dress, and the general Asian reluctance to give up some of their cultural beliefs and practices, forced the country to start taking account

of Asian cultural needs. The fact that this was a period when liberal thinking was quite strong in Britain also helped.

So far as the Afro-Caribbeans were concerned, it was initially believed that they were culturally British. They spoke the same language, shared the same religion, dressed similarly, regarded Britain as their mother country, knew and generally identified with its history, played cricket, loved sports and so on. Gradually this view began to change. Creole was acknowledged to be not corrupt English but a distinct dialect; Afro Caribbean Christianity had a distinct character and content; their family structures, life styles and patterns of social relation were different and so forth. Also due to the racism they were experiencing in British society, many Afro-Caribbeans felt alienated from it and sought to redefine their identity in non-British and largely cultural terms (Parekh 1997).

The continuing underachievement of Afro-Caribbean children, which aroused considerable concern in the 1960s, also reinforced the growing salience of culture. The range of explanations was wider than in the USA, however. Some blamed their family structure including the lack of parental encouragement and support. Some blamed their low self-esteem and their alienation from the exclusively white curriculum. Others blamed teacher racism including low teacher expectations, and the racism of the society at large which conveyed demeaning views of Afro-Caribbean's, and whose discriminating practices stifled their ambition and drive. All these in its own different ways emphasized the role of culture.

Britain began to realize that its immigrants were not just 'black' or 'coloured' but distinct communities with their own cultural identities, and that it was now a culturally diverse or pluralistic society (Grillo 1998: 188-215). Increasingly it came to be described, especially in liberal circles, as multiracial, multi-ethnic, multicultural and, in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair as multi-faith. Although the terms were rarely defined and distinguished, the contemporary usage indicated that the first term was preferred when the Afro-Caribbeans were in mind, the second when both they and Asians were intended, the third when both of them and white subcultures in mind, and the fourth when the reference was to religious groups. Since the term 'race' was increasingly seen to be problematic, and since the term

culture was too wide, the term multi-ethnic became popular. It is striking that blacks and Asians were described as ethnic minorities rather than as ethnic groups, a term widely preferred in the USA and Canada, and sometimes as minority communities, a term rarely used in any other western country (Parekh 1997).

Some of the more conservative and nationalist politicians like John Tyndall and Martin Webster, in Britain, knowing the power of words, felt concerned that the emerging vocabulary foisted an identity on the country that they did not like. To call Britain multicultural or multi-ethnic was to imply that whites were just one group among many, that they did not enjoy a historically or politically privileged status, that the ethnic minorities were central to British identity, that the country was not only multicultural as a matter of historical fact but should remain and even relish being one, and that its minorities were not just collections of individuals sharing certain features in common but organized communities that required to be treated as such. Not surprisingly, conservative and nationalist spokespeople rarely used such terms as multicultural, multi-ethnic or ethnic minority communities. They were convinced that Britain's multiculturalism posed a deep threat to its stability and identity, and that it must be drastically reduced by vigorous assimilation or repatriation. Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech (Kivisto 2002: 143-144) in April 1968 reflected this view well. His inflammatory speech, which was critical of the perceived privileges afforded to the 'Commonwealth immigrant' under the proposed amendments to the 1965 Race Relations Act, further aggravated the antagonism between the cultures: (Holohan 2006).

For these divisive and dangerous elements the legislation proposed in the Race Relations Bill is the very pabulum they need to flourish. Here is the means of showing that the immigrant communities can organize to consolidate their members, to agitate and campaign against their fellow citizens, and to overawe and dominate the rest with the legal weapons which the ignorant and the ill-informed have provided. As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see the River Tiber foaming with much blood.

Despite conservative resistance, the bulk of influential opinion increasingly defined Britain as 'multicultural' society consisting of 'ethnic minorities'. This was a great symbolic achievement with important policy implications for all areas of life. Since Britain had a new identity, it could not consistently pursue the earlier assimilationist project, and needed to explore a pluralist alternative. Roy Jenkins, a former home secretary, articulated the change well in his influential statement: (Parekh 1997).

Integration is perhaps a loose word. I do not regard it as meaning the loss, by immigrants, of their own characteristics and culture. I do not think that we need in this country, a 'melting pot', which will turn everybody out in common mould, as one of a series of carbon copies of someone's misplaced vision of the stereotyped English man. I define integration, therefore, not as a flattening process of assimilation but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.

Although the term 'integration', as Jenkins himself admitted did not adequately convey his liberal vision of Britain, it soon gained currency and provided the guiding principle in all areas of life. Private employers, health authorities and others were more accommodative of minority cultural requirements than before, and so were local authorities in the formulation and implementation of their employment and housing policies. The courts of law began to show greater respect for minority cultures in deciding relevant cases. Such public bodies as Arts Council showed more interest in and increased their funding for minority arts. The Government ministers began to speak more positively about the contributions of ethnic minorities. The fact that minority cultures were respected and publicly funded, and their needs taken into account in deciding public policies, gave them public legitimacy in their own and especially the majority community's eyes. Contrary to the assimilationist argument, respect for cultural diversity brought communities together and seemed to promote integration (Parekh 1997).

The new spirit of multiculturalism led to a demand for multicultural education, of which liberals were greatest champions. First they were worried about the Afro-Caribbean educational underachievement. And since they blamed it on low teacher expectations, low black self esteem and black alienation from the monocultural

curriculum, they multicultural education in schools and teacher training colleges provided the answer. Secondly, liberals genuinely valued cultural diversity and thought that the traditional British curriculum was narrowly Eurocentric. And thirdly, they were concerned to combat white racism, which they attributed largely to prejudice and ignorance and which in their view was best countered by a greater knowledge and understanding of minority cultures (Parekh 1997). The Swann Report, suggestively titled "Education for All" and published in 1985 (HMSO: 1985), offered a coherent and influential statement of the liberal philosophy of multicultural education.

The final report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Children from Ethnic Minority Groups, chaired by Lord Swann, was significantly entitled 'Education for All', and has subsequently been seen by educationists, social scientists and other commentators as a landmark event in the development of a culturally diverse United Kingdom (Myers *et al.* 2006). The Swann Report, *Education for All*, as Gargi Bhattacharya (1998) notes is 'infamously the official version of multiculturalism in Britain – the declaration made by emissaries of the state, the promise made by the government'. In officially recognizing the development of cultural diversity, in uncovering and investigating racism in schools and society, and in proclaiming the failure of the education system to prepare all young people for life in a multicultural society, the report was both important and controversial. The issues explored by Swann continue to resonate, both in the UK and beyond, and the significance and the legacy of the report remain subjects of considerable debate (Myers *et al.* 2006). The report outlined a vision of pluralist future for Britain (HMSO 1985: 6-7)

It is important to emphasise here free choice for individuals, so that all may move and develop as they wish within the structure of pluralist society. We would thus regard a democratic pluralistic society as seeking to achieve a balance between, on the one hand, the maintenance and active support of the essential elements of the cultures and lifestyles of all the ethnic groups within it, and, on the other, the acceptance by all groups of a set of shared values distinctive of the society as a whole. This then is our view of a

genuinely pluralist society, as both socially cohesive and culturally diverse. It is essential, we feel, to acknowledge the reality of the multiracial context in which we all now live, to recognize the positive benefits and opportunities this offers all of us and to seek to build together a society which both values the diversity within it, whilst united by the cohesive force of the common aims, attributes and values which we all share.

2.4 Multiculturalism and the Muslim Community

Having sketched the genesis of multicultural policies in Britain, in this section we focus specifically on the primary community under study the Muslims and their experience. Muslims and the religion of Islam occupy a significant position in the contemporary discourse on multiculturalism. It is argued that the immediate future of British multiculturalism is closely associated with the experience of British Muslims, and, in its current form, it does appear that a return to assimilationism is an accurate reading (Abbas 2005: 153). Muslims in Britain are receiving all the attention especially since the September 11 and July 7 bomb attacks in the USA and London respectively. The pertinent question here is as a reaction of these events whether the policies of assimilationism have come to dominate British debate on multiculturalism. There is an implicit belief that all Muslims are responsible for the reactionary cultural practices of few. Indeed, Fekete (2004) argues that the security state demands “cultural homogenization and forces assimilation...it spells the death of multiculturalism”. Similarly, in recent expositions of a multicultural European identity, many scholars have come to the conclusion that to be European is to be a Christian Enlightened liberal who abides by Roman law, where the emphasis is on a return to a narrower multiculturally exclusive European identity (Amin 2004; Marranci 2004).

If a minority community begins to adopt the cultural practices of the dominant ethnic community and is still rejected by the majority population then assimilation is hardly a viable political or cultural option (Abbas 2005). Given the xenophobic and racist tendencies that minority communities’ encounter vis-à-vis the majority their effort not surprisingly is to retain their unique ethnic and cultural norms and value rather than assimilation. Assimilation does not guarantee acceptance and equality.

Even before the events of September 11, questions in relation to 'loyalty' to a cultural national identity were being asked of British Muslims. Given the ways in which multiculturalism is seen, understood, accepted, applied and rationalized, it is clear that no other group questions its effectiveness as the British Muslims do (Modood 1998). Indeed, there were both external and internal forces at work affecting the positions of British Muslims before September 11. Externally, after September 11 the international agenda dominates domestic politics, there is a tightening of security and anti-terrorist measures and there are citizenship tests for new immigrants (Sheridan 2006). Important to consider too are the disturbances in the north, Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in 2001, as government reaction to them has direct and lingering implications for British South Asian Muslims (Amin 2003). Internally, young British Muslims are increasingly found to be in the precarious position of having to choose their loyalties, being impacted by radical Islamic politics on the one hand and developments to British multicultural citizenship on the other. This creates tensions and issues, encouraging some to take up the "struggle" more vigorously while others seek to adopt more Western values. There is a contestation between the forces of radicalization, secularization and liberalization impacting on the lives of young British Muslims. In the post-September 11 climate, British Muslims are at the centre of questions in relation to what it means to be British or English (CRE 2005). The basis of this rests in issues on the global agenda as well as local area concerns in relation to "community cohesion", citizenship, and multicultural political philosophy.

As a response to the disturbances in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford in the summer of 2001, when young Asian Muslim youth took to the streets, the government had decided on a new policy thrust – community cohesion. And it was in the idea that the nation somehow had a deficit of glue, which would have to be artificially manufactured and injected into British institutions, that the seeds of the attack on multiculturalism took root (Bourne 2007). Britain's most serious riots in two decades, which occurred in the spring and early summer of 2001 in various north-English cities, threw an altogether different light on Britain's multicultural reality (Joppke 2004). A government commissioned investigation into the origins of riots chaired by Ted Cantle observed that

Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities. The extent to which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges. (Cantle report 2001: 9)

The debates on community cohesion and national security (in the wake of September 11) found common cause in the spectre of 'the enemy within' – the Muslim community. Over the last five years a virulent and all pervasive form of racism, directed against Arabs and Muslims, has come to permeate British life. The demonisation of Muslims in the media is being reinforced by the application of anti-terror and policing measures which specifically target that community. And a popular racism, with increased attacks on Muslim institutions and people perceived to be Muslim, has ensued (Bourne 2007).

2.5 Criticisms of the Policy

The policy of multiculturalism is under considerable criticism from various quarters. Whether this has been able to achieve what it was aimed at is a continuous debate. There are those who argue that the policy has only resulted in further isolating people on the basis of religion and particular cultures. There is lot of distrust among the populace about the declared aims and the end results for the policy. Critics argue that since no stable life is possible without a shared national culture, multiculturalism is a recipe for social chaos and political disintegration. It breaks up society into neatly insulated cultural units, each claiming sovereignty over its internal life and immunity from external criticism and all sharing nothing in common. The critics argue that no civilized and stable social life is possible on such a basis. They also criticize it on the basis of cultural relativism - the belief that all cultures are equally good, that there are no intercultural or universal standards of moral judgment, that no cultural practice may be criticized, however, offensive it might

seem to outsiders. For critics this involves abdication of all moral judgment, a dangerous moral *laissez faire*, and is not only false but an enemy of all that western civilization stands for.

From mid 1970s onwards, multiculturalism came under severe criticism from the New Right, the rise of which was a result of a combination of factors. Since the mid-1960s British society had begun to undergo significant changes. Almost all the traditional sources of pride in terms of which Britain had for several centuries constructed its collective identity, namely the empire, social cohesion, stable democratic institutions, industrial leadership of the world, political leadership of the rest of Europe during the Second World War, political unity and so on, were proving problematic. This created a widespread feeling of decline and disorientation, and provoked a debate on the causes and the best ways of arresting them. As a result of the decolonization of most of the empire, Britain's three centuries of imperial adventure came to an end, leading to drastic shrinkage in its geographical expanse and political power. The British economy was in a state of decline. Its industrial productivity was low, its technology outdated, the quality of its industrial management poor, and its balance of payments unfavorable. The pressure from influential quarters to join the European Community generated wide spread fears about the loss of its distinct political identity. The emergence of Scottish, and to a lesser extent Welsh nationalism also aroused fears about Britain's territorial and political integrity. The arrival of a large number of black and Asian immigrants from the erstwhile colonies and their concentration in the major cities, British society was becoming recognizably different (Parekh 1997).

It was in this context that the New Right, which was finally tuned to the national mood, introduced its programme of national regeneration. In its view Britain was steadily declining because, among other things, its national identity was being increasingly eroded. Lacking a clear conception of what it stood for and a sense of national purpose, it was increasingly being seduced by fashionable but highly dubious ideas and practices imported from abroad. It was also losing touch with its great past and becoming devoid of the qualities of the character that had made the past possible. For the New Right the answer to Britain's predicament was obvious. It

needed to return to its roots, to reestablish contacts with its past, and to revive its characteristic virtues. British national identity, a product of its long history, was already formed, and the British people only needed to know it. As the New Right defined it, British national identity largely consisted in a specific body of virtues and values and a specific form of historical self-understanding. This narrowly defined national identity was to be articulated and transmitted by educational institutions, the central agencies of the New Right project of cultural engineering. Accordingly, the government of Margret Thatcher devoted considerable energy to educational reform. It centralized education, created a fairly rigid national curriculum, and paid particular attention to the teaching of history, English literature and religion- the three major sites of the construction of national identity and moral renewal (Parekh 1997).

Given the New Right emphasis on the consolidation of national culture, predictably it dismissed multiculturalism as a false and subversive doctrine. It was false because every society including Britain required a clearly defined national culture for its cohesion and stability, and culture could only be one, which had historically evolved and which was inscribed in its institutions and practices. As a liberal society, Britain did have a duty to respect other cultures, but the respect could neither be equal or at the cost of its own cultural integrity. Britain should not suppress them but it did not have to grant them public recognition and support, let alone accept them as a part of its national identity. The New Right was contemptuous of multicultural education which in its view, subverted the British sense of national identity, diluted British history and culture by putting them on a par with others, failed to promote cultural values and even destroyed them by relativizing them, and included material that pampered minorities but lacked educational value. Not surprisingly, it mocked and ridiculed both the Swann Report and the limited multicultural experiments it had encouraged. Even such a determined leader as Margret Thatcher could neither dismantle the intellectual and institutional legacy of the earlier period nor overcome the resistance of those holding a different view. Although her views did not completely prevail, she did change the political climate and set in place institutions inhospitable to multiculturalism in all walks of life, especially in the educational arena (Parekh 1997).

Immediately after a dramatic return to power in 1997, New Labour was keen to embrace Britain's multicultural and ethnically diverse mix of people. But after the publication of the Runnymede Trust's commission report, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* also known as the Parekh Report (Runnymede Trust 2000), Home Secretary Jack Straw publicly disassociated himself with the findings of the commission when media focus switched to a particular paragraph problematising the idea of "Britishness". Some liberal quarters regarded this as multiculturalism 'gone mad', and indeed there was a strong media backlash against the publication of the report and some of the members who made up the commission. The authors of the Parekh Report emphasised the need for more and better anti-discrimination measures. They favoured cultural diversity, the need for both equality and difference and respect for the rights of both individuals and communities. The Report also recommended that the integration of Britain's diverse populations was best achieved by educational policies that would recognize and accommodate group difference (Runnymede Trust 2000). In 2001, a number of local and international events had a tremendous impact on British South Asian Muslims in particular. Details of both local and international events are discussed in the next chapter. The civil unrests in the northern cities of Britain, Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, during the late summer of 2001 shifted the focus away from a celebration of multicultural diversity towards an idea of a "communities lacking cohesion". The then incumbent home secretary David Blunkett signaled the changing terms of public debate through his controversial comments on the need for immigrants to learn English as test for citizenship. To quote Blunkett (As cited in Wolton 2006)

We must . . . do more to articulate and secure the common values that underpin our democracy. We have allowed parts of our society to become effectively segregated. Mutual understanding and respect have weakened, particularly among the young. We have done too little in the past to articulate our common values and democratic commitments, or to promote positive induction into citizenship for those settling here

This is a remainder of the past, in the 1970s and 1980s, when assimilationist rhetoric kept on reemerging at times of crises and important turning points in the history and development of British "race relations" (Schuster and Solomos 2001).

The recent UK debate about the future of multiculturalism has been sparked off by none other than Trevor Philips, the current chair of the Commission for Racial Equality. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) is blocking grants to ethnic minority projects that fail to promote "Britishness" and integration. In a much publicized argument, Philips has suggested that because of "globalization" and "bureaucratic tokenism", multiculturalism in Britain has reached its end and the need now is to return to a focus on integration and equality. This view has been criticized from various quarters. To quote Parekh from the Report on Future of Multi-ethnic Britain: (Runnymede Trust 2000) Britain certainly needs to be 'One Nation' – but understood as a community of communities, and a community of citizens, not a place of oppressive uniformity based on a single substantive culture. Cohesion in such a community derives from widespread commitment to certain core values, both between communities and within them: equality and fairness; dialogue and consultation; toleration, compromise, and accommodation; recognition of a respect for diversity and, by no means least, a determination to confront and eliminate racism and xenophobia.

The supporters of the current Labour government's approach have described it as having defended the rights of minorities to preserve their culture, while also seeking to ensure they become fully participatory citizens — that is, 'integrating without assimilating.' Critics say the policy fails on all accounts: If social conditions and racism become barriers to the integration of minorities, then multiculturalism does not properly function. There is now a lively debate in the UK over multiculturalism versus "social cohesion and inclusion." The current Labour government appears to favour the latter. In the wake of the July 7 Bombings 2005 (which left over 50 people dead) the opposition Conservative shadow home secretary called on the government to scrap its "outdated" policy of multiculturalism (EUMC 2005: 10-26). In the May 2004 edition of Prospect Magazine, David Goodhart (2004) entered the debate on multiculturalism in terms of whether a modern welfare state and a "good

To conclude one can say that the current debates in Britain have brought multiculturalism back to the limelight. The term multiculturalism is counter posed to 'integration', which has replaced the discredited term 'assimilation' but carries similar implications. Both 'integration' and 'assimilation' desire to manage diversity through imposed categories. A widespread feeling that common values necessary for a functioning society are being undermined by an excessive tolerance towards cultural diversity is gaining ground. Integrationists, however, are unable to reach a consensus on what they mean by 'British values'. The recent terror attacks have complicated the situation and it is likely that in both the short and long run it would adversely affect the interest of the Muslim community as attitudes on both sides are likely to harden. What that has meant for the community in real terms is the focus of the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

The Impact of 9/11 on British Muslims and Multicultural Policy and Practice

The Impact of 9/11 on British Muslims and Multicultural Policy and Practice

Introduction

September 11 magnified the focus already trained on the Muslim population because Muslims are the largest and most visually prominent of all religious communities in Britain. Over the last fifty years British discourse on racialised minorities has mutated from colour to race, to ethnicity (Modood *et al.*1997) and religion (Runnymede Trust 1997; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004) in the present period. Christopher Allen has argued ‘...that in the foreseeable future, Europe’s “Other” will remain undoubtedly Muslim’ (Allen 2004: 141). He further says whether this other will be controlled or feared remains to be seen. Post September 11, as the following pages will reveal it is evident that they are feared (and suspected) and this fear creates greater inclination for control.

Ever since the “clash of civilization thesis” (Huntington 1993) formulated by Samuel Huntington gained currency, the trend in the West has been to demonise Islam and Muslims and project it as a force which is absolutely antithetical to the Western values of secularism and democracy. This trend has been particularly reinforced following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the New York, Madrid (24/3) and in London (7/7). All Muslims are widely seen as the enemy within and are identified as either terrorists warring against the West or apologists defending Islam as a peaceful religion (Sardar 2002). This tendency to associate Islam with terrorism has had the effect of getting Muslims to forge closer ties between community members despite the presence of intra-community troubles.

The 2001 UK Census showed that 68 per cent of Muslim population was of South Asian origin. Pakistani’s alone account for 43 per cent of the Muslim population and are the largest and dominant individual group. (Office of the National Statistics (ONS) 2003). Far Right groups in Britain, as discussed in the previous chapter have

argued that the nation could only survive if it was homogenous, welded together by a single racial, religious or cultural identity. They have been most vociferously and vehemently attacking the basic foundations of multicultural policy in Britain. However, since 9/11, multiculturalism has come under attack from main stream and even liberal sources. It has been blamed for the erosion of what they call as 'Britishness', (Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) 2005) the emergence of home grown terrorists and the alleged self segregation of minority groups. Whether identification with Islam leads to segregation as alleged or segregation is the result of racism and discrimination needs to be looked at. The government's move to set up a Commission for Integration and Cohesion, which was launched on 24 August 2006 under the chairmanship of Darra Singh, appears to signify that multiculturalism if not on a retreat from the public sphere has at least been pushed on the defensive. This chapter will examine the problems faced by British Muslims in the aftermath of terrorist attack in the United States, followed by Madrid and London incidents. Media portrayal of Muslims and Islamic practices, the hysteria created by the Right wing in Britain and the Islamophobic reaction to these events would also be looked into. Subsequent strengthening of the anti-terror laws, curtailment of civil liberties would also be analysed.

3.1 Media Representation of Muslims and Islamic practices in Britain

An important issue following September 11 has been the representation of Islam and Muslims in various media channels (Ahmed 2005; Poole and Richardson 2006). Research has suggested that media portrayal after the attacks was responsible not only for generating a negative perception of Muslims but also for perpetuating and helping to legitimise subsequent political ideologies, as well as inciting attacks against Muslims (Bunlawala 2002a). Many people (66 per cent according to a 2002 YouGov opinion poll finding) draw most if not all of their information about Islam and the Muslim communities from the media. The media in Britain continues to reinforce Islamophobic attitudes in the majority community. In addition, many Islamic movements, as well as Western Islamophobia, have helped create a perception that Muslims share few civic values with other faiths and traditions in Britain, that they are not sincere in their acceptance of democracy, pluralism and

human rights. The media's negative treatment of Islam reinforces its image as a one dimensional and monolithic religion that poses a threat to Western democratic values. It has been argued that 'the media's portrayal and representation of Islam has been one of the most prevalent, virulent and significant sources of Islamophobia' in Britain (Allen 2001).

The 1997 Runnymede Trust Report on Islamophobia powerfully illustrated the vehemence with which Islam and Muslims were negatively stereotyped both in the print and electronic media. Headlines such as *The People's* 'slaughtering goats, burning books, mutilating teenagers ... and still they want me to respect the Muslim ways?' or cartoons depicting Arabs as savage and threatening, all contributed to this Islamophobic atmosphere (Runnymede Trust 1997 24-30). In a survey of the coverage of Islam and Muslims in the British media before 11 September 2001, four persistent stereotypes related to Muslims were identified: namely the Muslims are 'intolerant', 'misogynistic', 'violent' or 'cruel' and 'strange' or 'different' (Whitaker 2002; Poole 2000: 157-179). As a matter of fact, the diversity in Islam and the heterogeneous nature of Muslim communities tend to be overlooked by the media in order to reinforce negative images and reproduce the dualism of 'them' and 'us'. Poole argues that these stereotypes are largely dictated by business and government interests and 'the strangely nonplastic literary tropes of Orientalism', which mostly contrast Islam negatively with a Eurocentric conception of modernity and progress' (Poole 2002).

Elizabeth Poole's study clearly shows (Poole 2002), the pattern of prejudice and media bias against Islam and Muslims. Following are the major findings of her study

- Islam is still seen as a foreign phenomenon (88% of the survey) in the British press, although coverage of British Muslims is increasingly slowly (and its profile since the 2001 attacks on America has increased dramatically, sometimes positively) (pp. 5, 58).
- Islam is the third most widely reported major faith (22%), behind Christianity and Judaism (p. 60).
- A computational semantic analysis reveals that British Muslims are most commonly linked, in descending order, with issues of belief, education, fundamentalism, world

affairs, relations with Christianity, adjustment to culture, racism, the Muslim community, personal relationships and relations with other religions (p. 64).

- Islam is explained, often negatively, by comparison with Christianity (pp.76-78)
- The Rushdie Affair still defines debates around what constitutes appropriate freedom of speech in a plural society (pp. 78–80), ignoring the fact that British Muslims have moved on from questions of blasphemy to issues of religious discrimination (pp. 128–140).
- Debate on social inequality is viewed solely in racial terms, and the argument that Islamophobia constituted a form of cultural racism bolstering Muslim marginalisation was largely rejected in favour of the view that anti-Muslim sentiment was a justified response to what was seen as Islamic fundamentalism (pp. 80–81).
- The most common stereotypes centre around security concerns (*and this prior to 11th September*), Islam as threatening to mainstream British values, and the idea of irreducible cultural differences between British people and Islam (p. 84).
- British Muslims have been able to set the national agenda on issues like education, but they have little or no influence over the subsequent debate they provoke (p. 84) on the rights and wrongs of liberal multiculturalism (p. 117).
- Muslims are usually talked about by non-Muslim establishment figures (usually non-religious rather than Christian); and even when Muslims are interviewed, it is more likely to be an ordinary member of the community than an expert (p. 87).

The September 2001 attacks gave further impetus to the rise of Islamophobic trends in the media. *The Daily Telegraph*, under the headline, ‘A religion that sanctions violence’, selectively invoked the Qur’an in order to show that Islam posed a major threat to peace. Basing itself on the inaccurate assertion that ‘many Muslims rejoiced at the tragic loss of American lives’, it concluded that ‘[t]he World Trade Center attack cannot be dismissed merely the work of a small group of extremists’. In contrast, the tabloid, *The Sun*, emphasized that ‘Islam is not an evil religion’,

(Preston 2001) and cautioned against confusing religion with religious extremism, reminding its readers that while the hijackers were 'evil', the 'religion they practice is one of peace and discipline' (The Daily Telegraph, 17 September 2001; The (Guardian) Editor, 22 September 2001, p.8).

Overall, however, the connection between Islam and fanaticism remained prevalent. The widespread prefacing with 'Muslim' of words such as 'extremists', 'terrorists', 'fundamentalists' and 'fanatics' served to perpetuate the view that Muslims and Islam are violent and frighteningly dangerous. The prominence given to the support for Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and jihad against the West expressed by marginal and controversial individuals such as Abu Hamza al-Masri, a cleric (subsequently suspended by the Charity Commission) at the North London Central Mosque in Finsbury Park, created a false impression that they represented mainstream Muslim opinion. The Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), expressed its concern about 'Islamophobia' in the media under Article 6, and added a note stating 'This has become a matter of increasing concern in the light of reactions to the 11th September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States of America.' (Advisory Committee on the FCNM 2001).

The impact of such reporting upon Muslim communities and the resultant change of mood is perceptively captured by Sajidah Choudhury, a councillor, and the Director of the Slough Race Equality Council:

I certainly have felt a much greater slant against Muslims from the media, and the impact amongst colleagues in the field [race equality], friends and family, has been that there is a shifting of positions, i.e. a greater desire to bond with our roots and rediscover our heritage in the constant bombardment of ... anti-Muslim ... news report and subtle racist jokes, comments and jibes ... It takes a great deal of energy to remain objective and fair when the average Muslim can only see through the media what the ... West... is doing to impoverished nations. This impacts on the psyche of the community and further divides communities... the impact has changed us forever.(Ansari 2002)

Muslims in Britain constantly face the challenge of proving that they do indeed belong to British society. After 11 September 2001, Muslims were singled out and repeatedly pressed to condemn the attacks louder than other citizens as anything less was perceived as hidden support for the murder of innocent civilians. The former Conservative home affairs spokesperson, Ann Widdecombe, called for British Muslims fighting for the Taliban to be tried for treason. This contrasts with the treatment of UK citizens who went to fight British forces for the creation of the state of Israel in the 1940s, or members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) or loyalist 'terrorists', who are simply charged with specific illegal acts (Ansari 2002). Suspicions linger in the mind of the majority population that Muslims do not, and perhaps cannot, fully understand British society and its institutions. Since the power to decide policy and to distribute resources does not rest in their hands, Muslims have suffered rejection, disadvantage and exclusion, which, in turn, helps develop and shape their perceptions about their identity.

Despite the negative portrayal, media also tried to pacify the situation by playing the role of a peacemaker. After 9/11, there was a genuine recognition among most media outlets for the need to avoid material that would inflame the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. Led by the line from Downing Street, even the *Sun* – long saddled with a reputation as a racially intolerant and sensationalist newspaper – issued a high profile appeal for calm. On 13 September 2001, a full-page article written by David Yelland – proclaimed *Islam is Not an Evil Religion*. It may have been stating the obvious. But at the time it made a valuable contribution, a fact recognized by the Commission for Racial Equality which shortlisted the article for a race in the Media Award (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004).

Despite the best efforts to maintain peaceful community relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain, the whole process was undermined by certain vested interests in both media and civil society. As the shock from September 11 subsided, however, Muslim concern about the media's tendency to elevate fringe figures to a place of mainstream importance became a live issue once again (Bunlawala 2002a and 2002b). For many years Muslims had complained about the prominence given to

Omar Bakri Muhammed – the North London cleric with a penchant for publicity and the provocative quote. For all the good intentions, after September 11 many newspapers and broadcasters still found him a hard habit to break. But the appeal of Omar Bakri paled dramatically when set against the attractions of Abu Hamza.

In an analysis of the media post September 11, the *Daily Mail* printed the same photo of Abu Hamza on the 15, 17, 18, 20 and 21 September (Bunglawala 2002a). It also printed an interview with him on the 13 September that was partially repeated on the 15 and 18 as well. Days after the beginning of the war in Iraq, his views were sought again. The Press Association, which supplies all national and regional papers, described him as ‘one of Britain’s best known Muslim preachers’. For journalists from the *Telegraph* to the Today Programme, and from the *News of The World* to Newsnight, he was a top attraction. Of course, figures like Hamza and his associates have a right to have their views reported, as does any other citizen of this country. But too often such views are reported as representative of all Muslim communities. Moderates who sought to place them in their proper context struggled to make their voices heard. Inayat Bunglawala of the Muslim Council of Britain voiced the frustrations of many. ‘There are over 800 mosques in the UK and only one of them is run by a known radical. Yet this one mosque (Finsbury Park, London) seems to get more coverage than all the rest put together. The situation is akin to taking a member of the racist BNP and saying his views are representative of ordinary Britons.’ (Bunglawala 2002a).

Ahmed Versi, the editor of the Muslim News, says that frustration remains. ‘The Muslim community is attacked for not denouncing September 11 enough, yet the newspapers and television news will give an enormous amount of space and airtime to people like Abu Hamza and not seek out moderate voices. He is a nothing figure in the Muslim community. He doesn’t have a major following. Young Muslim men are not particularly attracted to his teachings. So why do newspapers continue to give him so much space? It is Islamophobia.’ (Versi 2002)

The coverage given to the attacks of September 11 was widespread and diverse in nature, in some places basic and stereotypical and in others analytical and challenging. Following the events anti-Islamic discourse in both media and

academia clearly intensified (Allen 2001). Many of the commentaries which focused on Islam and Muslims were analytical in their nature, debating either the reasons for the attack, the situation in Muslim countries or foreign policy issues which may have prompted the attack. The role of the media cannot be underestimated in these situations, they provide a fair proportion of the understanding people have and, at times when there is such an intense focus on Muslims, the information circulated within mass media is particularly significant in developing attitudes and opinions (Ahmed 2005). To substantiate this argument Fred Halliday cites an example of the BBC's dismissal of presenter Robert Kilroy-Silk, following a particularly vitriolic attack on 'Arabs' that he wrote for the *Express on Sunday* news paper (Halliday 2006). In this article Kilroy-Silk made sweeping generalisations about the Arabs including:

We're told that the Arabs loathe us. Really?..... What do they think we feel about them? That we adore them for the way they murdered more than 3,000 civilians on September 11... That we admire them for the cold blooded killings in Mombasa, Yemen and elsewhere? That we admire them for being suicide bombers, limb-amputators, women- repressors? ('We Owe Arabs Nothing', *Sunday Express*, 4 January 2004)

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) analysed the negative impact on attitudes towards Islam and Muslims in the 15 EU member states following September 11. The role of media was specifically examined (Allen and Nielsen 2002). The report found that although it was difficult to pinpoint with accuracy whether the overall impact of media had been negative or positive (it conceded that the role of media is always contentious and debatable), it was possible to highlight instances of sensationalism and stereotyping in the media coverage of almost all member states (including the UK) to a greater or a lesser degree. As media attention on Muslims was intense, with debates in electronic media and analyses in newspapers, websites and academic articles, keeping abreast was a top priority for many Muslim organizations, which analysed and responded to a plethora of articles and programmes.

Julian Petley (2006) argues that the application of journalism's own professional codes of practice does not encourage fair and accurate representations of Muslims either. The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) Code of Practice requires newspapers to 'avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation', but Petley shows that they are failing in their role to censure newspapers who violate this code. Despite receiving 586 complaints about discrimination in 2003 (19.8 percent complaints received, a rise from 1.7 percent in 1993) not a single one concerning racism or religious discrimination has ever been upheld by the PCC. It is clear that the PCC is not an adequate bulwark against Islamophobia in the media. As a response, Petley provocatively concludes that the PCC is part of the problem of press racism, not part of the solution, and should be replaced by a statutory right of reply.

3.2 Islamophobia in Britain

The misrepresentation, disadvantage and discrimination experienced by Muslims in Britain were part of British society and history long before the events of 2001 (Ansari 2002; Vertovec 2002). Portrayals of Islam as undifferentiated and immune to processes of change have often obscured the complexities of the historical experience of Muslims in different societies. Western 'orientalists' and Islamists alike have tended to emphasize what distinguishes Islam from the West, presenting it, and its adherents, as the 'Other' (Halliday 1995: 195-217).

The Christian/secular West has effectively constructed and stigmatized an Islam that resembles little that is of value in ordinary Muslim lives. It has conjured up Islam as a powerfully dangerous force, irrational, violent and fanatical, force that requires tight control but also needs to be kept at a distance. The imagery of the Iranian revolution (1979), the public burning of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (January 1989), the orchestrated hysteria before and after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (1990-91), and the attacks of 11 September 2001 have all combined to confirm an antipathy towards Islam and Muslims in the western popular mind (Ansari 2002; Sheridan 2006).

Islamophobia is the fear and/or hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic culture. Islamophobia can be characterized by the belief that all or most Muslims are religious fanatics, have violent tendencies towards non-Muslims, and reject as directly opposed to Islam such concepts as equality, tolerance, and democracy. It is viewed as a new form of racism whereby Muslims, an ethno-religious group, not a race, are nevertheless constructed as a race. A set of negative assumptions are made of the entire group to the detriment of members of that group. During the 1990s many sociologists and cultural analysts observed a shift in forms of prejudice from ones based on skin colour to ones based on notions of cultural superiority and otherness (see Runnymede Trust 1997).

The first known printed usage of the word *Islamophobia* appears to be in February, 1991, when it was published in a periodical in the United States (see Runnymede Trust 1997). It has been included in the Oxford English Dictionary since 1997. This word is functionally similar to *xenophobia* and offers a useful shorthand way of referring to a dread or hatred of Islam and therefore a fear or dislike of Muslims (Runnymede Trust 1997). Following the events of 11 September 2001, it has been speculated that Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims have increased.

The Runnymede Trust has identified eight components that they say define Islamophobia. This definition, from the 1997 document *'Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All'* is widely accepted, including by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. The eight components are:

- Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.
- Islam is seen as separate and 'other'. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.
- Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist.
- Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism and engaged in a 'clash of civilisations'.
- Islam is seen as a political ideology and is used for political or military advantage.
- Criticisms made of the West by Islam are rejected out of hand.

- Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
- Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural or normal

In Britain as in other European countries, manifestations of anti-Muslim hostility include: (Runnymede Trust 1997; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004)

- verbal and physical attacks on Muslims in public places
- attacks on mosques and desecration of Muslim cemeteries
- widespread and routine negative stereotypes in the media, including the broadsheets, and in the conversations and 'common sense' of non-Muslims – people talk and write about Muslims in ways that would not be acceptable if the reference were to Jewish people, for example, or to black people
- negative stereotypes and remarks in speeches by political leaders, implying that Muslims in Britain are less committed than others to democracy and the rule of law – for example the claim that Muslims more than others must choose between 'the British way' and 'the terrorist way',¹
- discrimination in recruitment and employment practices, and in workplace cultures and customs
- bureaucratic delay and inertia in responding to Muslim requests for cultural sensitivity in education and healthcare and in planning applications for mosques
- lack of attention to the fact that Muslims in Britain are disproportionately affected by poverty and social exclusion
- non-recognition of Muslims in particular, and of religion in general, by the law of the land,
- anomalies in public order legislation, such that Muslims are less protected against incitement to hatred than members of certain other religions
- laws curtailing civil liberties that disproportionately affect Muslims.

¹ This particular insult was made by Denis MacShane MP, minister of state at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, in November 2003. It was compounded by the feebleness of his apology a few days later. See, for example, Kamal Ahmed (2003).

Following the events of 11 September 2001, the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) anticipated a rise in Islamophobia and implemented a system to record anti-Islamic reactions across the 15 EU member states. A summary report was produced in May 2002 (Allen and Nielsen 2002). Allen and Nielsen (2002) reported that Muslims, as well as members of other vulnerable groups, had experienced increased hostility post-September 11. Although relatively low levels of violent abuses were reported, verbal abuse, harassment, and aggression were far more prevalent. Explicitly Islamophobic content was observed on the Internet and via emails and text messages, as well as via more traditional hate crime methods such as abusive telephone calls, messages left on cars, and anonymous mail sent to private homes, mosques, and Islamic cultural centers.

Allen and Nielsen (2002) propose that the perceived increase in xenophobia and fear of Muslims noted throughout many parts of the EU represented an intensification of preexisting sentiment, exacerbated by feelings of fear and vulnerability and a perceived threat of the “enemy within.” To support their argument, Allen and Nielsen pointed out that these particular prejudices were localized and tended to remain within the borders of individual member states—the events of September 11 merely confirming historical prejudices. Furthermore, Allen and Nielsen (2002) noted that although in some cases post-September 11 expressions of Islamophobia were “covers” for general racism and xenophobia, many expressions were specifically targeted toward Muslims. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the ultra right-wing British National Party formed an anti-Muslim alliance with Sikh and Hindu extremists.

According to Allen and Nielsen (2002) the single most predominant factor in determining who was to be a victim of an attack or infringement was their visual identity as a Muslim. This was found to be the case across reports from all 15 EU member states. The primary visual identifier appeared to be the hijab, or headscarf, worn by many Muslim women. Women were more likely to be targeted than men, particularly those who looked to be of Muslim or Arab descent. Islamic cultural centers and mosques were also targeted for retaliatory acts. Allen and Nielsen (2002) point out that what appears to be important was whether attackers perceived their

target to be Islamic, irrespective of whether it actually was or was not. The negative approach of the media and politicians is backed by 'scholarly' works. Authors such as Huntington claim to have come to the considered opinion that there has, of necessity, to be a clash of civilizations between the West and the rest (Huntington 1997).

A pilot study titled *'Migrants Experiences of Racism and Xenophobia in 12 EU Member States'* was conducted by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC), between 2002 and 2005 (EUMC 2006:118-123). In the case of UK, the sample comprised of people from different ethnic groups. The total number of valid responses in the seven selected respondent groups amounted to 1449. The largest respondent group were Black Africans (404 valid responses), followed by Black Caribbean (306), migrants with Pakistani background (270) and migrants with Indian background (201). The other respondent groups were significantly smaller in number: Middle Eastern and Asian other (86 each) and Black other (45). Finally, 51 respondents did not belong to one of the seven respondent groups. It is significant to note that the majority of respondents indicated their religion as Muslim: Asian other (62 per cent Muslims), Black African (81 per cent), Mid-Eastern (83 per cent), migrants with Pakistani background (96 per cent). Hindus were the majority among Indian respondents. The majority of Black Caribbean and "Black other" respondents believed in Christian religion. Another important feature of the survey was that more than half of the respondents were born in the UK (59 per cent). Most of respondents who were not born in the UK came in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s. About one third of Black Caribbeans, migrants with Indian background and migrants with Pakistani background immigrated already before 1970 to the UK. Seventy-five per cent of "Black other" came in the 1980s. Mid-Eastern and Black African respondents arrived latest.

EUMC study categorically proves that there is a persistent discrimination in the British society against the surveyed groups of which majority are Muslims. They are discriminated in different walks of life which includes: private life and public arenas, commercial transactions, shops or restaurants, institutions and last but not the least by the police. According to the UK study, on average 37 per cent of

respondents who subjectively experienced acts of discrimination reported this to public authorities. The study (EUMC: 2006), unequivocally concludes that while analyzing the relationship between respondents' characteristics and discriminatory experiences, it does not imply the assumption that migrants should in any way be seen as *causing* discriminatory acts against them.

Islam as a faith and Muslims as a whole have found themselves under something of a siege in a current climate of Islamophobia (Allen and Nielsen 2002; Cummins 2004). In the battle of 'Jihad versus McWorld' (Barber 1995), many ordinary Muslims have found themselves on the wrong side. They stand accused of being 'a threat' to the West (Buruma and Margalit 2004) and its national security and insufficiently committed to the politics and values of their host communities. Islamophobia creates a wide gap between the Muslims' perception of who they are and the ways in which they are viewed by the host society. Groups on both sides of the divide demand that Muslims abandon either their faith or their national allegiance. The *Hizb ut-Tahrir* announces that it is no longer possible for the youth in the UK to be both British and Muslim and declare that it is necessary to 'choose' between faith and nationality (*Sunday*, BBC4, 24 August 2003).² Islamist groups such as the *Al Muhajerin* announce on their posters 'you are either with the Muslims or with the Kaafir' (*Guardian*, 9 September 2004) or parade their 'choice' in London by calling a conference on the 11 September 2003 to glorify the suicide bombers, calling them the 'magnificent 11'.³ This reinforces an earlier point made about the Islamic movements and how it contributes to the current discourse of Islamophobia in the West.

Scholars like Tariq Ramadan espouse a moderate view by arguing for a Euro-Islam concept. Tariq Ramadan is considered to be one who coined the term "European Islam". This new kind of Islam would combine the duties and principles of Islam with the contemporary European cultures, values and traditions such as human

² *Hizb ut-Tahrir* defines itself as a 'political party whose ideology is Islam, so politics is its work and Islam is its ideology'.

³ *Al Muhajerin* is a voluntary organisation dedicated to giving da'wah to both Muslims and Non Muslims. Da'wah is explained to mean a 'call' or 'invitation', used to refer to a person being 'called' to follow Islam. However in October 2004, *Al-Muhajerin* closed its web site and announced that it was dissolving and ceasing its activities (*Guardian*, 13 October 2004).

rights, law system, democracy and gender equality (Ramadan 1999; 2004). He believes in constantly reinterpreting the Qur'an in order to correctly understand Islamic philosophy. He also emphasises the difference between religion and culture, which he believes are too often confused. Relatedly, he thinks that citizenship and religion are two separate concepts which should not be mixed. He claims that there is no conflict between being a Muslim and a European at the same time (Ramadan 1999; 2001; 2004).

He observes that European Muslims must create a "European Islam" just as there is a separate "Asian Islam" and "African Islam", which take into account cultural differences. By this he means that European Muslims must re-examine the fundamental texts of Islam (primarily the Qu'ran) and interpret them in light of their own cultural background, influenced by European society. He rejects a binary separation of the world into dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam) and dar al-harb (the abode of war) since they are never mentioned in the Qur'an. He believes that European Muslims could be said to live in dar al-Dawa (space of testimony) in which Muslims are "witnesses before mankind" and are forced to consider the fundamental principles of Islam and take responsibility for their faith. He emphasizes a Muslim's responsibility to his community, whether it is Islamic or not. He criticizes the 'us vs. them' mentality that some Muslims advocate against the West. (Ramadan 1999; 2001; 2004)

3.3 Right Wing Politics of Hatred and Violence: The British National Party (BNP)

After 11 September 2001, British Muslim anxieties increased, as the British National Party (BNP) intensified its campaign against the Muslims adopting various means. It took a nasty turn especially after the northern disturbances, as the BNP overtly campaigned against Islam and Muslims spreading the message of hatred and violence. The prevailing climate of Islamophobia further accentuated differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. The BNP in its effort to gain legitimacy in the public sphere, despite its racist overtures, came out with a wide body of materials and resources that exploited the specifically post 9/11 threats and fears (Allen 2005). Much of the content was highly inflammatory: it encouraged

insult, provocation and abuse and employed language and images calculated to initiate or encourage hatred. Through a 'ghost' web project, *Oldham Harmony*, the message became clear: *the problem is Muslim* (Allen 2005). The following extracts show the tone that the leaflets adopted:

It won't be long before Christianity is dead and buried and Britain becomes an Islamic dictatorship. After all, what can stop them? With continued immigration, high birthrates and conversions to Islam, Christianity is being crucified on the dark cross of multiculturalism and globalization... Unless we change things Christianity in Britain is going to die.

Among the native British majority, no one dares to tell the truth about Islam and the way it threatens our democracy, traditional freedoms and identity – except for the British National Party. So angry are the old parties about our willingness to stand up and tell the truth that they are about to rush new repressive 'laws' through Parliament to make exposing the evils of Islam an imprisonable offence.

Crazy, isn't it? Muslim rioters tear the town apart, attacking white people, houses and shops, and petrol-bombing and shooting at the police – and yet whites like us are getting the blame!

We've got to take action to put pressure on the Asian community to control the extremists and race-haters in their midst. Not by confrontation, but by boycotting their shops and take-aways. Not ones owned by Chinese or Hindus, only Muslims as it's their community we need to pressure.

An analysis of the history of BNP categorically proves that they have been at the forefront in the anti-Muslim campaigns in Britain. They have targeted the South Asian Muslims and the leaflets which they publish fervently argue for the expulsion of Islam and Muslims from Britain. The British National Party (BNP) was founded in 1982 under the leadership of John Tyndall, a longtime Nazi sympathiser whose involvement with the far right dated back to the 1950s. Tyndall's reservations in using such terms as 'multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic' for Britain have already been referred to in the previous chapter. A former chairman of the National Front and editor of the fascist magazine *Spearhead*, Tyndall was on record as stating that "*Mein Kampf* is my bible". Tyndall formed his own group called the New

National Front (NNF) in 1980 after losing a factional struggle against his rival and former close collaborator Martin Webster. He established the BNP on the basis of a fusion between the NNF and two smaller fascist groups - the British Movement and the British Democratic Party (Brown 2007; Copsey 2004). The BNP spent its first ten years in the shadow of the National Front. When the National Front split, the BNP became the main far right party in Britain, winning a council by-election in Tower Hamlets in 1993, which some commentators pinpointed as an 'electoral highpoint', with support returning to more 'normal' levels of 0.1 per cent in the 1997 general election and then 0.19 per cent in the 2001 general election (Margetts *et al* 2006). Tyndall remained at the head of the BNP until 1999, when he was successfully challenged for the position of chairman by the present incumbent, Nick Griffin. After his death in July 2005 a *Guardian* obituary rightly described Tyndall as "a racist, violent neo-Nazi to the end".

In recent years the BNP has registered gains in local elections. It now has over 50 councillors, an achievement unprecedented in the history of the far right in Britain. This has been assisted by a systematic revamping of the party's image. The public expressions of Nazi sympathies and Holocaust denial for which the BNP had become notorious have been junked and it now presents itself as a respectable, mainstream political party. But whether this amounts to a fundamental change in the BNP's political character, or is it a cosmetic exercise designed to fool voters into backing an organization that has in reality failed to break with its fascist past remains an open question. (McKibben 2007; Drake 2007)

In 1999 Nick Griffin took over as BNP chairman, proclaiming that the party would become 'the focus... of the neglected and oppressed white working class'. Richard Barnbrook, then BNP candidate in Barking and Dagenham and London organizer, declared that the BNP was 'more Labour than Labour', which had abandoned the working class; and it is in Labour's traditional heartlands that the BNP has made most inroads. Griffin threw in his lot with the BNP's 'modernizers', working to give the party a more respectable image (with Le Pen's Front National as a model) and to rid the party of the 'careless extremism' which made them unelectable (Brown 2007). In the 1999 European elections the BNP gained 1.0 per cent of the national

vote, a major advance on any previous performance by a far-right party in national UK elections (although turnout was low). In that election, the party won 11 per cent and 10 per cent of the vote in the two Oldham constituencies and 10 per cent in Burnley. In 2002 the party won three council seats in Burnley and 28 per cent of the vote; in Oldham it took an average of 27 per cent of the vote across the five wards it contested (Copey 2004; Margetts *et al.* 2006). The BNP entered the 2004 European and local elections with 17 council seats and fielded a record number of candidates. There were predictions that the party would do well and might even win seats in the European Parliament. A report by Vision 21 for the Rowntree Charitable and Reform Trusts (2004) on three by-elections in Burnley, Calderdale and Oldham in 2003 suggested that the BNP's 'grassroots face-to-face campaigning' all year round was popular with residents and contributed to the party's successes.

In the European elections of 2004, the BNP won 4.9 per cent of the vote in the UK, up by 4 per cent on 1999. They gained a similar share of the vote in the London-wide elections for the London Assembly and almost gained a seat. In the mayoral election, they gained 3 per cent of first preferences and 3.7 per cent of second preferences. After the European and London Assembly elections in June 2004, the BNP decided to concentrate their efforts on the east London borough of Barking and Dagenham, where the party had no branch and few, if any, paid-up members. In a by-election in 2004, the BNP candidate came a close second to Labour with 31.5 per cent of the vote in the first of three by-elections; in September its candidate, David Kelley, won Goresbrook ward with 51.9 per cent of the vote; three weeks later, the BNP candidate again came a close second with 38.5 per cent of the vote. Also in 2004, the BNP won West ward in Keighley, with 51 per cent of the vote (Margetts *et al.* 2006).

In the 2005 general election, the BNP won 4.3 per cent of the vote across the 116 seats that they contested. The party polled 16.9 per cent in the Barking constituency, its main target and its highest share of the vote anywhere in the country, and 9.6 per cent in neighbouring Dagenham. In 33 of the seats they contested, they obtained more than 5 per cent of the votes (see Table 3.1)

Table 3.1: The BNP's Results in the 2005 General Election

No. of seats where BNP got more than 5%	33
No. of seats where BNP got more than 6%	21
No. of seats where BNP got more than 7%	10
No. of seats where BNP got more than 9%	7
No. of seats where BNP got more than 10%	3

Source: (Margetts *et al.* 2006)

The election results signal that the party has built up a significant electoral base and illustrate the potential for it to be even more successful in future elections, such as the local elections of 2006. Nigel Copsey, contemporary historian of the BNP, has noted, 'For the first time in its history, the British National Party stands on the brink of entering the political mainstream' (Copsey 2004). In fact by early 2000, the BNP had begun a process of electoral growth, with modest gains in the London mayoral elections and in sixteen targeted local council wards. In July that year, it gained just over 26 per cent of the vote in a council by-election in the outer London borough of Bexley, where the focus was almost exclusively on the issue of asylum seekers. 'Asylum seeker' was fast becoming the new race' card in British politics and the BNP sought to play it for all it was worth. But in early 2001, the BNP had also other cards to play, most notably in Oldham and Burnley in north-west England. First was Oldham, a part of Greater Manchester with a sizeable and segregated poor Asian, mainly Muslim, population. Taking cue from remarks made by Oldham's police chief, the local paper started a campaign in early 2001 over alleged Asian-on-white crime. This was, in turn, seized upon by the BNP whose activities in the area led to violent resistance on the night of 26 May by some Asian youths. In general election in June, one in six Oldham voters had turned to the BNP; one result of a strategy to concentrate its activists' efforts on only a limited number of constituencies. In this way, the BNP was able to increase its total vote and achieve localised success. In Oldham, the BNP had gained legitimacy by tapping into the issue of supposed Asian crime; in Burnley, it latched on to the canard that local resources were expended on Asian areas at the expense of white. While BNP reaped electoral benefit, the town of

Burnley reaped the violent discord two weeks after the election (Copey 2004; Margetts *et al.* 2006).

The electoral gains brought more attention for the BNP, as did further disturbances in the summer of 2001 in Stoke and Bradford. As Copey (2004) points out, when, after September 11, the anti-Muslim backlash meant that the asylum issue got mixed up with terrorism, and terrorism with UK-based Muslim 'extremists', the fortunes of the BNP were further boosted. The BNP's subsequent campaign spoke not merely to racial prejudices but also to national preoccupations. However, it was local focus that showed the way forward for the BNP. In Burnley, the BNP won three wards in the local elections held in May 2002, further encouraging mutual alienation of Muslim and non-Muslim communities in those areas. With this 'an important credibility threshold was passed' as Copey puts it. In May 2003 local elections the BNP won seven seats in Burnley and a further six in other towns; in 2004 that number increased to 21.

Copey further argues that underlying BNP's rise 'has been the reemergence of popular racism.....This racism, albeit articulated through "socially acceptable" forms of intolerance towards asylum seekers, and heightened by post "9/11" insecurities, has provided the British National Party with its largest reservoir of support'. And the BNP's quest for legitimacy, respectability and credibility has been aided by the way-even more blatant in the last general election campaign-that both the Labour and the Conservative parties have pandered to popular racism over asylum and immigration. It is significant to note that in the 2004 European election exit poll, it was found that 25.2 per cent of respondents felt that immigration was 'the most important issue facing Britain today', above unemployment (4.8) and the fight against terrorism (19.6) exceeded only by public services (46.9). This finding indicates the extent to which immigration was the top concern of many voters in 2004(Margetts *et al.* 2006).

In a recent study published by the University of Essex, *The BNP: Roots of its Appeal* (Margetts *et al.* 2006) found that a significant minority, as many as 18 to 25 per cent of the population, would consider voting for the British National Party even if they do not do so currently. Within this group of potential voters for the BNP is a

solid and long-standing sub-section of people who have strong views on immigration and asylum. And at the same time no far-right party has ever registered the electoral successes of the BNP and the party is in a strong position to take advantage of this potential support in forthcoming elections. Though the BNP were unable to make an impact at the national level, in terms of number of seats won, at the 2005 general elections; it managed to perform better in the May 2006 local elections by increasing their tally to an impressive figure of 48 councillors up from 21 in 2004 (Bennett 2006)

The BNP was instrumental in unleashing hatred and violence in the northern towns of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, where the South Asian Muslims are majority population. The activities of the British Nationalist Party (BNP) inflamed antagonism and mutual distrust between Muslim and white communities (*The Observer*, 3 June 2001, p. 5). In towns such as Oldham and Burnley, Muslim men of South Asian descent clashed with white extremists and police, highlighting the considerable discontent felt among some sections of the local Muslim communities. Speaking on BBC television in June 2001, BNP leader, Nick Griffin, stated that troubles in the area were ‘not an Asian problem, but a Muslim one’ (Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC) 2001: 12). For several weeks in the summer of 2001, young Asians living in the old, rundown textile mills of northern England went on a rampage to protest against a long history of economic deprivation and hopelessness, white racist threat and violence, police intrusion and incursion, public sector neglect and failed ethnic leadership (Ansari 2002; Amin 2003). According to Ash Amin (2003), after the civic unrest that involved the young Muslim men in the northern English towns of Oldham, Burnley and Bradford during the summer of 2001, a culture of unashamed questioning of the cultural practices and national allegiances of British Muslims has grown.

A BNP campaign leaflet entitled *Islam out of Britain* unapologetically sought to explain ‘the threat Islam and Muslims pose to Britain and British society’. However the explicit South Asian-ness of the BNP’s vitriol became apparent in its leaflet entitled *The Truth About I.S.L.A.M.* This employed ‘I.S.L.A.M’ as a acronym for ‘Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson and Molestation of women’. Widely

distributed, it used highly inflammatory reasons to justify hatred of Muslims, suggesting that 'to find out what Islam stands for, all you have to do is look at a copy of the Koran, and see for yourself.... Islam really does stand for Intolerance, Slaughter, Looting, Arson and Molestation of women'. Selectively quoting the Qur'an, it painted the most despicable picture of South Asian Muslims in particular. The venom of the diatribe reaches full strength when it suggests that understanding the Qur'an provides a context for the 2001 Bradford disturbances and 9/11(Allen 2005; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004).

The May 2006 local election campaign was fought by the BNP as a "referendum on Islam". Their election leaflet stated: "Terrorist atrocities in London. militant marches on our streets and 'preachers' calling for the deaths of normal British people simply because they don't follow Islam. This is not some nightmare vision – but the reality of Islamic extremism in Britain today, yet our government do nothing but pander to these people. The BNP say enough is enough! We are the only people speaking out against the dangers of the Islamification of Britain. If you want to make Blair and Co hear your voice, vote BNP, and use this election as a referendum on Islam." However, this shift in political tactics does not mean the BNP membership have abandoned their anti-semitic views. In the documentary *Young, Nazi, and Proud* Mark Collett, unaware that he was being recorded, opined: "I'd never say this on camera, the Jews have been thrown out of every country, including England. There's not a single European country the Jews have not been thrown out of.... When it happens that many times it's not just persecution. There's no smoke without fire." On the eve of the 2005 general election the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported details of a video made at a BNP social event "in which its members and supporters sing neo-Nazi songs, praise the leadership of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich, and give Sieg Heil salutes accompanied by shouts of 'Auschwitz!'" One of the songs sung in the video is "a re-write of the Kenny Rogers 1969 chart hit 'Ruby, don't take your love to town', except that the words have been changed to 'Nigger, get the **** out of my town'." The mask slipped again in June 2006 when Liam Birch, the BNP's candidate in a Plymouth council by-election, was exposed as having posted racist comments on his web log in which he referred to the "alleged" gassing of Jews by the Nazis and asserted that the chimney of a concentration camp crematorium was "a

Soviet dummy". Birch also wrote: "The Jews declared war on the Nazis, not the other way round."(McKibben 2007; Drake 2007; Brown 2007; Bennett 2006; Copey 2004)

It is quite clear that the public downplaying of anti-semitism by the BNP under Griffin's leadership is just another tactical manoeuvre that does not affect the party's basic ideology. In any case, a shift in emphasis from anti-Jewish to anti-Muslim racism is hardly evidence of a renunciation of fascism. Copey (2004) argues that even if the image and tactics have changed under Griffin there has been little modification of the party's core ideology. The recent study published by the University of Essex, *The BNP: Roots of its Appeal* (Margetts *et al.* 2006) concludes with the growing significance of the British National Party in English politics. The rise in BNP support is a national phenomenon, significant and widespread across several English regions, rather than a change restricted to a few localities such as the East End of London, parts of Yorkshire and Birmingham. This is a party that has used the electoral machine to garner and target support in different locations across England. It is likely to use its base to continue to gather more votes in local and European elections. It is time to take the challenge from the BNP seriously, especially given the more volatile conditions of British politics and the depth of disillusion and frustration felt about the established political parties (Brown 2007).

3.4 Terrorism, Anti- Terror Laws and Muslims

A crucial impact of September 11 was the spurt in anti-terror laws in democratic countries across Europe and Britain was no exception to it. After 9/11 and during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, responsible politicians and newspaper editors in Britain maintained that the war on terror was not a war on Islam. It was evident from the headlines in British newspapers such as the *Sun* and *Mirror*. Politicians and editors emphasised that the vast majority of Muslims are peaceful and law-abiding, and that Muslims who claim a religious justification for terrorism are a tiny unrepresentative minority (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004). In reality the 'War on Terror', has changed the dialectics of international discourse on terrorism. Despite the assurances by politicians and the media, the witch hunting had already begun in Britain. The 'enemy within' was identified and

Muslims were the easy target. There has been both widespread support for and condemnation of the way the British government and the criminal justice system has dealt with Muslims in the wake of the terrorist attacks in the USA in September 2001 (Ansari 2002).

Soon after the terrorist attacks of September 2001 on the United States of America, democratic countries around the world began to introduce anti-terrorism laws with the explicit aim to safeguard against similar events occurring on their own territories. Restrictions on individual freedom of assembly, religion, speech and the right to privacy soon raised the public's suspicion that the petrified mood among citizens was being exploited by governments to introduce overtly authoritarian legislation (Haubrich 2003). While governments justified these measures as a necessary means to enhance their antiterrorist and security capabilities, at times equating critics of the legislation with supporters of terrorism, human rights groups saw in the laws just another step in the retreat from protecting human rights. They accused governments of 'opportunism in the face of tragedy' by cloaking the crackdown on political opposition and civil disobedience (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2002). To them, the laws undermined the civil liberties on which democratic societies were traditionally built.

Muslims in Britain (and elsewhere) have felt increasingly vulnerable since September 2001. For some, this has been accentuated by the introduction of new legislation to deal with suspected terrorists. The Terrorism Act 2000 had already proscribed terrorist organizations which had been resisting tyrannies in their home countries or been involved in liberation movements (Sivanandan 2006). There has been substantial criticism from Muslim and non-Muslim individuals and organizations about the government's Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001, which allows internment without trial and suspends obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (Ansari 2002; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004; Sivanandan 2006). No other European country has taken such a drastic step. In the words of Amnesty International, it 'effectively allows non-nationals to be treated as if they have been charged with a criminal offence, convicted without a trial and sentenced to an open-

ended term of imprisonment'(Amnesty International 2002). The British government argued that Britain was vulnerable by virtue of its 'close' relationship with the USA. However, the security services have argued that there was no specific threat. Shortly after the legislation became law, seven people of Arab origin were interned, but none were charged in connection with the attacks on the USA on 11 September (*The Guardian*, 11 March 2002).

The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) allows the Home Secretary powers to detain terrorist suspects, if they are not UK nationals, without arrest, charge, trial or any of the normal safeguards, for an unlimited period of time (Haubrich 2003; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004). On 30 July 2002, the Special Immigration Appeals Commission ruled that the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 discriminated between foreign and UK nationals, and that the government had acted unlawfully by interning 11 terror suspects – all Muslims – without charge. The panel ruled that these suspects' human rights, under the ECHR, had been breached. However, the suspects remained under detention as the government decided to appeal against this judgment. Civil rights groups such as Liberty have condemned the law as internment under another name ('extended detention') and pledged to challenge it in the European Court of Human Rights (Ansari 2002). In order for the law, The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) to pass in Britain, the government had to withdraw Britain from Article 5 of the ECHR, which prohibits imprisonment without a fair trial. The Convention permits governments to opt out of the clause at 'times of war or other public emergencies' (*The Guardian*, 20 December 2001; Ansari 2002). There is also mounting concern in Muslim communities about the impact of anti-terrorism legislation on UK nationals. The statistical facts were published by the Home Office on 12 December 2003 and are as follows: in 2002-03 there were 32,100 searches under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 21,900 more than in the previous year and more than 30,000 above 1999-2000 levels. Resulting from the 32,100 searches, 380 people were arrested ⁴ (Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia 2004). UK

⁴ There was a particularly outrageous incident in November 2003, when a British Muslim was detained at Heathrow airport. He was one of the most respected and prominent Muslim scholars and leaders in the UK, Shaykh Suleman Motala, and was on his way to a pilgrimage. For more

Muslim groups condemned proposed anti-terrorism legislation saying it could lead to the “demonisation” of legitimate Islamic values and beliefs.

The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 was passed in British parliament on 13 December 2001. At that point, barely a month had passed since the bill had been submitted to the legislature (UK, Home Office: 2002). The speed and hurry were not unprecedented, of course. The two previous emergency anti-terrorism bills — the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1989 and the Prevention of Terrorism (Additional Powers) Act 1996 had been equally rushed through the legislative process. Yet, while the two predecessors contained only eleven and seven sections respectively, the 2001 Act encompassed a total of 129 sections that were in need of scrutiny through parliament (Haubrich 2003). Dirk Haubrich (2003), has identified eight categories of civil liberties that were affected by the various legal stipulations introduced in The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 passed by the British parliament. They are the following:

Privacy and Informational Self-Determination:

The civil right to privacy and informational self-determination refers to the right of the individual to be protected against intrusion into his or her personal life and to prevent the unauthorized acquisition or publication of secret personal information. In Britain, internet and phone providers need to keep communications data for two years, although the content of such communications is explicitly excluded from the stipulation (sec. 102–107). Forwarders and carriers, too, need to retain information on freight and passengers and furnish them to the enforcement agencies (sec. 87, 119). Governmental authorities, including the Inland Revenue, have the power to disclose any information required by the secret services or the police to facilitate, carry out and even initiate their investigations (sec. 17). Account monitoring enables the police to require financial institutions to provide information on accounts for up to 90 days (schedule 2, part 1). It will be an offence if the institution fails to report knowledge or suspicion of terrorist financing. Article 61 makes it a requirement for

information see The Muslim News, editorial article for November 2003, and comment and coverage at <http://www.mcb.org.uk> accessed on 4th March, 2007.

managers of laboratories dealing with pathogens and toxins to furnish the police with names and other details of people who have regular access to the facilities. (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Freedom of the Person:

One of the cornerstones of a free society is the ability of its citizens to go about their business without the need to explain to anyone in authority what they are doing, and without the fear that they may be subject to arbitrary challenge or arrest. Section 94 of the ATCSA confers on the police the right to require an individual to remove any item of clothing that might conceal his or her identity. These measures are available if the grounds are 'expedient' in order to prevent or control the commission of any criminal offence, no matter how minor. Further, search warrants can be issued whenever 'dangerous substances' are believed to be kept on particular premises (sec. 66). Police powers have been expanded beyond the actual police force. The jurisdiction of the British Transport Police (BTP) has been extended to allow it the same privileges as constables of the police force (sec. 100) (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Freedom of Expression:

Freedom of expression refers to the possibility for individuals, or groups of individuals, to promote a particular idea or point of view, through direct speech, books, articles, pamphlets, newspapers or broadcasting. In the British Act, sections 37 to 41 put the shouting of religion-related abuse under greater legal punishment. The provisions extend the racially aggravated offences of assault, public order, criminal damage and harassment to cover attacks aggravated by religious hostility. To be prosecuted on these accounts, a perpetrator must use threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Private Property:

Related to the right to privacy referred to earlier is the right to private property. The defence of property is usually justified on the grounds that individuals have a right

of private space. In Britain, sections 1, 4 and 5 now allow for the forfeiture and freezing of any property, including assets or cash, 'intended to be used for the purposes of terrorism'. Contrary to previous laws, this provision now applies at the beginning of an investigation and not only at the later stage when the person is being charged. The freezing order must be kept under review by the Treasury, is subject to further approval by parliament, and automatically expires two years after it has been invoked (sec. 7, 8) (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Freedom of Movement (Asylum/Immigration):

The right that is under consideration here is concerned with the freedom to come, go and also to remain on the territory of a country. The emphasis is on immigration control and the asylum process. In Britain, sections 21 to 32 now allow the detention of 'suspected terrorists' without trial where the option of their removal to the country of origin is not present at the time. Such can be the case if the person in question, if expelled, would face a real risk of being subjected to treatment contrary to article 3 of the ECHR. This provision may apply only to persons subject to immigration control, and therefore cannot apply to British citizens (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Jurisdiction of Secret Services:

Security services are needed to protect a country from external enemies and internal subversion. As such they are required to operate in secrecy. Contrary to the work carried out by the police force, they are allowed to gather information about individuals and organizations' exhibiting violent or extreme views without having to inform citizens what is happening. With their operations not being accountable to, or controllable by, the public, limitations to the jurisdiction of the secret services thus becomes a cornerstone for the protection of civil liberties. The focal point is that, first, a correct distinction is made between subversive action and legitimate civil dissent, and, secondly, activities that do not require the involvement of the secret services indeed stay in the realm of the publicly accountable police force. In Britain, sections 98 to 101 of the legislation allow the Ministry of Defence Police (MOD) to

act outside their previously limited jurisdiction. They are now allowed to operate outside defence sites, accountable only to the executive and outside the jurisdiction of the Police Complaints Authority. They can operate in cooperation with, and indeed with the same powers as, the national police force (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Personal Identification:

A formally less relevant, but emotionally more charged, aspect of the freedom of the person discussed earlier is the obligation of citizens to carry an identification card. Contrary to common belief, an ID card is not a legal document but merely *prima facie* evidence of nationality and identification. Government authorities may request evidence to establish nationality and identity but cannot detain persons who fail to produce the required document; an assessment that is equally applicable to passports. In Britain, the introduction of an ID-card was, after a much heated debate in public and parliament, finally pushed off the agenda. But biometrics is still being discussed as a feature with which British passports could be equipped and ID-cards might even be reintroduced through the back door as 'entitlement cards'. (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Miscellaneous:

The British law features a whole array of miscellaneous provisions. Sections 76 to 81 tighten the regulations related to nuclear security, 81 to 87 tighten the laws applicable to airport security, and sections 43 to 57 strengthen legislation controlling chemical, nuclear, biological or radiological weapons. Sections 108 to 110 prohibit the bribing of foreign diplomats and officials, and 114 imposes punishment on hoax threats that intend to induce in a person a belief that an item is likely to be, or contain, a noxious substance that could endanger human life or create a serious risk to human health (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003).

Table 3.2: Restrictions to Civil Liberties in Post-September 11 Anti-terrorism Laws in Britain

Law submitted to legislature:	12.11.2001
Law approved by legislature:	13.12.2001
Law expires:	Unrestricted
Privacy	Yes
Freedom of the Person	Yes
Freedom of Expression	Yes
Private Property	Yes
Freedom of Movement	Yes
Jurisdiction of Secret Services	Yes
Personal Identification	Yes
Miscellaneous	Yes

Source: (The Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001; Haubrich 2003)

The latest anti-terrorist bill (October 2005) is the fourth counter terrorist measure in five years and it has expanded the definition of terrorism and created new terrorist offences. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, introduced control orders legislation (that is house arrest and electronic tagging) to replace detention without trial (Sivanandan 2006). According to the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), the enforcement of anti-terrorism legislation “has led to the victimization and stigmatization of the Muslim community” (FAIR 2004: 4). FAIR has also found that:

victimisation of Muslims under the anti-terrorism legislation has lead to increased incidences of Islamophobia and racism against Muslims. This has manifested itself in the form of vandalism of mosques, Muslim graves and homes” and that “the increased hostility towards Muslims has also seen an increase in hate campaigns against Islam and Muslims from far right groups (FAIR 2004: 5-6).

One of the central elements in the debate in Europe about the integration of migrant communities, and especially Muslims, in the society is the question of political loyalty (van der Veer 2002: 97). In debates about religious points of view, Muslim citizens are regularly requested to show their allegiance to British norms and values, and to the law of the land. Some of this is simply a juridical demand connected with the citizenship, but it does single out Muslims. Muslims in particular have often been portrayed as fanatically pursuing the imposition of Islamic values on non-Muslims. In Western Europe, the burning of copies of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* did more than anything else to reinforce the image of intolerant Islam and to highlight the conflict between liberal conceptions of citizenship and religious conceptions of collective action in the public sphere (Asad 1990: 455-480).

The 7/7 attacks in London further added to the woes of British Muslims, who were persistently asked to prove their loyalty to the British state. On 7 July 2005, four bombs were detonated in central London during the morning rush hour. Three exploded in underground stations and the fourth on a bus. Two weeks later, on 21 July there were four more attempted attacks on London's public transport system. This time only the detonators of the bombs exploded, and there were no fatalities. The victims of the London bombings were people of many nationalities, British and non-British, whites and non-whites, Muslims and non-Muslims (EUMC 2005). The Government of the United Kingdom reacted initially in two ways. One reaction was to treat the London bombings as acts of terrorism and employ legal and operational measures to pursue the perpetrators vigorously and prevent any further similar event. The other reaction was aimed at averting any possible anti-Muslim backlash and ensuring that a careful distinction was drawn between the bombings and Islam or the Muslim communities. The Government made it clear that reprisals against Muslim communities (individuals, buildings, businesses, etc.) would not be tolerated and would be dealt with harshly. The Police stressed that they would pursue any such incidents with vigour, and to the full extent of the law (EUMC 2005).

Within the Muslim community, Muslim leaders reacted at once by condemning the bombings and stressing that such acts were counter to Islamic belief. For example, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB),

stated that any true Muslim would not carry out such acts as they were clearly contrary to Islamic beliefs. In general, the media went to great lengths to make the point that Muslims were killed in the bombings and that the perpetrators were not acting on behalf of Islam. On 7 July, the media carried articles warning against a potential anti-Muslim backlash. However, after it became clear that the bombers were British-born, there was a distinct change in the kind of reporting, shifting to issues of integration and the radicalisation of members of the Muslim community in Britain. The later reporting by some media on the granting of UK citizenship to some of the 21 July suspects and the situation of non-British religious extremists resident in the UK, broadened the debate to issues of immigration, residency status and human rights legislation. Media also focused on the themes of betrayal and ingratitude towards the host society regarding two of the suspects arrested for the attempted bombings on 21 July. The focus also shifted to Muslim communities and 'community leaders'. The key questions concerned the credibility of some current Muslim community leaders, and what potentially could be done to prevent young suicide bombers carrying out such acts in the future (EUMC 2005).

A Mori poll for the BBC conducted on 8-9 August suggests that the 7/7 bomb attacks have not led to an upsurge in racial intolerance. The poll showed that of the 1,004 people questioned⁵, 62 percent said multiculturalism made Britain "a better place to live". But 32 percent think it "threatens the British way of life" and 54 percent think "parts of the country don't feel like Britain any more because of immigration". The overwhelming majority of Muslims - 89 percent - said they feel proud when British teams do well in international competitions, a similar figure to the national population. The survey findings show that Muslims agree, as much as non-Muslims that immigrants should be made to learn English and accept the authority of British institutions. According to the survey, 74 percent of Muslims think Britain should deport or exclude foreigners who encourage terrorism, compared with 91 percent of the population as a whole. Multiculturalism is clearly an issue for discussion in the UK, having been taken for granted for many years, following remarks by Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Commission for racial

⁵ The survey questioned 1,004 people in the UK. A booster survey of 204 British Muslims was conducted for comparison

Equality, that more emphasis should be given to integration of minorities (Trevor Phillips:2004)

In conclusion one can say that the terror attacks of 9/11 and 7/7 has shifted the attention back to the issues of 'integration and cohesion' in Britain. Multiculturalism has been so to say put on the defensive. The government has since then been performing a delicate balancing act aimed at assuaging the fear and apprehension of the majority and trying not to appear to be holding the community responsible for acts of a few. In the aftermath of 7/7, thus a decision was taken, that the Home office with a number of representatives from the Muslim community would establish 'a commission to advise on how, consistent with their own religion and culture, there is better integration of those parts the community inadequately integrated'(UK Home Office: 2005, EUMC: 2005). The Commission on Integration and Cohesion was launched a year later in August 2006, but in the interim the Home Office immediately established seven working groups under the joint project title of 'Preventing Extremism Together' (PET), which were to focus, respectively, upon Muslim youth; education; women's issues; regional and local community projects; the training of imams and the role of mosques; community security and police relations; and finally, tackling extremism and radicalization (EUMC: 2005; Brighton:2007). The reports of these working groups, published in Autumn 2005, outlined key issues each group had identified and offered 64 recommendations for actions to be undertaken by both government and Muslim community groups (UK Home Office: 2005, EUMC: 2005). These efforts and follow up would go a long way in deciding the place of Muslims in British society. The government should continue to encourage and promote the active involvement of Muslim communities in institutionalised procedures of policy-making and include them in more informal channels of dialogue at European, national and local level if challenges that the government and the community faces vis-à-vis extremism is to be successfully tackled.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

Conclusion

The study of Muslims in Britain leads one to conclude the following. *Firstly*, over the years Muslims have become an important religious community in Britain despite facing various challenges. Demographic profile of the British Muslims has always been a matter of debate. A clear picture emerged from the 2001 Census data, since the Census for the first time included a question on religious affiliation. According to the figures published by the office of the National Statistics (ONS) on 13 February 2003, the Muslim population of the UK (in April 2001) was 1.6 million. The Muslims in Britain tend to concentrate in a small number of large urban areas with London having around two fifths of Muslims. The different reports as the Ouseley Report, Cantle Report following riots in Muslim dominated areas had in fact indicated this tendency of 'ghettoisation' which gets further rooted with the application of multicultural policies.

Secondly, while it is true that the British Muslims are not a monolithic community their common religious identity presents them with similar challenges and issues. They are members of diaspora communities concentrated along ethnic lines in different parts of urban Britain. Early Muslim migrants arrived as seamen, labourers, traders and began settling around the major British ports at the beginning of nineteenth century. Migration of Muslims increased substantially since the end of Second World War. As a result of decolonization, migration from Commonwealth countries increased and the majority of them were from South Asia, parts of Middle East, Africa and Cyprus.

Thirdly, the study indicates that the British Muslims are becoming increasingly vocal in terms of their identity. In the initial years efforts at identity maintenance was by and large a private affair. Thus the community arranged for halal meat, children's education and prayer facility through intra community effort. No help from the state was as such sought other than the understanding that it would allow their customs, traditions to function. However, with the successive generations born in Britain understanding and expectations changed. They demanded more than mere

tolerance. Thus they lobbied for active help from the state in maintaining their community identity. The whole issue of state funding for Muslim schools is a case in point that can only be understood in this context. The argument was if there were Church run schools funded by state, Muslims were also entitled to their Islamic schools.

Fourthly, the response of the British state to reports of discrimination and harassment that early migrants faced was to adopt Race Laws. The first one came in 1965, the second in 1968 and third 1976. The 1976 Race Relations Act also created The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) as a permanent body to enforce, review and make recommendations in relation to anti discrimination measures and to promote good race relations. CRE initiated many projects and programmes to create an environment conducive to the coexistence of different religious and racial groups. However, the problem of the Muslim community was far from adequately addressed as this study shows. This was because the element of religion was altogether missing till 2003, when for the first time religious discrimination was declared an offence. The application was still restrictive, as this was extended only in the sphere of employment.

Fifthly, the publication of *Satanic Verses* marked a turning point in Muslim community life both in terms of what they wanted of the state and how the larger white British community perceived them. The publication of *Satanic Verses* which intended to denigrate The Prophet created uproar among the Muslims in Britain who found it offensive. It was an event which made history and the ensuing crisis can be seen as a prelude to the much criticized 'clash of civilizations' theory of Samuel Huntington. Muslims were vociferous in their protest against Salman Rushdie and his novel *Satanic Verses*. It became acrimonious when a copy of the novel was symbolically burned at a mass rally in Bradford on 14 January 1989. The issue received international attention after Ayatollah Khomeini declared a *fatwa*, calling for the death of Salman Rushdie. It reinforced the already prejudiced notion that Muslims are an intolerant community. It also set in motion debates on freedom of speech, blasphemy laws and the protection of non-Christian religions in Britain.

Muslim demand for banning of the book was opposed by majority of the British establishment and public at large, who considered it as an attack on the principles of freedom of speech, thought and expression. But the issue also opened up discussions on the inadequacy of the British blasphemy law. The law protects only Christianity and the demand was to extend protection to other religions. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) also argued that either the blasphemy law should be extended to other faiths or that it should be abolished altogether.

Sixthly, legal imperfection and lacuna notwithstanding, the British Muslims have over the years become more assertive so far as their religious identity is concerned. Apart from the conducive climate that the adoption of multiculturalism has created this could be because overtime their families joined them and today the community consists of British born citizens for whom Britain is their country of origin, their homeland, their motherland so to say. In a sense, therefore, they see themselves as having greater legitimate claims on the state.

Seventhly, multiculturalism and the Muslims are inextricably linked together in present day Britain. It has been argued that the immediate future of British multiculturalism is closely associated with the experience of British Muslims. The study shows that by and large the policy has worked for them. Not all issues have and can be settled overnight, but the movement has been positive. For instance the establishment of religious schools has been a major area of concern for the British Muslims. They consider it essential for maintaining their religious identity. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church have got more than 2000 schools that receive the bulk of their running costs from public funds. After much struggle the Muslims now have five such state funded-schools. It is obviously a far cry from what the Church has got but what is important here is that the Muslim community's claim has been accepted in principle and from here on the numbers can only improve and increase.

Eighthly, apart from education, political engagement and accommodation of community practices are crucial concerns for the community. Muslims realize that

formal political mechanism is an effective way of getting their problems addressed and it is visible from the fact that growing numbers of Muslims are getting involved in their local community political initiatives. Traditionally they have been supporting the Labour Party. Although several efforts made to organize Muslims were not completely successful, Muslim organizations have become more visible in the public sphere since late 1980s. The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKCIA) was formed in 1988, to mobilize protests against the *Satanic Verses*. But its authority was challenged by other Muslims who questioned its legitimacy. Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) was formed in May 1996, and by May 2001, its general secretary Yousuf Bhailok claimed that it was the largest umbrella organization of Muslims and that its status as representative body was recognized by all mainstream politicians.

Ninthly, the terrorist attacks in New York (9/11), Madrid (24/3) and London (7/7) has diverted the focus away from identity issues of Muslims which were debated in the public sphere of Britain. Muslims have been victims of a vicious diatribe following these incidents. Media representation of Muslims and Islamic practices has been highly arbitrary and it has helped in intensifying Islamophobic attitudes in Britain. Media has been projecting a monolithic image of Islam and Muslims, which poses a threat to Western democratic values. This image is backed by scholars like Huntington, who argue that a clash between West and Islam is inevitable since the two civilizations are diametrically opposed to each other. The undue coverage given to fringe elements among Muslims who profess extremist views on religion is projected to reinforce the view that Islam and Muslims are intolerant and uncivilized. Voices of moderation by the learned scholars of Islam are being neglected and pushed to the periphery. The EUMC study which analyzed the negative impact on attitudes towards Islam and Muslims in the 15 EU member states following September 11, specifically examined the role of media. It concluded that there were instances of sensationalism and stereotyping in the media coverage of almost all member states, including the UK to a greater or a lesser degree.

September 11 contributed in strengthening Islamophobic trends throughout Europe. In Britain this feeling gained greater ground following the London 7/7 terror attacks.

Muslims were the 'other' and the 'enemy within'. The EUMC summary report on Islamophobia in the EU after September 11 categorically stated that Muslims had experienced increased hostility even though relatively low levels of violent abuse were reported. In Britain anti-Muslim hostility ranged from - verbal and physical attacks on Muslims in public places to laws curtailing civil liberties that disproportionately affect Muslims. The report also pointed out that Muslim women wearing the hijab were easily identifiable and widespread targets for verbal abuse, being spat upon, having their hijab torn from them and being physically assaulted. A number of prominent mosques around the country were similarly attacked, ranging from minor vandalism and graffiti to serious damage through arson and firebombs.

Tenthly, 9/11 and 7/7 gave a fresh lease to the activities of the BNP. The events appeared to corroborate Powell's speech way back in 1968 where he warned about the perils of immigration. Immigrants were aliens, inassimilable and antithetical to the interests of British society. The BNP moved by similar understanding intensified its activities following these events. Though they did not gain in terms of seats in the 2005 national elections in Britain, they were as seen in this study able to increase their support as evident from their vote share. They made inroads into many local Councils and got over 50 councilors, an achievement unprecedented in the history of the far right in Britain. The 2001 riots in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford, orchestrated by the BNP helped to change its electoral fortunes. The increase in its popularity, vote share by openly criticizing the Muslim community does not augur well for the Muslims. In all likelihood the association of the community as rigid, conservative, non-adaptable in the public mind since the Rushdie affair is reinforced after the terror attacks and explains the increase in BNP sympathizers.

Another effect of September 11 and 7/7 has been the opening up of the question of community loyalty. The Muslims are being considered as the 'enemy within' with doubts cast over their loyalty to the British state. Many studies, however, prove it otherwise. In a recent study (2007) conducted by Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) in Britain found that the idea of Britishness is more widely prevalent among ethnic minority groups than native white Britons who tend increasingly to assert their regional identities, and insist on being described as "English", "Scottish" or

“Welsh” rather than British. Rahsaan Maxwell (2006), in his study using the survey data from the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey, proves that Muslims and South Asians are almost as likely as whites to identify themselves as British. The policy of multiculturalism in Britain is under considerable criticism from various quarters; from left- liberals to feminists and right wing have been vociferous in their attack. They claim that multiculturalism has failed to achieve what it was intended to do and it has outlived its utility.

Finally, notwithstanding the fact that the terror acts are committed by handful of individuals from the Muslim community what created apprehension was the involvement of Muslims who were British citizens. This has created problems all round, it has put the community on back foot, it has unleashed vocal criticism of multiculturalism as a policy, and it creates enormous difficulties for the authorities to come up with laws that will prevent perpetration of such acts in future without appearing to target a particular community. Thus the government came up rather hurriedly with the Anti Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001. It provides the government with excessive powers aimed at curtailing the civil liberties of its citizens. To pass the law the government had to withdraw Britain from Article 5 of the ECHR, which prohibits imprisonment without a fair trial. Though of course the law specifically targets no community, in the present atmosphere it makes the Muslims considerably vulnerable in the British society.

Liberal democratic theories’ thrust on the individual has been supplemented by multiculturalists’ emphasis on groups and group rights. Critiques of multiculturalism have long debated on the merit of according such rights. Feminists for instance, have had strong reservations against granting rights to groups. Today, however, multiculturalism faces criticism for creating segregated communities whose identity takes precedence over commonality. The issue of terror has created further complexity and how multiculturalism handles this onslaught remains to be seen.

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