

Contemporary challenges of Muslim Ummah and their solutions according to teachings of Islam.

Introduction:

The Muslim Ummah also known as Muslim community of believers was established by Holy Prophet in 622 C.E. From 622 C.E to this date, Muslim Ummah has grown into more than 1.5 billion people and 57 states. It has developed in numerous ways such as forming geopolitical relationships, having large territories under control and making strong human potential. In addition, many of the states of Muslim Ummah are well-developed and they hold a strong position in the world as they are rich in natural resources and have formed a monopoly in the ~~market~~ market such as oil, natural gas, coal etc.

With the development of Muslim Ummah, there have been internal and external challenges that they are facing. These challenges are hindering their progress towards a strong Muslim Ummah. The internal challenges include political disunity, inefficient management of natural resources, inability to advance in education, science and ^{intellectual} technology, modern world, extremism, intellectual crisis, identity crisis, moral crisis, and Middle Eastern crisis. The external

challenges include colonialization, globalization and western power over the weak Muslim states.

Internal Challenges

Political Disunity:

Unity is an essential element of Islam and it has been emphasized and practiced by Muslim Ummah to live in unity. In Surah Hujurat, it has been highlighted that,

"The believers are nothing but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers."

(Al Hujurat, verse 10)

In today's era, political disunity has been a major internal challenge. Muslim brothers are not united as they were in the past.

Muslim states are indulged in sectarian quarrel and hatred among each other. In many states, majority Sunni sects are killing Shia people and in majority Shia states, Sunnis are being killed. Moreover, the rich

Muslim states are not helping much their poor Muslim brother states. The Muslim Ummah was based on progressing together as one unit, but due to personal quarrels and power ambitions, Muslims are not in unity.

It is causing them to go backwards instead of progressing. One best example that depicts the unity and disunity among Muslims is

of Pakistan's relationship with Iran and Afghanistan. When Pakistan got independence, Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan as an independent Islamic state. On the other hand, Pakistan and Afghanistan were not able to form such good ties till date. Pakistan had put in a lot of efforts such as establishing RCD and supporting the government of Afghanistan, but had somehow, not succeeded in its efforts.

Inefficient management of natural resources:

Many muslim countries are rich in resources but they are unable to make the best use of them. Although, these countries are earning a great wealth and enjoying status of complete monopoly in the market, but they haven't invested much as per the teachings of Muslim Ummah. Most of the muslim countries are underdeveloped and living below the poverty line, but rich Muslim states have failed to accommodate them to progress. These resources could have been used to serve the purpose of Islam and defend Muslims against conspiracy and wars but the picture portrays otherwise. The rich muslim countries have used these resources for their lavishness and extravagance. They could have provided a great aid in developing education, science and social sector to

help Muslim Ummah become stronger.
Inability to advance in Education, Science and Technology:

Muslim countries are unable to show visible progress in the fields of education, science and technology. This lacking has made them dependent on other countries such as US, China, Japan, Germany etc. The muslim countries have less literacy rates as compared to other countries. There are low number of ~~univ~~ universities or Ph.Ds if set side by side with other countries. Although, some countries such as Turkey are trying to progress in this regard but the overall results are dismal. Islam has focused and emphasized on getting knowledge and learning. In Surah Az Zumar, the importance of knowledge has been explained,

"Are those who have knowledge equal to those who do not have knowledge?"

(Surah Az Zumar, verse 9)

Modern World

As the world is developing, new technology and advancement has taken charge of it. There have been rapid changes in communication and how practices and activities are being led. Today, the world is called a global village. Muslim lack in this field too. Muslims are not effectively using

these tools to serve the purpose of Islam and to help their Muslim Ummah develop. In this contemporary world, only updated tools like such can be helpful socially, politically and religiously. One good example is, whatever injustice has been happening in Palestine was on social media and people were deciding to help them in one way or other.

Extremism

There is a huge difference between the past when Islam was formed as a religion and the present world. Failing to acknowledge and act as per the difference, the learned interpreters have coined Islam as fundamentalist. They emphasize on making the interpretation strict and rigid but it is irrelevant and inadequate in modern times. Many Muslim countries have to face or implement strict policies to adhere with religious doctrines which becomes intolerable for them to grow. Islam is the message of peace. The word Islam itself comes from an Arabic word 'SLM' which means peace, surrender, submission etc., so how can Islam be strict and fundamentalist? Many terrorist groups have misused the interpretations of the teachings of Islam by indulging in terrorist attacks, killing thousands of innocent people and themselves, and calling it Jihād.

The Holy Quran in Surah Anbya sheds light on,
"Oh Muhammad! We have sent you as a
mercy to the worlds."

(Surah Anbya, verse 107)

Intellectual Crisis

Before When British took over India and started giving western education to the public, muslims thought of it as their conspiracy to convert Muslims to their religions. They did not allow their children to get western education and had to face severe consequences. This canvas perfectly paints the picture of Muslim's thinking towards the intellectual advancement. Muslims are not as intellectual in comparison with other people. They have lagged behind in scientific and technological advancement. This stagnation has been caused by various political, social and cultural factors in the past era. However, the muslims need to step up their game because they are inclined towards modernization.

Moral Crisis

Islam is a religion that teaches us balance between this world and the Hereafter. However, modernization has blurred this picture and made people more ~~materitit~~ materialistic. Money is assumed to be the most important element in life. People are

more worried about their life here than the Hereafter. This has ^{caused} given greed and other such evils that are ~~not~~ immoral to come into existence. These evils bring severe consequences. The rich Muslim countries are into earning more money and help their Muslim brothers a little only. In addition, these immoral activities have made enemies, devastated economies ~~and~~ and taken the lives of millions. In Surah Al Adiyat, Allah says,

"And verily, he is violent in the love of wealth."

(Surah Al Adiyat, verse 8)

Middle Eastern Crisis:

One of the greatest challenge for the Muslim Ummah is Middle Eastern Crisis. It has failed to unite the muslim countries as they were in the past. ISIS is controlling Syria and Iran. Palestinians are being victim of genocide of Israel. Saudi Arabia is attacking Yemen. Libya is disintegrated. Such terrorist groups and the actions of Muslim countries are putting a negative mask in the name of Islam.

External Challenges:

Colonialism:

The western domination subjugated weaker states and Muslims were isolated from their foundation and values. The message of Islam was considered outdated and harsh, and the Muslims were ridiculed for their teachings of Islam. Moreover, the simple living people were looked down, during this period. The concept of westernized elite came into existence. The differences of superiority and inferiority were given birth to. The western Muslim states also participated in this race instead of supporting their fellow brothers.

Globalization:

Globalization has given numerous benefits to the world. It has increased trade and investments, reduced the distance and increased usage of modern technology. However, Muslim Ummah is facing several challenges due to globalization. As globalization is a modern form of colonialism, it is mostly in western manner. It has caused cultural impoverishment, backwardness in educational and technological fields, deviation from values and ideological battles.

Western domination over weaker states:

The weak states are dependent on the western states as they provide them with support in times of need. This dependence has made the western states dominant and weaker states have to do as they say. It has added into

the struggles of Muslim Ummah and made them lag behind in all aspects.

Pragmatic measures for the Muslim Ummah:

The muslim needs to understand that there is difference in past and present ~~th~~ times. The ~~teachings~~ ^{practices} applied ~~in~~ at that time may not be applicable, nowadays. They have to come up with new system that is as per the teachings of Islam but are defined and approved with the present world, They have to learn new ways of staying united and spreading the message of Islam.

A United Muslim Ummah:

Most of the challenges faced by muslim countries are because they are not united as they are suppose to be. ~~The~~ ^{The} solutions should be discussed for sectarian divide, extremism and terrorism, and should be implemented by all states.

Focus on science, education and technology:

In many verses and hadith, the importance of knowledge has been mentioned. Holy Prophet (Pbuh) said, "~~seeking knowledge is an~~

"seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim."

Hence, the Muslim Ummah should focus on gaining ~~not~~ knowledge and exposure in science, education and technology, and advance themselves.

Ijtihad:

The current situation portrays growing need for

Jtihad and the religious scholars should play a positive role in finding the solutions for the challenges faced in these times. They should focus on portraying the real message of Islam, that is, peace and harmony. The teachings of Quran and Hadith should be interpreted in the correct way.

Joint Efforts of Muslim Ummah:

As mentioned earlier, the rich muslim states are not doing much to support the weak muslim states. Muslim Ummah should be one unit in all aspects. The joint efforts should be made to support muslim countries economically, socially and culturally. A fund should be set up for the Muslim Ummah to support them. There should be greater investments, infrastructure and advancement in the community.

Islamophobia and the real Islam:

Muslim Ummah should together put an end to the terrorist groups who in the name of Jihed, are killing thousands of innocent people. Islam is not the name of terror, but the message of peace and harmony, and it should be portrayed in the same manner.

The role of OIC:

OIC is playing an effective role of bringing all muslim countries together and come up with solutions for the recent challenges. However, the disunity in muslim countries is causing an hindrance as it requires collective efforts, OIC should work on improving the relationships and

and the image of Islam.

Conclusion:

Muslim Ummah is facing great challenges and they require immediate attention. The muslim countries should stop blaming others, accept their mistakes and rectify ~~if~~ them. They should accept that practices applied before ~~should~~ will not be applied today and they have to incline themselves as per the situation but without compromising the real message of Islam. The unity among muslim countries will play an important role in reviving the image of Islam, peace and harmony.