

Question-1

Is Islamophobia a threat to Muslim?
Explain how Muslim societies can
get rid of it.

(a)

Introduction

Islamophobia has significantly spread after 9/11 attacks. Western media portray Islam as violent, which generated fear in western communities from Muslims. Therefore, it became a threat for Muslim communities. These threats include discrimination of Muslims faced by Muslim minorities, physical attacks, travel restriction and identity crisis. However, to get rid of these threats strict actions are required for instance, stronger diplomatic stance, legal and policy reforms, show true image of Islam by academia and media, and counter extremism in within Muslim societies. These measures would help

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In conveying true universal values of Islam.

Historical Perspectives of Islamophobia

Islam was labelled as "backward" and "irrational"

Muslim states viewed as authoritarian and weak
Islamic threat: Iranian revolution (1979)

Colonial period
(18th-20th century)

Post-Colonial Era
(20th century)

Islamophobia

9/11 attacks
(21st century)

Contemporary

Islam was equated with terrorism

Term like "Islamic extremism"
and "Islamic terrorism"
became common

Islamophobia is fueled by far-right populism, media misinterpretation and Islam-west polarisation

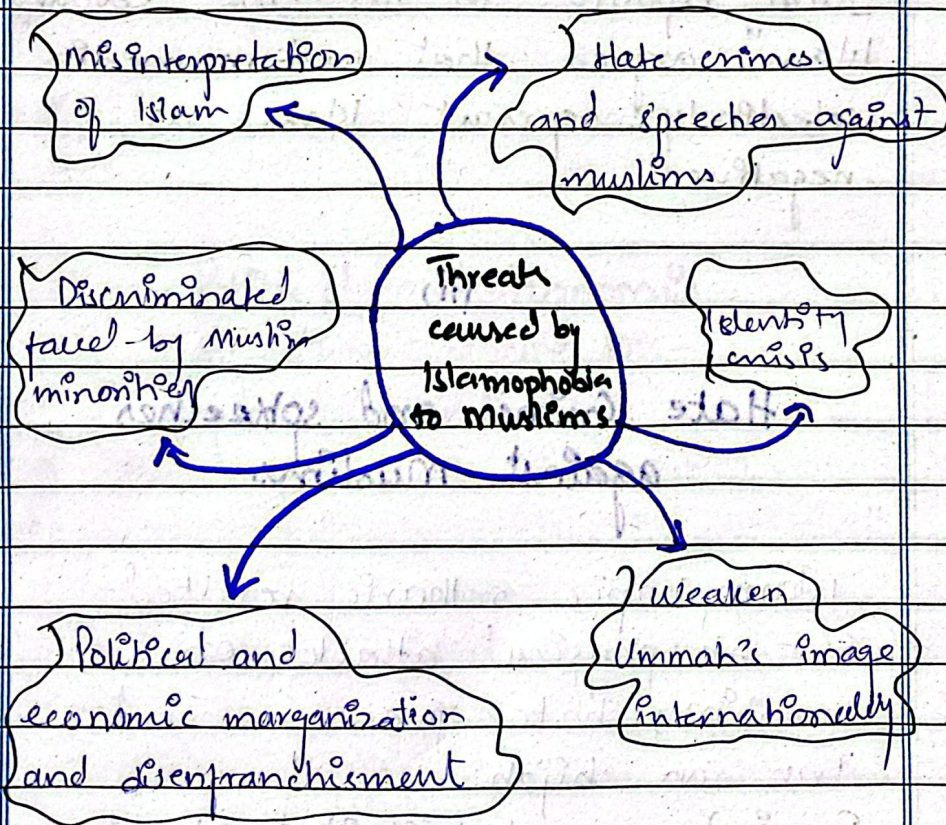
John Esposito defines Islamophobia as:
"Islamophobia is a modern form of racism that uses religion as a identity

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maker to justify discrimination and exclusion against Muslims
(C)

Islamophobia: Threat to Muslims

Islamophobia is a threat to Muslim Ummah as it caused several challenges for Muslims. Some of them are:



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Misinterpretation of Islam

Islamophobia has caused distorted teaching of Islam. Western Media portray Islam as inherently violent which are against the universal values of Islam i.e. peace, tolerance and compassion. John Esposito in his book "Covering Islam" argued that western media selectively represent Islam as negative.

Hate crimes and speeches against Muslims

Islamophobic rhetoric resulted in physical attacks on Muslims, hate speeches and ban on hijab. For instance, in Christchurch in mosque in New Zealand, 51 Muslims were killed during Friday prayer by shooting (2019).

(iii)

(vi)

Discrimination faced by Muslim minority

Muslim minority faced prejudice in jobs, education, housing and social life because of Islamophobia. Pew Research (2021) reported that 78% of ~~Asian~~ European Muslim feel discriminated because of their faith.

(iv)

Political and Economic Marginalisation and Disenfranchisement

Islamophobia lead to the political and economic marginalisation of Muslims. Muslims ~~are~~ are considered as "second class citizen" and political parties use Islamophobia to win election.

For example, France ban on Hijab and India's CAA (Citizen Amendment Act) 2019

(iv)

Weaken Ummah's Image Internationally

Islamophobia cause damage to soft power of Muslim States. Muslim ban on travel and visa restriction, restricted Muslims from global trade, political participation and academics.

For instance, US "Muslim Ban" in 2017 on 7 Muslim majority countries, stigmatize the whole Ummah.

Bin Laden has inspired
- 2011 bin (vi) of the movement
Islamophobia

Islamophobia resulted in Identity Crisis

Constant exposure to rejection, discrimination resulted in depression, anxiety and identity crisis.

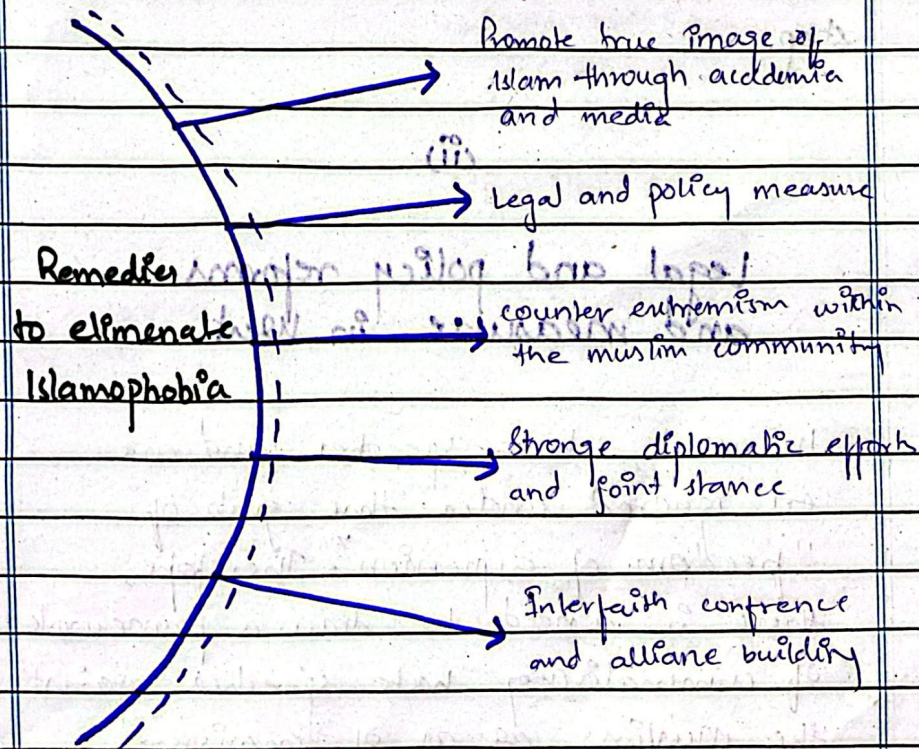
Karen Armstrong in his book Islam and West argued that Islamophobia pressures the Muslims

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to either assimilate completely or become radicalised.

Remedies to Eliminate Islamophobia

In order to address these threats and challenges, state-level to grass-root level measures are required. Some of the remedies that would help in culminate threats are



(i)

Promote True Image of Islam through media and academia

Islamophobia agenda widely spread through social media and therefore and academia. Therefore, muslim scholars and research center should publish international journals, hold conferences and counter the orientalist stereotypes.

For instance, a book of Karen Armstrong "Muhammad: A Prophet of our Time" is the best counter narrative building step.

(ii)

Legal and policy reforms and measure in West

In west, hate speeches are ignored under the grab of "freedom of expression". Therefore, there is a need to draw a framework of criminalising hate speeches against the muslims as an of terrorism.

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John Esposito argued that legal safeguards are required to stop it from being normal.

(iii)

Counter Extremisms within the Muslim Communities

Extremist act within the muslim communities is put as "proof" of Islam being violent. Therefore, counter extremism is necessary.

Extremism can be controlled by wasatiyyah (moderation), interfaith dialogue and joint fatwa against extremism.

(iv)

Stronger diplomatic efforts and joint stance

It is essential to prevent islamophobic & western policies. OIC and muslim world should joint put this issue in international forums such as United Nation (UN) and

European Union (EU) against the islamophobic policies of west, travel ban and

hate speeches

(c)

Conclusion

In a nutshell, in the contemporary world, Islamophobia is the one the most significant threats to Muslim Ummah that need international attention. However, Muslims can get rid of it by taking essential measures.

(vi)

Some steps to be taken to reduce Islamophobia