

Some Recent Publications on Islam/Muslims

Shikwa-e-Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims by Mujibur
Rehman, 2024, Simon & Schuster Publishers India

Roughly 200 million today, Indian Muslims are greater than the population of Britain and France or Germany put together. According to the Indian Constitution, Indian Muslims are treated as political equals, which is what India's secular polity promised after its independence, encouraging more than 35 million Indian Muslims at the time of Partition to choose India as their motherland over Pakistan. However, the supposed relationship of equality between Hindus and Muslims as scripted in the constitution is being increasingly replaced by the domineering tendencies of a Hindu majority in India today.

The author describes the current state and position of Indian Muslims (the seeds for which were sown when the BJP came to power in 2014) as the third political moment; the second he believes was in 1947 when the community was given equal status in the Indian Constitution; and the first, was in 1857 when Indian Muslims learnt to live under the British colonial state. As he states, there is no denying that political circumstances for Indian Muslims were not completely ideal or full of democratic energy prior to the rise of the Hindu Right since the late 1980s. With numerous layers defined by language, ethnicity, region, etc., Muslims have the most heterogeneous identity, representing India's quintessential diversity. And yet, Muslims are perceived as the most enduring well-grounded threat to the majoritarian project of the Hindu Rashtra.

Indian Muslims are perceived or presented as perpetrators of violence and violators of law, even if they are at the receiving end. They are viewed as an internal enemy, who need to be dealt with for political, social, historical, and ideological reasons.

Going forward, the community must formulate the language of democratic rights of Indian Muslims as equal citizens and define the ethics of human dignity in their struggle to reassert their place in India's political power structures at all levels: from panchayat to Parliament. While the economic future or cultural rights of Indian Muslims have been debated since 1947, it is the political future that demands attention because only as an equal and participatory community in the politics of the nation, can economic and cultural futures be addressed. This book explores the political future of Indian Muslims in this context.

From Shaheen Bagh to Hindu-Muslim riots, from the unique position of Muslim women in India to the Sachar Report and the Muslim backwardness debate, Mujibur Rehman analyses, confronts and discusses the urgent concerns of Indian Muslims in a manner that is nuanced and globally relevant.

A History of the Muslim World: From Its Origins to the Dawn of Modernity by Michael Cook, 2024, Princeton University Press

A panoramic history of the Muslim world from the age of the Prophet Muammad to the birth of the modern era.

This book describes and explains the major events, personalities, conflicts, and convergences that have shaped the history of the Muslim world. The body of the book takes readers from the origins of Islam to the eve of the nineteenth century, and an epilogue continues the story to the present day. Michael Cook thus provides a broad history of a civilization remarkable for both its unity and diversity.

After setting the scene in the Middle East of late antiquity, the book depicts the rise of Islam as one of the great black swan events of history. It continues with the spectacular rise of the Caliphate, an empire that by the time it broke up had nurtured the formation of a new civilization. It then goes on to cover the diverse histories of all the major regions of the Muslim world, providing a wide-ranging account of the key military, political, and cultural developments that accompanied the eastward and westward spread of Islam from the Middle East to the shores of the Atlantic and the Pacific.

At the same time, A History of the Muslim World contains numerous primary-source quotations that expose the reader to a variety of acutely insightful voices from the Muslim past.

A Brief History of the Present: Muslims in New India by Hilal Ahmed, 2024, India Viking

Present-day political discourse swings between two contrary positions on the issue of Muslims. Hindutva politics categorizes Muslims as a monolithic religious group to substantiate Hindu homogeneity. The liberals, on the other hand, claim to protect Muslims as a religious minority to defend Indian democracy (if not secularism!). In both cases, Muslim identity is envisioned as a one-dimensional phenomenon.

A Brief History of the Present attempts to go beyond the obvious to rethink the role of minorities, specifically Muslims, in the 'New India' that has revealed itself since 2014. By diving deep into the complexities of Muslim identity and its role in everyday life while at the same time viewing the Muslim communities through a historical lens, the author attempts to provide a far more accurate picture of Indian Muslims than what is perceived currently.

Through the author's interpretation of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative sources and his long experience as an observer of the Indian political scenario for more than three decades, the book presents a deeply considered view of a burning question: the current status of Muslims in India.

Intra-Muslim Polemics in South India: Intimacies, Mass Publicity, and Secularism by Nandagopal Menon, 2024, Oxford University Press

How do we understand differences and disputes among various branches of Islam? This book places intimacies, rather than radical incompatibilities, at the centre of its in-depth ethnographic account of mass-publicized theological polemics among Sunni Muslims in the south Indian state of Kerala. What unites Muslims of different Sunni groups also divides them and incites polemics—Islam as a shared system of knowledge and practices, bonds of kinship and other social relations, and the common condition of being a beleaguered religious minority in a Hindu majoritarian democracy. Diverging from works that have focused on how Islamic practices like ritual prayers facilitate the fashioning of theologically grounded pious selves, the book argues that intra-Muslim polemics marginalize theology and have little to do with cultivating piety. Instead, polemics constitute inter- and intra-religious socialities, enable Muslims to articulate their connections to India and other imaginaries, and produce Islam as a public religion in a secular nation-state.

Postcolonial Bollywood and Muslim Identity by Nadira Khatun, 2024, Oxford University Press

The book joins a growing scholarship in the field of Bollywood film studies, encompassing methodological sub-groups such as discursive or narrative studies, textual analysis, audience research, and the political economy of Bollywood. It particularly focuses on the representation of Muslims in postcolonial Bollywood cinema that draws upon earlier questions and concerns about narrative style and the politics of representing Muslims. It also includes issues concerning Muslim film genres and the chronological shift in the portrayal of Muslims that is contingent upon national politics. In Bollywood cinema, Muslims have traditionally been portrayed through the lens of religion. Narratives associated with that specific religious identity have been adapted, based on the socio-political setting of the country at the time of the film's making. The study, thus, adds to scholarship on 'representation' in popular Hindi cinema.

Why Islamists Go Green: Politics, Religion and the Environment by

Emmanuel Karagiannis, 2024, Edinburgh University Press

Investigates the environmental policies of transnational and militant Islamist groups

- Examines and compares the environmentalism of transnational groups that have been labelled as extremist or militant: the Muslim Brotherhood, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Hamas, Hizbullah, Al-Qaeda and ISIS

- Covers different thematic areas, including land and water management, trees, animal issues, energy and pollution
- Seeks to expand research into Islamist environmentalism through the combined lens of political science and Islamic studies

From North Africa to Indonesia, Muslim populations have struggled to cope with the new environmental realities. In the era of globalisation, however, Islamists are increasingly addressing green issues and suggesting policies to help protect the environment. Delving into the causes of this new environmentalism phenomenon, Emmanuel Karagiannis explores the motivations of different Islamist groups and assesses the degree of influence that Islamic texts, rulings and principles have on the green policies pursued.

Islamic Modernities in World Society: The Rise, Spread, and Fragmentation of a Hegemonic Idea by Dietrich Jung, 2025, Edinburg University Press

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Islamic Modernities in World Society: The Rise, Spread, and Fragmentation of a Hegemonic Idea by Dietrich Jung, 2025, Edinburg University Press

Offers a new understanding of the relation between Islam and modernity, informed by social theory

Interprets modern Muslim history as an integral part of global modernity

- Presents a unique combination of social theory with Islamic studies
- Critically revises Eisenstadt's concept of multiple modernities
- Combines two distinct concepts of world society with theories of social emergence
- Six case studies give an account of the multiple modernities within Islam
- A theoretically informed fresh view on the construction of modern Muslim identities
- Based on more than 30 years of experience in Muslim countries

How is one 'authentically' modern? Substantively drawing on contemporary social theory, this book investigates the multiplicity of answers that Muslims have given to this question since the end of the nineteenth century. Through six historical and thematic case studies, the chapters examine the historical evolution of multiple modernities within Islam. The book argues that we can observe the rise and spread of a relatively hegemonic idea according to which a relation to Islamic traditions bestows projects of Muslim modernities with cultural authenticity. At the same time, the book provides an interpretation of this specifically Islamic

discourse of modernity as an inherent part of global modernity in conceptual terms understood as the emergence of world society.
