YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
with RELIGION *and* FAITH
in the 21ST CENTURY

Green Islam and Re-Imagination of Khalifa: Eco Politics and Muslim Youth Movements in South India

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INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at the ways in which Muslim Youth Movements after the 1990s are responding to the question of the ecological and democracy crises in India by invoking their own faith resources as a claim to belonging and social performance. For that purpose, it tries to understand the South Indian Muslim Youth organization, Solidarity Youth Movement in Kerala's, attempt to engage environmental discourse by radically reinterpreting their ideological standpoint in response to changing social processes.

The South Indian state Kerala is known as a role model for social and political development for the Global South. It is well recognized that the unique characteristics of the Kerala model were the result of public action/public politics. The internal contradiction within a late socialist model, global decline of the left and changing political scenarios after 1990 have led to the emergence of post-left political activism in Kerala. The 1990s also marks one of the changing moments in Indian history, politics and social life as well as the emergence of various new social actors in the public sphere. Solidarity Youth Movement emerged in Kerala during this period with a unique style of Islamic activism by absorbing the emancipatory aspect of religion and a radical form of ecopolitics. Solidarity Youth Movement evolved a distinct language of Muslim politics by involving many grass-roots people and their struggle across Kerala against communalism, human rights violations, ecological issues, and land rights struggles by Dalits and Tribals.

Solidarity claim that their idea is to recognize the search for social liberation from all power organized as inequality, discrimination, exploitation, and

domination and charting a de-colonial future and in essence rediscovering and trying to put into praxis a theology of Islamic liberation. Hence, Solidarity identifies the ecological crisis and social-political implications as a violation of divine guidance, ones that couldn't absorb ecological morality. Proper care of the earth is not possible without ecological morality. And care of the earth is entitled upon human beings as Khalifa (vicegerent) of Allah. Some of their theo-political articulation and mediations with traditions is very novel and innovative and some of them they are absorbing from existing literature.

Based on my field materials, I will examine the Muslim youth movement's contribution and engagements in environmental movements and how Muslim identity conceptualizes the environmental discourse within the larger eco-political discourse. This will critically engage how Muslim actors use their own resources to interpret/reinterpret their new political articulation. I will argue that the emergence of this new Muslim green politics should be understood in the context of citizenship politics that evolve around ethical considerations in a risk society. This paper also looks at how this movement would manoeuvre between the various imaginations of social action and transformation available to us, especially in the context of social movements and reflect on the limitations and possibilities of this transformation itself by drawing insight from social movement theory, debates on Islam, secularism, citizenship, ecopolitics and political theology.

This paper focuses on how the Muslim actors are negotiating and realizing citizenship under the twin pressure of cultural Hindu nationalism and global capitalism. They are reinterpreting their standpoint in response to changing social processes such as globalization, hegemonic discursive notions of Hindu oriented secular public sphere and the emergence of new social movements by critiquing the left-initiated Kerala model of development. The Kerala model of development later received wider criticism from different corners for its failure to account for the marginalized sections in the state and economic stagnation. It marks the crucial transformation of state and citizenship relationships and the corresponding shift in the position of Muslim movements. On a critical note, this paper also marks the transformation of social citizenship into ethical citizenship under the neoliberal cultural atmosphere from an early understanding of protective national welfare collectively with rights and responsibilities bound by state to collective community with duties and responsibilities bound by society. This also meant having a place that is effectively constructed through localized participation.

THE DECLINE OF THE WELFARE STATE AND EMERGENCE OF ETHICAL CITIZEN

The neoliberal state and economic policies have had tremendous impact on the conception of citizenship across the developing countries. On the one hand, it disabled the old welfare state and its notion of an active citizen, and on the other hand, it also enabled new avenues of action and engagements within the newly emerged civic space.[1] Two types of civic spaces emerged after the decline of the old welfare state model—one constituted by protest politics and other by the politics of governance. Protest politics asserted the state as the source of exploitation and injustice and sees no possibility of 'liberation' until what they call 'structural transformation' takes place. Through violent or peaceful means, it tries to dismantle the centre and restructure the society along an alternative true ideology. There were many forms of liminal spaces that tried to participate in and withdraw from the structure it was struggling with and proceed towards its goal.

Contemporary forms of civic space are not constituted by the politics of protest, which tries to control

sovereign power; rather by a kind of power that prefers the art of governance. What is important now is the governance of subjects with many identities and coming from many locations. So contrary to the old model of top-down governance where the secular democratic state controls the population and structures the society accordingly, the new state emphasizes relations of power, and is dispersed and variously negotiated by the subjects at many levels. This has opened up many spaces of negotiation and engagement with the state power by the citizens.

The new political actors are trying to influence these negotiations in the civic space by creating multiple points of action and penetration into the logic of governance. This has opened up multiple points of entry in to the production of power. Many instances of politics in this civic space can be considered. This has also led to a shift from the "social" to "ethical" citizenship, from an *a priori* compact of shared (national) welfare to collective belonging that must actively be made through localized participation. The social and political transformation by the neoliberal world order has been supplemented by the emergence of an ethical citizen.

The ethical citizen is commonly understood as someone who accepts responsibilities and duties and acts accordingly. Aihwa Ong in her work *Neo Liberalism as Exception: Mutation in Citizenship and Sovereignty* explains the ways in which neoliberalism as exception articulates sovereign rule and regimes of citizenship, formulating a constellation of mutually constitutive relationships that are not reducible to one or the other in non-western contexts.[2]

She also argues that the proliferation of techniques to remake the social and citizen-subjects, with neoliberal logic requires such subjects to be free, self-managing and self-enterprising individuals in different spheres of everyday life. She also points to the investment of techniques of economic globalization with a moral calculus about more or less worthy subjects, practices, lifestyles and visions of the good.[3] This renewed ethical project has been noted by a number of scholars concerned with both the turn to neo universalisms like rights and with the return of the sacred within modernity.

Andrea Muehlebach defines ethical citizenship in her well acclaimed work *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy* as the newly emerged species of solidarity that is entirely different from its twentieth-century (welfarist) forbearer, and is a fundamentally novel way of conceptualizing collective existence; how it ought to be reproduced and shaped. She also argues that scholars of welfare have come to think about citizenship as a set of rights that got rearticulated over time through a series of "citizenship projects."[4]

Ethical citizenship is no longer founded on the old 'welfarist' social contract of the nation-state, but on a neoliberal pact of heartfelt moral solidarity, where citizenship is enacted through individuals' dual care of the self and care of the other. The former welfare state built on social citizenship, granting social rights by public provisioning of a range of services, seems to leave space to an age full of virtue, where religious and social doctrines and leftist solidarity again merge together.

The neo-liberal state today is striving not only to externalize the welfares capacities, but sacralities attached with it by its sovereign power. By withdrawing from welfare activities and envisaging the social citizenry, it is limiting itself to the role of a facilitator to encourage the ethical citizen to engage in the anomalies created by the neoliberal order or market. So the old dichotomies such as public/private, law/theology and sacred/secular are redrawn. The former welfare state, built on social citizenship, granting social rights by public provisioning of a range of services, seems to leave space for an age full of virtue, where religious and social doctrines and solidarity again merge.

Volunteerism became one of the significant acts of solidarity in place of state-led welfare narratives. On the one hand, the newly emerged welfare/voluntary community see themselves as a moral community situated outside the purview of commodified market relations and beneficiaries of state-led developmental initiatives. So they alternatively put their works as acts of compassion, care and solidarity to construct a better society that transcends the limitations of capitalism. So ethical citizenship allows acting as anti-capitalist on the one hand and draws from ethical practices on the other.

Prominent citizenship scholar Pierpaolo Donati[5] explains the ways in which we can understand new forms of citizenship that are emerging in the neoliberal world along with the conflicts inherent in the modern idea of identities and solidarities. He explains why and how a post-modern (societal) balance between social solidarity and social identities (i.e., a new citizenship) is emerging today, from society rather than from the state, in such a way so as to build new forms of interdependencies and links between identities and solidarities. Andrea Muehlebach summarizes it like this:

"The rights that are tied to this citizenship arise not from a national state "which is no longer the pillar and/or summit of citizenship," but from "outside the established state organization and the entitlements it grants under positive law." Instead, rights are today best "associated with human beings and the social groups they form a part of." Societal citizenship originates in "the subjects' will to belong" to a number of smaller-scale relations such as the family and the neighbourhood, entrenched in particular times and places."[6]

The state of Kerala in southern India democratically elected the first Communist government in 1957. Kerala is even known as the role model for social and political development in the Global South. It is well recognized that unique characteristics of the Kerala model were the result of public action/public politics. The internal contradictions within a late socialist model, global decline of the left and the changing political scenario after the 1990s have led to the emergence of post-left political activism in Kerala.[7]

The 1990s also marks one of the changing moments in Indian history, politics and social life as well. The Nehruvian idea of modern, secular nation with a self-reliant economy was challenged from different corners. Caste, religion, gender, community and region have come to play decisive roles in the social and political lives of India. The implementation of the Mandal commission, initiation of structural adjustment programs, the rapid growth of the Hindu right wing and the *Ram Janmabhumi* movement, Babri Masjid Demolition, emergence of the new middle class among different communities and media revolution had a tremendous impact on politics and society.[8]

The people's campaign in Kerala or the democratic decentralization campaign in the 1990s, led by CPM replaced its ideological category 'class' by 'people' to increase people's participation in the government. As J. Devika pointed out, the transformation of politics itself in the 1990s in Kerala, from the "public action" mode in which welfare was claimed as "people's [collective] right" through agitation politics, to the "liberal" mode in which welfare is bestowed by the state through a state-centric civil society, and pegged on self-help and group interests strengthened various forms of oppositional politics.[9] This has resulted in the emergence of new social movements and undermined the relevance of antiquated social movements.[10] This new mobilization around the language of culture, human rights, identity and ecology was led by a new set of political actors who were invisible in the public space and it helped the subject formation of the hitherto submerged marginal sections in the society. These new social movements including environmental movements, feminist movements, caste, tribal and religious movements emerged in the Kerala public space during this period.

Moreover, the state is also seeking more and more participation from all kinds of groups to enlarge its domain of governance. In the case of Muslims, the state's efforts after the Sachar Committee report to include more and more Muslim groups is unprecedented. I do not intend to say that these efforts are flawless, but what is to be noted is how the art of governance gives a new understanding to the state –society relationship and notion of citizenship.

Barbara Metcalf, in her analysis, of the relationship between Islam and democracy in India in the twentieth century by focusing on political visions of four Muslim leaders in relation to the model of ideal liberal democracy on the one hand and a communitarian-focused model on the other, draws attention to the trends in Indian Muslim political life after the release of the Sachar Committee report. She argues that post-Sachar Muslim political discourse replaced the previous focus on cultural symbols, such as Muslim personal law to that of the economic and social conditions of Indian Muslims.[11] Javeed Alam also points out that a new "citizen politics" seems to be taking shape among Muslims in India who are articulating their demands relating to jobs, income, and education after the Sachar Committee Report. This politics of empowerment, egalitarianism and deepening democracy also leads to Muslim political actors building alliance with other marginalized groups in India.[12]

By the 1990s, Kerala also witnessed the emergence of many different articulations of citizenship by Muslim actors. New political and social movements emerged within the Muslim public space by emphasizing the constitutional language and religious duty attached with it. In politics, though the Muslim League has been representing the Muslim interest in democratic processes in Kerala, new movements began to emerge by critiquing and raising many questions.

Various social processes such as the emergence of strong and prosperous Hindu and communal/caste organizations, which dominate the public sphere, Muslim marginality at the national and state level, the state of living in the "post-Ayodhya" era, the rise of militant Hindutva, the gradual erosion of citizenship rights of Muslims and the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions and, post-9/11, the Islamophobic atmosphere globally have characterized this phase.

On the other hand, the Gulf boom has been benefiting the community and has led to the emergence of a new middle class. Gulf migration also has a tremendous impact not only on the economy but in society, culture and politics. Many observers have already pointed out the relationship between the history of modernity in twentieth-century Kerala and the histories of migration and trans-nationalisms/major and minor cosmopolitanisms in the region.[13] It has already been pointed out by many that the remittances that flowed from the Gulf region have been a vital factor in sustaining Kerala's economy since the 1970s.[14] The cosmopolitan nature of the Gulf migrants also has significant influence on the shifting notion of class structure, social hierarchy, worship patterns, family structure and above all, religion and religiosity in Kerala.[15] Migration also has its social remittances that have affected the religion and religious activism and sensibilities in Kerala, thus, leading to a transformation of the society.[16] One of the major shifts that happened in this process was the reinterpretation of religious practice, which is considered as a wider project of self-transformation to an active ethical engagement with life as a whole, from self-presentation to social. Along with this in the urban religious space, various forms of social activism emerged as more legitimate and recognized acts of realisation of religion and citizenship. This in turn also coincided with the shift of social citizenship to ethical citizenship under the conditions of neoliberalism.

Many people have expressed their concerns over the excesses of newly emerged middle-class aspirations of capitalism such as consumerism, corruption and individualism. They began to critically engage with the

neoliberal order with their ethical imperatives. So what we see here is newly emerged movements, vehemently posing the critique to elite-driven aspirations of the globalization process. They also cautioned against the consequences of a western paradigm of development. Conventional Muslim politics and organizations have to face the newly emerged movement's far-reaching moral critiques. At the same time, a good dose of pragmatism often informs the engagements with the ethical demands of Islamic reformism and evolving a new idea of citizenship.[17]

Meanwhile, the growth of militant Hindu nationalism and the gradual "saffronisation" of the public space also created a sense of an 'erosion of citizenship rights' among Muslims, which in turn demanded cultivation of self-reliance and engagement with other marginalized groups in India. The implementation of neoliberal policies and the stepping down of the old welfare state also demanded the community to act with a new set of frameworks. On the other hand, the government also identified the backwardness of Muslims in all aspects of life in comparison to others. This in turn further recalls the debates about political viability in considering religion as an authentic source of deprivation and unique treatments in governance. Developmental questions, community concerns and global geopolitical changes influenced and echoed in religious activism, and these questions were asked to old forms of community collectivises.

Solidarity also seeks to prepare the youth to embark on a journey of confidence and self-esteem and to discover a self that is not in shock, cut off from its past and humiliated by being exposed to contempt, demonization and Islamophobia. Faithful to the tenets of its faith, Solidarity's solutions to problems and needs, unmet by successive right and left governments, challenge in a fundamental way popular thinking about politics, economics and the principles around which society is organized. It stresses that solidarity is an idea that recognizes the search for social liberation from all power organized as inequality, discrimination, exploitation, and domination and charting a decolonial future and in essence rediscovering and trying to put into praxis a theology of Islamic liberation. Solidarity also tried to transcend secular binaries such as religion/politics and spirituality/revolution. Solidarity sees their activities as expression of a political spirituality.

Solidarity has also ensured that its activities transcend all barriers of faith, language, caste and creed and in doing so have become a significant force in the social fabric of Kerala. This was already noticed by scholars as an attempt within the Muslim community to transcend sectarian divides and reach out to other communities and have a dialogue and establish solidarity with various issues.[18] Maidul Islam also studied this movement in detail by recognizing Solidarity's attempts to open the new antagonistic frontier against Hindu nationalism and capitalism; Islam argues that they are not offering an alternative.[19]

MUSLIM YOUTH FOR THE PEOPLE: SOLIDARITY'S VISION

Though it is a Muslim initiative, the memberships of the organizations are open to everyone who is less than 40 years old, irrespective of their caste, creed and religion. This opening of membership to all was a remarkable intervention in the history of Muslim social movements in Kerala. Theologically, Solidarity justified this position by citing two reasons. On the one hand, they argued that though religious difference and the question of salvation remains a specific issue, Islam also offers some universal values and ethics, which can be followed by every human being. The centre of Islamic teaching is *Annnas* (The Masses). Islam and prophets were always introduced as a common heritage of masses and for the masses. So a political solidarity is possible with the person who does not share the same vision of salvation as Muslims share. Religious difference and differences

regarding the path of salvation will not hinder the larger material struggles people always lead in their specific material social political and economic conditions.

Solidarity has always explained the reason behind its emergence as a response to global planetary crisis due to reckless developmental policies of government and the resultant unbridled consumerism and its ill effects on common people. This has resulted in the marginalization of the poor, environmental degradation, corruption and accumulation of wealth and prestige by a few. To check this depleted condition, a collective effort has to be made. Youth have a crucial role in correcting this evil and reconstructing society on the basis of common and shared values.

ISLAM AS AN ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A RESURGENT CITIZEN

To fully understand Solidarity's vision and theological claims on social and national state structures we have to carefully look at the way they have derived their ideas from Islamic sources. Some of their articulations and mediations with traditions is very novel and innovative and some of them, they are absorbing from existing literature. To understand the ideology of their cosmological understanding, we have to carefully look at the ways they understand God, Human being and universe and how they interact with each other.

In one of their brochures, Solidarity ideologue and former working committee member Khalid Musa Nadwi explains it by situating the preferred state of conflict between the ideas of *fasad* (destruction) and *ta'ameer* (construction). This is novel in the sense that it is radically different from early Islamist positions of complete negation of engaging with manmade systems (*Taghooth*).[20] In the very moment in which God distributed humans in the earth itself, Quran has indicated the possibility of a man to be a rebel. The world has persistently witnessed the clashes between *fasad* (destruction) and *ta-meer* (construction), which is represented by *Iblees* (satan) and human beings respectively. It is a historical reality that many prophets have appeared with constructive missions on the earth (*Islah*) and these prophets led the revolutions bravely confronting the destructive powers. Solidarity marks a continuation of these revolutionaries, the prophets.

Communalization, radicalizations and stratification of societ—it is the ideology of *fasad*. The basis of all racist arguments find itself in the argument of Satan that fire is more sacred than soil. This sacred sense persuaded Khabeel to kill Habeel. Khabeel is the primary inaugurator of evil acts on the earth. The vision of Satan as well as the action plans of Khabeel continues in these days too. So solidarity views the contemporary forms of racial/caste/discriminations, environmental degradation and accumulations of wealth by a few etc. as continuations of an old form of Evil.

The way of Quran in addressing the issue of *kharunism* isone of the important inspirations of Solidarity's struggle against capital hegemony. Those who are finding difficulty in relating Islam with the anti-capitalist hegemonic struggles, are also struggling a lot to digest Musa (A)'s revolution against Kharunism. Kharun is a rich man and also an earlier capitalist who has already established his individual power over capital. Pharaoh was the then power centre. The ethnic superiority of the Quibti clan was the root of this power centre. The people of Israel were the victims. The army of Haman strengthened the Kharun-Pharaoh alliance. The imperialism of Kharun-Haman-Pharaoh was challenged by Prophet Musa (A) - this is the ideal anti-imperialist movement in the history.

By pointing out the criticism against Solidarity that it is post left phenomenon in which they have been post ideological and imitating the left movement the writer says that;

"Intellectuals who are accusing solidarity youth movement of borrowing leftist ideals have never comprehended the historical facts explicitly given in Quran. Solidarity does not have any ideological crises to adopt anti-imperialist ideals of leftist movements as far as its very ideal is Musa (A), who questioned Pharaoh's imperialism and Authoritarianism. And the narrow-minded people who excludes Solidarity's ideals from religious grounds should know how to read Quran in its spirit, rather in letters only".

According to him anyone going through Quran can easily make out the ardent teachings of Prophet Muhammed against capitalist mentality. Locking of wealth, plutocracy and earning through fraudulence in sales have been prohibited by Quran out rightly. The Quran also questions consumerism, which is the reflection of plutocracy. The Quran has declared that if a rich man doesn't consider poor and hungry people, he ceases to be a believer. The Quran explains that the toughest moral struggle is to work for those who are hungry and fated to eat soil. These are the theological justifications to Solidarity to stand against capitalism and struggling for weak and downtrodden communities.

The revolutionary way of solidarity does not comprise agitations alone, but also service too. Solidarity leads charity missions to rehabilitate the people who are deprived of basic needs by providing food, clothing and shelter. Solidarity workers are more in to service since they are convinced of the Quranic ideal that helping poor people for God's grace alone is the very basis of all virtues.

The Quran envisages such a world order in which justice is offered against all invading cruelties like humiliating native communities, destroying generations and agricultural fields and killing of females, kids and elderly people. Invasion is injustice. One who believes in Quran cannot move ahead without questioning it. Solidarity backs anti-invasion warriors in words and action since the resistance shows that nothing but brave moral fights is justified.

Capitalism, imperialism and developmental policies which jeopardize human life also peril nature and environment. It sucks up the water of life. It destroys agricultural lands. A clean atmosphere is a promise of Quran. Prophets have forbidden acts such as spitting shamelessly and defecating on the road and riversides. Solidarity cannot imagine that the same prophet will entertain these pollutions of developmental terrorism. Hence, Solidarity identifies the polluters of Chaliyar and Periyar rivers and waste disposers at Njeliyan Paramba as violators of divine guidance and ones who failed to absorb ecological morality. Proper care of earth is not possible without ecological morality. And care of earth is entitled upon human beings as *Khalifa of Allah*.

The basic developmental scheme envisaged by the Quran comprises the following things: to cultivate, to produce food grains, to produce fruits and vegetables and thus provide food for human beings. The students of the Quran cannot move forward, neglecting the industrial-developmental terror which contravenes this scheme. The nutshell of the story is the sole stimulus for solidarity to brighten soil and soul comes from Quran and Prophetic words.

The capitalist culture, which commercialized drinking water conflicts with god's sovereignty and the perception that human beings are provided with natural resources. Oxygen and drinking water are not meant to be purchased. Those are God's resources on earth. It belongs to all geographical communities. Water does pour from sky and seeds sprinkling from earth are universal resources with equal rights to all. Modern capitalism privatizes water like old Jews. A well was privatized by a Jew and this well was later bought by Usman (R), the follower of prophet and thus made available to public- this was the way of Usman to fight financial supremacy. Solidarity's people's protests also become moral/ethical protests.

In short, capitalism is an old wine in a new bottle. It was capitalism, which took a cross-grained standpoint in history. Capitalism arises in a place

where god, man and culture are alienated and money grabs major concerns. The common modus operandi of capitalism is polarization and power politics. Imperialism is justice-less entrenchments. And the new world order is a union of capitalism, imperialism, and the developmental terrors are leading its growth. Solidarity questions this new power structure and works hard for an alternative world based on divine aspect and justice. Here we can see Solidarity as a Muslim Youth organization that changes their position from establishment of Islamic polity to engaging in social with the Islamic ethical framework. So they re-interpreted the Islamic notion of *fasad*, *Islah* and *Jahillyah* as a new way to articulate the resurgent citizenship in India with ethical claims.

ECOLOGICAL VISION AND ETHICAL CITIZENSHIP

Solidarity has endeavoured to recognize their alternative vision to the existing disastrous developmental model by drawing to a great extent from Islamic principles. Here in this area, I need to outline the theory elaborated in the book *Development, Environment and Global Capitalism* by different intellectuals associated with the Solidarity Youth Movement. The book was published and distributed by Solidarity state committees.[21]

In this book, Solidarity tries to explain the philosophical foundations of the Islamic way to deal with the question of development and critique of existing models. The book is introduced as a summary of the debates and ideas, propagated by Solidarity related to its development. The editor of the book clearly says this in his introduction;

"The perspective on development today is limited and one dimensional. Moreover, it only benefits a micro-minority of people for a short while and causes trouble to the majority of the mass forever. The current developmental models help to accumulate resources by a few and widen the gap between the haves and have notes. The luxury and greedy desires of wealthy people tend to overshadow the demands of the needy poor people on the planet. So this market-oriented development has been leading humanity and civilisation to disarray. This development is not only a threat to human beings, but to the environment too. It polluted and destroyed the earth and sky in the name of development. So Solidarity wants to give a revolutionary alternative to Development. To give a revolutionary note to development, the prime step is to reject the existing definitions of development that primarily lies on a mere increase in production and revenue. A new definition is too formulated by considering the social, cultural and ecological concerns of the human being."[22]

Developmental processes must be future-oriented and sustainable and comprehensive. Capitalism and communism cannot offer such a developmental paradigm since both are human-centric and less concerned about the human relationship with nature. Though communism considers human relationships partially, it never worried about the human and environmental relationship. To overcome this limitation, there should be a developmental model that considers the spiritual aspects of human beings and the relationship between God, human and nature. The theo-centric perspective can only help to imagine and replace man from his master status over resources and other human beings. The real master is God, and he is the only one who has authority to claim total control over the environment and material resources. A human being is mere trustee/vicegerent (Khalifa) of this worldly affair. He has to responsibly hand over it to the next generations. So he has to approach natural resources and a human being with utmost care (*taqwa*) and nobility. This perspective can prevent human beings from exploiting natural resources and other human beings, and it also encourages the redistribution/circulation of resources among people.

The two basic premises of a comprehensive developmental model -1) fulfilment of basic human

needs such as food, shelter, education, employment and health 2) the priorities of developmental policies must be based on this instead of the priorities of the wealthy, i.e. food over cosmetics and village roads over high-speed corridors. So Solidarity believes that Islam can offer a critique to existing development and offer a solution to the current development impasse. For that, they have laid down the philosophical foundations of Islamic conception of development.

The first chapter in the book *Development Islam –An Introduction* gives an outline of the philosophical foundations of the Solidarity Youth Movement's conception of development. The writer TK Abdullah elaborates his ideas about the foundations and values of an Islamic perspective, based on the Qur'an and Hadith and how that developmental model can operate effectively in this era.[23]

He argues that the idea of development is very much there in Qur'an. He quotes the Qur'anic verse (51:47), "With power and skill did we construct the Firmament: for it is We Who create the vastness of pace", and he illustrates that the word mūsiʿūn means the expansion and mighty and powerful in various Qur'an Interpretations. That denotes that God never intended to fix the universe into a fixed entity, but it is expanding according to his Hikma (Reason). Moreover, he points at the meaning of the term Rabbul Alamin, which denotes growth, change and progress are the fundamental laws of the universe as dictated by God. The intervention of human being with his free will and partial autonomy in that process is called development. The partial autonomy is the ontic status of human being on the earth. Qur'an calls this state *khilafa* (Viceregency).

Khilafa in this sense means two things, one is implementation of God's *Adl* (Justice) and *Hukm* (Rule) in this world and second is the construction of Emarat al-Ard and development of the earth. These two duties are complementary too. The essence of development framed in spiritual principles, "the construction of Earth" (*Emmarat al-ard*) and stewardship (*istikhlaf*), that act as a foundation for the whole. It integrates the material, economic and social domains and helps to evolve a value based and objective community (or *ummah wasat*); it can infuse a common purpose, provide a common foundation and stimulate a common resolve. The community, evolved through this alternative vision of development will have five components: 1) a powerful state, which can face internal and external challenges and acquire its power through knowledge and development; 2) clean and healthy community; 3) a community, who will cooperate and help each other; 3) satisfactory and joyful individuals, since they have much expectation in another world than this world; 4) clean environment.

The ultimate goal of this developmental paradigm is a Good life (*Hayat Tayebah*), and this pursuit of happiness in Islam has little to do with material accumulation and consumption. Good life (*Hayat Tayebah*), from an Islamic perspective, has to do with the decisive role of the human to assemble and add value to life (*Emarat al-Ard*) and to be a witness and a trustee and to leave a proper legacy. Capitalist or communist developmental paradigms of what constitutes an exact opposite of the basic Islamic notions of simplicity or sufficiency (*Zuhd*) and using local sources and expertise to acquire a people-centred development of man's trusteeship, moral, political and financial, and the standards of social association.

Understand the Symphony of Life (*tasbeeh* and *sujood*) is the key principle. Recognize the consistent, unique continuum of insight, love and vitality that connects the external scopes of the universe with our close planetary system, our planet and its biosphere including all people, with our inward metabolic frameworks. The above rule may illuminate various strategy activities. These incorporate (a) recognizing the extraordinary riddle (*ghayb*) that underlies presence, (b) trying to comprehend and satisfy humankind's one of a kind capacity in the Universe (*taskheer* and *istikhlaf*), (c) regarding the Earth with

its unpredictable nature of which people are a basic part (*ummam amthalokom*), (d) cultivating sympathy and a comprehensive, exhaustive point of view in the fundamental aim, inspiration and genuine usage of human undertakings, and (e) connecting inward change (*dameer*) of people to changes in the social group (*taghyeer*), establishing frameworks for development of another planetary cognizance.

This principle offers a critique and solution to existing developmental paradigms. Regarding state responsibility for the welfare of the people, O Abu Rahman offers a third way.[24] He argues that the Islamic conception of development is neither state-centric nor individual oriented. Instead, it stresses on all three: the individual, society and the state. He argues that the basic needs of human beings such as food, shelter, clothes, health and employment have to be attained by every human being. The fundamental responsibility lies with all individuals. Every human being has a responsibility towards his destiny. By quoting the Qur'anic verses 9:105, 53:39 and 17:15, he is explaining the importance of imagining an independent life without depending on the state alone. Every individual has a responsibility of their life and their family, and he even argues as follows:

"The concept of hijra is not limited to the issues of faith alone. The Qur'anic verses, when angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls they say: "In what (plight) were you". They reply: "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." They say: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" Such men will find their abode in Hell; what an evil refuge! These verses are not about the difficulties in faith alone. If someone is suffering from poverty and unemployment, he has no excuse to sit idly, lamenting that we are weak and deprived. He has to go wherever he finds employment and opportunities to empower themselves".[25]

The effort of individuals is not to satisfy his interest alone but society too. He should be ready to sacrifice his interest for the sake of society and community. Individualism and ego worship have no role in the Islamic community. Extravagance and luxurious lifestyles have to come under societal control. Those peoples' commodities have to be brought under the control of society by ensuring basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. When social interest and individual interest are contradicting each other, societal interest has to be given priority. For the public interest and common good, state can interfere and control individual interest and needs. He sees this importance given to the social is similar to socialism. However, he also states that the Islamic concept of state is in between capitalism and socialism.

Capitalism gives total freedom to the individual where socialism establishes total control of the state. However, Islam gives equal role to individual, society and state. The state has the responsibility to maintain the equilibrium in the relationship between individual and society. The state has to intervene in the occasions where individuals acquire excessive power and authority over the public and where society encroaches on the rights of individual Also, the state has the responsibility of protection of citizen's life, wealth and self-respect. To ensure progress in the national income and wealth; the state has to take necessary steps.[26]

The natural and cultural commons has to be preserved and maintained by the state. The land, which has not cultivated any crop in around three years, has to be brought under state control in spite of it belonging to private ownership. Ownership of the land has to be given to those who give life by cultivation. Since vegetation and agriculture are essential for human existence, cultivators have to give the original ownership of the land. The state has also a responsibility to protect and redistribute the wealth of a nation equitably among his people. Education, transportation and health are social concerns and the state has to regulate and control it. To give total freedom to stakeholders in this sector may lead to

social tragedies. The private sector has to allow for specific control measures to check the possibility of exploitation and excessive profit making. Education, health, agriculture and industry can allow private investment with social control. However, this has to be done very cautiously and by taking ethical responsibility without transforming the fields into a competitive marketplace.

The Islamic notion of development has to give priorities to the needs of the people rather than to profit or investment. Essential public health facilities have to be given priority over cosmetics and village roads over expressways. In a nutshell here, the individual, state and society have responsibilities and rights. It is only possible through an ethical commitment to fellow beings and commitment to the ultimate truth.

These ideas largely echo the welfare state model that was weakening after neo-liberal policies. So Solidarity believes that it is their ethical duty to fulfil this by engaging and standing to restore the welfare state developmental model. Though the welfare state model has been weakened by neoliberal policies, the newly emergent political actors in the democracy like Muslims and Dalits, see the modes of welfare politics, perhaps as an attempt to redefine and even reform the state along with its welfare priorities.

The issue is to think or re-think how best the so-called negotiations with the power of the state can lead to the achievement of welfare. It is essential, in the context where an obsessive persuasion being exercised in the political theory of the idea that the state is indispensable for the delivery of welfare. The interventions of civil rights/civil society movements are essential to lay complex relationships bare in this respect. The view that the state is not merely a matter of government and its apparatus, but a relationship rooted in hierarchical power structures that permeate the entire life world, seems to be very critical for tracking various articulations of welfare politics.

It may be mandatory to conceive of an alternative idea of doing politics, then welfare itself should feature as politics. Moreover, in contrast to the immediate state-centric power politics acceptance, it should be considered whether there may be any unarticulated imagination and assertion to the direction of welfare politics present in the history of humanity.

So Solidarity emerged here as the expression of this mode of alternative politics and a new conception of ethical citizenship. Ethical citizenship is the way by which one informs, involves and civically engages with the members of the community and advocates their values, beliefs and reasoning through written, spoken or symbolic discourse. Solidarity, as a Muslim youth movement that emerged in this arena of the ethical citizen, is exploring various possibilities of re-conceiving the idea of doing politics. It proposes to understand people's engagements for advancing individual and social freedom, justice, well-being, and happiness as eco politics. In the process, they have submitted a global politics of future using the vocabulary of political utopia –Khilfa as zero-institution (neither geographical and a state power) is a (non)place, where all social antagonism(s) are obliterated, a place in which all members of society can recognize themselves. Or in other words, as Catherin Keller argues, a planetary movement against a secular apocalypse concerning political theology of earth.

ENDNOTES

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