

MODERNITY, ISLAMIC REFORM AND THE SHIAS OF KARGIL: CONTRIBUTION OF IMAM
KHOMEINI MEMORIAL TRUST (1989), KARGIL

A Dissertation submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the
award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

In

HISTORY

by

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “**MODERNITY, ISLAMIC REFORM AND THE SHIAS OF KARGIL: CONTRIBUTION OF IMAM KHOMEINI MEMORIAL TRUST (1989), KARGIL**” submitted by **MUSADDIQ HUSSAIN** bearing **Reg. No. 20SHHL05** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy in HISTORY is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

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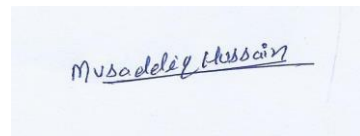
DECLARATION

I, Musaddiq Hussain hereby declare that this Dissertation entitled “**Modernity, Islamic Reform and the Shias of Kargil: Contribution of Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (1989), Kargil**”, submitted by **MUSADDIQ HUSSAIN** under the guidance and supervision of **DR. V.J. VARGHESE** is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation appears in its current form due to the constant support as well as the valuable guidance of a large number of people.

Firstly, I would like to express my deep and immense sense of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. V J Varghese for his valuable supervision and guidance which helped me in the completion of this dissertation. His guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I also take this opportunity to thank all my professors specially Prof. Anindita Mukhopadhyay, Prof. Suchandra Ghosh, Dr. M N Rajesh, Prof. Bhangya Bhukya and Dr. Vijaya Ramadas, for their generous support and valuable comments throughout my research. I am very thankful to Dr. Salah Punathil for his advice and suggestions which were crucial in framing my thesis. Also, I am very thankful to our department staffs especially Sucharita ma'am for helping me with the formal academic procedures.

I thank my friends in the department, Mimansa, Debankita, Navneetha, Rizwan, Hafis, Alok, Shakti, Anjana, Pragati and Aditi, who made the research experience something special.

I am sincerely grateful to Master Muhammad Yusuf, Master Muhammad Ali, Zakir Hussain and Gulzar Hussain for their genuine encouragement and motivation which proved quite fruitful for my entire academic career.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank all my lovable friends in Hyderabad particularly Rohullah, Ali Armaan, Nissar Hussain Noori, Abass Ali Khan, Liyaqat Ali and Sajjad Zairi for providing me with a happy atmosphere reminiscent of Home.

Lastly, but most importantly, I extend my deepest gratitude to my family members especially to my parents, whose love and support, patience and constant presence made my life meaningful.

Special thanks to my sisters Zulikha, Raziya, and Bintul and my brothers Ghulam Haider and Ali Naqi for their love and care.

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Chapter I

Introduction

This study aims to examine the socio-religious condition of the Kargil district in Ladakh which provided the ground for the formation of a ‘modernist’ group, the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT) in 1989 named after Rohullah Khomeini the leader of Islamic Revolution of Iran of 1979. The study will look into the socio-religious and political changes that were taking place in Ladakh during the 1970s and would attempt to understand how these changes at the regional level as well as in the Shia world enabled the IKMT to bring socio-religious transformation in Kargil.

Kargil is one of the two districts of the current Union Territory of Ladakh and has been part of the Ladakh region historically, geographically, and politically. “Ladakh in Tibetan, ‘La-tags’ (meaning Land of passes) is the most common name of the country and is also known as ‘Mar-Yul’ (fertile low land),” states Alexander Cunningham in his work on Ladakh in 1854.¹ Fa-Hian, the Chinese pilgrim who came to Ladakh around 400 AD named Ladakh as “Kie-chha”, which means ‘Snowy land’.² Hieun-Tsang, the Chinese traveller who visited Ladakh in 640 AD, called it “Ma-Lo-Pho” (the country of the river Indus).³ In academic writings, Ladakh is known by different names, ‘Greater Tibet’ by the oriental writers and ‘western Tibet’ by western writers. In most of these writings the Buddhists are studied much more and written about even though half of the population are Muslims.⁴ The reason for this is partly because Ladakh is portrayed as a

¹ Alexander Cunningham, *Ladakh: Physical, Statistical and Historical* (London: Allen, 1854): 10-19.

² Cunningham, *Ladakh*, 8.

³ Cunningham, *Ladakh*, 19.

⁴ As per the Census of 2001, the population of Muslims and Buddhists account to 47.4% and 45.9% out of the total population of 236000 in Ladakh respectively.

Buddhist kingdom and as the land of Buddhist inhabitants in popular academic and public imaginations.

It is bounded by the Kuenlun range and the slopes of Karakorum in the North, Chamba, Kulu, and Bashahr of Himachal Pradesh in the South, Kashmir, and Baltistan (now in Pakistan occupied Kashmir) in the west, and on its East and South-east are the Chinese districts of Rudok and Chumurti.⁵ Anthropologists have accepted that the contemporary Ladakhis are a mixed race, comprising of the Dards (Indo-Iranian), Tibetan (Tibeto-Mongoloids) Mons (north Indian Aryans), and Arguns (offspring of Ladakhis and Kashmiris).⁶

There is very less information about the ancient and early medieval history of Ladakh, especially prior to the 8th century AD. From the late 7th century to 842 AD Ladakh was the part of Tibetan Kingdom. Till the 15th century, Ladakh was divided into small independent kingdoms such as Basgo and Leh but in 1470, the popular Namgyal dynasty was established by the ruler of Basgo, Lhanchan Bhagan, after defeating all the small kingdoms and uniting Ladakh under a single dynasty and remained an independent kingdom till 1834 AD.⁷ In 1834, with the raiding of the region by the Dogra army, it lost its independence and suffered a general decline. The army of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu invaded the Ladakh region in 1834 AD, and the province ultimately lost its independence in 1842 AD. It became a part of the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir on March 16, 1846 AD under the treaty of Amritsar with the British government. The areas of Leh, Kargil, and Baltistan (now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) collectively made up the Ladakh

⁵ Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh, Superintendent Government Printing, Calcutta, 1890, Reprint New Delhi, Vivek Publishing House, (1974): 531.

⁶ The works of R.D Shaw, F. Drew, A.H Franke, G. Dainelli and Hashmatullah Khan provide a first-hand view on the ethnic communities of Ladakh particularly the Dards, Rohit Vohra, "Ethnographic Notes on the Buddhist Dards of Ladakh: The Brog-Pä." *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* H. 1 (1982), 69-94.

⁷ Azra Khatoon, "local cosmologies diverse universes: An ethnographic study of the Purigs in Kargil", Ph.D. diss., Jamia Milia Islamia University, (2021): 5.

Wazarat under Dogra administration prior to the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947.⁸ Ladakh remained part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir from 1947 until it was made a separate Union Territory on 31st October 2019 under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019.⁹

History of Islam in Kargil

Historically, being a part of the Silk Route, Kargil had been an important transit route cum trading centre and marketplace of Kashmir, Punjab, Tibet, Baltistan, and many Central Asian countries until 1947. The traders from South and Central Asian countries had been coming to Kargil for sale and resale of commodities before the partition of India. The common imported items from Central Asia to Kashmir and other parts of India via Kargil were pashm (wool), silk, green tea, salt, embroidered cloths, black tea, coarse cotton clothes, charas, darai Khotan, colored patta, jade stones, jewellery, sugar, horses, lustered leather, silver, gold dust, blankets of yak hair, dried fruits, apricots, kernels, yak tails, porcelain, Chinese cups and gold coins.¹⁰ On the other side, the exported commodities from other parts of India via Kargil were best quality spices, tea, medicines, indigo, guns, gun powder, gun caps, borax, sugar, opium, cutlery, velvet, Ana line dye, otter skins, dried fruits, dried apricots, kernels, soda salt, books, guns, honey, confections, logwood, cartridges, grim (a kind of barley), and sattu (barley meals) and shawls, etc.¹¹

⁸ Radhika Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil: Contemporary Shi'a networks between India and West Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014), 371. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X13000759>.

⁹ The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is an act of the Parliament of India. It contains provisions to reorganize the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories, 1. Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with a Legislature. 2. The Union Territory of Ladakh without Legislature. The reorganization bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 5th August 2019. See Government of India (Legislative Department), *The Gazette of India*, no. 53, 09/08/2019, Ministry of Law and Justice: New Delhi, 2-3. Doi: [2601GI.p65 \(s3waas.gov.in\)](https://www.s3waas.gov.in/s3waas/2601GI.p65). Accessed on: 14/05/2022.

¹⁰ Janet, Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans: Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh* (New Delhi: Oxford University press, 1999), 159.

¹¹ Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Caravans*, 160.

According to the 2011 Census, out of a total population of 140802, 108239 (76.87%) were Muslims, 20,126 (14.29%) were Buddhists, 10,341 (7.34%) Hindus, 1,171 (0.83%) as Sikhs, and 604 (0.43%) were Christians and 321 (0.23%) belongs to other religions in Kargil.¹² The population in Kargil is dominated by the Shia Muslim community. Prior to the advent of Islam till the 15th century, Buddhism was the prevalent religion of Kargil. Kargil comprises different ethnic groups of Purgis, Baltis, Dardis, and Zangskaris. The Purgis are Tibeto-Mongoloids who came from Tibet and settled in eastern and central Kargil which constitutes the majority of the population in Kargil.¹³ The Dards (Indo-Aryan) locally known as Brogpas (highlanders) settled in the Drass tehsil and the two villages of Darchik and Garkun of the Kargil district.¹⁴ The Baltis are the migrated people from Baltistan and settled in the Kargil district.¹⁵

Because of its strategic location in the Karakoram ranges different theories are put forward for the origin of the name Kargil. The name Kargil originates from two words 'Khar' and 'Rkil'. Khar meaning 'castle' and Rkil refers to 'center' therefore referring to a place between castles as the place Kargil lay between kingdoms of Kashmir, Tibet, and Baltistan.¹⁶ Kargil is equidistant from all-important trading centres Srinagar (205 Km), Leh (214 Km), Zaskar (248 Km), and Skardu (170 Km).¹⁷ In Tibetan, the term for Kargil is called 'Purig' and the ancient name of Kargil was 'Purig', it etymologically means 'centre'. People coming from various places used to take a halt in the region of Kargil. Therefore, it is also believed that Kargil also derives its name from 'Gar'

¹² District Kargil at Glance, District Statistics & Evaluation Officer Kargil, Jammu and Kashmir Government, (2011-12): 10.

¹³ A.H.Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet Part I* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1914).

¹⁴ Mona Bhan "Border practices: labour and nationalism among Brogpas of Ladakh." *Contemporary South Asia* 16, no. 2 (2008), 140. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09584930701733472>.

¹⁵ Gupta, Radhika. "Poetics and politics of borderland dwelling: Baltis in Kargil." *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic Journal* 10 (2014): 4. <https://doi.org/10.4000/samaj.3805>

¹⁶ Retrieved from, [District Kargil, Union Territory of Ladakh | Union Territory of Ladakh | India](#). Accessed on 20-05-2022.

¹⁷ [District Kargil, Union Territory of Ladakh | Union Territory of Ladakh | India](#). Accessed on 20-05-2022.

locally meaning ‘where’ and ‘Khil’ meaning ‘stop’, implying a ‘stopping spot’.¹⁸ This argument is put forward because of its strategic position during the time of robust Central Asian trade when travellers and traders from as far as Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Xinjiang, Yarkand, as well as European and other Indian states travelled and took a halt in Kargil, as it is located at an equidistance from major trading arenas along the Silk route.¹⁹ Another story based on the folklores mentions an ancient warrior who shot an arrow in the air and inquired about the spot where it had landed by pronouncing ‘Garo Khyl’ meaning ‘where did it stop?’ and the arrow fell in the vicinity of the present town of Kargil, therefore giving it the name ‘karogyl’ which eventually came to be known as Kargil.²⁰ Another historical reference of the name region is in the Tibetan Bodhi manuscript, where it is mentioned that a prince from Purang in Tibet, named Nyathistan, had fled Tibet with his two brothers for life in 155 B.C after his father’s death and reached Purig and later became its ruler, thus, this region is called Purig because its first ruler came from Purang.²¹

On the history Islam in Ladakh, Abdul Ghani Sheikh reflects that the exact emergence of Islam in Ladakh cannot be determined.²² However, Sheikh states that the connection of Ladakh with Islam dates back to 7th and 8th centuries when Ladakh witnessed hard conflict between the Chinese and Arab alliance against Tibet over Turkistan.²³ After the conflict the western part of Central Asia came under the influence of Arabs and from there Islamic preachers disguised as Muslim Ulama and Sufis were despatched to spread Islam in Kashmir and Ladakh. Ladakh also being part of the Silk Route

¹⁸ Retrieved from <https://kargil.nic.in/history/>. Accessed on 22-12-2022.

¹⁹ Azra Khatoon, “local cosmologies diverse universes: An ethnographic study of the Purigs in Kargil”, Ph.D. diss., *Jamia Milia Islamia University*, (2021): 9.

²⁰ Khatoon, “Local Cosmologies,” 10.

²¹ A.H. Francke. *A history of Western Tibet: one of the unknown empires*. Asian Educational Services, 1995. 30.

²² Abdul Ghani Sheikh. *Reflection on Ladakh, Tibet and Central Asia* (New Delhi: Skyline Publications Pvt Ltd. 2010): 65.

²³ Sheikh, *Reflection on Ladakh*, 66.

and as a transit point saw frequent visit of Muslim traders from Iran, Afghanistan, Yaqand and Kashmir leading to a closer contact with Islam.²⁴ It is held that Islam entered Kargil in the 15th century when preachers traveling overland via Baltistan from Khorasan spread Islam in the region.²⁵ The conversion in Kargil was the consequence of proselytizing of religious leaders from Kashmir and Baltistan and the conversion of some chiefs to Islam while establishing relationships with Baltistan.²⁶ The Islamic proselytization among the people of Kargil was a slow and gradual process. Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi is credited for the foundation of Shia Islam in Kargil.²⁷ Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi first came to Kashmir in 1493 during the rule of Hassan Shah as an ambassador of King Mirza Ismail of Khorasan and stayed in Kashmir for eight years, and made many disciples. After the death of Hassan Shah, he went back to Khorasan and returned again as a preacher of Islam. He converted the Dardic tribe of Chaks²⁸ to Shia faith and the tribe ascended to the throne of Kashmir after the fall of the Shahmir dynasty.²⁹ Since the majority of the people were following Sunni Islam in Kashmir, the religious proliferation of Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi was seen with cynicism, and was forcefully expelled from Kashmir by Prime Minister Syed Muhammad Bahaiqi to Baltistan around 1505.³⁰ In the beginning of the fifteenth century, Syed Mohammad Nurbakhsh influenced the people of Kargil and

²⁴ Sonam Spalzin, *Archaeological Remains of Ladakh* (Leh: Bangkolok Publishers and Distributors, 2015): 60.

²⁵ Pascale Dollfus, "The History of Muslims in Central Ladakh." *The Tibet Journal* 20, no. 3 (1995): 37. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43300542>.

²⁶ Nicola Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru Valley of Northern India", PhD diss., Goldsmiths, University of London, (1998): 16.

²⁷ Sheikh, *Reflections on Ladakh*, 68-69.

²⁸ The Chak dynasty ruled Kashmir from 1561 AD to 1587 AD. The dynasty was founded by Gazi Chak, the military commander of Habib Shah, the last ruler of Shahmiri dynasty of Kashmir. The Chaks were originally from Dards who settled in Kashmir during the reign of Shah Mir, founder of the Shahmiri dynasty. Mohibul Hasan Khan. "Some Aspects of Kashmir History Under the Shah Mirs and the Chaks." *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 16 (1953), 199. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44303872>.

²⁹ Juan Cole, *Roots of North Indian Shiism in Iran and Iraq: Religion and State in Awadh, 1722-1859*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 25.

³⁰ Parvez Alam "The Spread of Shi'ism in Kashmir during Chak Dynasty (1554-1586 A.D.)" *Islam and Muslim Societies* 8, no. 2 (2015), 83.

Baltistan to join the Nurbakhshi sect.³¹ But from the sixteenth century onwards, Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi converted the vast majority of the populace to Shia Islam.³² Many local chiefs of Baltistan and Purig (Kargil) were converted into the Shia fold, and since then, the Shia faith spread to Kargil through the efforts of local chiefs and with the preaching of different clerics coming from various places of Arabia, Kashmir, and Baltistan.³³ Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi also set up a network of madrasas (Islamic institutions) for the teaching of Shia theology. On his return to Srinagar, in 1526 he was executed by his rivals and was buried at Zaddibal, Srinagar.³⁴ However, Mir Shamsuddin Iraqi's son Daniyal continued to stay in Baltistan for the propagation of the Shia sect, and later on, he was killed by Mirza Haider Duglat.³⁵ Another interpretation about the spread of Islam in Kargil is found in folklore and is also recorded by Hashmatullah Khan.³⁶ Islam continued to spread in Kargil during the reign of Thi Namgyal, who was the last sovereign ruler of the Suru-Kartse area of Kargil. According to the local folklores, he is said to have married 'Thi-La Khatun', the daughter of the Muslim chief of Skardu, Ali Sher Khan, the main power in Baltistan, in return for the favour of giving protection to the Namgyal dynasty.³⁷ The queen was accompanied by Islamic scholars to

³¹ Nurbakshiya is an Islamic movement born of a messianic mission first disclosed in a remote Asian Sufi hospice in 1423. "Muhammad Nurbaksh, the movement's eponymous founder, called for a reformation of Islam whose primary purposes were to eliminate Islamic sectarian boundaries and to promulgate a religious viewpoint rooted in Sufi terminology and practices. This reformist stand itself matured into a new sectarian identity under Nurbaksh and his successors in Iran during the late Timurid and early Safavid periods. The sect lost its ideological uniqueness in Iran under the Safavid religious policies; however, it was able to get a firm Kashmir, Baltistan, and Ladakh and survives in its distinctive sectarian form." See also, Bashir, Shahzad. *Messianic hopes and mystical visions: the Nurbakhshīya between medieval and modern Islam*. (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2003).

³³ Grist, "Local Politics in Suru", 98.

³⁴ Alam. *The Spread of Shi'ism in Kashmir*, 83.

³⁵ Hussain, Fayaz, "Society and culture of district Kargil (Ladakh): A historical perspective (1979-2011)" PhD diss., Punjab University, (2017): 217.

³⁶ Hashmatullah Khan was the Dogra administrator (wazir-i-wazarat) of Baltistan and Ladakh. His work *Tarikh-i-Jammun* (published in 1939) is considered as one of the most authoritative Urdu sources on the Islamic History of Ladakh and Baltistan.

³⁷ Halkias, Georgios T. "The Muslim Queens of the Himalayas: Princess Exchanges in Baltistan and Ladakh" in *Islam and Tibet-Interactions along the Musk Routes*, Routledge (2016): 237-242.

Suru, who preached Islam to the people of Kargil.³⁸ Thi-La Khatun is hailed to be the most renowned Muslim Khatun in Ladakh. She is famous for patronizing Shia Islam in Ladakh and for giving birth to ‘Thi Sultan’. Thi Sultan was brought up as a Muslim and was taught by a Shia intellectual, Mir Hashim.³⁹ During his reign, Islam flourished in the Kargil region. The tomb of Syed Hashim still exists in Kargil at ‘Karmo Khar’ and is an important site of pilgrimage.

By the time British reached Ladakh Islam was a major presence in the region. William Moorcroft and his companion George Trebeck, who as employed by the East India Company and were the first British person to visit Ladakh between 1820 and 1822, mentions the influence of Islam in western Ladakh:

In each of the villages were an akhun, or village school master, and one or two individuals who could speak Persian or Hindustani. Every village had its mosque, and not a single lama’s house or sculptured pile made its appearance. Islamism is evidently making rapid strides, and there is every reason to expect that before long Ladakh will be entirely a Mohammadan state.⁴⁰

Till the partition of India in 1947, Baltistan remained the main centre of religious learning for the Kargili students who were interested in Islamic education.⁴¹ Due to the absence of a ‘authoritative Shia Seminary’ in India following the British closure of the first Shia Madrasa, students from Kargil also travelled directly to seminaries in West Asia, specifically Najaf and Karbala, for religious

³⁸ Grist, “Local Politics in Suru”, 98.

³⁹ Syed Mir Hashim was the disciple of Syed Shamsuddin Araki who had brought Shia Islam to Kashmir, Baltistan and Ladakh.

⁴⁰ William Moorcroft was a veterinary surgeon of the British East India Company. He travelled with George Tredback to Ladakh between 1820-1822. His goal was to continue travel to Bokhara in Central Asia in order to find better horse breeding stock for the British East India Company. William Moorcroft and George Trebeck. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara; from 1819 to 1825* Vol. 1. (London: John Murray, 1841).

⁴¹ One of the most renowned teachers was Sheikh Ali Brolmo. He was a local saint and religious scholar and preached Islam in Kargil. His grave is in Brolmo, Baltistan and is a place of pilgrimage and frequented by people from all Baltistan.

education.⁴² They did this through Afghanistan or by sea from Bombay to Basra.⁴³ After India was divided in 1947 and the border was established, travelling between Kargil and Baltistan was quite challenging. The immediate response to this was the establishment of a religious seminary in Kargil. Kargili clerics who had studied in Iraq felt the need for a religious seminary in Kargil to impart Islamic education to Shia students of Kargil. As a result, the Islamia School Kargil (ISK) was established in Kargil in the year 1956 under the leadership of Sheikh Mufeed, an eminent religious Shia Scholar of Kargil and was supported by other local ulamas like Syed Akbar, Syed Rehmatullah, Syed Nassir-ud-din, and Sheikh Abdur Rehman.⁴⁴ It was built in the main centre of Kargil town, with a three-story building from donations by rich zamindars and ordinary people of Ladakh. As the only Shia religious centre in Ladakh, the ISK deputed clerics to villages for Islamic proselytization along with teaching elementary Islamic education to students and also carried out important Islamic processions. This increased number of clerics in Kargil and with the presence of a religious preacher in every village of Kargil, there was an increasing emphasis on more orthodox practices and censorship on various cultural events by these Shia clerics, such as playing musical instruments and singing song at the events of weddings and other celebrations were strictly prohibited by the clerics by considering it as un-Islamic.⁴⁵ There was a further increase in the number of clerics in Kargil when in 1974, Saddam Hussain, the then president of Iraq, ordered to throw out of foreign clerics from Iraq, the Kargili clerics who were in Iraq for Islamic theology also returned

⁴² For several generations, the majority of the Shi'a ulemas of India had gained education from Mujtahids in Iraq. In 1843 Nawab Amjad Ali Shah laid the foundation of the first Shia Seminary in Lucknow. The seminary was established to cultivate a body of Ulama with expertise in Shi'a jurisprudence to advise the Nawabi court and was closed following the British occupation of Lucknow in 1856. After the closure of the Seminary in 1856, Iraq remained the focus of Shi'a religious education for students aspiring to be religious scholars. See also Justin John, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India: Religion, community and sectarianism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 34.

⁴³ Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 372.

⁴⁴ AiyinNama, Anjuman-Jamitul, Ulema, Hawzai-Ilmaiya, Isnai-Ashriya, Kargil, Ladakh, 1985, 5.

⁴⁵ Grist. *Local Politics in the Suru Valley*, 100.

to Kargil, thus increasing the numbers of clerics in Kargil.⁴⁶ These clerics strongly promoted orthodox teachings among the locals, prohibiting them from taking participation in the socio-economic and political changes that were taking place in Ladakh for example, prohibition on acquiring modern education by designating it as 'un-Islamic'.⁴⁷ The orthodox rules enforced by the local clerics had some serious impacts on the Shias of Kargil. When the other communities in Ladakh were competing for modern education, the Shias were not participating in it which made them backward in education and modernity. They lagged behind most of the other communities in development because of their religious beliefs and orthodoxy insisted upon by the clerics. Due to the conservative outlook of the clerics, which was hampering the progress of Kargil, a group of clerics and some youths laid the foundation of a Trust, Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT), to bring socio-religious changes in line with modernity in Kargil and to carve out an identity for Kargil away from its long-held conservatism and closure. The founders of IKMT parted ways from the ISK due to their traditional outlook, which according to the former hindered the progress of Kargil. Keeping alive the teachings and memory of Rohullah Khomeini, the IKMT aimed to bring social changes in Kargil through the dissemination of knowledge, Islamic education and ethics, elimination of un-Islamic cultures, reforms in social customs, inculcation of brotherhood, mutual sympathy, and unity.⁴⁸ The rise of the IKMT in Kargil and its appropriation of Iranian revolutionary ideology forced a shift away from the traditionalist stance of the Islamia School, and using a similar vocabulary of fighting against injustice and oppression, the ISK school too entered the arena of social change.

⁴⁶ Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil", 376.

⁴⁷ Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil" 381. See also, Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control: Performance and Politics on the disputed borders of Ladakh, India*, (London: Duke University Press, 2006) 41-42. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X13000759>.

⁴⁸ Mohammad Yusuf, *Tazkira-i-Purkistan* Urdu (Kargil: Akhone Publication, 2015): 155-157.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a dearth of studies on the Muslim communities of Ladakh. While analyzing the academic writings on the Himalayas till the 1980s and 1990s, Grist mentions that “in Ladakh, Buddhists are much more studied and written about by scholars of all disciplines than Muslims.”⁴⁹ It is because in most of the popular and academic imaginations, Ladakh is seen as the Buddhist Kingdom, even though the population is evenly divided between Buddhist and Muslim during the 1990s. Grist also explains that “Ladakh divides the two major academic regions in the Himalayas, each of which has its own distinct anthropology.”⁵⁰ On the one hand there are Scholars who examined the western Himalayas or the Karakorum with a strong emphasis on ethnicity and conflict with relation to segmentary lineage systems are in contrast to those who investigated the eastern Himalayas and the Tibetan plateau with a focus on Buddhism and polyandry.⁵¹ She further explains that these academic writings on the Himalayan region have this attitude of “demonising of Islam and lionising of Tibetan Buddhism”.⁵² Only a small amount of information is recorded about the historical, cultural, and religious significance of Islam, in the books and articles written by A.H. Francke (1907), Hasmatullah Khan (1939), Abdul Ghani Sheikh (2010), and Raveena Aggarwal (2004).⁵³ {Details of these works in a foot note.

⁴⁹ The main sources used for the history of Ladakh are William Moorcroft’s *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara; from 1819 to 1825*. Vol. 1. (London: Asiatic Society of Calcutta 1841). A.H.Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet Part I* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1914), Petech *The Kingdom of Ladakh c.950-1842 A.D.* (Rome, IsMEO, 1977) and Janet Rizvi, *Ladakh Crossroads of High Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983).

Nicola Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru." PhD diss., Goldsmiths, University of London, 1998, 41.

⁵⁰ Grist, “Local Politics in the Suru,” 41.

⁵¹ Grist, “Local Politics in the Suru.” 41.

⁵² Grist, “Local Politics in the Suru,” 42.

⁵³ A.H Frankie’s *History of Western Tibet* (1907) provides the chronicles of the Ladakh Kingdom and various smaller chiefships of the region along with their encounter with the Muslim kings of Kashmir providing a valuable information about the encounter of Ladakh with Islam. Abdul Ghani Sheikh’s *Reflections on Ladakh, Tibet and Central Asia* (2010) focuses on the history of Ladakhi Muslims and their connection with Tibet and Central Asia. Zain-ul-Aabedin Aadedi’s *Emergence of Islam in Ladakh* (2009) largely based on secondary sources serves as a

Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan's (1939) *Tarikh-i-Jamun, Kashmir, Ladakh aur Baltistan* (History of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, and Baltistan) written in Urdu, is considered the most important work on the Muslims of Ladakh. It provides a detailed account of the advent of Islam in Ladakh along with the ruling dynasty of Ladakh. He was an official in the administration of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Drawing from both written texts and as well as oral narratives, Hashmatullah Khan made a detailed description of the history and everyday life of Muslims in Ladakh. It also remains an important source regarding the history of Purig⁵⁴ and provides an extensive description of the Purig region, which is not much documented in most of the academic writings of Ladakh. The background of Maulvi Hashmatullah Khan assigned by the Dogra Raj as an administrator of Ladakh needs to take into consideration while reading his account of Ladakh.⁵⁵

William Moorcroft and Tredbeck, in their book, *Travel in the Himalayan Province of Hindustan and Punjab* (1841), provide valuable information about the influence of Islam in Ladakh and other surrounding areas. They were the first Western travellers to visit Ladakh and spent almost two years in the region, between 1820 and 1822.⁵⁶ William Moorcroft's official reason for visiting Ladakh was to explore routes to Central Asia with an aim to acquire a good breed of Central Asian horses, which he desired to domesticate in British India. During his visit to Ladakh, he wrote notes

useful introduction to the History of Islam in Ladakh. John Bray, Raveena Aggarwal's *Beyond Lines of Control: Performance and Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh, India* (2004) provides an anthropological study of the shared culture between the Muslims and Buddhist of Ladakh. "Readings on Islam in Ladakh: Local, Regional, and International Perspectives" *Himalaya, the journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan studies*, 32(1):13-21.

⁵⁴ In the Tibetan Bodhi manuscript, the region of Kargil is mentioned by the name 'Purig' because the first ruler Nyathistan, who came from 'Purang' Tibet.

⁵⁵ Hashmatullah Khan's account resembles a blend of literary and oral history, with the author sometimes turning to guesswork to fill in logical or chronological gaps while writing the history of the region. Hashmatullah also makes it clear that he work intended to glorify the name of the Dogra dynasty by offering a detailed information about the significant part of their domain. Shahzad Bashir, "Nurbakshis in the History of Kashmir, Ladakh, and Baltistan: A critical view on persian and Urdu sources." *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, (2009), 148.

⁵⁶ Grist, "Local Poitics in Suru," 43.

and recorded Ladakh's physical, cultural, and religious landscape.⁵⁷ His travel to Ladakh was also aimed at investigating the commercial importance of the region. In his travel account along with the commercial and geographical details, he has also given a detailed description of the influence of Islam in Ladakh.⁵⁸ His research also reveals a real account of Kashmir's physical location and topographical landscape and provides valuable figures of Pashm⁵⁹ import between Ladakh and Kashmir.

C L Datta discusses the importance of Ladakh, Baltistan, and western Tibet in the western Himalayas and the role played by Ladakh in Central Asian politics throughout history in his book *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1848* (1973).⁶⁰ It also highlights the importance of Ladakh as a strategic position in Indian politics. Several aspects of religion have been mentioned by the author to illustrate how deeply religion has been intertwined with trade and administration in Ladakh and how profoundly it has influenced politics there. Datta highlights that one of the reasons behind the continued distinct identity of Ladakhi life is partly because of its topography, geographical location and also due to the devotion of its people to their country and religion.⁶¹ Datta's work provides a valuable historical account of Ladakh for researchers who are interested in Ladakh's History.

⁵⁷ William Moorcroft and George Trebeck. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*.

⁵⁸ Moorcroft and Trebeck. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces*.

⁵⁹ Pashm is the fine soft wool that grows during winter, under the shaggy hair of the Pashmina goat: the raw material of the cashmere shawl. The fabric woven from pashm is called Pashmina. The Pashmina wool was one of the most lucrative items which had huge demand from different powerful countries and it has given the trade of the Himalayan region more importance, Janet Rizvi, and Monisha Ahmed. *Pashmina: The Kashmir shawl and beyond*. Marg Publications, 2009.

⁶⁰ C.L. Dutta. *Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics 1819-1848; the Dogra Conquest of Ladakh Baltistan and West Tibet and Reactions of the Other Powers*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1973).

⁶¹ Dutta. *Ladakh and Western Himalayan*.

Drawing from decades of ethnographic experience starting in the 1970s, Helena Norberg Hodge's *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh* (1992) examines two registers of Ladakh; when it was not been affected by western culture in any significant way and the subsequent time of impact of the modernization process, and the changes it brought into Ladakh.⁶² She skilfully documents the traditional lifestyle of the Ladakhi people and how they lived an environmental-friendly life while discussing how religion, social norms, communal bonds, and environmental dependence made Ladakh a content and sustainable community. She then describes the opening of Ladakh to modernization and the severe effects this process had on Ladakh and makes us question the very notion of modernity. She raises the question if environment, social and cultural destruction a side effect of modernization or its main features? Through her experiences in Ladakh, Norberg has provided clear observations about the advantages and downsides of a traditional way of life getting 'modernized.'

Local politics in the Suru valley of northern India (1998), Nicola Grist's doctoral thesis, is a significant study on the Muslims of Ladakh and makes a significant addition to its anthropology. The thesis concentrates on the relationship among several Muslim factions, which included two Shi`as and a Sunni in the Suru Valley of the Kargil district. By discussing the functioning of these three factions in Suru, Grist seeks to locate the history of the Muslims along with other histories in Ladakh. The thesis illustrates the effects of urbanization in Kargil along with the emergence of an administrative elite when Kargil got a separate administrative status in 1979.⁶³ It mentions the effect of such changes that took place in the Suru valley with the emergence of new economic opportunities and new forms of power, status, and gender relations. Grist conducted extensive

⁶² Helena Norberg, *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, (San Francisco, Sierra Club Books 1992).

⁶³ Grist, "Local politics in Suru." 40.

fieldwork among both Muslims and Buddhist villages in both Leh and Kargil and created significant visibility for the Shia communities in the academic writings on Ladakh. She was one of the few researchers to have focussed on the Muslims of the Kargil region who are still underrepresented and misrepresented in the literature on Ladakh.⁶⁴ Regarding the treatment of Muslims in academic studies on Ladakh, she rightly pointed out, “quite unintentionally the impression has been given that ‘real’ Ladakhis are Buddhists and that Muslims and Muslim practice are impostors in their own land.”⁶⁵

In the article, “Imaginariness of Ladakhi modernity” (2003), Martijn van Beek analyses the various forms that modernity can take in various contexts and places, rather than being a homogenizing operation as suggested by the modernization theory of the middle of the 20th century while discussing multiple modernities and regional modernities.⁶⁶ He points out various trajectories through which modernity is disseminated in Ladakh. He traces three important sources of the dissemination of modernity in Ladakh - firstly, by Kashmiri and British colonial civil servants who aimed at developing the region towards a modern state; secondly, role played by Christian missionaries as they played an essential role in the furtherance of modern education (through their efforts at modernizing Ladakh’s agriculture and develop the local craft industry, apart from becoming an important catalyst for the development of contemporary imaginations in Ladakh. Thirdly, through numerous Buddhist modernist influences that Ladakhis who venture outside of Ladakh for trade, pilgrimage, or educational purposes have brought to the region.⁶⁷ Martijn argues

⁶⁴ Grist, “Local politics in Suru.” 40.

⁶⁵ Nicola Grist, “Muslims in western Ladakh.” *The Tibet Journal* 20, no. 3 (1995) 59. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43300543>.

⁶⁶ On multiple modernities, see, e.g. (Eisenstadt 2000; Hefner 1998) The notion of regional modernity is developed by K. Sivaramakrishnan and Arun Agrawal (2003).

⁶⁷ Martijn van Beek, “Imaginariness of Ladakhi Modernity.” *Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the IATS*, Volume 11: Tibetan Modernities, (2007). <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004155220.i-458.44>.

that, these modernization paths placed a strong emphasis on education and sought to bring about social change for the region's and its people's growth so they might reach their full potential. According to Martijn, social and cultural change in Ladakh is both intended to keep people from losing their identity and is first and foremost considered vital to remove barriers to growth and scientific reason.⁶⁸

An anthropological analysis of the ways in which various subjectivities are ritually performed and created in Ladakh may be found in Ravina Aggarwal's *Beyond Lines of Control: Performance and Politics on the Disputed Borders of Ladakh, India* (2004).⁶⁹ She examines the shifts in practices and meanings of specific performances and offers original ideas on the dynamics of community identification and politics in Ladakh. Based on extensive and repeated fieldwork on the society and politics of Ladakh, Aggarwal offers a realistic vision of Ladakh by describing the struggle of people to meet the challenges due to rapid socio-economic changes. She also describes how change in the political system of Ladakh led to the complex relationship between the Muslims and Buddhists and affected the communal harmony between the two. Aggarwal's work also discusses some of the practices and interpretations of different kinds of performances which include village weddings, national holidays archery competitions, festivals, poetry, literature, songs, and films as means through which the interplay of local, regional, and national politics can be approached and explained and calls for the inclusion of Ladakh's history and politics in the wider academic discussions.⁷⁰

While keeping the Shi'as of Kargil as the center of her research, Radhika Gupta, in her paper, "Experiments with Khomeini's revolution in Kargil: Contemporary Shi'a networks between India

⁶⁸ Beck, "Imaginariness," 13.

⁶⁹ Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond lines of Control* (London: Duke university Press, 2004)

⁷⁰ Aggarwal, *Beyond*, 180.

and West Asia” (2014), explores the Shi’a linkages between India and West Asia and the contemporary religious network between the two. She describes how the networks of religious learning are used to spread politico-religious ideas, which are applied selectively and frequently exaggerated in micro locations to impact important social and political changes, in addition to textual and doctrinal information. Gupta discusses the actions performed and opposition raised by the IKMT, a modernist organisation established in Kargil that has selectively adopted Khomeini's revolutionary beliefs to promote social transformation, affect local politics, and reshape religious traditions in Kargil.⁷¹

Literature on modernity and Islamic reform is also looked upon for the formulation of the main argument of this thesis. Studies on universal modernity has viewed religion as obsolete and celebrated secularism as the defining feature of modernization.⁷² However, the post-structuralist ideas provided religion a new lease of life in the contemporary intellectual discourses, rather than conceptualizing religion as a pre-modern entity and the focus was shifted to questioning how religion itself has been modernized during the course of modernity apart from religion reinforcing the modern in significant ways.⁷³ In such a context, it would be interesting to examine the way Islam and Islamic communities interacted with modernity across the world and simultaneously constituted their own modernity. Islam’s encounter with modernity began in the eighteenth century when Europe experienced the flow of new ideas because of enlightenment which stresses the importance of human resources, science and rationality. The new technologies were sweeping

⁷¹ Gupta, “Experiments with Khomeini’s Revolution,” 386.

⁷² Sanjay Seth. "Beyond belief: secularism, religion and our muddled modernity." *Postcolonial Studies* (2022). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2022.2035924>.

⁷³ Franz-Xaver Kaufmann. “Religion and Modernization in Europe.” *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics (JITE) / Zeitschrift Für Die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft* 153, no. 1 (1997): 80–96. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40752988>

through much of Europe because of the Industrial Revolution which resulted in the rise of European dominance over the world in power and influence. Islamic modernism as a movement is described as “the first Muslim ideological response to Western challenges”⁷⁴ or a movement aimed at bridging Islam and contemporary ideals like nationalism, democracy, reason, rights, equality, science, and progress.⁷⁵ It began in the middle of the nineteenth century when European colonialism plunged the Islamic world into crisis. It was a fight to redefine Islam in order to show that it was still relevant to the new circumstances that Muslims were forced to face as their societies modernised. Shireen T. Hunter in her book *Reformist voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity* (2009) discusses three types of responses to modernity by the Muslims; total embrace, rejection and synthesis.⁷⁶ According to her, the elites educated in a Western style institution or West, for example, Ata Turk in Turkey and Pahlavi in Iran were the believers of the total embrace of western modernity.⁷⁷ They responded by fully embracing European modernity because they saw the Islamic traditions as being followed and applied in their countries' educational and judicial systems as the main reason for the decline of Muslims.⁷⁸ The uneducated masses and the clerical establishments formed the second, rejectionist response. They believed that the primary causes of Muslims' decline were the loss of Islamic piety and values, as well as the inability of Muslims to administer and control society in accordance with Islamic law in the face of the onslaught of modernity.⁷⁹ The rejectionists believed that, in order to reverse the process of decline and regain the lost strength and vitality of Islam, the Muslims should revive and observe Islamic rules and

⁷⁴ Mansoor Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism, Nationalism and Fundamentalism: Episode and Discourse*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 2.

⁷⁵ Moaddel, *Islamic Modernism*, 2.

⁷⁶ Shireen T. Hunter, *Reformist Voices of Islam: Mediating Islam and Modernity*, (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2009) 11.

⁷⁷ Hunter, *Reformist voices*, 11.

⁷⁸ Hunter, *Reformist voices*, 12.

⁷⁹ Hunter, *Reformist voices*, 13.

values. The third reaction i.e., synthesis, maintained that Islam is not a hindrance to scientific and other progress and advocated reform in Islam for the restoration of Islam's rationalist and scientific spirit and interpreted that the basic tenets of Islam are compatible with some features of modernity and suits to Muslim's current condition and needs.⁸⁰ Muslim reformist like Jamal-ud-din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh were the representatives of this trend and worked hard to validate their views. In terms of Islam, they explained how the adoption of Western institutions was not the introduction of something new but rather a restoration to the original spirit of Islam.⁸¹ Michelle Brower's and Charles Kurzman's work *An Islamic Reformation?* (2004) discusses the importance of the Islamic reformist movement and draws attention to the way modernity pushed the discussion of true Islam and Islamic authenticity to the fore of public discourse within Islam and Islamic communities. They compared the Islamic reform to the Protestant Reformation, which placed an emphasis on the individual while criticising the clergy, and identified similarities in both movements.

Research Objectives

The goal of the research is to look into the modernization process that was taking place in the region of Ladakh and how these processes created ground for the formation of IKMT. Particularly, the study revolves around on the following objectives:

1. To understand how change in the events of religious and political condition in the transnational Shi'a networks of Iraq and Iran has impacted the social, religious and political condition of Kargil.

⁸⁰ Hunter, *Reformist voices*, 14.

⁸¹ Hunter, *Reformist voices*. 14

2. To understand the role played by IKMT in the promotion of Modern education in Kargil with the introduction of their modern education initiative in the form of Mutahhari Educational Society (MES) and how it challenged the existing attitudes of Shias towards modern education.

Sources and Methodology

The historical sources which throw light on the history of Islam in Kargil are very limited. For the present study, these limited sources are used to understand the emergence of Islam in Kargil. The study would be qualitative in nature. For understanding the socio-religious reforms initiated by the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT) in Kargil both primary and secondary sources are used. The researcher has conducted field research in Kargil from May 2021 to October 2021 and collected oral narratives from the various localities to find out how IKMT inspired socio-religious changes of a particular kind in Kargil. The field visit also allowed the researcher to meet and have conversations with the founding members of IKMT, apart from various other people who had witnessed the growing influence of IKMT in Kargil since its formation in 1989. Focus Group Interviews (FGI) were conducted with people associated with the organization with the help of unstructured questionnaire to find answer to the research question. Key Informant Interview (KII) was also conducted with individuals to collect information about the activities of IKMT wherein questions about the inner workings of various branches of IKMT were asked. Publications and various public notices issued by IKMT have also been collected during the field visit. A few articles that appeared in contemporary media, journals, and newspapers were useful in forming an understanding of the socio-religious and political activities initiated by IKMT. The secondary sources consulted for the study included published books and research articles on Ladakh with special reference to the history of Islam in Ladakh. Literature on modernity, Islamic reformers,

and the importance of their reform initiatives in India are looked upon for the formulation of the main argument of this thesis. Though there is scant work available on Islam, some direct and indirect references can be traced in the celebrated works on Ladakh while discussing the Socio-religious condition of Ladakh. In very few books that discuss the Shia community of Ladakh, we find references to the IKMT, and these sources are used to understand reform initiatives of the IKMT in Kargil.

Chapterisation.

The thesis consists of four chapters, including an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter is an introductory one, which provides a brief outline of the dissertation and highlights the main objectives of the study. This chapter also mentions the research methodology that has been adopted to carry out the research work, which is primarily qualitative in nature.

The second chapter, entitled ‘For Social-Religious Reform: Emergence of a Modernist Group in Kargil’, deals with the discourse of modernity in Kargil, focusing on the formation of IKMT as a reformist organization. This chapter explores how the socio-religious connection of Kargil with the transnational Shia networks in West Asia, mainly with Iraq and Iran, influenced the socio-religious and political condition of Kargil. A brief note on the religious condition of the region has been highlighted to understand how it has provided the platform for the formation of the IKMT in Kargil. It also deals with the promotion of socio-religious reforms in Kargil by IKMT and argues how the then existing Islamic traditions have led to the degeneracy of Shia Muslims in Kargil, which created a space for IKMT and its activities in Kargil.

The Third chapter, ‘Promotion of modern education’, discusses the contribution of IKMT in the promotion of modern education in Kargil by laying down the foundation of Mutahhari Public

School (MPS), imparting both Islamic and modern education. The chapter will shed light upon the attitude of the Shia Muslims towards modern education with a focus on the traditional education system in Kargil. It will also highlight the thoughts of Murtaza Mutahhari on modern education and how IKMT was influenced by his idea in forwarding a strand of modern education that focussed upon education and its instrumentality to rid Shia Muslims of Kargil from their anti-modern education attitude.

Chapter II

Fighting for Socio-Religious Reform: Emergence of a Modernist Group in

Kargil

South Asia experienced a number of religious reform movements during the 19th century when colonialism became more widespread. Movements of religious revival had assumed importance as they took place at a time when religion was highly influenced by the contemporary colonial ideas of rationality, objectivity and also tried to give their own meaning to the notion of ‘self’ and its interconnectedness with sanctity. Robinson highlighted that this shift in the worldly point of view of holiness which was seen in the practice of agency by the believers and their wish to uphold their religion in capacity.⁸² It states that as previously viewed religion was no longer just a medium to uncover the hidden secrets of life or life after death but it was to be used as an instrument which would help in the formation of a fair society on earth. The role of a believer and his subjective existence was formed through interactions with varied societal and social proponents the credit of this shift in how a believer perceived oneself was inspired by the historical content of colonialism. The mid of nineteenth century saw emergence of many movements, attempting to reform Muslims who lived by old, traditional practices and when the ‘right’ form of Islam was propagated to them. *Islah/reform*’s motive was to bring back the old Islamic values in the society which had turned modern.⁸³ Prophetic tradition states that God will assign a leader (*mujadid*) to the Muslim community once in every century to help the community refresh its faith and belief.⁸⁴ In Islamic

⁸² Francis Robinson, "Islamic Reform and Modernities in South Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 42, no. 2-3 (2008): 261-269. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20488020>.

⁸³ Mohamed Haddad, *Muslim Reformism-A Critical History*, (Tunisia: Springer International Publishing, 2020): 51.

⁸⁴ Shireen Hunter, ed. *Reformist voices of Islam: mediating Islam and Modernity*. (New York: M.E. Sharpe: 2009): 4.

tradition, this is referred to as *tajdid*⁸⁵ (renewal), a term that accompanies it is *Islah* which is loosely translated as bringing reforms. Reforms in this context are brought about to terminate the external factors or practices which may have contributed in diminishing the values of both ethics and religion in the Muslims society and caused its moral downfall.⁸⁶ To break away from old binding rituals and traditions was foundational principle of reform as it challenged the structure of Muslim society and that it also provided space for driving different meanings of Quran that would suit the newly formed society. The society is dynamic with many ideas taking shape and changing through passing generations, the process of reforming the old traditions which are upheld by religion is in tune with the growing need of the society to bring desired changes.⁸⁷ Thus, the paradigm of *Islah* i.e., reforms had come into manifestation in the Islamic world in order to bring change in the Muslim society while protecting the Islamic values as well as to confront the modernity in whose development it had not directly participated.⁸⁸

The encounter with modernity created general anxiety in the Islamic world as it contributed to a debate on the downfall and stagnancy of the Muslim world. The Islamic world was losing its power in many areas as the western power was taking control of them, as demonstrated by Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt between 1798 and 1800, Mughal empire's defeat in India, and the country's incorporation full-fledged into the British Empire after 1857. The Islamic way of living was challenged by the west which blamed Islam for the weakness and backwardness of the Muslim world.⁸⁹ Ancient knowledge consecrated by Islam was now being contested by the newly

⁸⁵ According to Islamic thought, *Tajdid* refers to the process of reforming the ideology that represents the intellectual product produced by Muslims in the fields of science, knowledge, and *ijtihad* in order to interpret Islam and understand and explain its rulings.

⁸⁶ Shireen Hunter, ed. *Reformist voices of Islam: mediating Islam and modernity*, (New York: ME Sharpe, 2009): 4.

⁸⁷ Haddad, *Muslim Reformism*, 49.

⁸⁸ Haddad, *Muslim Reformism*, 51.

⁸⁹ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 11.

developed knowledge of the west. The intermingling and collision of the European world and the Muslim world was the cause of awakening and sudden realization amongst Muslims on how they faced decline, generating thoughts about possible ways of overturning it. It was proposed that what would make the Muslim world grow towards progress was circumventing the teachings of Islam and sometimes even completely shunning it.⁹⁰ The general response to these confrontations was the process of renewal among the Muslim societies, which according to Francis Robinson was expressed in different ways in different contexts. In order to respond to the challenges posed by the west, the political elites made efforts known as Islamic modernism to reorganize Islamic institutions and knowledge in accordance with the western paradigm.⁹¹ On the other hand the traditional *ulama* saw it as a tool to reorganize communities and work closely on one's own individual behaviours in terms of fundamental religious principles which was reformism, according to them.⁹² Islamic fundamentalism or Islamism was to be achieved as contested by a new strand that emerged with a claim that the holy revelation of the verses has and will have all the rights that control what a human being experiences.⁹³ It asserted that Quranic revelations has the authority to dictate all aspects of human existence and claimed that state power must be used to achieve this goal.⁹⁴

Robinson argues that four characteristics differentiate projects of renewal amongst Muslims since the 18th century, these entailed an attack on that the previous authority, a new found focus on the will of human beings, especially of each Muslim in the absence of strong political power, a transformation of self and the conscious adoption of Islamic practices and rationalization of

⁹⁰ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 11.

⁹¹ Robinson, "Islamic Reform," 259.

⁹² Robinson, "Islamic Reform." 259.

⁹³ Robinson, "Islamic Reform." 259.

⁹⁴ Robinson, "Islamic Reform." 259.

religious belief, involving critique of local customs, superstition, and forms of Sufism.⁹⁵ At the turnaround to the nineteenth century the conceptualization of the holy verses and teachings of Quran and *sunnah*⁹⁶ were brought into focus to ponder over and re-compile and investigate with a new vigor not only the *sunnah* but also Quran and the core meaning of the religion of Islam.⁹⁷ This comes with still adhering to the core principles and essence of Islam and the new outlook that would be juxtaposed with modernity. The nineteenth-century reformers Jamal-ud-din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh felt that the Quran and *sunnah* were eternal and unchangeable and could not be interpreted differently over time and circumstances.⁹⁸ Their main argument was how the contemporary Muslims were to be blamed for the defeat they met with the hands of the Europeans and not Islam in totality. They claimed that Islam had been misinterpreted and the understanding had not been at par with the real message, and if it was otherwise Islam wouldn't have been deplored.⁹⁹ Both stated that Muslims would not have been as easily vanquished and subjugated by the European forces if Islam were correctly understood and explained, as it was during the height of Islamic culture.¹⁰⁰ In their arguments they brought out how Arabs who once used to be the masters of the world were in sync with the real ethical values of Islam. For the reformists, the reform movement arose in response to two issues, or a mixture of them: actual or perceived moral and religious observance deviations, which frequently led to a period of Muslim communities' general decline, and external threats, particularly foreign conquest.¹⁰¹ The goal of the Islamic reformers, according to this perspective was to act as a middleman between the preservation of

⁹⁵ Filippo Osella and Caroline Osella, eds. (*Islamic Reform in South Asia*. Cambridge University Press, 2013): 28-29

⁹⁶ The sunna are the practices and sayings of the Prophet, as recorded and related in hadith.

⁹⁷ Robinson, "Islamic Reform." 261.

⁹⁸ Naṣr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd, *Reformation of Islamic thought: A critical historical analysis* (Vol. 10. Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 23.

⁹⁹ Zayd, *Reformism of Islamic Thought*, 24.

¹⁰⁰ Zayd, *Reformism of Islamic Thought*. 24.

¹⁰¹ Zayd, *Reformism of Islamic Thought*, 25.

Islamic values and the demands of modernization. In order to create a rational and intellectual foundation and framework that would be inspired by and ingrained in Islam's fundamental principles, the reformists envisioned the construction of a modernity that could meet Muslims' dual desires of modernity without giving up the authenticity of Islam and its basic ethos.¹⁰² They think that because this idea of modernity would be based on the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual history of Muslims, it would have a stronger chance of succeeding in the Muslim world. The reformists wanted to accomplish this in order to combat the influence of idyllic, pedantic, and excessively nativist interpretations of Islam.¹⁰³ They suggested a more contextualist, rationalist method of interpreting Islamic, biblical, and legal sources. a strategy that allows for novel interpretations of Islamic texts.¹⁰⁴ They would more accurately reflect the actual essence of Islam and its guiding principles of mercy and justice, making these new interpretations more applicable to Muslims' present needs and circumstances. The reformists hoped to show that Islam's core principles of tolerance, democracy, and pluralism were all consistent with contemporary modern ideas of human rights.¹⁰⁵ They demonstrated that, when correctly understood, interpreted, and put into practice, Islamic principles can coexist peacefully with modernization, welfare state, basic rights of individuals, that the difficult choice to make between upholding one's religious beliefs and also going down on the path for modernization can be avoided.¹⁰⁶ A notable illustration of this is the Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan-founded Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh. The apprehension of Sir Sayyid can be summed up in his fears that if not kept up with the pace of changing times Muslims will be obliterated and omitted from all the social spheres, more so by

¹⁰² Hunter, *Reformist Voices*. 25.

¹⁰³ Hunter, *Reformist Voices*, 21.

¹⁰⁴ Haddad, *Muslim Reformism*, 67.

¹⁰⁵ Haddad, *Muslim Reformism*, 67.

¹⁰⁶ Zayd, *Reformism of Islamic Thought*, 29.

the ever-threatening powers of the Hindus and British that worked against them.¹⁰⁷ Henceforward all his endeavours were directed towards the embrace of modernity by the Muslims most particularly the educational aspect of modernity.¹⁰⁸ In the 1960s and 1970s, a new school of Muslim intellectuals focused on the "Islamization of Knowledge".¹⁰⁹ They made an attempt to show that Islam provides Muslims with what they require in order to flourish in modern society while protecting them from the degrading effects of modernization.¹¹⁰ While praising the accomplishments of western modernity, Muhammad Iqbal¹¹¹ cautioned the Muslims against becoming overly fixated on them and pushed for the creation of a socioeconomic and political structure based on Islamic philosophy. Iqbal berates the western modernity effort for focusing solely on earthly affairs and failing to pursue the individual's spiritual aspirations.

The purpose of this new type of reformism was to enhance the relevance of Islamic sources to Muslim needs in the modern world by applying a rationalistic, historical, and contextual

¹⁰⁷ Filza Waseem, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Identity Formation of Indian Muslims through Education." *Review of History and Political Science* 2, no. 2 (2014): 132. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269406442>

¹⁰⁸ Waseem, "Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan," 133.

¹⁰⁹ The phrase 'Islamization of Knowledge' has been first quoted by the Malaysian scholar Sayyid Naquib Al- 'Attas in his book *'Islam and secularism'* published in 1978. He argued that IOK process needs two steps, including the separation of the un-Islamic elements from the contemporary knowledge, and then imbibing the Islamic concepts in that knowledge. He defined that the IOK project is 'the liberation of man first from magical, mythological, animistic, national, cultural tradition and then from secular control over his reason and language.' Syed Naquib al-'Attas, *Islam, Secularism and the Philosophy of the Future*, (Mansell Publishing limited, London and New York, 1985).

¹¹⁰ Hunter, *Reformist Voices*, 20.

¹¹¹ Muhammad Iqbal, also known as Allama Iqbal, is the National Poet of Pakistan. A poet, philosopher, politician, lawyer, and scholar, Iqbal was born on November 9, 1877, in Punjab, Pakistan, to Kashmiri parents and educated at Scotch Mission College in Sialkot. Iqbal is widely known as one of the most important figures in Urdu and Persian literature, having written numerous volumes of poetry in both languages. After returning to Lahore in 1908, Iqbal taught philosophy and English literature while practicing law. His first book, *Asrar-i Khudi (The Secrets of the Self)*, was published in 1915, followed by *Ramuz-e-Bekhudi (The Mysteries of Selflessness)* in 1918—both of which are regarded as the base for his poetic philosophy. He continued to write and publish volumes of poetry up until his death on April 21, 1938. Iqbal was a strong proponent of the political and spiritual revival of Islamic civilisation across the world, but specifically in India; a series of famous lectures he delivered to this effect were published as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Retrieved from https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/m/Muhammad_Iqbal.htm. Accessed on 10-10-2022.

interpretation to them. The end goal in sight was to create a kind of modernity that was rooted in Islamic learnings and experiences and simultaneously inculcating the ideas of western modernity.¹¹² In order for the Muslims in Islamic society to break ties with the corruption that had festered deep within their societies along with the dormant state of people. Ali Shariati, the proponent of the Iranian revolution seeks to transform Islam from a culture into an ideology.¹¹³

Shia Revival in South Asia

Religious renewal and reform were a key component of Sunni Islam in South Asia in the late 19th century. This encompassed an effort of upliftment for Muslims to be engrossed in absorbing the most prominent message of Islam and also a bogging down of all the perceptions of divination; Muslims were encouraged to follow the path shown to them by the holy scripture, their consciences permeated as much as possible by the *ulama*, and these were the elements that would protect them from external dominance.¹¹⁴ An overarching cause for this revival was loss of political stronghold which Muslims faced and hence they were pushed to create a society so rooted in Islamic ideas which now existed without power. The Sunni ulama took up the responsibility as there was no state support, they also set up factions in societies and also laid the foundation for many madrasas, translated the holy texts of Quran and Hadith into local and regional languages, and spread knowledge widely through print and preaching.¹¹⁵ However, very less is known about the response

¹¹² Hunter, *Reformist Voices*, 20-21.

¹¹³ Malik Mohammad Tariq, "Ali Shariati's View of Islamic Modernity." *Dialogue (Pakistan)* 8, no. 3 (2013), 336. Retrieved from https://qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/8_3/Dialogue_July_September2013_335-345.pdf. Accessed on 25-12-2022.

¹¹⁴ Francis Robinson, "Introduction: Shi'a in modern South Asia." In *The Shi'a in modern South Asia: Religion, history, and politics*, J. Jones & A. Qasmi (Eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Sufyan Abid Dogra, "Living a piety-led life beyond Muharram: becoming or being a South Asian Shia Muslim in the UK." *Contemporary Islam* 13, no. 3 (2019). Retrieved from [10.1007/s11562-019-00437-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-019-00437-8)

¹¹⁵ Francis Robinson, "Introduction: Shi'a in modern South Asia." In *The Shi'a in modern South Asia: Religion, history, and politics*, J. Jones & A. Qasmi (Eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43307307>.

of the Shia Muslims to such an environment. The Shia Muslims in the south Asian context were not to be found in academic terms as Francis Robinson states, “the Shi’as have suffered from the paradox of being both highly visible but in scholarly terms largely invisible.”¹¹⁶ They are highly visible during the procession of Muharram in South Asia as they commemorate the martyrdom of the third Shia imam and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, Imam Hussain.¹¹⁷ Keeping in consideration the challenges and changes that were brought by the contemporary times the Shia reformers wanted to work towards creating a model that was standard and could be applied everywhere despite of the geographical reach, on how to practice Shia Islamism in everyday life.¹¹⁸ The central argument that shapes the essence and ideas that guide Shia philosophy has been on the exploration of the inner truth. It was mostly distinguished by the challenge to western modernity as well as the theological critique on Sunni Islam by addressing the misunderstandings about Shia Islam among Sunni Muslims. The misconceptions such as Shias considers Ali to be superior than Prophet Muhammad, all Shias curse the companions of prophet Muhammad and Shias has different Quran were increasing the sectarian gap between the Shias and Sunnis. The reformists seek to clear such misunderstanding regarding Shias and instil a new understanding of divinity which will revolve around the physical changes too that manifest in ones appearances but at the same time also what appears to the world in following the important pillars of faith in Islam that include, offering namaz five times in a day, religious ceremonies, reading the Quran and an increased personal engagement with the propagation of Shia Islamic activities.¹¹⁹ The Karbala

¹¹⁶ Robinson, “Introduction: Shi’a in modern South Asia,” 353.

¹¹⁷ Robinson, “Introduction: Shi’a in modern South Asia,” 353.

¹¹⁸ Sufyan Abid Dogra, "Living a piety-led life beyond Muharram: becoming or being a South Asian Shia Muslim in the UK." *Contemporary Islam* 13, no. 3 (2019), 2. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-019-00437-8>.

¹¹⁹ Dogra, "Living a piety-led life," 5.

paradigm is central to such Shia reformism.¹²⁰ A few select scholars in the South Asia propounded living a life led with divinity even beyond the sacred time of Muharram but also to excel in the worldly matters such as education, building a career having social relationship and indulging in affairs of one's community but also not neglecting the religious necessities of observing fast during the month of Ramadan or offering namaz and practicing the ideas of Shia Islamic ideologies all through the year. Justin Jones traces the life and death of the third Shia Imam, Hussain as an inspiration for living a piety-led life among the Shi'as of South Asia.¹²¹ Ali Naqi Naqvi, the prominent Shia scholar demystified the Karbala paradigm and denied all the mystically motivated powers associated with Hussain and presented him as a role model for the Shia Muslims.¹²² Key aspects of his understanding of the Karbala paradigm, to which Justin Jones refers to Hussainology,¹²³ were: 1). The use of authentic sources to counter both the modification of the Karbala tale and also to satiate the claim to precision. 2). He attempted to assert the martyrdom of Hussain in a broader ethical paradigm, rather than simply being remembered during the weeks of Muharram, the life of Hussain should be looked upon as a role model in all human actions, and 3).

¹²⁰ The Karbala paradigm recounts the battle of the third Shia Imam, Hussain against the unjust rule of the Umayyad regime. It provides models for living and a mnemonic for thinking about how to live and was used by Shia reformists to promote 'modern' and revolutionary interpretations according to which Shias should strive for modern values, such as education and progress, political awareness, and social involvement. David Pinault, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India*, (Palgrave, Hampshire, 2016), 11-13.

¹²¹ Justin Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India: Religion, community and sectarianism*. Vol. 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

¹²² Jones, *Shi'a Islam in Colonial India*. 5.

¹²³ Sayyid Ali Naqi Naqvi (1905-1988) also known as Naqqan was a mujtahid from Lucknow, India who graduated from Najaf, Iraq. He is famous for his writings in Urdu, including the most famous Shaheed-e-Insaniyat and Tareekh-e-Islam. One of the most highly regarded scholars of Shia Islam at his time, he wrote more than 100 books and 1000 short books. In India, he published books in 12 languages. Ali Naqi Naqvi was able to formulate a fresh construct of Imam Hussain's selfhood built around his worldly agency rather than intercessory powers, and a message of temporal action that meant he was a figure to be emulated rather than merely commemorated and attempted to open Hussain's significance to all humanity by reaching out externally to other Muslim and Non-Muslim communities. For more see Justin Jones. "Shi'ism, humanity and revolution in twentieth-century India: Selfhood and politics in the Hussainology of 'Ali Naqi Naqvi." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no. 3 (2014), 415-434.

He attempted to use the message of Karbala Karbala message as a propagating tool of both the Shia and non-Shia Muslims.¹²⁴

One of the important events in the transnational Shia network which influenced Shia reformism in South Asia is the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the country's leader, announced that Iran would challenge “the world’s arrogant powers” across the globe.¹²⁵ He declared that, “we shall export our revolution to the whole world.”¹²⁶ This idea of Khomeini found its voice in many places in the Shia world and the revolution brought new found proceedings to resuscitate predicaments that Shias of South Asia faced, which were standardization and reformation of ritual commemoration practices, ex-communication of the so-called ‘deviant’ elements, and the ‘creation of one main body to exercise the authority of religion.’¹²⁷ The Shia ulama studied in the religious centres of Qom and Mashhad in Iran declared many Shia practices ‘innovative, un-Islamic, cultural and impure’, which was harming the image of global Shia Islam and defaming it.¹²⁸

Khomeini’s Revolution and the Rise of a Modernist Group in Kargil

The Iranian Revolution initiated by Rohullah Khomeini has created waves that are still felt and is named as one of the major events that came out of the late 20th century. The Shia world welcomed the Iranian Revolution with great pride as it imparted confidence among the Shias and awakened

¹²⁴ Justin Jones, "Shi 'ism, humanity and revolution in twentieth-century India: Selfhood and politics in the Husainology of 'Ali Naqi Naqvi." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no. 3, (2014): 420-430.

¹²⁵ Husain Haqqani, “Iran’s Revolutionary Influence In South Asia-Analysis.” *Hudson Institute*, November 18, 2020. <https://www.eurasiareview.com/18112020-irans-revolutionary-influence-in-south-asia-analysis/> accessed on 25-12-2022.

¹²⁶ Haqqani, “Iran’s Revolutionary Influence”.

¹²⁷ Sufyan Abid Dogra, “Karbala in London: Battle of Expressions of Ashura Ritual Commemorations among Twelver Shia Muslims of South Asian Background.” *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 6 (2017): 166. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43307311>.

¹²⁸ In 1994 Ayatollah Khamenei the current supreme leader of Iran declared a fatwa against the Practice of self-flagellation with chains (zanjeerzani) and blades (qamazani).

them to stand for their rights which were oppressed for a long time, and changed the stature of the Shias.¹²⁹ Throughout history, the Shia communities, at various levels, posed a defying obstacle to various empires which ruled the world of Islam in a global sense and hence the Shias were often eyed with suspicion and met with strong oppositions. The Arab world was treating the Shias as outsiders and or as lesser Arabs by accusing the Shias as Iranian fifth column.¹³⁰ The Shia agenda which is often claimed to be carried out in secret by the Arab regimes has been used to justify the dictatorship in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain.¹³¹ The Shia leader Muhammad Baqer al-Sadr along with his sister Bint-ul-Huda was put to death by Saddam Hussein in 1980 due to a fear and to protect the Ba'thist rule during the Shia revolution which was happening in the neighbouring nation of Iran. The Iranian revolution¹³² awakened the Shias by making them intrepid in their insistence for basic rights and recognition and allowed the Shias to achieve an Islamic statehood that was much talked about by Sunni activist in the Muslim brotherhood and also by the Jamaat-

¹²⁹ Vali Nasr, *The Shia revival: How conflicts within Islam will shape the future*, New York: W.W Norton & Company (2007), 138.

¹³⁰ Nasr, *The Shia revival*, 108.

¹³¹ Nasr, *The Shia revival*. 108.

¹³² Iranian Revolution refers to the popular movement in Iran (1979) was a mass movement of diverse interests and political groups within Iranian society come together to overthrow Mohamed Reza Shah Pahlavi, the country's monarch since 1941. The Shah ruled Iran with an oppressive force that was seen as corrupt, intimidating, and intolerant of public criticism. However, he also sought to westernize Iran and was pressured by the U.S. to instate a national development program called the White Revolution. This program disrupted the wealth and power dynamics of landowners and religious leaders, but it also catapulted Iran into a period of economic growth and prosperity. Despite some of its successes, the program created social disparities and was not accepted by everyone in Iran. Most notably, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was an outspoken critic of the White Revolution and the Shah's government. By late 1978 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini had come to dominate the antiregime uprising, in which secular nationalists, liberals, and leftists also participated. Khomeini wanted to reintegrate religion back into the government and decrease the western influence in Iran. Despite his conservative religious ideas, Khomeini was supported by many groups in the resistance (rich, poor, working class, upper class, men, women, etc.). Khomeini cast the struggle against the shah as a re-enactment of the Battle of Karbala (680 CE), which Shi'ite Muslims mark annually in the month of Muharram by commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (grandson of Muhammad). Hussain died at the hands of his enemy Yazid in the desert of Karbala (present-day Iraq), in a battle that sealed Yazid's succession to the caliphate. In 1978, Khomeini personified the innocent Hussein, the shah stood for his nemesis Yazid, and those protestors killed by the shah's brutal repression were seen as martyrs in the tradition of Hussein's seventh-century followers. After a national referendum vote on April 1st, 1979 Khomeini succeeded in creating the Islamic Republic. Heather Lehr Wagner, *The Iranian Revolution*, (New York: Chelsea House publishers, 2010).

e-Islami.¹³³ Following the Iranian revolution, Shia politics began to stir up and change was visible among the Shias of Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq and South Asia.¹³⁴ Iran backed militia group Hezbollah in Lebanon and their resounding win over Israel brought a sort of a shine in the power that Shias exuberated and so bolstered their confidence. The newly discovered and explosive zeal with which the Shias fought in unison had a deep impact on the Muslim world.¹³⁵

Khomeini interpreted Islam as a political religion. He emphasized the Shias not be the bystanders and leave their fates in the hands of someone else and called for an active participation in the struggle against injustice through Islamic revolution. The Karbala paradigm was central to Khomeini's ideology of active participation in politics and forming an Islamic government. He used the emotional Shia lore to influence the Shias to become active participants in the fight against Shah regime,¹³⁶ but also to lay claim over the divinity of Shiism. Khomeini claimed that it is only through resistance the Shias could get rid of injustice and establish their own identity. According to Daniel Brumberg and Marvin Zonis by making the "oppressed and innocent masses, crushed underfoot all over the world," Khomeini was effective in spreading his revolutionary philosophy

¹³³ Nasr, *The Shia revival*, 138.

¹³⁴ Nasr, *The Shia revival*. 138.

¹³⁵ Nasr, *The Shia revival*, 139.

¹³⁶ The Pahlavi Dynasty was the ruling house of Iran from 1925 until 1979, when the monarchy was overthrown and abolished as a result of the Iranian Revolution. The dynasty was founded by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925, a former Brigadier-General of the Persian Cossack Brigade, whose reign lasted until 1941 when he was forced to abdicate by the Allies after the Anglo-Soviet invasion. He was succeeded by his son, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran. The Pahlavi's came to power after Ahmad Shah Qajar, the last ruler of the Qajar dynasty, proved unable to stop British and Soviet encroachment on Iranian sovereignty, had his position extremely weakened by a military coup, and was removed from power by the parliament while in France. Faced with growing public discontent and popular rebellion throughout 1978, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi went into exile with his family in January 1979, sparking a series of events that quickly led to the dissolution of the state on 11 February 1979, officially ending the 2,500-year-old tradition of monarchy in Iran. Retrieved from https://homepages.uc.edu/~torresrs/fwd/finalproject/piwebsite/pahlavi_dynasty.html. Accessed on 25-12-2022.

throughout the Muslim world.¹³⁷ According to them Khomeini was successful in making his ideology the representative of all oppressed peoples and stand against the oppressors.

Inspired by the Iranian revolution and the newly developed ideology of Khomeini, a few religious leaders and a number of young men came together to establish a Trust in the Indian mountain town of Kargil district.¹³⁸ It was founded soon after the demise of Rohullah Khomeini on 4th June 1989 to keep alive his teachings and memory. The Trust draws inspiration from the teachings of Khomeini and aims to serve ‘humanity without any discrimination on any ground, be it caste, creed, color, gender, religion, etc.’ and to work for the progress of society in a holistic way.¹³⁹ As pointed out already the architects of the trust parted ways from the ISK¹⁴⁰, the foremost religious center of the Twelver Shias¹⁴¹ of the district, criticizing their traditional, orthodox outlook which was hindering the development of the people of Kargil being under the crutches of old generation of clerics who had studied in Najaf.¹⁴² The supporters of IKMT raised questions to the ISK clerics about their interpretation of certain hadiths because they believed that the older clerics did not

¹³⁷ Marvin Zonis and Daniel Brumberg, “Shi’ism as interpreted by Khomeini: An Ideology of Revolutionary Violence,” in *Shi’ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, Martin Kramer (London: Routledge, 2019) 110.

¹³⁸ Radhika Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil: Contemporary Shi'a networks between India and West Asia." *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): pp.371-372. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X13000759>.

¹³⁹ Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust manifesto, 3rd Edition, (IKMT: Kargil, January 2020).

¹⁴⁰ Islamia School Kargil also known as Anjuman Jamiat-ul-Ulama Houza Elmiyah Asna Asharia Islamia School Kargil (I.S.K) is a socio-religious organization in Kargil that was founded in the year 1954 by the clerics of Kargil who had studied in Najaf. When movement between Kargil and Baltistan became difficult because of the drawing up of borderline these clerics felt the need to establish a local seminary in Kargil to look into the religious matters of Kargil. Presently the organization run madrasas and deputed ulamas in different villages of Ladakh for Islamic proselytization.

¹⁴¹ Twelvers are the followers of the 12 imams they consider to be the only rightful successors of the Prophet Muhammad, beginning with Ali ibn Abu Talib (600-661 CE), Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and ending with Muhammad ibn al-Hasan (born 869 CE), the 12th imam who according to Twelver belief will emerge and bring peace and justice to the world, becoming the ultimate savior of humankind (Muhammad never appeared publicly and is currently considered in major occultation as the Mahdi).

¹⁴² Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 371.

promote a questioning mentality that places an emphasis on *aql* (rational faculty) rather than blind faith.¹⁴³

The emergence of IKMT was in reaction to the numerous political and social-economic changes that were occurring in Ladakh during the 1970s. During the 1970s and 1980s significant changes were revamping the society of Ladakh's and also its economy. i) Ladakh was opened to outsiders in 1974 and attracted a number of tourists towards it.¹⁴⁴ ii) The Leh-Srinagar highway was completed in 1976 and connected Ladakh with the outside world and increased the number of tourists looking for adventure and spiritual peace which ushered extensive economic changes in Ladakh.¹⁴⁵ iii) In 1979 Kargil was given full-fledged district status by the state government of Jammu and Kashmir, till then it was a tehsil of the erstwhile Ladakh district and got its due share of funds from both state and central government. iv) The President of India passed the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order 1989, whereby eight tribes from Ladakh [(a) Dard, (b) Shin, (c) Mon, (d) Purigpa, (e) Bot, Boto, (f) Changpa, (g) Drokpa, (h) Balti, (i) Garra, (j) Beda] were declared Scheduled Tribes and under the Tribal Advisory Councils apportioned a considerable economic benefit package for the area through a special tribal plan.¹⁴⁶ The Buddhist of Leh district took advantage of all these developments and advanced towards socio-economic progress while the Kargili Muslims distanced themselves from participating in these

¹⁴³ Christophe Jaffrelot and Laurence Louër, eds. *Pan-Islamic connections: transnational networks between South Asia and the Gulf* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 199-200.

¹⁴⁴ Between 1948 to 1794, Ladakh was geographically and politically secluded from rest of the world due to military strategic reasons. Tourism in Ladakh started with 525 tourists during its opening season and witnessed large numbers of visitors with passing years. Tashi Lundup, "Tourism and Ladakhi Culture in Transition." *Indian Anthropologist* 48, no. 1 (2018): 47–59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26633111>.

¹⁴⁵ Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control* (Duke University Press, 2004), 41-42

¹⁴⁶ The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989 (C.O. 142), Van Beek, Martijn. "Hill councils, development, and democracy: Assumptions and experiences from Ladakh." *Alternatives* 24, no. 4 (1999): 439-441, Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, 41-42

developmental processes. They held Leh's dominance in political and economic fields responsible for the neglect of Kargil¹⁴⁷ whereas the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA)¹⁴⁸ blamed endemic corruption and conservative beliefs of the Kargilis for their backwardness and called them "undeserving beneficiaries of affirmative action" because the Kargilis did not participate in any demand for the developmental processes like Scheduled Tribe Status for Ladakh but later on benefited from it.¹⁴⁹ The attitude of Leh towards the Kargili Muslims was largely negative and there is a long history of antagonism between the regions of Leh and Kargil. The Shias of Ladakh were primarily seen as the "Poor" other and were viewed with some disdain and trepidation.¹⁵⁰ The Kargili Muslims are sometimes referred to as "Balti," a disparaging term that also suggests that they are outsiders because it refers to the nearby Baltistan region. The name 'Balti' is generally used for the Kargili Muslims which has both derogatory connotations and also implies that they are outsiders as the name refers to neighbouring Baltistan. The Buddhists make a distinction between the Muslims and themselves by calling the Buddhists 'Nangpa' meaning 'insiders' while the Muslims as 'Phi-pa' meaning 'outsiders.'¹⁵¹ In Leh the Kargili Shias were thought to be uncouth and dirty.¹⁵² Grist mentions the general attitude of Buddhists in Leh towards the Kargili Muslims and explains, "when I first visited Suru in 1981/2, we were told by a number of people in Leh that Suru people would not let us into their homes and that we would have difficulty even getting a glass of water. This was untrue and typical of derogatory things that were said about

¹⁴⁷This is the most popular opinion in Kargil. leaders of both IKMT and Islamia school Kargil share this common opinion and blames Leh's leaders for always neglecting the Kargilis in the key areas of development.

¹⁴⁸ It is an organization in Ladakh which is concerned with the interests of Buddhists in Ladakh. The association was founded in 1934 with the aim of bringing social reform in Ladakh.

¹⁴⁹ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, 51.

¹⁵⁰ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, 50.

¹⁵¹ Nicola Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru Valley of Northern India." PhD diss., (Goldsmiths, University of London, 1998) 55.

¹⁵² Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru," 55.

Kargili Shi'ahs in Leh.”¹⁵³ In 1989 the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) which was demanding the Union Territory Status for Ladakh imposed a social boycott of Muslims to free Ladakh from the authority of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The LBA prevented the Buddhists from inter-dining, intermarrying, and interacting with Muslims, and called for the boycott of Kashmiri-run businesses like travel agencies, grocery shops, vegetables shops, and meat shops. Initially, the boycott was against the Kashmiri Sunni Muslims in Leh but when the Shia Muslims displayed their reluctance to participate join in the Union Territory demand for Ladakh the boycott was extended to them which aggravated the animosity between Leh and Kargil.¹⁵⁴

A significant contributing reason in the Kargili Shias' resistance to Ladakh's modernizing process was the Shias' long history of resistance to colonialism. The relationship between Kargil and the Shi'ite hotspots in West Asia with an influx of devotees and intellectuals since the early twentieth century had a key role in the Shia resistance to the modernizing process in Ladakh.¹⁵⁵ The British invasion of Iraq during the First World War followed by the 1920 declaration of a British mandate led to an anti-colonial attitude in Iraq during which Shia ulama, prominent figures, and tribal chiefs took part in the nation's uprising against British authority.¹⁵⁶ The chief mujtahid, Muhammad Taqi Al-Shirazi in the shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf issued a *fatwa* (religious ruling) prohibiting the Muslims from taking employment in British offices and proclaimed every service to the British to be illegal and urged nationalist and ulama of Iraq to join him in boycotting the British.¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵³Grist, “Local Politics in the Suru,” 56.

¹⁵⁴ Martijn Van Beek, "Beyond identity fetishism: Communal conflict in Ladakh and the limits of autonomy." *Cultural anthropology* 15, no. 4 (2000): 539-543. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656621>.

¹⁵⁵ For more see, Henry Wilson-Smith, "More Religious and Less Moral: The Changing Face of Religious Coexistence in Ladakh." (2015).

¹⁵⁶ Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam*. (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2003), 174.

¹⁵⁷ Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War*, 175.

anti-colonial attitude remained popular in Iraq and the ulama continued the anti-colonial resistance. During the same time, a sizeable amount of Shia clerics from Kargil got trained in the seminaries of Najaf and Karbala which developed as a stronghold of Shi'ism in Iraq from the mid-eighteenth century. Students of Kargil who wanted to gain the same knowledge and training to become clerics would undergo long travels to these places particularly in Najaf and Karbala. They would either travel via land through Afghanistan or to Basra via sea from Bombay and were dependent on the support of a specific *mujtahid* (the highest authority in jurisprudence) for their stipends.¹⁵⁸ After completion of their studies in Iraq, it was always been the tradition and requirement for these students to return to Kargil for proselytization. Radhika Gupta argued that the networks of religious learnings not only serve as channels for the diffusion of religious knowledge but also for disseminating West Asian socio-political discourses and ideas.¹⁵⁹ The present researcher often been told by the members of IKMT that upon the arrival of the clerics from Iraq in Kargil, they brought along with them the anti-British attitude and spirit of resistance to colonialism that they imbibed from West Asia. They preached the common people about the fatwas of various mujtahids against the colonial cultures through an advocacy of boycotting English education and refusing government offices by terming them as un-Islamic. These clerics who study in Iraq and Iran are highly respected and are conferred higher positions in the hierarchical structure of the Kargil society. Those who pursue Islamic education in the middle East comprise 'Aghas' and 'Sheikhs'.¹⁶⁰ The Aghas are the Sayyids and trace their descent from Shia imams bearing family names such as, Mousavi, Rizvi, Hussaini, Shah whereas the title of 'Sheikh' is given to someone

¹⁵⁸ Radhika Gupta. "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 372-375.

¹⁵⁹ Gupta. "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution," 373.

¹⁶⁰ The aghas and Sheikhs wear special dresses and are differentiated by their dresses. The Sheikhs are recognized by the white turban while the Aghas wear black turban.

who completes Islamic education.¹⁶¹ In Kargil, the Aghas and Sheikhs are given with huge amounts of admiration and are well respected they are regarded as fountainheads of knowledge and instruments to meet the spiritual and other requirements of the people. B.L Kak narrates the strong influence of Aghas and Sheikhs on the Shia society to the extent that majority of people would rather die than discard spiritual remedies advised by them and called them ‘demigods.’ He explains:

What the Aghas and the Sheikhs do to the religion-ridden Shi’a population of Baltistan territory under the occupation of Pakistan, is practiced on the Muslim population of Kargil tehsil on almost the same lines. In other words, the Aghas and Sheikhs of Kargil sector profit by the people's blissful ignorance. Some of these "demi-gods" are materially prosperous while quite a few of them take advantage of "mutta" without any restriction. The old Muslim practice of "mutta" (temporary marriage) is common in the region.¹⁶²

It is a very common practice in Kargil to stand up when an Agha or a Sheikh enters or as a sign of respect, they will be provided with the most sought-after place to be seated in any gathering. The institution of these ‘demigods’ refused and prohibited the Shias to participate in any of the developmental processes that were brought into the social and economic spheres of Ladakh during the 1960s and 1970s.¹⁶³ These developmental processes were seen with suspicion by the ‘demigods’ and replicated the anti-British attitude in Kargil as a sign of solidarity and allegiance to the mujtahids in Iraq.¹⁶⁴

In order to make the teachings of Islam more applicable to cater the needs of Muslims in the changing world and to be in sync with new revised codes of ethics which dealt with human rights

¹⁶¹ Grist, “Local Politics in the Suru,” 26.

¹⁶² B. L. Kak, *Chasing Shadows in Ladakh*. (New Delhi: Light & Life Publishers, 1978), 18.

¹⁶³ Kak, *Chasing Shadows*, 19.

¹⁶⁴ In conversation with a member of the IKMT. On 12-03-2021.

a new breed of Islamic intellectuals emerged in the 1980s.¹⁶⁵ These reformers advocated a distinct brand of Islamic reform that emphasizes a contextual, historical, and rationalist approach to the understanding of Islamic literature. In the end, it seeks to create a sort of nativized modernity rooted in the spiritual history of the Muslims while acknowledging the emancipatory aspects of western modernity.¹⁶⁶ It seeks to reconcile logic and spirituality, religion and freedom and attempted to develop an 'Islamic modernity' which has its root in Islam's spiritual heritage along with taking the emancipatory and liberating aspects of western modernity.¹⁶⁷ Murtaza Mutahhari, the Iranian cleric and philosopher held that rather than using religion as a tool for social change, reform should come from within the religious community. He was critical of those who desired "to limit Islam to the archives of history" as well as those who were opposed to any kind of innovative thought or religious change. Instead, he advocated for an internally generated reform in Islam by making it more responsive to modern needs through the restructuring of prevailing clerical establishment and its intellectual renewal. He questioned the conventional ulama for not doing more to show people, especially the youth, the genuine Islam, which is a socially conscious and problem-solving Islam.¹⁶⁸ Mutahhari advocates an Islam which is free of ignorance and superstitions. He believed that internally generated reform in religion could be achieved with the restructuring of existing traditional clerical establishment which could be done through the process of intellectual renewal in the Islamic learning centres.¹⁶⁹ He also advocates changes in the teaching system in the religious centres where the ulama does not encourage students to look into new

¹⁶⁵ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 20.

¹⁶⁶ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 20.

¹⁶⁷ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 22.

¹⁶⁸ Mortaza Motahhari and Hamid Dabashi, "The Fundamental Problem in the Clerical Establishment" in Linda S. Walbridge (ed.) *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 165.

¹⁶⁹ Motahhari, "The Fundamental Problem," 165.

perspectives. Mutahhari further believed that the traditional ulama due to their surface interpretation of Islam stopped it from playing a larger role in mobilizing the society and the teachings that they offered were mostly kept to performing traditional rituals or holding religious festivals.¹⁷⁰ Influenced by Mutahhari's understanding of Islam, IKMT felt the necessity to initiate socio-religious reform among the Shias of Kargil. Founded by a group of new clerics and some young men in Kargil, IKMT felt the need to shape an identity of Kargil characterized by a 'modern' outlook and aimed to develop a progressive Shia identity.¹⁷¹ They began to criticize the old clergy for preventing change in important spheres of life that were thought to be required for much-needed advancement and development, and described the opposition as an attempt by the clerics to maintain their authority by keeping the populace illiterate. The Trust credits the Iranian revolution for imparting confidence among the Shias to stand for their rights and developing a new 'Shia identity' in the world. It was during this time Iran was also aiming to universalize its revolutionary appeal by exporting it to rest of the Muslim world.¹⁷² They took leverage of the international connections of clerics that the Shia Ayatollahs were linked through in different parts of the world. The Iranian regime made use of the clerical relations that linked prominent Shia Ayatollahs around the Shia world to one another and to their ardent supporters. The 1980s exposed the people of Kargil to the world when Ladakh was opened to outsiders along with the construction of the Srinagar-Leh highway which followed television, travel, and educational exposure and the availability of large numbers of printed Islamic materials in Kargil in large numbers. While printed material began to circulate from the 19th century onwards among the Muslim population of India,

¹⁷⁰ Hunter, *Reformist voices of Islam*, 43.

¹⁷¹ Gupta. "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution," 380.

¹⁷² Imad Salamey and Zanoobia Othman. "Shia revival and welayat al-faqih in the making of Iranian foreign policy." *Politics, religion & ideology* 12, no. 2 (2011), 201-202. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2011.591983>

it came to have an impact in Kargil very late due to remoteness in terms of location, linguistic diversity, and slow development of literacy rate. With Ladakh being opened for outsiders and the connectivity with the outside world the availability of printed materials increased and more Iranian literature began to circulate in Kargil. Printing presses in Delhi, Mumbai, and Lucknow made the writings and ideas of major Iranian revolutionaries including Rohullah Khomeini, Murtaza Mutahhari, and Ali Shariati, available in Urdu and English. As a result, at least some people started to understand and think about Islam on their own, after reading some of the accessible literature.¹⁷³ Visual media has also acted as a tool in the propagation of the Iranian revolution in the Shia world. It is important to note that Ayatollah Khomeini in his first speech after returning from exile in 1979 to Iran said,

We are not opposed to cinema, to radio, or to television. The cinema is a modern invention that ought to be used for the sake of educating the people, but as you know, it was used instead to corrupt our youth. It is the misuse of cinema that we are opposed to, a misuse caused by the treacherous policies of our rulers.¹⁷⁴

Thus began the adoption of cinema by the Iranians as an ideological counter against the west and as a tool for propagating the message of the Iranian revolution all around the globe, these revolutionary movies found their way to Kargili homes, the people watched these movies religiously as the movies echoed their sentiments. *Parvaz Dar Shab* (the Flight in the Night) and *Ekhrajiha*, the Iranian revolutionary movies are very popular in the region.¹⁷⁵ While interacting

¹⁷³ The Iranian revolution is being credited for the availability of large numbers of books in Kargil.

¹⁷⁴ Hamid Naficy. "Iranian cinema under the Islamic Republic." *American Anthropologist* 97, no. 3 (1995), 548. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/683274>.

¹⁷⁵ The story of the movie *Ekhrajiha* is based on a gang of men who decide to participate in the Iran-Iraq war, also known as the First Gulf War, which lasted from September 1980 to August 1988. The main character Majid, a local thug in order to impress the girl he loves and her, he decided to go join the army and fight against the Iraqi Army. His character changes to the point that he even sacrifices himself to save others. The movie ends with his martyrdom. The movie *Parva Dar Shab* is based on the Iran-Iraq war of 1980s.

with common people in Kargil, I was frequently told by them about the availability of Iranian revolutionary movies (in CDs, DVDs) in the local market and how these movies provided them with information about the Iranian revolution and resurgence of Shi'ism when Iran was fighting war against Iraq during the 1980s. The coming of satellite dishes in many Shia households with frequencies set for Iranian channels viz Sahar Tv, Press tv, IRIB channels are testament to the strong and continuing Iranian revolutionary influence in Kargil. Thus, the foundation of IKMT in Kargil as suggested by Radhika Gupta “can be seen as the partial success of the export of Iranian revolutionary ideology and the institutional apparatus put in place to disseminate it outside Iran.”¹⁷⁶ As the people of Kargil began to recognize the need to carve an identity marked by a modern vision that would put them on par with its neighbouring regions, the Kashmir valley and Buddhist Ladakh, the Trust tried to use the Iranian revolution to bring about social change.

When the news of Khomeini's demise reached Kargil, a large number of people gathered at Islamia School Kargil (ISK) to mourn the death of the Shia champion. Every nook and corner of Kargil mourned his demise, public institutions, imam barghas, and mosques were filled with mourners. Mourning processions of the death flooded Kargil town and the youths coordinated the recitation of the Holy Quran for forty days.¹⁷⁷ Feeling the mass commotions, an ad-hoc committee named Anjuman-Itehaat-ul-Muslimeen was constituted to look after the forty days Quran recitation program, *Majalis-e-Tarheem*¹⁷⁸. Along with Quran recitation, the committee also made arrangements for young clerics and other speakers to shed light upon the teachings and lifestyle of

¹⁷⁶ Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 380-383.

¹⁷⁷ It is a common practice among the Shias of Kargil to recite the Quran for forty days after someone's demise and connects it with the Fortieth day of Imam Hussain's martyrdom which is commemorated by all Shias known as Arbadeen.

¹⁷⁸ Majalis e tarheem. A program organized by the Shia Muslims to commemorate the demise of an important person for forty days.

Khomeini. The program saw mass participation of people from all over Kargil which showed how the people of Kargil respected Khomeini. These gatherings proved to be a milestone in the history of Kargil and left an ever-lasting impression as at the end of the historic 40 days *Majalis-e-Tarheem*, the organizing committee strongly felt the need to take an initiative for keeping alive the principles and values set by Khomeini.¹⁷⁹ Accordingly, a meeting was held at Titichumik on 24th July 1989 in the vicinity of Kargil town and it was decided to establish an organization at District headquarter Kargil under the name and style of Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust Kargil (IKMT).¹⁸⁰ The aims and objectives were finalized and an ad-hoc executive body of IKMT was established with Sheikh Hussain Zakiri as the Chairman, Sheikh Muhammad Mohaqiq as senior vice chairman, Sheikh Abdul Karim as Junior Vice-chairman, Asghar Behnam as General Secretary, and Haji Muhammad Hussain as Chief Organizer.¹⁸¹

Aims and Objectives of IKMT

In order to demonstrate a broader modernist Islamic reformist agenda, the constitution and bylaws of IKMT cited the various ideological strands that had formed the Iranian revolution's discourse as a source of motivation and legitimization. The main objectives of IKMT as stated in its manifesto hold that the IKMT will be a socio-religious organization following the *shariah* of Prophet Muhammad in all its functioning.¹⁸² The collection of *khums* ("one-fifth of certain items which a person acquires as wealth, and which must be paid as an Islamic tax") and *zakat* (charity)¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Mohd Yousuf, *Tazkir-e-Purkistan* (Kargil: Akhone Publications, 2015), 151.

¹⁸⁰ Yousuf, *Tazkir-e-Purkistan*, 152.

¹⁸¹ Yousuf, *Tazkir-e-Purkistan*, 152.

¹⁸² Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust manifesto, 3rd Edition, (Kargil: IKMT, January 2020), 9.

¹⁸³ After taking care of all expenses, it is compulsory upon all Twelver Shi'as to donate one-fifth of their remaining income which is divided into two parts: 1) *sahm-i-imam* meaning the share of imam and goes directly for the construction of masjids, Islamic seminaries, Islamic schools, libraries, hospitals or clinics, orphanages, the printing of the Noble Quran, hadith books, Islamic books and 2) *Sahm-i-sadat* the portion for the poor sayyids, descendants of the Prophet since they are banned from receiving *zakat* (charity). *Zakat* is one of the pillars of Islam and is the

by the Trust on an annual basis, and resolving personal matters among people based on the Islamic principles are how the organization functions to uphold sharia in Kargil.¹⁸⁴ It also deems the last Shia Imam Mehdi, (*Imam Zamana*) as its true spiritual patron. The IKMT believes in the Islamic Revolution of Rohullah Khomeini and seeks to work for the society by taking inspiration from his teachings.¹⁸⁵ As a public welfare institution, the IKMT provide services to humanity without discrimination and prejudice.¹⁸⁶ Its welfare services shall include dissemination of knowledge and education, Islamic teachings and ethics, reforms in social customs, elimination of social evils, inculcation of brotherhood and mutual sympathy, unity, and synergy of religiopolitical thinking among urban and rural masses, reviving Islamic culture and values, revive regional and national identity, to create physical as well as ideological strength with capabilities and safeguard them and to strive welfare of orphans and destitute.¹⁸⁷

compulsory giving of a set proportion of one's wealth to charity. It is regarded as a type of worship and of self-purification. It is liable on gold, silver, cash, savings, investments, rent income, business merchandise and profits, shares, securities, and bonds and is not paid on wealth used for debt repayment of living expenses such as clothing, food, housing, transportation, education, etc. For more see Gupta, Radhika. "Seeking knowledge from the cradle to the grave Shi'a networks of learning in India", Jaffrelot, Christophe, and Laurence Louër, eds. *Pan-Islamic connections: transnational networks between South Asia and the Gulf*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

¹⁸⁴ Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, 3rd Edition, (Kargil, IKMT, January 2020), 9.

¹⁸⁵ Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, 3rd Edition, (Kargil, IKMT, January 2020), 9.

¹⁸⁶ Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, 3rd Edition, (Kargil, IKMT, January 2020), 9.

¹⁸⁷ Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, 3rd Edition, (Kargil, IKMT, January 2020), 9.

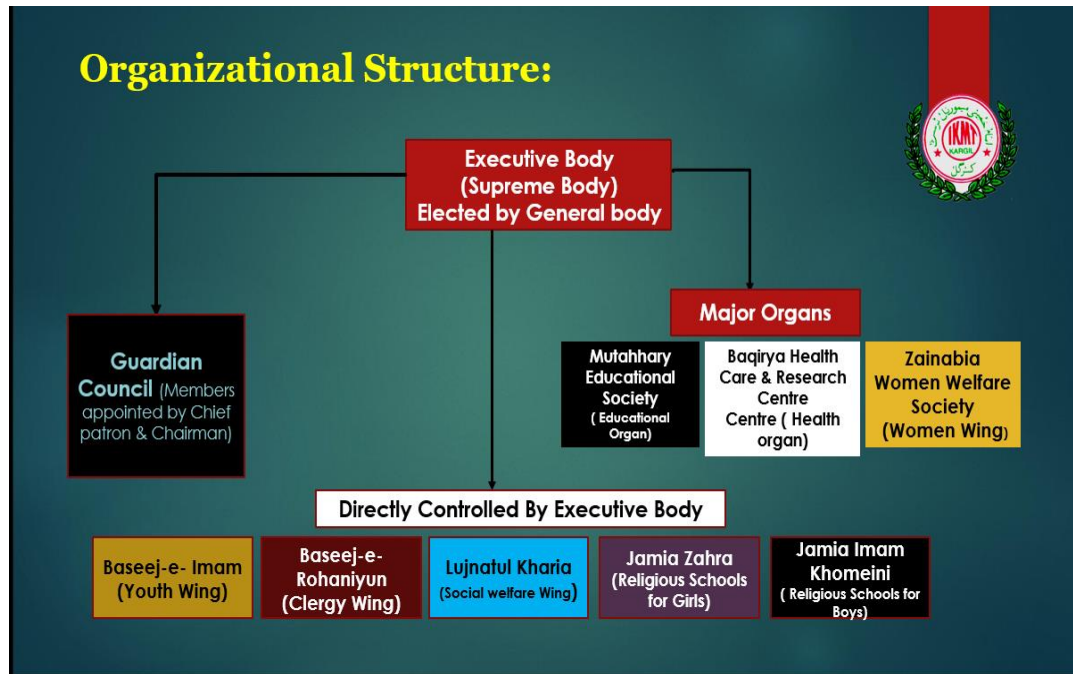


Fig. 1. The organizational structure of IKMT

Source: Media Cell IKMT

Contribution to the Promotion of Socio-Religious Reform

In line with the general modernist Islamic reformist agenda, IKMT like the other Islamic modernists set up an agenda for socio-religious reform in Kargil focusing on key areas of religious practices, politics, education, and women empowerment and targeting various areas in Kargil where perceived injustice or inequality was thought to be impeding the region's development

I. Endorsement of Wilayat-e-faqih for political participation

In the arena of socio-religious reform, one of the main focuses of IKMT was on *Wilayat-e-faqih* (the guardianship of the Islamic jurist), which became a source of contestation between IKMT and ISK. One of the most important objectives, according to the manifesto of IKMT is to believe in the Islamic movement initiated by Khomeini and to take inspiration from his teachings. Khomeini's ideological innovation of Wilayat-e-faqih stated that the society of Muslims should

be under the jurisdiction of a jurist who is just by nature¹⁸⁸ and is imbued with political as well as spiritual power who will superintend events of all in the absenteeism of the twelfth Imam who according to the Shia tradition is believed to be in occultation (*al-ghayba al-kubra*). The wilayat-e-faqih has a major role in running and managing day-to-day affairs of the state. Khomeini summarizes the mandate of the jurisprudence as follow:

The divine ordinances (*ahkam*) of Islam necessarily require the state (*hukumah*) and the divine mandate (*wilayah*) for their implementation. Without the state and the ruler with the divine mandate (*wali al-amr*, [*vali-ye amr*]), the supremacy of divine law (*siyadat al-qanun al-ilahi*) cannot be maintained; nor is it possible to keep the affairs of Muslims from being disturbed. These necessities constituted the proof for the *Imamat*; they remain forceful during the occultation of the infallible Imam.¹⁸⁹

Here Khomeini emphasize the need of an Islamic State which is required in the absence of the twelve Imam in order to keep the affairs of Muslims in accordance to the divine law and it is the duty of the *mujtahids* (jurist), to take on this responsibility.

The Islamic State (*al-hukumah al-Islamiyah*) that Islam has brought into existence is a state-based entirely and solely on the divine law (i.e., the divine ordinances). The necessary qualification of the ruler (*wali*) of the Islamic state comprises (a) the knowledge of the divine ordinances (*al-'ilm bi al-ahkam*) and (b) the justness (*al-'adalah*) as leader of the community and executor of the ordinances. Since no specific individual is appointed during the occultation, the divine mandate (*al-wilayah*) belongs rightly to the just jurisprudent (*al-faqih al-'adil*) in that capacity (and no one else).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ In Shia theology, every Shia who cannot infer the Islamic laws from sources must choose a qualified clergy who can infer the laws of Islam and defer to him. A clergyman with such qualification is called a marja or mujtahid Marja's are the highest religious authorities in Shia. See Linda S. Walbridge, ed. *The most learned of the Shia: The Institution of the MarjaTaqlid* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

¹⁸⁹ Yasuyuki Matsunaga "Revisiting Ayatollah Khomeini's Doctrine of Wilāyat al-Faqīh (Velāyat-e Faqīh)." *Orient* 44 (2009), 80-82. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.5356/orient.44.77>

¹⁹⁰ Matsunaga "Revisiting Ayatollah Khomeini's Doctrine." 80

According to Khomeini, the ruler who is in charge in the absence of the divine authority, the 12th Imam, should have the qualification and knowledge about the divine laws of Allah. He must follow the divine rules to remove injustice.

Establishing the Islamic state and forming the basis for the Islamic government, therefore, constitute a collective obligation (*al-wajib al-kifa'i*) on the part of the just jurists (*al-fuqaha' al-'udul*); their appointed status (*mansib*) will not lapse even if they are unable to establish the Islamic state. As ruler of the Islamic state, there is no difference between the jurist, on the one hand, and the Prophet and the Imam, on the other; the jurist has all that the Prophet and the Imam had for rulership and politics (*al-hukmah wa al-siyasah*).¹⁹¹

Khomeini then claims that the learned jurist who is in charge of the Islamic State has the same duty which the Prophet and Imams performed during their times. His position is same as that of the Prophet and Imams when he is in charge of the Islamic State.

The ruler with the divine mandate and the Islamic state may even suspend certain substantive divine ordinances (*ahkam-e far'iyeh*), because the state is a branch of the absolute mandate of the Prophet (*sho'beh'i az velayat-e motlaqeh-ye rasul Allah*) and the mandate of the jurist and his ruling ordinance (*hokm-e hokumati*) are among the primary ordinances of Islam (*ahkam-e avvaliyeh-ye Islam*). People have the obligation to obey the commands of the ruler with the divine mandate, be he the Prophet, the Imam, or the jurist obeying the commands of the Prophet and the Imam is obeying God.¹⁹²

Khomeini argues that it is the duty on everyone to obey commands of the Jurist because obeying him means obeying the Allah.

Khomeini's idea of *wilayat-e-faqih* urged the Shias to move away from political quietism and submission to oppression and injustice and called for active participation in politics.¹⁹³ He

¹⁹¹ Matsunga "Revisiting Ayatollah Khomeini's Doctrine." 80

¹⁹² Matsunaga, "Revisiting Ayatollah Khomeini" 81.

¹⁹³ Marvin Zonis and Daniel Brumberg. "Shi'ism as Interpreted by Khomeini: An Ideology of Revolutionary Violence," in *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution*, ed. Martin Kramer (New York: Routledge, 2019), 98.

emphasized that religion and politics are intertwined to each other and demanded that Muslims should give up the passive attitude towards the experience of injustice.¹⁹⁴ *Wilayat -e- Faqih* as a governance doctrine according to Khomeini, is an extension of the ruling system of the Holy Prophet and the holy Imams and further stresses that any Muslim opposing *Wilayat-e-Faqih* is equivalent to going against the rule of Imam Ali.¹⁹⁵ In an interview with the eminent cleric and the current chairman of IKMT when asked about *Wilayat-e-Faqih*, he was of the opinion that the concept is comparable to the rule of Imam Ali and Khomeini was solely responsible for enlightening and guiding the Shias towards the Islamic principle of *Wilayat-e-Faqih*'.¹⁹⁶ The Karbala paradigm was also central to Khomeini's idea of *Wilayat-e-Faqih* to redefine the political actions in the struggle against injustice and freedom from oppression. It is pointed out that the IKMT follows the Iranian Constitution's statement that amongst all the mujtahids and clerics and leaders, Khomeini was the most revered and well-read and he was quite the all-empowering leader moreover a representative of the twelfth Imam (Al-Mehdi).¹⁹⁷ Drawing upon Khomeini's idea of *wilayat-e-faqih*, the IKMT explicitly endorsed the Shias to actively participate in the politics of Ladakh. They emphasized that without political power the society of Kargil will not develop and the dominant political elites could not be removed from their unshakable position of power. The Trust asserted the public to undertake active participation in the politics to create the conditions for a good life based on justice and a life free from oppression. For this the IKMT endorsed Khomeini's concept of *Wilayat-e-faqih* to promote the role of religious leaders, who are not only

¹⁹⁴ Gupta, Radhika. "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 389.

¹⁹⁵ Imam Ali was the cousin and son-in-Law of Prophet Muhammad. In the Shia School of Islam, he is the first Imam and the rightful successor of prophet Muhammad, while according to the Sunni School of thought he the fourth rightly guided Calipha.

¹⁹⁶ Personal interview with Sheikh Sadiq Rajaie about the doctrine of *Wilayat-e-Faqih* and the role of IKMT in adopting and popularizing it in Ladakh. Date: 20-Sep-2021.

¹⁹⁷ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, 201.

the spiritual heads of a community but also have a legitimate role to play in politics. The mission translated in practice into active participation in the political affairs starting with the parliamentary Lok Sabha election of 1989 just after the formation of IKMT and later on in the elections for the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Kargil (LAHDC).¹⁹⁸ The IKMT urged the people of Kargil to actively participate in the Lok Sabha election of 1989 before which the Lok Sabha seat was in the hands of the representatives belonging to Leh district despite the slightly larger share of voters in Kargil district. IKMT held the view that the earlier elected representatives (from Leh) were discriminatory in their attitude towards the netizens of Kargil and they did hardly anything for the betterment of Kargil. Divided among factions and exploited by a few traditional elites, IKMT appealed to the people of Kargil to come together in order to unshackle themselves from the clutches of exploitation, political illiteracy to ensure electoral victory in the year 1989 when Haji Hasan Commander from Kargil and backed by IKMT won the Lok Sabha election of 1989. This was for the first time a candidate from Kargil had won an election to this Lok Sabha seat and the role of IKMT was very apparent. The trust credited Khomeini's ideology of *Wilayat-e-faqih* for the political awareness of the people of Kargil as he emphasized that politics is an integral part of religion and should not be disassociated from each other. While IKMT promoted the stance of *Wilayat-e-faqih*, ISK followed the clerical leadership of Iraq as Ayatollah Sistani rejected the theoretical concept of Khomeini's *Wilayat-e-faqih* and debated that the system of *Wilayat-e-faqih* will only work in an Islamic country like Iran and couldn't be applied in a non-Islamic state. They criticized IKMT for using the law of a foreign land to incite unrest among the populace and creating factions among the Shias of Kargil. Radhika Gupta pointed out that "Wilayat-e-Faqih in the context of Kargil became a way of marking factional identity rather than

¹⁹⁸ The Hill council is a decentralized government body to endeavour the monitoring of the developmental works by ensuring transparency and accountability in the district administration.

having any practical implications or perhaps even truth-value to it.”¹⁹⁹ IKMT justified its participation in politics through the ideology of Vilayet-Faqih, ISK and its followers adhered to Ayatollah Sistani’s view who critiqued and advised against the participation and endorsement of politics by religious organizations, However, Later on ISK changed its stance and backed participants for the elections of LAHDC Kargil thereby abandoning Sistani’s stance in this particular context.²⁰⁰ The foray into politics by IKMT was based on Khomeini’s thought of active participation of people in politics, which meant the Shia were only responsible for their upliftment and political representation was a crucial step in the development and realization of social justice.

II. Rationalization of Religious Practices

When it came to addressing the Islamic practices, the IKMT sought to tackle certain rituals performed during the Muharram processions, one such was the issue of self-flagellation during the month of Muharram. A common practice being performed during the month of Muharram by the Shia Muslims is the custom of using chains, knives, and swords on one’s own flesh known as *Qama-Zani* and *Zanjeer-Zani*.²⁰¹ The Shias perform the practice of *Qama-Zani* and *Zanjeer-Zani* in remembrance of the pain Imam Hussain and his companions went through during the battle of Karbala while trying to protect his people from oppression and inhumanity.²⁰² The issue of *Qama-*

¹⁹⁹ Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 391.

²⁰⁰ The first Lahdc election in 2003 witnessed the backing of IKMT to Asgar Ali Karbalaie, and ISK supported Qamar Ali Akhone. Mona Bhan, *Counterinsurgency, Democracy, and the Politics of Identity in India: From warfare to welfare?* (New York: Routledge, 2014): 87.

²⁰¹ *Qamma zani* is amongst a set of bloody rituals that are performed by some Shia Muslims during the month of Muharram in commemoration of the great tragedy of Karbala, when Imam Hussain and his companions were massacred by the forces of Yazid, the Umayyad Calipha at that time. It is performed by striking the head with a sword or knife until blood gushes out. *Zanjeer Zani* involves repeatedly striking the back with a chain of blades with the intention of cutting the skin and causing blood to flow.

²⁰² Imam Hussain the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and his companions were martyred brutally by the forces of Yazid in the battle of Karbala when Imam Hussain refused to pledge alliance to the unjust rule of Yazid. The Battle of Karbala is particularly central to Shi'a Muslim belief. In Shi'a Islam, the martyrdom of Husayn is mourned by an annual commemoration, called *Ashurah*. They represent the battle as one between good and evil, light and darkness.

Zani and *Zanjeer-Zani* became a symbol of factional identity between IKMT and ISK when the supreme leader of Iran Ayatollah Khamenei issued a fatwa in 1994, forbidding the public performance of *Qameh-Zadan* (dagger striking) during lamentation. Khamenei makes it clear that his worry is the damage done to Shia Islam's image because of the practice of spilling blood and will be used as propaganda by the enemies of Shias to show them as barbaric.²⁰³ IKMT immediately adhered to the fatwa of Khamenei and considered the practice of self-flagellation as haram. They emphasized the use of 'Aql' (rational faculty) and urged people to be aware of the significance underlying religious acts and to actively engage in them. The IKMT adopted methods of blood donation campaigns to lessen the practice of self-flagellation and urged people to be reasonable to actions that bring harm to the religion of Islam. The Islamia School, however, continued the practice of shedding blood during Muharram arguing that it is an old tradition and was not banned by older mujtahids. The ISK also interprets that Khamenei's fatwa only forbids actions of knife cuts but the action of *Zanjir-matam* (striking oneself with chains) is not prohibited and still continues the practice of self-flagellation.²⁰⁴

The IKMT was also instrumental in the standardization of the performative behaviour in religious affairs (offering namaz daily, paying the obligatory *Khums* and *Zakat*, fasting during the month of Ramzan) of the Shias. The standardized behavioural performance and the image of Shias which is only associated with Muharram should be changed and instead all through the year the Shias should try to lead a sincere life. Clerics educated and trained in Qom have been instrumental in the standardization of performative behaviour of the Shias in Kargil. The *Baseej-e-Rohaniyun* (clergy

²⁰³ Ayatollah Khamenei, "Tatbir is a wrongful and fabricated tradition" Khamenei.Ir, Oct 7, 2016. Retrieved from <https://english.khamenei.ir/news/4209/Tatbir-is-a-wrongful-and-fabricated-tradition-Imam-Khamenei> accessed on 28-12-2022.

²⁰⁴ David Pinault, *Horse of Karbala: Muslim devotional life in India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 199-201.

Council), a wing of IKMT deputed clerics coming from Iran to every corner of Kargil to streamline activities like Islamic education, moral teachings and manage the academic affairs of Quran study centres (*Dar-ul-Qurans*)²⁰⁵ in different villages of Ladakh. The procedure of reinstitution of religious practices began by the clerics discouraging the cultural and popular ways of playing music, dancing, and singing during marriage ceremonies. Henry Wilson Smith mentions the presence of Shaykhs (clerics) in different villages of Kargil after the Iranian revolution and its impact on the indigenous traditions. He pointed out that “before the arrival of these clerics, Buddhists and Muslims lived side by side for many generations. Members of both religions lived and practiced in the same families often with mixed names such as Ali Tashi and Gunzes Bir.”²⁰⁶ The communities would gather to celebrate wedding ceremonies and any other festivals and dance and sing to the local Ladakhi music of drum and flute. Henry points out that the arrival of these shaykhs in the villages has directly affected the religious communities and their shared cultural practices. The clerics deputed by IKMT proclaimed that two religions cannot coexist under one roof which led to the disturbance of the religious harmony between the two religions. The arrival of these clerics was criticized by many youths for the censorship of music and warned against abandoning local cultural practices. Kargil Social and Cultural Association (KASGO) formed in 1997 aimed to reclaim the Ladakhi script *Ngati-Skat* (our language) and made efforts to revive cultural traditions for tourist attractions and to bring Kargil on the map of Ladakh as a tourist attraction centre. They were critical of the clerics for forbidding local practices and alleged that “folklore is the fabric of a nation’s or community’s culture and culture is its past, its identity.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ There is approximately 70 dar-ul-Qurans registered under IKMT and a cleric from IKMT is posted in the Dar-ul-Quran to teach Quran and other basic Islamic education to young people.

²⁰⁶ Henry Wilson-Smith, "More Religious and Less Moral: The Changing Face of Religious Coexistence in Ladakh." (2015), 8. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2225.

²⁰⁷ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, 202.

The response of people of Kargil at such process of standardization varied as for some it brought clearer religious practices by bringing rationality to certain rituals like self-flagellation and living a pious life behind Muharram, while some saw it adopting cultural exports from Iran at the expense of local Ladakhi cultural heritage.

iii. Emancipation of Women

The emancipation of women has surfaced as one of the most important issues for the reformers of Islam. The discourse of colonial modernity condemned Islam for its oppressive attitude towards women.²⁰⁸ As a result, the Islamic reformers paid significant consideration to the status of women in Islam by challenging the western notion of women's emancipation.²⁰⁹ They negated the Western assumption that Islamic law treats women less favourably than men and oppresses them. They were adamant on the claim that the law of Islam was progressive and relevant with the modern world and propagated female education by questioning religious restrictions on women's education.²¹⁰ The Muslim modernists questioned and challenged the western notion of women's emancipation and claimed that it was Islam that freed women from the shackles of oppression and argued that men all through the course of history were in position of authority and were often in violation of women's rights.²¹¹ The Islamic reformers contended that among Greeks, women's status was not all that different from that of a domestic slave.²¹² The Portuguese bought and sold women and were considered a commodity. Likewise the Christians and Jews viewed women as

²⁰⁸ Jose Abraham, *Islamic Reform and Colonial Discourse on Modernity in India*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 120.

²⁰⁹ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 121.

²¹⁰ Mansoor Moaddel. "Religion and Women: Islamic Modernism versus Fundamentalism." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 1 (1998): 108–30.

²¹¹ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 122.

²¹² Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 121.

inferior to men and did not enjoy a higher status.²¹³ They conceded that the Arabian women were not in a different situation from that of the other parts of the world.²¹⁴ The Arabs also considered women to be inferior to men which is clear from the fact that when a girl child was born, she was buried alive in order to preserve their honour from the society.²¹⁵ The Islamic modernists asserted that for the first time in history, Islam gave women their due status.²¹⁶ Islam acknowledged the individual rights of women, who were equally despised by peoples in the east and the west. Based upon the post-Iranian clerical discourse, IKMT drew the agenda of women's empowerment in Kargil. According to this, women make significant contribution to the society and can legitimately participate in various professions as long as they adhere to the Islamic principles. The IKMT emphasized the education of women which was considered to be haram.²¹⁷ Sheikh Sadiq a prominent Shia cleric in Kargil and the chairman of IKMT, elaborates, "the participation of women in the different sectors of Kargil society has been minimal and their lack of representation has translated into their marginalization."²¹⁸ He further added, "IKMT has stepped up in this regard with the facilitation of space to women in the public by encouraging them with the formation of an independent women's wing Zainabia welfare society for conducting religious congregations."²¹⁹ On the issue of women's participation in education and professional sectors, he was of the opinion that, "the participation of women is necessary in order to achieve development in the society, the emancipation of women has been the goal of the trust, our detractors have criticized us for endorsing separate space to women and pushing education for women. Islam

²¹³ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 121.

²¹⁴ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 121.

²¹⁵ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 122.

²¹⁶ Abraham, *Islamic Reform*, 122.

²¹⁷ I was told by many individuals that the older clerics prohibited women from acquiring modern education.

²¹⁸ Personal Interview with Sheikh Sadiq Rajai, Chairman IKMT. On 05-09-2021.

²¹⁹ Personal Interview with Sheikh Sadiq Rajai, Chairman IKMT. On 05-09-2021.

permits the participation of women under the confines of the Islamic law, and promotion of education of women certainly is in line with the teachings of Khomeini, who advocated the participation of women in various domains of the society.”²²⁰

The Trust also placed a strong emphasis on women's education because educated mothers can raise their children well and advance society and the country as a whole. Understanding the importance of women's participation in society, a women's organ of IKMT was formed in the year 1992 with the name Zainabia Women Welfare Society. The organ carries out activities focused on women's empowerment as well as religious, cultural, social welfare and developmental activities. The reformist objective of the IKMT also made public venues more accessible to women. They began planning special occasions for women, such as the yearly commemoration of Fatima Zahra's (the Prophet's daughter) birth anniversary, also known as *Youm-e-Khawatin* (Women's Day).²²¹ The IKMT also propagated the contributions of women to society by taking various government and private professions. To raise the status of Shia women in Kargil, the IKMT not only encouraged modern education for girls but also started the seminary called Jamia-Tuz-Zahra. This is the only Islamic theological centre exclusively for women in the Ladakh region imparting higher education in the field of Islamic studies to the level of graduation. It is affiliated with Al-Mustafa University and in 2017 it got recognition from Aligarh Muslim University. Drawing from this attitude the Islamia School too adopted a liberal attitude towards women by providing them space in public with the foundation of the women's wing, *Heya'te Fatimiyah*. The Trust is very strict towards the concept of hijab and propagates chastity as the greatest wealth of women 'women can only go in the public freely if they have put on the hijab properly, i.e. the Iranian way'²²² Although

²²⁰ Personal Interview with Sheikh Sadiq Rajai, Chairman IKMT. On 05-09-2021.

²²¹ <http://www.ikmtkargil.org.in/zainabia-women-welfare-society/> accessed on 13-10-2022.

²²² Gupta, Radhika. "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil."

the IKMT ignored the changes that occurred in Iran after the Iranian revolution when women had more public roles before the revolution as they occupied positions as judges, high-ranking administrators and cabinet ministers, however the reformist agenda played an important role in the emancipation of women in Kargil by opening public spaces for women and providing them the opportunity of acquiring modern education. The advocacy for change in the condition of women was curated by the Trust in accordance with the Islamic rules, this dictated change didn't necessarily uplift women which is indicative in the overall participation of women in administrative roles within the Trust, although discussion about change has been initiated due to efforts of the IKMT. An independent wing of the Trust, Zainabia, is responsible for framing guidelines and objectives with a sole focus on women and the wing is spearheaded by women. The dependency on the parent organization IKMT in the overall decision-making process in the conduct of programs,²²³ and other cultural, developmental activities present a view of the wing subordinate to the IKMT whose structure is constitutionally patriarchal.²²⁴

²²³ Skill Development program for women conducted by Zainabia Welfare Society in order to instruct women about knitting, tailoring, embroidery, the wing conducts courses like these on a regular basis Retrieved from : <https://www.voiceofladakh.in/2021/02/skill-development-course-for-women-conducted-by-zainabia-concludes-at-kargil/>. Accessed on 26-12-2022

²²⁴ All the important posts within the organization which include Chief Patron, Chairman, Vice Chairman Religion Affairs, Vice Chairman Political Affairs, General Secretary, Joint Secretary, Chief Organizer & Treasurer are male.



Fig. 2 Classroom of Jamia-Tuz-Zehra (IKMT's Theology College for Women).

Source: Media Cell, IKMT



Fig. 3 Jamia-Tuz-Zehra (IKMT's Theology College for Women)

Source: Media Cell, IKMT

iv. Contribution to Health Awareness

In the arena of promoting awareness and providing medical facilities, the IKMT founded a health wing, Baqirya Health Care and Research Centre 2007. The health wing is composed of doctors, engineers, teachers, and other professionals associated with IKMT. The Baqirya Health Care and Research Centre was founded with the aim of providing free medical camps in far-flung areas of Ladakh, conducting medical awareness programs, and helping the government organizations in implementing various National Health schemes. The health centre is successful in providing free medical consultation (OPD Services) to the poor and the needy irrespective of their faith. The health centre claims of treating more than 36000 patients for free and provided multi-specialty OPD services in the field of general medicine, gynaecology, orthopaedics, paediatrics, ophthalmology, and ENT by the year 2019. They also claim to have conducted more than 30 free

medical camps in remote areas and had treated more than 50000 patients by 2020. The health care and research centre has also taken the challenge to free Kargil from Hepatitis B and provided free Hepatitis B vaccination in collaboration with the Health Department, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil which has been made possible due to many of the volunteers (Doctors) being Govt Employees in the main district hospital. The ISK also subsequently established its health wing Al-Reza Health Care and Research Centre to strengthen the district hospital with the best machines, and equipment along with providing financial assistance to needy patients.



Fig. 4 Free Medical camp by Baqariya Health Care and Research Centre

Source: Media Cell, IKMT

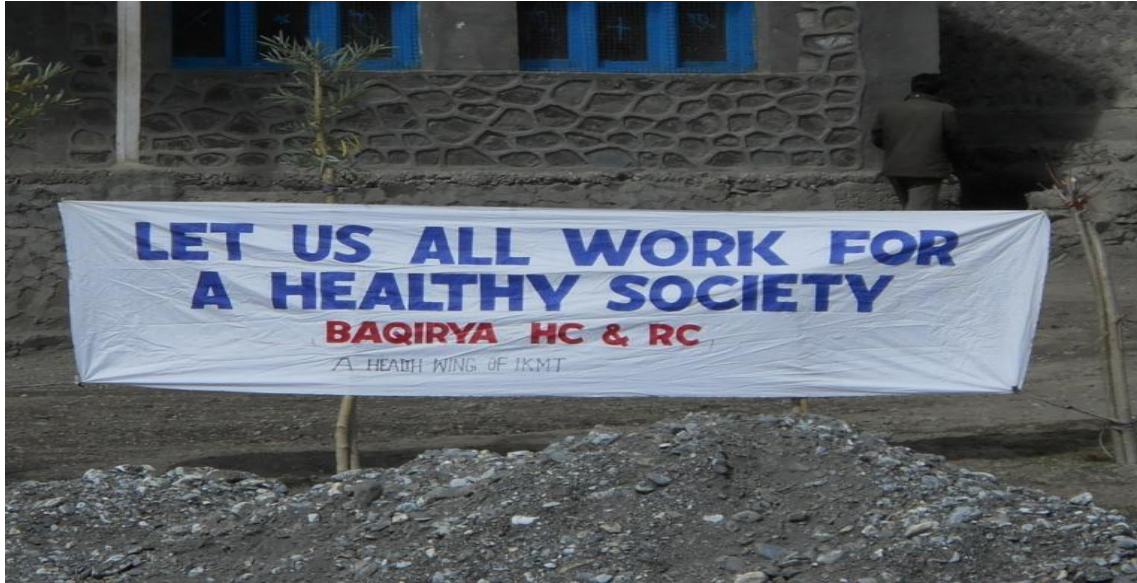


Fig. 5 Banner of Baqariya Health Care and Research Centre

Source: Media Cell, IKMT.

IKMT like the other Islamic modernists was also influenced by the degeneracy of Muslims and called for socio-religious reform. The long-lived tradition of the struggle of the Muslim world against western modernism has led the Shias of Kargil to reject modern education and other developmental aspects in Ladakh and made them economically and socially backward in Ladakh. In this context, the IKMT made the decision to start a socioreligious reform movement in Kargil inspired by Khomeini's ideology. The IKMT set up the agenda to transform the Kargil society toward the process of modernization by bringing key changes in the arena of religion, education, politics, and women empowerment. IKMT challenged the traditional outlook of clerics which prohibited the common people from acquiring modern education claiming that

Khomeini remarked that ‘any individual should acquire education from the cradle to the grave.’²²⁵ They emphasized on the use of *Aql* by not accepting everything with unquestioned faith and exhorted people to comprehend the significance behind religious practices and perform them consciously.

²²⁵Gupta, "Experiments with Khomeini's Revolution in Kargil," 381.

Chapter 3

Promotion of modern education in Kargil

This chapter deals with the condition of education system before 1989, importance of education in Islam and the role of IKMT in the dissemination of modern education in Kargil. The chapter will also shed light upon the role and influence of Murtaza Mutahhari's thoughts and how it has impacted on the outlook of IKMT towards modern education and the way it's imparted. The access to education imparted being provided by the government with the setting up of government schools were availed by only a few elite sections of the society which meant that the majority of people in Kargil society didn't participate in the process of modern education. The effect was that majority of the Shia Muslims of Kargil were left behind in the developmental process via education. This chapter further stress upon how IKMT promoted modern education to carve a new identity of Kargil so that the Shia Muslims can partake in the developmental process of Ladakh. The role of IKMT here becomes pivotal as it introduced the idea of Iranian revolution as a counter to the existing traditional attitudes towards modern education championed by the *ulama*. This experiment of the IKMT shares similarities with the ideas of the earlier modernist Muslim reformers such as Jamal-ud-din Afghani, Mohammad Abduh and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who came before Khomeini, and talked about the indispensability of modern education in the upliftment of the Muslims. Khomeini's idea with its roots in Islam made it legitimate to receive modern education in order to carve out an Islamic presence in the everchanging world. For Khomeini the primary role of knowledge is:

Through knowledge that man can secure his prosperity in this world and the next. It is through teaching that man can train and educate the youth in such a way that they are able to safeguard their own interests in this world and the hereafter.²²⁶

²²⁶ Imam Khomeini. "Imam Khomeini Defined Difference between Knowledge and Belief," November 2017. http://en.imam-khomeini.ir/en/n22691/Imam_Khomeini_defined_difference_between_Knowledge_and_belief. Accessed on 05-11-2022.

Education is the most important instrument to bring change and development in the society.²²⁷ It can be understood as the transmission of values and accumulated knowledge of a society.²²⁸ It facilitates learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, along with values, beliefs, and habits. Education trains and develops the manpower resources, transforms the society and changes the human status in the social hierarchy. It entails educating human beings in the pursuit of goodness and truth and instilling a sense of spirituality in human beings.²²⁹ As an integral part of society, education also defines the development of an individual based on his needs and demands. In contemporary world particularly in developing countries modern education is seen as a means and goal for modernization.²³⁰ Growth of education is seen as a sign of human growth and development.

Islam is seen as laying always emphasis on the acquisition of education and the dissemination of knowledge (*Ilm*). To seek knowledge is one of the fundamental duties in Islam and makes it an obligation upon all its followers as a means to bring it closer to Allah.²³¹ The first revelation of the Quran was the word *Iqra* which is interpreted as ‘read’ or ‘recite’, ‘seek knowledge’. The Quran states,

*Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.*²³²

The early revelation of the Quran with the word *Iqra* signifies the importance of seeking knowledge, as well as perfecting the human spirit. It stresses the importance of learning about the

²²⁷ Tasneem Shazli and Sana Asma, “Educational Vision of Muslims in India: Problems and Concerns” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, Volume 4, Issue 3 (2015), 21.

²²⁸ Shazli and Asma, “Educational Vision of Muslims.”

²²⁹ Shazli and Asma, “Educational Vision of Muslims.”

²³⁰ Shazli and Asma, “Educational Vision of Muslims.”

²³¹ Muhammad Qutb, *Islam the Most Misunderstood Religion*, (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations, 2006) 142.

²³² *Al-Qur’ān*, 96: 1-5.

existence and creation of this world and the things existed in it. Islam has provided many guidelines for the acquisition of knowledge and made it compulsory on all men and women.²³³ Stressing on the importance of education one of the traditions (*hadith*) of Prophet Muhammad declares that, “seek knowledge even if it is as far as China.”²³⁴ There are two important implications of this hadith. Firstly, Muslims should seek knowledge and use it for the upliftment of human race. Secondly, Muslims should acquire knowledge from all corners of the world and even if the path of acquiring knowledge is hard, Muslims should fight for its acquisition.²³⁵ The significance of acquisition of knowledge for the overall development of humans is seen as an essential aspect of the religion by the Iranian philosopher Murtaza Mutahhari.

Murtaza Mutahhari and Education

As already said, the Quran gives great importance to the acquisition of knowledge for the perfection of Human spirit. Islamic scholars regard *ta’lim* (education) a fundamental process which leads human beings to the ultimate goal of life by becoming the pious servant of Allah and a just human being free of any corruption and leads to the creation of the ‘perfect city’ (*Madinah al-fadilah*).²³⁶ Murtaza Mutahhari, the Iranian philosopher and one of the ideologues of the 1979

²³³ Shazli and Asma, “Educational Vision of Muslims,” 22.

²³⁴ Omar Manasreh. “Seek Knowledge even it is as far as China.” *Optoelectronics Research Lab*, (September 2008). Retrieved from <https://optoelectronics.uark.edu/seek-knowledge-even-if-it-is-in-china/> Accessed on 25-12-2022.

²³⁵ Omar Manasreh. “Seek Knowledge even it is as far as China.”

²³⁶ The term *Madinah al fadilah* was for the city of Madinah where prophet Muhammad established the first community of the Muslims. Muslim Historians, political scientists, and reformers looks to Prophet Muhammad’s governance of the city for guidance and inspiration. Al-Farabi the describes the Perfect City as, “the fashioning of a city (state) is not the outcome of a natural process; it depends, like the moral life of individuals, on the right decision being taken, it makes all the difference whether ‘will’ and ‘choice’ are directed towards the true good or not. The result will be either a good or bad city (state).” Furthermore, “the excellent city resembles the perfect and healthy body, all of whose limbs cooperate to make the life of the animal perfect and to preserve it in this state.” Also, “The ruler(s) of the excellent city, the foundation and source of the policies by which the city will be governed, must align will, resourcefulness and energy with vision and pragmatism rooted in wisdom and knowledge.” He explains the qualities of a good ruler and states, “Wisdom and knowledge the ruler(s) must receive firstly by means of his predisposition to rulership by his inborn nature, and secondly from his fervent and fruitful relationship with the divine reality, i.e., the revelation conveyed to the Prophet (pbuh) and embodied in the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah. Due to his central qualities, such a ruler may well become something like a visionary forecaster capable of warning of things and problems that are yet to come and befall the city, as well as of telling of and solving particular predicaments which exist at present, unlike those who had detached themselves from

Islamic Revolution has extensively discussed the subject of knowledge. According to him Islam has its own independent concept of knowledge which is different from the other schools of thought to which he refers to as Islamic human sciences.²³⁷ Before discussing his thoughts on knowledge, it is important to look into his life in order to understand his role and contribution to Islamic thought and to get a clear picture of the social and intellectual context in which he lived.

Murtaza Mutahhari was born in the small town of Fariman in 1920 and finished his primary education from there. At the age of thirteen he moved to Mashhad to attend the *Hawzah*.²³⁸ He shifted to *Qom* for his higher learning where he met two distinguished Islamic figures Ayatullah Khomeini and Allameh Tabatabai, who played an important role in his intellectual life. He attended the classes of Allameh Tabatabai on Avicenna and materialist philosophy which were eventually published as *The principles of Philosophy and The Realistic Method*. He also attended the lectures of Ayatollah Khomeini on ethics and mysticism (*Irfan*) specifically on the *Asfar-i arba'a* of Mulla Sadra and the *Sharh-i manzuma* of Sabzavari which continued till 1951 and established a close relationship with Khomeini. Their collective interests in Islam as a total system of life and belief impacted by philosophical and mystical traditions played an important role in connecting with each other.²³⁹ Marxism was one of the strongest intellectual currents in Iran during the same time and he was drawn towards the study of material philosophy by reading the communist party literature *Tudeh*. This helped in familiarizing him with modern philosophical terminologies and was able to contest the Marxist principles.²⁴⁰ Along with an intellectual life,

divinity and through their faulty judgments missed the right path, bringing about, in consequence, nothing but ignorance and wickedness to their cities.” See *Abu Nas'r al-Farabi, On the Perfect State of Al-Farabi*, trans. Richard Walzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 229-256, Ahmad Toquero Macarimbang. "Envisioning A Perfect City: An Introduction To Al Farabi's Political Philosophy." *Journal for Islamic Identities and Dialogue in Southeast Asia* 1 (2013).

²³⁷ Murtaza Mutahhari and R. Campell. *Fundamentals of Islamic thought: God, man and the universe*. Berkeley, California: Mizan Press, 1985): 81.

²³⁸ A *Hawzah* is a seminary where Shia Muslim clerics are trained.

²³⁹ Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic state: Khomeini and the making of a new Iran* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000): 76.

²⁴⁰ Martin, *Creating an Islamic state*, 95.

Mutahhari was also a regular participant in raising voice against the Shah rule alongside Khomeini.²⁴¹ In 1952, Mutahhari left the *Hawzeh* in Qom and shifted to Tehran to teach theology in the Tehran University, a decision that significantly impacted his subsequent social and intellectual life. This move introduced him to the problems between the two pillars of educational institution of Iran, the *Hawzah* and University. There was a huge distrust between the two institutions as they looked down to each other. This move by Mutahhari introduced *hawzah* scholars to the university who were open to new ideas and questions and had a more than sufficient knowledge of other school of thoughts like western philosophy and strived to close the gap between the *hawzah* and university. His teaching style attracted students from many different disciplines which led to the formation of Islamic association among the students and teachers such as the Islamic Association of doctors or engineers.²⁴² He authored many books and articles and influenced young minds to look at religion from a different perspective. Mutahhari promoted a form of Islam that he referred to as moderate, rejecting prevalent superstitions, stagnation, and ignorance. He emphasised the need of using reason while analysing religious texts and emphasised the primacy of the Quran over hadith. He wrote in a way that was accessible to a wider audience, and his writings reflect the needs and issues of the people of his time. For instance, he explained the subject of philosophy in a very straightforward manner in his book *The Principle of Contradiction in Islamic Philosophy*.²⁴³ An important feature of his writing was that he avoided the use of mystical language and adopted a language that could be easy to understand for common readers. In his lectures and writings Mutahhari criticised the traditional ulama for not motivating people against injustice and for covering up the corruptions of the monarchy. He was also critical of those such as the *Furqan*,²⁴⁴ who bring non-Islamic elements in Islam by calling it ‘modern’. In

²⁴¹ Martin, *Creating an Islamic state*, 76.

²⁴² Martin, *Creating an Islamic state*, 76.

²⁴³ Martin, *Creating an Islamic state*, 77.

²⁴⁴ A militant group in Iran founded under the leadership of Akbar Goodarzi, they looked for support among the younger generation in their fight against Ayatollah Khomeini. The same group was responsible for the assassination of Muttahhari.

1980, the militant group *Furqan* assassinated him as a result of his continued struggle against what he called non-Islamic ideas masquerading as Islam.

Ta'lim is understood as a method of transferring information from an educator to the one being educated. This process involves various elements, including a teacher (*mu'allim*), knowledge (*ilm*), a student (*muta'allim*) and a method via which this information can be transferred. Mutahhari's main focus of discussion was on *ilm* and the ways through which it is transferred. Mutahhari examines the two main sources of understanding the Islamic thought i.e., the Quran and *hadiths* and attempts to discover the concept of knowledge. While exploring the Quranic verses Mutahhari states that the Quran provides convincing evidence of the significance of knowledge and education in Islam. From the *hadith* "seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim," he concludes that education is a duty of every Muslim, just as praying and fasting is and emphasizes that in order to perform any religious obligation, knowledge is required.²⁴⁵ He was critical of those who assumes that knowledge bring harm to the society.²⁴⁶ He urges for the urgent need of knowledge for spiritual and economic prosperity of the Muslims. According to Mutahhari knowledge is not sufficient for human beings, it will only build up half of a human being not a virtuous being. He strongly insists the importance of Faith (*iman*) in the revelations of God along with knowledge.²⁴⁷ For Mutahhari faith along with knowledge functions as a pair of wings that can take a human far beyond what he can reach in the absence of either one. Faith and knowledge must be able to work together in order to achieve prosperity for every individual of the society and they should not be in conflict with one another. Society thus needs both knowledge and faith, because knowledge without faith is equally as detrimental as faith without knowledge.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Mutahhari and Campell, *Fundamentals of Islamic thought*, 113.

²⁴⁶ Morteza Motahari, 'The Fundamental Problem in the Clerical Establishment', in *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja'i Taqlid*, Linda S. Walbridge (ed.), (Brill: Leiden, Boston, Koln, 2001): 164-165.

²⁴⁷ Motahari, "The Fundamental Problem," 177.

²⁴⁸ Mutahhari and Campell, *Fundamentals of Islamic thought*, 14.

Despite being given remarkable attention to the significance of knowledge in both the Quran and Hadiths and also looking into its glorious past, the Muslim countries lagged behind in terms of development, science and technology. Mutahhari draws several reasons for the decline of science among the Muslims.

1. Social changes during the period of the Caliphs, led to the division of Muslim society among two classes: the lower class, unable to even meet their basic needs, and an upper wealthy class with lavish life. Here Mutahhari explains that a society divided in such a way that it lacked social justice and does not provide any ground for pursuing education or knowledge. This division in the Muslim society and lack of importance to knowledge led to the decline of science in the Muslims.²⁴⁹

2. The focus of learning shifted from the *ilm* to the *alim* (scholar). Instead of showing respect to science and knowledge by learning them, people became more depended on the *alim* which led to excessive domination of the *alims*. Instead of encouraging knowledge and becoming *alims* themselves the people submitted themselves to the *alims* hence leading to the distortion of the Islamic education system.²⁵⁰

3. The third important factor for the prevention of knowledge in the Muslim societies according to Mutahhari was the division of the *Ulama*, who were busy fighting against each other to show their superiority over the other. According to Mutahhari the *Ulama* who were expert in one school of Islamic knowledge saw that particular area as the one prophet Muhammad designated as obligatory.²⁵¹ The theologians consider Islamic theology (*kalam*) as obligatory because it is the knowledge of the principles of Islam. The *ulama* who were expert in ethics (*ilm al-akhlaq*) considers their science as superior because it teaches the people to live a virtuous life. Jurists who

²⁴⁹ Maryam Shamsaei, and Mohd Hazim Shah. "Philosophical Study on Two Contemporary Iranian Muslim Intellectual Responses to Modern Science and Technology." *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education* 12, no. 4 (2017), 881-882.

²⁵⁰ Motahari, "The Fundamental Problem," 167.

²⁵¹ Motahari, "The Fundamental Problem," 168-169.

are specialized in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) considers it to be favoured by prophet Muhammad. The *mufasssirun* (Quran commentators) believes that their knowledge is superior because *tafsir* (interpretation of the Quran) is the knowledge of Allah, therefore it is obligatory according to the prophet's *hadith*. Mutahhari believes that it is because of this division and tussle between the *ulamas* the Islamic world lagged behind scientific progress.

4. Another reason for the decline of science in the Islamic world was because of the division of *Ulum* (science) between religious and non-religious. Because of this classification people study topics directly related to Islam like *fiqh*, *tafsir*, and *kalam* while ignoring the broad range of necessary human knowledge like Mathematics, Physics and Medicine.²⁵² Mutahhari states that this division of knowledge into religious and non-religious does not make any sense and believes that any type of knowledge which helps in the prosperity of Islamic society is religious and those who acquires it will also be rewarded as promised in the Quran.²⁵³ He also cites the hadith as example which shows the importance of all kind of knowledge, which says "the angles spread their wings for the person who seeks knowledge."²⁵⁴

5. Mutahhari also blames the prevailing traditional attitude of Muslim communities for confining women and girls in the home which deprived their right to learn, teach and develop, as one of the important factors for the decline of science in the Muslim world.²⁵⁵ Many of the Muslim communities practiced this un-Islamic idea for centuries which according to Mutahhari harmed the educational development of Muslim societies as depriving the women from education it endangered the intellectual development of children who would have benefited from her knowledge.²⁵⁶ Mutahhari again re-interprets the hadith, "*talab al- 'ilm faridatun 'ala kulli Muslim.*"

²⁵² Maryam Shamsaei, and Mohd Hazim Shah. "Philosophical Study," 884.

²⁵³ Maryam Shamsaei, and Mohd Hazim Shah, "Philosophical Study," 884.

²⁵⁴ *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, 226.

²⁵⁵ Morteza Motahari., *Woman and her rights in Islam*, (Islamic Seminary Publications, Iran: 1982): 54.

²⁵⁶ Sareh Ardeshtir Larijany, "Mutahhari and His Approach to Women's Social Life," PhD. Diss., (Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 2020): 142-143.

which translates to, “seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim.”²⁵⁷ Here the Muslim according to Mutahhari is everyone, regardless of gender so as to ensure equal opportunities in exhibiting their capabilities that would contribute to the society.²⁵⁸

This arguments by Mutahhari regarding the decline of science is largely based on the corrupt social, political as well as ideological system of the Muslim societies which affected all the aspects of their life including education and science. Mutahhari’s concept of Knowledge based on the Quran and hadith and its acquisition being obligatory on all Muslims was explored in the case of Kargil when his ideas were disseminated into Kargil by the IKMT in order to tackle the anti-modern education sentiment of the traditional clerics. The connectivity of Ladakh with the construction of the Srinagar-Leh Highway in 1974 witnessed the flow of large number of Iranian literatures translated in Urdu from the printing press in Delhi, Mumbai and Lucknow.²⁵⁹ The writings of Iranian scholars like Mulla Sadra, Mutahhari and Ali Shariati influenced many individuals in Kargil and they started questioning the existing Islamic practices in Kargil based on the philosophical thinking of these Islamic scholars. One such argument of these outspoken individuals who later laid the foundation of IKMT, was questioning the outlook of traditional Kargili clerics towards the acquisition of modern education as un-Islamic. They argued by citing Mutahhari that “any type of knowledge which helps in the prosperity of Islamic society is religious and it is an obligation on every Muslim to acquire such kind of knowledge.”²⁶⁰ The IKMT thus propagated Mutahhari’s ideology to promote modern education in Kargil by setting up a modern educational institution in Kargil in his memory known as the Mutahhari Public School (MPS) in 1984.

²⁵⁷ Larijany, “Mutahhari and His Approach,” 158.

²⁵⁸ Larijany, “Mutahhari and His Approach,” 158.

²⁵⁹ Gupta, “Experiment with Khomeini’s revolution,” 380.

²⁶⁰ Mutahhari and Campell, *Fundamentals of Islamic thought*, 129.

Traditional Education in Kargil

The education system in Kargil can be seen as a continuation of the traditional Islamic pedagogy which had continued in the 18th century India where knowledge was transmitted through informal means between the teacher and student.²⁶¹ Mosques were the main centres of learning in Islamic education. The medium of instruction was mostly the traditional and Arabic language. The traditional education system of knowledge sharing was in a very informal manner. A student willing to study religious education would visit a *maktab*²⁶² in her/her own village. Every village had a *maktab* where an ‘*akhone*’²⁶³ or a cleric would impart Persian, Arabic, and Quranic education, Moorcroft during his visit in region in 1822 mentions about the presence of an ‘*akhone*’ in almost every village of Kargil that were imparting religious education and preaching Islam.²⁶⁴ The traditional education, apart from teaching the Quran and Hadith also involved the recitation of *marsiyas* and *qasidas* in the balti language, this form of oral narration was carried forth from the teachers to many generations in Kargil.²⁶⁵ A well-known teacher of the time was Sheikh Ali Najafi Brolmo, a renowned figure whose name is still being invoked as one of the most important teachers in Kargil for teaching students countless *marsiyas* and *qasidas* along with religious knowledge. Initiative from the government side in education sector started when the State Council sanctioned the opening of a primary school in Kargil on the demand of the Wazir-i-Wazarat of Ladakh in 1899 and a provision was made by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to award a

²⁶¹ During the 18th century anyone who acquire education could expect recognition from learned families. Education was informal, a patriarchal relation between the teacher and student was the norm. A boy who chose to Islamic study would learn Arabic and Persian and the focus of study would be on Quran and Hadith. Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900* (Oxford University Press: New Delhi 2002) 19.

²⁶² *Maktab* in Kargil is place of religious learning where students are taught Quran and other Islamic knowledge on daily basis for one or two hours by a *mu'allim* (teacher).

²⁶³ *Akhon* here refers to religious men who are educated locally, and not trained in higher seminaries from West Asia.

²⁶⁴ William Moorcroft and George Trebeck. *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab; in Ladakh and Kashmir; in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara; from 1819 to 1825*. Vol. 1. (London: Austerity of Asiatic Society, 1937).

²⁶⁵ *Marsiyas* are elegies. *Qasidas* are poems in praise of the prophet and His family.

stipend of 200 rupees to the total number of students for attending the school in 1905, around 48 students were enrolled in the school.²⁶⁶ In 1930 in order to improve the educational condition the government upgraded the Primary school into Middle School at Kargil with Urdu as the medium of instruction.²⁶⁷ The middle school remained the only highest level of instruction in Kargil till 1950 when the first higher secondary school was opened at Leh.²⁶⁸ In order to pursue higher education a student of Kargil has to travel to Leh or Srinagar which was a difficult endeavour within itself.

The first instance of establishment of a major Islamic education centre in Kargil came up with the formation of ISK in 1956. The madrassa was successful in the propagation of Shia faith and also the proselytization process as it sends clerics to all parts of the district. ISK under its sub branch ‘*Howza Ilmiya Madrasa-e-Asna Asharia*’ (Islamic Studies Centre) imparted Islamic education by offering different courses on Islamic theology and *fiqh*. This centre is also affiliated to the Al-Mustafa International University, Iran. The ISK played a pivotal role in the systematisation of the traditional system of knowledge sharing by establishing a string of Islamic learning centres known as *Daru-ul-Quraan, Makatib* in 1970. This marked the beginning of formalisation of the Islamic knowledge and promulgation of Shia Islam by standardising the system of knowledge transmission in the region.²⁶⁹ As through the institution of ISK clerics were sent to all the *Daru-ul-Quran Makatibs* in more than 60 places across Kargil for the purpose of transmission of Islamic Knowledge, all of them followed the proper syllabus set by ISK which meant the standardisation of the transmission process in a very formal manner. The curriculum included:

²⁶⁶ Prem Singh Jina, *Ladakh Himalaya: Past and Present*, Anmol Publisher: India, (2006): 166.

²⁶⁷ Jina, *Ladakh Himalaya*, 167.

²⁶⁸ Jina, *Ladakh Himalaya*, 171.

²⁶⁹ Anjuman Jamiat-ul-Ulama Isna Asharia Kargil, “Makatib e Jaffariya,” February 18, 2013. <http://youthwingisk.blogspot.com/2013/02/makatib-e-jaffaria.html>. Accessed on 05-11-2022.

1. *Usul-e-deen* which is the basic principles of Islam i.e., belief in one God (*towheed*), belief in the justice of God (*Adil*), belief in the prophets of God (*Nubuwaat*), belief in the vice regency (*Immamat*) and belief in resurrection (*Qayamat*).²⁷⁰

2. *Furuh-i-deen* which means branches of faith i.e., *Namaz* (daily prayers), *Roza* (fasting), *khums* (charity), *Zakat* (religious tax), *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), *Tawallah* (love towards the family of prophet Muhammad), *Tabarra* (distance from the enemies of prophets), *Amir-Bil-Maroofof* (good behaviour), and *Nahi-Anl-Munkar* (Bad behaviour).²⁷¹

3. Quran and *Hadith* which includes teaching *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Tafsir-e-Quran* (Quran exegesis), *Usul* (Islamic doctrines), *Aqqayid* (theology) and *Akhlaq* (Islamic ethics) and Islamic history.²⁷²

Establishment of Mutahhari Public School

The literacy rate of Kargil in year 1961 was 5.90 percent and in the year 1971 the literacy rate was 10.00 percent. In the year 1981 the literacy rate became 19.40 percent.²⁷³ The literacy rate in the case of female population in the year 1981 was as low as 3.14 percent and the male literacy rate was 32.26 percent.²⁷⁴

The data presented above shows that the educational condition of Kargil district of Ladakh was very poor as late as the 1980s. Several factors have played an important role in the poor condition of education in Kargil. One of the important factors according to Nicola Grist for the reluctance

²⁷⁰ B.R.Rizvi, "The Balti: A Marginal Tribe of Jammu and Kashmir" in *Cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir*, ed. Kulbhushan Warikoo (New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2009), 239.

²⁷¹ Rizvi, "The Balti: A Marginal Tribe," 239.

²⁷² Anjuman Jamiat-ul-Ulama Isna Asharia Kargil, "Houzia Emliyah Madrasa e Asna Asharia Kargil," August 6, 2016. Retrieved from <http://youthwingisk.blogspot.com/2016/08/activities-of-students-tullaab-houza.html> accessed on 05-11-2022.

²⁷³ *Statistical Hand Book*, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Planning and Development Department, district Kargil, (2007-08), 83.

²⁷⁴ *Statistical Hand Book*, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, 83.

of the Shias towards secular education was because of the suspicious attitude of the Shias towards any external force or power as a means of subversion. According to Grist,

The Shias historical lack of involvement with the government - of whatever period, and their experience of state power as an external and coercive force. Hence, they did not regard schools as being benign providers of education, but as just another example of an arbitrary and cruel imposition of an external authority.²⁷⁵

The Shias thus distanced themselves from taking part in the government initiatives of secular education.

Grist also states that another reason for the Shias not enrolling in modern education was the fact that they were mainly focused on land, both symbolically and economically, which is why they did not want to spare their children from working on the land. Agriculture was the main source of subsistence in Kargil from early times and continued till new economic opportunities came to Kargil after the 1980s.²⁷⁶ They practiced mixed agriculture which involves growing one crops in irrigated fields and keep various bovines, sheep, goats and horses from which they get milk, meat and wool. The dependence on agriculture and to have higher surplus for consumption during the harsh winter, large number of labourers were needed. All the family members including children participate in the agricultural activities during the whole summer. This was one of the reasons for the parents not willing to send their children to school.²⁷⁷

One of the most important factors for the low literacy rate of Kargil district was due to the presence of strong anti-modern attitude among Shia clerics who discouraged the people regarding modern education by calling it *Haram* (un-Islamic).²⁷⁸ They were hostile towards secular education

²⁷⁵ Nicola Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru Valley of Northern India," PhD diss., (Goldsmiths, University of London, 1998), 157.

²⁷⁶ Grist mentions that till the 1980s agriculture was the main source of livelihood. After the 1980s Kargil was moving towards urbanization which brought new opportunities in Kargil and the focus of people shifted from agriculture labour to government employment.

²⁷⁷ Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru," 159.

²⁷⁸ Gupta, "Experiment with Khomeini's Revolution," 381.

because they were of the opinion that it would weaken their faith. The English language was seen as the language of hell and learning it means going directly to hell. These clerics hold higher position among the Shia population and also hold strong followers among the Shias. The Shia clerics focussed more on religious education and preached the people that higher status could only be achieved through the attainment of religious education such as learning the Quran and the basic principles of Islam.²⁷⁹

The above factors along with the modernizing processes which was taking place in Ladakh such as, the opening of Ladakh for outsiders in 1974, separate district status for Kargil in 1979, and employment opportunities and the reluctance of Shias participating in it provided the premise for some clerics and young men to promote modern education who felt the need to set up an organisation to provide modern education in Kargil. The initiative in the field of modern education began when the late Sheikh Hussain Zakiri²⁸⁰ and some young intellectuals took a revolutionary step of opening a modern educational institute Mutahhari Public School (MPS) on 12 April 1984. Sheikh Zakiri, the founder of IKMT and the architect responsible for introducing Khomeini's thought in Kargil and instrumentalising it to bring about change in Kargil especially in the arena of education, was vocal against the lack of educational infrastructure in the district and the backwardness of the district. Radhika Gupta describes, "Sheikh Zakiri is an apt example of ulama who are not just custodians of religious tradition and learning but respond to changing times".²⁸¹ Prior to the formation of IKMT, Sheikh Zakiri floated the idea and need of a modern school in Kargil and persuaded the clerical command of the ISK to support his initiative who at the beginning provided him with the financial assistance.²⁸² For the first time a private educational

²⁷⁹ Grist, "Local Politics in the Suru," 159.

²⁸⁰ Sheikh Zakiri (1940-2016) known as the founder of the IKMT, he was born in Pratap Bagh, Kargil which he later renamed to Bagh-e-Khomeini, he is entirely credited for bringing in Khomeini's revolution of Iran to Kargil. His aim essentially was to spread a revolutionary (inquilabi) outlook in every field.

²⁸¹ Gupta, "Experiment with Khomeini's Revolution," 382.

²⁸² Gupta, "Experiment with Khomeini's Revolution," 383.

institution was setup in Kargil by the Shia clerics in order to impart modern education along with religious education. The initiative of starting Mutahhari Public School, was based in the idea of looking at the social condition of Kargil during the 1980s. Sheikh Zakiri reminded the Shias that, “any reform within the society is only possible if they free themselves first from the clutches of oppression.”²⁸³ This according to him, could be done by looking upon the life of Khomeini and taking lessons about reform and change. He further stresses on the aspect of freedom of an individual to express oneself because for him, “the idea of freedom entailed, freedom of thought and expression, freedom from corrupt mullahs and their machinations, freedom to express oneself against the rampant inequalities that existed in the region, freedom from being pawns of the political parties.”²⁸⁴ All of this was possible according to Sheikh Zakiri through the attainment of education, as it would rid the society of social backwardness and bring about equality and progress to the society.²⁸⁵ He propagated Khomeini’s thought of “acquiring education from the cradle to the grave.”²⁸⁶ The Mutahhari Educational Society (MES) was founded for the proper administration and promotion of modern education in Kargil under the patronship of IKMT. The main objective of IKMT in entering the field of modern education was to fill the vacuum created by the then existing educational system and to establish their relevance in the Kargil society, especially modern education and its understanding meant the growth of the society in many possible ways and provide an equal footing in the developmental process of the nation at large. IKMT in the context of education shares the view of Muslim reformers like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan by claiming that education is the singular agency for their emancipation, the view that the acquisition of modern education isn’t compromising their identity culture or religion.²⁸⁷ They held

²⁸³ Sheikh Zakiri, “Barsi programme,” IKMT Official, 20 September 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUVDncURSbQ&t=2960s>

²⁸⁴ Sheikh zakiri, “Barsi programme.”

²⁸⁵ Sheikh zakiri, “Barsi programme.”

²⁸⁶ Haider Ali Askary, “Sheikh Zakiri, An Insitution.” *Voice of Ladakh*, Volume 4, Issue No 31, 12 September 2016.

²⁸⁷ Filza Waseem, “Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and the Identity Formation of Indian Muslims through Education.” *Review of History and Political Science* 2, no. 2 (2014): 132.

that modern education would help the Shias to progress in the modernization process which was taking place in Ladakh. It is through modern education the Shias of Kargil will progress and prosper; it was argued. The IKMT challenged the clerics of ISK who held the acquisition of modern education not compatible with Islam. In order to highlight the importance of modern education in Kargil the Trust promoted the ideas of Murtaza Mutahhari on acquisition of knowledge in Islam.²⁸⁸

Based on Mutahhari's take²⁸⁹ on the importance of education and the then existing social structure of Kargil, the IKMT initiated modern education to combat rampant illiteracy and the religious interpretation of the traditional clerics regarding modern education as un-Islamic. The aim of Mutahhari Educational Society (MES) as a branch of IKMT was imparting awareness among the local masses regarding modern education, provide better the quality of education in Kargil and to establish their work as a benchmark to be looked upon while coming to terms with modernity and modern education, to open and set up school in different areas of Kargil and to create awareness regarding women education.²⁹⁰ The initiative saw the participation of some of the clerics within the Kargil society thus involving the *ulama* of Kargil in the process of awareness regarding modern education. The involvement of the *ulama* community helped MES to show the society that Islam and modern education are not contradictory to each other.

During the initial stage of its foundation the school has been criticized by many clerics from ISK for propagating 'western agenda' in Kargil. The clerics from ISK objected the secular nature of the syllabus which included teaching subjects like English, Science, Mathematics and Social Science with English as the medium of instruction and the wearing of uniform.²⁹¹ The prescribed

²⁸⁸ Bylaws Mutahhari Educational Society, January 1996.

²⁸⁹ Mutahhari's view on education that all kind of knowledge which helps in the emancipation of an individual is obligatory on every Muslim and should use it as a tool to emancipate the Muslim community.

²⁹⁰ Mutahhari Educational Society bylaws.

²⁹¹ Mohd Yusuf Kanoori, *Tazkirah-e-Purkistan* (urdu), (Kargil: Akhone publication, 2015), 214.

uniform was Pathani suit or also known as khan dress and the students have to shave their head completely. Some even went ahead to name the school as *Gotang school* (school of bald children).²⁹² Facing ridicule by many, the management of the school decided to change the uniform to pant and shirt, which again didn't go well with the ulama of ISK and stopped financial assistance. Some individuals still joined voluntarily with a meagre remuneration rendering their services to MPS. Among whom famous educationists such as Haji Mohammad Baqir Naqdoo and Haji Asgar Ali Karbalai are well known. They came forward with an intention of the betterment of the Kargil society at large. In the aspect of women's education, the venture was late as the school encouraged the participation of girls in the field of education only in the mid-1990s. The total numbers of students at the beginning of the school were 48 in 1984 which by 2016 reached more than 2000 with 1248 boys and 1044 girl students. The success of the first school led to the formation of different branches of MPS in other parts of the Kargil district keeping in mind that the majority of the population of the Kargil resided in the rural parts and the town cannot be accessed by everyone. By 2022 the Society had 15 different branches working under it at different places of Kargil.

²⁹² Personal interview with students as well as members of MPS.

S. No	Name of School	Location	Distance from HQ	Roll of Students		Total	Staff Strength	status
				Boys	Girls			
1	MPS High School	Kurbathang	04 KM	84	76	160	12	H S
2	MPS Baroo	Baroo	05 KM	334	275	609	34	H S
3	MPS Drass	Drass	55 KM	88	77	165	12	M S
4	MPS Baroo Colony	Baroo Colony	02 KM	92	78	170	12	M S
5	Upright Pushkum	Pushkum	14 KM	62	56	118	11	M S
6	MPS Choskore	Choskore	15 KM	53	42	95	07	P S
7	MPS Fokar	Fokar	35 KM	35	25	60	06	P S
8	MPS Primary Dept	Kargil Town	Nil	272	222	494	22	P S
9	MPS Goma Kargil	Goma Kargil	04 KM	64	56	120	11	M S
10	MPS Tumail Colony	Tumail Colony	05 KM	18	17	35	05	P S
11	MPS Stickchey	Stickchey	08 KM	18	14	32	04	P S
12	MPS Sanjak	Sanjak	75 KM	16	12	28	04	P S
13	MPS Akchamal	Akchamal	08 KM	45	37	82	07	P S
14	MPS Kanoor	Kanoor	16 KM	67	57	124	09	P S
Total				1248	1044	2292		

Table 1: MPS Branches Under Mutahhari Educational Society

Source: Mutahhari Educational Society

The IKMT also claims to work for the improvement of women's education in Kargil. The literacy rate of women in Kargil in 1981 was only 3.14 percent.²⁹³ The literacy rate among the women had been very poor in Kargil till the late 1990s. The reason being the orthodox practice of the Shia clerics. These clerics discouraged parents from sending their children to school particularly the girl child and preached their followers that girl child should be married when they reach their maturity level of nine years.²⁹⁴ The IKMT argued that women would be given equal opportunity to pursue education as Ayatollah Khomeini expressed that "both women and men are free to attend

²⁹³ *Statistical Hand Book*, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Directorate of Economics and Statistics Planning and Development Department, district Kargil, (2007-08), 83.

²⁹⁴ Grist, "Local politics in Suru," 158.

university. Both are free to vote and stand as parliamentary representatives.”²⁹⁵ In its bid to raise the status of Shia women, the IKMT encouraged both religious and modern education for women in Kargil. In order to provide modern education, the MPS was opened for girls in 1995 and since then continued to encourage co-education. In terms of providing religious education the IKMT started the *Jamia-Tuz-Zahra*, theology College for Women in July 2008. It was the first institute in the district that catered to the propagation of Islamic education solely for Shia girls. The *Jamia-Tuz-Zahra* imparts higher education to the level of ‘*Karshinasi*’ which is equivalent to graduation. It is affiliated with Al-Mustafa University, Qom, Iran and offers two courses. One course is for three years and another one is for four years and follows the syllabus of Al-Mustafa University. In the year of its formation, it started with 40 seats and 3 teachers, the number rose to 70, in 2014 with 6 teachers to supervise them. The students applying to the institution are needed to have cleared their matriculation and the admission process involves a written test and a viva.



Fig. 6: MPS High School, Kurbathang.



Fig. 7: Students of MPS in a library

Internet Source: Mutahhari Educational Society

²⁹⁵ Khomeini in his speech on December 7, 1978.



Fig.8: Students of MPS in Muharram Procession



Fig. 9: Students on a field trip

Source: Media Cell. IKMT

With the effort of MPS by the year 2001, there was a significant change in literacy rate in Kargil as the literacy rate increased to 50.96 percent with male literacy rate of 64.40 percent while the female literacy rate at 34.90 percent. According to the census conducted in the year 2011, the literacy rate in Kargil district reached to 74.49 percent with 86.73 percent of male literacy rate and 58.05 percent of female literacy rate.²⁹⁶ The success of MPS initiative and the increasing roll of the school added an impetus to the promotion of modern education at large, This directly translated to many Kargilis demanding for schools in various parts of Kargil where MPS couldn't cater to.²⁹⁷ The state responded with new government schools in different parts of the district and it factored in to the spike in the literacy rate of Kargil with the rise in the number of government schools. In the year 2011 the total number of schools to impart modern education in Kargil district were as,

²⁹⁶ Census of India, 1981, Jammu & Kashmir, District Census Hand Book, No.IV, Ladakh District, Superintendent of Census operations, Jammu & Kashmir, Srinagar, 1981. Census of India, 2011, Series-II, Part XII-B, District Census Handbook Kargil, Directorate of Census Operation, Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar, 2014.

²⁹⁷ Mohd. Yusuf Kanoori, *Tazkirah-e-Purkistan*, 215.

14 higher secondary school, 39 high schools, 269 middle school and 232 primary school making a total of 554 schools.²⁹⁸

The history of state's intervention in the field of modern education saw a lesser impact due to the religious orthodoxy of clerics regarding modern education. The role of IKMT as an agent of change can be viewed in their success against tackling religious orthodoxy by disseminating the ideas of Murtaza Mutahhari and Khomeini in changing the attitudes of clerics and common people towards modern education. The politics of formation of the MPS was the utilisation of modern education as an emancipatory tool for the Shia Muslims, apart from promoting participation of Shia Muslims in the matters of representation in various aspects of life in the region of Ladakh.

The drawback of the initiative of the IKMT and its politics regarding modern education is in their narrower approach of adhering to the idea of social development and within a singular framework of Mutahhari and Khomeini regarding social change. This particularistic framework also meant increased 'Persianization' of the region, effecting the regional culture and the undermining of local languages and the folklores which were once treasured in various parts of the district and contributed to its cultural diversity and heritage.²⁹⁹ The onset of Persianisation saw the erosion of the local cultural practices while certain aspects of Persian culture found its legitimacy through its import by the Trust.³⁰⁰ This can be seen in the recitation of morning prayers in Persian at Mutahhari Public School, for instance "*khuda ya, khuda ya, ta inqilabi Mehdi Khomeini rah nighdah*", meaning, "O lord, O lord, May the revolution of Khomeini prevail till the arrival of Mehdi." The roughly translated description of another Persian prayer commonly recited in the MPS schools is as follows:

²⁹⁸ Zain-ul-Aabedin Aabedi, *Ladakh: Then and Now* (Srinagar: Atlantic publishers and distributors, 2015) 232.

²⁹⁹ Aggarwal, *Beyond lines of control*, 197.

³⁰⁰ Henry Wilson, "More Religious," 16.

Oh God, Oh God, until the revolution of Mehdi

Of the government of Khomeini

Protect (Protect Khomeini's Government)

With your kindness, keep Khamenei the leader

Give the fighters of Islam victory

Make us destined to see the face of Mahdi

Make us go to Karbala - allow it in our destiny.

Please accept our prayer, Lord of the Worlds.³⁰¹

The above prayers are an indication to the extent how the Iranian revolution is disseminated through the actions within the schools of MPS. The adoption of many facets of Persian culture can be viewed as promotion of the Iranian culture at the expense of the local culture. Also, the overtly Islamic appearance of the MPS in making Hijab(scarf) mandatory for girls, assembly prayers in Persian and Urdu saw the distancing of individuals belonging to Buddhism, Sunni sect from the institution. Also, the detractors of this framework critiqued the promotion of Iranian ideology resulting in the loss of the regional culture as they pointed out the pride that the Iranians take in their culture irrespective of the faith they practice while at the other hand the clerical command of the IKMT forwarded Iranisation as religion ultimately leading to the side-lining of the indigenous culture.³⁰² The institution can be perceived as non-inclusive to individuals of other faiths in Kargil because of the particularistic vision of the school that places a larger emphasis on Iranian revolution. However, the role of MPS can be viewed as significant considering the social conditions of Kargil at the time of its formation and acting as an instrument for bringing change while negotiating with modernity and the idea of modern education.

³⁰¹ During the field visit to various MPS` branches, this was the common prayer recited in all the schools and all the religious congregations of the IKMT.

³⁰² Aggarwal, *Beyond lines of control*, 202.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

The encounter of Islam with modernity through the colonial experience left an impact on the socio-religious notions that were in existence. Ideas and notions like progress, the spirit of scientific rationalism, the equality of women, social backwardness, modern education as ‘useful knowledge’, and the inevitable rise of a secular nation-state, spread through the process of modernization. While the reformists appropriated these ideas which was thought to be essential for the progress of the community, they did not present them as ideas external to Islam. These ideas in their understanding and propagation laid emphasis that the teachings of Islam were already compatible with them, thus the impetus to reform was arrived at from within Islam and not from outside it, creating the idea of ‘Islamic modernity’. This approach towards reform also allowed for less resistance from people who had otherwise developed anxieties because of their experience with colonialism and viewed reform and modernity as antithetical to Islam and a threat to the religion. The establishment of the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust was in the Kargil district of Ladakh in 1989 needs to be understood in such a broader context.

The organisation claimed itself to be modernist in outlook while it was bringing in socio-religious reforms in the Shia Muslim community of Kargil. Iranian Revolution led by Khomeini in Iran during 1979 deeply influenced the organisation. They provided counter-discourse to what was already present in Kargil which was propagated by Shia clerics, who had come from Iraq and were anti-colonial and anti-modernity in outlook. It primarily focussed on modern education and remained married to the introduction of modernity in general. Drawing from the experience of the Revolution, IKMT propagated that the Shia Muslim identity needs to be asserted as was done in Iran and a need to reform in the direction of modern

development process. Modern education became the primary focus of the organisation for achieving this goal.

The political changes in the transnational Shia networks have played an important role in the formation of the IKMT. The historical connection of Kargil with the transnational Shia religious centres in Iraq and Iran has enabled the diffusion of socio-religious as well as political ideologies into Kargil. The shift in the Shia religious learning centre from Najaf and Karbala in Iraq to Qom and Mashhad in Iran after the expulsion of Shia clerics by Saddam Hussain in the 1970s and the subsequent Iranian Revolution in 1979 saw the dissemination of new ideological strands in Kargil which played an important role in the formation of IKMT.

Apart from being influenced by transnational Shia politics, the internal issues and the modernizing aspirations which were emerging in Ladakh region after the mid-1970s also prompted the formation of IKMT. The opening of Ladakh to the outsiders in 1974, the construction of Leh-Srinagar Highway in 1974, Kargil getting a separate district status in 1979 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and the recognition of tribal identity of the region created new opportunities for the region in the form of connectivity, employment, business and education. However, the Shia Muslims from the region remained resistant to these changes as they were guided by the traditional clerics and the changes were resisted due to their anti-colonial and anti-modernity attitudes. This resistance created a vacuum, a space in which IKMT emerged as an organisation to challenge the resistance and promoted Shia power and identity.

On its formation, IKMT focused on developing political consciousness amongst the Muslims as they were mostly passive in their participation in politics. With IKMT's interjection, politics was given importance based on Khomeini's idea that politics wasn't antithetical to religion, but is very much a part of it. As a result of such a reorientation and the consequent mobilisations, the first Shia MP from Kargil was elected in Lok Sabha elections of 1989. In the

sphere of religion, self-flagellation which was part of Moharram rituals was denounced and instead everyone was asked to focus on the real message of Karbala and Imam Hussain's sacrifice. The use of *akl* was emphasised instead of believing in superstitions. Efforts aimed at the standardisation of *khums* and *zakat* were also made.

The IKMT also played a part in bringing about changes in social practices. Women's social role underwent a change. Under IKMT's separate wing for women called *Zainabia Welfare Society* which was created in 1992, a space was provided for women to participate in the religious as well as social programmes and services. It also provided impetus for women education and women's employment. This enabled women to gain some independence and becoming part of decision-making at home and outside. A college for Islamic education of women was also established which was named *Jamia-tuz-zehra*, allowing women to get trained in religious matters and participate in it in their own way.

The emphasis on education was what made the functioning of IKMT distinct. They challenged the entrenched clerical idea of traditional religious education and laid focus on the importance of modern education by justifying that it was not against the tenets of Islam. They used the philosophy of Murtaza Mutahhari who held that education of all kinds is important and there existed no binary division between the traditional education and the modern education. The Mutahhari Public School opened by IKMT brought co-education for both males and females so that everyone can be emancipated.

IKMT's existence and the reforms it sought to introduce solely emphasised on Khomeini's thought and all its actions were taken about within the ambit of the ideology of the Iranian revolution. The imagination of the Organisation regarding suggested reforms didn't exceed the thought of the Iranian revolution and as a result the interesting aspect of the reforms undertook by IKMT is their finiteness, as they aimed for change and modernity from a

particular, restrictive vision. Despite all the modernising claims, the organisation remained limited only to the Shia community, it failed to include Buddhists within their fold. Even within the community, they could not get everyone to reform. For this, they were criticised by the community for creating divisions within the Shia community. They also faced criticism for bringing in Persian standards and practices which led to denigration of the local cultural practices like local folk music etc. while the ban on local script led to the decline of local language and its cultural universe. Many aspects of the indigenous culture such the traditional folk songs, the epics of Kesar Saga have been lost or undermined due to the standardization of Islamic practices by the ulama of IKMT. The Ladakhi New Year 'Losar' which was earlier celebrated by people of Kargil was replaced by the festival of 'Navroz', a Persian festival marking the arrival of the New Year. Instances like these led to the crystallisation of the Muslim and Buddhist groups as two different groups and their coexistence which was based on cultural practices which involved dancing, singing and celebration of certain festivals became extinct. The divide between the two major religions could have only been mended with the shared culture in the celebration of festivals, but IKMT and its reforms motivated by the Khomeini's thought contributed to the widening of the divide between the Buddhists and the Muslims and the other communities,

Thus, IMKT was a key player in the socio-cultural changes in Ladakh towards the end of the twentieth century. While they used the vocabulary of modernity to assert their presence in Kargil, they attached particularistic religious tropes with it. While their efforts contributed significantly to change the traditional Shia attitude towards, modernity, politics and education, standardisation of religion and religious practices and the homogenising tendencies in their reform initiatives led to the decline of local culture and shared cultural practices.

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