ISLAMOPHOBIA: LITERATURE REVIEW OF ITS DEFINITIONS AND EARLY TWENTY FIRST CENTURY APPROXIMATIONS

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ABSTRACT--*Review of the previous studies finds a high magnitude in the contemporary research scenario. It proves a significant tool to inform scholars how to create a decipherable synthesis of the best resources available in literature to engender guidelines for starting point. Qualitative in nature, this paper critically evaluates the selected documented literature on Islamophobia. It explores the development of Islamophobia over a period of time and discusses its definitions to argue that bias and prejudice based on irrational fear of Islam and Muslims are helpful in understanding the spread of Islamophobia in Western and American societies. It also investigates how contemporary global situation develops a new stance on intersection of racism and religion. The paper concludes that complexities of the existence of Islamophobia in Western and American society make it difficult to explore its presence. A closer and clearer identification possibly will lead to effective ways of reducing Islamophobia.*

Keywords*--Religion, social, economic, cultural, intellectual, global*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Although majority of individuals agree that Islamophobia is irrational. However, often people are ignorant of the multifarious attitudes which can be labeled as Islamophobic. Overtly racist in tone, French writer Fallaci (2001) in her article entitled 'The anger and the pride' criticized Muslims as 'breed like rats… we have no place for muezzins, for minarets, for false teetotallers, for their fucking Middle Ages, for their fucking chador' (cited in Bruno et al. 2012). Words used for Muslims reached the pinnacle of anti-Muslim racism. In 2002, Fredrickson in his book contested the idea of equating religious and ethnic discrimination with racism. He questioned racism as an 'attitude' (p.7). He argued that if 'the redemption of a heathen' was possible 'through baptism' and 'an ethnic stranger' was assimilated… into a tribe or culture in such a way that his or her origins cease[d] to matter in any significant way', then conflicts might be created due to specific 'attitude' in that context but that might not necessarily be 'labelled as racist' (Fredrickson 2002, p.7).

Nevertheless, those who held power were in the position to nurture feelings of antagonism against an individual or a group. The fear that power could be snatchedfrom them by the suppressed group further elongated the

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prejudices. Sartori (2000) deemed it impossible that Muslim immigrants could easily incorporate into Europeansociety:

I am wrong, for example, to argue that the immigrant Muslim is for us the farthest, the most alien and the most difficult to integrate? If I'm wrong, no one has shown it to me. I'm not mistaken in claiming that Muslim immigrants are fundamentalists at all (cited in Giuseppe 2002).

On the other hand, political scene in America used overtly Islamophobic discourse about Muslim and Islam in the beginning of twenty first century. Hence, it is important to identify how the current professional literature (Humanities as well as social sciences) has defined Islamophobia. Prejudice and bias are equated with Islamophobia, therefore, this paper gives a brief introduction of both. Prejudice is usually conceptualized as an attitude comprising a cognitive constituent such as pre conceived beliefs about a target group. Defined by Allport (1954) as 'an antipathy based on faulty and inflexible generalization', prejudice towards an individual or a group is felt or expressed. In the field of psychology prejudice is recognized 'as an intrapsychic process (an attitude held by an individual)' (Sherry 1996). Sociologists have accentuated its 'group-based functions' (Sherry 1996). Recent scholarship have synthesized the psychological and sociological perspectives and viewed it 'as a mechanism that maintains status and role differences between groups' where reactions of the individuals accelerate the process (Eagly and Diekman 2005). Prejudice is reactive and replicates an expectancy of being singled out by majority group members (Johnson & Lecci, 2003; Monteith & Spicer, 2000).

Bias, on the other hand, is generally defined as a favorable or unfavorable opinion of or against an idea. Psychologists recognize it as an implied measure primarily represented in 'habitual cultural associations rather than attitudes' (Karpinski & Hilton, 2001). Many are of the opinion that both implicit and explicit measures evaluate a single attitude calculated at diverse points in the entire process 'of expression, with social desirability concerns more strongly shaping overt expressions' (Fazio, Jackson, Dunton, et al., 1995).

Prejudice and bias lead to evoke fear; fear of Islam in the present context. Matters of prejudice and bias may play an invariably significant role in the entire terrain of Islamophobia. Hence, the present study presents a synthesis of various definitions of Islamophobia given to it in various social, political and literary contexts and through critical evaluation of the existing research works finds it as yet another form of racism.

'Synthesis of Knowledge'

Political scene in America used overtly racist discourse about Muslim and Islam at the advent of twenty first century. Scholars and political think tanks referred to post -9/11 American policy, as 'boomerang' (Parenti 2002, p.10-19). September 11 attacks were understood partly as repercussion in the wake of US policy that armed and encouraged Islamic fundamentalists to wage war against USSR. Primarily Afghanistan in 1980's was the target of oppression (Saikal 2004.p.95-110). The decline of Shah of lran in 1979 at the hands of Islamic fundamentalist was an earlier 'boomerang' that was ultimately 'returned to the thrower' (Parenti 2002). It changed the world politics and proved harbinger of an anti-Islam and anti-Muslim ideology around the globe.

World perspectives agreed broadly on the *essential positioning of mass media* in the process of *globalization.* Media's augmented courage brought forward European consideration of Jews as 'internal enemy and the Muslims

external enemy' (Anidjar 2003). Considering Muslims as 'a competing nation', Europe was alarmed of its loss of power (Anidjar 2003).

To pave the way for a better comprehension of Islamophobia, this paper uses various researches that have attempted to define Islamophobia. For fourteen centuries Islamophobia pertained to intricacies of historical, economic and political realities. The situation termed it into a new conception of Islam in relation to racism within the context of 'frustration, anger and intolerance' (cited in Greaves et.al. 2004, p.142). It led to a designated fear of Islam and Muslims in the West and America. Contemporary scholarship recognizes 'Islamophobia' as an accepted form of racism, an amalgamation of race and religion (Nieuwkerk 2004, Werbner 2005, Meer 2008, Meer et.al Noorani 2008, Modood 2009 and Dunn et.al.2007). As a form of 'religiophobia', when it came to 'cultural determinism' Islamophobia merged into racism (Geisser 2003, p.12, Cigar 2003). These definitions illustrate dynamics of dominance and religious differences as the main constituents of Islamophobia.

Ahmed (2003) investigated in his book the division of the world into 'us and terrorists' in the milieu of 9/11 attacks. A 'changing complicated and dangerous world' was constructed to explain association of Muslims and Islam with terrorism (Ahmed 2003, p.1). Ahmed's definition of Islamophobia was 'misinterpretation of Islam' on part of both Muslims and non-Muslims who used selective teachings of Islam and Quran to suit their purposes (Ahmed 2003, p.9). The misconception was further extended to discover European conscience under 'the endemic streak of Islamophobia' (cited in Greaves et.al. 2004, p.142). However, much was done to ensure protection given to Muslims in Britain by passing law against 'incitement to religious hatred' in British Parliament (Werbner 2005). Werbner identified Islamophobia as a unique form of racism and posed a question to investigate it as 'cultural racism' (2005). Nevertheless, categorizing Islamophobia as a 'cultural fear' or cultural racism is far from being true. Living examples are the Turk Muslims who do not face threat from the West the way Iranian or Afghani Muslim do.

Assumptions of 'Islam as the religion of the sword, the prophet Muhammad as a violent person, and the Quran as a book of theological gibberish' find their roots in Medieval Europe (Kalin cited in Lumbard 2005). Kalin quoted Dante's *Divine Comedy* as an example of the great German philosopher's interest in Islamic culture (cited in Lumbard 2005, p.144). His study defined Islamophobia perceived in terms of 'theological and political threat to Christendom'. Kalin's essay cited many more names which formed an ambivalent image of Islam (cited in Lumbard 2005).

Calling it anti-Muslim racism, Gold berg (2006) gave a model to understand Islamophobia that allegedthe single Muslim or the single fundamentalist who lives next door, the single body which bears intolerable cultural and religious symbols (Flags, graves, hijab), [and] the entire civilization which produced and shaped him (Goldberg 2006, p. 331-64).

Prominent scholars such as Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris and Richard Dawkin started 'a particular brand of atheism' attacking Islam through a rudimentary inveterate fondness. It restored overt racism against Muslims and categorized them as a 'race' on the basis of religion that reinforced prejudice and bias against Islam and its followers. Their arguments were deleterious race propaganda embedded in religious fears. Fulton (2004) in her essay assessed the implication of Islamophobia in race relations across Europe. She termed it 'an EU problem' confined to USA in the backdrop of 9/11 terrorist attacks. Her choice to investigate the phenomena in a Muslim

majority country (EU country) was in response to Turkey's submitted membership application to Brussels with religion as the main talking point.

Otterbeck & Bevelander (2006) discussed inclusion and exclusion as a highly significant characteristic of Islamophobia. Poynting et.al. (2007) focused xeno- phobia to point out the transition from 'Anti -Asian and Anti-Arab' to Islamophobia. Since Asians and Arab immigrants were considered outsiders in European counties, they faced prejudice and bias due to their places of origins. Allan (2007) recognized Western antagonism as Islamophobia by elaborating 'closed' and 'open' views about it that later became merely 'recurring characteristic of closed views'. Allan's definition was based on Runnymede Trusts Report published in Britain in 1996. Mainstream attitudes deemed Islam as a monolithic and static religion. Such assumptions brought lslam as a concept of 'other' in discourse; an enemy and manipulative religion opposed to West (Poynting et.al. 2007). 'National histories of racism' formed Islamophobia (Poynting et.al. 2007, p.63). Within the constraints of Rushdie affair 1989 and the Gulf War 2001, Poynting framed and concluded by forwarding the rise 'of media and popular racist attacks' against Britain and Australian Muslims (et.al.2007, p.81). His study proposed an understanding of the entire historical process of 'racialization' before defining Islamophobia.

If 'religious hatred' was 'necessarily racial?' Rana (2007) debated to settle this question by emphasizing a possible conflation of racism with Islamophobia. His study examined 'the historical construction' of Muslim figure through the notions 'of race and Islamophobia' (2007). According to his study, it was invariably unattainable to explain the concept of Islamophobia exclusively in connection to culture. Contrarily, debates on race and racism adhere to culture. Still culture is endorsed for shaping anti- Islamic conceptions. Hence, cultural beliefs and ideas exploited religion as the main constituent of racism (Rana2007). When physiognomy ceased to condition a difference, culture was the instrument to comprehend racial differences.

Serendipitously, critics have attempted to explore a spectrum of attitudes known as Islamophobia. Asad had defined it decade earlier a concept 'of religion as a trans-historical essence' (1993). War in lraq, however, proved to be an active agent in reducing malice against Muslims among common people of America. It clearly lifted the ratio up in hate crimes against the perceived Muslim 'other' (Kaplan 2007). Kaplan (2007) clearly pointed out President George Bush who alleged 9/11 attacks within theological stipulations unswervingly followed by mainstream American thoughts. Findings of the research pointed out practice of 'Islamophobic crime' in European societies. It also pointed out 'withering global criticism' directed against the United States. 'Determinism', a preliminary feature of anti- Semitism was difficult to encounter in Islamophobia' (Rattansi 2007). The 'evil Islam' was not in the blood of Muslims so Islamophobia ceased to be racism in biological prospect, argued Rattansi (2007).

Roald et al. (2003) and four years later Bunzl (2007) recognized the concept of Islamophobia creating a stressed and apprehensive relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims and 9/11 attacks fortified the relation more. These scholars also specified the definition of Islamophobia as: a fear or a phobia against the religion 'Islam' and of its supporters, Muslims, and also a campaign against Islam and Muslims that originate from this fear...Expressions of Islamophobia are built upon the majority's vision about the minority (Roald et al. 2003, Bunzl 2007).

Bunzl (2007) however, highlighted similarities between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia and identified a common enemy for 'both Jews and Muslims in a right-wing Christian fundamentalism'. He emphasized that Christian beliefs were used 'as the norm for how a religion should be portrayed and performed' (2007).

II.   RESULT

Muslim world's concern over Islamophobia was voiced strongly in the first OIC observatory report on Islamophobia in 2008. All leaders around the world condemned the politics of hatred and intolerance against religion Islam and its followers. The report discussed the term 'Islamophobia'; its definition and root causes. It also discussed the recent manifestation of the term and measures suggested by Secretary General of Observatory Conference. Development of Islamophobia to such a significant status in the modern world pertained to media hype. Recent decades watched the derogatory and controversial 'cartoons' and their impact all around the world in general and Muslim world in particular. At government level, US appointed a special envoy to OIC as a positive step so that dialogues with Muslims were reinstated. Yet the question cropped up about re-establishment of the ideology particularly in literature, which is a popular channel to create ideologies reinforced through other apparatus such as media. As a matter of fact, popular fiction writers targeted the masses by highlighting issues of social interest. Non- popular fiction writers spot the scholars to shape an ideology. A set of conscious and unconscious ideas form beliefs and goals. This in the form of a normative expose was followed by politically and socially strong groups. Every political, social and economic system followed ideologies. Long before OIC, in his study Althusser (2001) called it 'the imaginary relation to the real conditions of existence'.

Cotemporary world experienced hype in creating new ideologies. Globalization offered easy apparatuses for ideologies to develop. Racism evolved more closely in the form of cultural and religious differences resulting 'social paranoia pervasive in social interaction' (Jackson 2008).

It was difficult to give exact number of Muslim presence in America because religious affiliation was not a required datum in US census (Smith 2010). Muslim presence in America recounted as immigrants or African Americans promoted an intricate 'picture of American Islam' (p.xiv). Smith (2010) identified Islamic faith shaping and regulating lives of American Muslims. He also highlighted the significant wave of immigrants Muslims to America under Immigration Act 1965 when President Lyndon Johnson repealed quota based on national diversity, which shaped contemporary Muslim population in America namely Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis (2010). Representing a great deal of Islamic culture, 'political Islamists…those with no religion or political agenda…those… find [ing] their… minority status…those… with their coping skills' made figure of Islam in America quite complicated (Smith 2010, p.54). Situation of converts and immigrant in America exemplified the presence of Muslims in America without any turbulence in those decades. Apparel of Muslims as 'Islamic Umma' generated their status of one 'race' in Western minds that further complicated their lives (Smith 2010). Smith (2010) probed the freedom of religious practices given to Muslims in America and ardently argued to show how education and rights are given to Muslim Americans (p.155-184). He discussed 'living a Muslim life in American society' as well (2010). Despite the efforts of lmams and other religious scholars to portray a positive and peaceful

picture of Islam, America perpetually grew 'un-comfortable' towards Muslims presence in the wake of 9/11 disaster (Smith 2010). Smith's study raised questions that the research itself implicitly was under 'the endemic streak of Islamophobia (Greaves.et.al 2004). Smith (2010) ended the book with future implications to investigate Islam in America as 'a significant political force' and sustenance of hatred against Islam in future (p.202).

American policy of 'global militarism' pushed Americans and Muslims on intense 'collision' (ed .Ismael et.al. 2010). Contemporary scholarship confessed the allegations of terrorism against 'brown – skinned Muslim men' who were 'after all, probably just a bunch of extremists' (Hendricks 2010).

Twenty first century America focused on 'Islamic other' and recreated its image in the minds of people through diverse media techniques. Print media positioned Islam and Muslims in clash with the rest of global civilizations. Ismael et.al (2010) listed recognition of Israel in 1948, Camp David Accord between Israel and Egypt in 1978, overthrowing of nationalist government of Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran in 1979, long and unhappy relationship with lraq in 1963, as key elements in the contemporary American records to indicate hostility against Muslims. It was after 9/11 that the hostility grew to a point of phobia as American society expected a reverse or reciprocal action of what they had been stating, dictating and manipulating against Muslims by foregrounding Islamic faith; 'the boomerang'(Parenti 2002, p.10).

Grosfoguel (2010) explored 'epistemic racism' shaping the contemporary discourse of Islamophobia. His study was based on knowledge as the foundation to know and validate. The outcome of the study discussed 'the circulation of...stereotypes contribut[ing] to the portrayal of Muslims as inferior, violent creature-thus its easy association with terrorism and representation as terrorist' (p.37). The present study finds Grosfoguel's study relevant as these both debate the ignorance about Muslim faith playing important role in the construction of stereotypes.

Lopes (2011) looked at Islamophobia as a provoking force, a kind of 'cultural racism' with an aim to 'racialize' a religious minority and made it comparable to anti- Semitism. Ant-Semitism identified Jews on the basis of ancestry. A Jew was believed to change through assimilation or by abandoning religion. The same prototypical image was created for the Muslims 'to stop being Muslims' through conversion. Nevertheless, Lopes (2011) found it difficult to clearly identify Islamophobia as racism because it was devoid of biological and cultural stoicism as its inherent characteristics. Lopez agreed to the previous scholarships in such cases which defined Islamophobia as 'hostility to Islam and Muslim' but 'not necessarily raci [sm] (Rattansi 2007).

He further discussed diverse definitions of Islamophobia, which evolved in twenty first century scholarship considering 'Islam as an enemy that must be fought' (Lopez 2011). Moreover, defence of Western Scholars as 'racist without being Islamophobes… and Islamophobes not necessarily racist' did not end the discussion (Lopez 2011). The conception of 20th century scholars might conform to that situation but twenty first century projected an entirely different scenario. It went beyond the boundaries of religious intolerance to the extent of declaring Muslims as other race on the basis of religious beliefs and their images were amplified as terrorists and enemies. Concluding remarks of Lopez study explained Islamophobia 'confounded with a form of racism' as its target was the 'minorities' who were 'effectively racialized' (2011). In addition, in twenty first century America targeted minorities were none other but Muslims who were victims of racism based on their sacred beliefs.

Gotanda conducted a study in 2011 to explore Islamophobia that evolved as a result of racialization of Islam in America. It was a significant development after presidential elections of Barack Obama He examined 'birther' movement that supported the idea of Obama's birth in Kenya rather than Hawaii. This claim linked Obama to Muslim hereditary. Gotanda called it 'an outlandish conspiracy' and looked at the core of the movement within the parameters of racism (2011). His study focused racialization of Muslims in Media hate talks. It constructed a new stereotype in America that Kuruvila highlighted; 'brown-skinned men with beards and women with head scarves are seen as Muslim-regardless of their actual faith or nationality' (2006). Gotanda (2011) developed an analytical framework to understand racialization as comparative process by examining three different dimensions 'the raced body, the racial category and the ascribed subordinate'. However, he did not discuss the racialization of Islam and Muslims from ancient times. Rather he called it 'Asian American Racialization' (2011, p.189). His discussion under the label of 'permanent foreigners' did not shed much light on its relation with Muslim immigrants in America. Conclusion of his study found 'racialization of Islam...more discouraging' for foreign policy of America (p.194). The situation further developed a picture of 'good' and 'bad' Muslim. The former assimilated 'conventional American secular ideals' whereas the latter sustained its usefulness to 'American foreign policy goals' (Gotanda 2011, p.194). The whole 'birther' movement was a 'political exercise' that ended in rising a speculation on the exposed condition of minority communities of Muslims when the president could not defend himself against 'an outrageous falsehood' (Gotanda 2011, p.195).

Thus, the term Islamophobia was often used interchangeably with 'racism', 'racialization', 'discrimination', stereotypes' and 'prejudice' of Muslims and Islam in twenty first century (Bleich 2011, Lopez 2011). Researchers referred to it as 'polemic' and 'neologism' (Recker et.al. 2012). In his study Bennoune accentuated US enterprise to provoke Saudi-Arabia to spend large amount of money 'to export …[Wahabism] ideology than it does oil' (2013). A constant political agenda stimulated an urge to create and re-create Muslim identity. Bennoune's study replenished the silence on 'structural adjustment' by the West (2013). Islamic discourse on 'what gets to the next life', it asserted, was actually part of religion as any other religious sermon. Hence, Whabism transformed into Islamophobia in the backdrop of 9/11 New York terrorist attacks.

Researchers compared and quoted anti-Semitism and Islamophobia as 'religious racism' (Alietti et.al 2013). They conducted a survey within Italian population to examine anti-Semitic and Islamophobic attitudes. Using computer assisted telephonic interviews as tools, these researchers attempted to examine the nature of racism that stemmed from cultural and religious differences. The word racism was discussed interchangeably in terms of prejudice bias, intolerance, and hostility. Based on these interviews, the researcher designed scales for identification of anti-Semitic and Islamophobic attitudes; 'authoritarianism' and 'anomie scale'. Within the framework drawn upon xeno-racism and the notion of clash of civilization, the analysis found overlapping between Islamophobia and Anti-Semitism that provided 'novel insights' to understand and interpret 'racialized dynamics' existing in multicultural societies (Alietti et.al 2013, p.549).The study discovered the similarity between anti-Semitism and Islamophobia alluding to the pliable nature of racism. Based on theological believes, both Jews and Muslims were perceived 'closed' groups, who had undergone 'essentialization or racialization' (p.595). Western 'polarized ideologies' considered both inferiors. (Alietti.et.al. 2013: 595). It included anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the same family. However, in its historical shape, anti-Semitism provided a strong model to

understand the racialization process of other ethnic groups. The research conclusion was the exposure of 'pervasive attitudes' against 'new internal enemies… identified in Muslims' (Aliettiet.al. 2013: 599). Jews disappeared from 'the [global] ideological horizon' (p. 599). Moreover, media and 'social entrepreneurs of racism' spread the prejudice in their extreme efforts (p.599). 'Situation of anomie' catered prejudice and paved the way for racism supported by 'ethno-racial identity' (Alietti. et al. 2013: 597). Researchers termed racism a 'disorganized and confused arrangement of prejudicial attitudes' (Alietti. et al.2013: 599). Racism as 'a pale replica' covered itself under the guise of social insecurities and religious oppositions. Emphasis of the study was investigation of 'political ideologies' as well as 'institutional practices' nurturing bias and antagonism (Alietti et al.2013, p.600).

Sutar (2013) investigated Islamophobia and argued its existence as a phenomenon and concept. Strzyewski (2013), the same year conducted a study to explore Islamophobia prevailing in American literature. Its major argument was the construction of term 'Folk devil' constituted for Arab-Americans in post 9/11 America. The study alleged media for representing and reinforcing such images and it challenged the scenario through an analysis of post 9/11 American literature as well as culture. It based the study arguments by countering literary works such as Mohsin Hamid's *Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Moustafa Bayoumi's *How does it feel to be a problem?Being Young and Arab in America.* These narratives situated their arguments in Islamophobia. The study also scrutinized American 'Legislation and Bush Administration' and held them responsible for 'the rise of Islamophobia'. The study was concluded by an overview of American foreign policies and considered them to be the root cause of Islamophobia.

Peter (2014) referred to anxiety about Muslims (in other words Islamophobia) in Brussels 'not rooted simply in a fear of terrorist violence or radicalization', it was situated in the 'uncertainties about social marginalization, phenomena of spatial disintegration, and religions practices' that did not find a contented passage in a secular context (p.312). He referred to Denmark and Italy where 'regional divisions and conflicts inside the nation' were related to 'Islamic threat' (2014, p.312). The situation disturbed their political systems. In Netherlands, 'the memory work of European societies' shaped anxiety about Islam considering Muslims outside their history and culture (p.313). 'Fear about regression' was elevated to highlight Islam's possible incorporation in German society (Peter 2014, p.313). Peter (2014) identified the existing 'question of Israel-Palestine and the new anti-Semitism within Germany Muslim community' unfolding 'fear of regression' (p. 314). France equally demonstrated resentment to Muslims and Islam in the form of 'traumatic evacuation of Algeria' openly 'configuring Muslims immigrant's undesirable and problematic' (p. 314).

'Islamophobia' and 'Muslimphobia' with relation to racism were discussed by Cheng (2015) in the context of Swiss parliamentary debates which rose to ban minarets construction in Switzerland. Cheng (2015) attempted to enquire the difference between anti-Islam and anti-Muslim discourses. He (2015) termed 'being Muslims… far more complicated' (p.2). He critically analysed the parliamentary debates and examined if Islamophobia and Muslimphobia existed without each other or not. He considered both as 'form of racism' (2015, p.3). He also drew distinction between 'universalist' and 'cultural racism' (2015, p.4). 'Universalist racism' claimed differences based on practices whereas 'cultural racism viewed 'the other as threat' in the form of 'irreconcilable cultural differences' (p.4). Cheng (2015) viewed 'Discourse-Historical Approach' of Reisigle and Wodak (2001, 2009) for analyzing

the data. That approach viewed 'ideology as a vehicle for establishing and maintaining unequal power relations through discourse'. Cheng (2015) concluded by highlighting co-existence of 'Islamophobia and Muslimphobia'. However, he pointed out few more Islamophobia discourses clearly hostile towards religion Islam rather than its followers. Anxiety is not about Islam as a converting force against Christianity but as a dominating force in political and legal spheres of Switzerland (Cheng 2015). The study sustained the function of racism as political and ideological force. These factors made it relevant to the present study which is attempted to encounter ideologies of selected American writers. Zaidi-Jivraj (2015) explored the phenomena in British context by conducting his study specifically on non-Muslim views on Islam as a faith. He examined views related to the phenomenon of Islamophobia as a whole. His scholarship raised the question of using terms Islam and Muslims interchangeably (2015). He aimed his study to split views on Islam articulated online by non-Muslims as a response to representation of Islam on British Television (Zaidi-Jivraj 2015). His definition of Islamophobia is 'contempt of Islam'. Zaidi-Jivraj (2015) investigated online responses. Since an important feature of the present-day is to relate Islamophobia to racism, its focus is on the correlation with Islam and its followers. It provokes the thoughts as where this discussion will lead on in an apparently secular region such as America.

Studies of Zaidi- Jivraj (2015) and Wisely (2015) relate a great deal to the objectives of the present study. Rather than merely providing definitions of race and racism, the problem is best approached by highlighting the social changes during twentieth and twenty first century. Media reports and blogs portrayed Islam as a 'deadly' religion. It had been blatantly associated with ISIS (Pakistan), Al Qaeda and Taliban. Recently the discourse was directed to Daaish. Social media went to the extent of referring to America a land which 'has a Muslim problem'. Media overtly criticized Hilary Clinton (presidential candidate) for calling Islam religion of peace. Her speech writers were identified as 'imams from Saudi Arabia'. Media bloggers confessed that they feared Islam and they called it a 'rational fear'.

A hype was created by media to broadcast Omer Mateen's case representing a mal picture of Islam though later on Mateen was exposed a gay himself who in fits of sexual frustration attempted the killing (Orlando gay night club killing 2016). Print media as an accessible tool for propaganda, reported the case against Islam. US political campaigns denounced Islam and Muslims on plea of their extremist beliefs. Therefore, an extensive and recognized American tradition to brand Islam as 'un American' and envisaging Muslim as threat sustains as dominant discourse in all the spheres of American life. Contemporary American picture of radical Islam in the wake of these attacks on LGBT community implied a political agenda to invoke the respective community to take up arms against Islam.

UK government termed the contemporary age as 'open season for racists'. Unease and fear among the Muslims was found that Brexit might reinforce the negative portrayal of Islam in Britain. Events such as 9/11 attacks and Brexit pushed the West towards the 'unchartered territory of Islamophobia' (Jeory 2016). Jeory's study was concluded with a conception that 9/11 attacks would incessantly be used as a weapon in future to justify perpetual racist attitudes towards Muslims in America.

III.   CONCLUSION

This paper presented a synthesis of what had already been published on the subject of Islamophobia to determine its definition. Like racism, idea of Islamophobia has been bound up with the concept of superiority and inferiority where instead of genealogy and origin, status of Muslims was determined through their religion. Woven altogether in economic, psychological, social, political and pathological tangles, world scholars agreed upon a common definition of Islamophobia as a mental state and a manifestation of the bias and prejudice of Muslims who are by and large considered an inferior group in West and America. Thus, religion being its dominant constituent, 'ethnicity' remains an overriding issue in the contemporary world. Transition from 'anti Asian and anti-Arabs' to 'anti-Muslim racism' fabricated as Islamophobia articulate racism more overtly. Muslims are equated with terrorist in the global transition of ideologies. Islamophobia, for that reason, is 'a new word for an old fear'. Defined as 'threat', 'phenomenon', 'pervasive attitude', 'essentialization', 'religious racism', 'social paranoia' and 'fear about regression', Islamophobia has been materialized exclusively as a 'significant political force' in the West and America. 'Confounded with a form of racism', however, its permanence can be reduced through inter-faith dialogues by incorporating and evaluating its causes and their possible effects. Identification of Islamophobia through such studies will lead to effective ways of reducing Islamophobia. Media can also play a significant role in clearing the dust that has blurred the true image of Islam for the past decades.

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