‘Love-Jihad’; Protection of Religious Proximity: An Indian Situation

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Abstract
Love is choreography of contemplation and projection of emotion. The practice of love is discussed under various philosophical and theological reflections. Love offers wisdom (Sophia); however the conceptual understanding of love is influenced by the optional affair. The fundamental disposition of love is prompted by religion and sociological colour and shapes. Love-Jihad is new social weed that is nutritioned by the hectic politics of religion and trap for youth of Indian national under active political aliance. The paper attempts to study the genesis, and the repercussions of such movements on contemporary social structure. It also calls for the study the lineage of inter-faith marriages in India and the way it is gaining a new reference in the contemporary scenario. The shift from the secularism oriented goal to the religion colored violence builds the platform to debate on the trust and reliance in a relationship as well as interrogates the authenticity of law to safeguard people from the upcoming challenges.

Keywords: Love, Jihad, Politics, Religion, Fanaticism, Polarization.
Love as the animalistic urge dictates certain kind of behaviour which otherwise is influenced by the spirituality touching the highest realm of life. Plato’s *Symposium* defines love with the series of elevation where the baser instincts are superseded by the intellectual conception of love surpassed by its theological vision and transcending sensual attraction and mutuality. Love is the ontology of affection fill the emptier man as ‘… water runs through wool out of a fuller cup into an emptier one’ (Plato 2001: 3). Aristotle defines the theory of love as ‘two bodies and one soul’. He defines, love on three grounds, ‘utility’, ‘pleasure’ and ‘goodness’.

The philosophical notion of love includes several other disciplines such as epistemology, metaphysics, religion, human nature, politics and ethics. Aristotle defines the three different levels of love, i.e. *Eros, Philia and Agape*. *Eros* stands for love, as it is the platonic beauty (*Kalos*) and the integral part of love. Beauty with the specific Eros is described in two forms, first, when the lover is inspired by the beauty and second when the lover urges to possess the beauty. *Philia* stresses on friendship as the ‘loving someone for himself’ (Plato 2001: 118).

Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics, Book VII* illustrates the basis of love as ‘… things that cause friendship are: doing kindness; doing them marked; and not proclaiming the fact when they are done’ (*Rhetoric II*: 4, Trans. Rhys Robert). Love as a friendship should not bear any grudges, or aggression. *Agape* focuses on the divine love which is the supreme form of loving. Agape love refers to the pure love without any expectation. In Indian philosophy, too, love find a special place. The nature of love has also been defined in the *Sāmkhya-Yoga*. The *Vedānta* and, especially, distinguish *Sāmkhya-Yoga* between the feeling and cognition as *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is a pure consciousness, while *Prakṛti* is a primordial matter. There are three kinds of feelings, i.e. *Gunas* (qualities), *Satta* (*Sukha* or comfort), *Rajas* (*Duhkha* or grief) and *Tamas* (*Vighatana* or confusion). However, satta is the most elevated state of emotion rendered as ‘reflection’.

Love is tangible as well as abstraction in the polity between relations. Diversity in the portrayal of love has touched upon numerous fields such as Music, Art, Literature, Cinema, Performative Arts and many genres of expression. Though to love, and to be loved, is the basic natural need of all living organism, it has too often been a site for social and communal self-

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1 *Eros* is a Latin word which means AMOR or CUPID, the god of love. The Greek poet Hesiod describes Eros as a cosmic that emerged self-born before the creation to spur procreation. The poet later illustrates that the two gods of love, i.e. *Eros* and *Himeros* (Desire) accompanied Aphrodite to emerge from the sea-foam. The Greek Philosopher Plato defined Eros as possessing good oneself forever.

2 *Philia* is translated as ‘brother love’ in Greek, but in the Aristotelian Philosophy it is described as friendship or affection.

3 *Agape* is translated from the Greek as ‘brotherly love’, ‘charit’, ‘the love of god for man or man for god’. In Christianity ‘New Testament’, it suggests the self-sacrificing love for god, written as “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3:16, KJV
determination in human society. Love has also been a ground to decide the human society’s moral and ethical codes and therefore rules of conformity and resistance are enacted leading to examples of violation of basic global human rights. Love has also been accused to violate the sacred profanity of the individuals and community identity. It is often taken, that, the enigma of love and its various avatars, for instance Love-Jihad inevitably pose threat to rip apart the social order and hence invite policing and surveillance.

Talking specifically of Love-Jihad, it is a recent drive taken up by the extremist wings of the Indian social system where, once again, the expression of free will, is threatened with the customary code of lack of decency in observing Indian Culture and Traditions. With the ongoing modernization and boom in social networking, free expression of love has become an often phenomenon. Love-Jihad, in the romantic relationship among the modern youth in the present milieu, has taken a toll on the normal population of India. Purported as a proactive socio-religio-political movement to protect religious sovereignty in India, Love-Jihad has now has attained a new climax by showcasing its presence on the visual as well as print media. There has been a deluge of Love-Jihad cases in newspapers and social networking sites which has undoubtedly posed a threat to the expression of once choice of love, and also raised alarming questions about one’s religious identity. The two highly different words, even when compounded together, create juxtaposition of meaning which stands analogous to the concept of ‘romantic love’. The word ‘Jihad’\(^4\) (/dʒɪˈhɑːd/; Arabic: جھاد) Love in (had is negatively installed in a manner that it has threatened the very idea of romantic love. Carrying religious connotations, the word ‘Love-Jihad’ signifies a sectarian approach which has nothing to do with love. Ironically the act of controlling and patrolling Love-Jihad incidents has been taken up with desperation by the Right-Wing Hindu activists’ organization such as the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) and the other sister branches\(^5\) of the Shangh Parivar. Be it the Valentine’s Day, Homo-Sexual Rights, Rights to One’s Sexuality, Live-in Relationships, Inter-Caste and Inter-Faith/Religious, Romance/Marriage, posing them as one of the biggest threat to the cohesive community identities and boundaries, these sects have polarized the situation with

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\(^4\) Jihād is a movement launched for some good cause. Jihād is an Islamic term referring to the religious duty of Muslims to maintain the religion and the Sunnah of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SWA). In Arabic, the word Jihād is a noun meaning ‘struggle’ or ‘resisting’. It is often translated as ‘holy war’, but in a purely linguistic sense, the word ‘Jihād’ means struggling or striving (the Arabic word for war is: Al-harb). In a religious sense, as described in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SWA), ‘Jihād’ has many meanings. It can refer to internal as well as external efforts to be a good Muslims or believer, as well as working to inform people about the faith of Islam. If military jihad is required to protect the faith against others, it can be performed using anything from legal, diplomatic and economic to political means. If there is no peaceful alternative, Islam also allows the use of force, but there are strict rules of engagement. Innocents - such as women, children, or invalids - must never be harmed, and any peaceful overtures from the enemy must be accepted. A person engaged in Jihad is called a mujahid, the plural of which is mujahideen.


\(^5\) Sri Ram Sena, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Hindu Janjagruthi Samiti.

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several political as well as religiously biased comments. ‘Moral Policing’, ‘Ghar Wapsi’6, “Bahu Lao, Beti Bachao’ (बहु लाओ बेटी बचाओ), ‘How to save our Women from the Terrorism of Love-Jihad’, ‘Hindu Auraton ki Loot’7 (हिन्दू औरतों की लूट), Love – Trishul 8 are unfortunately some of the campaigns run by certain national political parties.

Love-Jihad, also termed as ‘Romeo-Jihad’,9 is an alleged activity in India, where the Muslim men are accused of marrying the non-Muslim women and forcing them to adopt the teachings of Islam by feigning love as a weapon. The Hindus have accused the Muslims for devising plans, as a part of international Islamist conspiracy, for receiving funds from abroad to purchase ‘designer clothes, vehicles, mobile phones and expensive gifts to woo Hindu women and lure them away …’ from their home and religion (Gupta 2009: 13). Such campaigns with anti-women over tones where the ‘… body of the Hindu woman has become a site for both claims to community homogeneity and honour …’ (Gupta 2009: 13) are creating panic and fostering hate to draw sharper lines between the Hindus and the Muslims in India. A poem written in 1928 and later banned, called Chand Musalmanon ki Harkaten (चन्द मुसलमानों की हरकतें) stated:

तादाद बढ़ाने के लिये चल चलाई
(Tadat badhane ke liye chal chalai)

मुस्लिम बनाने के लिये स्कीम बनाई
(Muslim banane ke liye scheme banayi)

6 ‘Ghar Wapsi’ (Hindi: घरवापसी; Urdu: گھر واپس) or ‘Homecoming’ is a new phenomenon in the promotion of the Hindu or Hindu Nationalism in India. The term has been derived from two words from two different languages, ‘ghar’, a Sanskrit word meant for ‘home’ and ‘wapsi’, a Persian word meant for ‘coming back’. Conjoining of the words give a sense of something which has returned from somewhere. It is actually what can be called the religious reconversion process purported by the Hindu Right Wing Organizations in India, namely the VHP, RSS, Dharam Jagaran Samvaj Samiti, Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha and others. These organizations especially promote the re-conversion of those who were once believers of Hindu religion, converted their faith (by own will or by force) to any other religion, and has now returned or forced to return into their old Hindu religion and faith.

7 Source: http://www.digvijayasingh.in/Love-Jihad-propaganda-spurs-hate-not-dialogue.html

8 Love-Trishul is a group formed by the Shiv Sena to protect Hindu girls. “Love Trishul” will be first formed in Bareilly and then it will spread across UP’, president of UP Shiv Sena, Anil Singh said.


Muslims are making new schemes to increase their population and to make people Muslims. They roam with carts in cities and villages and take away women, who are put under the veil and made Muslim. (English Translation)

Such comments stated, clearly, undermines the status of women in India with the old patriarchal notion that women are not self-sufficient to make their own decisions. On the other hand Charu Gupta quotes the examples of noted Hindi writers like ‘... Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-85), Pratap Narain Misra (1856-94) and Radha Charan Goswami (1859-1923) to portray the medieval Muslim rule as a chronicle of rape and abduction of Hindu women’ (Gupta 2009: 14). The same assumption is carried forward that the Muslim men lack morality with high sexual appetites for women body, lecherous in behaviours with a life of luxury and religious fanaticism.

Love-Jihad marriages call for the tussle between the strong cultural prohibitions and the religious tension in inter-faith marriages especially between Hindus and Muslims in India. Gupta says that the entire matter of Love-Jihad is a political agenda based on blame-game to encash a common situation of inter-faith marriages into the vote bank of Indian polity. She also condemn the accusation of the Hindus that the Muslim men are actively involved in wooing the non-Muslim women into the romantic relationship and later forcing them to convert their religion. Such allegation is far from the reality:

The fake claim by the Hindu right that there is a Love-Jihad organization which is forcing Hindu women to convert to Islam through false expression of love is similar to a campaign in 1920 in the north India against alleged “abduction”. Whether 1920 or 2009, Hindu patriarchal notions appear deeply entrenched in such campaigns: images of passive victimized Hindu women at the hands of inscrutable Muslim abound, and any possibility of women exercising their legitimate right to love and their right to choice is ignored. (Gupta 2009: 13)

**Historical Exploration of the Situation**

The historical records confirm numerous inter-faith marriages that have taken places in India right for the Mughal period. The twentieth century also saw a steep rise in inter-religious marriages. The most famous inter-faith marriage of the century was that of Feroz Gandhi (practicing Parsi, follower of Zoroastrianism) and Indira Nehru (Indira Gandhi, practicing
Hindu) (1942) and in the rest enfolds a long history. However the outcome of most of the marriages has been unpleasant with possessive victimizations of the lovers and especially the women in the story. It often challenges various traditional norms and customs and rouses the fundamentalist attitudes. In a country like India where Muslims are 13.46% of the total population it is expected that some Muslim men and women will marry non-Muslims. The most successful inter-faith marriage of Emperor Akbar and Queen Jodha Bai, in the Mughal era, was not just a political alliance to build a future of a great nation, but to promote a cultural identity of the nation, irrespective of all religious practices, uphold the integrity of the nation and the culture of its people. His promotion of *Din-E-Illahi* or the ‘Religion of God’ (1582 AD), a syncretic religio-philosophical thought that intended to merge the best elements of the religions practiced in the empire and thereby to reconcile the differences that divided his subjects, was an outcome of his own personal life of an inter-faith marriage and his greater philosophical thoughts of oneness in human kind, as some of the scholars say. The example set by the great Emperor Akbar, on the later part, in the modern Indian history, influenced the idea of secularism or the religio-neutral policies in the Constitution of India to set an example of religious tolerance in the world fraught with the clashes of religions.

10 Rajeev Gandhi (practicing Hindu) and Sonia Gandhi (born as Edvige Antonia Albina Màino, practicing Roman Catholic Christian); Sachin Pilot (practicing Hindu) and Sara Abdullah (practicing Muslim); the daughter of Sheila Dixit, a Brahmin, married a Muslim after converting to Islam. The niece of L K Advani, a Sindhi Brahmin, married a Muslim. Aditi Gowitrikar (TV anchor and actor, a doctor, model) was a practicing Hindu, now married Muslim Dr. Muffazal Lakdawalla after converting to Islam and adopted a new Muslim name Sarah Lakdawalla, (but keeps her Hindu name for her TV stuff). Suhasini Subramaniam Swamy (practicing Hindu, a TV anchor at CNN-IBN), the daughter of Dr. Subramaniam Swamy (an Economist and Professor at IIT Delhi, political leader BJP), married a Muslim Nadeem Haidar, the son of Salman Haidar (a former Indian Foreign Secretary, external affairs minister and former India’s High Commissioner to London), and now known as Suhasini Haidar. Likewise instance of inter-faith marriages in the political leadership is now not many a less, whereas the ‘B’ town is flooded with such cases, e.g. Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi (practicing Muslim) with Shirmila Tagore (practicing Hindu), Dharmendra Deol (practicing Sikh) with Hema Malini (practicing Hindu, both of them converted to Islam to marry each other), Nasiruddin Shah (practicing Muslim) with Ratna Pathak (practicing Hindu), Saif Ali Khan (practicing Muslim) with Amrita Singh (practicing Hindu) and later with Kareena Kapoor, Rina Roy (practicing Hindu) with Pakistani cricketer Mohnis Khan (practicing Muslim), Saha Rukh Khan (practicing Muslim) with Gauri Chhibba (later Gauri Khan was a practicing Hindu), Amir Khan (practicing Muslim) with Kiran Rao (practicing Hindu), Manoj Bajpai (practicing Hindu) with Shabana Raza (practicing Muslim) now called Neha, Pankaj Kapoor (practicing Hindu) married Neelima Azeem (practicing Muslim) and many more.

11 The remainder 80% are Hindus, 2% are Sikhs and 2.34% are Christians.

12 Akbar’s marriage with the daughter of Raja Bharmal of Amber (modern day Jaipur) was quite unequivocally a device used for political acquisition. Hira Kunwari (Jodha’s maiden name) was married to Akbar on January 20, 1562, at Sambhar near Jaipur. She was Akbar’s third wife.

13 The elements were primarily drawn from Islam and Hinduism, but some others were also taken from Christianity, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.

14 *Prohibition of Discrimination on Grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or Place of Birth* has been guaranteed under Article 15 of the Constitution of India. *The right to freedom of Religion* is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution of India.
Jawaharlal delivered his notions of equality in his freedom speech thus:

... All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations. We cannot encourage communalism or narrow-mindedness, for no nation can be great whose people are narrow in thought or in action ...

(Nehru qtd. in Gopal, 2014: 362)

His speech propagated the secular idea of India, a nation filled with idea of ‘Unity in Diversity’. But with the passing of time, the tolerant idea of communal harmony has been stained with days of assertion of individual identity, where different groups are coming up with new ideas of solidating the community feeling. One of such bids is the ‘religious identity’. Throughout history, religion has played a key role in shaping societies, creating community and individual identity, as well as building nations. Religion has also been found to so often contradicting its own teachings causing death and destruction of massive population. While most religions are based on peace, love, divinity of the God(s) and religious tolerance, they, too, often have become the justification for horrific acts of inhumanity in historical past.\(^\text{15}\) The polarization of the religious communities, especially that of the Hindus and the Muslims during the period of partition of India left both the nations in a traumatic situation. Undoubtedly, the partition sowed a seed of communal difference among the nations where they have become intolerant about the other side, not only in the sense of nationality, but the religion they practice (majority and minority basis). The religious differences which cropped up from the time of partition have become more intense in the present time both; have become an equal threat to each other and have instilled religious intolerance in the society. Communal riots, regional ethnic discriminations\(^\text{16}\), hate-speech regarding religious intolerance, ‘Ghar Wapsi’ have become everyday incidents that has shaken the Constitutional thought of oneness of India.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Failing the Nehurivian idea of ‘Indianness’, the resurgence of the Hindu Right Wing Parties (Fundamentalist Hindu Political Parties) in India in the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the strident ‘Hindu Nationalist Movements’ and the ‘Ayodhya Movement’ which led to the demolition of the ‘Babri Masjid’ on December 6, 1992. The violence that engulfed the entire nation before and after the demolition shook the existing complacency of secular governance. Moreover the motto ‘freedom of expression’ was threatened for supplementary gruesome consequences. Incidents like ban on Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and the strict observance of the fatwa (by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Supreme Religious Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.) on the author in India, scraping of Rohinton Mistry’s novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) from the B.A. syllabus in the University of Mumbai, India, for its alleged offensive remarks on the supremo of a right-wing political organization (Shiv Sena), became an oft quoted phenomenon in the continental politics.

\(^{16}\) Attacks on Uttar Pradesh and Bihar migrants in Maharashtra by the Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena resulted in the mass exodus of north-Indian workers from Maharashtra to other states of India between February-October, 2008.

\(^{17}\) The Constitution of India Preamble: We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation; in our constituent assembly this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.
Playing the Political Card: Love-Jihad and Identity Politics in India

The political system in India has become more sectarian in approach. Identity of the political parties is been achieved through religious propaganda. The rise, cause and impact of such fanaticism is a pressing concern of our time. In a world fraught with such fanaticisms, the study of identity has gained prominence in both academic and literary circles. From the British Colonization, to Independence and partition of the country, and to socio-political movements of different forms of cultural productions, the issue of identity has emerged as a capital mode in modern times. Often, it is thought that there is one single overriding affiliation so much more important in certain/every circumstance to all others that it might legitimately be called as identity. If that is the case then the question arises on how identity is to be defined or what is that dominant affiliation to be prioritized? Is it then to be defined:

… in terms of inherited traditions, particularly the inherited religion, of the community in which they happen to be born, taking that unchosen identity to have automatic priority over other affiliations involving politics, profession, class, gender, language, literature, social involvements and many connections? Or should they be understood as a person with many affiliations and associations the priorities over which they must themselves choose (taking the responsibility that comes from reasoned choice)? Also, should we assess the fairness of multiculturalism primarily by the extent to which people from different cultural background are — left alone, or by the extent to which their ability to make reasoned choices is positively supported through social opportunities of education and participation in civil society and the political and economic process ongoing in the country? (Sen 2007: 150)

However as we assess identity in varied terms, often the affiliations to many nodes are reduced to a specific and single node at a certain moment of time to define an identity. Rather to put it as simple, one affiliation of many affiliations becomes important on one specific moment and therefore the identity as we can understand is a situation based option for an individual or a group where the ties become strong on a specific time. This reductionist notion of the domination of one single feature of identity of one’s being is creating violence as it is a frequently used as weapon to ferment social chaos in the form of wars and extremist violence. This solitary approach toward identity has also led to the emergence of a stream of politics, which focuses solely on a singular aspect of an individual’s being rather than the usual development -led agenda. In doing this, more than the similarities, it is differences that are celebrated in today’s world because the ability to be different from the rest is viewed as a virtue in itself. So, for example, when a people are made to feel that their language is under threat, it is the linguistic component of their overall identity which becomes the dominating factor in how they expose themselves to the world. The same can be said about religion, ethnicity or nationality. Therefore

18 In the 1950s and the 1960s, linguistic issues in India caused civil disorder when the central government declared Hindi as the national language of India. The Punjabi Suba Civil Movement was started to address the language issue and restore Punjabi as the official language of Punjab. The matter led to the infamous Sikh insurgency in Panjab, Operation Blue Star and the killing of Iron Lady, Indira Gandhi in October, 1984.
to make a discussion on inter-faith marriages/relationships, Love-Jihad, nonetheless is solely concerned with the religious identity of the Indian population.

The tradition of marriage in India can be seen from the two lenses. First, a theoretical raising of questions about the authority of inter-faith marriages in the societal structure of India and second is the empirical arrangement of the post-modern sexual attitudes. By sexual attitude, we mean, it is the kind of behavior one chooses to practice, for example, stepping out of traditional arranged marriage and opting for love-marriage irrespective of caste and religion. The discursive aspect of the marriage system in India is passed down to generation in the form of the traditional marriage. This discursivity is connected through the minutiæ of the everyday living, which is further named as the tradition. It is passed down to the generations as a part of the form of life, a process of learning and re-learning one’s own identity.

The social strata of the inter-faith marriages, if seen, display a different pattern in India. Inter-faith marriages are an easy going phenomenon in the upper class of the Indian population, whereas in the lower strata it doesn’t gain social approval. Not only it is seen that the elite class has given a positive go to the idea, they, irrespective of any caste and community have accepted the integration whole heartedly. But the upper-class political strata have politicized the entire situation to encash it. Also not only the religion has caused a problem in elevating the situation but the time-old caste system of India and the social class consciousness has played greater roles in the situation. The problem lies with the orthodox nature of the customs and traditions that is followed by the majority population in India, irrespective of the fact of whether well-educated or not. Commenting on the social consciousness of the mass Indian population regarding the inter-faith communion, Prof. J Khwaja says:

The prohibition against inter-religious marriage is dinned into our ears from childhood with the result that the idea sounds to most of us almost unthinkable. When such marriages occasionally do take place they are looked upon as unfortunate social accidents and generate a lot of tension or resentment within the concerned families and also the society in general. (Khwaja19)

Therefore, the absolute truth of secularism and unity is seen only in friendship, school, colleges and work, but not in personal domain. Customs, traditions and religion are crucial to Indian families. In Indian families, customs, traditions and religion has a major role to play in the part of lives. Furthermore, marriages in India are not between the couples, rather is between two families. Accordingly both the involved families look for someone who is compatible with one another, and their customs and traditions. The compatibility between the couple is expected to develop post-marriage. Also marriage is a matter of prestige in this country and therefore

19 Source: http://www.jamalkhwaja.com/jamalbooksite/Article_2___Inter-Religious_Marriage_And_Islam.html
marrying in another community or caste is taken as prestige at stake. Here in India, people are so comfortable with their own practices and customs that it is almost impossible to convince them to allow someone to practice his/her faith in their home. An inter-faith marriage almost every time, break all of the above rules and thus is not accepted.

Love-Jihad as an embodied practice conceptualizes the aptitudes, sensibilities and propensities of new form of religious identity politics in India. Although, love is the guiding principle in one’s predisposition of one’s emotion, however, Love-Jihad as a complete movement is more inclined towards the relativity of justice to one’s faith and trust over one’s partner. It is allegedly, a new form of the romantic love with abstract theorisation of the sensory experience and evidence of exploitation or the religious violence. The first suspected case noted under the Love - Jihad is the Silja Raj – Asgar Case. Other related cases under the violence of Love - Jihad are Rizwanur Rahman, Jaya Bhandari, Rumi Nath, Tara Sahdeo, Meerut

20 From where it all Began: Silja Raj – Asgar Case (August 2009)
The first case that triggered the never ending political and social movement against Love Jihad is from Karnataka, a southern state of India is the Silja Raj – Asgar Case. As reported in the media channels, in August 2009, 18 year old Silja Raj a Hindu girl, the eldest daughter of C Selvaraj, fell in love with a 24 year old Muslim driver Asgar Nazar from Chamarajnagar, a small Karnataka town (around 180 km from Bangalore) and eloped to marry each other. The probe was prompted by a petition filed in the Karnataka High Court by Selvaraj (father of Silja) alleging Love-Jihad. The plea was handled by an RSS-affiliated lawyer Prasanna Deshpande and guided by the BJP Government’s Sangh-affiliated assistant Advocate General K M Nataraj. In an interim report filed in the high court on November 13, 2009, then Karnataka Director General of Police, Ajay Kumar Singh said that, ‘There seems to be no prima facie evidence of “love jihad”. Silja Raj married Asgar out of her own volition.’ During the CID investigation, the police briefly returned Silja Raj to her parents. After its interim report debunked the Love-Jihad argument, the high court said ‘Silja Raj was free to go anywhere she wished’. She chose to go with her husband. Later with the hype in media when asked, the family of Sila Raj admits that they are yet to come to terms with Silja Raj’s marriage. Her father says ‘We know she is well. We know she has a child and suffered a miscarriage recently. We know she is being looked after well by her family, but our ties with her were severed the day she chose to leave us. We changed all our phones’. He wishes though that the matter hadn’t turned out like this. He says “My intent in pursuing a case to get her back was only to show that there were people who cared for her. It was not about ‘love jihad’ or religion or anything. Many of my Muslim friends are angry with me about the way the case was projected.”


URL: http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/who-loves-love-jihad/

21 The indictment of the police by the CBI in the Rizwanur Rehman case in Kolkata reveals the complicity of State and society in maintaining and perpetuating regressive sociocultural prejudices in the name of family honour and religious belief. The case threw into sharper relief the Hindu Muslim divide that still exists in urban society. It also started a David vs Goliath media campaign on the socio-economic disparity pitting the right to justice of a middle class citizen against the might of money.

Computer graphics engineer Rizwanur Rahman, a middle class Muslim, in 2007 met Priyanka, daughter of wealthy industrialist Ashok Todi (who owns the 400-crore Lux Cozy hosiery brand) at a graphics designing institute where he taught. They secretly married in August 2007 against the wishes of the Todi family. Priyanka went to live with her husband in his modest accommodation in a Muslim neighborhood in Kolkata after the marriage. Fearing retribution, the couple asked protection from influential Todi family. In early September, Priyanka was called into the Todi residence by her family on the pretext that her father was ill. According to reports, she was never allowed to leave or speak to Rahman. She spoke to her new husband for the last time on September 11, 2007. On September 21, 2007, Rahman’s body was found near the railway tracks in north Kolkata.
Gang-rape Case (October 2014) and also others who had been either murdered or were subjected to domestic violence. Presently, more number of cases have come up from in the state

The Calcutta High Court in 2007 ordered a probe by the CBI into the circumstances leading to the death of Rahman. Soon after, West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya transferred Police Commissioner Prasun Mukherjee and four other top officers and promised to take action against them if the CBI investigations found them guilty. The CBI concluded in its investigation in 2008 that Rahman was driven to committing suicide by some of Kolkata’s top police officers and the Todi family and recommended initiation of an abetment to suicide case under Section 306 of the IPC. Ashok Todi’s brother Pradeep and brother-in-law Anil Saraogi were remanded to custody in December 2008 and were later released on bail in January 2009. The Calcutta High Court in May 2010 directed the CBI to lodge a murder case and asked the investigating agency to submit its probe within four months. Both Ashok Todi and the CBI had moved the Supreme Court challenging the Calcutta High Court’s order. The CBI said a fresh probe was not required as they have already concluded that Rahman’s death was suicide. The CBI abetment to suicide case still stands against Todi. However, the Supreme Court stayed two Calcutta High Court orders to start a fresh probe into the death of Rizwanur Rahman.

Source: ‘HC stays trial in Rizwanur Rehman Case’ by IBN Live. Report covered by Rajashri Dasgupta
Published: 12th May 2011 02:16 PM, Last Updated: 16th May 2012 09:58 PM.
URL: http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/article469303.ece

25 The headline of ‘Inhumane Islamic Torture on Hindu Married Girl by her Muslim Husband and Family in a Brutal Row for Forced Conversion’ was reported at Ranchi on January 08, 2015 ‘Jaya Bhandari’, a divorcee in her mid-thirties from Ranchi alleged that she has been recently forced to convert into Islam and nikah, and consume beef by her second husband Waqar Danish Anwar. As the news states ‘she was assaulted her by her in-laws after her refusal to pay a dowry of 5 lakh’. As reported in the FIR she says ‘initially after marriage he tried to convince me to convert of Islam. But when I did not agree, he brought several maulvis in December 2013 [two months after marriage] at home and organized nikah and forced me to accept it. He subsequently changed my name to Zoya Anwar. He beat me up when I strongly objected to conversion’. In addition the girl said ‘that she was threatened with dire consequences if she opens her mouth’.

April 2014 again marked a Love-Jihad violence report in the newspaper, Jacky Zakir and Rumi Nath Case. Met on a social networking site (Facebook) Rumi Nath, MLA from Borkola, Assam married Zakir on April 13 and embraced Islam as Rabiya Sultanah without divorcing her first husband Rakesh Kumar Singh. On June 29. The couple faced outrage of a mob consisting the Hindus for being fraudulent to both the belief systems. Later a case of forceful conversion of religion was filed by the first husband Mr. Singh. Ending the word-battle on social media, Rumi Nath gave a statement that ‘I want to clarify that I was not under any compulsion to convert to Islam and marry my friend Zakir. I am staying willingly with my husband Zakir’. Later again a case of domestic violence and dowry extortion was registered against her second husband Zakir.

24 Tara Sahdeo, the National Shooter of India was cheated into a love marriage by concealing the identity of the person she married. A case was registered in August 2014 against Ranjit Kumar Kohli, alias RaqibulHasan for deceiving Tara Sahdeo into marriage. The FIR was logged against Ranjit/ Raqibulin Hindpur police station for forcing her wife to accept the teachings of Islam. Jharkhand Police with the joint effort of the Delhi Police arrested the person. Further in the investigation, political links with charges of corruption within the ruling government.


25 A fresh row of Love-Jihad was filed in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India, in the month of October, 2014. As recorded in the first FIR with Kharkhuda Police Station, Meerut, UP, the victim, a teacher in a Madrasa, stated that she was abducted by Nawab (a Muslim), the Pradhan (Village Headman) of the village and has taken to confinement to some other place. According to her statement, on 29th June, 2014, Nawab, and Mohammad Sanaullah, another teacher from the same Madrassa and with other five, took turn and raped her. When her condition turned critical, on 23rd July, she was admitted into a private hospital for a surgery. On 27th July she returned home. On 29th July, she was again taken to Hapur, and was forced to convert her faith to the teachings of Islam on 30th July. On 3rd August somehow she managed an escape to her home. Based on such allegation in the FIR, arrests were made in quick
of Uttar Pradesh. The central problem with the Love-Jihad problematic is that women become an easy victim to this and are subjected to critical problems of the conversions including domestic violence. As the report by First post says:

The chief minister of the state Oomen Chandy conceded in the state assembly in 2012 that 2667 women were converted into Islam in the state since 2006, the government said there was no sign of an organised effort for forced conversions or ‘love jihad’. Although the government had limited evidence of Christian girls being converted (according to Chandy, only 447 Christian girls had been converted into Islam), the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC) said 2600 Christian girls also had been converted since 2006, making it appear like a challenge faced by both Christians and Hindus.

Love-Jihad has also been seen as a ‘Global Islamic Project’ where Christians are warned to be cautious. The evidence provided by the social media seems to draw more threat to the Hindu and Christian while Muslims girls are projected to be safe. Inter-faith marriage arranged for long-relationship seems to be fine, but the fake identity for seeking the platform of the exploitations appears to be crime. As Charu Gupta puts it in her article: ‘Hindu Women and Muslim Men: Love-Jihad Conversions’:

succession including the village Sanaullah and the headman. However on October, 2014 the girl took a U-turn from her previous statement and said “I went with the boy belonging to a different community out of my own will.” The family was completely against her will and when she came back she was forced to give false statements. She got an abortion in a hospital because of her complicated pregnancy. She also alleged that she possess a threat of life from her family ‘… I was staying with my parents, but I ran away from home because I feel a threat to my life from my parents and relatives’. She also accused her family members for plotting this incident and taking money from the political parties to frame this case.

URL: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other%2Dstates/utturn%C2%ADby%C2ADmeerut%C2%ADgirl%C2%ADon%C2%ADlove%C2%ADjihad/article6494076.ece

URL: http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other%2Dstates/meerut%C2%ADlove%C2%ADjihad%C2%ADgirls%C2%ADfather%C2%ADpermits%C2%ADmarriage%C2%ADto%C2%ADmuslim%C2%ADyouth/article6506909.ece

26 The problem of Love-Jihad in Uttar Pradesh is more of a political game and elections winning agency. As the news says ‘campaigns such as Love-Jihad and ghar wapasi are the reasons responsible for the electoral rout of BJP in Delhi assembly elections’. Besides this in Agra, RSS, approached counseling girls with ‘good sanskars’ and told that victims should take help of police in the suitable matter. Since, the matter is more political than personal; hence Bajrang dal has launched its new agenda ‘bahu lao beti bachao’ to prevent the frequent incidents inter-faith marriage. As Bajrang Dal UP governor Ajju Chauhan says ‘we are doing this for protection of Hindu girls. We are guiding Hindu men to respect and welcome girls of other religion’. He further added that ‘you have to understand “Love-Jihad” for this campaign. Hindu are victims of “Love-Jihad”. More than one lakh Hindu girls are abducted every year. They are sold in major cities and then sent to Dubai’.


What is significant in the present context is that in this period the Hindu Woman’s body became a marker to sharpen communal boundaries in ways more aggressive than before. The period witnessed a flurry of orchestrated propaganda campaigns and popular inflammatory and demagogic appeals by a section of Hindu publicist and Arya Samaj against abductions and conversions of Hindu Women by Muslim goondas, ranging from allegation of rape, abduction and elopement to luring conversions by loved and forced marriages. (Gupta 28)

The ulterior motive behind the constructed campaigns of Love-Jihad as a faith based movement eschews the uncompromising focus on the collective faith in inter-faith marriages. Alternatively, the politico-ideology ends to ‘constructed’ behavior which finally culminates into a new form of violence. This highly contentious issue seems to be more of an electoral agenda and power acquisition by the selective religious and political fraternity in India. In the year 2013, BBC used the term ‘sexual grooming’ in the context of Love-Jihad proclaiming that British Sikh girls are being lured by Muslim men and finally subjected them to the sexual abuse. 29

The most target states of the Love-Jihad agenda is Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala. Reasons behind the same are that these states does not have strong forced anti-conversion laws and due to this the victims register their cases under Anti-Dowry act, Domestic Violence or under the Rape Act. (Act No. 28, 1961 The Dowry Act; Act No. 43, 2005 Protection of Women from Domestic Violence; Act No. 14, 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place; Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code, Punishment for Sexual Assault/Rape). The data analysis by NDTV on 27th August 2014 reports:

… the official data (from the UP police) does tell us is that Meerut range is UP’s rape epicenter with 389 cases registered last year, the highest in the state. In 2013, Meerut also clocked 423 dowry cases, also the highest in UP, and 1119 cases of kidnapping of women, the second highest in UP. 30

The above data clearly states that in the contemporary political scenario, women’s body has become the battleground for playing the political card and spread the falsehood and hatred. Women bodies are often being presumed as the repository of moral ethics. Love-jihad appears to be a form of violence which attack religion, gender and the rights of women. India marriage

29 Source: Covered by BBC News, Updated: 2 September 2013 at 20:40 BST
Source: NDTV; Covered by Sreenivasan Jain with inputs from Niha Masih, Updated: August 27, 2014 17:42 IST
http://www.ndtv.com/india-news/love-jihad-bjps-claims-for-uttar-pradesh-dont-add-up-654999
structure is knit around the strongholds of patriarchal violence. Nevertheless, marriage appears to be one such institution, which veils off the several kinds of violence in clocked under dowry related violence and other domestic violence. Furthermore, Love-Jihad also tend seize the right of choosing their partner, and also hiking the religion imposed choices on the bride.

Conclusion

Love is the recurrent theme in the contemporary philosophical discussion. Yet, the ethics of love is often interrogated in terms of love for an object or personhood. Love as locus of will and desire is a delight and fulfillment of condensed stream of passion. The mystical love is “the best and the most delectable wine, and also the most intoxicating…by which, without drinking it, the annihilated soul intoxicated! Forgetting, forgotten, intoxicated by what is does not drink and will never drink” (Barthes 1979, 234). However, love is also considered as the ethics of being and is being judged on the morality and behaviourism. To sustain morality and honesty in a relationship, government of India has laid the protocol of behaviour against the other sex in order to secure and protect the rights and duties. The theology of the ethics of moral when contrasted with the ethics of love incorporates the rule, principle and duty. Thus, deciding whether the love is ethical or non-ethical appears to be highly dependent on the rational behaviour of couple expressing this vital emotion. The four different levels involved in love are, the body, the soul, the will, and the intellect. Any imbalance in the one of the stated aspects may lead to chaos. Love-Jihad as a new concept seems to digress from the traditional concept of love. It is romantic love, mixed with the intention of deceit deviating from the philosophical guidelines in theology of love. Moreover, the recent practice of Love-Jihad appears to be a new agenda of victimizing women’s body by the religious fanatic gundas. The stereotyping of women’s body in this new form of abduction and conversion is posing a severe challenge to the freedom of expression of will and desire in the present society. Love-Jihad appears to be a more politics-borne problem rather than love in general. If love is said to be, loving somebody “for own sake” then Love-Jihad does not qualify the test of love. Furthermore, love is an emotion which cannot be seen from the religious lens and the suffix jihad is a religious movement held for the good cause. The dialectical reason for calling Love-Jihad a single entity appears to be fictional. 31 Nevertheless, it

31 Legal Proceedings observed and Report by Indian Police: Appalled by the allegation of forced conversion of Hindu girls by the Muslims, a division bench of the court had ordered a CID probe in October 2009 to enumerate the reality of the situation of Love-Jihad. In a final, seven-page report on December 31, 2009, the CID police produced more pejorative evidence to dislodge the ‘love jihad’ theory. Then CID DGP, D V Guruprasad told the high court that ‘there is no organised attempt by any group of individuals to entice girls/women belonging to Hindu or Christian religions to marry Muslim boys with the aim of converting them to Islam’. The CID data also showed that girls and boys were marrying across religions. Of the 229 girls who had been reported ‘missing’ between 2005 and 2009 in Karnataka and were part of an inter-religious marriage, 149 were Hindus who had married Muslim men while 10 were Hindus who had wed Christians; 38 Muslim girls and 20 Christian girls in this period had married Hindu boys; a Muslim girl had married a Christian boy; while 11 Christian girls had married Muslim boys.

calls for the serious academic debates posing a serious threat to the identity and safety of women at present and in future.
References


Related Images

![Fig.1 Religions in India](image1)

![Fig.2 Flags on Sensitive Issue of Religious Conversion and Love-Jihad](image2)

![Fig 3. Silja Raj and Asgar Nazar The First case of Love-Jihad registered and got a legal proceeding](image3)

![Fig 4. The Alleged *Ghar Wapsi* in Agra, UP, India](image4)