

The Netherlands also has a considerable number of Moroccan and Surinamese Muslims. In France there are around 4.5 million Muslims and like Spain and Belgium, most of them are from Maghreb (mainly Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria), with small Turkish and African minorities. Over the past three decades, Islam has become increasingly visible in European public space. Mosques, halal food, Muslim customs and ways of dress are all increasingly common in European countries. According to certain estimates, Muslims are expected to outnumber non-Muslim in Europe by 2050. This can also be attributed to the low birth rate within the European population as well as the issue of ageing population in Europe.

European national governments have focused on Muslim populations within their own countries, and there have been fears propounded by the political elites of mobilization of these ethnic communities by their countries of origin. Although this has proved to be untrue but in the last two decades or so, there has been the emergence of a broader Muslim identity within Europe due to a number of issues like the Gulf war, the Rushdie Affair, the situation in the Middle East, the head scarf issue, race riots in Britain, and more recently the war against terrorism and its scope.

Different kind of policies were adopted by various European governments in the past to integrate their respective Muslim populations. On the whole, there have been three main models by which EU states have tried to deal with migrants in general. Firstly, there is the Guest worker model, where the migrants are seen to have temporary presence, which is primarily used in Germany, but in Austria and Switzerland in some modified form. Second is the assimilation model, where migrants are seen to be permanent and therefore strategies are employed for individual integration into the culture of the state and the formation of communities of migrants is discouraged.

France is the primary example of such a country. Thirdly, the ethnic minorities model, in which there is room for the preservation of cultural identity and to some degree pluralism is institutionalized. This model tends to be followed in Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries as well as in the UK.

European Muslim world is rapidly changing, and certainly it will be important to see how the structuring of Muslim communities in Europe continues. The advantages of such an approach to multiculturalism are many. The evolution of the cultural situation in Europe is important not only for the Muslim populations in Europe but also for Europe and, for different reasons, for Islam itself. Social networks lead to interactions between Europe and the Muslim immigrants' countries of origin. Islam in Europe

populations in the European fabric. There is a need to integrate their Muslim population and the challenge will be to guard against terrorism while avoiding swelling the ranks of disgruntled Muslims.

This can be done by Muslim representation at the political level by creating more space for Muslim representation in the Parliaments as well as at the local levels. In both Britain and Netherlands, there are Muslims represented at the highest levels of national governments. The Germans have not stimulated minorities to be active in politics even at the local level, until recently the Turkish minority was entirely excluded from German citizenship.

The Netherlands, by contrast, gave immigrants without Dutch citizenship the right to vote and to stand for elected office as early as 1986, and it has long been easier to obtain Dutch citizenship than German citizenship. More dialogue is required to understand the mindset of the Muslim migrants in Europe.

The problem is that the Muslim communities have been the underclass of the European societies in which they live. There are of course exceptions and examples of wealthy entrepreneurs and an emerging middle class. But for the most part, many Muslims are among those with the lowest incomes and the largest families in their countries. Although they are not very well represented in European politics and social setup, but in the recent past a realization on part of these community is to be a part of the European society to convey their concerns and problems.

The European media can play a very important role in positive integration of Muslims in the European society. Also writers on political Islam can help in creating a better understanding of their Muslim population towards a more harmonized Europe like Francois Burgat and Joceneyn Cesari have done in case of France.

The extremist notion that is being projected by directing the citizens to imagine that the country is threatened by hordes of Muslims living within its borders, determined to subvert European values and convert its people to Islam by hook or by crook, has to be dispelled. But an effort also has to be made on part of the Muslims in Europe for better integration by political participation, creating a better understanding of the societies they live in as well as efforts by Muslim scholars in Europe to establish some kind of a dialogue process with their counterparts and to disown the actions and opinions of extremists.

As Europe's governments step up their efforts to root out Islamic extremists - and attitudes, shift accordingly - the future holds one of two possibilities: either the continent's 20 million Muslims will integrate smoothly into their countries economic and political life; or they will remain on the margins, disaffected and potentially dangerous.