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**Abstract:**

*Hamid Umar Dalwai was a Muslim Modernist, social reformer, thinker, activist and Marathi language writer in Maharashtra. In India mingling of religion with politics is always been the part of politics. India had witnessed the politicization of religion since the British Government. After the Independence various political parties are vying or Muslim votes by offering various promises. The Muslim leadership's thought process which prevailed during his time virtually sought a parallel state for Muslim within India. Hamid Dalwai was one among the few religiously secular people. He had an independent personality of his own. From time to time, he earnestly appealed to political parties in India not to make humble appeals to Muslims. According to him, it indirectly fostered emphasis on communal separatism in Muslims. He believed that religion and politics have been confused amongst Indian Muslims. He wanted to attack it and expected to separate the two. He used his life, speech and writing for that purpose. He strove towards a uniform civil code rather than religion specific laws. To banish religion from the public sphere of politics as Kemal Ataturk had done in Turkey same kind of secular ideology Hamid Dalwai wanted to implement in India. Hamid Dalwai along with seven women had marched down to the Mantralaya in Mumbai, demanded today, the issue of triple talaq has gained traction, and with the practice declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 2019. Dalwai is one of the key figures that spearheaded this struggle. He was a radical Modernist who appeal to Muslim society that an old-fashioned Muslim society could not compete in the modern world, Muslim remained backward because they oppose the modernism. He demanded that triple talaq be abolished, uniform civil code (UCC) be implemented and polygamy be banned". Dalwai's main interest was with changing the attitudes of Indian Muslims towards democracy and modernism and the need for reform among Muslims. The analysis and interpretation of Islam and the politics of Muslim community by Hamid Dalwai was revolutionary. In this sense, he was the first Modernist, revolutionary social thinker in the Muslim society of Maharashtra.*

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**Introduction-**

Hamid Umar Dalwai was a Muslim Modernist, social reformer, thinker, activist and Marathi language writer in Maharashtra. He was born on 29 September 1932 in a Marathi speaking Muslim family in the Ratnagiri district of Konkan, his village Mirjoli near Chiplun. He got his secondary school education at Chiplun. In his early teens he joined a nationalist youth organisation, the Rashtra Seva Dal, the political and cultural wing of Samajwadi Party, the only Muslim in his village to do so. In his twenties Dalwai moved to Bombay. After his matriculation in 1951, he studied up to Intermediate at Ismail Yusuf College and Ruparel Collge in Mumbai and became active in socialist politics and came close to socialist veterans like Bhai Vaidya. Influenced by Ram Manohar Lohia, Jaiprakash Narayan and Mahatma Gandhi. He simultaneously started writing his short stories in magazines like Mauj,

Satyakatha and Vasudha.Dalwai's main interest was to change the attitudes of Indian Muslims towards democracy and modernism. Hamid Dalwai lived short but meaningful life, spearheaded the cause of radical reforms within the Muslim community. Hamid Dalwai along with seven women had marched down to the Mantralaya in Mumbai on 18 April, 1966.He handed over memorandum of demands to the Maharashtra chief minister Vasant Rao Naik, demanded that "triple *talaq* be abolished, uniform civil code (UCC) be implemented and polygamy be banned" It is quite unfortunate that the revolutionary thinking of Hamid Dalwai, a man of letters, journalist and social reformer, was not given its due importance to a great extent by the society he worked for. It is a need of time that Hamid Dalwai's views and secular outlook need to study and spread among the new generation. The present paper is attempted to describe the contribution of Hamid Dalwai in Indian Muslim society.

### **Hamid Dalwai's Secularism.**

India is an ancient land of religious pluralism and cultural diversity; the Hindu religion is predominant and its followers having a nearly 80 percent share in a country population. The 160 million Muslims of India are the country's second largest community. Despite being the second largest religious community of the country, the Muslims are overly under-represented in the governance of the country. In India mingling of religion with politics is always been the part of politics. Religious identity came to play an important role in Indian politics. There is no law in the country placing any restrictions on mixing up religion with politics. India had witnessed the politicization of religion since the British Government. The colonial government had begun to define Indians on the basis of their religion in one census after another. After the Independence Various political parties are vying for Muslim votes by offering various promises. The Muslim leadership's thought process which prevailed during his time virtually sought a parallel state for Muslim within India. Hamid Dalwai was one among the few religiously secular people. He had an independent personality of his own. From time to time, he earnestly appealed to political parties in India not to make humble appeals to Muslims. According to him, it indirectly fostered emphasis on communal separatism in Muslims. He believed that religion and politics have been confused amongst Indian Muslims. He wanted to attack it and expected to separate the two. He used his life, speech and writing for that purpose. He believed in the value of secularism that went beyond the concept of religion and accepted the equality of all religions and belief in this life. He strove towards a uniform civil code rather than religion specific laws. To banish religion from the public sphere of politics as Kemal Atatürk had done in Turkey same kind of secular ideology Hamid Dalwai wanted to implement in India. In an interview to journalist Chitre, Dalwai said "If secular democratic ideas are to survive, all liberal forces in this country have to rally and work together on a non-party, non-political basis" And lastly, he said "One cannot helplessly watch the game. The rules have to change" This was as important to him as were modern and international principles of freedom, equality, brotherhood, justice and faith in rational and scientific attitude.

**Tripal talaq Movement:-** Tripal talaq was a form of Islamic Divorce which has been used by Muslims in India, it allowed any Muslim man to legally divorce his wife by uttering the word talaq three times consecutively in oral, written or, more recently delivered by electronic means such as telephone, SMS, email or social media. The man did not need to cite any cause for the divorce and the wife need not have been present at the time of pronouncement. Muslim women face the threat of a sudden, oral, and out-of-court divorce. A survey by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan revealed that 95 per cent of divorced women received no maintenance from their husbands. In many cases, women are not in a position to earn enough money for their household expenses and it became difficult to manage kids. Hamid Dalwai opposed the practice and Muslim law. He was disturbed by the power given to Muslim men to divorce their wives verbally. For defending his views, he was branded an infidel by several orthodox Muslim groups and generally failed to garner widespread support from the Muslim community in his feminist pursuits.

Hamid Dalwai along with seven women had marched down to the Mantralaya in Mumbai on 18 April, 1966.He handed over memorandum of demands to the Maharashtra chief minister Vasant Rao Naik, demanded that “triple *talaq* be abolished, uniform civil code (UCC) be implemented and polygamy be banned” This march, marked the first steps taken towards safeguarding Muslim women’s rights and was the beginning of the social justice movement against triple *talaq*. He demanded for a uniform civil code rather than religion specific laws, and fought to abolish Triple *talaq* in India.Today, the issue of triple *talaq* has gained traction, with the practice declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 2019. Dalwai is one of the key figures that spearheaded this struggle.

#### **Modernisation of Muslim Society and formation of Muslim Satyashodhak Samaj -:**

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe was undergoing major transformation as the new ideas of the Enlightenment, which stressed the importance of science, rationality, and human reason. Modernization in the Europe also give momentum and accelerate the process of modernization of Muslim countries as well. Islamic modernists argued that Islam and modernity were compatible. The Islamic scholars believed that they could revitalize their religion through adopting western philosophies of modernity and rationalism. Soon legal reform was attempted in Egypt, Tunisia, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, and in some cases these reforms were adopted. Azerbaijan granted suffrage to women in 1918.Modernization in this Muslim countries has significantly been aided by educational expansion. This new phase of the internal responses of the Islamic law to modernization also enter the Indian scene. Traditionally, education was imparted to Muslims through madrasas which varied in respect of size and grades up to which education was imparted on the traditional lines. These madrasas had neither modern methods of teaching nor of learning and did not emphasize the teaching of modern secular subjects like science and humanities.

British Government implanted modern English education in India. To spread education in Muslim community, they established Aligarh Muslim University and Osmania University, where the medium of instruction was Urdu. But the reaction of Muslim elite to modern education was always negative. They were reluctant to accept the new education system. One more factor which affect the modernization of Indian Muslims is religious conservatism, it persists among large section of the Muslim community, especially in regard to personal laws, purdah system and family planning. The personal laws have considerably been modernized in countries like Pakistan, but Indian Muslims still oppose them, particularly in these scenarios the role played by Hamid Dalwai was very significant. He was radical Modernists who appeal to Muslim society, that an old-fashioned Muslim society could not compete in the modern world, Muslims remained backward because they oppose modern education, Education is one of the most important instruments for the development and empowerment of any marginalized community. He worked hard for the expansion of education in Muslim society. To create a platform for his views and work, he established the Muslim Satyashodhak Samaj,Musli Truth-Seeking Society in Pune on 22 March 1970.Through the medium of this society, He campaigned for encouraging Muslims in acquiring education in the State language rather than Urdu, their mother tongue. He also established the Muslim secular Society. He organized many public meetings, gatherings, conventions and conferences to campaign for modern education and better social practices.Hamid worked towards reforming bad practices in the Muslim community especially towards women.He helped many Muslims women who were victimized to get justice.He also tried to make adoption an acceptable practice in the Indian Muslim community.

In this connection, he wrote extensively in Marathi and English newspapers like Secularist, Quest, Times of India, Indian Express, Maharashtra Times, Maratha and Sadhana. In addition, he also wrote books on the subject entitled Muslim Jatiyteche Swarup: Karane ani Upay,Indhan (Fuel)-a novel, Laal (wave)-a collection of short stories, Islamche Bhartiya Chitra and Muslim Politics in Secular India-a thought provoking book. The last mentioned title was translated into Marathi as Rashtriya Ekatmata ani Bhartiya Musalman and was published by Sadhana. He used

the medium of his writing for social reform. He was able to devote hardly 11 years for the Muslim Satyashodhak Movement.

**Conclusion-:**

The analysis and interpretation of Islam and the politics of Muslim community by Hamid Dalwai was revolutionary. In this sense, he was the first revolutionary social thinker in the Muslim world. His social analysis and work for the transformation of his people has given a new dimension to the subject. His thought-provoking writing has emphasized modern, secular and democratic values. Today, the issue of triple talaq has gained traction, with practice declared illegal by the Supreme Court in 2019. Dalwai is one of the key figures that spearheaded this struggle.

He strove towards a uniform civil code rather than religion specific laws because it would provide Muslims equal rights and opportunities, same protection of rights and property as all other Indians. Hamid Dalwai was a radical Modernist who appeal to Indian Muslim society to adopt modernism and secular ideology. A celebrated Indian historian, Ramchandra Guha, in his book Makers of Modern India (2010) has mentioned 21 persons as ‘Architects of modern India.’ He includes Hamid Dalwai’s name amongst stalwarts like Jyotirao Phule, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Tarabai Shinde and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In addition to Dalwai, Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan and Jinnah, no Muslim thinker finds a place in that list. He was the first Modernist, revolutionary, social thinker in the Muslim society of Maharashtra. Undoubtedly, the work of Hamid Dalwai was very significant for the betterment of Indian Muslim Society and Nation as well.

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