

Additional Information

This half an hour documentary was made in the aftermath of a violent police crackdown on students of Jamia Millia Islamia and a concerted campaign by the Government and the entire Right-Wing machinery to demonise Muslims. Statements made by top BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister Anurag Thakur and other BJP leaders about anti-CAA protesters in Jamia and Shaheen Bagh had left the community feeling angry and isolated. The police crackdown on students of Jamia came as another blow which added to fears of fundamental rights of minorities and dissenting voices being quashed under the present regime.

The documentary sought to capture the mood of people who were at the receiving end of the hate campaign. Getting residents of Jamia Nagar to speak openly on camera and voice their fears and suspicions was not an easy task. Not only were they scared of being punished for openly criticising the State but were also suspicious of journalists after being misrepresented and criminalised by several TV news channels. I spent a considerable amount of time trying to win their confidence and ensuring them that their statements will not be quoted out of context and that their concerns would be fairly represented.

SCRIPT

INSIDE JAMIA NAGAR: A STORY OF EVERY PREJUDICE AGAINST INDIAN MUSLIMS

OPENING MONTAGE

Montage of police attacking students inside Jamia Millia Islamia; anti-CAA posters on campus; students raising slogans – intercut with sound bites of PM Modi and Gadkari.

SOT: Nitin Gadkari- I want to tell our Muslim brothers that only the BJP can help in your development.

SOT: Narendra Modi: The people who are spreading fire can be identified by their clothes.

TITLE STING

PTC: Seemi Pasha

Even as stories of police brutality on students of Jamia Millia Islamia continue to unravel...we're seeing the blame slowly being shifted to outsiders or locals residing in nearby areas of Batla House, Shaheen Bagh, Zakir Nagar- localities which are loosely referred to as Okhla or Jamia Nagar. This is a prominent Muslim Ghetto in south Delhi and a place which is often viewed with suspicion. But why is that? What kind of people live here...what are the reasons that have pushed them inside a ghetto. Let's find out

(AMB UP: sound of traffic. Shots of crowded streets + me walking with a girl on the road+ track shot of galis + traffic)

VO 1

Barely two hundred yards away from the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia is Batla House, home to thousands of students who come from different parts of the country to study at the prestigious central university and lakhs of Muslim families seeking the safety and security of a ghetto. The streets are dusty and crowded as people try to make their way...crisscrossing between street hawkers, rickshaws, three wheelers and motorcycles. If it is visual identification of a community that you're looking for...the markers are all present here. Women bustle past in burqas and hijabs...some even with their faces tightly covered with dupattas. Boys with scull caps and old men with long beards dot the streets of the ghetto. The streets lead to narrow by-lanes with houses closing-in from both sides of the road- blocking the sun out.

(garbage with dogs sleeping and cows looking for food)

VO 2

On the banks of a river that is dying a slow death, past hills of garbage we reach a school that promises a new way to success.

(shots of the school board with its name written on it)

AMB UP- song- montage of children's faces

Lab pe aatihaidua ban ketamanna meri
Zindagishammakisurat ho Khudaya meri

Door dunya ka mere dam se andhera ho jaye
Har jagha mere chamakne se ujala ho jaye

Ho mere dam se yunhi mere watankizeenat
Jistarhaphool se hotihaichamankizeenat
(PLEASE USE IT TILL HERE)

VO 3

Rows of innocent children, with their eyes closed and hands folded, praying for a meaningful life which brings light into the lives of others and a future where they are able to make their country proud. The earnestness of their prayer is almost heart-breaking given that most of them are from poor Muslim families, primarily slum dwellers, the people who are most likely to bear the brunt of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC.

SOT

Nishat Bilgirami, Principal, New Way Public School

There's a significant improvement in the children who study at our school and it gives me hope but I also feel disturbed by the political scenario in the country. I lie down at night and wonder if all the work that we have put in these children will bear fruit...if these children will be able to go out and do something with their lives.

VO 4

Set up in 2001 with 6 students, New Way Public school now boasts of more than 400 children and 21 teachers. Like many schools in Okhla which are recognised by the Delhi government- this school too follows the CBSE curriculum and seeks to provide affordable education to children whose parents are struggling to make ends meet. Their parents may be poor, but they are simple people, trying to lead simple lives.

SOT

Nishat Bilgirami, Principal, New Way Public School

I have been running this school in Zakir Nagar, which is a ghetto, for the last 19 years and I find the people here to be honest and fair. We have lots of interactions with parents of school children and we get to speak to all kinds of people. I have always found them to be simple people who are looking for a better future for their children.

VO 5

Nishat Bilgirami admits that the ghetto is not anyone's favourite address...not for the school and not for parents of students living next door...but she is trying to do her bit to make a difference.

SOT

Nishat Bilgirami, Principal, New Way Public School

If I want to set up a school like this in New Friends Colony or Maharani Bagh I won't be able to do it. Of course I also want to teach these children here because it makes me peace of mind.

VO 6

From those who are starting out their life in a ghetto to those who have chosen the ghetto as their permanent home after spending their lives exploring other cities and other settlements. We find an informal club of senior citizens tucked away in one of the by-lanes of Zakir Nagar, a locality which seamlessly merges into Batla House. This group of retired professionals meets every afternoon to discuss politics and current affairs and the conversation this past week has centred around the Citizenship Amendment Act and the police crackdown on protesters. What happened in Jamia has made them extremely upset.

SOT

Safir Ahmad Khan- Majority of Jamia students live in Okhla. People say locals got involved but who are locals? They are ex-students of Jamia. A large percentage of them live here. Some are retired teachers and professors of Jamia. Where will they go after retirement? They live here. Jamia doesn't have enough hostels to accommodate so many students...they live around here in Shaheen Bagh, Zakir Nagar, Joga Bai, Batla House

SOT

Javed Naseer Khan- Even after students get jobs they prefer to live here. This place is the heart of South Delhi and is well connected. Food is easily available and to everyone's liking. All our fellow students live in the vicinity, all friends live here.

SOT

Ammar Khan- Most of the population here is peace loving. Even if someone young people did something, you cannot blame the entire population for it.

SOT

Safir Ahmad Khan- Bad elements can be anywhere...its not like they're confined to Jamia.

SOT

Javed Naseer Khan- Rotten eggs can be found anywhere but to tarnish the image of the university and the entire residential area is unfair.

SOT

Matloob Ahmed Khan- I have lived in lots of cities and I have seen that they don't want Muslims as tenants and this is not a recent thing. It has been going on for years.

SOT

Safir Ahmad Khan- Why is our Prime Minister Modi and our Home Minister Amit Shah saying that Muslims need not be scared? What is the need to make that statement. Muslims are being made to feel insecure. To my mind this is phase 1 of their plan. They have said that apart from Muslims anyone who comes from Afghanistan, Pakistan or Bangladesh will be granted citizenship. If it was only about granting citizenship, they wouldn't have brought this bill. They could have done without it too. When Congress was in power, over 2 lakh people, fleeing the LTTE, entered India and they were granted citizenship. Under the same law, these refugees could have also been granted citizenship. Why did we need a new law?

SOT

Ishtiyaaq Ahmed Khan- No body talks about how at the time of partition, the 40% Muslim population voted for the Congress party. They voted for Mahatma Gandhi. There were announcements in Deoband at the time of partition asking people to vote for Gandhi. Khan Abdur Ghaffar Khan worked closely with Gandhi to fight the British and played a crucial role in the independence movement. Nobody is talking about this. They just keep saying go...leave our country.

Javed Naseer Khan- When the Muslim league had a referendum and asked Muslims if they wanted another country, less than 50% said yes. All the others stayed back here in India.

Resident Jamia Nagar- A majority of Muslims stayed back here. They chose India as their country.

Ammar Khan - Muslims are being openly discriminated against. There was discrimination earlier also but one could always turn towards authorities to seek justice but now Muslims are being openly targeted in the name of cow protection and being lynched. Now there is no one to speak for us and protect us. There is a sense that Muslims are today helpless and that feeling is very dangerous.

Safir Ahmad Khan- We may still be able to produce documents to prove our citizenship but I can assure you that 75% of the population- Hindus and Muslims will have no paper work. Like what happened in Assam. There are thousands of migrant workers from UP and Bihar who go to the north-east to work. They had nothing that's why they travelled to Assam looking for work. Now they're being called illegal citizens. Why did Delhi's population rise? Because people who are poor and unemployed came here looking for employment. Now if you catch them and ask them to prove their citizenship...they wont be able to prove anything.

Matloob Ahmed Khan- Muslims who live in separate colonies are targeted during riots. They're targeted not just by rioters but also by the police.

Resident, Jamia Nagar- New Friends Colony is not secure for us plus it is also out of our budget. My brother helped me get a flat here many years ago otherwise we would not have any place to stay in Delhi.

Javed Naseer Khan- Security is a key concern. A large part of the population here is of respectable people some of whom can afford houses outside the ghetto also but they have chosen to live here.

Resident, Jamia Nagar- The government should realise the kind of fear and insecurity they have created. Leaders should come here and talk to the people. Even during elections, none of the BJP leaders came here. They should come here and speak to us. Tell us what their plans are. They keep talking about Pakistan and what is happening there. We don't care about what is happening in Pakistan. If we wanted to go to Pakistan we would have left a long time ago but fact is that our forefathers chose to stay here. There was more freedom for us in India but slowly that freedom is shrinking.

Safir Ahmad Khan- It is not like Muslims here are not well to do. Some are even millionaires but they don't want to go and live in New Friends Colony. Not just that, it is not possible for them to find a house for them in New Friends. Those people don't want us there. **(PATCH)** It is not just Hindustan and Pakistan that are divided. Every city of India is divided on communal lines.

Javed Naseer Khan- After Babri Masjid's demolition there have been several communal riots and everywhere we saw that areas that had a majority Muslim population wasn't effected. Places where Muslims were living scattered were affected by riots. Houses belonging to Muslims were ransacked and set ablaze. This happened in Gujarat too.

Safir Ahmad Khan- People are dying of hunger, there are no jobs, inflation is at an all time high but nobody cares. Its as if the CAA is an attempt to divert attention. Modi ji doesn't care. He just keeps touring the world and during elections he makes appearances to address rallies. The state of the economy today is a result of demonetization. Businesses worth thousands of crores were destroyed. All the money came back into the system. The government has still not been able to tell us what happened to its claim of black money. Where is the black money?

Zahid- My son wanted to take a house on rent in New Friends Colony. We had finalised everything but at the last minute they found out that we are Muslims and they cancelled the deal. This kind of communal feeling exists right next door among people who are supposed to be educated.

VO 7

Everywhere you look, there is frustration and a sense of helplessness. The anger and betrayal is more pronounced amongst youngsters living in the area- most of whom are either former or current students of Jamia Millia Islamia.

Interaction with students

Please use the first 8 minutes and 40 seconds and make it a little more compact. Don't edit too much- I like most of the points they are making and want all the bites to be included. Please put the bites in a window with visuals of Jamia protest.

(walking through the streets. Close up shots of faces)

VO 8

Everyone in the ghetto is aware of the suspicion and mistrust with which they are viewed. Their appearance and address further deepens the prejudice with which society sees them. They are hurting...you can tell...and the government is only adding to their wounds by introducing discriminatory laws.

AMB UP

VO 9

(shots of Madiha playing with her child)

This 28 year old urban planner, who has taken time off work to look after of her 18 month old infant, is furious about what happened in Jamia. Also a former student of the university, Madiha feels let down by the administration.

SOT

Madiha Khan, Urban Planner

People think there's a large percentage of Muslim students in Jamia and AMU so they must be terrorists. Are we all terrorist? Am I a terrorist?

No right...but people believe that the students must only be at fault. There is misrepresentation. People think that if the students are Muslims, they must be miscreants. That's not true. The students are fighting for their rights. What about what the police did...they entered the campus and misbehaved with students. They didn't even spare the girls. Was that not wrong? Why isn't their action being criticised. The students don't have any power, they didn't have any weapons but the cops did. They had weapons, they had guns and tear gas shells and they used it. Why didn't they do their job...of maintaining law and order? It was their job to ensure that the situation doesn't get out of hand but instead they used weapons on unarmed students.

VO 10

Living in Zakir Nagar is not a cakewalk. There are a thousand issues that residents here have to live with...but Madiha says they have chosen safety over comfort.

SOT

Madiha Khan, Urban Planner

There's no water here. There are pipelines but no connections. Roads are still okay but look at how we're living in these houses like little boxes. If there's an earthquake, no one will survive. Quality of life is quite poor. There are traffic jams in bylanes. There are cars parked everywhere...there is no space to walk in the streets. Recently there was a short circuit in one of the buildings and many people trapped and died in the blaze. The fire tenders couldn't reach. Who do we blame...there is nothing that can be done. This is the quality of our lives. The streets are full of garbage. We don't want it to rain. If it rains, then it becomes impossible to step out of the house. The drainage system here is very bad, in fact it is non-existent. There are no parks here. There is an Ashoka Park near New Friends Colony but nothing for us. There is no place where we can send our children to play. We just make them stay at home all day. This is it. This is what we have.

(Ext shots of Al Shifa Hospital+ people queuing up+shots of Brigadier Zafar)

VO 11

As more and more people migrate to the ghetto, efforts are being made by private individuals to improve infrastructural facilities in the area. Sena Medal awardee Brigadier Zafar has been managing Al Shifa Hospital in Abul Fazal Enclave since its inception. What started out as a 33 bed hospital in 2011 has today developed into a multi-speciality 100 bed hospital. Most of

the students who were injured in clashes with the Delhi police on the 15th of December, were brought to Al Shifa for treatment that fateful night.

SOT

Brigadier Zafar Ali SM, Director, Al Shifa Hospital

That day when the students came...we were prepared. When the first batch of 20 students came, we provided them with emergency treatment. When more students were brought in, we called more of our staff in, most of whom live close by.

VO 12

As someone who has been living in Jamia since 1964, Brigadier Zafar says he is ready to vouch for the residents of the area but finds it difficult to beat the stereotype and misconceptions that have been created over several years.

SOT

Brigadier Zafar Ali SM, Director, Al Shifa Hospital

If you were to hail an auto or a taxi from a railway station and ask them to take you to Okhla- they would flatly refuse. What we used to do was tell them that we want to go to New Friends Colony. After reaching New Friends we'd request the auto or taxi driver to just drive in another 200 yards. Even these drivers have some misconception that as soon as they enter the area, they will be beaten up or their vehicles will be confiscated....people here are good. They are busy in their own businesses and they don't create trouble.

(Shots of the market + shots of Humair Khan- tall man with a beard and cap)

VO 13

It is not easy to break away from stereotypes in the face of concerted efforts by national leaders to create divisions in society. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that those indulging in violence can be identified by their clothes has left the Muslim community stunned. Humair Khan, an alumnus of Jamia who has been living in Okhla for the last 24 years, says he is made to feel guilty about the way he looks.

SOT

Humair Khan, Resident, Okhla

I am wearing these clothes and I wear them anywhere I have to go. Today when I step out I am seen as some abnormality. I can see people looking at me questioningly and their gaze makes me uncomfortable. People look at me with suspicion, like I am some sort of a freak because I have a beard and I wear a cap. I have started feeling guilty about my appearance. Women have started advising their sons to not keep a beard and not wear caps to avoid trouble.

DIP TO BLACK

END PTC

The search for a normal life, a simple existence- where no one judges them on the basis of their clothes, their address and their religion is increasingly become a distant dream- not just for the residents of Jamia but for the Indian Muslim community at large. Can we allow this kind of division of our society ...are we okay with it...that's a decision that we the people of this country will have to take.

DIP TO BLACK

Montage of all the best shots over the sound of children singing 'Lab pe aatihadua'