

Indian Muslims have developed 'Indo-Islamic culture', says Hamid Ansari

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Rabat: Indian Muslims have lived in a religiously pluralistic society over the years and the intermingling has helped develop "an Indo-Islamic culture in India", Vice President M Hamid Ansari said here on Wednesday.

Hamid Ansari

He also said in the modern world with diversified cultures across the globe, tolerance alone is not adequate and efforts ought to be made to seek "acceptance of diversity as a civic virtue".

"The challenge for the modern world is to accept diversity as an existential reality and to configure attitudes and methodologies for dealing with it. In developing such an approach, the traditional virtue of tolerance is desirable but insufficient," he said delivering a lecture at the Mohammed V University here during his ongoing visit to Morocco.

"...our effort, thinking and practices have to look beyond it and seek acceptance of diversity and adopt it as a civic virtue," said Ansari.

"Indian Muslims have lived in India's religiously plural society for over a thousand years, at times as rulers, at others as subjects and now as citizens.

They are not homogenous in racial or linguistic terms.....Over centuries of intermingling and interaction, an Indo-Islamic culture developed in India," the vice president said speaking on the topic 'Accommodating Diversity in a Globalising World: The Indian Experience'.

Ansari said "the one incontrovertible" fact about the Muslim experience in modern India is that Muslims consider themselves as "beneficiaries" of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, participate fully in the civic processes of the polity and "seek correctives for their grievances" within the system.

"There is no inclination in their ranks to resort to ideologies and practices of violence," he said.

However, he said given the "segmented nature of society and unequal economy", there would be issues at times and concerns have been expressed from time to time about shortfalls and pace of implementation of what is enshrined in the constitution.

But Ansari pointed out: "The corrective lies in our functioning democracy, its accountability mechanisms including regularity of elections at all levels from village and district councils to regional and national levels.

"The framers of our constitution had the objective of securing civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights as essential ingredients of citizenship. Particular emphasis was placed on rights of religious minorities."

Stating that efforts are on in India to propagate acceptance of diversity and "as a civic virtue", Ansari said: "We in India are attempting it, cannot yet say that we have succeeded, but are committed to continue the effort".

In this context, he invited "all right-minded people to join us (India) in this endeavour".

Ansari is on a visit to Morocco and Tunisia.

The Moroccan varsity later conferred an honoris causa degree on the Vice President.

- IANS