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## Two Peas In A Pod: Lived Experiences Of Religion In A Classroom In India

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### Abstract

India has witnessed stirring political-economic changes since the turn of the century. Though, politics of religion has always been omnipresent behind the greater political canvas of India, in the last decade, it has assumed center stage. Use of religious symbols, religious narratives, communal disharmony, bigotry etc., have become exceedingly common even in the domain of media, education, politics, market; the so-called emblems of democratic, egalitarian, and modern thought. This has enabled the politics of religion to seamlessly seep down into the everyday, mundane existence of the individuals' lives.

Set against the backdrop of the prominent CAA-NRC (Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens) protest in India, the proposed paper seeks to explore the diverse experiences of two Muslim boys in a classroom in Navi Mumbai. It interrogates the hows and whys behind conversations of students of a primary school as they take communal turns. Beyond the four walls of school, these students were exposed to news channel debates, conversations between adults, social media narratives which provide half baked, stereotypical, and politically vested views on the proposed Citizenship Amendment Act; influencing their sense identity, also creating an identity of the 'other.' This paper traces the journey of the 'self' negotiation and differential experiences of the two students in a classroom, highlighting their subjective interpretations, how they cope with communal hate and microaggression. These stories are case studies of students observed as part of data collection for a doctoral thesis in the year 2019-2020 in a prestigious private school situated in Navi Mumbai.

**Keywords:** Lived-experience, India, Sociology of Education, Self and Identity, Classroom