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[Press release](#)

Sing on Nahid, sing on Suhana; IMSD is proud of you

Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) applauds the achievements of two young Muslim women, Nahid Afreen (Assam) and Suhana Sayed (Karnataka), who have wowed music lovers cutting across religions with their outstanding singing talents.

And it condemns the attempts of certain Muslims who with their blinkered brand of Islam seek to silence the nightingales of Indian Islam.

In the latest instance of dissonant discourse, 46 Muslims from Assam, molvis and madrasa teachers included, have put out a pamphlet seeking to muzzle the 16-year-old Nahid Afreen who was the first runner-up in the 2015 season of a musical TV reality show.

Five days earlier, 22-year-old Suhana Sayed was trolled by an outfit that identified itself as "Mangalore Muslims" after she received a standing ovation at a Kannada reality TV show for her superb rendering of a bhajan in praise of Lord Balaji. The judges even applauded the young hijab-wearing woman as a "symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity."

The pamphleteers from Assam and the trolls from Mangalore are cultural misfits who seem to have imbibed nothing of India's composite culture where for centuries Hindus and Muslims have dressed alike, shared the same cuisine, spoken the same language, sung, danced and played music together.

Who hasn't heard of Bismillah Khan, or Allah Rakha's *jugalbandi* with Ravi Shankar? Or Mohammad Rafi singing, '*Hari Om! Man tadpat Hari darshan ko aa'* with lyrics by Shakeel Badayuni and music composed by Naushad?

Suhana who was warned that even "her parents will not go to heaven" because of her sinful act reportedly went "underground". But the gutsy Nahid is not so easily frightened.

"I was shocked and broken from inside at first, but many Muslim singers gave me inspiration to not quit music, will never do so," she has told the media.

Bravo, Nahid. Be not afraid, Suhana.

Through the simple act of singing their songs, they project an image of Muslims at peace with the world. In striking contrast, through their pamphleteering and threat of hell-fire, the maulanas of Assam and the Mangalore Muslims present before others the unpleasant picture of bigoted Muslims and an intolerant Islam.

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