

Editorial

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Being Hindu does not necessarily require Mythological connection

The arrival of Hinduism to the Manipuri Society during the 17th Century can be term as the root of controversial remark of Chief Minister at Gujarat.

Various Manipuri scholars, historians and social activists had interpreted the entry of the Hinduism in their own views and perspectives. Some said it was the beginning of a new Manipuri civilization but some said it was an invasion. As found at some of the writings of social scientists - the arrival of Hinduism during the reign of Meidingu Pamheiba (1709-1748) had brought tremendous change in the religious practices of Manipur. But, whatever be it the religion came to the region and there is no way that it have any mythological connection with the region particularly in the erstwhile kingdom of Kangleipak.

It is not about religion. It is about our pride of being Meitei. In his letter to his daughter Indira Gandhi, the first prime Minister of India wrote - Gods comes as a product of the fear of mankind. If scientists have succeeded in making a time travel machine, where we could go back to the prehistoric days, all sorts of confusions would have been solved. Even though we don't have the opportunity to go back to the pass we could still culled the series of events that might have happened during the days.

Scholars say - early people had to struggle hard for their survival. Professor Ratan Kumar Singh of the Manipur University while presenting his famous paper - "God in Manipuri Literature" in the Oxford Round Table Conference during April month in 2011 vividly explain the life our ancestors. As according to his presentation the early people were surrounded by hostile forces of nature and the environment. Their living conditions, to a great extent were influenced by the forces beyond their control. And they had a need to provide some explanations and accounts for the good and the bad things which happened to them along with those of the favourable and the adversaries. It is a very interesting fact that many of the forces were often personified and given name and personalities. This phenomenon was perhaps the first step for having beliefs and religious rituals. And consequently a number of gods and goddess representing the various elemental forces and qualities appeared.

The reason for bringing up this piece of write up is to remind that mythical part of any religion is confine to the civilization of the specific community.

The great grandparents of our great grandparents who were survived before the reign of Meidingu Pamheiba did have a religion and mythology which was counterproductive of their ancestors.

May be, after force conversions or willy-nilly adoption, my ancestors, who were born after the reign of Meidingu Pamheiba have become Hindu. In course of time the Hindu rituals finds its way to the veins of the Manipuri society and become a part of it. The rich culture of the region which were flourished since Meitei civilization became into existence began to establish in a new outlook. These new traditions, along with the ancient indigenous traditions, were in existence simultaneously in Manipuri Culture. To the words of Professor Ratan - It was in some aspects we find a beautiful amalgamation of pre-Hinduism and Hinduism element in Manipuri Culture.

The rich heritage of Manipuri Culture and its recognition to the world community is the product of the ancient indigenous traditions streams through the newly invaded religion called Hindu. The Hindu that has been flourishing to the society this erstwhile kingdom is in no way a curse but rather a boon.

Indeed the traditional Meiteism culture and the newly entered Hinduism adopted by our ancestors are the two sides of the same coin. There are beauty and respect to the rituals of Hindus and we have reason to feel proud to the rituals of my Sanamahli religion.

But connecting the region with the Hindu mythology with the region is nothing but an insult to the erstwhile nation, a betrayal to our forefathers who survived before Meidingu Pamheiba. It better we stand clear that we are Meitei first before we become Hindu Meitei.

Safronization, Hinduization or Brahminization?

-By Dr. K. Jamanadas

Courtesy: velvada.com

These days everybody talks of "Hindutva", they say Hinduism is not a religion but a way of life. What are these concepts? What is the difference? Why this difference? These are questions the Bahujans, SC/ST and religious minorities should ponder over. All these acrobatics in phraseology, are they not just to maintain the supremacy of Brahmins? Ranjit Pardeshi has discussed all such issues.

Instead of Hinduization, the other word some times used is 'safronization'. May be due to RSS flag being of saffron color, this word came in vogue to suggest the effect of Sangh. But even this word conceals the concept of the Sangh. After all, saffron is the color of many other flags not necessarily of RSS ideology. Even the color of robes of Buddhist monks could be saffron. Therefore, neither Safronization nor Hinduization denotes the true concepts the R.S.S. The proper word must be Brahminization.

RSS attempts to reverse the ideology of Phule-Ambedkar

Inequality in Hinduism is well known, we do not need to refer to 'shastras' to learn about that. All of the suffering masses know it. To combat this inequality, Mahatma Phule suggested 'satya dharma' and Ambedkar accepted Buddhism as the alternative. Phule and Ambedkar's alternative to Hinduism was based on anti-women-slavery, analysis of Brahmin religion, equality for all, anti caste, anti-brahmin shastras and ignoring idea of god.

The RSS activists equate the Phule Ambedkar's ideas with the Renaissance in Hindu religion, which they claim was brought about by people like Swami Vivekananda and Arbindo etc. During early years of his struggle against Hinduism, Ambedkar DID say that Hindu religion needs reforms. On the basis of that RSS now claims that Ambedkar was also a 'Reformer of Hindu religion'. As a matter of fact, Ramesh Patrange, in his 'Dr. Hedgewar aani Dr. Ambedkar' gives an editorial in 'Bahishkrut Bharat' dated 21st December, 1928 as a whole appendix. In that editorial Dr. Ambedkar had

In that editorial Dr. Ambedkar had narrated the ill effects of caste system and observed that if you have to avoid the destruction of Hindu religion, you must get rid of Caste System. This perhaps in the eyes of RSS is 'Reformer of Hindu religion' and doing same work as Dr. Hedgewar. Thousand and one times Dr. Ambedkar had said that we - the Dalits - are not interested in reforming Hinduism, but the RSS has got selective amnesia about Ambedkar's teachings and they never project such quotes of Ambedkar. This is one aspect of Hinduization. It is note worthy that RSS never refers to Ambedkar's criticism on Brahminism. They always call it reform of 'Hindu' religion and not Brahmin religion.

The other aspect of Hinduization is whatever Ambedkar said about Islam to show the differences from Brahminism is construed to wrongly project Ambedkar as having anti-Islamic convictions.

It must be remembered in both these examples it is the preservation of vested interest of higher castes that is involved. But it is projected as interests of whole 'Hindu' religion and 'Hindu' people. What Samarasata Manch is doing is the glorification of 'Hindu' identity and propagation of hate of 'Muslim' identity, and their real interest is welfare of higher castes. This internal aspect of Samarasata is always concealed. What they show is just an external aspect like religion, religious symbols, mandir masjid etc.

Because of the concealment of inner real aspects of so called Safronization or Hinduization, the critics against it is limited to external symbolism and thus RSS

succeeded in their politics. They can now take political advantages by limiting the discussion to 'Hindu vs. Buddhists' or 'Hindu vs. Secularists' or 'Hindu vs. Muslims', and never 'Hindu vs. Brahmins', which should be the real contradiction and which was brought forward by Phule, Shahu, Periyar and Ambedkar. It is the duty of Ambedkarite movement - a movement for the transformation of society - to project these contradictions.

Internal aims are concealed because of the projection of only external aspects in contradiction, the RSS can depict religious minorities or secularists as enemies of the majority Hindu 'Nation'. For example, the upper castes, to safeguard their interests with the capitalists or feudal landlords, involve the lower class/caste 'Hindus' in conflict with the anti-Muslim politics. They declare the leftists both Dalit as well as non-Dalit as 'Appeasers of Muslims', and thus gain the sympathy of the majority of 'Hindus' And the Dalits or Non-Dalit Lower castes and even the Muslims do not realize the game-plan of RSS and remain divided against their real enemy.

Babari Masjid - Ram jamma bumi contradictions

What is the real contradiction in "Babari masjid Ram jamma bumi" conflict? It appears externally as religious conflict for religious symbolism between the symbols of Hindus and those of Muslims. But is it really so? The real internal conflict is the caste conflict. How many lower caste non-dalits (OBCs) realize this? When V. P. Singh tried to implement Mandal Commission recommendations for the benefit of OBCs, the RSS started the Rathayatra to scuttle this movement. Everybody will remember the words of Bajpai that time, 'because they started Mandal, we started Kamandal', which he said in an open interview. (Dharmayug, 90, q/b Pardeshi p. 15)

Phule denigrated

The second example can be cited of Gangal and Behre criticizing Mahatma Phule as 'foul smelling dirt' about ten years ago. This was the reaction of the conservative upper caste middle class elitists against the Bahujan castes. When protests were made against this by the people in movements against caste, Senior leader of RSS, Gopinath Munde opposed this stand with the backing of lower castes like Dhangar, Mali, Vanjari and other OBCs, under the Brahminic leadership of the Sangh.

Conflict of Riddles misrepresented

When Dr. Ambedkar wrote the Riddles of Rama and Krishna, he utilized the symbolism of Rama and Krishna. Rama and Krishna to represent the Brahminical social order of Chaturvarnya with 'Brahmin' supremacy and not as the symbol caste of Kshatriyas. The movements of transformation, failed to bring forward this aspect of Ambedkar to the 'Hindu' masses and therefore it became easy for RSS to project Ambedkar's writings as an attack on 'Hindu' gods and goddesses, and they succeeded in organizing huge masses of 'Hindu' OBCs against the Dalit Buddhist organizations, with consequent aftermath.

All these are the examples of Brahminization but are purposefully and wrongly termed and projected as Hinduization or safronization, thereby shifting the emphasis The real concept that must be projected is that of Brahminization and not Hinduization or Safronization It is absolutely necessary to bring forward the contradictions among the Bahujans and Upper Caste Hindus. Otherwise, it becomes easy for the Sangh forces to bring the common masses under the name of 'Hindu religion' and utilize them against those who want social transformation. The forces acting in Hinduization are not the 'Hindu' Bahujans, but the Brahminic 'Alpajans'. This can be brought

forward only by the concept of Brahminization. For that purpose it is necessary to preserve the ideals and idols of our great dignitaries like Phule, Shahu, Periyar Ambedkar etc.

Polarization of society

It must be understood that it is always beneficial for the RSS and the makers of the caste to divide and achieve the polarization of society in two warring groups - 'Hindu' and 'non-Hindu'. The elite Brahmins can then maintain their upper caste grip over the lower caste 'Hindus' - the Bahujans -, in the guise of expressing the glorification of Hindu identity as opposed to that of Christians, Buddhists and Muslims. This provides them good opportunity for the purpose. Chatrapati Shivaji who was a 'kulvaadi-bhushan' (pride of lower caste kulvaadis), as described by Mahatma Phule, as he came from peasants shudra caste, and rose to power by his own merit and valor. He is now wrongly projected by the Brahminic historians as 'go-brahmin-pratapalaka' (protector of cows and Brahmins), which he never was, as proved by Shejwalkar by examining the original letters of Shivaji. It was not Shivaji who called himself 'go-brahman-pratapalaka', but it were the Brahmins who called him so, when they approached him for favors. In the coronation seal also it is mentioned 'kshatriya kulvanta' and not 'go-brahmin-pratapalaka'. The kingdom he established was egalitarian but the Brahmin historians call him founder of 'hindu paatshahi'. They also project it was a kingdom of "Shree", some times they projected Ramdas as Shivaji's guru. Enough has been written to disprove these imaginary stories. Shivaji was never against the Muslims, but they project him as enemy of Muslims and use his name as a symbol for opposing the Muslim identity and instigate the lower caste Bahujans against the Muslims during riots.

Hindus did not exist before Muslim Rule

Before the non-Brahmin castes, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes were included within the purview of 'Hindu' identity, there was a conflict and struggle between 'brahmins' and 'non-brahmins' in the religion, culture, philosophy, history and the society itself. When there were 'varnas' and not castes, the thumb of Eklavya was cut by Draonachaya to preserve the Varna supremacy of Arjuna, in the name of 'guru-daxina' for the education NOT imparted by him. This grave injustice was glorified in the name of great 'guru-bhakti' (devotion to guru). This shows the tendency of Brahminization during those days.

During the Satvahana times in early centuries of Christian era in Maharashtra, there existed a process of Brahminization by assimilating on lower status, of lower castes into the same religious stream but it was always seen that the social grading among the various castes was maintained without any change. The author of Dnyankosha - the great Ketkar, explains this. It must be understood the concept Hinduization is not historical. There were no 'Hindus' before the Muslims came and the concept of 'Hindu' came into existence during Turk Moghul era, and not before. Hence, the concept of Hindu can not be used for guidance as a historical tool for transformation of society.

There was an ideological struggle between the Buddhists and the Vedantists, the basis of which was contradictions in Varnas - the Brahmins against the non-Brahmins. But the RSS Brahmin scholars can analyze this as "Hindu Vedantism" against "Non-Hindu Buddhism", and the defiant language of the today's Buddhists can be labeled as "anti-Hindu" and can lead to riots. This is because in the name of 'Hindutva', the

Bahujans can be appealed to and organized by causing confusion amongst them on the exploitation of caste - exploitation by the upper castes can be concealed.

Brahminization in ancient times

About the 'Social organization and expansive acts done by Brahmins', Ketkar explains the activities of Brahmins during Vedic period. The aim behind these activities was to maintain the supremacy of Brahmins. It was nothing but Brahminization. The strategy applied during those days and techniques of cheating and deception used that time are still being used by RSS today in a refined manner. These techniques could be summarized as follows:

1. They relate the old stories with the ancestors of original inhabitants and pretend that their religion was same as that of Brahmins. This technique was used during Vedic times. Today, it is being used to show that the Ambedkar's Buddhism is same as old Brahminized Buddhism and aver that Ambedkar's Buddhism is just a part of Hinduism. This is done through various conferences, where even Dalai Lama and Guru Goenka participate.

2. During Vedic times, they performed yajnyas like 'vratyastoma' etc. to make the ineligible people eligible for yajnyas. Today, they admit ineligible Dalit Buddhist scholars in Samarasata movement and provide them posts, property and prestige in Social organizations, Literary Organizations, Journalism, Universities, Governmental Institutions and the like and use them as propagators of RSS ideology.

3. It was necessary during Vedic times to create a false history and to label the various alien nationalities as prodigal sons and proclaim them to be the progeny of some Brahmin 'rish' on some non-Brahmin woman. Middle ages saw the corruption of history in formulating origins of great non-brahmin saints, like Raidas and Kabir Today the rebellious Phule is 'accommodated' as son of 'Hindu Ishwara', Phule's 'Nirmiki' is projected as god, and Dr. Ambedkar as 'a reformer of Hindu India'. These are the new strategies applied these days.

4. Ketkar explains that during the process of Brahminization, two principles were adhered to.

One - it should be on the mass scale, and Two - the relative status of various caste groups must be maintained in new caste situation and Brahmin supremacy not being jeopardized. Today this has been transformed making a vote bank in elections, to control the reservation policy for the preservation of upper caste interests, to accommodate the awakened Bahujans' identity in the 'Hindutva' at a lower status. While doing all these, to maintain the Brahmin supremacy, is the real challenge for the RSS.

Only the names of Hedgewar, Golwalkar, Deoras, Sawarkar etc. were in the scriptures of Sangh in the past. They had now to add M. Gandhi, Phule, Ambedkar etc. Some share in prestige, power, the property has to be given to upwardly mobile people from among the lower castes, but the main principle of 'not disturbing the social order of status of caste' is still rigidly observed. As they have to establish the relation of original inhabitants with their religion, now they started telling a false imaginary story that Ambedkar visited the 'shakha' of RSS and found many untouchable volunteers there. Ketkar had said that in olden times such imaginary stories served a great cause of Brahminization, as some castes like 'Andhra' etc. were called 'Vishwamitra-putra'. So Sangh is now telling us such imaginary stories. But even then, they do not disclose the vested interests of their ruling upper castes in this imaginary unification with lower castes.



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