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SOUL-HARVESTING THROUGH SUPERSTITIONS

CHANGAI SABHAS, THE HEALING & DELIVERANCE MEETINGS, IN THE NAME OF CURING CHRONIC DISEASES, PROMISING EMPLOYMENT, PROTECTION FROM EVIL AND SECURING VISA FOR A FOREIGN COUNTRY ARE EMERGING AS EVANGELICAL INSTRUMENTS TO MANIPULATE THE WEAK, POOR & GULLIBLE PEOPLE BY SPREADING SUPERSTITIONS.

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READERS' FORUM



Boycott Soros

APROPOS the editorial 'The Soros Saga: Hypocrisy in the name of Democracy,' *Organiser*, March 5, by Editor Prafulla Ketkar. Nobody in India would have bothered about George Soros, but for his disparaging remarks against the Indian Prime Minister and an insinuation for the change of regime, following release of the



controversial Hindenburg report, during the Munich Security Conference. Our Foreign Minister has rightly qualified him as "an old, rich, opinionated and dangerous" man. But these epithets are too mild for him. He is a master manipulator, sans comparison, who was instrumental in creating instability in different countries, including the United Kingdom, Thailand, Hungary and Japan. Under the guise of charities through his organisation Open Society Foundation, Soros

has funded political movements in several countries. Amnesty International is his organisation. Its credentials are also dubious and it is funded by him. The principal funder of the Democratic Party in the US is Soros. In 2020, at the Davos Economic Forum, he made derogatory remarks about the CCA Bill and abolition of Article 370. The agitation against the Farm Bills was funded by him. Even the detractors of PM Modi in India are scared to associate with him, though some had initially hobnobbed with his representatives.

DHARMARAJAN AK, *Thalassery*

North East Embraces Saffron

APROPOS reference to the report titled "Verdict in Favour of Ashtra Lakshmi", *Organiser*, March 12. For the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and more so for the Central Government, which has made development its plank in the Seven Sisters, the election results are an endorsement of its positive policy vis a vis the North East. The BJP has emerged a winner in North East only due to



its serious work in ameliorating poverty, providing livelihood to the locals and bringing investment in the region. The beleaguered region, which was lying in obscurity, is now attracting

tourists. In fact, the talented weavers, artisans, designers, musicians as well as entrepreneurs are slowly but steadily becoming part of the national mainstream. People of the North East, who are a bundle of talent, have outrightly rejected the Congress party due to its lack of vision on how to ensure growth of this region and its failure to acknowledge the good policies being pursued by the Centre.

NITIN NAGPAL, *Lajpat Nagar*

Mockery of Bharat

REGARDING the recent lecture of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi at Cambridge University, it is a matter of concern that an opposition leader is settling personal and political scores by speaking up against the ruling Government at the Centre. Political battles aside, it becomes incumbent for any opposition leader to be neutral at such events. However, one cannot expect such mature and rational behaviour from the Congress scion, who has shown his recklessness and irresponsibility by claiming that there was no Freedom of Expression in India. If that was the case, then why was the media giving so much coverage to him during his Bharat Jodo Yatra? The fact is that it was his grandmother Indira Gandhi, who had imposed the Emergency. She had put so many journalists, freedom fighters and intellectuals in jail. Their only fault was that they spoke up against the draconian Emergency imposed by her.

INDERJIT SINGH, *Gurugram*

Secular-Socialist Stagnation Vs Real Hindu Growth Rate

Bharat is 'dangerously close' to the Hindu growth rate, remarked Raghuram Rajan, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Bharat. He was referring to the sequential slowdown in quarterly growth, as revealed by the latest estimate of national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The State Bank of India (SBI), in its Ecowrap report, dismissed Rajan's argument as "ill-conceived, biased and premature". Only time will tell whether the Bharatiya economy is showing positive trends as claimed by SBI based on 'recent GDP numbers against the available data on savings and investments'. But the fact remains that the entire world sees Bharat as the 'bright spot' in the post-COVID-19, Ukraine-Russia war embroiled world. The stagnated secular socialists like Rajan exhibit their Hindu hatred using ill-conceived, derogatory terms.

Though BPR Vithal, under the pseudonym Najin Yanupi, for the first time equated Hindu Dharma with slow economic growth in 1973, the term 'Hindu Rate of Growth' was popularised by agriculture economist from Delhi School of Economics Prof Raj Krishna by using the erroneous cliché in his lecture. He was a staunch opponent of the Nehruvian socialism characterised by 'license-permit-quota-raj'. Therefore, in 1978, he chose the term 'Hindu Rate' to label the slow economic growth rate from the 1950s to 1970s. The slow economic growth rate hovering around 3.5 per cent was attributed to the Hindu philosophy of *Bhagya* and *Karma*, fatalists and contented.

The Nehruvian socialism had nothing to do with Hindu principles and ideas; even Nehruvians would accept that. Then why did a person with Western liberal ideas equate another Western fad called socialism with Hindu Dharma? Pakistan is facing another economic crisis, but the phenomenon is never termed an 'Islamic' growth rate. Many European countries have been going through cycles of stagnation and negative growth rate - not called a Christian growth rate. Then what is the reason behind maligning the oldest and open civilisation? The answer is 'secular mindset'. For both the Western prisms and Abrahamic religions, Hinduphobia is inherent. Branding anything Hindu as regressive, parochial, fatalist and communal is their basic presumption for getting recognition as a scholar.

As Angus Maddison, a famous British economist, meticulously traced and presented in the OECD report, Bharat had been the world's economic giant for 2,000 years. Sharing the top two slots in economic growth with China, Bharat had the highest share of the world's GDP at nearly 25 per cent from 1 CE to 1700 CE. At some point, that share touched upon the one-third proportion of the global economic share. Many travelogues and testimonies of scholars visiting glorious Hindu empires like Vijayanagar verify these facts. That was the real Hindu growth rate, and we should proudly strive to achieve the same.

The colonial loot through the drain of resources led to the decline of Bharat's growth trajectory. As Dharampal Ji revealed through his magnificent research based on British documents, colonial exploitation destroyed the Bharatiya social, educational, industrial and legal structures. The colonisation of the minds of our elite is the worst legacy which the British have left. The Nehruvians then and now represent the same colonial psyche. Former RBI Governor represents this class. Hence, as the RBI Governor, he had issues with the Modi Government's flagship schemes and policies like 'Make in India', Jan Dhan Yojana and demonetisation. Raghuram Rajan's every prediction about Bharat, whether about COVID-19 management or economic recovery, has gone wrong. Therefore, his laughable comments will not find any ground in the battle of narratives. While discrediting him, there is a need to debunk this fraudulent concept of the Hindu growth rate once and for all.

 @PrafullaKetkar



Today we are driving our society towards a state of complete domination by western thought, science, technology and systems, thereby completely subjugating our people and their environment and civilisation in chains of bondage....If we wish to change this, then we have to begin to create a new India on the basis of the traditions, beliefs, knowledge systems and the nature of the people of our civilisation. We must decide to abandon the colonial systems and devices, with immediate effect."

—Rediscovering India, Acharya Dharampal, Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas, Mussoorie, 2003, pp. 214-15

HINDU BASHING IN ECONOMICS

WHILE THE TERM 'HINDU RATE OF GROWTH' HAS BEEN RECKLESSLY USED BY SOME ECONOMISTS TO DEFAME THE HINDU WAY OF LIFE, STUDIES SHOW THAT INDIA'S ECONOMY WAS THE STRONGEST WHEN HINDUISM WAS AT ITS VIBRANT BEST

Former Governor of Reserve Bank of India Raghuram Rajan recently commented that India is dangerously close to the “Hindu rate of growth” as the country sees limited investment in private sector, high-interest rates, and decreasing global growth. Rajan’s denigrating statement points to an earlier concerted effort to defame India and Hindutva on the economic front.

THE DEFAMATORY TERM

It was Raj Krishna, an Indian economist, who rose to notoriety for coining the term “Hindu rate of growth” in 1978, to describe the slow annual growth that averaged between 3.5-4 per cent during the period from 1950s to 1980s (Chapter 3 of *Statistical Year Book - Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation- MOSPI*). Thereafter, the anti-Hindutva lobby has conveniently propagated the term to indicate slow economy, backwardness, and low economic growth rates since Independence. Raj Krishna’s coining of the term ‘Hindu rate of growth’ was publicised globally by the then World Bank President, Robert McNamara, in 1980s.

However, many critics have pointed out that the period from 1950s to the end of 1980s should have been termed as “Nehruvian socialist rate of growth” and not “Hindu rate of growth”, since throughout this period India experienced the impact of Nehru’s experiment with the Russian model



Raghuram Rajan, former RBI Governor

ANALYSIS



SAJI NARAYANAN

Former President BMS

of socialist economics. The experiment miserably failed. During this period, growth stagnated around 3.5 per cent, while per capita income growth averaged 1.3 per cent. Another Congressman, Dr Manmohan Singh, endorsed the failure of the Nehruvian Russian model of Socialism in India in the early 1990s and officially inaugurated the opposite stream of American model of capitalism coining the fascinating name “globalisation”.

Max Weber had disqualified India and China in the history of economic development for following Hindu and Buddhist religions. Max Weber had even concluded that lack of the 'spirit of capitalism' in Indian society is attributed to the absence of 'a rational practical ethic'. But Anthony Giddens who wrote the introduction to Weber's book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* clearly admits that “during the same period at which Hinduism became systematised, trade and manufacture



reached a peak in India.”

Karl Marx had said India is a backward country which worships monkey, elephant and cows. The tradition of Karl Marx, Max Weber-Raj Krishna-McNamara to trivialise Hindu India was later carried forward by Montek Singh Ahluwalia who endorsed Raj Krishna’s description of India in the new millennium. Now it is the turn of people like Raghuram Rajan to carry on the mischief.

THE REAL “HINDU RATE OF GROWTH”

Exactly five years later, Raja Krishna’s colonial theory trashing Hindus for India’s low growth was blasted in 1983. Two studies, one by Paul Bairoch, a Belgian economic historian and another by Angus Maddison, as approved by OECD (The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), proved that actually the “Hindu rate of growth” had kept India the most powerful economy of the world for 1850 years out of 2,000 years of world economic history.

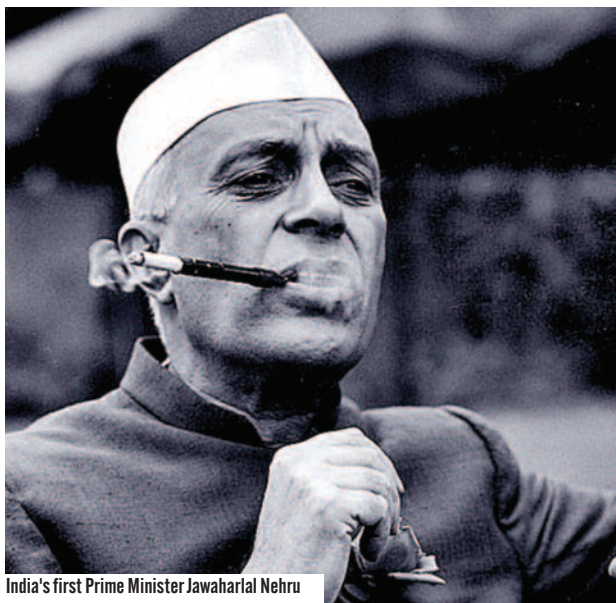
In 1983, Paul Bairoch, a Belgian economic historian, came out with his study of the world economy from 1750 to 1980 and his findings astounded the West. He said that in 1750, India’s share of world GDP was 24.5 per cent, China’s

MADDISON SHOWED THAT HINDU INDIA WAS THE LEADING ECONOMIC POWER OF THE WORLD WITH 32 PER CENT SHARE OF WORLD’S GDP IN THE FIRST 1000 YEARS (AD 1 TO 1000) AND 28 PER CENT TO 24 PER CENT IN THE SECOND MILLENNIUM TILL 1700

32.8 per cent and Europe’s 23.2 per cent, but the combined share of Britain and the US was only just 2 per cent! India and China together accounted for 57.3 per cent of world manufacturing output. Bairoch shook the West by saying that in mid 19th century, the West had a lower standard of living than Indians and Chinese.

Bairoch’s revelation shocked the capitalist world. OECD (The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), an organisation formed by the capitalist countries, immediately constituted a Development Institute Studies under Angus Maddison, a great economic historian, to conduct comprehensive research into economic history and check the veracity of Bairoch’s study. The real intention for directing such a study was to prove Bairoch wrong. Angus

RAGHURAM RAJAN/ECONOMY



India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru

THE DEROGATORY TERM WAS COINED WITH THE 1950-80 PERIOD IN MIND. THIS PERIOD OF INDIAN ECONOMY SHOULD ACTUALLY HAVE BEEN TERMED AS THE “NEHRUVIAN SOCIALIST RATE OF GROWTH”, SINCE THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD INDIA SUFFERED THE IMPACT OF NEHRU’S EXPERIMENT WITH THE RUSSIAN MODEL OF SOCIALIST ECONOMICS

Maddison, after two decades of hard work, published his studies - *World Economic History-A Millennial Perspective in 2001*. But against all expectations, his study also confirmed Bairoch’s conclusions.

Maddison studied the entire 2000 years of economic history. The study revealed that Hindu India was the richest country in the world before the Industrial Revolution and foreign colonial rule. Maddison showed that Hindu India was the leading economic power of the world with 32 per cent share of world’s GDP in the first 1000 years (AD 1 to 1000) and 28 per cent to 24 per cent in the second millennium till 1700. In 1700 AD India’s share was 24.43 per cent. China was second to India and it was only in 1600 that China temporarily overtook India. India again overtook China in 1700. Thus till 1830, the global economic play was with Hindu India and Buddhist China. The Bairoch-Maddison studies have also been corroborated by other

studies and records. One such report is the ancient historian Pliny the Elder’s reference about India (‘Natural History’, 6.21, 6.26 and 12.41). He talks about the growing anxiety of the Roman Senate on the drain of significant part of gold and wealth of the Roman empire due to the regular import of pepper and other spices from India.

FALL OF INDIA’S ECONOMY

Bairoch found that India’s share fell from 20 per cent in 1800; to 18 per cent in 1830; and finally crashed to 1.7 per cent in 1900, while China’s crashed from 33 per cent to 6.2 per cent. In 1800, China and India accounted for 53 per cent of the world’s GDP and in 1900 they accounted for only 7.9 per cent. In these 150 years, the combined share of Britain and the US rose from mere 2 per cent to over 41 per cent. The Industrial Revolution owed much to India’s wealth that was looted away by the British. Consequent colonial looting led India to poverty. Nehruvian socialism made it stagnate further even after freedom. This has led to the “Nehruvian socialist rate of growth” at the rate of about 3.5 per cent.

Maddison also confirmed and confessed that Hindu India declined only due to colonial exploitation. Now the Maddison study, endorsed by OECD, is the most authentic economic history of the world. He postulated that the advantage of Europe and backwardness of the third world including India was due to colonial exploitation and not due to any scientific advancement or other superiorities. Angus Maddison says: “If Bairoch is right, then much more of the backwardness of the third world presumably has to be explained by colonial exploitation” and “much less of Europe’s advantage can be due to scientific precocity, centuries of slow accumulation, and organisational and financial superiority”. India is rich in natural resources and human resources. Thus, it is said about India in comparison to Japan that “India is a rich country inhabited by the poor” and “Japan is a poor country inhabited by the rich”!

Raja Krishna brigade’s distorted understanding about India’s economy or other ulterior intentions led to the terming of low rate of growth as “Hindu rate of Growth”.

In the new era of *AtmaNirbhar Bharat*, when India stands high among the comity of nations on economic and other aspects, every nationalist proudly aspires to the resurgence of the “Hindu rate of growth” achieved in the glorious past. People with colonial mindset should not be allowed to tamper with such aspirations. Hence it will be appropriate for Raghuram Rajan to apologise to the nation for his irresponsible statement that pains all the nationalists in India. ■

AN ILL-INTENDED COMPARISON

RAGHURAM RAJAN HAS SIMPLY EXPOSED HIMSELF BY DENIGRATING INDIA'S GROWTH STORY ON THE BASIS OF A MINOR ONE-QUARTER ECONOMIC CORRECTION AND USING A MALICIOUS TERM COINED TO DEGRADE THE WORD 'HINDU'. THIS, AT A TIME WHEN, DESPITE GLOBAL DOWNTURN, MOST GLOBAL RATING AGENCIES HAVE PREDICTED A GROWTH RATE OF 6.5 PER CENT FOR 2023-24 FOR INDIA, MORE THAN TWICE THE GLOBAL AVERAGE



projects a fall in the global growth rate to 2.9 per cent in 2023 from 3.2 per cent in 2022 with an alarming inflation of 8 per cent. Even in this state of global downturn, most of the global bodies and rating agencies have been predicting a growth rate of 6.5 per cent for 2023-24 for India, almost more than twice the global average. The rate of growth in 2022-23 is also expected to be more than 7 per cent. The Economic Survey has also forecast a 6.5 per cent growth in 2023-24, which shall be highest among all major economies and the nominal growth for the country would be at 11 per cent. The dubbing of the Nehru-Indira-era slow growth as 'Hindu Growth Rate' was mischievous and sinister. The Nehru-Indira era was marred by the highly restrictive socialistic policies.

The economic buoyancy displayed by our economy in the last nine years is unprecedented since the last couple of centuries. Bharat has left behind 5 major global economies, including England, the erstwhile colonial ruler, in these nine years. The critiques of the Hindu worldview, bent upon maligning Hindu values, have now resorted to calling a minor economic correction in the growth rate of the third quarter of the financial year 2022-23 as the 'Hindu rate of growth' – a derogatory term coined in 1978. Maligning Hinduism on the basis of a minor economic correction is unfortunate.

THEN AND NOW

The socialistic policies adopted post Independence, till the mid 1980s, such as public sector reservations in several sectors, license raj, denying permissions to the domestic industry even to manufacture half of the domestic demand, had restrained the average growth to 4 per cent per annum. Before Independence, in the Christian era rule of the East India Company followed by the British Crown, the growth rate was pegged at 1 per cent between 1890 to 1910 – the worst in several millennia. India's share in the world GDP had also declined from 34 to 22 per cent during the Islamic Moghul rule. Today, Bharat is the producer and supplier of a wide range of necessities from food grains to medicines, including Covid vaccines, and defence products from aircrafts (Tejas) to guns.

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has portrayed the minor correction, in a mere three-month period between October and December 2022 as 'dangerously close' to 'the Hindu rate of growth'. This correction has occurred on revision of Internet rates, in the aftermath of the post Ukraine war inflationary trends visible across the world.

Overall annual economic growth is not likely to dip and the comparison is ill intended. It is worth mentioning here that the January 2023 World Economic Outlook Update

It would be worth reminding here that at the end of the UPA regime, Bharat's economy was

ANALYSIS



PROF BHAGWATI PRAKASH

Ex Vice-Chancellor of Gautam Buddha University

RAGHURAM RAJAN/ECONOMY

at 10th place, and since 2014 onwards, we have left behind Russia, Italy, Brazil, France and England. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already announced that Bharat is poised to be the third largest economy of the world inter alia by imparting skills to youth and making them better employable.

The Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and certain other agencies have opined that Bharat can become a 40 trillion dollar economy, if the entire working age population can be meaningfully employed. Today, even the global economy has only 100 trillion dollar GDP. The US is a 20 trillion dollar economy. Moreover, on the basis of purchasing power parity (PPP) cost, Bharat has already become the 3rd largest economy after the US and China, growing at a faster rate than both. Unfortunately, Raghuram Rajan has chosen to link a single quarter low growth of end 2022 to the Hindu worldview at a time when the country is growing at more than double the average global growth rate.

FALLOUT OF DEVALUATION

It was under the missionary dominated rule of European imperials that the Rupee suffered the worst. As per B.E. Dadachandji (author of '*History of Indian Currency and Exchange*', 1928), one Rupee was equal to 23.12 pence sterling, which had fallen to 15 pence and then to a further low of six pence for one Rupee.

Immediately after Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru, the champion of pro-Left policies and critical of Hindu revivalism, had without any pressing need borrowed from the World Bank under the condition of devaluing Indian Rupee. The Rupee-Dollar exchange rate was then revised from Rupees 3.5 per dollar to Rupees 4.49 per dollar. Even Pakistani Rupee was still at Rs 3.5 per dollar then in 1949. The second devaluation was done in 1966 by Indira Gandhi and the third and last devaluation was done by Manmohan Singh in 1991. Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay brought out a monograph to warn against the fallout of that devaluation.

At the time of Independence, England was indebted to Bharat by a Pound sterling loan equivalent to Rs 1400 crore, and India was one of the five largest shareholder/quotaholder of the world Bank and IMF. By virtue of this, Bharat was one of the five permanent directors on the board of both, the World Bank and the IMF. On account of the devaluation of Rupee by Jawaharlal Nehru to borrow from the World Bank, the value of our share in the IMF and World Bank fell and consequently we lost our permanent directorships.

IMPACT OF SOCIALIST POLICIES

The private sector, up to mid 1980s, was not allowed to set

up new manufacturing capacities or expand existing ones. As a result, the country had become import dependent and stricken by scarcities of all type of products from sugar and cement to steel. Bharat had to import steel worth Rs 31,000 crore till 1981, despite having plenty of iron ore. Bharat could have had foreign exchange surplus of Rs. 13,000 crore, had the domestic manufacturers been allowed to fulfill the demand of iron and steel. The Industrial Policy Resolutions of 1948 and 1956, the Industries Development & Regulations Act of 1951 (the law establishing corrupt license raj) and the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act prevented the industry from growing and fulfilling domestic demand. Hence, the low 4% rate of growth till mid 1980s was not a result of Hindu economics but of draconian socialistic policies. The Indian Rupee is emerging as an international currency for global trade after almost a millennium. Already 12 countries are now trading in the Indian Rupee, and almost 35 countries have shown interest to do so. India is presiding G20. India has pioneered in developing the most effective Covid-19 vaccine and administered 100 crore people with free vaccines. India has championed the cause of global humanity by calling the WTO member nations to free Covid medicines and vaccines from patents. India is also leading the Global Solar Alliance and has declared the target for carbon neutral economy as well. At such a moment, dubbing of a single quarter growth rate as 'Hindu growth rate' and raising nationwide alarm is unfortunate.

In fact, the economy is rather poised to take a bigger leap, as highlighted by the State Bank of India's research report Ecowrap, which has dubbed Rajan's view as ill conceived and biased. The SBI report emphasised that gross capital formation (GCF) by the government has touched a high of 11.8 per cent of GDP in 2021-22, up from 10.7 per cent in 2020-21. This also had a domino effect in private sector investment that jumped from 10 per cent to 10.8 per cent over the same period. At the aggregate level, the gross capital formation is supposed to have crossed 32 per cent in 2022-23, the highest level since 2018-19. In 2021-22, gross savings have risen to 30 per cent from 29 per cent in 2020-21. The ratio is supposed to have crossed 31 per cent in 2022-23, the highest since 2018-19. The economy is on a sound footing as evident from the Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR) that has improved from 7.5 in FY12 to 3.5 in FY22, as per the report. Thus, only half of the capital is now needed for the next unit of output, the report said.

Indeed, the Hindu Worldview – embracing all aspects of life including economic, scientific, technological political, social and cultural – can now usher the society in an era of prosperity and global wellbeing. ■



BAN ON HEALING CRUSADE

'HEALING CRUSADES' AND ADVERTISEMENTS OF MAGICAL REMEDIES BANNED BY THE UPPER SIANG DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

In the wake of growing superstitious activities of the Church and missionaries to convert people, the Arunachal's Upper Siang district has banned conducting prayer healing, healing Crusades, healing through local priest (Epak), as a remedy to cure various diseases and illnesses.

"This has been brought to the notice of undersigned that various organisations/groups are conducting prayer healing, healing Crusades, healing through local priest (Epak) etc or (by whatsoever name called) as a remedy to cure various diseases and illness. Such practices are misleading innocent people from taking a course to scientific medical treatment and cause severe health issues. It also gives rise to socio-cultural problems like conversion to other faith and thereby spreads discord among people & groups," read an official notification dated February 28, 2023.

Arunachal's Upper Siang district administration has also banned such advertisements and healing practices that breaks the provisions of The Drug and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisement) Act, 1954. Section 5 of the Act prohibits advertisement of magic remedies for treatment of certain diseases and disorders.

"No person carrying on or purporting to carry on the

profession of administering magic remedies shall take any part in the publication of any advertisement referring to any magic remedy which directly or indirectly claims to be efficacious for any of the purposes specified in section 3," the notification reads.

"I, Shri Hage Lailang, Deputy Commissioner-cum-District Magistrate, Upper Siang District under the provisions of section 133 of CrPC bestowed upon me, hereby issue following directives to be followed scrupulously within Upper Siang District –Ban on conduct of Prayer Healing, Healing Crusades, Healing through local priest (Epak) etc (by whatsoever name/nomenclature called at public premises and ban on advertisement(Publication/Display/Circulation) of magical remedies for treatment of diseases and disorders," the notification reads.

The notification further added that all these directives shall apply to all individuals, groups, faiths or religions. Also, SP of Upper Siang District has been directed to initiate necessary action to execute the order & to take appropriate action against violators. Also, all Administrative Officers have been directed to ensure its execution and mass circulation of the order within their respective jurisdiction. ■

HOAX OF HEALING CRUSADE

THE IDEA OF CONVERSION, UPROOTING SOMEONE FROM HIS CULTURE AND TRADITIONS FOR THE SAKE OF SPREADING RELIGION ITSELF IS THE BIGGEST FORM OF SUPERSTITION. CHANGAI SABHAS, THE 'HEALING & DELIVERANCE MEETINGS', IN THE NAME OF CURING CHRONIC DISEASES, PROMISING EMPLOYMENT, PROTECTION FROM EVIL AND SECURING VISA FOR A FOREIGN COUNTRY ARE EMERGING AS THE SOUL-HARVESTING INSTRUMENTS OF MISSIONARIES TO MANIPULATE THE WEAK, POOR & GULLIBLE PEOPLE BY SPREADING SUPERSTITIONS. BAN ON HEALING CRUSADES IN ARUNACHAL IS A SIGNIFICANT BEGINNING IN REINING IN THE EVIL OF SPREADING SUPERSTITIONS FOR EVANGELICAL PROSELYTISATION. THE MISSIONARIES AND INTELLECTUALS WHO OFTEN TARGET INDIGENOUS TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES AND PRESSURISE GOVERNMENTS IN THE NAME OF SUPERSTITIONS, CONVENIENTLY TURN A BLIND EYE TOWARDS THIS EVIL AND HOAX CRUSADE IN THE NAME OF HEALING



Benny Hinn, the US-based controversial preacher, addressed three massive rallies between February 13-15, 2004 at the Bandra Kurla Complex in northwest Mumbai for an event billed as the "Festival of Blessings". His own website claims 4.8 million people attended these services. The personalities who attended this event included then Maharashtra Governor Mohammed Fazal, then Congress MP Sunil Dutt, actors Dev Anand, Kiron Kher and Reena Roy, ghazal singer Jagjit Singh and his wife Chitra Singh, as well as popular television personality Shekhar Suman.

The Christian Broadcasting Network reports that this 'healing



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crusade' in India drew one of the largest crowds ever. "This endeavor was massive on every scale," it says. Interestingly, the Catholic Church in Mumbai warned its members from visiting his prayer meetings in the city. The website www.christiantoday.co.in reported that "The Church, rightly worried that their faithful, many of whom watch his television programs, will flock to his meetings hoping to watch people healed from sicknesses said that Hinn was misleading Catholics with his "false prophecies, his alleged visions of angels and contacts with the dead". "

This website describes Hinn, who claims to make contact with the dead, as a controversial figure in the west where he has been criticised for misinterpreting the Bible and prophesying the appearance of Jesus at his gatherings. His claims of miraculous healing are also treated with skepticism, it reports.



VHP WARNED ABOUT 'CHANGAI SABHA' IN PUNJAB

Amid growing incidents of "Changai Sabha" ('healing meeting') in Punjab, VHP's Central Joint General Secretary Dr Surendra Jain on November 26, 2021, had said that a Changai Sabha was an immoral, illegal and irreligious conspiracy of Christian missionaries to convert people by fraud; their two other potent weapons are force and allurement. He further said that despite this, then Chief Minister of Punjab Charanjit Singh Channi tarnished the dignity of his office by accepting to be the chief guest at a Changai Sabha event in Moga. The dharma-cherishing society of Punjab, the holy land of the great gurus, strongly opposed this conspiracy of illegal conversions, he added.

Dr Surendra Jain said that "Changai Sabha" is a punishable offense under Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code (IC) and the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, 1954. If they can heal someone with the incantation of some abracadabra, why don't they heal millions of patients in the world? Millions of people died due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including many Church priests. If they really have any power, why weren't they all saved? This is just a fraudulent act in which innocent and unsuspecting people are trapped and converted.



Youth Associate Brother Johnny Lever at Swargate Pune #YouthAssociateBrotherJohnnyLever

While addressing a religious gathering organised by 'Youth Associates', Bollywood actor Johny Lever, alias John Prakasa Rao Janumala, said he healed the liver swelling of famous actor Hrithik Roshan through prayers. The video was posted on June 8, 2019 which has been viewed by 75.95 lakh users till date.



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In May 2022, pastor Pradeep Kolhe attempted to organise a big prayer meeting called “Mumbai Peace Festival 2022” in association with pastor Bajinder Singh from Punjab, who is infamous for propagating superstition in the name of healing and deliverance. The event was cancelled amid protests from activists including Sikhs.

The infamous Christian preacher Sebastian Martin, founder of the Church from Vasai in Palghar district Maharashtra, was known for his claims of ‘healing’ patients suffering from severe ailments through prayers. He managed huge following through his fraudulent healing claims. The Mumbai Police booked him in 2016 under the IPC & Black Magic Act on the complaint by a Vasai resident, Nilesh Patil.



CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY RANJAN CHUTIA ARRESTED IN ASSAM FOR MISUSING RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CREATIONS OF BHAKTI SAINT SHANKAR DEV



On December 18, 2022, villagers of Maruvapalli village, Andhra Pradesh, caught a Christian priest red handed with young children who were lured into the church, despite many earlier warnings by the minor children’s parents and village elders against unsolicited invitation. The villagers had been complaining for a while that church authorities were enticing children as young as six and seven with sweets, chocolates and biscuits to enter the Church premises for conversion activities. ■

BLACKMAGIC OF PROSELYTISATION

THE WESTERN CHRISTIAN WORLD IS SPREADING LIES ABOUT HINDUISM. ITS PREACHERS TRAVEL ACROSS INDIA TO MAKE LOCALS BELIEVE THAT HINDU PRACTICES ARE UNSCIENTIFIC

The Western Christian world seems very busy nowadays, especially in peddling how unsafe India is for minorities and how minority rights are being strangled in India. As for the Western Christian world, the realisation of religion, culture and truth comes with a prejudiced fixation burdened with a self-proclaimed need to monopolise the entire creation for their one God, the book and a holy ghost. This self-taken burden of the Western Christian world to populate a singular thought process has blurred the thin line between what is ethical and what is fraudulent, what is religious and what is quackery and what is spirituality and what is cacophony.

FOMENTING TROUBLE

At a time when humanity has realised the necessity of scientific medical interventions, and when India is taking the quantum jump to make healthcare accessible to the last person, an army of Western religious zealots are flooding every nook and corner of the country to fool people with quackery and charm them to conversion on a mission mode. These European preachers, who match the deceit and cunningness of snake charmers, are using their hypocrisy of magical trickery and are driving innocent Indians away from awareness of scientific medical interventions to pursue magical and superstitious healing of diseases. What is more intriguing is that, while these Western religious zealots spread their antipathy against the Indian Government's stand on

healthcare, they expect the Indian Government to provide them with a conducive environment so that they can apply their quackery and comfortably convert the very people which the Constitution has mandated the Government to protect.

In a Healing Crusade event organised at Mariani town, Jorhat, Assam, between October 22 to October 25, 2019, by a Swedish couple Hannah Mikaela Bloom and Marcus Arne Henrik Bloom for their evangelical organisation called Good News To All People (GNTAP) where they claimed to have converted more than 15,787 (fifteen thousand seven hundred eighty-seven) people by performing magical healings on the old and the young. Astonishingly, the Swedish preacher couple utilised their foreign funds to organise a three-day magical superstitious healing programme right under the nose of the Jorhat district administration, while on tourist visas and openly converted people. The Preacher couple went on for three straight days, conducting magical healing on children disregarding the law of the land like the Juvenile Justice Act, violated Drugs and Magic Remedies Act 1954, and



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Villagers being baptised on the banks of a river in Bihar

the tourist visa norms. While doing all this, the couple conveniently preached to the world how unsafe India is for minorities and how strangled is freedom of religion in India.

OVERLOOKING HUMAN RIGHTS OF HINDUS

While considering the Christian Western world's pretence on the supposed insecurity of minorities in India, it would remain incomplete without highlighting the not-so-old memory of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which connivingly placed India on the list of countries of particular concern and opportunely overlooked human rights violations of Hindus in Pakistan. Perhaps the self-certified accreditation agency never misses out on an opportunity to lecture the world about religious freedom as it wants to blackmail the world into fulfilling the great biblical commission, or it is just one uncanny coincidence that almost all heads of the USCIRF are Christians and no other co-religionist got any chance in so-called multicultural America. Maybe the USCIRF is like that one crazy lad we all know who would make the most considerable hue and cry if his mistakes are pointed out so as in the future, people overlook his mistakes to avoid facing those tantrums.

EARNING WITHOUT WORK PERMIT

Since the entire Western Christian world, USCIRF and BBC

in particular, is so bothered with the insecurities of minorities inside India, it becomes a moral obligation for me as an Indian to highlight at least a few of the achievements of their citizens. This one, John Roughton from Virginia, USA, openly operates a Christian evangelical organisation by the name of Spirit of Faith Church inside Nagaland and by the name of NISSI church in Assam, which in all likelihood, is registered in the US. But interestingly, while searching for FCRA registration for both entities operated by John Roughton, we could not find one, thus cementing the suspicion that John Roughton is circumventing Indian laws and regulations to funnel foreign funds. Since John Roughton is a US citizen, it is more than evident that the funds he utilised in founding and operating the Spirit of Faith Church are foreign funds and are violative of the FCRA laws of India. Moreover, it is clearly visible from the attached screenshots that John Roughton is organising public events while travelling on a tourist visa. Subsequently, as a common practice in Churches, it is pretty standard that John Roughton is also receiving donations which again amounts to earning in India without a valid work permit. Concomitantly, John was also a very active anti-vaccine advocate and can be seen multiple times resorting to anti-vaccine and anti-lockdown propaganda. It is also worth mentioning that John Roughton and his Spirit of Faith Church organised mass public events in Nagaland even

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when the entire country was under lockdown. Lastly, John Roughton and his spirit of Church also perform Magical healing on people where they supposedly heal people from a ghost infestation. Therefore again, violating the Drugs and magic remedies act 1954 and too without any legal consequences, maybe bcoz he enjoys complete diplomatic patronage from the western Conversion corporation that would scream intolerance if confronted. Now let us look at another UK-based organisation's endeavour called "Heart For India", which works in India and is registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales with the registration number 1088138. However, the very first thing one cannot miss out on is their self-declared motto i.e, "Advancement of the Christian religion primarily in India", for which they had reportedly spent around £62,703, equating to 63,18,205.09 in Indian rupees in the financial year 21-22 alone. Moreover, Heart for India also declares their earlier name was PACAD or Plant A Church A Day, which again is self-explanatory and clearly establishes their objective. The Heart For India, in turn, has an array of other organisations who furthermore operate other organisations to achieve the conversion goal in India. For example, heart for India collaborated with another US-based organisation, Christ For India, to fund the New India Church of God run by Pastor John Abraham, who operates 4,500 churches and

17 orphanages across India and has apparently converted more than 6,00,000 Hindus in the last decade alone.

Perhaps, the rate at which the Western Christian world is invested in achieving a blanket conversion in India is not being realised at an anticipated rate. Since their investments are not getting the foreseen traction, the Western Christian world has deduced this into intolerance and strangulation of minority rights in India. The Western Christian world also had, at times, left no stone unturned to imply that all practices of Indians and Hindus, in particular, are highly unscientific and that only their way paved the path for scientifically achieving oneness with God. Therefore, it is only apt that before concluding this article, we shed some light on the scientific methods they propagate, especially in the North East.

Nevertheless, it is reasonably clear that there is a larger plan and program in play orchestrated by the Western Christian world that wants to blackmail India into submission, that wants to pressurise the Indian Government to hand out a red carpet welcome while they execute their subversive policies. However, the western Christian world has also realised that the is today aware and more vigilant than before and, with time, will only become resilient, thus, suddenly giving rise to this urgent need to target India and the Indian government's image globally. ■

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ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA FOR EXECUTIVES IN VISIONARY LEADERSHIP FOR MANUFACTURING (PGDEX-VLFM) 2023-24		
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SERVING THE NEEDY OR HARVESTING SOULS?

CONVERSION ACTIVITIES ARE AT A ZENITH IN ANDHRA PRADESH, TAMIL NADU AND PUNJAB AS CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES ENJOY OFFICIAL PATRONAGE. TEMPLE PROPERTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE TAKEN OVER BY THE STATE AND RUN BY CRYPTO-CHRISTIANS WHO MAKE POLICIES TO PUSH THE COMMON PEOPLE AWAY FROM TEMPLES

Churches, through their proselytisation machinery, had a dubious role to play in consolidating colonial power in the southern coastal region during the 18th century. Preachers were specially hired to divide the Indian society and convert Hindus through inducements, cheap freebies and vilification campaigns. These practices continue even today. Christian missionaries have been using 'tool kits' for conversion since over hundred years now. These kits are just updated from time to time to target a wider spectrum.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi, one of the earliest victims of induced conversion by educated pastors, described his painful experience in his book 'Christian Missions: Their Place in India' (Published by Navajivan Trust in 1941). In this book he exposed the methodology that

proselytisation activists employed. One Mr Baker targeted Gandhi, then a lonely student in England, to convert. After some persuasion, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was taken to a prayer meeting, where he was given a 'special' place to pray exclusively. "Lord, show the path to the new brother, who has come amongst us. Give him, Lord, the peace which thou hast given us. May the Lord Jesus, who saved us, save him too. We ask all this in the name of Jesus". Gandhi was strong-willed and did not fall prey to the special prayer treatment given by the 'brothers'. This 'tool kit' was, however, successfully converted many other Indians.

In the same book, Mahatma Gandhi explained incidences of how Christian pastors invaded people's privacy in Rajkot, Gujarat. They would visit the houses of Hindus uninvited and start preaching and



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distributing literature on Christianity. This practice continues even now. Children studying in schools run by missionaries experience the same forced exposure to the Christian style of prayer. In the name of campus discipline, these schools prohibit boys or girls from wearing or carrying 'Hindu symbols' such as bindis, bangles, mehendi and pictures of Hindu Gods in school premises.

SOFT TARGETS

Christian prayer is a compulsory morning ritual in such schools. Then there is the moral class, where only stories from the Bible are taught – never from Hindu scriptures. Girls are often taken to the convent to showcase the life of nuns – tempting and coercing them to interact with the nuns. This is supposed to work like 'slow poison' on young minds, which are at a formative stage.

It is recorded in Gandhi's book how the missionaries are trained to act. The poor and hungry are to be given food first. Then, before providing them the next meal, divide them into small groups and introduce them to Jesus. In the name of 'service', this is how the poor and the hungry were (and continue to be) exploited in India. Though there were innumerable poor and hungry people in Europe at that time, the missionaries did not 'serve' them but only targeted Indians – because the purpose was not to eradicate poverty or hunger but to harvest Jesus in India.

The establishment of Christian missionary schools and hospitals is not to serve the needy but to misuse them as centres for conversion. At hospitals, the treatment starts with a prayer. Gullible Hindus are made to believe that it is not the medicine which cures but the prayer to this particular God. As a gratitude, the patient should remain faithful to the new God. Precisely because of this, a Church is always part of the school and hospital. After the initial introduction in schools and hospitals, the pastor is taken over and leads 'them' to believers' life.

In rural areas, the Christian preachers perform 'miracles' to lure the simple village folk. The miracles are nothing more than magic tricks.

The question that Gandhi posed in his writings was - why should one change his/her religion to Christianity to receive aid in the form of food or medicine? The motive of the aid was obviously not to serve in the true sense but to exploit and convert.

The latest tactic to attract teenagers in colleges and universities is youth camps. It's a free trip for girls and boys to a secluded place with promised fun and sport. The

intent is to make Christian youth target Hindu boys and girls for conversion. In the youth festivals, the camps start with fun, games, songs and dance, and later the participants are taken to a prayer session. Here the real action starts. By the time one realises, he or she is already caught in the quagmire of Christianity, chained through physical attraction including liberal sexual pleasures.

What shocks and stuns is the fact that this conversion activity, which seeks to destroy our social fabric, continues under official patronage in peninsular States, post-Independence. This activity has reached its zenith now in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Punjab under the present dispensations. The ruling leaders here speak about 'Gandhian values' with scant regard for what the Father of the Nation had warned about.

COMMON GOAL

The present chief minister of Andhra Pradesh has never hidden his Christian identity but voters allowed themselves to be fooled in the 2019 election campaign. In the CM saddle now, Jagan Mohan Reddy has bared his true Christian colours.

Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin's rationalism was exposed as a façade when he proudly proclaimed "I am the CM because of you" while addressing a Christian gathering. That was a continuation of his family's 'rationality', set by MK Karunanidhi, as anti-Hindu and pro-minority. The fact is that both Jagan and Stalin won the elections because of the support of the Church and a huge population of crypto-Christians, to an estimated tune of 20-30 per cent.

Christian groups are now openly active in Tamil Nadu, confident that no action will be taken against them since their CM is at the helm. Ever since the 'rationalist' DMK came to power in 1967, the anti-Hindu Churches got a free hand. The 1951 census in the then Madras state showed 90.47 per cent Hindu population, which was down to 87.58 per cent by 2011. In Kanyakumari district, Hindus were in majority but are now reduced to less than 48 per cent of the population.

Jagan's indirect support to the Church and its conversion activities comes from the way government funds are disbursed to pastors. The Andhra Government has made it a policy to give monthly salary to about 30,000 pastors who are not affiliated to any established church. Each pastor is given Rs 5,000 per month. Then there are over 10,000 organised churches, which make the pastors 50,000-strong. As per the 2011 census, the Christian population in Andhra Pradesh was less than 7 lakhs, which means the state had a Christian pastor for



The conversion factory of Ankur Narula, who is making the 4th world's largest Church in Punjab. He has converted lakhs of families across the country

every 15 believers.

The role of crypto-Christians is also diabolical. These are church-goers who remain Hindus in official records, to enjoy the benefits of reservations in education and employment - thus denying the chance to true Dalits.

OFFICIAL SANCTION

That the rampant conversions have official sanction was confirmed when the DMK Government failed to take action on a school and hostel where a girl committed suicide on being pressurised to convert. Both the institutes were running without the requisite permissions. Such pressurised conversions are happening in almost all Christian educational institutions. These institutions, which have a church and a 24/7 pastor in waiting, are the centre of indoctrination of innocent boys and girls in the formative age. There is no official verification of illegal religious activities happening inside. Non-Christian students and their parents are harassed if they complain. There are allegations in some cases that those who complain are targeted by the governmental machinery and false police cases are booked against them. In villages where crypto-Christians dominate, the Hindu population feels helpless as the official machinery is against them.

The crypto-Christian population is not restricted to Andhra Pradesh or Tamil Nadu. It's an all-India phenomenon now, and needs immediate attention of the government and counter action from the Hindu society.

The Association of Integrated Christian Council national president Sonthi Nagaraju had claimed in March' 22 that the Christian population in India will soon be 30 per cent. To this end, foreign-based organisations provide big funds to target Indian population. The 'secular' polity of DMK and YSRCP is the same.

The Hindu places of worship, on the contrary, are seen as revenue generating wings of the government. Both the

MISSIONARY BAITS

- Pastors are assessed by their foreign Church masters on the basis of the number of conversions done by them. The financial support they get from abroad depends on this 'assessment'
- Christian education institutions invite pastors to talk to students about their studies. Then the parents are asked to visit. Every school visit ends with a church visit, where some essential items are presented as gifts
- Poor families are helped with payment of fees, uniforms, bed sheets, sweaters and other things. These actions also work as inducement for the neighbours to join the Christian congregations
- Magic tricks show Hindu Gods in a bad light. For example, a wooden cross (coated with metallic paint) will be seen floating on water while a stone/metal idol of a Hindu God will be 'drowned' in water. With this trick they prove Jesus's "power". This is a very common trick used to lure innocent villagers
- 'Miraculous' healing through prayer is demonstrated in public, while actually it's nothing more than drama. A boy acts like a cripple and as the pastor prays for the boys, he starts walking normally. This is one of the usual dramas of 'faith healing'
- Teenagers are lured through nocturnal meets where young boys and girls are allowed to mingle freely and 'enjoy'. These meetings are labelled as youth camps. They are photographed, and these photos are used in church sessions. Once in the clutches of these pastors, a web is woven around them so that they feel compelled to accept Christ as their 'Lord'

Stalin and Jagan governments have taken over temple properties, lands, gold and even the reserve funds of temples to fund minority-oriented schemes. Using the power given under the Endowment Act, the CMs have turned temples into their own political party property. The temple trusts are filled with non-believers and even by crypto-Christians with the mandate to reduce the sanctity of the temple. At times the temple properties sold and the temple lands are assigned for other purposes while the lands of the Church remain untouched.

Both the state governments have strategically started fixing very high price for darshan as well as pooja in all major temples, thus pushing away ordinary Hindus from these temples. The intent to make the poor feel that the Hindu God is not for them but only for the rich. This feeling is encashed by Christian missionaries who project themselves as followers of a God who charges nothing to meet Him. Affluent Hindus need to understand the subtle design behind these actions of the governments of Jagan and Stalin and act accordingly. Else, it will have a very long term impact on the Hindu belief system. ■



UPROOTING THE INDIGENOUS

THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE NORTH EAST HAVE SUFFERED THE ONSLAUGHT OF CHRISTIANISATION FOR ALMOST TWO CENTURIES NOW. THE SUFFERING IS NOT LIMITED TO THE CHANGED MANNER OF PRAYER ALONE. IT HAS RESULTED IN COLOSSAL DAMAGE TO THE ETHNIC WAY OF LIFE, LOCAL CULTURE, VALUE SYSTEMS AND TRADITIONS

The Khasi community has been one of the worst sufferers of the missionary tactics of spreading hate and discrimination. To comprehend the enormity of damage, it is essential to understand what were those priceless traditions and customary practices that we have lost. We must also revisit the glorious history of the tribes as a whole.

There are significant concentrations of Christian denominations in almost all the North Eastern states, where the indigenous faiths and practices are virtually nearing extinction.

THE AGENDA

It all started in 1841 when the first Welsh missionary set foot on the hills of the Cosya

or Khasi Hills in present-day Meghalaya. Within two to three years, the missionaries succeeded in converting two Khasi tribes. The process was unstoppable thereon and spread at an alarming rate to each and every corner of the region. As per the latest census, the Christian denomination is now over 80 per cent, reducing the indigenous faith or the Adivasi of Khasi land to less than eight per cent.

The East India Company entrusted the spread of 'education' to Welsh Missionary Thomas Jones. Christians credit Jones with giving the written Roman script to the Khasis. The sole objective of spreading education was to enable the Khasis to read the Bible. Jones also translated the Bible into



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Christian missionaries with a Khasi tribal woman in Guwahati

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES TEACH THE CONVERTED (KHASIS) TO DISRESPECT AND AVOID MINGLING WITH THEIR ORIGINAL COMMUNITY, CONVINCING THEM THAT THE KHASIS ARE UNTIDY, UNHOLY AND BARBARIANS. THEIR SACRED ETHNIC TRADITIONS ARE SPECIFICALLY TARGETED, THUS BREAKING THE SOCIAL FABRIC OF THE LAND

Khasi or the local language.

PRE-COLONISATION ERA

The crucial question here is: Were the Khasis illiterate before the introduction of the Roman script? The answer is: No. There were many Khasi writers and thinkers whose works and vision remain matchless till today, such as Babu Jeebon Roy Mairom, U Soso Tham, Radhon Singh Berry and others. Babu Jeebon Roy Mairom translated many books such as Ram Charitra Manas and Bhagwad Gita, to name a few. Radhon Singh Berry wrote the value education books 'Ka Jingsneng Tymmen' or 'The Teaching of Elders'.

The Khasis are living proof of being the only surviving matrilineal system of society. The lineage is taken from the mother's side. The mother is the custodian of all ancestral properties. The mother shall govern the affairs at home, teach her children values and ethics, the way of life and much more. The father, or man of the house, shall represent the clan and the family in the Dorbar or any affairs conducted for the welfare of the society at large.

The Khasis adhere to four significant tenets – To earn Righteousness; To live life by knowing man and knowing God; To live life knowing your maternal and paternal relations, so as to avoid marriages among the same clan for it is an unpardonable sin; and To love yourself dearly and respect others.

The traditional Dorbar of the Khasis is purely democratic,

though it has its own unique system of administration that astonished the British. The Khasi Dorbar was known to be far better than the proceedings conducted in British Parliament.

DIVIDE AND RULE

The Christian missionaries used the Divide and Rule policy from the start and imposed the use of Roman script among the Khasis, removing the Bangla script that was commonly known. Soon they included teachings and hymns from the Bible and made it a compulsory subject. Everything taught in their schools was contrary to the teaching of our elders since time immemorial.

Babu Jeebon Roy realised what the missionaries were teaching – the students were being made to learn by heart the sentence: "You are a born sinner, your mother, father and your ancestors are sinners, the curse of your self-respect". He then decided, along with other visionary Khasi leaders, to start a school and spread the knowledge and wisdom of the ancestors to the younger generation. He also pointed out that there should be a school for higher studies too, but the missionary paid no heed. Thomas Jerman Jones replied to him: "We have come for religion and not for education". This reply shocked Babu Jeebon Roy, and in 1880, he himself started a school from which his eldest son Sib Charan Roy was the first student to pass the intermediate examination. This school is now known as the Government Boys Secondary School, at Jaiaw Shillong. This was the first ever school in the North Eastern states. Students from different parts of the region came to study here.

Babu Jeebon Roy also introduced a printing press and bullock carts in Shillong, competed in limestone mining with the British, taught the Khasis to grow Banaspati, coffee, trade with the plains, grow potatoes for supply purpose and not limited only for domestic use. Babu Jeebon Roy's contributions toward the modern Khasi society earned him the title 'Father of Modern Khasis'.

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STRATEGY OF DISRESPECT

The missionaries look upon the Khasi way of life with disdain and also teach the converted (Khasis) to disrespect and avoid mingling with their original community, convincing them that Khasis are untidy, unholy and barbarians. Herbert Jones, a missionary, went to the extent of terming the tunes, musical folklore and songs of victory (in war or after hunting) as "similar to the yelling and crying of dogs and foxes."

Dr John Roberts composed the song of Ri Khasi or Khasi Land, in which he insulted the Khasi culture, tradition and martyrs, degrading their honour and spirit. Unfortunately, till date there are many schools in the States that make this song their anthem and the non-Khasis proudly sing it as a song of glory. This song is actually the anthem of Wales.

The converts are restricted from participating in Khasi festivals such as 'Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem', 'Beh Dien Khlam' and 'Shad Nongkrem' and also from wearing traditional Khasi dresses.

As per a recent report, EW Kharsahnoh, who is the Director of the Synod Institute of Music (2017), shared his experience during the 1980s when the Church leaders stopped him from bringing and using the Khasi traditional instruments inside the Church.

The missionaries also started opposing the cremation of the dead as per the age-old traditions of the Khasis, accusing them of polluting the environment. In a recent case of Mylliem in 2017, a local leader, late Kulam Nongrum, was denied the right to cremation according to customary rites on the grounds that his denomination was in minority, while the non-Khasi were in majority.

Wherever the Christian population is in majority, they try to put an end to the customary practices and the traditional Khasi way of life.

The Christian community is taught to disrespect the Khasi practice of 'ka tip kur tip kha' - one of the cardinal principles guiding social interaction among members of the Khasi society, violation of which is believed to be an unpardonable sin. The missionaries even started introducing the new system of taking lineage from the father's side, illogically reasoning that the matrilineal society is not progressing just because the lineage is taken from the mother's side.

FAKE NARRATIVES

During the 1990s, a fake narrative was spread that the Judgement Day was near. The year 2000 Millennium was the year of judgment, the locals were told. The world was coming to an end, and the dead bodies would rise and



A statue of Thomas Jones in one of Shillong's oldest Presbyterian churches. Jones established the Nongsawlia Presbyterian Church, the first in the northeast, in 1848. He also translated the Bible into Khasi

EAST INDIA COMPANY ENTRUSTED THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION TO THE WELSH MISSIONARY THOMAS JONES. THE SOLE OBJECTIVE OF SPREADING EDUCATION WAS TO ENABLE THE KHASIS TO READ THE BIBLE

face the trial before the Lord. Those who did not embrace Christianity would be sent to hell without trial and face unimaginable horrific tortures, it was propagated. It was a frightening experience for all, especially the youngsters.

I was sent far away from home for studies. There was not a single day that did not terrify me thinking about the year of judgment and that I will die such a horrific death without my family and parents. But even after 23 years, the world exists and we are living a normal life.

In recent years, Christian missionaries have started realising that their fake narratives will no longer convince people to convert. They have therefore increased 'charity' work to lure people to convert. Fortunately, there are many families who have returned to embrace their original faith and tradition. This could be noticed in recent years with the help of Seng Khasi movement.

To conclude, the traditional Khasi culture and values have suffered tremendously at the hands of Christian missionaries. We must understand the dangers of proselytisation and the need to conserve our indigenous cultures, our very identity. ■



UNMASKING SINNERS

IN THE TRIBAL BELT OF THE DINDORI DISTRICT OF MADHYA PRADESH, THE PRINCIPAL, FATHER AND TEACHER OF A MISSIONARY SCHOOL SEXUALLY ASSAULTED MINOR GIRL STUDENTS. THE SCHOOL'S DIARY HIGHLIGHTS THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

■ **SUBHI VISHWAKARMA**

Minor girls studying at a Missionary school reported sexual assault by the Principal, Father and a teacher teaching at the school. The abuse came to the fore after the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) did a surprise inspection drive at the Missionary Hostel. The incident was reported from a small village in tribal belt of the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.

Due to administrative failure, the accused Principal, booked under the POCSO Act, was released by the police. After his release, the Chairperson of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Priyank Kanoongo, visited the school. He met the victims and their family members to help them with the relocation.

In his single visit, as many as seven FIRs were

lodged against the culprits, involving the suspension of Government officials. He also revealed that massive data pertaining to Baptism was recovered from the school documents. However, they are yet to be investigated.

CWC INSPECTION

A First Information Report (number-00/2023) was registered in this case at the Mahila Thana Dindori on March 4. under sections 354, 354(a)(1) i, 323, 34 with sections 7/ 8 of the POCSO Act and sections 75 and 82 of the Juvenile Justice Act.

As per the report, Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Dindori Dhanya Kumari Vaish, told the police that on March 3, 2023, a team from the State

DINDORI CASE/GROUND REPORT



Members of the Child Welfare Committee and NCPDR during a surprise inspection at the Missionary Hostel, Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh



NCPCR AND CWC MEMBERS BROUGHT SWEETS AND COLOURS FOR THE CHILDREN AS IT WAS THE 'HOLI' A HINDU FESTIVAL THE NEXT DAY. THE STUDENTS FIRST SAID THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO CELEBRATE HOLI FOR IT BEING A MISSIONARY SCHOOL

Child Commission head office in Bhopal arrived in Dindori for a surprise inspection drive. The team reached a Missionary school (JDES, Junwani) for the inspection. The CWC members were accompanied by the district educational officers (DEO), Women and Child Development's department members, and the State Child Commission's members.

During this drive, the boy students told visitors about the physical assault they undergo and the vulnerable hostel conditions. At the same time, the girls alleged to the CWC that there was sexual abuse on the minors by Nansingh Yadav and Khemchandra sir. Even after repeated complaints to the Church father (Sunny Father), no action has been taken against the perpetrators, told the minors.

In this complaint, the name of sister Savita was also mentioned, as she used to torture the minor girls in the hostel.

Notably, this complaint was registered only after the NCPCR Chairperson intervened in the matter. Soon after the inspection, the CWC members took these minors off the campus and shifted them to the one-stop centre, located in

the Dindori district, on the same night (March 3). As many as eight minor girls were shifted from the hostel.

Even after sufficient proof, no action was taken against the culprits, and the police was not ready to register the complaint. Members of a regional political party, 'Gondwana Gantantra,' assembled in front of the one-stop centre and threatened the CWC members. They did all of this to bring the girls back to the hostel.

While leading the protests. Chairperson of the party Aman Singh Porte and Radheshyam Kakodiya called a minor girl "characterless" and pronounced their name in front of the media. A separate case has been registered against them.

On March 6, Kanoongo visited the town with the Madhya Pradesh Child Commission Chairperson Onkar Singh and member Megha Pawar. During this visit, he was accompanied by the local CWC members.

Organiser Weekly sent this correspondent on the ground to bring the reality to our readers. This correspondent reached Dindori, a district located in eastern Madhya Pradesh bordering Chhattisgarh. The district is one of the



Chairperson of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Priyank Kanoongo, visited the school. He met the victims and their family members to help them with the relocation

250 most backward districts in the country. It is a tribal belt with the maximum population from the Baiga tribe. The other tribes include Gond, Bhariya, Dhuliya, Agariya and Vanvasi.

The village Junwani where the school and hostels were located, is around 30 kilometres from the Dindori district. Before moving to the hostel, Kanoongo met four minor girls and their family members near Samnapur's one-stop centre.

Among four girls, one was a 'divyang' child, and in fear of the church authorities, she was not ready to leave the hostel. The NCPCR Chairperson sent the girls to their choice of school and hostel in the town. Two of them wanted to be doctors and one said she will become a police officer.

All of them belong to the tribes, with surnames like Behsa and Mattress. This correspondent accessed the statements of the minor children on camera, where they told the CWC members that teacher Khemchandra used to press the breasts of the minor girls in class. He would also touch their private parts.

Other than this, these students told the CWC members that they found a dead cat in the water tank used for drinking purposes. The students mostly remain ill due to the unhygienic practices followed by the school administration.

The team then reached the school. The school was built over a huge land, almost an acre. As soon as one enters the premise, one can see a big Church in front. On the left of the Church was the boy's mess, and on the right was the girl's hostel. The boy's hostel was located opposite the Church and beside it was the principal's office.

Soon, the school administration took Kanoongo to the

office where he checked the registration and clearance documents. Shockingly, irrespective of being a fully Government-funded institution, the school was charging fees from the students. The monthly hostel fee is Rs 1,600, whereas the tuition fee is much higher.

A register that acts as proof to Baptism being practised was also recovered. Kanoongo told *Organiser Weekly*, "We received a complaint from the minor girls that the school authorities sexually abused them. During the inspection, we also found records of conversion activities. After FIR in the said matter was registered, the local political leaders issued threats to CWC members. They even took the accused from the police custody with them."

EXPLOITATION AND CONVERSION

Noting that the visit opened a Pandora's box, Kanoongo said the school received Government-aid for four hostels whereas in reality they only had two. "They were charging money from students, abusing them sexually and converting them to Christianity. Furthermore, the deteriorating condition of the hostels made the students vulnerable, and students were forced to have low-quality food and whatnot".

The members of Tribal Welfare Departments were involved in the matter and hence asked the administration to take action against them, added Kanoongo. The collector suspended the Block Education Officer (BEO) of both the Tribal Welfare Department and the district-level BEO.

He informed about the suspension of the Twon Inspector (TI) in whose presence the accused principal was released.

Apart from this, an FIR against Gondwana Gantrata's

DINDORI CASE/GROUND REPORT

Kakodiya is registered under POCSO and Juvenile Justice Act charges for revealing the name of a minor victim in the media. Other than this, four FIRs have been instituted against the school and church authorities for taking Government grants illegally.

Also, an FIR under IPC section 354 has been registered against goons who threatened CWC members at the one-stop centre on the intervening night of March 4-5.

From the office, Kanoongo reached the boy's mess, where students ate food in an abandoned class. No chapatis were provided to them, and the meal on the day of the visit included Dal, Egg Curry and Rice.

This correspondent accompanied the CWC and Child Commission female members to the girl's hostel, where girls were sitting on the floor to have food. The same menu was served in the girl's hostel as well.

The correspondent went to the rooms and washroom, which were very ugly. While these officials were moving towards the hostel, the locals (mostly converted Christians) assembled at the campus tried stopping them. They were trying to confront the minors saying the Church and its employees could not do any wrong with the children.

This correspondent spoke to some of them. A woman named Chanda Kumari Baghel, who was describing herself as a converted Christian, said, "We are here as the girls have falsely framed a case against Father and the Principal. After Sunday prayers, the authorities told them about the case and then they decided to call for a protest against the Commission."

Asked if her children studied at the school or lived in the hostel, she replied in the negative. She was there just to register her protest against the minor girls, who have falsely framed a case against the principal.

Asked how she would know what was going on in the hostel if none of her children studied there, she said she had complete faith in the teachers. They are gods to them.

The NCPCR and CWC members brought sweets and colours for the children as it was the 'Holi', a Hindu festival, the next day. The students first said they were not allowed to celebrate Holi for it being a Missionary school. They said they could not put 'Teeka' on the forehead as that, too, was not allowed. But the NCPCR and the CWC members counselled them, and then the kids were overjoyed and played Holi with them.

SCHOOL OF CONVERSION

It is pertinent to mention here that the correspondent checked the school diary, which noted the history of the Church and details of the founder. As per the information,



STUDENTS TOLD THE CWC MEMBERS THAT THEY FOUND A DEAD CAT IN THE WATER TANK USED FOR DRINKING PURPOSES. THE STUDENTS MOSTLY REMAIN ILL DUE TO THE UNHYGIENIC PRACTICES FOLLOWED BY THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

the founder of the school and Church in Junwani was Father Pemence, who was born and brought up in the Netherlands.

In 1939 he arrived at Junwani from Nainpur, a town in the Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. He started the school from a small room which later turned into a big campus. In 1988 the school was expanded to Class 10, and in 1997 it converted to a Higher Secondary School.

Meanwhile, Kanoongo, in his inspection, found details of Baptism from 1939. A school located at the heart of the tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh is into conversion since 193

It needs to be inspected why the members of the Gondwana Gantantra party have been trying to protect the molesters and abusers. They, too, are involved in the racket, or it is a bigger game? There is a cent per cent chance of a big conversion racket that is running behind closed doors. More than hundreds of families assembled there said they had converted to Christianity and done it independently. They regularly attend the prayer sessions; the women, wearing cross symbols with their nuptial chains, look like any ordinary Hindu woman.

Another alarming fact is that these people are using their Dalit certificates to seek benefits from Government programmes but call themselves Christians on the ground. De-listing needs to be done. The students also select Christianity in the religion column but are members of 'Tribal welfare groups'. ■

CRUCIFYING RESERVATION

PROVISION OF RESERVATION WAS MADE FOR PEOPLE FROM THE BACKWARD COMMUNITIES. IRONICALLY, THE CONVERTS HAVE SNATCHED ITS BENEFITS FROM REAL SCHEDULED TRIBES. NOW, DEMAND IS BEING MADE THAT THE CONVERTED SHOULD NOT GET THE BENEFIT OF RESERVATION

■ RAVI MISHRA

“Slogan of Mim-Bhim is a conspiracy to end the scheduled caste. They are not concerned about the welfare of SCs, and their aim is only to increase their numbers. If they were concerned about the Scheduled Caste, they would have given SCs the benefit of reservation in their (Christian and Muslim) institutions and the benefit of scholarships given to the minorities,” said Dr Surendra Jain, Central Joint General Secretary of Vishwa Hindu Parishad on March 5, 2023, while addressing the concluding session of two days conclave (March 4-5), “Conversion and Reservation”, organised by Vishwa Samvad Kendra in association with Gautam Buddha University.

Dr Jain further said, “This year we are celebrating the 200th birth anniversary of Swami Dayanand ji. Swamiji had said that untouchability is *aveda*, which means it is not mentioned anywhere in the Vedas. He said that one person will not take any decision on the issue of reservation for converts, but the whole country will think about it. That's why we are discussing this topic through this conclave. There should be a nationwide discussion on this. We will see comprehensive results of this two-day discussion in coming times.” He appealed to educationists, jurists, and sociologists to bring this issue to the centre of discussion nationwide.

Importantly, the Subject of the conclave was the scheduled caste community, who have converted to Christianity or Islam, should get benefit from reservation given to the Hindu Dalit community or not.

During the concluding session of the two days conclave “Conversion and Reservation”, Justice (retd) Shivshankar said, “conversion means leaving one faith completely and



adopting another. And if you have left your faith, then why to demand reservation and benefits given under it?”

Padma Shri Milind Kamble, Chairman of Dalit Indian Chamber of commerce and Industry (DICCI), said, “Provision of Reservation was made to give proper representation to those who had less representation. However, those converted to other religions snatched its benefits from those who deserved it. Still today they are eying on this.” He said that some people want to grab political power in the name of the Reservation to Convert people. They should cry for Reservation before the Minorities Commission instead of snatching it from us.

Before this session, Arun Halder, Vice-Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, said, “reservation was brought to bring exploited society forward. Backward society come forward with the help of caste-based Reservation; this is for what Reservation was brought.” He said it would be wrong if the people converted due to greed and pressure, get reservation benefits”.

While presenting his paper, Prof SC Sanjeev Rayppa said, “Converted people are more protected. We SCs are unsung Heroes. Cases of conversion will increase if converted gets benefits of reservation. Converted SCs don't change their name in documents and keep getting benefits of reservation.”

He said that if converted pressurises and threatens the local people in the villages who follow their original culture, where will these people go?

Notably, VSK and GBU had selected 17 topics arising from the terms of reference of the Justice KG Balakrishnan Commission. The organisers gave a call for papers, to which 60 legal and academic experts responded through their

CONVERSION & RESERVATION CONCLAVE/REPORT



More than 150 participants in the conclave "Conversion and Reservation", including former judges, serving and former Vice Chancellors, deans, professors, journalists, advocates, column writers and other academics

articles from across the country.

Narendra Jadhav, former Member of the Planning Commission and MP of Rajya Sabha, was the chief guest for the inaugural function, Alok Kumar, International Working President, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), and Prof. Sanjay Paswan, former HRD Minister of India, were the key speakers.

More than 150 persons participated in the Conclave, including former Judges, serving and Former Vice Chancellors, Deans, Professors, Journalists, Advocates, Column writers and other academics.

After conclusion of the event, Alok Kumar, International Working President, VHP, on March 6, said, "The Conclave unanimously reiterated that the reservation for Schedule Castes is an article of faith and shall continue. The basis for selecting Caste in the Schedule was the social, educational



Justice (retd) B Shivshankar speaking at the conclave

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS DECLARE THAT THERE IS NO CASTE SYSTEM IN THOSE RELIGIONS, AND HENCE, THERE IS NO PRACTICE OF UNTOUCHABILITY. THUS, A SCHEDULED CASTE PERSON WHO CONVERTS TO ISLAM OR CHRISTIANITY LEAVES BEHIND THE SOCIAL STIGMA AND CANNOT BE CONSIDERED FOR RESERVATION IN STS CATEGORY

and economic backwardness." He further said, "The questionnaire prepared by the then Census Commissioner Dr J H Hutton for the census of 1931 formed the basis for determining social backwardness. It included the following question:

"Does the Caste or class in question pollute a high-caste Hindu by contact or proximity?"

Based on this, the state identified the Castes considered untouchables in Hindu society. The same categorisation later became the basis for introducing Article 17 in the Constitution of India to abolish untouchability. Yet, the curse of social discrimination against the Schedule Castes continues in various forms and degrees. Therefore, the reservation should continue and be limited only to castes considered untouchables in the past."

"The Abrahamic Religions, i.e. Islam and Christianity, declare that there is no caste system in those religions, and hence, there is no practice of untouchability. Thus, a scheduled caste person who converts to Islam or Christianity leaves behind the social stigma and cannot be considered for reservation in the scheduled caste category. In any case, the OBCs amongst Muslims and Christians enjoy the benefits of reservations in the respective quota of various states. The other poor Muslims and Christians are entitled to the reservation under the EWS category. They also enjoy the benefit of different schemes for the development of minorities. Their institutions are protected under Article 30 of the Constitution of India. Minorities have also benefited from welfare schemes, including free ration, housing, toilet, gas, electricity, tap water etc. Therefore, the reservation for Scheduled Castes is sacrosanct. Including any other caste or race will dilute the Constitutional spirit behind the reservation provisions," said Alok Kumar.

He informed that the VSK will prepare a memorandum for submission before the Commission, request for a personal hearing and take all possible steps to place facts before the Commission for a logical and just conclusion. ■



Christian missionaries and Islamic organisations offer incentives such as free education for children and work for the unemployed to coax them to convert

STRICT CONVERSION LAW NEED OF THE HOUR

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION THROUGH COERCION, FORCE AND FRAUDULENT MEANS IS IT VIOLATES THE VERY SPIRIT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA. IT SHOULD BE SUMMARILY BANNED BY LAW. YET IT IS HAPPENING RAMPANTLY IN RURAL AS WELL AS URBAN AREAS, EVEN IN THE NCR REGION



ASHWINI UPADHYAY

Sr. Advocate of Supreme Court

Fraudulent religious conversion by Christian missionaries was well known even in the pre-Independence era. Mahatma Gandhi had denounced this practice in clear terms: “In my opinion religious conversion under the guise of acts of generosity and pitifulness is dangerous and hurtful. The people of the country view this with displeasure, distress and discomfort. Religion is a very personal matter. If a doctor attends

to me to be better from some disease, why should I change my religion in return for it? It is difficult for me to understand why a doctor should expect such a thing from me? If I am studying in any Christian educational institution then why Christianity will be imposed on me?” (*Young India* 23.4.1931).

Coercive, forced and fraudulent conversions have been a global phenomenon since ages. In their zeal to

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION



ARTICLE 25 OF THE CONSTITUTION GUARANTEES 'RIGHT TO RELIGION', BUT THIS IS NOT AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT. IT IS SUBJECT TO PUBLIC ORDER, HEALTH AND MORALITY. RELIGIOUS CONVERSION BY LURING, USING FORCE, PROMISING MIRACLES, PROMOTING SUPERSTITIONS AND BLACK MAGIC IS NOT PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW

enacted in Bikaner, Jodhpur, Kalahandi and Kota.

EFFORTS IN PARLIAMENT

To curb the practices aimed at conversions, several private member bills were introduced in Parliament in the past but failed in the absence of majority. The examples of such bills are: (i) The Indian Conversion Regulation and Registration Bill, 1954 (ii) The Backward Communities (Religious Protection) Bill, 1960 (iii) The Freedom of Religion Bill, 1979 (iv) The Religious Conversions (Prohibition of Allurement-Use of Coercive 10 Methods) Bill, 2000 – introduced in Rajya Sabha by S.S. Ahluwalia (v) The Prohibition on Religious Conversions Bill, 2001 – introduced in Lok Sabha by Anant Gangaram Geete (vi) The Ban on Religious Conversions Bill, 2003 -introduced in Lok Sabha by Chandrakant Khaire (vii) The Compulsory Registration of Religious Conversions Bill, 2005 – introduced in Lok Sabha by Kashiram Rana (viii) The Prohibition on Religious Conversions Bill, 2011 – introduced in Lok Sabha by Bijoya Chakravarty (ix) The Religious Conversions (Prohibition) Bill, 2015 – introduced in Lok Sabha by Bhartruhari Mahtab (x) The Prohibition on Forced Religious Conversions Bill, 2015 – introduced in Lok Sabha by A.T. Nana Patil (xi) The Prohibition on Religious Conversions (By Inducement Or Force) Bill,

convert people to their own religion, both Muslims and Christians have killed billions of people, raped millions of women and destroyed millions of temples and other centres of worship, spirituality and pilgrimage. Propagators of both religions have always been on an expansionist spree aimed at changing the demography of the country they reside in – once they attain majority, they convert that country into an Islamic or Christian country. The composition of demography is not merely a data, but reflects the culture, philosophy and identity of an area and a nation. They have thus completely destroyed many ancient cultures like Maya, Mesopotamia, Roman, Egypt etc. India too was partitioned in 1947 only on the basis of Islamic religion.

Immediately after Independence, there was a big hue and cry against the Christian missionaries' efforts to convert the tribals in remote areas of the North East and Madhya Pradesh. The conversions were, of course, being done in the name of charity. The Government of Madhya Pradesh appointed the Christian Missionaries Activities Enquiry Commission on 14.4.1954 under the chairmanship of Justice Bhavani Shankar Niyogi. The Niyogi Commission submitted an eye-opening report in 1956. It delineated in detail the intent and modus operandi of Christian missionaries.

The list of organisations engaged in conversion activities is long and foreign organisations that fund them are also very large in numbers.

MODUS OPERANDI

One method of conversion is material enticement by which economic, educational, medical or social assistance is offered and doled out as freebie on the condition that the person converts. The second method is the denigration of a person's religion to make a new religion appear superior. The third is the promotion of 'bigotry' i.e. promoting religious hatred and violence.

Predatory conversion tears apart the religious and social fabric of the affected communities and has led to social disorder and unrest.

PRE-INDEPENDENCE LAWS

In the pre-Independence period, the British naturally did not make any anti-conversion law. However, some princely states did enact such laws, such as the Raigarh State Conversion Act 1936, Patna Freedom of Religion Act 1942, Surguja (or Sarguja) State Apostasy Act 1945, Udaipur State Anti-Conversion Act, 1946, and some specific laws against conversion to Christianity were

IN 1956, THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES ACTIVITIES ENQUIRY COMMISSION UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF JUSTICE BHAVANI SHANKAR NIYOGI HAD SUBMITTED AN EYE-OPENING REPORT EXPOSING THE PRACTICES OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN MADHYA PRADESH

2015 – introduced in Lok Sabha by Sadashiv Lokhande.

EFFORTS BY STATES

States are empowered to enact laws against religious conversion and some states have done so. These laws were challenged in the Supreme Court but all of them were upheld. Some of them are: Orissa Freedom of Religions Act, 1967; Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantrya Adhiniyam 1968 (the constitutional validity of both these Acts was upheld by the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the case of Rev. Stanislaus vs. State of Madhya Pradesh 1977 (1) SCC 677); Chhattisgarh Freedom of Religion Act, 1968; Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1978; Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion Act 2002 repealed in 2006; Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003; Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2006; Rajasthan Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam, 2008; Jharkhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2017; Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act 2018.; Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020.

LEGAL VACUUM

Chapter-XV of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 deals with offences relating to religion but there is a vacuum. Injuring or defiling a place of worship, deliberate and malicious act to outrage religious feeling, trespassing on a burial place or hurting religious sentiment etc. are considered as offences relating to religion. However, religious conversion by intimidation, threats, luring through gifts, monetary benefits and by inducement – which are more serious offences – are not covered under Chapter-XV of the IPC. As a result, many states have become safe havens for foreign funded individuals, NGOs and missionaries to indulge in religious conversion and they have established their offices not only along the border and tribal areas but also in the national capital Delhi (Okhla, Jamia Nagar, Batla House, Kali Bari Marg etc).

Article 14 ensures equality before law and equal

TACTICS

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES CONVERT THROUGH

- Orphanages
- Missionaries schools
- Hospitals and other charity works
- Giving loans
- International/national seminars in the name of environment or human rights
- Social, electronic or print media (promoting miracles etc)
- Impersonating and adopting Hindu cultural activities for Bible and Yeshu such as Isa Bhagwat, Isa bhajan etc.

MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS CONVERT AFTER

- Abducting or alluring Hindu girls for marriage with Muslim boys
- Kidnapping kids, sheltering orphans in madrasas, orphanages etc.
- Employing poor children in Muslims establishments
- Sending poor people to Arab countries to work and then confiscating their passports
- Pushing poor, illiterate persons into illegal activities
- Deceiving people with promises of healing by magic and exorcising ghosts
- Using force, terror, fear or coercion in Muslim majority areas
- Using soft worship practices in the name of “Sufiism”

protection of laws throughout the country. However, the situation on ground is different. Take the case of the national capital region (NCR) itself. Religious conversion by threats, coercion and allurement is an offence in Ghaziabad-Noida but not in adjoining East Delhi. Similarly, religious conversion is an offence in Gurugram-Faridabad but not in adjoining West and South Delhi. This is not only in contravention to Articles 14, 21, and 25 but also conflicts with the principles of secularism and rule of law, which are part of the basic structure of the Constitution.

Women and children are the main targets of foreign funded missionaries and conversion groups but the Centre and the States have not taken appropriate steps to control religious conversion in the spirit of Article 15(3).

Religious conversion directly offends the right to life, liberty and dignity guaranteed under Article 21.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

Conversion activists use, or rather misuse, the legal vacuum to continue with their unethical strategies to convert socially and economically backward citizens.

Right to religion guaranteed under Article 25 is not an absolute right but subject to public order, health and morality. Therefore, religious conversion by using miracles, superstitions and black magic is not protected under Article 25. However, due to the outdated and ineffective provisions of the IPC, foreign funded individuals and NGOs are converting EWS-BPL category citizens to other religions by wrong means.

Article 25 guarantees the right to profess, practice and propagate religion, but not the right to convert. Article 26 gives freedom to manage religious affairs to every religious denomination but it is not an absolute right and is subject to public order, health and morality.

Unfortunately, due to inaction at the central and state level, many mosques and churches have become epicenters of black magic, superstition and religious bigotry where the ultimate purpose is to convert.

Article 29 secures the right to culture, custom and tradition of citizens but in the absence of adequate legal safeguards, this basic right is being seriously violated. Despite massive demands for a central law, the government has not taken appropriate steps to amend the IPC.

Article 37 states that the Directive Principles are fundamental in the governance of the country and it is the duty of the State to implement these in letter and spirit. The State has failed to perform and uphold this duty. Article 46 directs the State to protect the SC-ST community from all forms of social injustice and exploitation. Undoubtedly, religious conversion by intimidating, threatening, deceiving, luring through gifts and monetary benefits and by using black magic and superstition is an injustice and exploitation.

STEPS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

It is the duty of the Centre to enact stringent anti-conversion laws. Religious conversion by the above-mentioned methods can be prohibited by inserting Section 296A and Section 298A in Chapter-XV of the IPC. Likewise, Section 375A, Section 409A and Section 493A can be inserted in the IPC to prohibit religious conversion by intimidating, threatening and deceivingly luring through gifts and monetary benefits as well as by using black magic and superstitions.

There is massive foreign funding through money laundering and FCRA to NGOs and individuals from



Christian missionaries are seen on pursuing their conversion agenda

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MUST ENACT STRINGENT ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS. IT MUST ALSO REVIEW FCRA RULES FOR FOREIGN FUNDED NGOS AND INDIVIDUALS AND TAKE STRINGENT STEPS TO CONTROL FUNDING THROUGH HAWALA AND FCRA ROUTES

Gulf and West for conversion activities. Although the Centre has cancelled the FCRA licences of a few NGOs, it has neither amended the FCRA, Money Laundering Act, Benami Property Act and Black Money Act nor has it changed the VISA Rules for religious preachers and missionaries.

Keeping in view the above stated facts and circumstances, the Government of India must

- Review FCRA Rules for foreign funded NGOs and individuals;
- Take stringent steps to control funding through hawala and FCRA
- Review Audit Guidelines for foreign funded NGOs and individuals
- Review VISA Rules for religious preachers & foreigner missionaries
- Call upon the Law Commission of India to suggest suitable legislation and guidelines to check unlawful fraudulent religious conversions
- Take steps to confiscate benami properties & disproportionate assets of persons & institutions involved in fraudulent religious conversion, and
- Insert two new sections in Chapter 15 of the Indian Penal Code to award and confer stringent punishment to the persons involved in religious conversion. ■

OPINION



RATAN SHARDA

Author and Columnist

NOT JUST ABOUT POLITICS

THE NORTH EAST HAS CHANGED IN LAST NINE YEARS DUE TO THE HARD WORK OF UNSUNG HEROES, WHO WORKED FOR DECADES. THE CHANGE STARTED WHEN RSS SENT 10 PRACHARAKS IN 1950 TO THE REGION. THE SANGH GAVE MORAL SUPPORT TO INDIGENOUS FAITHS TO REVIVE THEIR CULTURE AND CENTURIES OLD TRADITIONS THAT WERE UNDER ATTACK BY THE CHURCH

As the results of three NE states rolled out, the talk was about BJP making inroads on the back of development work unleashed by Modi Ji at blinding pace, about tribal and non-tribal alliances, whether BJP did well or not so well. This is an incomplete view of a tectonic shift in Indian socio-political scenario, more particularly of North East Region (NER).

From being unseen, unreported this huge region of Bharat that has longest land borders with maximum number of countries on the border, NER has become the mainstream news. It no more suffers from “tyranny of distance”. The tyranny so high that days of blockade of places like Manipur did not enrage the nation, nor did they become headlines of so-called national newspapers. News from NER would be hard to find, save some outrageous terror attack, and election news would be limited to two minute mention on so-called national news channels, not worthy of any discussion or debate.

Northeast was like a warehouse containing a vote bank, to be opened and dusted when elections were around and votes collected with the help of the church, separatists and some obscure Muslim leaders. Once a party got elected, its leaders could go back home and enjoy loot from central grants and supposed development works, that were hardly completed. With advent of PM Modi the neglected corner



A glimpse of the service activities being carried out by Swayamsevaks

of the house got due importance as the most important corner of sacred Asht Laxmi whose progress would define the progress of Bharat.

Last 8 years have changed the face of NER the way no citizen of the region had even imagined. Citizens of the ancient land of Pragjyotishpur, of Parshuram Kund or Idu Mishmi tribe, and so on who identified themselves with clans of Mahabharat; Tripura people who have written records of 1000s of years with links to other kingdoms of Bharat, but were never treated as Bharatiyas felt one with the nation. They are no more aliens in their own land.

I will not recount the immense development work with

statistics as it has already been discussed by many. Suffice to say that no dimension of inclusive development is left out. People feel happy and optimistic about their future.

These victories of BJP or regional alliances under NEDA with BJP are not just political manipulations. Governments in 2018 with BJP were seen as result of manipulations of Himanta Biswa Sarma and Amit Shah. But this win of 2023 cannot be termed by any turn of imagination as manipulation. It shows consolidation of national sentiments in this region; supposedly the hotbed of separatism and rebellion which could never be calmed or won over.

NORTH EAST IN MAINSTREAM

A national party with a tag of Hindutva and communal that was an anathema to NE, specially the church, got support from Christian majority states after five years of being part of some governments there. In Tripura it got reconfirmation from Tripura people in a tough scenario of Left- Congress alliance on one side and a tribal party led by a former royalty on the other. These developments indicated acceptance of inclusive growth model of BJP. For an 'outsider' 'Hindu' party to gain 51 per cent in Nagaland, 41 per cent in Meghalaya and 39 per cent votes in Tripura with alliance partners is stunning to say the least. It shows that sense of isolation and alienation is gone. Northeast has embraced the mainstream with enthusiasm. This is the real story.

From a region that didn't celebrate August 15 and January 26 as many parts of Northeast region turned these days into 72-hour black days, a region where news about frequent blockades including 72 hour blockade of states like Manipur was treated as routine, frequent boycott calls of 'outsiders' were accepted as the fate of the people, where parallel governments collected their own taxes with receipt, this is an unbelievable change. Such incidents have gone down markedly. If a few exist, they are now private money-making rackets.

These changes show that what this region needed was brotherly compassion for its people, development and a better life, and treatment as equals. When Congress says, these are small states, it shows its contempt for our people. This shows what was wrong with our politics for so many years. Has this change been sudden and just over last 9 years? No, it is a process of years of hard work of unsung heroes who worked ceaselessly, selflessly for decades with their brethren. The first step to complement the work of these noble souls was establishment of special ministry for Northeast by first BJP led government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji. Unfortunately, the rhythm broke in next 10 years when the Congress led alliance had a PM who was

HAS THIS CHANGE BEEN SUDDEN AND JUST OVER LAST 9 YEARS? NO, IT IS A PROCESS OF YEARS OF HARD WORK OF UNSUNG HEROES. THE FIRST STEP TO COMPLEMENT THE WORK OF THESE NOBLE SOULS WAS ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL MINISTRY FOR NORTH EAST BY FIRST BJP-LED GOVERNMENT OF ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

elected a Rajya Sabha MP for those 10 years.

Nations are not built on lecturing foreign audience, grabbing Social Media and TV headlines

The process I talk about, began nearly 70 years back when RSS sent out a batch of 10 pracharakas in 1950 to the region, called Assam at the time. Shri Eknath Ranade, the then Sarkaryavaah had visited the then Assam (entire North East and NEFA at that time) for a month. He returned to Maharashtra and went to the Sangh Shiksha Varg (one month long training camp). He talked to the Sanghchaalak of Maharashtra Shri Babarao Bhide, seeking large number of Pracharakas for Assam; telling him that if Sangh didn't start work in a big way now, entire Assam would be lost to Bharat in next 30 years due to the activities of the Church and separatists working under its guidance. He gave a lecture in this camp and immediately got a response as mentioned above.

It was an uphill task, with no resources, no social or political support and a hostile terrain controlled by the Church of various hues that was there since 1836. There was persecution, threats, and violence against RSS Karyakartas and Pracharakas. This experience was uniform for the Pracharakas of NER whom I met during my research for my thesis and book

"Conflict Resolution: The RSS Way". In such a situation work was carried on by opening schools in remote areas, beginning Sewa work and starting projects for self-reliance for tribals. Other organisations like Ram Krishna Mission too were working in the field of health and education and have a wonderful network there.

Indigenous faiths that were under attack by church, were given moral support to revive their culture and centuries old traditions. Importance given to northeast can be gauged from the fact that that Maharashtra was asked by RSS leadership to 'adopt' NER. Which meant sending Pracharakas regularly to the region, arranging for resources, opening hostels for students in Maharashtra and so on. You will not find any Maharashtra Pracharak who

RSS IN NORTH EAST



RSS Swayamsevak providing flood relief

IT WAS NOT AN EASY PATH FOR THESE UNSUNG HEROES. FOUR PRACHAARAK WERE KIDNAPPED IN 1999 AND BRUTALLY KILLED AFTER MANY DAYS OF CAPTIVITY. THIS DID NOT DETER OTHERS FROM WORKING

has not spent years in northeast including the current Sarsanghchaalak Mohan Ji Bhagwat.

Another important pointer was the second VHP conference after Prayag inaugural in 1964. It was held in Assam where leaders of various tribes were invited. Some purists and 'progressives' argued that they were not Hindus as they worshipped nature, animals and ate beef. Response of Shri Guruji was that all Hindus worship nature and animals. Beef eating habit was formed due to compulsions of the region and they will change as better diets are made available. Thus, began the renaissance of indigenous faiths. It is gathering steam slowly but surely.

My favourite story is of an elderly teacher Bhaiyya Ji Kane, who left a suburb of Thane in Maharashtra, inspired by Shri Guruji to start a school in Ukhrool in Manipur, just 6 km from Myanmar border, where it took 2 days to trek and reach. He left one of his students as a security to take along young school children to Mumbai to create a sense of integration in their minds who like most people in the region believed that India was a different country and they were 'outsiders'. By the way, that student, Jayant, now works for education in NER. This is how student exchange programme and education of tribal children began in

Maharashtra. ABVP came up with 'Students Experience in Interstate Living' for students exchange and families in Maharashtra adopted children from NER in their families and taking care of their education. Many of the current politicians in NER have gone through this process. Many successful sportspersons have got support from Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram in their formative years.

It was not an easy path for these unsung heroes. Four Pracharak were kidnapped in 1999 and brutally killed after many days of captivity. This did not deter others from working. When a young swayamsevak, Vinay, in Dapoli in Maharashtra heard of the incident, he didn't flinch and decided to become Pracharak in northeast. A Khasi leader Rijoy Singh was killed because he supported Vishwa Hindu Parishad. A Bodo leader Bineshwar Brahmo was killed because he supported Devanagari script for Bodo language. Language is a powerful tool of colonisation if you read the history of collaboration between the Church and colonialists.

August 15 and January 26 were not celebrated in many regions of the NER. They were celebrated as Black Day, sometimes lasting 72 hours. RSS inspired workers began celebrating them in Sewa Bharati projects and Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram schools despite threats. When tribes like Brus, Dimasas and Chakmas who refused to convert, were attacked by Church inspired terrorists, RSS inspired organisations supported them. They were also there during any natural disaster.

It is on this penance of years of such hard work that Modi Ji began the humungous task of turning around NER. As we know now, Modi Ji travelled there 51 times, more than all the PMs put together till then and that a central minister visits the region every 15 days. The people of the region, for the first time enjoyed the fruits of development that came at a very rapid pace. It was not a trickle of favours. Slowly, the wheels of change turned. No more blockades, no more bandhs and big reduction of militancy – everything followed.

This is the reason, I noted that 2023 elections of NER are not a matter politics, of electoral victory or of voting percentages. It is story of bringing North east region into mainstream and bringing a sense of integration both in that region and the entire nation, where a lone Mary Kom was not a matter of curiosity because she became world champion but a line-up of sports champions came out and were celebrated all over the Bharat. It is this irreversible change that we celebrate. Political parties come and go, but Bharat has turned the tide against divisive politics and breaking India forces. ■

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NATIONALIST NARRATIVE IN NORTH EAST

A SILENT TRANSFORMATION

THE RSS HAS WORKED EXTENSIVELY IN THE ENTIRE NORTH EAST IN THE PAST 75 YEARS TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONALIST NARRATIVE. ITS AFFILIATE ORGANISATIONS HAVE DONE PIONEERING WORK IN TAKING EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE INITIATIVES TO THE TRIBALS IN FAR-FLUNG AREAS. IN TRIPURA, MANY SANGH KARYAKARTAS SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES DURING THE LEFT RULE, BUT NOTHING DAUNTED THE SANGH SPIRIT. THE IMPACT IS VISIBLE TODAY

■ DIBYA KAMAL BORDOLOI

It has been over 75 years since the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been working tirelessly in the North East for national integration.

Sangh Pracharaks Dadarao Parmarth, Vasantrao Oak and Krishna Paranjpe arrived in Assam on October 27, 1946, and went on to establish RSS shakhas in Guwahati, Shillong (the then capital of Assam) and Dibrugarh. Since then, lakhs of selfless RSS *Pracharaks* and *Karyakartas* have worked indefatigably in the Northeastern region, overcoming enormous challenges.

Today, 75 years after its quiet beginnings in the North East, the RSS can claim that it has successfully set the nationalist narrative in the region, which has a large Muslim and Christian population.

As per the 2011 census, Assam has a whopping 34 per cent Muslim population, while in five other North East states more than half of its population are Christians — Nagaland (87.93 per cent), Mizoram (87.16 per cent), Meghalaya (74.59 per cent), Manipur (41.29 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (30.26 per cent).

RSS IN TRIPURA

The tiny Princely State of Tripura has a Hindu population of over 83 per cent. The state has a large tribal population and the RSS started its foray in Tripura by serving this community. In Tripura, the RSS started its activities in 1952 but found it hard to find its ground. The Sangh initially began its activities in Tripura through "Udbastu Sahayata Samiti" and later started shakhas in 1956. But the expansion of shakhas was not so easy.

The Sangh also started welfare works for the tribals through 'Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram', which started its functions in the state in 1979. Currently, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram runs 8 hostels and 6 'Khelkud Kendra' for the tribal people of the State. In the 1980s and 1990s, there were constant



RSS Swayamsevaks distributing grocery kits to tribal villages in the hilly regions of Khowai district, Tripura

threats to the Sangh *Karyakartas* from extremist organisations like the Tripura National Volunteers and the National Liberation Front of Tripura. This came to a head in 1998 when four RSS workers were kidnapped and killed by NLFT. Even though Tripura is an overwhelmingly Hindu State, the CPI (M) governments made it difficult for the Sangh to expand its ideology of nationalism in the state.

Tripura, with 83.40 per cent Sanatani followers, was ruled by the Communist Party for many decades. Sangh *Pracharaks* and *Karyakartas* had to overcome the hurdles caused by Left goons virtually on a daily basis. Many tireless Sangh *Karyakartas* sacrificed their lives to build the nation-building narrative in the State.

Despite its presence since 1956, things gradually changed only after 2014. Now Tripura has around 150 shakhas, around 60 Milan and around 60 Mandali. In addition, 200-250 schools are run in the state by RSS-

affiliated organisations like 'Sanskar Kendras'. There are hostels as well for the poor and needy students.

In 2017, when Tripura was still under the rule of Left parties, the RSS organised a mega Hindu congregation, which was addressed by Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat ji and attended by a number of top RSS Pracharaks. Lakhs of people from more than 500 villages across Tripura and other districts of nearby northeastern states attended the event. The RSS said the mega Hindu congregation was "inspirational" and "effective in every sense".

"The Hindu Sammelans organised in the northeastern states, especially in Tripura, were inspirational in many ways," the Sangh said in its annual report in 2018. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad started its functioning in Tripura in 1984. Since then, the VHP is involved in organising and consolidating the Hindu society to serve and protect the Sanatan Dharma. It has been involved in many social service projects and the organisation is currently running 4 hostels for the poor and needy students.

EDUCATION AND SERVICE

Likewise, the flagship program of RSS, the 'Ekal Vidyalaya Abhiyan' has been a transforming factor in the field of education in remote and hilly tribal areas. Started in 2001, the Ekal Abhiyan is running more than 60 Ekal Vidyalaya in the tribal areas of Tripura.

Similarly, Vidya Bharti, another frontal educational organisation of the Sangh, has made a huge impact on the rural and semi-urban educational scenario of Tripura since 1995. Vidya Bharti now runs 11 successful schools in the state. Besides all these, social awareness initiatives by various organisations affiliated with the RSS, such as Janajati Kristi Sanskriti Mancha and Reang Saranartha Seva Kendra are working tirelessly to bridge the gaps in the society. Some of the very successful social initiatives are Sarhad Ko Pranam in 2012, Tripura Hindu Malayam 2017, and Maharaja Bir Bikram Jayanti in 2019. Pujjya Santikali Maharaj Ashram Pratistha in 2022 had a huge impact on the Hindu society and helped the Sangh gain more social support in the state.

The Sangh umbrella has expanded today in Tripura and in all other Northeastern states, with shakhas, Vivekananda schools, Balwadis, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas, tuition centres, study circles, vocational training centres and a hospital.

Dr. Kanak Chaudhury, a physician from Agartala the capital city of Tripura, said, "I have always been impressed by the social welfare programmes initiated by the RSS. In

my personal capacity as a doctor I always try to attend the medical camps for the poor people by Seva Bharti. These types of initiatives bridge the gap in our society."

THE SACRIFICE

The journey of the RSS in Tripura was never easy in a state run by Left parties for 25 years and disturbed by extremism. Four RSS Pracharaks - Shyamal Sengupta, Dinen De, Sudhamay Datta and Subhankar Chakraborty – were abducted by NLFT extremists on August 16, 1999 from Kanchanpara in North Tripura district. The four men had gone to Kanchanpara to visit the Ratanmani Shishu Shiksha Mandir run by the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram.

Six months later, the Pracharaks were executed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh by the extremist group. It was perhaps the first time in the history of independent India that innocent members of a non-political organisation were killed in a foreign country in such a manner. Even today, 22 years later, the conspiracy behind the murders is been revealed. The BJP government had constituted an SIT to reinvestigate the murders. Apart from the sacrifices of these four karyakartas, RSS workers have suffered many attacks during the Left rule.

SANGH AND THE NORTH EAST

In the 80s and 90s, the Sangh established many welfare programs, especially in education, through the Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram in the tribal-dominant States of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram. During this period, the RSS, through its affiliate organisations, began to sponsor the education of students (mainly tribal students) from the region. By the mid-90s, the RSS had strong roots in the North East states. Not only the Hindu society, Sangh institutions like the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Eklavya Vidyalaya have earned appreciation even from the Christian community for their educational work.

Today the RSS, through its immensely effective social impact initiatives, especially in the education sector, has established its presence in the region and successfully implemented the theory of nation-building through person-building. Dr Susendra Barman, an educationist of the region, says that when the elected governments did not provide basic education to the tribals of far-flung hilly areas of the North East, it is the RSS which is giving them an opportunity to learn through their affiliated organisations. Giving a chance to the poor and needy to gain knowledge is the best service to mankind, Barman added. ■



Neiphiu Rio, Chief Minister of Nagaland

Dr Manik Saha, Chief Minister of Tripura

Conrad Kongkal Sangma, Chief Minister of Meghalaya

RISE OF SAFFRON

DEMOGRAPHY OF NORTH EAST HAS TOTALLY CHANGED IN LAST FEW DECADES. DESPITE THIS, BJP'S VICTORY IN THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED TRIPURA, MEGHALAYA AND NAGALAND ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IS HISTORIC

India's Northeast, known as the 'land of rising sun' is witnessing the lotus blooming. Today in all the eight Northeastern states (Termed as 'Asta Lakshmi' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi) NDA enjoys the mandate of the people. In Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Sikkim, and Assam, NDA formed Govt while in Tripura, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh, BJP alone got a full majority. The rise of the BJP in the political landscape of the Northeast bears significance on several fronts. The hotbed of ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, India's Northeast shares international borders with China, Bangladesh and Myanmar and is connected to the rest of the country with a mere 20 km width 'chicken neck'. North East, which abounds in natural resources and torch bearers of India's cultural heritage since time immemorial, came to be known for the wrong reasons—violence became the recurring theme in the socio-political discourse of the region. The development narrative got subverted. Aspirations of the indigenous people remained unfulfilled; issues concerning security remained unaddressed. A sense of alienation took hold. It became a case of a broken dream. "Tute hue sapne ki/sune kaun siski/ Antar ko chir/Byatha palko par thithki..."

Vajpayee ji's poetic lines could best explain the condition. Successionist agitation/militant activities started, and violence killed many. Rashtrawadi organisation's leaders became the target of militant organisations. Pramod Dikshit, Murli Manohar, and sukleswar Medhi were pracharaks of RSS who were killed by the militant ULFA. Many others laid down their lives to keep the honour of tiranga intact.

BJP, with its "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" mission, seems determined to expand its base to every nook and corner of the country. Earlier, BJP Leadership stood by the indigenous people of Assam and supported the anti-foreigners agitation launched by the All Assam Students' Union. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in his visit to Assam as Prime Minister, gave a clarion call to narrow down the distance of mind: "Maan ki duriya Mitane hei". BJP has been able to make its presence felt in all the northeastern states, including the Christian-majority states of Nagaland, Manipur, and Mizoram.

In the recently held assembly elections in Tripura, BJP got a full majority and formed Govt under the leadership of Manik Saha. In Nagaland, BJP and its allies have won the people's mandate and formed Govt under Neiphiu Rio's leadership. In Meghalaya, BJP

ANALYSIS



**DR JNANENDRA
BARMAN**

Assistant Professor, Cotton
University, Guwahati

made a post-poll alliance with Conrad Sangma-led NPP and formed Govt. In Tripura, BJP won 33 seats with a 38.97 per cent vote share. Once a left bastion, Tripura has witnessed the phenomenal rise of the BJP. The left won 49 seats in the 60-member Assembly election in 2013 with 48.11 per cent votes; Congress won 10 seats with 36.53 per cent vote share. BJP managed to get only 1.54 per cent votes. BJP workers, along with its supportive social organisations, worked hard to change the 'old order' led by CPI(M). Some BJP workers were brutally killed. But the indomitable spirit never gave up. In 2018 Tripura Assembly election, BJP defeated CPI(M) by winning 36 seats in the 60-member Tripura assembly. CPI(M) could win only 16 seats. BJP got 43 per cent vote share and CPI(M) could garner 42.7 per cent votes.

In Nagaland, BJP's ally, the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) won 25 seats with 32.22 per cent votes, while BJP got 12 seats with 18.81 per cent votes. NDPP-BJP coalition won 37 seats and formed Govt led by Neiphiu Rio. A decade ago in 2013, BJP managed to win only one seat with 1.8 per cent votes. Indian National Congress got 24.9 per cent votes. This time Congress' vote share declined to 3.55 per cent. The North East remained a bastion for the Congress party for decades after independence. But of late, its political space is fast eroding. The Christian-dominated state of Nagaland has witnessed the phenomenal rise of the BJP. In the last Assembly election in 2018, BJP won 12 seats with 15.3 per cent vote share. This time vote share has increased to 18.81 per cent.

In Meghalaya, Conrad Sangma-led National People's Party won 26 seats, United Democratic Party 11, BJP 02, and Hill State People's Democratic Party 2 in the 60-member assembly election. These parties have formed a post-poll alliance and formed a government led by Conrad Sangma. Two independent MLAs have also supported the Government Prime Minister Narendra Modi blessed the swearing-in ceremony of Conrad Sanga on March 7, 2023. A decade ago BJP had little presence in the political landscape of the state.

In 2018 the party could win 2 seats with 9.6 per cent votes. In 2023, it won maintained its seat share. In the 2013 assembly election Indian National Congress got 34.8 per cent votes. In this election, the vote share of the Congress party has declined to 13.14 per cent

Earlier BJP had won people's mandate in the Christian-concentrated Northeastern states of Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. In the 2022 Assembly election in Manipur BJP won 32 seats in the 60-member Assembly. Congress had to be content with five seats only. BJP's vote share in the state

ONCE PERCEIVED AS 'HINDI-HINDU' PARTY BY THE OPPONENT/CRITICS, BJP HAS NOW CROSSED ALL GEOGRAPHICAL, LINGUISTIC, RELIGIOUS BARRIERS AND ENJOYS WIDE ACCEPTANCE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE PARTY NOW SPREADS IN EVERY NOOK AND CORNER OF THE COUNTRY

increased from 2.12 per cent in 2012 to 36.6 per cent in 2017 and 37.83 per cent in 2022. In the 2012 Assembly election, the party contested 19 Assembly seats but failed to open its account. But in 2017, the party won 21 seats and formed Government with Naga People's Front (NPF) and National People's Party (NPP).

In Manipur, the Christian population is 41 per cent and in Arunachal Pradesh Christian population constitutes 30.26 per cent of the total population. This region of the country is home to more than 400 ethnic communities with their unique cultural heritage. In the last assembly election in 2019 in Arunachal Pradesh BJP got a landslide victory, winning 41 seats in the 60 member Arunachal assembly. Congress, which ruled the state for a long period of time in the past, had to be content with four seats only. BJP got 50.86 per cent popular votes while Cong could garner only 16.85 per cent vote. In the parliamentary election, BJP won both the parliamentary seats of Arunachal Pradesh. Its vote share increased from 47.80 per cent in 2014 to 58.16 per cent in 2019, while Congress' vote share declined from 43.7 per cent in 2014 to 20.49 per cent in 2019.

Assam witnessed a saffron surge in the 2014 parliamentary election and the April 2016 Assembly election. In a state where the Muslim population constitutes 34 per cent of the state, BJP won 60 seats and 84 with its allies. Its vote share went up to 30 per cent in 2016 from 11 per cent in the 2011 Assembly election. In the 2014 Parliamentary election, the party won 7 seats out of 14. The Congress won 3, and the AIUDF won 3. In the 2019 Parliamentary election, it won 9 with 31.5 per cent vote share. Cong won 3, AIUDF 1 and one won by an independent candidate. In the 2021 Assembly elections, BJP led NDA again got the people's mandate with 75 seats. BJP alone got 60 seats with 33.21 per cent vote share.

Once perceived as a 'Hindi-Hindu' party by the opponent/critics, BJP has now crossed all geographical, linguistic, and religious barriers and enjoys wide acceptance nationwide. The party now spreads in every nook and corner of the country. It has moved ahead with its commitment to development and cultural nationalism. ■

REVOLT IN CPM OVER PFI LINKS

IN THE WAKE OF CPM'S ALLEGED LINK WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT OF INDIA (SDPI), THE POLITICAL ARM OF THE OUT-LAWED POPULAR FRONT OF INDIA (PFI), THIRTY-EIGHT PARTY MEMBERS, INCLUDING FOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE SECRETARIES, HAVE RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY

■ **T SATISHAN** FROM KERALA

CPM suffers massive desertion in Cheiryanadu, Chengannur, Alapuzha district. The issue exploded in connection with the alleged CPM link with the Social Democratic Front of India (SDPI), the political arm of the out-lawed Popular Front of India (PFI).

Thirty-eight party members, including four branch committee secretaries, have resigned from the party in the wake of the alleged link of Sheed Mohammed, Cheiryanadu South local committee (LC) Secretary and Area Committee (AC) Member, with SDPI. The issue occurs in Chengannur, the Assembly constituency of Saji Cheriyan, the Cabinet Minister and CM State Secretariat Member. It is reported that the unholy nexus has been going on there for a long. The resignation letter is said to have alleged that the SDPI leader is the business partner of Sheed Mohammed. They alleged 'mutual adjustments' behind the rout of CPM hence an SDPI win in the LC Secretary's own ward during the last Panchayat elections in December 2020.

They alleged that LC Secretary Sheed Mohammed did not bother to organise the "Anti-Communal Campaign" called for by the State Committee in his jurisdiction. They have reportedly raised a serious allegation that the 'LC secretary is CPM in the day light and SDPI after sunset'. This is nothing but the true echo of the allegations RSS, BJP, and Sangh-inspired organisations and other nationalist movements have been alleging for the last several years.

One of the most popular political commentators in the State, who is also a CPI member, disclosed to *Organiser Weekly* four years back that lot of Muslim men are cadres of fundamentalists in the night. According to him, it was beneficial to both: CPM gets well-trained cadres for action plan, and the fundamentalists get an image of mainstream political party cadres.

Resignation letters cite reasons for SDPI's election win in the Ward VIII of Cheriyanad Panchayat, where CPM leader Sheed Mohammed lives. Sheed runs a restaurant with PFI leader Ashiq and his brother Ashad there.

Ashiq is an accused in the (ABVP leader) Vishal murder case. Vishal was murdered by alleged PFI workers on July 17, 2012. Workers had expressed their objection to this notorious alliance to the leadership several times. But, did not avail, thanks to the minority appeasement-cum-vote bank politics. Another hitch was the reported link of a DYFI man with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), a partner in the Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front (LDF). RSS, BJP and Sangh-inspired organisations have been pointing out the link of CPM with religious fundamentalist organisations. Now, the CPM cadres have started to admit this publicly. During the last elections, party rank and file had pasted posters, even at martyr memorials, highlighting the CPM-SDPI links.

DOUBLE STANDARDS EXPOSED

The resignation letter of Lijo Joy, Cheiryanad South LC member and Korandippallisserri BC Secretary, proves PFI commands power in CPM. Sheed Mohammed had scolded Hindu comrades for wearing sandal paste *tilak* on their foreheads, a Hindu practice in Kerala. But, his own father was wearing a Muslim cap when he hoisted the party flag for the Kollamkadavu Town Branch conference of the party. It was very much in the presence of Sheed Mohammed. Neither Sheed nor any Hindu nor Christian comrade objected. The letter reportedly says Sheed's SDPI connection, especially with the Vishal murder accused, is not fit for a 'comrade'. Party and comrades hanged their heads with shame before the general public. When fanaticism is deep-rooted in the area, LC Secretary rubs shoulders with communal forces!!! It adversely affects the credibility of the (CPM) party.

Until recently, the CPM links with Islamic fundamentalists were the issues Sangh and BJP men alone used to raise. Now, the matter has started to fume within. It looks like the beginning of a big start in the interests of the State and the country. ■



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	Fresher	5 - 6 L Per Annum	- do -
	Experienced (upto 5 years)	6 - 8 L Per Annum	- do -
	Experienced (above 5 years)	9 - 12 L Per Annum	-do -
Engineers, (Freshers or Experienced)	B.Tech (IIT)	7.5 - 9 L Per Annum	- do -
	B.Tech (NIT)	4.5 - 6 L Per Annum	- do -
	B.Tech (Other Institutes)	3 - 3.6 L Per Annum	- do -
	M.Tech (IIT)	8.5 - 10 L Per Annum	- do -
	M.Tech (NIT)	5.5 - 7 L Per Annum	- do -
M.Tech (Other Institutes)	3.6 - 4 L Per Annum	- do -	
MBA	MBA (IIT + IIM)	15 L + Per Annum	- do -
	MBA (IIM)	12 - 15 L Per Annum	- do -
	MBA (Other Institutes)	3 - 3.6 L Per Annum	- do -
Post Graduate & Graduate	MCA, B.Ed., M.Ed., MSW, M.Sc., M.Com., M.A. (Freshers / Experience) Ph.D. *	2 - 3 L Per Annum	- do -
	Mass Communication (Media) - PG	2.4 - 3 L Per Annum	- do -
	B.Com. with three years experience in accounts, purchase, store	2.4 L Per Annum	- do -
	B.Sc. BCA, BBA, BA, B.Com (Persuing / Passed)	1.2 L Per Annum	- do -
	Diploma	1.8 L Per Annum	- do -
Law	LLM	3 - 3.6 L Per Annum	- do -
	LLB	2.4 - 3 L Per Annum	- do -

- More deserving candidates may get higher salary as specified above.
- Ph.D candidates can also apply. salary will be decide during the interview.
- Yoga Teacher, Naturopathy Doctor, Karate Teacher, Music Teacher, Stenographer (Hindi & English), Script Writer (Hindi & English), Data Operator & Clerk can also apply. Salary will be given according to qualification.

2. Graduate Management Trainee (GMT)

Qualifications. Boys who have passed class 10th / 11th / 12th in 2023 may apply. Should have secured minimum 60% aggregate marks with 75% marks in Maths in the previous class. **Age.** Below 18 years. Selected candidates will be imparted 6 months initial training at Surya Foundation Training Campus Jhinholi prior to the **On Job Training (OJT)** or **Practical Campus Training (PCT)**. Facilities for doing graduation and MBA or MCA will be provided during OJT / PCT.

Free accommodation, food and stipend of Rs. 5,000/- p.m. will be provided during the period of 6 months initial training. During the OJT / PCT, besides free accommodation and facilities for education, stipend of Rs. 8,000/- p.m. in class 11th, Rs. 10,000/- in class 12th, Rs. 12,000/- in 1st year graduation, Rs. 15,000/- in 2nd year graduation, Rs. 18,000/- in 3rd year graduation, Rs. 22,000/- during MBA / MCA 1st year and 27,000/- in MBA / MCA 2nd year will be given. Salary Rs. 40,000/- p.m. (CTC) will be given on completion of MCA / MCA.

3. Assistant Staff Cadre (ASC)

Qualifications. Boys who have passed class 10th / 11th / 12th in 2023 may apply. Should have secured minimum 55% aggregate marks with 60% marks in Maths in the previous class. **Age.** Below 18 years. Selected candidates will be imparted 6 months initial training at Surya Foundation Training Centre at Jhinholi prior to OJT / PCT for three years. Free accommodation, food and a stipend of Rs. 3,000/- p.m. will be provided during the six months initial training. During the OJT / PCT, besides free accommodation stipend Rs. 8,000/- p.m. for 1st year, Rs. 10,000/- p.m. for 2nd year and Rs. 12,000/- p.m. for 3rd year will be paid. On completion of OJT / PCT salary of Rs. 15,000/- (CTC) will be given.

In your detailed application please mention if you have done any camp such as NCC / NSS / Sangh Shiksha Varg / Prathamik Shiksha Varg / Sheet Shivir / PDC etc. Specify the details if the candidates has association with Seva Bharti / Vidya Bharti / Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram / Sangh. If there is anyone familiar in the Surya family, then mention their name and department. Enclose the photocopy of the mark sheet along with the application. Please send your CV application along with detailed resume to the following address. You can also send CV application by email.

AJNALA INCIDENT: A LAWLESS STATE?

AMRITPAL SINGH-LED 'WARIS PUNJAB DE' IS SEEKING A REVIVAL OF SEPARATISM AND TERRORISM IN PUNJAB. THE STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GOVERNMENTS MUST IMMEDIATELY CONVERGE THEIR RESOURCES TO ADDRESS THIS UNFOLDING CRISIS

On February 23, 2023, in an unprecedented and horrifying incident, a violent mob attacked a Police Station in Ajnala, Punjab. Armed with rifles, pistols, swords and a variety of hand-held weapons, the mob went on a rampage, breaking police barricades and shouting slogans as they took control of the Police Station. The incident sent shock waves through Punjab and the rest of the country. It triggered a widespread fear of revival of the terrible days of insurgency and terrorism in Punjab and caused a wave of insecurity among the people.

ANALYSIS



JAIBANS SINGH

Columnist, Defence and Security Expert

ARCHITECT OF SEPARATISM

The architect of the violence was a new-born radical named Amritpal Singh who has recently surfaced from Dubai. He has, under dubious circumstances, become the head of an organisation called "Waris Punjab De" that was created by another radical activist, Deep Sidhu, who died in a road accident. The organisation, under the garb of promoting cultural rejuvenation of Punjab, holds an agenda of separatism which Singh is actively pursuing.

Interestingly, the objective of the mob violence was not based on any religious, social or ideological pursuit. It was limited to a personal agenda of setting free a person called Lovepreet Toofan, who is a close accomplice of Amritpal Singh and was then under police custody in the Ajnala Police station. The sad part is that the mobsters carried with them the *Sarop* (copy) of Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs that has the stature of a living Guru. Sikhs



across the world look upon this as a sacrilege of the holy *Granth* and are extremely anguished. The Punjab Police, otherwise known to be one of the best in the country, It had no plan or structure in place to meet the eventuality of violence despite the tension brewing for many days. Even more perplexing is the docile manner in which the police capitulated to the demand of the radicals and found reasons to free Lovepreet Toofan. "In the light of the evidence presented before us, it has been decided that Lovepreet Toofan will be discharged," said Satinder Singh, Senior Superintendent of Police, Amritsar (Rural).

Later, the police tried to cover up its inefficiency by saying that it exercised restraint due the presence of Guru Granth Sahib at the site of the mob violence. This is a noble thought, but it does not completely absolve the police from its intelligence and preparation failure. Overall, the situation exhibited a total collapse of law and order, a fact that has been pointed out by many leaders and intellectuals.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was busy with an investors summit when this terrible incident occurred. His reaction came much later and was in the form of a denial. "You have the wrong information. Law and order in Punjab is under control and Punjab Police is capable," he is reported to have said.



Followers of Amritpal Singh clash with the police while breaking through barricades at the police in protest against filing of FIR against him and his associate

Immediately after the investor summit, the Chief Minister flew to Mumbai with his boss and Aam Aadmi Party convenor, Arvind Kejriwal, where they met Uddhav Thackeray, for a party level political discussion not concerning Punjab.

CM'S NONCHALANT APPROACH

The disinterest shown by the Chief Minister has strengthened the popular perception in Punjab that the incumbent weak, vacillating and directionless Government is wholly responsible for the current indecisiveness and inefficiency of the Punjab Police. The morale of the force is at rock bottom. This perception is raising alarm bells among the political analysts and intelligentsia.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) that is mandated to ensure Maryada (sanctity) of the holy has been quite reticent in addressing the sensitive and emotive issue of carrying the holy Granth for a violent activity. Akal Takht Jathedar, Giani Harpreet Singh, has done a cover-up job by forming a 15-member panel to look into the protocol of carrying the Saroop of Guru Granth Sahib to the sites of protests and demonstrations. The report of the panel is awaited. Amritpal Singh has also visited Sri Harmandir Sahib and held a meeting with Giani Harpreet Singh, he was quite unapologetic about his behaviour and that of his followers. The proclivity of the SGPC in shielding the sacrilege is seen as a political compulsion due to its subservience to a particular political family that exerts

THE ORGANISATION ("WARIS PUNJAB DE") UNDER THE GARB OF PROMOTING CULTURAL REJUVENATION OF PUNJAB, HOLDS AN AGENDA OF SEPARATISM WHICH AMRITPAL SINGH IS ACTIVELY PURSUING

unconstitutional influence over the autonomous body. The Sikhs are looking for more firm action against Amritpal Singh and his gang of hoodlums led by the SGPC. The major political parties of the State have taken a serious view of the incident. The Congress is giving threats of holding a massive protest if action is not taken against Amritpal Singh. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has already held a massive protest in Chandigarh on 9 March and demanded the immediate arrest of Amritpal and all other perpetrators of the mob violence.

Amritpal Singh came to Punjab from Dubai, out of the blue, and positioned himself as a clone of the late Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He started with the noble objective of baptising the Sikh youth with *Amrit Pahul* (Sikh nectar ceremony) and weaning them away from drugs. Sadly, his movement soon veered towards a demand for a separate State for the Sikhs whom he described as "enslaved" people. "Khalistan is the ultimate solution to every problem we have right now," he says often in his interviews. He urges the Sikhs to become "*Shastradhari*" (armed) and get ready to offer their "sacrifice" in the name of the Guru and the Panth (community). Such rhetoric blatantly encourages an armed uprising in Punjab. Now, his political aspirations and proclivity to follow the path of violence are coming to the fore.

Amritpal is not as well versed in the study of the holy Granth as Bhindranwale was. It is this lack of knowledge that probably led him into making the cardinal error of carrying the Saroop of Guru Granth Sahib to the Police Station at Ajnala.

Amritpal is merely a tenth class pass who went abroad to earn a living since he could see no future for himself in India. Now he eloquently addresses complex political and social theories to further his advocacy for the Khalistan cause. Apparently, he has been tutored. To the experienced eye, tutoring by Pakistan's ISI is quite evident. He is possibly a foreign enemy sponsored agent who has come to Punjab to leverage the weakness of the incumbent AAP-led Government towards creating dissension and divisiveness in the border State. The state and the Union government need to remain sensitive to this probable persona of Amritpal Singh. ■

DECODING FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEET

SUCCESS OF INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY SHOULD BE JUDGED IN A LARGER CONTEXT AND NOT JUST ON WHETHER A CONSENSUS STATEMENT COULD BE AGREED UPON IN A PARTICULAR MEET OR NOT



The formal meeting of the G20 Foreign Ministers under India's Presidency at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

On March 1-2 this year, the Foreign Ministers of the G20 nations met in India. This meeting was happening against the backdrop of an extremely tumultuous global scenario. A few days before this the G20 Finance Ministers and the Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) failed to come up with a consensus-based joint statement or communique. Expecting consensus in the Foreign Ministers' meet was always going to be unrealistic.

ANALYSIS



PATHIKRIT PAYNE

A Research Consultant on Strategic, Defence & Security Affairs

STUMBLING BLOCK

Over the last few months, both Russia and Western States, led by the US have hardened their stand on Ukraine even more. Even the very mention of Ukraine in any joint statement was now being opposed by Russia and backed by China, unless it includes pledge to investigate the sabotage of Nord Stream pipeline, even as the US-led block had a divergent view on the Ukraine issue, wherein it puts the entire onus of the war on Russia. The consensus-based communique thus could not have happened anyways.

Back home, cynics and critics of Modi Government, who perpetually wait for an opportunity to term anything that Modi

Government does, as 'not successful', were, as usual, quick to latch on to it and declare in a hurry that the whole saga of not having a joint declaration was 'failure' on the part of India's diplomacy and presidency. It is though not for the first time that PM Modi's bête noire have tried to draw conclusions in haste only to be proved wrong later on.

COMMUNIQUE NOT MANDATORY

In the first place, it is not mandatory that every meet of G20 would necessarily have to have a joint declaration. Since in G20 meets, joint declarations are based on consensus and not on majority votes, declarations can often be elusive. In such a scenario, a summary of the meet is issued by the Chair along with an Outcome Document.

UKRAINE FACTOR, NOT INDIA

Secondly, the most crucial reason for an elusive consensus, as of yet, is the Ukraine conflict, which in other words, is nothing but a conflict between Russia and NATO. The war is reaching a critical stage with NATO countries supplying Ukraine with weapon systems that may aggravate the situation

even more and lead to a state where the Ukraine-Russia war may even spill over beyond the contours of these two nations and reach the doorstep of some of the adjoining states in Europe. If that happens, and whose probability is rising with each passing day, then apocalypse would not be far away.

US-CHINA FRICTION

Thirdly, because of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, and the warnings being given by US to China against possible Chinese supply of offensive weapon systems to Russia, the tension between China and US, which has been on a high for various other reasons well, including Taiwan, has almost reached its zenith.

In such a scenario, therefore, expecting a consensus, and expecting that the warring sides would shake hands agree on whatever is written on the joint declaration was always a utopian dream. It was a foregone conclusion that the West would want the inclusion of Ukraine issue, as per their liking, in the Joint Declaration, while Russia, possibly backed by China, would oppose it.

ACRIMONY NOT AN EXCEPTION

Interestingly, the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meet was always supposed to be an acrimonious one this time, given the state of Ukraine-Russia war. A certain level of desperation has also crept into the Western countries who had anticipated that the NATO support to Ukraine and sanctions against Russia would lead to collapse of the regime in Kremlin. It has, however, not happened that way.

Russia has endured. Putin continues to be popular back home, and sanctions on Russia have catapulted the price of energy in Europe to humongous levels. Also the cost of funding the war, in terms of supplies of weapon systems, as well as its impact on war wastage reserves of NATO countries, are both pinching them hard. There are also disagreements even among the EU states on what kind of weapons they should supply Ukraine with.

UKRAINE CONFLICT

To put it in perspective, Russia-Ukraine war has reached a stage where the West does not want Russia to win, since it would permanently tilt the geopolitical balance against the West, making Russia henceforth invincible. Interestingly, the West perhaps does not want Russia to lose the war either, given that it would lead to a scenario where Kremlin—frustrated by sanctions, sabotage of Nord Stream pipeline, and NATO's perpetual fueling of the war through incessant supply of cutting-edge weapons to

SUCCESS OF INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY, HOWEVER, LIES IN INDIA BEING ABLE TO PURSUE US SECRETARY OF STATE ANTHONY BLINKEN AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV TO MEET FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE UKRAINE WAR

Ukraine—may not dither from using the nuclear option. This possibility has rattled the EU leadership. Already, Kremlin has decided to withdraw from the New START (Strategic Armed Reduction Treaty) Nuclear Treaty. While the West may fund a distant war, but it goes through nightmares at the thought of that very war knocking at its own doorsteps. Further, the West does not want the war to drag on for years either because the economic cost of the war would pull down Europe completely. Already, it is going through a phase of high inflation and economic stagnation. Condition of US is no better either.

Against this backdrop, the Foreign Ministers' meet was always going to be slanging match. And it did happen that way, with both sides locking horns and not budging from their stated positions. In such a scenario, those blaming India for not having a joint declaration, either lack the understanding of the issue or are unaware that the onus of having Joint Declarations is not on the host but on all members.

INDIA'S SUCCESS

The success of India's G20 Presidency, however, lies in India's success at pursuing US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to meet. The real problem between US and Russia is the complete breakdown of formal communication since the Ukraine war. Therefore, making them meet is a feat in itself. It shows that both US and Russia trust India. It also makes us one of the last remaining bridges between West and Russia. Even as India remained firm on its fiercely independent foreign policy and refused to taken sides on the War, PM Modi has nurtured India's image as a key global truce-maker.

While it is for certain that by the time the G20 Leaders' Summit happens in September, 2023, India's vision for a more unified world through a more inclusive world order would start to show the footprints of a new path, one cannot deny that India has already started making its presence felt and voices heard. That is where the success of India under PM Modi's leadership lies. ■

COLUMN



DR ANKITA KUMAR

Independent Researcher

MARTYRDOM FOR TRIBAL RIGHTS

WITH SUPPORT OF TRIBAL YOUTH, BABURAO SHEDMAKE EMBARKED ON A TASK TO WIPE OUT THE BRITISH FROM THE STRONGHOLD OF TRIBAL AREAS OF PRESENT-DAY MAHARASHTRA. HIS EXECUTION DID NOT EXTINGUISH THE FLAME OF REBELLION IN THE HEARTS OF TRIBALS



In 1857, a wave of Independence sparked across India against the oppressive British Empire. People from all corners of the country, who were suffering from the tyranny of British rule, began to rise up against their oppressors in their own unique ways. Adivasis, indigenous people of the land, were among those who participated in this movement. However, they were particularly affected by British imperialism as it threatened their way of life and ownership of their ancestral land.

ANGER TURNED INTO AGITATION

Baburao Shedmake, a great revolutionary hero from Chandrapur (present-day Gadchiroli and Chandrapur areas in Maharashtra) which came under British rule in 1854, was one of the warriors who raised his voice with 500 tribal youths against the unjust, oppressive, imperialist rule of the British. Baburao witnessed the injustice and oppression of common people by landlords

and contractors from a young age. This experience left him deeply dissatisfied with the tyrannical system. When the British established their empire in India and began to oppress the common people, Baburao's anger turned into agitation.

CONFRONTING CONVERSION AGENDA

The Chandrapur district was teeming with tribes such as Pardhan, Halbi, Gond, and Madia, who were living there before the Britishers came to India. When a new collector was appointed to Chandrapur in December 1854, the British began to establish their rule in the area. The number of Christian missionaries also increased, and

they started forcing the tribes to convert in the name of development. The British destroyed the forest and mineral resources of the area, which affected the communal and cultural way of life of the tribes. Baburao Shedmake, who was born in a royal family in Chandrapur, witnessed the oppression of common people by landlords and contractors from a young age. He was deeply dissatisfied with the tyrannical system and became increasingly angry when the British started to oppress the tribes.

ENRAGING QUEEN VICTORIA

To fight against the British, Baburao Shedmake formed the Sangom Sena and trained tribal youths from Ghot, Adapalli, and other villages in guerilla warfare. They started their struggle by attacking Rajgad, which was under British rule at that time.

Shedmake and his tribal army successfully attacked Rajgadvar and the British army was unable to stand against them.

However, the Sangom Sena's attack on the British telephone camp resulted in the death of two British operators and the destruction of the messaging system. This drew the attention of Queen Victoria, who was moved by Shedmake's prowess and realised the danger he posed to the British Empire. She issued an order to arrest Shedmake at all costs. Despite the British sending their army several times to attack Baburao after the defeat of Surjagad, they were unable to defeat his double-edged army.

So they decided to conspire and arrest Baburao Shedmake. For this, they took shelter at Baburao Shedmake's rival Atya Lakshmibai, who was a zamindar in the Aheri area. Falling prey to the Amish shown by the British, Lakshmibai agreed to help them in capturing Shedmake. And on September 16, 1858, the British succeeded in capturing Baburao Shedmake in a conspiracy.

EMBRACING DEATH

After capturing Baburao Shedmake, the British kept him in Chandrapur jail. They feared him greatly, and it was decided to hang him to undermine the British Empire. Finally, on September 18, 1858, Babu Shedmake was hanged from a peepal tree in Chanda Central Jail (now Chandrapur Jail). The bravery and courage of Baburao Shedmake inspired many freedom fighters to continue the struggle for India's Independence. The execution of Baburao

TODAY, BABURAO SHEDMAKE IS REMEMBERED AS A HERO AND A REVOLUTIONARY WHO FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE TRIBAL PEOPLE. HIS LEGACY CONTINUES TO INSPIRE GENERATIONS OF INDIANS TO FIGHT AGAINST OPPRESSION AND INJUSTICE IN ALL FORMS

Shedmake did not extinguish the flame of rebellion in the hearts of the tribal people. His legacy and sacrifice inspired many others to continue the fight against the British.

Shedmake's followers continued the struggle and formed a number of revolutionary groups in the region. Their followers fought valiantly against the British for the rights of the tribal people.

Baburao Shedmake's legacy also inspired the formation of many *Kisan Sabhas*, which aimed to unite farmers and peasants across India to fight against the British colonialists and feudal landlords. The *Kisan Sabhas* also played an important role in India's struggle for Independence, and many of its leaders were inspired by Baburao Shedmake's fight against oppression and injustice.

Today, Baburao Shedmake is remembered as a hero and a revolutionary who fought for the rights of the tribal people. His legacy continues to inspire generations of Indians to fight against oppression and injustice in all forms. In recognition of his contribution to the freedom struggle, the Government of Maharashtra has named a hostel after him in Chandrapur, and a memorial has been erected in his honour in his native village of Ghot.

Baburao Shedmake's story is a reminder of the struggle and sacrifice of countless Indians who fought against the oppressive British Empire. Shedmake's fight for the rights of the tribal people and his legacy of resistance continue to inspire Indians to fight against injustice and oppression. Shedmake's life is a testament to the power of people's movement and the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of overwhelming odds. His sacrifice will always be remembered as a symbol of hope and inspiration for all those who seek a better and more just world. ■



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BALLALESHWAR: SPIRITUALITY MEETS SCENIC BEAUTY

BALLALESHWAR TEMPLE IN RAIGAD DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA IS AN IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL DESTINATION IN THE ASHTAVINAYAK PILGRIMAGE

Ganapati temple at Pali in Raigad district of Maharashtra is one of the eight temples of the famous *Ashtavinayak* pilgrimage. Ballaleshwar is third in the sequence of *Ashtavinayak* pilgrimage.

The entire Raigad district is blessed with serene natural beauty, so is the village Pali. The temple is situated between Fort Sarasgad and river Amba; on the way to Pune from Mumbai one can visit this temple. The entrance to the temple is marked by the rows of vendors selling puja items as well as edible Konkani meva, peculiarities of the Konkani region.

This temple is the only incarnation of Bhagwan Ganesha that is known by his devotee's name. The temple was originally a wooden temple constructed in the 11th century and was renovated by Moreswar Vitthal Sindkar, who contributed to the construction of the temple in 1640. In 1760, Shri Phadanis of Moradabad further renovated the temple. The temple walls are made extremely strong by mixing lead with concrete while construction.

The tradition of pilgrimage is woven in various forms in the Bharatiya society. The role of architecture of the temple in sustaining these pilgrimages is very simple, it has to accommodate *bhaktas* for rendering individual as well as collective pujas, without hampering in the slightest way the memory and the images of the temple structure. All the renovations that have been witnessed by Ballaleshwar temple only result in its existence till date in the most beautiful manner in the eyes of the devotee. The devotee while entering the temple is only subconsciously absorbing the ambience of the temple, his/her entire focus is actually to see the idol with eyes of the entire being. ■



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