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Men, Women and the Nation: Semiotics of Hindu Nationalism

Friday 15 April 2016



by Navneet Sharma and Pradeep Nair

Trident (Trishul) is a symbol of Hindu religion and not a weapon.... its distribution is a movement to realise our goal of [the] Hindu Rashtra. —A Hindu fanatic leader

The mobilisation of people on communal lines has been the oldest trick in the politics of the world and nations. In Hindu mythology 'trishul' is wielded by Shiva and Durga. *Trishul* is a polyvalent (trifold or having multiple usage) symbol. The *trishul* wielder symbolises a virulent and powerful god. The distribution of tridents is hailed as '*trishul deeksha*' by the organisers. The question is: why '*trishul*'? If it is about god and mobilisation for the religion's sake, it could have been a *damru* (triangular conical drum). The distribution of *trishuls* is not just to abide by the idea of religion or expression of faith, but it creates a jingoistic religious nationalism and politics.

In this article we attempt to understand and appreciate how the semiotics of Hindu nationalism works and is employed for vote-bank politics. Another strikingly similar movement was created in the mid-1980s as the *Ram-shilaandolan* (the stone carved with the name of Ram). It was the brainchild of another veteran leader vociferously steering the Ram Janma-bhoomi movement, who now stands marginalised, retired and hurt. Every household was expected to donate a brick with the name of Ram; another similar idea is in trend where every household is expected to contribute 'iron' for the giant iron statue of the 'first' iron man, Sardar Patel, coming up in Gujarat. According to an RSS *pracharak*, these 'movements' not only mobilise people as a cohort or vote-bank but provide for an 'identity' or conscience to the 'Hindus' in deep slumber for centuries. The question is: who are these people and how would they benefit by 'awakening' the Hindus? And the possible answer is: probably to get hold of the monolithic power of the state. This requires a stratagem. This kind of politics creates myths and misnomers like the idea of 'ideal' Hindu women, men and nation. In this commentary, we attempt to deconstruct to clarify that: how the semiotics of Hindu nationalism works and is exclusionary and divisive to the core.

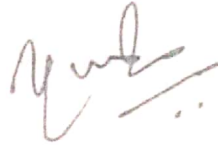
Mainstream Weekly

Mainstream, VOL LIV No 24 New Delhi June 4, 2016

Right to Opium: Women, Holy Places and God

Monday 6 June 2016

WOMEN'S WORLD



by Pradeep Nair, Navneet Sharma and K.B.S. Krishna

Karyeshu dasi, karaneshu manthri; bhojeshu mata, shayaneshu rambha; Roopeshu lakshmi, kshamayeshu dharitri; shat dharmayukta, kuladharmathni—Neetisara

(Works like slave, helps like minister, cooks like mother, beds like a consort, beautiful as goddess of wealth, is as bearing as the earth, carries hundred religious virtues, is the righteous familial wife.)

The above 'pearls' of wisdom not only eulogise the idea of ideal woman but simultaneously places men at the centre of the very existence of women.

The physiology and psychology of women has always been shrouded in mystery as stated in the proverb: "triyā charitram, puruṣasya bhāgyam, devo na jānati kashchit manushya (women's character/trait/behaviour and men's destiny is unknown to god even, how the mortal man can fathom)". In every mythological explanation of the genesis and origins of earth and humankind women have been portrayed as playing second fiddle to men and most of the time are depicted as secondary creations of the divine self. The women are not even, according to Hindu mythology, directly the *atman* as a part of *paramatman*. They have to approach god via men or it is better if they perceive man as god. The *pati-parmeshwar* idea succinctly expresses this. Women, moreover, are not entitled to 'swarg' (Hindu-heaven) as they cannot pay back three 'rinas' (debts), namely, *Guru-rina*, *Matri-rina*, and *Pitra-rina*, which, as per the scriptures, clears the path to heaven. Women and non-*dwijas* cannot seek education/knowledge, as it is in *Sanskrit* (dev-vani -- language of gods), and women were forbidden from learning the language. In fact, there were specific provisions in Manu's constitution on how to punish women and non-*dwijas* who learn/hear Sanskrit whether intentionally or even by chance. *Matri-rina* (debt to mother and father) cannot be paid back as women again cannot perform the last rites (*sanskara/shraddha*) of their parents. At the best what a pious, chaste, and devoted woman can do is to be re-born as a *dwija-man* (Brahmin in particular) to seek salvation and

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Lucknow to Delhi: Why UP Elections Matter

Tuesday 21 February 2017

COMMENTARY

by Navneet Sharma and Divyanshu Patel



“Whosoever rules on water shall rule upon the earth”

If the speaker would have been aware of the politics and demographics of India he would have said something similar about the rule in UP and at New Delhi. In this commentary the argument is not only demographic but political rhetoric also. We will not only be looking at statistical reflections of the slated UP elections but the making of the popular mood and response to the governance by Modi at the Centre as well.

The State of Uttar Pradesh not only constitutes one-sixth of the population of India but also casts the major dye for the making of the 'cow belt' and Hindi heartland. The elections and electoral results of UP are like *árdh kumbh* reflecting on the fate of the '*mahakumbh*' of the national elections. The best ever tally of 71 seats out of 80 in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections catapulted the BJP to power with the formation of a majority government at New Delhi after a gap of 25 years. The result of the 2009 elections had similarly helped the Congress-I (20 seats from UP) to retain power in New Delhi. The coalition politics in the 1990s at UP also had its effect on the New Delhi dispensation in the 1989, 1991, 1996 and 1998 electoral results. The NDA Government feels the pinch in the Rajya Sabha for not having full majority as UP alone decides about 31 seats in this House. The presidential elections in June 2017 will also be influenced by the UP results. The present NDA ruling in New Delhi cannot get its presidential candidate elected unless it gains an upper hand in the UP results. The UP election results will not only send tremors to New Delhi but also decide about the occupancy at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The Demographic Importance

As India's most populous State, UP contributes 80 seats out of a total of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha. As history reveals, the Prime Minister's Office has been occupied by eight candidates from UP out of a total of 19 men and one woman candidate till date. With a peculiar behaviour of


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Campus Battles: Ideological Conflicts over Non-issues

Monday 24 April 2017

by Navneet Sharma and Khem Raj Sharma



'Catch them young' is the political and philosophical perspective which guides almost all political parties (except the BSP) when they form their students' wing which functions across the country in university and college campuses. The most famous and sordid revolutions across the world have also seen higher education campuses as their favourite germination turf. Somehow the most prestigious technical, medical and management campuses in India have been bereft of formally functional student wings of these political parties but student politics even in these campuses are guided by these political parties from behind-the-curtain tactics. The recent spate of ideological conflicts across universities, be it JNU, DU or Rajasthan University or Central University of Haryana or Hyderabad Central University is a matter of concern for all stakeholders in higher education.

The incidents of violence, strikes, protest movements in educational institutions, albeit for different reasons, raise certain pertinent questions regardless of their ingenuity. Do we need politics in our institutions? Do the institutions of higher learning enjoy the requisite autonomy, and reflect the democratic ideals that our nation espouses? While student politics *per se* is not undesirable, politicisation of student unions in India has resulted in many undesirable consequences. Apart from the above-mentioned phenomenon, higher educational institutions in India have been plagued by the ills that characterise politics in the country. Frequent student union clashes, boycott of classes, strikes, roadblocks, manipulation of voters, display of muscle power, disruption of academics and violence have become commonplace. Those who argue against the politicisation of institutions give innumerable examples of entire academic sessions going waste. They condemn political violence entering the 'temples' of modern India. The answer to all these lies not in disallowing any form of politics in campuses but changing the kind of politics we practise.

Ideology carries the baggage of indoctrination and higher educational institutions succumb to the allure in the guise of making academic orientations. An 18-year-old, just out of the 'safe' and pristine confines of a school, with her/ his yet impressionable political mindfulness, is the best catch as the lifelong practitioner or at least sympathiser and votary of a particular ideology. For this 'prospective' voter, all ideologies rush for and compete with each other. All pedagogues

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Nationalising' Workforce: Indian Labour and Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh

Saturday 17 June 2017

by Navneet Sharma and Divyanshu Patel



Workers of the world, Unite.—Marx

Workers, Unite the world.—Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh

If unity is to be of an abiding factor, it must be founded on a sense of kinship.—B.R. Ambedkar

Class, as an economic category, at least theoretically and in certain exceptional circumstances, has vertical mobility. On the other hand, caste, being a social category, neither theoretically nor exceptionally, has vertical or horizontal mobility. The staticity is such that one takes birth, lives, marries, reproduces and even dies in the caste s/he is born in. No amount of highest possible hard work or for that matter luck is said to bring about change in one's caste. Caste is pre-determined and supports the destiny-based allocation in hierarchy. The only reprieve from caste is being 'honest' and committed only to the work assigned to the caste one is born in.


In India, the National Labour Day is 'celebrated' on Vishwakarma jayanti. Vishwakarma—as the name suggests—is the *shilpi* (craftsman) of the world. He belongs to the group of *brahminical* deities and finds mention as one of the grandsons of *Brahma*—the creator in the triumvirate of the most important Hindu gods, the others being Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiv, the destroyer. Besides this *brahminical* incarnation of the god of labour, five other kinds of workmen—carpenter, ironsmith, mason, goldsmith and potter—belong to the cohort of the *Vishwakarma* clan. These groups of workmen are marginalised groups forced to the periphery of the social order by *dwijavarnas* (twice born) —*Brahmin* (Priest), *Kshatriya* (Warrior) and *Vaishya* (Merchant). These (*Vishwakarma*) caste groups, not exactly being '*avarna*' or *shudra*, are still what we in modern parlance call 'OBCs—other backward castes'. These castes are neither very welcome in the sanctum sanctorum of the very 'temples' they build nor do they have any say in matters and concerns of religious nature.

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Imbecility and Impudence: The Emergency and RSS

Sunday 16 July 2017



by Navneet Sharma and Anamica

"Imbecility of men, history teaches us, always invites the impudence of power." —Late (Justice) H. R. Khanna

June 25, 1975 to March 21, 1977 is the blackest period in the history of Indian democracy, liberty and freedom that we gave to ourselves in August/January 1947-50. George Santayana (1906) observed: "Those who don't remember the past are condemned to repeat it." We, the people or generation 'X', who have born or grown young after/despite the 'Emergency', must be reminded of the times of pre- and during Emergency because if we land in a soup again it will be our inanity of not being able to distinguish between democrats, demagogues and dictators.

The dictators in the making have always evolved through the stage of being chaotic imbecile, the stage through which Mrs (Indira) Gandhi sailed and Mr Modi is navigating. In this commentary we wish to flag the pre-Emergency situation that led Mrs Gandhi to decree Emergency and the similarity of the times then and at present. This commentary will also analyse how the mighty Hindu cultural organisation is fond of and would ideally prefer a totalitarian and archaic 'benevolent' dictatorship as the form of rule and governance.

Shared Imbecilities, Synchronised Impudence: Mrs Gandhi and Mr Modi

Congress hatao, Modi lao, Desh bachao (Remove Congress, Bring Modi, Save the Country)—the appeal was individual-centric with which Modi-bhaktis campaigned in 2014. Modi chose to rise above and beyond his party to establish direct connect with the voters/people (?) prompting a scene where the BJP is Modi and Modi the BJP. The BJP—the party with a difference—gets its cadre from the RSS and whosoever was the 'party' is now in the 'margdarshakmantra'. Consequently, no other leader of the party possesses virtue even close to that of Modi. In the selection of the presidential candidate it was taken care that the President might not be

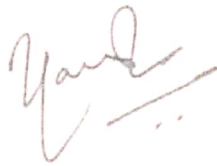
Mainstream Weekly

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Patriarchy, Piety and Padmavat(i): The Sordid Story

Friday 23 February 2018

by Navneet Sharma and Anamica



"The film which distorts facts and disrespects 'Rashtra Mata' will not be allowed to screen..."

—Shivraj Singh Chouhan

"In Rajasthan 47 per cent of women are illiterate, 50 per cent of girls are mothers by the age of 19, 51 per cent of girls are married before legal age, only 883 girls are born for every 1000 boys.....Save the honour of Rani Padmini.

A WhatsApp message

"When a woman is raped, people say that she has lost her honour. How did she lose her honour? Her honour is not in her vagina. It is a patriarchal idea that her rape will defile the honour of her community."

—Kamla Bhasin

The feminist perspective of history has always critically perceived the discipline as his-story and the women's narrative is dismissed as hearsay (her-say?!). Women may owe half of the sky and the earth but history has always relegated them to harems, petticoat-politics and *jauhar*. The contemporary times attempt hard to not let her break the glass ceiling of man's hold over history-writing and historicity. The controversy and upheaval over Sanjay Leela Bhansali's epic movie, *Padmavat(i)*, which has captured the national consciousness more than any other concern pertaining to women, mirrors the same domination and monopoly of males even on narratives that are constructed around women. The film, *Padmavat(i)*, has recently become a matter of national interest and all other issues, which actually demand the nation's heed and scrutiny, have been

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Cultivating Loss Reaping Suicides: Perils of being a Farmer in the Republic of India

Monday 12 March 2018

by Annapurna and Navneet Sharma



People eat mango kernel for hobby.

—Agriculture Minister, Odisha

(seeking) Loan waiver has become fashion these days.

—Venkaiah Naidu, former Minister, Vice-President, India

Farmers have been uncared for ever since India got freedom. Of late, they have been pushed to the walls, their pain has been ignored and they are exploited in name of development policies. The growth rate in rural agricultural employment during 1983 to 1993-94 was 1.38 per cent and it further declined to 0.12 per cent during the post-reform period from 1993 to 2006. The data further shows a continuous fall in the agricultural investments per year since 2010-11. During the first two years of the Modi Government, it had a sharp fall of 3.8 per cent per annum. The fundamental issues have been repeatedly brushed under the carpet and cow and Diwali celebration with the cost to the exchequer is brought to the fore. The government seemingly has a nationalist-Hindu-socialist approach for the corporate(s) and for farmers, capitalism prevails.

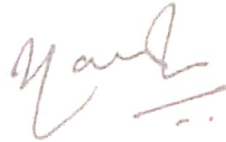
Venkaiah Naidu has commented: '(seeking) loan waiver has become a fashion these days.' This loan waiver was an important point in the BJP's electoral agenda. It is worth asking Naidu: what would be the ideal situation under which this demand of loan waiver would be genuine and not a fashion? What, according to him, would be the emergency of a farmer jumping in the river along with his five-year-old son or hanging himself from the roof or swallowing some pesticide or cephos. Expecting an answer would be too much but sensitivity from a Cabinet Minister is at least desirable. Insect attack, a bad weather, drought, disease, flood or any other circumstances which claim for all the effects applied in his endeavour, farmer always suffers. The question is what he is left with is a huge pile of debt. He is not a professional, he is not a businessman, he is not a

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Kashmir: Old Political Chimera is Social Again

Sunday 20 May 2018



by Navneet Sharma and Showkat Ahmad Mir

Don't see J&K as a conflict state and a political issue, it is a society which has social issues right now. — Haseeb Drabu

(the) deep sense of victimhood prevalent in the Kashmir Valley. It surely deserves to be addressed with great sensitivity. — Three Interlocutors

Political settlement will happen only when peace prevails. — Dineshwar Sharma

Kashmir is no more a place or the word. We have been 'trained' to read it as the Kashmir issue. Moreover writing on or about Kashmir is no more an academic pursuit but a political activism which is evaluated in academic discourse from the vantage point from where it has been written or evaluated. Moreover writing on Kashmir entails a deep sense of 'correctness' and 'uniqueness' in the writer which hampers and obstructs the appreciation of others' views or the Buberian dialogue.

In this commentary we will not be going into the annals of history to pin what went wrong or betrayal theory or Mountbatten/Nehru/Jinnah/Hari Singh/Sheikh Abdullah pentads' (mis)understanding about the Kashmir issue of secession to India or Pakistan or to be independent. Neither will we engage into the debate about pre-or post-1953 status of Kashmir nor about the Articles 370 or 35A. These questions are important and may be of the utmost importance in understanding the conflict and resolution but in this commentary we will restrain ourselves to see Kashmir as a social quagmire and to appreciate whether the school/educational system can contribute to the way to wriggle out of it.

Schooling/education gets its validity and social legitimacy from the understanding that it is inherently designed to alter/modify people's behaviour. Moreover if the state of India believes that the Kashmiri young generation is indoctrinated or swayed by the rhetoric of separatist leaders, to



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JIO: The Case of Pre-Born Eminence

Tuesday, 7 August 2018

by Navneet Sharma and Showkat Ahmad Mir

For the child (male!) to be pre-eminent there should be Garbhadhan samskara. For this is the time of Kali and everyone is sudra. For an 'abhijatya' garbhadhana is unavoidable.

— Srimad Bhagvatam-4:31:10 purport

(IoE tag) This will facilitate them to grow more rapidly and at the same time they will get more opportunity to scale up their operations with more skills and quality improvement so that they become world class Institutes.

— Prakash Javdekar, Minister, HRD, GoI

The vedic Government of India, which was perturbed with the anti-national character of higher education heralded by the likes of the JNUs and AMUs, has done garbhadhan to embark upon a new journey to envision a nationalist higher education for the Jio-institute/university/foundation (!). The mighty government has gifted one thousand crore rupees as 'shagun' in the garbhadhansamskara. This was done in the garb of selecting an institute of eminence amongst the higher education institutions. This pre-born samskara for the Jio institute could be expected from only that government which hails and shouts the loudest about the nation's welfare (*RashitrahitSarvopari*). As the adage goes, patriotism is the virtue of the vicious. In this commentary, we will not attempt to comprehend the un-comprehensible that how a government thumping a fifty-six inch chest on nationalism and Hindu nationalism could so brazenly succumb to such a level of moral corruption and pressures of poll funding for 2019. In this commentary we will only highlight the apathy of the government, which promised to create two crore jobs (annually) and workers through Skill India, has taken what Amartya Sen says, 'a quantum jump in the wrong direction'. In this country there are Central universities which are unable to get land for the last ten years since their inception and here is a university/institute on paper which not only gets the tag of eminence but one thousand crores in the next five years.

Jio Institute: Yet to be Born

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Stream Weekly

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Conquering Hunger: The Battle for Right to Food in India

Sunday 28 October 2018

by Annapurna and Navneet Sharma

There are so many hungry people. To them God has no other shape than bread.—Mahatma Gandhi

India has recently crossed France to claim the sixth spot of being the largest economy and has also made a deal for Rafale fighter jets worth sixty thousand crore rupees with France. With these jets we are going to protect the largest number of hungry people in the world and the largest number of farmers who commit suicide. In this article we wish to emphasise that if the present government wants to leave its imprint in history in a positive manner rather than that of the disastrous note ban, communal disharmony, lynching and shoddy defence deals, it should take a cue from the governance of the UPA-I regime which added two more rights to the list of Fundamental Rights by bringing in Right to Information and Right to Education. This government should pay heed to roti (bread) than Ram. This commentary is an advocacy for the much required Right to Food for which the people of this country have reposed their misplaced faith in the present government; the bullet train to Ayodhya cannot run on the tracks of empty stomachs of the people.

The cruciality of human rights fulfilment includes the right to food and nutrition which is imperative for the nation's human development, raising learning and yielding capabilities, elimination of poverty, and economic and social development. Without food and access to proper and sufficient square meals it is useless to imagine a citizenry committed to the idea of a nation. Though the present dispensation may perceive Maslow's pyramidal hierarchy model as a 'Western' notion, it will always remain a universal truth that without fulfilment of physiological needs people will not be in want of social, psychological and spiritual needs. Hunger and its satiation are the most primary needs for any living being.

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Decolonizing education: Re-schooling in India Educação descolonizadora: reescolarização em la India

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The industrialization and its consequential imperialism and colonialism have impacted this world for three centuries. India has been a colony of the British Empire for two centuries. These eventful two centuries of Indian history did see the influence of not only the political and economical might of the "great" Britain, but its influence on every milieu of Indian life. India's indigenous education system was gradually displaced and the colonial model of education pervaded under the patronage from the colonial-state. The language, pedagogy, evaluation and knowledge of the colonizer became *naturalis obligato* for the population of the colony. India got independence in 1947 and took to the task of decolonizing education immediately. The attempts to decolonize education from various standpoints of political activism, universalism and religious nationalism are charted in this article. What decolonizing education should entail and how India has responded to this question in the last century and how the neo-liberal order has supported a particular ideology to have a dominant say in this process are concerns of this article. We analyse how re-schooling and indoctrination are projected as the most nationalist response for methodical decolonizing of education.

Keywords:
decolonization,
re-schooling,
indoctrination,
education,
saffronisation

La industrialización, y el imperialismo y colonialismo que trajo consigo, ha tenido impacto en el mundo. En el caso de la India, esta se convirtió en una colonia del imperio británico durante dos siglos, periodo en el cual no solo predominó la fuerza política y económica de la "Gran" Bretaña, sino su influencia en cada espacio de la vida indígena. El sistema de educación indígena fue desplazado poco a poco y el modelo colonial de educación se extendió bajo el resguardo del Estado colonial. El lenguaje, la pedagogía, la evaluación y el conocimiento del colonizador fueron impuestos a la población hasta 1947, año en que la colonia se independizó y emprendió la tarea de descolonizar la educación. En este artículo abordamos los intentos de descolonizar la educación desde varias perspectivas del activismo político, el universalismo y el nacionalismo religioso. Qué implica descolonizar la educación, cómo la India ha respondido a esta cuestión y cómo el orden neoliberal ha promovido una ideología específica para dominar el proceso de descolonización educativa son los ejes que guían nuestro trabajo. Los resultados revelan que la reescolarización y el adoctrinamiento se proyectan como una respuesta más nacionalista para una descolonización metódica de la educación.

Palabras clave:
Descolonización,
reescolarización,
adoctrinamiento,
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Ten Per Cent Quota: The Megalomania of Savarna Reservation

Sunday 17 March 2019

by Navneet Sharma and Anamica

"The megalomaniac differs from the narcissist by the fact that he wishes to be powerful rather than charming and seeks to be feared rather than loved. To this type belong many lunatics and most of the great men of history."

—Bertrand Russell

The year 2019 arrived with a thud. The highly branded "invincibility" of the concordant couple at the helm bit the dust in electoral politics in the Hindi heartland. The land beneath their feet had slipped and something was required to arrest it. The delusion of power came to play and the ten per cent quota Bill was placed in Parliament and got the presidential assent in record time. Though there are many other similar Bills like the women's representation reservation Bill, which is awaiting its turn since two decades, the cogency of the political class across party lines on this issue was no wonder as the issue of reservation in jobs and educational institutions forms both the social and emotive narrative in India and no one wants to be seen as being on the other side of the fence. In this commentary we will not be commenting on the political expediency of this act but its implications for sociological and academic discourse. We attempt to appreciate how this Bill, which will not be able to stand scrutiny at the court of law, can alter the discourse on the reservation issue and other positive affirmation steps of the Indian state or future governments.

The Quota and the Vote-bank

The 'ten per cent quota for forward castes', as the government calls it, is above the 22.5 per cent reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and 27 per cent reservation for the Other Backward Classes; and the government plans to implement this quota for the economically weaker sections of the 'upper' caste population by amending Articles 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution. This quota applies to people whose family income is not more than Rs 8 lakh per annum, who own

God on Shoulders: Lumpen Proletariats and the Political Agenda of Kanwar Yatra () - Mainstream

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Navneet Sharma

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God on Shoulders: Lumpen Proletariats and the Political Agenda of Kanwar Yatra

Saturday 31 August 2019

by Navneet Sharma and Anamika

Move your body, Move your bum

Bhole bam, bhole bam, Bhole bam

—A popular song emanating from blaring DJs in Kanwar Yatra

Every year people in and around Delhi and in the so-called 'cow belt' wait with baited breath for not only monsoon in Sawan or Shraavan but also for the peaceful conduct of the Kanwar Yatra. This yearly ritual is dreaded because lumpenism and hooliganism run amok on the street and the government not only turns a blind eye to these but rather facilitates them as these not only help in creating a devout Hindu vote-bank but also fulfil Hindutva—the majoritarian Hindu agenda of the party at the helm. The Chief Minister in saffron robes, an IAS officer showering petals, an IPS officer massaging your feet and Chandrayaan being launched in consultation with the auspices of Sankaracharya can give any 'Bhole' (Kanwariya) the feeling that he is beyond the world and the law; rather he is the world and the law. In this commentary, we do not intend to get into the discourse of sociology of Hindu rituals but wish to appreciate the politicisation of a ritual.

Rituals have been politicised since Lokmanya Tilak rechristened Ganesh Utsav for the mass movement for freedom from the colonisers, but the Kanwar Yatra gets politicised for the purpose of electoral politics. The overt commercialisation of Ganesh Utsav and converging the crass into culture in Kanwar Yatra reflects not only the idea of a new India but a global phenomenon taking shape either as 'Brexit' or 'Americans First' wherein the capitalist economy chucks multiculturalism and multiplicity into the bin. Nationalism and ethnicity are not new cynosures but coyotes leashed free to upsurge ethical values and human rights. The new fatal

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In Lieu of Five Acres: Being a Muslim in India - Mainstream

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Mainstream



Mainstream, VOL LVIII No 11, New Delhi February 29, 2020

In Lieu of Five Acres: Being a Muslim in India

Sunday 1 March 2020

by Navneet Sharma and Anamica

Gar galiyaan Babar ki thi, toh Jumman ka ghar fir kyu Jale?
—Adam Gondvi

Jumman is the quintessential character portraying the typical imagery of an Indian Muslim; the one who is afraid of what he is by religion, of what he eats, what he wears, how he prays and where he prays. In India, the social identity of a Muslim is crafted as the 'other' to cater to the 'us-them' politics; and in daily discourse it is hammered into the people that Muslims are 'they' or the 'other'. That is why it is stereotyped that each Muslim has four wives and at least a dozen of children; they marry their own brothers and sisters; they are 'katua' (referring to circumcision); and are fanatic about their religion and rituals. It is said that they keep beard without moustache; wear pajamas which end four inches above the ankle; wash their hands upside down; bathe only on Fridays and eat non-vegetarian food and beef daily.

It is also held that they stink or smell differently (itrwala), wear gaudy colours, use Kohl (irrespective of gender), speak Urdu; all of them keep roza and above all celebrate when Pakistan wins a cricket match against India. It is also said that they are the reason for India's poverty, backwardness and rising crime graph of rape, loot and murder; that is why, they prefer living in ghettos which are also the hideouts for terrorists.

Moreover, the catchy phrases like 'Tel lagao Dabar ka, Maaro bachcha Babar ka', 'Hinduon ka Hindustan, Mulle Jayein Pakistan', 'Gay humari mata hai, Gaffur usko khata hai', 'Hindustaan me rehna hai to Jal Shree Ram Kehna hai', 'Hindu Jan ka nara hai, Hindustan humara hai' are used to alienate Muslims. The slangs like 'Khangress for Congress', 'Khan Market Gang for allegedly anti-Hindu media', 'Paki, Jihadi for Muslims or Muslim supporters', 'Sickular or Pseudosickular for Seculars', 'Libtards for Liberals' also help to harvest anti-Muslim attitude and manufacture Islamophobia. This vilification translates into religion-based communal politics and Hindu vote-

Yard

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Carpe diem: the present and future of Kashmir

Navneet Sharma & Showkat Ahmad Mir

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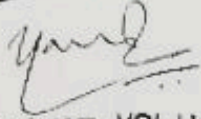
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Mainstream



Mainstream, VOL LVIII No 23, New Delhi, May 23, 2020

COVID Crisis and Cultivation: Looming Agrarian Disaster in India

Saturday 23 May 2020

by Annapurna and Navneet Sharma

"Which scientist or doctor is not secretly praying for a miracle? Which priest is not - secretly, at least - submitting to science?" — Arundhati Roy

The covid -19 and ensuing crisis, in all domains of human life whether social, political or economic is going to be a juncture where the life, empathy, development and harmony will also be studied in pre and post covid phases. This humongous crisis will also have its impact on the basic requirements for life, food and water. Food and hunger will mean different in post covid world. Similarly, running water and its availability to wash hands frequently to combat corona spread will also be seen differently post this pandemic. The lockdown and its essentially elitist nature is going to affect the idea of food, food production and its distribution and the severest impact will be borne by farmers. The food growers in our country may get more disenchanted with farming or may commit suicide in more numbers. This disaster and India's preparation or rather no preparation will write a new chapter on deprivation in India and unfortunately farmers will be the centre piece in this. In this article we are going to focus on how this covid spring will be a bane for farming and cultivators and we also dread to imagine how it will influence the future of agricultural production consumption and distribution in India.

It has been no less than a miracle that the farmers in India produce bumper harvest despite the utter laggard of the system of the distribution and consumption but it is only the 'science' of agriculture which can uplift the situation of the farmer the most. It is the time of year when there is a harvest ready to be reaped and further processed and sold. It is when the field is prepared for the next crop. The 'mandis' brim with the harvest and is the time to reap money as a reward for the hard labour which the farmer has put in through the year. But this covid - 19 and the consequential lockdown will have a different kind of influence on agriculture and farmers and will also create new domains for deprivation.

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Mainstream



Navneet

Mainstream, VOL LVIII No 27, New Delhi, June 20, 2020

'Warnography': Frenzy Media, Frantic World | Navneet Sharma and Khem Raj Sharma

Saturday 20 June 2020

by Navneet Sharma and Khem Raj Sharma

"The surest way to become a pacifist is to join the infantry."—William H. Mauldin

War is an extreme aggression and destruction leading to mortality. It is only a masculine response to economic, political, geographical, religious and cultural conflicts. No war is fought for the sake of war but for peace or for the control over the ability to disturb peace. War is an economic enterprise. It benefits an ideology to be in perpetual state of war. The arms industry and profit mongering survive on the spate of fear and insecurity among people. The political compulsions of the governments at helm also contribute to the idea that war is at door or we are at war. In an era, when mass media rules our lives; and decision or choice making ability 24X7 being in tizzy favours commerce and commercialization.

In a war *carpe diem* (seize the day) is the aim. This is to support quick and random (and heroic/adventurous!) decision to sweep all enemies in a day. Similarly, in creating a war-like situation, *veer-ras* is eulogised to glorify the edifice of courage, bravery and nationalism, ethnicity or a particular religion. The usage of this emotion in mass media or popular culture is what that leads us to warnography—semantically equivalent to pornography—intended to stimulate our fear, insecurity, and simultaneously our heroic nationalistic sentiment. The media and medium for expressing this emotion has been there in different forms in high culture like paintings and poetry, but in popular culture it takes a subversive form to titillate the viewer and create the fuzzy excitement. We are not concerned about the literary, cinematic or fictional piece of works about war but the area of concern is the content and depiction on news channels. Amongst hundreds of channels looming into our most private recesses of drawing rooms and bedrooms, news channels have a distinct reputation wherein we consider the content shown and depiction as authentic and truthful.

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Mainstream



Yard

Mainstream, VOL LVIII No 45, New Delhi, October 24, 2020

Debilitating historicity: History as statecraft | Navneet Sharma and Anamica

Saturday 24 October 2020

by Navneet Sharma and Anamica

"If history and science has taught us anything, it is that passion and desire are not the same as truth." —E.O. Wilson

Those who don the historian's hat are expected to unearth, collect, and present facts that make a coherent and cogent narrative. A historian also must have the historical sensibility and historical mind. Though history is known as the story of the past yet it is not a story but a reconstruction of the past based on pieces of evidence and sources. Before going into the appreciation of historical sensibility and historical mind of GD Bakshi and the invitation to him as a historian by the vice-chancellor of the university which is ranked numero uno despite dislike by the people at the helm, one should acknowledge that the students and faculty of Centre for Historical Studies, JNU have issued press releases condemning and distancing themselves from the organization of this event. Bakshi was invited to speak upon a book that he has written whose Kindle edition was launched recently at *The Saraswati Civilization: A Paradigmatic Shift in Indian History*. Bakshi's book has claimed to launch 'a massive campaign to correct the ancient Indian history presented by the British, with facts and figures.' The book's description suggests that this is the 'authentic' Indian history for which evidence, discoveries, and facts are brought together by the author with the help of sources ranging from satellite imagery, geology, hydrodynamics, textual hermeneutics, and DNA research. Bakshi had a long stint with the Indian Army and retired as Major-General. He is a well-decorated officer and has held important posts and positions in the defense establishment. It is astonishing how, despite his grueling career in the defense establishment, he could find time for his exhaustive and extensive research on ancient Indian history. In fact, he has also researched modern Indian history and has attempted to answer another question which has baffled historians for a long that Gandhi or Bose, who got the Indians their freedom. His numerous publications on varied concerns ranging from Mahabharata, China to environment and ecology can embarrass even any

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Science Education in India: A Misnomer for Scientific Temper

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ABSTRACT

Indians being 'argumentative' can even justify the indefensible and the conventional scientific logic and rationality appear amorphous and adjustable to us, which can be tailored to justify our firmly held superstitious beliefs and obscurantist practices. Scientific temper is a requisite to evolve an 'Ask why' society to sustain and reinvigorate the Indian democracy, which needs to be re-understood in the context of popular culture and pedagogical practices of science education. In this article, we tend to problematize what is scientific temper? Why scientific temper continues to elude us despite being part of our constitutional fundamental duty and framework. The aim is to negotiate with the idea of science as understood by Indians, while simultaneously deconstructing the idea of Indian science. The article will also explore the pedagogical concerns of science education in India. The penultimate question would be about the possibility of evolving scientific temper with the contemporary science education policies and system. The paper attempts to analyze how science education in Indian classroom settings continues to evade involvement of scientific temper.

KEYWORDS: Science, Science education, Scientific temperament, Indian classroom, Values

Introduction

"If we have to regain our place in the world and are not to be relegated once again to the dustbin of history; if we wish to offer a life of fulfillment to our destitute millions; indeed, if the light of our civilization is not to be extinguished, we have to

स्वामिभक्ति से सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद तक : भारतीय शिक्षा की पटकथा

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नवनीत शर्मा¹ और नीरज कुमार मनी²

सार

औद्योगीकरण के परिणामस्वरूप, साम्राज्यवाद और उपनिवेशवाद ने तीन शताब्दियों तक सम्पूर्ण दुनिया को प्रभावित किया है। भारत भी दो शताब्दियों तक ब्रिटिश साम्राज्य का उपनिवेश रहा है। भारतीय इतिहास के घटनाक्रमों में ब्रिटेन के उपनिवेश को न केवल आर्थिक एवं राजनीतिक रूप से मजबूत होते देखा जा सकता है, बल्कि, भारतीय जीवन के हर एक पहलू पर इसके प्रभाव को देखा जा सकता है, जिसमें भारतीय शिक्षा प्रणाली भी शामिल है। परिणामतः भारत की देशज शिक्षा प्रणाली धीरे-धीरे विस्थापित हो गई, और औपनिवेशिक राज्य के संरक्षण में शिक्षा का औपनिवेशिक मॉडल व्याप्त हो गया। साम्राज्य की भाषा, ज्ञान, शिक्षाशास्त्र और मूल्यांकन की प्रक्रिया भारतीय जनमानस के लिए स्वभाविक रूप से अनिवार्य हो गयी। इस लेख में औपनिवेशिक शिक्षा प्रणाली के विभिन्न दृष्टिकोणों को प्रतिबिंबित करते हुए, भारत में शिक्षा के वि-उपनिवेशीकरण की प्रक्रिया में राजनीतिक सक्रियता, सार्वभौमिकता और धार्मिक एवं सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद किस प्रकार से अपनी भूमिका अदा करते हैं, उस प्रक्रिया को रेखांकित करने का प्रयास किया गया है। नव-उदारवादी विचारधारा ने औपनिवेशिक शिक्षा का किस तरह समर्थन किया है, और इस प्रक्रिया में उभरे उन विचारों को चिह्नित करते हुए, व्याख्या करने का प्रयास किया गया है। प्रश्न है: कि वि-उपनिवेशीकरण के लिए, पुनर्स्कोलीकरण को सबसे अधिक राष्ट्रवादी प्रतिक्रिया के रूप में कैसे पेश किया जाता है?

कुंजी शब्द

वि-उपनिवेशीकरण, उपनिवेशवाद, शिक्षा, सांस्कृतिक राष्ट्रवाद, पुनर्स्कोलीकरण

प्राक्कथन

पूर्व में, कुछ यूरोपीय साम्राज्यों का शासन विश्व के एक बहुत बड़े हिस्से पर रहा था, जिसमें ब्रिटेन का उपनिवेशवाद सबसे बड़ा था। इसके बारे में कहा गया है कि इस साम्राज्य का सूरज कभी अस्त नहीं होता था, जो ब्रिटेन द्वारा नियंत्रित भूगोल की विशालता को दर्शाता था। उपनिवेशवाद का

¹ असिस्टेंट प्रोफेसर, शिक्षा विभाग, शिक्षा स्कूल, हिमाचल प्रदेश केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय, धर्मशाला, हिमाचल प्रदेश।

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स्कूल, समाज और इक्कीसवीं सदी

नवनीत शर्मा, नीरज कुमार मनी



शिक्षा का संचालन शून्य में नहीं होता यह संस्कृति और समाज पर पड़ने वाले बाह्य प्रभावों से अनुप्रेरित होती है। समाज के अतीत में स्थित परंपराओं से तो वह प्रभाव ग्रहण करती ही है, साथ ही उसे समकालीन वातावरण के अनुरूप बनाना होता है तथा उसमें निरंतर नए परिवर्तन भी करने होते हैं।¹ ख्वाजा गुलाम सैयदैन कहते हैं कि अच्छी शिक्षा एक अच्छे समाज में ही दी जा सकती है और बच्चे पर पड़ने वाला स्कूली प्रभाव उन शक्तियों द्वारा प्रतिबिंबित होता है जो राष्ट्र के व्यापक जीवन और स्कूल की चारदीवारी के बाहर की दुनिया में क्रियारशील हैं।² ब्राकिर हुसेन के अनुसार स्कूल शून्य में नहीं रहता वह समाज का एक अभिन्न और संवेदनशील अंग है। स्कूल अपने आसपास के समाज के जीवन से उदाहरण खोजता है और उनको अपना लेता है।³ उपरोक्त परिभाषाओं में विभिन्न शिक्षाविदों ने किस प्रकार से शिक्षा, स्कूल और समाज को जोड़कर परिभाषित किए हैं उससे यह बाहिर होता है कि कोई भी शिक्षा संस्थान समाज के नियमों और मान्यताओं से प्रभावित हुए बिना नहीं चल सकता, पर साथ ही उसे कुछ महत्वपूर्ण चयन करना होता है, कुछ नैतिक विकल्प अपनाने होते हैं और एक ऐसी विषयवस्तु को खोजने का प्रयास करना होता है जिनका लक्ष्य एक 'अच्छा नागरिक' और 'अच्छा समाज' बनाना होता है और इसी संदर्भ

¹ स्वाध्याय पुस्तक (2000) : 33.

² वही : 33.