

BUILDING UP HINDU NATIONALISM ON DOGMATIC AGE-OLD PILLARS

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Abstract

The concept of nationalism known as modern one carried out multiple aspects. Initially in Europe it has organized an absolute political power on secular line, subsequently it stabilized in secular democratic way of life. However, Hegel provided the concept as an organic structure of nationalism under the supreme control of state which subsequently turned into Fascism. The same Hegelian concept of nationalism was organized by the Hindu nationalists particularly Golwalkar of RSS in Indian context. His compact theory of Hindu nationalism by favoring caste and Verna, condemned an individual under the clutches of social and state slavery.



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The renaissance and enlighten movement in Europe forwarded the modern concept of nationalism which provided secular cross human relationship with the state. An enquiry into the religion, Machiavelli realized him that the materialistic interest of an individual is more important than the ethical one enshrined in dogmatic religious setup that arrived him to offer the secular nation-state apparatus that would make strongest one the political power. Thomas Hobbes¹ organized the same concept of an absolute power at the cost of individual liberty on philosophical plane. However, the Locke's paradigm² of liberal empiricist philosophy looked at secular nationalism in terms of individual liberty necessary for human happiness by limiting the jurisdiction of social and state power. Most of the writers built up the concept of nationalism on the common features-tradition, history, language, religion, culture and territory. The community having being followed a distinct historical heritage with common way of materialistic life, territory, language, psychological setup, culture as broadest form of society which dawn at the eve of capitalism known as nation.³ The proclamation of French Revolution which by destroying vested interest of elite classes in religion and economic realm, asserted the values liberty and equality that would weld fraternity as the foundation of nationalism.

The anglicized newly borne middle class elites in India, a product of British modernity, got enlightened and did introspection of their own inhuman social system urged the need of social reforms as a prerequisite to nation building.⁴ The tradition bound people would not be capable enough to digest the radical manipulating change, as such, the liberal social reformists visualized the eventual change without immediately destroying the social fabric in its totality. They attempted to reconcile between the stability and steady change; whereas the radicals stood for its total annihilation that would be replaced by liberty and equality as the foundation of social nationalism.⁵ By discarding the western materialism and modernity, the revivalists looked at ancient Vedic culture for reforms as the way to nationalism.⁶ Arobindo Ghosh identified his concept of nationalism with Hindu religion⁷ that would be capable enough to unite the divergent sects of Hindu society into nationalism.⁸ Similarly Bipin Chandra Pal built up the structure of his Hindu nationalism on the foundation of ancient Vedic culture.⁹ This has provided the space for feudal-rural Hindu masses to enlarge the scope of national movement against the alien rule.¹⁰ Tilak followed the same line and succeeded in massively mobilizing the national movement.

Gandhiji followed the religious line of militant Hindu nationalists for enlarging the mass social base against the foreign yoke; but founded his nationalism on the secular line that all existing religions carried out equal ethical values and faith. He borrowed the secular politics of liberal-moderates with regard to truth and morality. However, while glorifying the relevance Hindu religious tradition he denounced the caste and untouchability as part of custom and not that of Hindu religion.¹¹ The tradition bound Indian society, as Gandhiji presumed, may not succumb the manipulating change on secular line of west, as such, his liberal religious idiom in politics accelerated the task to unite Indian population irrespective of its divergent sects and faiths against the alien rule.

The unique feature of 1920's has witnessed three trends of nationalism- 1) Communist movement, 2) Ambedkarite movement, 3) Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha's movement for restoration of Hindu nation. The Communist movement though followed by internationalism, attempted to organize the Indian proletariats without destroying their sectarian feelings of caste and religion unlike Marxism. By making an enquiry into the authenticity of holy scriptures of Hindus, Ambedkar's efforts were directed to organize Indian society on secular-scientific nationalist line to build up a strong nation-state. He, therefore, stood for wholesome annihilation of caste and other pernicious inhuman traditions and institutions of Hindu society; and visualized the new one to be founded on liberty, equality and fraternity which would bring out the feelings of nationality among the Indians.¹²

The third trend of Hindu nationalism has, in fact, begun in 19th century. The organizations like Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission, and Theosophical Society were aimed at to preserve and protect the Hindu Society from the attack of Christianity, Shikhism and Islam as the missionaries of these religions were constantly criticizing inhuman and irrational traditions of Hindu society. It was, therefore, the efforts of these revival Hindu organizations directed to Hindu social reforms for which they looked at ancient Vedic age for inspiration and discarded the notion of western materialism and secularism. Indeed this revival movement was progressive in social reforms; however, its glorification for ancient Vedic age subsequently provided the foundation to the political nationalism of newly borne young militant Hindu nationalists at the cost of social reforms and secular politics. The trinity-Lal, Bal and Pal built up political nationalism which occupied the core philosophy of Hindu-Vedic culture so as to enlarge national movement. Bipin Chandra Pal regarded the spiritual and cultural foundation for nationalism.¹³ Vivekananda admitted the co-existence of nationalism and Hindu religion together. He was, however, progressive on social front.¹⁴ Arobindo Ghosh sought to formulate his concept of nationalism on religion, creed and faith rather than the political one. Sanatan (Classical) Hindu Dharma was the core concept of his nationalism.¹⁵ Two nations theory-Hindu and Muslim obliged Sawarkar to build up strongly the concept of Hindu nation occupying its foundation in religion, ethnicity, culture and historical heritage finds its organic nexus to the holy land.¹⁶

The Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha (RSS), the most fundamental and militant organization, founded by Hedgewar in 1925 for organizing the Hindus on Indian subcontinent as Hindu nation which eventually but certainly expanded its social base remarkably since the inception 21st century. Despite the all diversities in the way of living among the Hindus across the country, Hedgewar regarded it as an integral part of Hindu nation and regarded it national life as such.¹⁷ He sought to find out the existence of Hindu nation deeply rooted in the ancient history of the country which he admitted as mother land of Hindus that imparted the feeling of fraternity.¹⁸ Such Hindu nationalism discarded the western concept of liberal-secular nationalism which through its materialistic individual intuition flourished to pursue individual interest through liberty that would lead the society towards declination; whereas the values-co-operation and co-ordination (form of social organism) enshrined in Hindu nation would lead the society towards progress.¹⁹ Madhav Sadashiv Golwarkar, the successor of Hedgewar, looked at Hindu society as an omnipotent giant organic structure reflecting the state of god in it, regarded the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras as an integral organs of it.²⁰ These classes (Varnas) are obliged to

perform their duties, services towards the organic society from their respective graded position of Verna-caste system. He reiterated to continue the same view of an organic structure Hindu society as it was countenanced by science.²¹ However, Prakash Gadgil denounced such view of Golwalkar as it was not having official opinion of RSS and added that the organization would never agree with such unequal structure of Verna based society.²²

As being Verna-caste system the core unique feature of Hinduism, Golwalkar was intolerant in bearing the critic leveled by opposition against the Verna-caste system and attempted to defend the system that conferred equal status to each Verna to render their respective services to god.²³ Indeed Golwalkar's an organic paradigm of social structure condemned an individual under an absolute totalitarian control of society and state-nation under the Hindu philosophic conceptual structure. Gandhiji's revival of Verna system was part and parcel of his integral political strategy against the colonial rule. However, the caste and untouchability he regarded part of custom, hence it has no concern with Hindu religion.²⁴ The radical change in his views in his last phase of life that he visualized the Indian society as casteless and classless secular.²⁵ Golwalkar looked at the decay and fall of Hindu society in the violation of Verna order as he regarded it god ordained. He blamed Buddha for destroying the caste which turned into conversion of Hindus to Islam in Gandhar, the then region of Indian subcontinent. The Hindu society could have survived only because of the caste and sub-castes despite the several attacks on it by the foreigners.²⁶ Sangha's Hindu nationalism regarded Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism and Christianity as the offshoots of Hindu culture. However, Upadhyaya blamed the Muslims to be posed a danger to country's unity and integrity,²⁷ and urged them to assimilate themselves into Hindu culture. Golwalkar favored German Fascism for the reason making the country as nation of pure blood race at the cost of massive assassination of Jews.²⁸ However, he acknowledged Muslims' secondary citizenship of the country without claiming them special privileges as minority.²⁹ Since the Hindu nationalism deeply rooted in the long back historical heritage of ancient Vedic age, as such, the Sangha may not regard Hindu nation as modern one.³⁰

Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangha's concept of Hinduism attempted to make an organic unity of Hindu society, state and nation on the old foundation of ancient Vedic age. Such an arrangement of society would act in accordance with the institutional legal framework of Verna and caste to restore the purity of ethnicity of Indian people. Such as organic structure of society enjoys an absolute dictatorship over an individual and prohibits the lower caste people from the natural vertical mobility to pursue their own happiness in accordance to their ability, skills and personal efforts. Such version of Hindu nationalism may be described as

more worst than the Fascism of west as the later built up on maintaining the pure ethnicity of Nordics. How does far the Sangha capable enough to maintain healthy organic unity of so called Hindu population leading it to fraternity as nation if the innumerable castes and sub-castes welded reciprocal inimically on socio-cultural and materialistic plane and placed them in a hierarchically graded social order? The scientists concluded that no pure race of blood exists all over the world. The weak anthropic principle of astrophysics clearly indicated that the genesis of living organic setup including human being lies in the causation and effect of hydrogen, helium, carbon, oxygen and other components necessary for the survival of living organism. Ambedkar, in this regard, observed, 'The caste system can not be said to have grown as a means of preventing the admixture of races or as a means of maintaining purity of blood. As matter of fact caste system came into being long after the different races of India had commingled in blood and culture'³¹ Hence the notion of Hindu nationalism seems to be false incapable to cope the ever-changing world situation and turn the nation into peril.

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