

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY ON RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN INDIA

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt to find out the reasons for not being able to find a peaceful living, coexistence and religion tolerance in a country where religion plays a very dominant role in the life and living condition of people in the society. Here an attempt has been made why religious harmony and peaceful coexistence is a myth in a country like ours where we have multi religions, multi languages and races too. Here we have tried why and what are the hindrances to achieve religious harmony, better living and so on. As long as we are not able to accommodate religious tolerance, values and belief system of our people who are from different religious background it is not definitely possible to have religious harmony and better living of whatsoever in a country which is both vertically and horizontally stratified.

Key Words: Religious tolerance, animism and peaceful coexistence:

India is a multi caste, multilingual and multi religious country, wherein every section of the people has their right of practicing, propagating the religion which they belong. It is also true that every community is influenced by the religious values of their religion to which they belong. As a result of this we have the chance of witnessing multi religions in this vast country. The true philosophy of all religion is not only good but universally adopted one. But the real adoption of these philosophies rest on the people who are both believers and dissenters too. No Religion is bad. All religions of this world are highly accommodative magnanimous and so on.

Yet, these good things are not followed by the majority of the people. As a result of this religious harmony has become a dream: Now the question arises why it is not possible to have religious harmony. Religious harmony is possible provided that the teaching must be mandatory on each and every one. Peaceful coexistence should become the order of the day. Every religion preaches harmony, patience, religious tolerance etc; this itself is more than sufficient to have religious harmony. But in practice every one of us are different in our own perception, understanding and attitude towards religion. This difference itself is more than sufficient to go away from harmony and culturally approved norms of the society.

Over the years we have witnessed religious violence across the world. Most of the Islamic countries are seriously engaged themselves in religious fighting. Religion as a matter of fact which has to teach universality of peace and peaceful coexistence, but it has totally failed in doing so. Insecurity of jobs/economic growth and too much disparity among its people make their people to develop frustrations and as a result of this they become terrorist of first order to take revenge on this society. Though we have Sacred books, Holy texts, yet we have totally failed in creating awareness amongst us about religious tolerance. This is all happening because of its improper understanding of the values incorporating in them and wrong practices. Anthropology rests on the total understanding of the society which includes religion, art and the way of life. Religion is only a mirror. It will expose how you stand in front of it. It does not reflect otherwise. Bombastic terms like universal brotherhood and peace, exists only on the paper but not in reality.

This is the problem with the commoner. A commoner who is illiterate and belong to the Little Tradition always depend on the Great Tradition for their day today activities. 'Milton singer' opined that, Great Traditions are those very nearer and dear to the Vedas, Upanishads and other Sacred Holy literature. The very understanding of these by the people who belong to Great Tradition while imparting and interpreted and misinterpreted in their own way and asked its followers who are from Little Tradition to

follow without any fear or hindrance. As a result of this the great resentment of the Little Tradition continued unabatedly even today.

Anthropologically speaking religion represents the total way of life of a person including his divine faith and belief in supernatural forces which tries to connect him to this otherworld through spiritual understanding in attaining salvation / *Moksha*. Likewise many rites rituals and *Samskars* are there to connect with this philosophy. The only way to get religious harmony is to adhere to the rules and regulations of their religions to which one can belong and the applications of the teachings of this religion should be respected without questioning. Then only the ideal way of living takes place. Once this is restored then we can think of religious harmony amongst ourselves, if not in the whole world people of proletariat, simple, compact and homogenous societies were regulated by the belief in animism, animatism and so on. Animism, animatism and religious functionaries of yesterday created their own atmosphere wherein they do not find any differences of opinion or thought. Moreover yesterdays societies were small, compact, simple homogeneous and hence could not find the difference between harmony and violence of whatsoever. For them religion means belief system and nothing else. But in present times 'Religion' is highly multidimensional one and requires a greater understanding of the things which involves. The architecture of the Indian constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar opines that "Religion is for Man.... Man is not for religion", again he quotes about religion is that "I like the religion that teaches Liberty, Equality and Fraternity".

Conclusion: To sum up this discussion it is very difficult to have religious harmony, better living and so on. This is because of the fact that over the years the very understanding of the religion and the things involved in it has gone through a tremendous change. Believers and dissenters are two extreme ends. It is very difficult to have the amalgamation of these two peculiar ends. Hence religion as an issue remains under question mark to bring peace and religious harmony in society.

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