Religious Places as a Locus in Maintaining Religious Diversity in Vijayapura Dist

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study how religious places in Vijaypura dist. bring about **religious** non-exclusivists with respect to a disputed **religious** truth claim when they deny that any given **religious** perspective. Bijapur, now officially called Vijayapura, is the district headquarters of Vijayapura district (Bijapur district) of the Karnataka state of India. It is also the headquarters for Vijayapura Taluka. Bijapur city is well known for its historical monuments of architectural importance built during the rule of the Adil Shahi dynasty. It is also well known for the sports by the popular Karnataka premier league team as Bijapur Bulls. Bijapur is located 530 km (330 mi) northwest of the state capital Bangalore and about 550 km (340 mi) from Mumbai and 384 km (239 mi) west of the city of Hyderabad.

India has given refuge to followers of persecuted religions across its history. In the post-classical period, sanctuary was granted to Hebrew Jews who fled captivity in Babylonia, Aramaic Christians who fled the Islamic invasion of Syria in the 7th century, and Persian Zoroastrians who fled persecution in Persia in the 9th century following the Muslim conquest of Persia, as a result, India has the largest population of people adhering to Zoroastrianism (i.e. Parsis or Iranis) in the world. In the 20th to 21st centuries, sanctuary was granted to Russian, Persian and Afghan Jews, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Hindus, and Ahmadiyyas who fled persecution in Pakistan, Hindus and Buddhists from Bangladesh.Bijapur, one of the popular heritage city located in the Karnataka state of India, is also one of the top ten populated cities in Karnataka. The Bijapur city has been declared as one of the corporations in the state of Karnataka in 2013. Bijapur urban population as per 2011 census is 326,000, perhaps the 9th biggest city in Karnataka. Vijayapura Mahanagara Palike (VMP) is the newest Municipal Corporation formed under the KMC act along with Shimoga and Tumkur Municipal Corporations.The city was established in the 10th–11th centuries by the Kalyani Chalukyas and was known as Vijayapura (City of victory). The city was passed to Yadavas after Chalukya's demise. In 1347, the area was conquered by the Bahmani Sultanate. After the split of the Bahmani Sultanate, the Bijapur Sultanate ruled from the city. Relics of the Sultanates' rule can be found in the city, including the Bijapur Fort, Bara Kaman, Jama Masjid, and Gol Gumbaz.

Key words: Hindu, Islam, India, Muslims, Bijapur Sultanate, Lingayat.

Introduction

Religion in India is characterized by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. The Secularism in India means treatment of all religions equally by the state. India is a Secular State by the 42nd amendment act of Constitution in 1976. ¬ The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of four of the world's major religions; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and

Sikhism. Throughout India's history, religion has been an important part of the country's culture. Religious diversity and religious tolerance are both established in the country by the law and custom; the Constitution of India has declared the right to freedom of religion to be a fundamental right. India is a land of unity in diversity and it is not only true about its people, languages, religions, customs and occupations but it holds true about its geographical features also. The Indian peninsula has all the variety of relief features which makes India a remarkable country. The Himalayas in the North act like sentinels and separate us from Tibet and China. The Karakoram Range, Vindhya Range in the Central Indian region and the Satpura Range in the eastern Gujrat, The Aravali Range in Rajasthan and the Western Ghats are known as Sahyadris make these regions different from the Plains which are found in the northern plains and are called Indo-Gangetic Plains. On the basis of the soil, texture, vegetation and the regions these are broadly divided into the Bhabhar Belt, The Terai Belt, the Bangar Belt and the Khadar belt. The Thar desert stretches in the west and covers almost 6 percent area of the state of Rajasthan. Malwa plateau in the west, Deccan plateau in the south and Chota Nagpur plateau in the east make the Central Highlands of India. Coastal areas in the west and extreme south and in the east make India a peninsula. Also, there are islands of Lakshadweep, Andaman, and Nicobar make union territories. Indians are much more likely to view their country's religious diversity as an asset than as a liability. About half of Indians (53%) say religious diversity benefits the country, while 24% say it is harmful. The remainder (24%) don't take a position either way.

At the same time, Indians of different religious backgrounds don't see much in common with each other. For example, most Muslims say members of their religious community are very different from Hindus or Sikhs, and vice versa – most Hindus and Sikhs see themselves as very different from Muslims. With few exceptions, India's major religious groups perceive more differences than similarities between their communities.

By their own admission, Indians also don't know much about religions other than their own. While many Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists say they know at least something about the Hindu religion, fewer Hindus claim any knowledge about India's minority religions – even those, like Jainism or Sikhism, with some theological similarities to Hinduism. India's religiously diverse population is, therefore, composed of religious communities who are not too familiar with each other's beliefs and practices, and who don't see much common ground among them. Yet, many Indians take a pluralistic, rather than exclusivist, attitude toward religious beliefs. The predominant opinion among Indian adults overall, as well as within most of the country's major religious groups, is that "many religions can be true," rather than that theirs is "the one true religion."

For Bijapur City; which had a population of 326,360 population as per census 2011. Males constitute 51% of the population and females 49%. Bijapur has an effective literacy rate of 83.43%, higher than the national average of 74%; with male literacy of 88.92% and female literacy of 77.86%. 12% of the population is under 6 years of age. Kannada is the major language spoken here. Arrival of Sufis in the Bijapur region was started during the reign of Qutbuddin Aibak. During this period Deccan was under the control of native Hindu rulers and Palegars. Shaikh Haji Roomi was the first to arrive in Bijapur with his companions. Although his other comrades like Shaikh Salahuddin, Shaikh Saiful Mulk and Syed Haji Makki were settled in Pune, Haidra and Tikota respectively. According to Tazkiraye Auliyae Dakkan i.e., Biographies of the saints of the Deccan, compiled by Abdul Jabbar Mulkapuri in 1912–1913, Sufi Sarmast was one of the earliest sufi of this region. He came to the Deccan from Arabia in the 13th Century at a time when the Deccan was a land of unbelievers with no sign of Islam or correct faith anywhere. His companions, pupils (fakir), disciples (murid), and soldiers (ghazi), numbered over seven hundred. He settled in Sagar in Solapur district. There, a zealous and anti-Muslim raja named

Kumaram (Kumara Rama) wished to expel Sufi Sarmast, and his companions having also prepared to a struggle, a bitter fight ensued. Heroes on both sides were slain. Finally the raja was killed by the hand of his daughter. Countless Hindus were killed, and at this time Lakhi Khan Afghan and Nimat Khan came from Delhi to assist him. Hindus were defeated and the Muslims were victorious. The rest of the Hindus, having accepted tributary status, made peace. Since by nature he was fundamentally not combative, Sufi Sarmast spread the religion of Mohammed and befriended the hearts of Hindus. Having seen his fine virtue s and uncommon justice, many Hindus of that time accepted Islam, finally he died in the year A.H.680 i.e., 1281 A.D.

After this period arrival of Sufis in Bijapur and suburbs was started. Ainuddin Gahjul Ilm Dehelvi narrates that Ibrahim Sangane was one of the early Sufis of Bijapur parish. Sufis of Bijapur can be divided into three categories according to period of their arrival viz., Sufis before Bahmani and / or Adil Shahi Dynasty, Sufis during Adil Shahi Dynasty and Sufis after the fall of Adil Shahi Dynasty. And further it can be classified as Sufis as warriors, Sufis as social reformers, Sufis as scholars, poets and writers.

Ibrahim Zubairi writes in his book Rouzatul Auliyae Beejapore (compiled during 1895) which describes that more than 30 tombs or Dargahs are there in Bijapur with more than 300 Khankahs i.e., Islamic Missionary Schools with notable number of disciples of different lineage like Hasani Sadat, Husaini Sadat, Razavi Sadat, Kazmi Sadat, Shaikh Siddiquis, Farooquis, Usmanis, Alvis, Abbasees and other and spiritual chains like Quadari, Chishti, Suharwardi, Naqshbandi, Shuttari, Haidari etc.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze religious places of Vijaypura dist in harnessing religious diversity; fact that there are significant differences in religious belief and practice. It has always been recognized by people outside the smallest and most isolated communities.

Bijapur : place of religious unity

Bijapur, officially known as Vijayapura, is the district headquarters of Bijapur District of Karnataka state. The district is bounded by Solapur district on the North and Sangali on the North-West, Belgaum district on the West, Bagalkot on the South, Gulbarga on the East and by Raichur on the South-East.

The city was established in the 10th-11th centuries by the Kalyani Chalukyas and was known as Vijayapura (City of victory). The city was passed to Yadavas after Chalukya's demise. Bijapur came under Muslim influence, first under Allaudin Khalji, the Sultan of Delhi, towards the end of the 13th century, and then under the Bahamani kings of Bidar in 1347.

In 1347, when the Bahamani dynasty was established, it included southern and eastern parts of Bijapur district. The supremacy of the Bahaman's may be said to have ceased by 1489. At that time five Shahi Dynasties were born and one of

them was "Bijapur". The Mughal emperor Aurangazeb conquered Bijapur in 1686 and it was under Mughal rule up to 1723.

In 1724 the Nizam of Hyderabad established his independence in the Deccan and included Bijapur within his dominions. However, his acquisition on this portion was of brief duration, in 1760 it went into the hands of Marathas.

In 1817, war broke out between the British and the Marathas. By 1818, the whole of Bijapur was occupied by the British and was included in the territory assigned to the Raja of Satara. In 1848 the territory of Satara was obtained through the failure of heir and the British rule started. Till 1884, the Bijapur district had headquarters at Kaladagi. Bijapur was made headquarters in 1885.

After Independence, the movement for re-organisation of States gained further momentum and on 1 November 1956 a separate "Mysore State" was formed. By the wish of the people it was renamed as "Karnataka". Thus, the district Bijapur along with other Kannada speaking areas became a part of "Karnataka State" on 1 November 1956.

Central government approved the request to rename the city from Bijapur to "**Vijayapura**" on November 1, 2014.

Vijayapura district belongs to the Belagavi Division of Karnataka. It is made up of two sub-divisions. The Vijayapura subdivision includes Vijayapura, Basavan Bagewadi and Muddebihal Taluk. Indi subdivision consists of Indi and Sindagi Taluk.

Basavana Bagewadi

Basavana Bagewadi located 43 km south east of Vijayapura, Bagewadi was the birth place of Basaveshwara, the 12th century religious and social reformer and prime minister of the Kalyani Chalukya kingdom. The temple of Basaveshwara has the shrines of Basaveshwara (Nandi) Sangameshwara, Mallikarjuna and Ganapathi. There are two fine marble statues of Basavanna and his wife.

Jamia Masjid

Built by Adil Shah-I (1558-1580), as a suitable place for worship for the ever increasing population of the city, the mosque is a finely proportioned, rectangular building with graceful arches. The Monument 1600 Sq.Ft. in area is most extensive among the edifices of Vijayapura. The flooring of the prayer hall is marked with 2250 musallahs (spaces for prayer), defined by black borders, each large enough for one worshipper, The Central miharb (an arched recess in the interior wall of a mosque) on the western wall, is covered with lines from the Holy Quran etched in exquisitely gilded calligraphy.

Sahasraphani Parshwanatha Basadi

This Jain temple, situated on the outskirts of Vijayapura has a unique idol of parshwanath. The beautifully sculptured idol of black stone, that is about 1500 years old has a halo of 1008 snake hoods, each of which are interconnected. When the ritual anointing with milk is done, it travels through a maze of tubes, before it anoints the head and shoulders of the idol. This special ritual is done at 10.00 am on every new moon day (amavasya) and at 9.00 am on every full moon day

(Poornima). Covered in an ash filled pit, to escape religious persecution, the idol was discovered in the 20th century by a devotee and has now become an important Jain pilgrim centre.

The 85-foot (26 m) tall statue of Lord Shiva installed by the T.K. Patil Banakatti Charitable Trust in Vijayapura at Shivapur on Sindagi Road is gradually developing as a pilgrimage place.1,500 tonnes statue considered as the second biggest statue of Lord Shiva in the country was prepared by sculptors from Shimoga for more than 13 months and the civilian design was provided by Bangalore-based architects. The statue weighs around 1,500 tonnes. A small idol of Shivalinga is installed beneath the big statue. "Shiva Charite" will also be inscribed in Kannada on the inner walls of the temple to help the devotees learn the mythological stories related to Lord Shiva.

Conclusion

Religious diversity has been a defining characteristic of India's population for centuries. The country has no official state religion, but religion plays a central role in Indian daily life through its temple ceremonies, festivals, pilgrimages, family religious traditions, and the like. While Hinduism has been the dominant religion for several thousand years, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Jainism, and Sikhism have also flourished. Religion is taken far more seriously in India than it often is in the West and by virtually the entire population. It is often difficult for a foreigner to fully appreciate religion's importance in this officially secular country. Followers of India's religions, particularly Hindus and Muslims, have created what Indians call "communities," groups who largely coexist peacefully but live and worship in separate social circles. Accordingly, when violence does break out between groups, it is referred to as "communal" violence. Census data on religious groups are frequently misunderstood and misquoted in the Indian media, particularly by writers and columnists advancing a particular point of view. Some non-Muslims, in both national and regional political parties, worry that faster population growth among Muslims will cause a societal imbalance in the Hindu-majority country.[1]Thus, it is worthwhile to look at the actual numbers before considering this issue further. Vijayapura district, also known as Bijapur district, is a key district in the state of Karnataka. The city of Vijayapura is the headquarters of the district, and is located 530 km northwest of Bangalore. Vijayapura is well known for the great monuments of historical importance built during the Adil Shahi dynasty. Badami, Aihole, and Pattadakal, near Vijayapura, are noted for their historical temples in the Chalukya architectural style.

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