



Importance of Religious Places for Social Harmony in Vijayapura District

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Abstract

This paper attempts to study significance of religious places in maintaining social harmony in Vijayapura district. Religion today has taken a much-institutionalized form. Its origin has always been debated and discussed today by various scholars. In sociological terms, 'Religion is a system of sacred belief and practices both in the tangible and intangible form'. Religion can serve the dual role of ideology as well as institution. Today, religion has assumed a more narrow-minded approach. However, understanding religion in the broad sense highlights the following important points about it in society. Religion plays a crucial role for a person in giving a cultural identity. Each religion has festivals, traditions, mythologies which form a part of the tangible and intangible heritage of the country. Thus, religion contributes in order to protect this heritage and also adds to the diversity in the country. Religion helps in creating an ethical framework and also a regulator for values in day to day life. This particular approach helps in character building of a person. In other words, Religion acts as an agency of socialization. Thus, religion helps in building values like love, empathy, respect, and harmony. People are always on the quest of fulfilling the economic and material pursuits in today's world. It is the religion which plays a crucial role in establishing our connection to the divine and developing the belief that there is a supreme energy that acts as a regulator in our day to day lives. Thus, the components of prayer, chants, hymns, etc. creates the spiritual bond.

The foundation of this historic city was laid during the reign of the Chalukyan dynasty of Kalyani between the 10th and 11th centuries. They called it VIJAYAPURA or the City of Victory. Vijayapura experienced a great burst of architectural activity under the Adil Shahi dynasty. The Adil Shahis encouraged building activity to such an extent that Vijayapura itself has over 50 mosques, more than 20 tombs and a number of palaces. Vijayapura

is mainly famous for Gol-Gumbaz, Jumma Masjid, Bara Kamaan, Gajanan Temple, Ibrahim Roza, Taj Bawdi, Malik-e-Maidan, Methar Mahal, Gagan Mahal, Jala Manzil, Upli Burj, Shivagiri, Siddeshwar Temple etc.

Key words: Hinduism, Bhagavad Gita, Vedas, Buddhism, Christianity, social harmony

Introduction

Religion is a system of belief in a higher, unseen power along with certain rights for worship. It is the metaphysics of the masses. It involves respect for the authority, so, belonging to a religious group means following its beliefs and practices. According to James Livingston:

"Religion is that system of activities and beliefs directed toward that which is perceived to be of sacred value and transforming power."

Each and every religion promotes its philosophy and the crux of it has always been the welfare and wellness of the people. For example, in the Sanatana Dharma, there are ideas like Vasudaiva Kutumbakam (the whole world is a family), Sarve Sukhina Bhavantu (let everyone be happy) which nurture and cultivate love and compassion in the society. Data does not speak for themselves. It must always be interpreted either by the standards of the community being observed or by outside criteria brought to the study by an analyst. Similarly, there are different religions followed and practiced in the world. In countries that have gone through the difficult phase of partition, footprints of major religious conflicts can be observed there.

In the midst of the new work on religious traditions, there has been a steady, growing representation of non-monotheistic traditions. An early proponent of this expanded format was Ninian Smart (1927–2001), who, through many publications, scholarly as well as popular, secured philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism as components in the standard canon of English-speaking philosophy of religion.

Smart championed the thesis that there are genuine differences between religious traditions. He therefore resisted seeing some core experience as capturing the essential identity of being religious. Under Smart's tutelage, there has been considerable growth in cross-cultural philosophy of religion. Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916–2000) also did a great deal to improve the representation of non-Western religions and reflection. See, for example, the Routledge series *Investigating Philosophy of Religion* with Routledge with volumes already published or forthcoming on Buddhism (Burton 2017), Hinduism (Ranganathan 2018), Daoism, and Confucianism. The five volume *Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion* (mentioned earlier) to be published by Wiley Blackwell (projected for 2018) will have ample contributions on the widest spectrum of philosophical treatments of diverse religions to date.

The explanation of philosophy of religion has involved fresh translations of philosophical and religious texts from India, China, Southeast Asia, and Africa. Exceptional figures from non-Western traditions have an increased role

in cross-cultural philosophy of religion and religious dialogue. The late Bimal Krishna Matilal (1935–1991) made salient contributions to enrich Western exposure to Indian philosophy of religion (see Matilal 1982). Among the mid-twentieth-century Asian philosophers, two who stand out for special note are T.R.V. Murli (1955) and S.N. Dasgupta (1922–1955). Both brought high philosophical standards along with the essential philology to educate Western thinkers. As evidence of non-Western productivity in the Anglophone world, see Arvind Sharma 1990 and 1995. There are now extensive treatments of pantheism and student-friendly guides to diverse religious conceptions of the cosmos.

The expanded interest in religious pluralism has led to extensive reflection on the compatibility and possible synthesis of religions. John Hick is the preeminent synthesizer of religious traditions. Hick (1973 a and b)) advanced a complex picture of the afterlife involving components from diverse traditions. Over many publications and many years, Hick has moved from a broadly based theistic view of God to what Hick calls “the Real”, a noumenal sacred reality. Hick claims that different religions provide us with a glimpse or partial access to the Real. In an influential article, “The New Map of the Universe of Faiths” (1973a), Hick raised the possibility that many of the great world religions are revelatory of the Real.

Seen in historical context these movements of faith—the Judaic-Christian, the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Muslim—are not essentially rivals. They began at different times and in different places, and each expanded outwards into the surrounding world of primitive natural religion until most of the world was drawn up into one or the other of the great revealed faiths. And once this global pattern had become established it has ever since remained fairly stable... Then in Persia the great prophet Zoroaster appeared; China produced Lao-tzu and then the Buddha lived, the Mahavira, the founder of the Jain religion and, probably about the end of this period, the writing of the Bhagavad Gita; and Greece produced Pythagoras and then, ending this golden age, Socrates and Plato. Then after the gap of some three hundred years came Jesus of Nazareth and the emergence of Christianity; and after another gap the prophet Mohammed and the rise of Islam. *The suggestion that we must consider is that these were all movements of the divine revelation.* (Hick 1989: 136; emphasis added)

Hick sees these traditions, and others as well, as different meeting points in which a person might be in relation to the same reality or the Real:

The great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the major variant ways of being human; and that within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place. (1989: 240)

Hick uses Kant to develop his central thesis.

Kant distinguishes between noumenon and phenomenon, or between a *Ding an sich* and the thing as it appears to human consciousness.... In this strand of Kant’s thought—not the only strand, but the one which I am seeking to press into service in the epistemology of religion—the noumenal world exists independently of our perception

of it and the phenomenal world is that same world as it appears to our human consciousness.... I want to say that the noumenal Real is experienced and thought by different human mentalities, forming and formed by different religious traditions, as the range of gods and absolutes which the phenomenology of religion reports. (1989: 241–242)

One advantage of Hick's position is that it undermines a rationale for religious conflict. If successful, this approach would offer a way to accommodate diverse communities and undermine what has been a source of grave conflict in the past.

Hick's work since the early 1980s provided an impetus for not taking what appears to be religious conflict as outright contradictions. He advanced a philosophy of religion that paid careful attention to the historical and social context. By doing so, Hick thought that apparently conflicting descriptions of the sacred could be reconciled as representing different perspectives on the same reality, the Real (see Hick 2004, 2006).

The response to Hick's proposal has been mixed. Some contend that the very concept of "the Real" is incoherent or not religiously adequate. Indeed, articulating the nature of the Real is no easy task. Hick writes that the Real cannot be said to be one thing or many, person or thing, substance or process, good or bad, purposive or non-purposive. None of the concrete descriptions that apply within the realm of human experience can apply literally to the unexperienceable ground of that realm.... We cannot even speak of this as a thing or an entity. (1989: 246).

Vijayapura District has an area of 10541 square kilometres. It is bounded on the east by Kalaburagi and Yadagiri districts, on the southeast by Raichur district, on the south and southwest by Bagalkote District, on the west by Belagavi district, and on the northwest and north by Sangli and Solapur districts of Maharashtra.

It consists 5.49% of Karnataka state area. It lies between 15 x 50 and 17 x 28 North Latitude and 74 x 54 and 76 x 28 East Longitude. The administrative headquarters and chief town is Vijayapura.

Geographically, the district lies in the tract of the Deccan Plateaus. The lands of the district can be broadly divided into three zones: the northern belt consisting of the northern parts of Vijayapura Taluks of Indi and Sindagi; the central belt consisting of Bijapur city; the southern belt consisting of the rich alluvial plains of the Krishna Rivers parted from the central belt by a stretch of barren Trap. The northern belt is a succession of low rolling uplands without much vegetation, gently rounded and falling into intermediate narrow valleys. The upland soil being shallow, the villages are generally confined to the banks of the streams and are far away from one another. The Don River Valley has plains and consists of rich tracks of deep black soils stretching from west to east in the central part of the district. Across the Krishna River is a rich plain crossed from west to east by two lines of sandstone hills. Further south towards Badami and southwest to east by two lines of sandstone hills. Further south towards Badami and southwest of Hunagund, the hills increase the number and the black soil gives way to the red

There are 34 rain gauge stations in Vijayapura District. The average annual rainfall for the district is 553 mm with 37.2 rainy days. The monsoon generally breaks in the district during June and lasts till October. The highest mean monthly rainfall is 149 mm in the month of September and lowest is 3 mm in February. The annual rainfall variation in the district is marginal from place to place.

Objective:

This paper intends to explore and analyze role played by religious institutions in **Vijayapura district** to build and promote the concept of religious harmony so as to meet the challenges posed by religious diversity in a globalized world.

Religions and Harmony in Vijayapura district

According to the 2011 census Vijayapura district, Karnataka has a population of 2,177,331, roughly equal to the nation of Latvia or the US state of New Mexico. This gives it a ranking of 210th in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 207 inhabitants per square kilometre (540/sq mi). Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 20.38%. Vijayapura has a sex ratio of 954 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 67.2%. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes made up 20.34% and 1.81% of the population respectively.

Traditions

Hinduism

There are Smarthas and Vaishnavas as well as Veerashaivas among them. A few Hindu families in Bijapur district have modelled their religious life after the Lingayats. Among the Brahmins in Bijapur district, the Deshastha Brahmins are found in large numbers.

Jayathirtha (1345–1387), a prominent dvaita saint who is also known as the 'Teekacharya' lived in Mangalwedha propagated the Madhva philosophy in the region. He wrote commentaries on each of the work of Madhvacharya. The Madhwa pontiffs established their mutts in various places in North Karnataka region. Thus the territory of Bijapur, Belgaum, Dharwar, Raichur and the adjoining areas is a stronghold of the Uttaradi Matha and the Raghavendra Mutt.

Sufism

Bijapur has been well known as the Madinatul Auliya (Sufis) or the City of Sufi Saints. Various Auliya (Sufi Saints) have visited Bijapur and most of them made this city their resting place too. Auliya of almost all spiritual lineage like Qadriya, Sakafya, Ashraifya, Shuttariya, Nasqbandiya, Chisitya are to be found in this city.

The following is a brief list of notable Sufis.

- Peer Mahabri Khandayat
- Hazrat Haji Rumi
- Shaikh Muntajeeb Qadri (alias maan Qadri)
- Qutubul Aktab Sayedina Hashimpeer Dastageer
- Syed Shah Mohammad Hussaini Qaudri Tazeemtark
- Khwaja Ameenuddin Chisty

Religious places

- **Jamia Masjid, Vijayapura:** Graceful arches, picturesque aisles, beautiful halls and a large crowning onion dome are the features of one of the prominent examples of Adil Shahi indo-islamic architecture - the Jamia Masjid. Even though magnificent, the structure is incomplete, as it lacks the two minarets. The Central mihrab (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.
- **Shivagiri Temple:** The temple houses a 85-foot (26 m) tall statue of Lord Shiva and is gradually developing as a pilgrimage place. The statue is around 1,500 tons in weight and considered as the second biggest statue of Lord Shiva in the country. A small idol of Shivalinga is installed beneath the big statue.
- **Toravi:** Toravi village, 10 kms from Vijayapura, is known for Shri Laxmi Narasimha temple.
- **Sahasraphani Parshwanatha Basadi:** This Jain temple, situated on the outskirts of Vijayapura has a unique idol of Lord Parshwanath. The beautifully sculptured idol of black stone, is believed to be about 1500 years old and is adorned by a 1008 headed snake, each of which are interconnected. So, when the ritual anointing with milk is done on 1 head, it travels through all the heads, before it anoints the whole idol. This special ritual is done every new moon day (Amavasya) and every full moon day (Poornima).
- **Yelagur:** Known for Hanumantha temple with 16 square sculptured pillars.
- **Tikota:** Home to Dargahs of Malik Sandal, Haji Mastansab and Badkhalsa
- **Sindgi:** Taluk headquarters and known for Sharanabasaveshwar temple, Sangameshvara temple and smaller shrines of Banashankari, Narasimha and Bowramma.
- **Salotgi:** Had an educational institute during the 10th century, now home to multiple temples including Shivyog Ishvara, Yellamma temple and Hanumantha temple.
- **Muddebihal:** Home to Shiva and Hanuman temples, shrines of Dattatreya, Panduranga, Durgadevi, Mallayya, Marulasidheshwara and Banashankari. Muddebihal also has an old fort ruins.

- **Ingaleshwar:** Large village 9 kms north east of Bagewadi, famous for eight old temples, including two cave temples. Siddeshvara and Akka Nagamma temples are the cave temples located on a hill. Someshwara is the largest temple in town with 36 beautifully carved Kalyana Chalukya era pillars. Kalmeshwara is the other major temple.
- **Indi:** Home to Adinatha Digambara Basadi, Shantheshwara temple. Several Chalukya era sculptures were also found in Indi.
- **Inchageri:** A popular pilgrimage center with several big granite built temples.
- **Hippargi:** Home to Rashtrakuta era Kalmeshwara temple. Veerabhadra temple, Mailara temple are other major temples. Annual fair held in October is very popular.
- **Agarkhed:** Home to Shankaralinga and Bhairav Siddeshwara temples
- **Almel:** Home to Ramalinga temple, Hanuman temple and Bhavani shrine.

Conclusion

Religion has historically influenced Indian society on a political, cultural and economic level. There is a sense of pride associated with the District's rich religious history as the traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism all emerged out of India. Moreover, while a majority of people in Vijaypur identify as Hindu (79.8%), the medley of religions that exist within the country continually impact contemporary society. In terms of religion in 2001, Bijapur Taluka was 77.2% Hindu, 21.4% Muslim, 1.6% Christian, and 0.8% Jain. That was the lowest Hindu percentage in the district, and the highest Muslim, the highest Christian and the highest Jain percentages in the district. The mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah was built in 1659 and is topped by a large dome, the second largest dome, unsupported by pillars, in the world. Vijayapura district in the north western part of the state and spread across 5 taluks, namely Vijayapura, Basavana Bagewadi, Indi, Muddebihal and Sindagi. Central government approved the request to rename the city from Bijapur to "**Vijayapura**" on November 1, 2014. The mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah was built in 1659 and is topped by a large dome, the second largest dome, unsupported by pillars, in the world.

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