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Introduction

The CPI(M) is bringing out a series of six booklets entitled RSS Against India.

The booklets contain essays written by eminent intellectuals, political leaders and activists which have been grouped together to bring out different aspects of the retrograde and divisive role the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has played throughout its history and continues to do at present.

They include (1) The RSS role in India's freedom movement and its communal role in independent India (2) the RSS concept of Hindu Rashtra and its approach to caste, gender and adivasis (3) The "beef" politics of the RSS (4) the RSS understanding of neo-liberal economic policies and of the working classes (5) the RSS distortion of Science and History (6) speeches of General Secretary Sitaram Yechury and Polit Bureau member Md. Salim in the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha respectively during the debate in Parliament in November 2015, on "Constitution Day" and on "Growing Intolerance."

Several of the essays in these booklets quote from the published writings of RSS founders particularly from the writings of M.S.Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak of the RSS. It may be asked what relevance do these writings have to an analysis of contemporary activities of the RSS. These are texts which remain the fountainhead of RSS ideology, and continue to determine its world view and practice. Three quarters of a century may have passed since Golwalkar's *We—or our Nationhood Defined* and a *Bunch of Thoughts* were written, but

their toxic concepts have been articulated by RSS Chiefs throughout this period including the present RSS Chief, Mohan Bhagwat's statement that Hindustan is for Hindus. In all these years not in a single statement, writing or text in any of the publications of the RSS or its political wing the BJP has there been even a semblance of a distancing, leave alone a rejection, of any of the formulations made by RSS founders. On the contrary, the present Prime Minister has written a biographical profile of Golwalkar in his book "Jyotipunj" describing Golwalkar as one of his inspirations. Therefore the quotations used in the booklets to illustrate RSS ideology, some repeated, are relevant to an understanding of the "core" of this organization, which has been inspired by videshi fascists--Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's Blackshirts.

The question may also be raised that are these exposures of the RSS at all necessary and do they not inadvertently enhance its importance? The RSS, as many of the essays in these booklets show, appeals to the lowest denominator in human behavior in inciting violence against "the other." In doing so it seeks to exploit religious feelings and utilises traditions and beliefs based on social and gender inequalities that still influence a substantial section of our people. Hindutva as preached by the RSS is a political concept coined by V.D.Savarkar, far from the world of ordinary Hindu believers. Those fighting against the utilization of religion for political ends need to be conscious of the dimensions of the battle.

Religion as a political tool is used by fundamentalist forces of various hues and in the name of various religious faiths. The role of Muslim fundamentalist forces who are increasing their reach among sections of Muslim youth are a matter of deep concern and they need to be isolated and fought back.

These forces are encouraged by majoritarian Hindu fundamentalists who falsely claim to represent the nation. These apparently opposing forces strengthen each other and divert attention from the basic problems of the people.

With the advent of the BJP Government led by Narendra Modi at the centre, the RSS not only has free access to the levers of power, which it also in large measure enjoyed during Atal Behari Vajpayee's time, but

it actually is in a position of control in this Government. When a roll call of Ministers is taken for the presentation of a report card to RSS leaders, it is clear who is calling the shots. It is therefore necessary to expose the RSS, its links to the Government and the extra constitutional power it wields today.

Further, Narendra Modi was a pracharak, a full time worker of the RSS owing total allegiance to its ideology, its theories and practice. For a pracharak to become the Prime Minister of India is a big step forward in the RSS project. Gujarat 2002 was a result as well as an experiment of the Hindu rashtra project under his leadership in which he was fully backed by the RSS. In 2013-2014, when differences arose in the BJP as to who should lead the party's bid for power in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, it was the RSS which not only backed Modi's candidature but directly intervened to silence the opposition of L.K.Advani and other senior leaders. The Prime Minister's refusal to take any action against those who are his colleagues in the RSS and are now in positions of power in the BJP in spite of their repeated communally provocative actions and statements is a reflection of his loyalty to the RSS. For India's Prime Minister it is RSS first.

It is thus necessary to provide the facts, the deeds and the analysis of what the RSS actually represents. We hope this series will be useful in the struggle to safeguard and strengthen the principles of secularism, democracy and equality.

On behalf of the central publications team we express our gratitude to the authors of these essays, and to the comrades and friends of the Party who helped bring out this series. We also thank the cartoonists for permission to use their work.

Brinda Karat

Polit Bureau Member

The RSS and the Varna Caste System

Viplav Meshram

The RSS supremo Mohan Bhagwat in an issue of *Organiser*, the mouthpiece of RSS, recently called for a revision of the reservation policy, revealing the hitherto camouflaged policy of the RSS towards social justice. In reality, RSS is against reservations for socially deprived sections of Indian society. But declaring this openly is not easy. When Hardik Patel in Gujarat started his agitation demanding either reservation for the powerful Patel community or scrapping of the whole reservation policy, only then did the RSS supremo summon the courage to express the real views of his organization.

The reservation policy has its importance in giving opportunities to the weaker sections of Indian society that have been deprived of even human status by the caste system since centuries. Even today, gross social discrimination against dalits is practiced in many parts of the country. In May 2013, when Modi was Chief Minister of Gujarat, in the state sponsored report “Impact of Caste Discrimination and Distinctions on Equal Opportunities: A study of Gujarat”, it is mentioned that caste discrimination is just a matter of ‘perceptions’. This truly reflects the mindset of an RSS Pracharak. As we all know, dalits comprise one-sixth of India’s population and their majority still live at the bottom of the social hierarchy and are routinely discriminated against and subjected to many forms of violence. Can you call it a matter of ‘perception’ ?

Despite reservation, dalits are forced to do menial jobs while upper castes corner most of the top jobs. A majority of landless labourers are dalits. A recent survey found that on an average dalit family incomes are 40% less than upper caste incomes in rural areas, while this gap is a shocking 60% in urban areas. There are repeated incidents of murder, lynching, rape and arson against dalit families. But the RSS wants to wish away this brutality by claiming that the caste system in its mythical ‘pure’ form is actually a unifying force for Hindu society.

The ideology of the RSS is based on ‘Hindutva’, which is inseparable from the varna and caste system. The RSS believes in the caste system, according to which each must perform his/her duties without complaint as per their place in the caste hierarchy. The RSS has no love for the dalits and adivasis. It expects that the dalits and backward communities must perform their duties in accordance with the Dharmashastras (Hindu scriptures) which the RSS lauds as ideal. Narendra Modi has even said that dalit manual scavengers feel spiritual pleasure in doing their work. In the year 2007, a collection of Narendra Modi’s speeches to IAS officials at various points of times were compiled in a book form named ‘Karmyog’ and published by the BJP govt. of Gujarat. Here is what Modi thinks of manual scavengers’ job:

“I do not believe that they have been doing this job just to sustain their livelihood. Had this been so, they would not have continued with this type of job generation after generation.....At some point of time, somebody must have got the enlightenment that it is their (valmiki’s) duty to work for the happiness of the entire society and the Gods; that they have to do this job bestowed upon them by Gods; and that this job of cleaning up should continue as an internal spiritual activity for centuries. This should have continued generation after generation. It is impossible to believe that their ancestors did not have the choice of adopting any other work or business.”

(Pages 48-49, Karmayog, Narendra Modi)

Cabinet Minister VK Singh compared to the horrific Sunpedh incident of two dalit children being burnt alive to the death of a dog.

So, what is the real RSS view of dalits and where do they derive it

from? To understand this, it is necessary to briefly explore the history of the varna/caste system. This is all the more necessary because the RSS and its multiple fronts are constantly trying to rewrite history and claim that the caste system was introduced only by the Mughal rulers and before that everybody lived in harmony and equality. As we show below, nothing could be further from truth. Ancient Hindi scriptures are full of praise for the varna system, and explicitly spell out the inferior dehumanized status of 'lower' castes.

Varnas / Caste System and Dharmashastras

The Four Varnas (Chaturvarnya) system based on duties depends on birth. The caste system is called Jati Vyavastha. Jati means birth and hence the caste system is actually a Birth System. This caste system is unique in human history and is only found in Hindu society. Another feature of the caste system is that it is a hierarchy with superior and inferior castes. Such is the tenacity of this hierarchical concept that even within castes, the sub-castes consider themselves above or below others.

Apart from the Four Varnas there is a vast population which is out of the Varna system altogether and no law givers or Dharmashastras consider them a part of the social system. This is 'last birth' or Antyaja. The dalits and adivasis are 'Antyaja', out of the caste system and hence theoretically not members of Hindu society. That is why Dalits are called outcastes.

It is claimed that the Four Varna system evolved from the 'Purush Sukta' of Rigveda. The Rigveda is the oldest of the four Vedas evolved about 1500 BCE and took centuries for completion. The tenth Mandal of Rigveda is the latest and is thought to have been created in 800 BCE and only in this tenth Mandal, and only once in the whole of Rigveda, is there mention of four Varnas.

The Purush Sukta hymn of Rigveda says: "*Brahmanosya mukhamasid bahu rajanyah kritah, Uru tadasya yad vaishyah padbhyam shudro ajayat.*" (Explanation – when the Purush was sacrificed in yajnya the priests questioned how to define the sacrificed Purusha's body parts. Then his head is Brahmin, arms are rajanya (Kshatriya), thighs Vaishya

and feet are Shudra.)

This tenth Mandal was created when the Aryans settled in the Ganga valley. They abandoned nomadic life. Cultivation was the principal occupation and pastoralism was subsidiary which in the earlier nomadic life was the principal activity. Settled agriculture and use of iron implements produced surplus and the Aryan society became stratified into classes. It was to justify this class division based on the cultivation economy, that the Purush Sukta was created. To say that the caste system or Varna system sprang from the Purush Sukta is like placing the cart before the horse, and is unscientific. Actually, after the division of society in classes the Purush Sukta justified it as a divine system.

State power controls the producers of material production that is necessary for the existence of society and helps the exploiters to retain maximum surplus in their hands and lets the producers eke out bare subsistence. Even the Four Varnas were arranged in two groups – the Dvijas i.e. twice born – first born from mother's womb and second after initiation – which was a minority and the vast majority were Shudras. The Shudras were engaged in production while the Dvijas were largely parasitical, being engaged in priesthood, ruling or commerce, according to their place in the Varna hierarchy. All of them lived on the labour of the producers who were the Shudras.

For smooth functioning of the class-divided society and exploitation of the toiling masses, indoctrination of the exploited was necessary and the Purush Sukta was used to declare the system as divine. The Dharmashastras which were the jurisprudence of the time explained that the Brahmins originated from the mouth of Brahma and so on. The Shudras were born from the feet of Brahma and it was their divine duty to carry the burden of the dvijas or upper three Varnas.

The practice of dharma is explained in various 'smritis', the most notorious of which is the Manusmriti (Laws of Manu). It formulated many inhuman laws for Shudras. For instance: they cannot possess property, as they themselves were the property of the three higher varnas; if a Shudra abuses a Brahmin his tongue should be cut, whereas

if a Brahmin abuses a Shudra a nominal punishment was suggested; if a Shudra beats a Brahman his arms should be cut; if he listens to the Veda, molten lead should be poured in his ears; if he recites the Veda his tongue should be cut; if a Shudra happens to be a witness in a dispute or case, his testimony can be believed only when he drinks poison and does not die, or is put in the fire and does not burn.

Manusmriti is supposed to have been codified by the second century AD. It presents in totality the system of jurisprudence of Hinduism. In the year 1927, Dr Ambedkar burnt a copy of Manusmriti for its total disregard of principles of equality, justice and humanism, as a part of a massive Satyagraha held at Mahad in Maharashtra.

The *Organiser* (Nov, 30, 1949, page 3), the organ of RSS, gave vent to its ideas regarding Manusmriti : “in our constitution, there is no mention of the unique constitutional developments in ancient Bharat. Manu’s laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of Persia. To this day laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits (read Ambedkar) that means nothing”.

And what were these laws which RSS adores even today?

Two most revolting dictates of the Manusmriti are: 1) The Shudras must wear torn and discarded clothes of the upper Varnas, must eat left-over food of the upper Varnas and use broken earthen utensils. 2) To dehumanize the Shudras, the Manusmriti went to the extent of declaring that the names of the Shudras must be filthy. These laws were forced especially on Dalits and also women. This law of personal names was actually practiced in Indian society. Even up to two generations ago, Dalit Mahars had such ugly names as Hagrya (shit), Bhikarya (beggar), Janglya (savage), Fakirya (beggar) etc. The name of the grandfather of the writer of this article was Phandya (treacherous) and great grandfather was Fuktu (beggar). His father-in-law was named Janglya. The Manusmriti not only dehumanized Dalits but also suppressed their personality ruthlessly. They had no right to choose even good names for themselves.

Other Dharmashastras and epics follow the same brutality towards dalits. They imposed disability on Dalits, deprived them of access to education and dehumanized them. And this went on for centuries. This was not in any way for the mental satisfaction of the higher castes, but to maintain class and caste dominance over the system of exploitation.

The Dharmashastras, Epics, Smritis, Dharmasutras are the pillars of the unjust Hindu society on which feudal jurisprudence of the caste system rested. One cannot imagine Hinduism (and of course Hindutva) without these pillars.

The RSS and the Caste System

The ideology of the RSS and its Hindutva is based on these ancient scriptures. The former RSS supremo M S Golwalkar wrote in his *Bunch of Thoughts* that the Dharma is a way of life. It must be noted that by Dharma he means Varnadharm and not religion. While glorifying the Varnashram system in his *Bunch of Thoughts*, Part-2, Chapter X he wrote under the title ‘Nation and its Problems’ that “Society was conceived of as the four-fold manifestation of the Almighty to be worshipped by all.” On the caste system he said, in the same chapter – “Castes were in those ancient times too, continuing for thousands of years of our glorious national life They serve as a great bond of social cohesion.”

Further glorifying the caste system Golwalkar wrote, “If the caste system had really been the root cause of our weakness, then our people should have succumbed to foreign invasion far more easily than those people who had no castes.”

It must be stressed that none of Golwalkar’s casteist and communal writings have ever been repudiated by the RSS. Thus the RSS wholeheartedly supports the caste system. It talks about *samarasata* (assimilation) and not *samata* (equality). It wishes that each caste must retain its identity and it should survive, not be annihilated.

It is interesting to note that the very formation of RSS was done partly to combat the influence of a massive non-brahmin movement in the late nineteenth century led by the founder of Satyashodhak Samaj, Jyotiba

Phule (1827—1890) and Savitribai Phule, challenging the stranglehold of Brahminism and its associated patriarchy. Dr. Ambedkar described Jyotiba Phule as ‘India’s first systematic theorist of caste’ and ‘the most radical 19th century opponent of it’ who desired nothing less than the complete smashing of its oppressive structure. He along with his wife Savitribai started the first school for shudra-atishudra girls in 1848. People like Tarabai Shinde – author of the famous tract ‘*Stree Purush Tulana*’— who has been termed the first feminist thinker of India’ or ‘Narayan Meghaji Lokhande, who formed the first labour organization in India, were active workers of Satya Shodhak Samaj’.

Dr. Hedgewar tells his biographer Mr. C.P. Bhishikar in his biography ‘*Sangh Vriksha Ke Beej*’ that one of the reasons behind the formation of RSS was the way the non-brahmin movement had raised its head.

Prime Minister Modi spent several years as a pracharak of the RSS before becoming the chief minister of Gujarat in 2001. In 2008 he published a book which contains short life histories of 16 people that had a great influence on him. It is not surprising that one of these is MS Golwalkar, whom Modi describes in glowing terms.

RSS and Dalits

Although the RSS dare not openly treat Dalits as untouchables, it is opposed to any reformation that strengthens the Dalit populace - be it the Constitution, the law or the reservation system.

On February 6, 1950 *Organiser* carried an article by a retired High Court Judge Shankar Subha Aiyar titled “Manu Rules Our Hearts.” He wrote that “Even though Dr. Ambedkar is reported to have recently stated in Bombay that the days of Manu have ended, it is nevertheless a fact that the daily lives of Hindus are even in the present day affected by the principles and injunctions contained in the Manusmriti and other Smritis. Even an unorthodox Hindu feels himself bound at least in some matters by the rules contained in the Smritis and he feels powerless to give up altogether his adherence to them.”

Golwalkar in his *Bunch of Thoughts* said, “Our Constitution too is just a cumbersome and heterogenous piecing together of various articles

from various Constitutions of the Western countries. It has nothing which can be called our own. Is there a single word of reference in its guiding principles as to what our National Mission is, what our keynote in life is?”

K.R. Malkani, an ideologue of the RSS in his famous book ‘The RSS Story’ admits that Golwalkar, the number two supremo of the RSS, ‘saw no reason why Hindu law should break its ancient links with the Manusmriti.’

Clearly, the RSS thinks that Hindutva based on Manusmriti which proclaimed inequality and dehumanization of the masses must be our National Mission and this must be included in the Constitution of India, instead of equality before law irrespective of caste, creed, gender and language.

The RSS has never supported the agitation of Dalits or their entry in Mandirs. Even decades after independence, there are many temples in India where entry of Dalits is denied. Similarly, the RSS has never come out openly against many social evils that are part of the ancient Hindu traditions and that still plague today’s society.

For a function in Vasant Kunj in New Delhi of laying the foundation stone of an institute for Vedic Studies attended by L K Advani – veteran of RSS - on February 1, 2002, ten Dalit families of Dusadh caste were forced to leave their homes because the organisers of the function thought that the presence of Dalits would pollute the area. No RSS functionary, not even L K Advani, objected.

In Dulena in Jhajjar district of Haryana in October 2002, five Dalits were skinning a dead cow to sell its hide. Local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (part of the Sangh Parivar) and Shiv Sena spread rumours of cow slaughter. The five Dalits were lynched. Instead of condemning this gruesome murder, a senior leader of the VHP Giriraj Kishore supporting this lynching said that the life of a cow was more important than the lives of any number of people. Again the RSS did not utter a word. Uma Bharati, cabinet minister in today’s Modi Govt., during her chief ministership of Madhya Pradesh promulgated an ordinance for banning cow slaughter. The official statement issued in January 2005 extolled

the virtues of Manusmariti in the following words :

“Manusmriti ranks the slaughterer of cow as predator and prescribes hard punishment for him’. This was perhaps the first time in the legal history of independent India that a law was drawing its justification from Manusmriti. No wonder, a magnificent statue of Manu was installed in the high court of Jaipur by the BJP government in the early 90’s. They want the country to be ruled by Manusmriti which consigns the ‘lower’ castes and even ‘upper’ caste women to the most cruel form of slavery that humankind has ever devised. Just recently in Faridabad in Haryana two small children of a Dalit family were burnt alive by the upper castes and the mother and father sustained severe burn injuries. The silence of the RSS on this ghastly incident was indeed deafening.

The RSS jumped into the Sampurna Kranti agitation led by Jayprakash Narayan. But when Jayprakash Narayan gave a call for breaking the sacred thread (Janeu) which is a symbol of higher caste supremacy, the RSS neglected it and not a single RSS member followed this call. This was because the RSS firmly believes in caste hierarchy.

The statement that the reservation policy be reviewed is a part of the RSS agenda. The RSS does not want empowerment of Dalits, Adivasis and Backward Communities. When the Mandal Commission recommendations were implemented, the Advani-led BJP started the Ram Janma Bhoomi movement inciting communal polarisation throughout India. RSS supporters stirred up anti-reservation rallies and incidents of self-immolation took place. Behind all this were the Hindutva forces. The BJP withdrew support to the V P Singh government and it fell.

In Dadri in UP, not far away from Delhi, a Muslim was lynched recently on mere rumors that he had beef in his house. But some RSS men openly proclaimed that it is in accordance with the order in the Vedas to exterminate beef eaters. What treatment then is the RSS going to give Mahars (Neo-Buddhists) a Dalit caste in Maharashtra? Many Mahars eat beef because it is a cheaper source of protein than mutton. Two generations ago beef was a staple food for the Mahar caste.

Despite all these developments, we find that RSS and BJP are successful in wooing a substantive section of Dalits through different ways, and

particularly through their anti-Muslim propaganda. The views of Ambedkar are being twisted in an effort to appropriate him. It is therefore very urgent that the anti-caste struggle be made an integral part of the anti-communal struggle. Here is what Dr. Ambedkar said “ There are many lower orders in the Hindu society whose economic, political and social needs are the same as those of majority of Muslims and they would be far more ready to make a common cause with the Muslims for achieving common ends than they would with the high caste Hindus who have denied and deprived them of ordinary human rights for centuries.”

(Dr. Ambedkar, Writings and Speeches Vol. 8., P. 359)

The RSS objective is to establish a theocratic state in India, a state deriving its ideas from ancient writings like the Manusmriti. This state will be an enemy of dalits, tribals and all those who follow a different faith, like Muslims and Christians. It will be a more inhuman, dangerous, degenerate and perverted dictatorship than ever seen before. Hence it is the duty of all patriotic and democratic people of India to fight the RSS and all of its different faces.



Women in the RSS World View

Inputs from Shubha, Subhashini Ali and Dr. K. Hemlata

The attitude of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) towards women can be understood through the comments and statements made by the leaders, both men and women, of its various outfits and from their activities. As far as women's equality and equal citizenship is concerned all fundamentalisms and their organisations have the same approach regardless of the religion they claim to represent. The difference in the present Indian context lies in the power of the RSS to shape state policy under the regime of Narendra Modi.

The RSS claims to represent some "higher" moral code are actually only an attempt to attack the gains that Indian women have made, however incomplete, partial and inadequate, through multiple struggles and sacrifices in the legal, political, social and economic sphere and to push women back to the four walls of the home, as subservient beings in the name of tradition.

RSS Chief Speaks

The Delhi gang rape in December 2012 generated mass outrage across the country. Thousands of people including young men and women came out onto the streets demanding not only stringent punishment to the culprits of this heinous crime but also safety and protection for women. But the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's views were different. A few

days after the incident, Bhagwat made a statement blaming 'western life style' of the people in urban areas for such incidents. He said gang rapes and sex crimes happened only in India, meaning urban India, but not in 'Bharat', i.e. rural India where women were not influenced by 'western' culture. When this assertion/statement met with widespread criticism, RSS spokespersons, Swayamsevikas and BJP leaders came to his defence saying that he was only referring to Indian culture that respected women and western culture that led to rape.

It is this framework that arms the "moral police" belonging to a host of likeminded sangh organisations to attack pubs in Karnataka, to assault young couples on Valentine's Day or to enforce dress codes.

Recently an RSS run school in NCR was found to be teaching students about the greatness of the self-styled godman Asaram Bapu who infamously stated that the Delhi gang rape victim could have been spared if only she called her attackers 'brothers' and pleaded for their mercy. It is the same Asaram who is in jail on charges of sexual harassment and rape. His supporters distributed books on him to the students of Saraswati Vidya Mandir.

Bhagwat was again in the news some time back with his views on the place of women in marriage. Speaking at a gathering of RSS workers, he said: '... a husband and wife are bound by a contract which says, 'you (woman) look after the household chores and satisfy me, I (man) will take care of your needs and will protect you, and until she delivers her duties without fail, he keeps her on the contract and if she fails to honour the contract, he disowns her ...'

These are not isolated thoughts of Bhagwat. They are inspired and guided by the patriarchal and medieval ideology that inspires the RSS and its various outfits.

RSS Idea of Working Women

Such ideas find their way into textbooks promoted by the sangh parivar in BJP ruled States. Recently a young woman teaching in a tribal school in Jashpur, Chattisgarh strongly protested when she was asked to teach Class 10 students a chapter of a social sciences textbook derogatory to

working women. The textbook said “working women are the cause of unemployment... the percentage of unemployment after independence has increased as women in all sectors have started working.” In other words it is not Government policies, but women who are to blame! This at a time when women’s work and income is responsible for the survival of families both in urban and particularly rural India, where one third of families are dependent on women’s work and income. Besides, as the young woman in Chattisgarh asked, “Does this mean that the percentage of unemployment in country is measured only in terms of male unemployment.” Exactly, but the question can be raised only by those who believe that men and women have equal rights to employment, which is not the RSS view of the world.

RSS Women’s Wings

All RSS outfits including its women’s wings, the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti and Durga Vahini, share the same ideology and echo the same views related to the role of women in the family, including such issues as domestic violence, dowry etc and their role in society. The women belonging to the Sangh Parivar women’s organisations are made important instruments to propagate its patriarchal norms.

Krishna Sharma, leader of the women’s wing of the Vishwa Hindu, Parishad an outfit of RSS, said in an interview that education of a man was more important because it was the man who must earn and support the family while the woman manages the household. She said that this division of labour was natural.

The Rashtriya Sevika Samiti indoctrinates girl children, young and adolescent girls and women with these ideas. In addition to the camps, various Hindu festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Karva Chauth etc are utilised to spread this ideology. Every day the calendar of the Samiti lists a ritual event like visits to temples, observance of fasts, pilgrimages etc but avoids observance of any anniversaries of political events. According to the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, Indian women already enjoy equal rights and there is no need for them to fight for equal rights.

It is interesting that, while the political wing of RSS, the BJP, is very active in the social media, its women’s wing sees young girls posting their pictures on social media as one of the major problems that needs to be addressed, in addition to unemployment. According to one pracharika, ‘young girls must be stopped from putting their pictures on social networking websites like Facebook... They invite blackmailing by this.’ On this aspect, its views are similar to that of Madarsa Manzar –e-Islam of Dargah Aala Hazrat, an organisation of Sunni Muslim clerics which issued a fatwa against women uploading photos on the internet and social networking sites.

According to the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, women have to aspire to be good wives and mothers, not for any careers outside. The organisation’s manual says, ‘after marriage, a girl will have many responsibilities in her new home. It is not advisable for her to bring disquiet by refusing to compromise. If ordained by fate, her husband will permit her to study’. Its advice on domestic violence: ‘Don’t parents admonish their children for misbehaviour? Just as a child must adjust to his/ her parents, so must a wife act keeping in mind her husband’s moods and must avoid irritating him. Only this can keep the family together’. Women have to adjust at any cost. The task is ‘to keep the family together, not break it. We tell the women to adjust. Sometimes, we try to counsel the husbands too’. According to a *pracharika*, ‘Women demand extra freedom at the cost of the family. This is destructive’ (Holier than Cow; Neha Dixit, Outlook)

RSS Legitimises Discrimination

The above makes it clear that RSS does not support women’s equality. It does not want to change gender relations within the family or in the society. What it seeks is to legitimise women’s oppression and discrimination in society within the prevalent traditions and practices. The ideology of the Sangh, imbued with patriarchal notions and with justification of inequality is the inspiration for its women’s wings also despite the fact that they are surrounded by examples of tremendous discrimination and violence against women in society. They unquestioningly accept the projection of minorities as the enemies of the Hindu nation. This is essential in order for all social ills including

those faced by women to be laid at the minorities' door and to take the focus away from the intrinsic inequalities and discriminations of the Hindu social system. The women's organisations of RSS never take up the issues of dowry or domestic violence presumably because this would divide and bring disrepute to 'Hindu' society. In fact, Mridula Sinha, president of BJP Mahila Morcha said in an interview to the Telegraph in 1993 'I gave dowry for my daughter and received dowry for my son...wife beating is bad, but if it has to be done to bring the woman on proper track it's alright'. She is obviously not at all bothered by the fact that taking and giving dowry is a criminal act as per the law of the land.

Tanika Sarkar, an academician of repute, studied the Sevikas and wrote at length about their organisation. According to Poonam Gupta, one of the two leading Sevikas she interviewed, the notion of gender rights is the fruit of the western poison tree. It cannot be tolerated because it leads to unhealthy competition with male family members, to domestic discord, unhappiness, broken families, blighted lives of children etc. Asha Sharma, the other Sevika, felt that the very notion of rights was an inducement to rape and domestic unhappiness. It was the sole cause of male oppression. Young girls must submit to their parents as wives must to their husbands otherwise they will be responsible for domestic discord. Widows should not remarry for the sake of their children. Except in cases of dire economic compulsion women should not take up jobs.

Strangely, an entirely different type of 'right' is upheld by their members. The late BJP leader Vijaya Raje Scindia, it might be recalled, said that 'It is the fundamental right of Hindu women to commit sati, as it is in preservation of our past glory and culture'. Thus while women should not claim the right to equality in life, they can be enforced the right to die with their husbands to preserve the culture.

No Autonomy

The increasing numbers of killing of young men and women in the name of 'honour' and the terrible atrocities inflicted on young couples who cross caste and community barriers to forge friendship and marriage are of no concern to the RSS and its women's organisations. While these attacks are being strongly opposed by the democratic and women's organisations, the women's wings of the RSS insulate themselves from

these issues. Addressing the annual meeting of the Sevikas in 2005 the then RSS Sarsanghchalak Sudershan advocated segregation of men and women to avoid 'evil consequences' of interaction. He decried women's independence and reiterated the RSS' view that the main role of women was within the four walls of the home and the training and education of girls should help them in the effective discharge of this future role of theirs. This of course is nothing but justification of not only the imposition of severe restrictions on the educational, professional and intellectual development of women but also of the violence that they face when they cross the limits imposed by the Sangh and others.

Followers of Manusmriti

It is important to remember that this endorsement of segregation of women and the opposition to marriages and relationships that violate varnashram dharma echoes the ideas enunciated by one of the most important ideologues of the RSS and its second Sarsanghchalak MS Golwalkar and those mandated in the Manu Dharma Shastra. In fact Golwalkar held that Manu was the 'first and greatest law giver of the world' and suggested that Manusmriti, which is most repugnant and discriminatory towards women and the deprived castes, must be the Constitution of Independent India.

Golwalkar complained about the Indian Constitution in the RSS journal *Organiser* thus: 'But in our Constitution there is no mention of the unique constitutional developments in ancient Bharat. Manu's laws were written long before Lycurgus of Sparta or Solon of Persia. To this day laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our Constitutional pundits that means nothing'. In the 1960s Golwalkar continued to extol the virtues of caste divided Hindu society in an interview given to a Marathi daily, Navakal, that was widely condemned. KR Malkani, another leading ideologue of the RSS admitted in his book 'The RSS story', that Golwalkar 'saw no reason why Hindu law should break its ancient links with the Manusmriti'.

On 6th February 1950, the *Organiser* carried another article 'Manu Rules Our Hearts' which states 'Even though Dr Ambedkar is reported to have recently stated in Bombay that the days of Manu have ended, it

is nevertheless a fact that the daily lives of Hindus are even at present day affected by the principles and injunctions contained in the Manusmriti and other Smritis. Even an unorthodox Hindu feels himself bound at least in some matters by the rules contained in the Smritis and he feels powerless to give up altogether his adherence to them;

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha leader who was responsible for coining the term 'Hindutva' expressed his admiration for Manusmriti in no uncertain terms. 'Manusmriti is that scripture which is the most worshipable after Vedas for our Hindu nation and which from ancient times has become the basis of our culture, customs, thought and practice. This book for centuries has codified the spiritual and divine march of our nation. Even today the rules which are followed by crores of Hindus in their lives and practice are based on Manusmriti. Today Manusmriti is Hindu law'.

Contrast this to Dr Ambedkar, the architect of our Constitution, who showed his utter contempt towards Manusmriti by publicly burning it because its core teaching was in support of the hated caste system.

Against Equal Rights for Hindu women

Golwalkar also led the Sangh in opposing the Hindu Code Bill arguing that granting of rights to women 'would cause great psychological upheaval' to men and 'lead to mental disease and distress' (see Paula Bacchetta, *Gender in the Hindu Nation: RSS Women as Ideologues*, p.124). The years leading up to the framing of the Constitution witnessed heated debates in the Constituent Assembly on the Hindu Code Bill moved by Dr Ambedkar to do away with legal infirmities suffered by Hindu women for ages. All the stalwarts of the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha were engaged in furious activity and debate in a last ditch effort to stop the enshrinement of the principles of gender and social equality in the Constitution.

The Hindu Code Bill could only be passed piecemeal in three Bills over more than 5 years. The three Bills that were finally adopted were the Hindu Marriage Bill that outlawed polygamy and contained provisions dealing with intercaste marriage and divorce procedures; the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Bill that had as its main thrust the adoption

of girls, which till then had been little practised; the Hindu Succession Bill that placed daughters on the same footing as widows and sons where the inheritance of family property was concerned. These Bills aroused strong opposition from the Hindu nationalists. In Parliament, NC Chatterjee, the Hindu Mahasabha leader and SP Mukherjee, later the first president of Jana Sangh, protested vehemently against what they took to be a threat to the stability and integrity of traditional forms of marriage and the family in Hindu society.

The attitude of the RSS and the Sangh parivar to the Manusmriti and their opposition to the Constitution and the Hindu Code Bill, both of which attempted to do away with at least some of the inequalities that women had suffered for centuries in India, is the strongest illustration of their attitude to the rights of women and to the injustice and violence that they suffer.

Just two quotations from the Manusmriti are enough to understand how Manu treats women and the place he assigns to her. 'Woman is an embodiment of the worst desire, hatred, deceit, jealousy and bad character. Women should never be given freedom' (Manu IX. 17 and V. 47, 147). 'Killing of a woman, a Shudra or an atheist is not sinful' (Manu IX. 17 and V. 47, 147)

Racist ideas

Denial of autonomy to women is an important aspect of Golwalkar's world view. His extremely regressive and racist approach to the issue of 'superior race' and 'inferior race' (of Hindus) and the unlimited contempt in which he held women can be gauged from this lecture that he gave to the School of Social Sciences of Gujarat University on 17th December 1960. As reported in the *Organiser* of 2nd January 1961, he said 'Now let us see the experiments our ancestors made in this sphere (*sphere of cross breeding – ed*). In an effort to better the human species through cross breeding the Namboodiri Brahmanas of the North were settled in Kerala and a rule was laid down that the eldest son of a Namboodiri family would marry only the daughter of Vaishya, Kshatriya or Shudra communities of Kerala. Another still more courageous rule was that the first offspring of a married woman of any class must be fathered by a Namboodiri Brahmin and then she could beget children

by her husband. Today this experiment would be called adultery, but it was not so, as it was limited to the first child'. Not only is he factually incorrect but his brazen assertion of Brahmin superiority and his reduction of women to mere 'breeders' are nauseating.

In his 'Vichar Navneet' (Bharatiya Sanskriti Punaruthhan Samiti, Lucknow, UP, Third edition), which is accepted as the basic ideological document of the RSS, Golwalkar does not even mention women as independent beings. Where he does, it is usually in a negative strain. The basic ideological premise of RSS—'cultural nationalism'—promotes a social system which considers the inequalities and discrimination—against women as not only natural but to be characteristic of 'Hindu society', 'Hindu culture' and 'Hindu nationalism' that should be glorified. In the book, Golwalkar says 'Our ancestors believed that Hindu society itself is a huge male, the symbol of super strength. Although they did not use the word Hindu but the use of the word super strength in the 'Purush Sukta' makes this meaning clear.

Within this society in which the Hindu male is paramount, Golwalkar reduces women to being symbols of 'mother strength'. The function of women is restricted to reproduction and nurturing within domestic confines. Her primary duty is to give birth to sons and do everything possible to develop them into strong healthy men. According to RSS leaders like Sakshi Maharaj, Sadhvi Prachi etc it is the responsibility of Hindu women to ensure that Hindus remain a majority in India. Distortion of data and lies are used to spread the misconception that Muslims are increasing in numbers and soon will become a majority in the country.

To quell any desire for equality or autonomy in Indian women, Golwalkar presents Sita, Savitri and Padmini as the real ideals of Indian womanhood (Vichar Navneet, p31). Sita and Savitri are husband worshipping (pativrata) women and Padmini, in addition to being husband worshipping, also is a 'Jauhar'—committing Kshatriya. To keep women in line, however, Golwalkar is not shy of advocating violence against them. Women who fall short of the ideal standards set for them are described as 'a disgrace to her family/ clan', 'demoness' etc and he plainly states that such women should be subjected to violence and murder. He says that if, in order to establish The Rule of Righteous Religion, the murder

of an innocent woman is essential, this is also justified in the name of the Highest Duty.

When violence against and killing of Hindu women is brazenly justified, Christian and Muslim women cannot expect any mercy. Golwalkar categorises Christians and Muslims as 'internal threats' and 'aggressive communities' that have destroyed the glory of India and have reduced Hindus to an oppressed community which has to relearn its manhood from its Shastric religion and become 'victorious' and 'retaliatory'. These angry intolerant Hindus have to behave with Christian and Muslim women in accordance with their objective of the establishment of a pure Hindu society.

Love Jihad

Not surprisingly such patriarchal ideas permeate into state policy wherever BJP governments are formed. In the 1990s, under Kalyan Singh's regime, a UP social science textbook said that domestic discord increased after women were given legal rights. Similarly, in Chattisgarh, a textbook said that men are rendered unemployed because increasing numbers of women were taking up jobs (*This was later withdrawn*). In Rajasthan the government has stopped paying monetary rewards that used to be given to those entering into inter-caste marriages.

After the formation of the BJP government led by Modi in May 2014, all the components of the Sangh parivar, including members of government, elected representatives etc have become even more vociferous in support of their objectives and in the propagation of their particular brand of misogyny.

During his election campaign when he visited Haryana, Modi bent down to salute the land of the khaps. There have been innumerable attacks on young couples all over India by members of the Parivar alleging inter-caste or inter-religion marriage or friendship. In the Mangalore region in Karnataka, organisations like the Rama Sene continue to attack mixed couples with impunity.

The issue of 'love jihad' based on absolutely no evidence has been raised repeatedly, often resulting in terrible violence against Muslims.

In fact, the riots organised by the Sangh parivar in Western UP in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections were a variant of the ‘love jihad’ theme. Hysteria was whipped up over the issue of young Hindu girls being stalked and molested by young Muslim men. The killing of a Muslim boy by two Hindu boys who were in turn killed was falsely attributed to this kind of incident and a huge campaign was built up that resulted in more than 50,000 Muslims being forced to flee their villages and spend more than a year in ‘camps’ in the most primitive conditions of complete deprivation. At least 12 women were raped and not a single rapist arrested.

The Sangh Parivar’s campaign against ‘love jihad’ must be treated seriously because of the resonance that it finds in the minds of many Hindus who live in mortal fear of their children, specially their daughters, contracting inter-caste and inter-religious marriage. The support it receives not only from local people but the police and even the judiciary is also of grave concern. It is seriously being carried out in villages across the country. People are told that Muslim men are pretending to be Hindus in order to seduce Hindu girls. A twist to this narration is that good looking well dressed Muslim men use their charm and attractions to lure Hindu girls (One aspect of this campaign is that it treats Hindu women as brainless). The inspiration for this campaign is not only religious tradition, it is also political. Nazis in Germany used a similar campaign against the Jews saying ‘The black haired Jewish youth lies for hours in ambush, a satanic joy in his face, for the unsuspecting girl whom he pollutes with his blood and steals from her own race. By every means, he seeks to wreck the racial basis of the nation he intends to subdue. Just as individually he deliberately befouls women and girls, so he never shrinks from breaking the barriers race has erected against foreign elements... He deliberately seeks to lower the race level by steady corruption of the individual’. (Hitler, *Mein Kampf*)

BJP Government Policies

The hypocrisy of the Modi Government towards women is clear enough. The Prime Minister talks of *Beti Bachao Beti Pado* but cuts the allocations for child welfare through *anganwadis* by 50 per cent; it supports the most corrupt practices of doctors, including in Gujarat,

responsible for female foeticide; it has refused to implement the Verma Commission recommendations to make India a safe place for women; the Women’s Reservation Bill has yet to find a mention in the Government’s priorities.. and the list goes on.

The Prime Minister himself is a Pracharak, owing allegiance to the RSS ideology. The RSS and its cohorts want to push women back to the “traditions of subservience and subordination” which in their understanding is what constitutes a “good woman.”

This is the challenge before movements of all democratic forces who believe in women’s equality and gender justice.



Hindutva and Adivasis

Archana Prasad

It is well known that the Sangh Parivar considers the adivasis to be “Hindus” and has always attempted to manipulate them for the political ends of the Hindu Rashtra project. The Ghar Wapasi programme of reconversions driven by the RSS is illustrative of this approach. At the same time since adivasi inhabited areas are mineral rich and of particular interest to corporates, the organisations of the Sangh Parivar working among adivasis have always worked in tandem with Government policies to takeover adivasi lands and resources.

These two aspects taken together are the core of the Sangh Parivar’s approach to adivasis.

I

The Hindutva Project of Ghar Wapasi

Mohan Bhagwat’s statement that India is a Hindu Rashtra and that the Hindus should reclaim their own through a reconversion programme has a direct impact on adivasis. A most telling example is from Gujarat under Modi, when the assimilation of adivasi cultures into the “Hindu” fold was symbolized by an amendment in 2006, in the anti-conversion law. The term “Hindu” in the law specifically included “animists,” along with Buddhists and Jains. Animism broadly speaking is the belief held by many tribal communities in the existence of spiritual beings in natural objects.

Ghar Wapasi, or reconversions' have been used by the Sangh Parivar since the 1930s to penetrate into adivasi regions of central and eastern India. It works on the presumption that dalits and adivasis are basically ‘Hindus’ and they had been converted into Christianity by the missionaries in a forcible way. This ‘force’ was a function of welfare activities of the missionaries who could “lure” adivasis into their network by providing free and cheap education and medical aid. It was also noted that the missionaries had been able to penetrate into these regions because of their work in times of famines which helped them to set up these services.

In order to counter this, Hindu rightwing organisations like the Arya Dharma Sevak Sangh also started their own welfare activities with the support of the ruling classes, especially princely states like Jashpur. They put pressure on the Raja of Jashpur to enact the first anti-conversion law in the country, banning missionary activities. By the 1940s, all anti-missionary views sought to emphasize the affinity between adivasis and Hindus and therefore did not object to the reconversion work that the so-called Hindu nationalists continued to do on a large scale.

Reports of activities in adivasi areas in the 1940s emphasized how “nationalist schools” were opened by the Arya Dharam Sevak Sangh (an outfit run by the Hindu Mahasabha) to provide alternatives to mission schools. Mass reconversion and purification programmes by the Hindu Mahasabha received the tacit support of the Congress. Thus by the end of the 1940s it was seen that anti-missionary activists had started believing that assimilation into Hinduism was one of the only ways of secular adivasi development. They also lobbied for the banning of missionary activities in areas dominated by adivasis especially the areas under the Fifth Schedule at this time. The attack on Christian missionaries received a new impetus with the setting up of an enquiry into the activities of Christian Missions soon after independence.

A former judge, N B Niyogi, headed the commission that had only one Christian representative who was a Gandhian by ideology. No other minority was represented in the commission. Chief amongst these recommendations was the banning of all foreign and mission agencies in scheduled and specified areas. Armed with these recommendations, missionary activities were banned in partially excluded

areas of the province and the State took over the welfare activities in these areas.

The evidence on which the Commission's recommendations were based revealed that there were varied perceptions of conversions. More often than not, these differences were dependent upon the economic and social status of the respondent. For the adivasis and poor cultivators like Gonds and Uraons conversions to both Hinduism and Christianity were a means of economic necessity as they were offered basic services that were free of cost.

However the majority of the evidence produced in the volume was from the people of the professional middle class who were also the main service providers in the region and found missionary activities as directly threatening their interests. They also had linkages with the landholding class that formed the backbone of both the Congress and the Mahasabha. By accepting their demand for the ban of missionary activity in some areas and their curtailment in others, the Congress became a latent party to the Hindutva agenda in the 1940s and 50s.

The Vehicles of Conversions

The deliberations of the Niyogi Commission showed the alliance between the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and right wing forces in mainstream nationalism in the adivasi regions. The 1970s saw the setting up of several fronts like the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams and their rapid expansion after emergency and the revival of the Jan Sangh. By the beginning of the 21st century with the NDA in power, there were Vanvasi Kalyan Ashrams in 8,955 places in 312 districts of the country under the supervision of 1,203 full-time workers.

The Tribal Affairs ministry and Khadi and Village Industries Commission were used by the NDA government to dole out grants to those NGOs and voluntary sector organisations that were steadily implementing the Hindutva agenda in these regions. More than 85 percent of the funds of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Commission were given to NGOs associated with the Sangh Parivar in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. 13 of the 17 NGOs recognised by the Ministry of Tribal affairs for running social welfare schemes are affiliated to the Sangh Parivar.

These NGOs and ashrams play an important part in socialising adivasis into the Hindutva consciousness and incorporating adivasi rituals into local Hindu traditions. They also raise contingents of youths who spearheaded the gharvapasi campaign. In this context it is important to unveil the relationship between the expansion of Hindutva forces and the social classes that have formed the foundations of the opening up of the forest economies on which the 'adivasis' had become dependent.

Helping Traders and Corporates

Aggressive Hindutva (in the form of reconversion campaigns) in the post Mandal period and the initiation of policies aiding corporate capital exemplified the BJP rule at the centre. Its policies revealed that most of this opening up had taken place for the benefit of the traders, big companies and foreign money who funded the activities of the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Saraswati Shiksha Sansthan (an umbrella organisation of all Parivar educational institutions). It is no coincidence then that the Shishu Mandir Trust is headed by one of the largest Marwari traders of Kolkata and its local branches are patronised by influential landholders and traders. Thus the activities of the Sangh Parivar have ended up strengthening, rather than dismantling the very forces that have been exploiting the adivasis since the advent of the British rulers in these areas. The policies of the NDA government only strengthened and aided this process. Disinvestment of industries like BALCO and privatisation of land, water and forest resources as in the case of the Sheonath river, will only lead to the further deprivation, and unemployment of adivasis. The withdrawal of the State from key sectors has led to the reduction of State investment in infrastructure development. In this context, all attempts at the decentralised management of forests and forest produce collection have only strengthened the traders, industrialists and multinational companies who are appropriating the knowledge, labour and resources of tribal people for their own profits.

The debate on reconversions has to be seen in the context of this contemporary history. The enactment and aggressive implementation of anti-conversion laws in BJP ruled states like Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have emboldened the Sangh Parivar organisations, especially Bajrang Dal and VHP, to expand their reconversion campaign in

non-advansi regions. Current events show that Christians are once again the targets of these organisations. Today, when corporate capital is intensifying its appropriation from adivasi regions, this campaign is likely to receive its support and represent its interests. The evidence for this will have to be gathered on the ground by democratic forces so that the current face of the reconversion drive can be demystified.

II

Some Examples of the Gujarat Model

Mr. Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001-2014. It was the period when adivasis in Gujarat faced a series of dilutions of constitutional guarantees and destruction of livelihoods.

The scheduled tribes constitute 14.8 per cent of the population of Gujarat and are largely concentrated in Surat, Bharuch, Narmada, Dangs, Tapi, Navsari and Valsad districts in south Gujarat. These are the fifth schedule areas where the Tribal Advisory Council is headed by the Chief Minister. However, the council's meetings were hardly held. Further, the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act was implemented only in letter and not in spirit. The Gujarat model of PESA Act circumvents the centre's model act and dilutes its content by giving the power of decision making to the *talukpanch* rather than the *gram sabha*. In a Niyamgiri type of situation, this means that the right of informed consent lies not with the *gram sabha* but with the *talukapanch*. As several studies have pointed out, many of the *talukpanchas* are not always adivasis, and the state government does not implement ST reservations in the *sarpanch* elections diligently. This has serious implications for the manner in which land is acquired and resources are controlled in adivasi regions.

Another aspect of the dilution of constitutional positions was the half-hearted implementation of the centrally assisted tribal sub-plan schemes. Reports of the Planning Commission and the union tribal ministry show that the state government had not reported the utilisation of any central funds since 2008. The percentage of allocation of funds for the tribal

sub-plan was much lower than the total percentage of adivasi population (14.8 per cent) in the state.

In 2008 the Gujarat government declared that the tribal sub-plan strategy of the central government was not suited to the state and that it would have its own Gujarat pattern of fund allocations for adivasi areas. The then Chief minister Modi launched his 10-point Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana, a programme that largely works on the public-private partnership (PPP) model. In a true neo-liberal spirit, it assumes that wealth creation can take place only through corporate participation and sets up specific systems for this purpose. Many of these projects prefer to work through corporate houses and through non-government organisations (NGOs) which have partnerships with private sector companies who work in education and agricultural diversification.

Promoting Private Sector

Two specific programmes are to be noted in this regard. The first is the Project Sunshine that was launched in 2007 in order to produce hybrid maize seed for the Monsanto seeds company. A 2010 evaluation report of the projects showed that the benefits to most of the adivasi farmers were dependent on the technological inputs coming from Monsanto. These inputs were bought through NGOs and sold to farmers. Some 51 per cent of the adivasi farmers surveyed reported that they had to borrow money in order to buy inputs for their farming. Further, though the productivity per acre registered a marginal increase in some of the lands, income from non-farm occupations like animal husbandry and poultry declined. Most importantly, the government sponsored evaluation report provided ample evidence to show that the strategy cannot lift the adivasi farmers from poverty. Rather it is one among the ways to further the interests of corporate led contract farming.

The second evidence of this corporate driven strategy was in the tribal school education programme. Though the Eklavya Model residential schools are not exclusive to Gujarat, the PPP model implemented in Gujarat is instructive. The policy aims to hand over the "existing schools to professionally managed urban residential schools on a full cost reimbursement basis and encourage the socially conscious private

industry to develop new quality schools in ITDP areas.” (ITDP stands for Institute for Transport and Development Policy.)

This is the most blatant policy for privatisation of education that a government can articulate in a marginalised region. The schools are run through educational NGOs and trusts that have vested interests in an expansion of private education like the Mahatma Gandhi Global Schools Foundation (Singapore) or the Zee Learning Education Society. Some of these, like the Utthan Sewa Trust from Modi’s own constituency Maninagar, are also known to be close to the Sangh Parivar. The aim of these educational and training institutions is to provide skilled human resources for industry. Hence the projects of the ITDP partner with private educational institutions, and indeed subsidise them, in order to train and enskill labour for their own corporate enterprises.

In this sense the Gujarat model is designed to open up the adivasi areas to private corporate capital, both in terms of its material resources as well as its social fabric. This is also accompanied by a hegemonic Hindutva project whose social basis lies in the support it gets from small and big businesses. It has also used its network of organisations to spread its tentacles and create a communal divide within the adivasi society. This was clearly evident in the 2002 Gujarat pogrom when the adivasis were mobilised to execute the riots.

A myth is spread that Christian missions are taking over the whole Dangs district, while in fact only five per cent of the adivasis in Dangs are Christian. The fact that this process has intensified after 2006 shows that the Modi government is interested in creating a broad coalition against the minorities in order to polarise public opinion.

In sum, it is clear that the Gujarat model of adivasi development is part of a larger alliance between Hindutva and corporate capital. This trend can be fought only politically and ideologically if the democratic movement and its organisations intensify their struggles in the region. By doing this, they will also help to build a democratic adivasi consciousness that is essential to counter both Hindutva and pro-corporate policies.

III Gujarat Model in Delhi

An analysis of the trends of public expenditure by the Central Government for the last four years shows that there has been a declining trend in the public expenditure for the welfare of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes. The budget figures show that in 2012-13 the public expenditure for the welfare of these classes was 3.06 percent of the total expenditure which went up to 3.48 percent in the next year i.e., 2013-14. This was also the last year of the UPA government and naturally it tried to show an increase in the expenditure for the welfare of historically oppressed classes.

During the last two years however, i.e., the first and second budgets of the present Modi led government, the public expenditure on the welfare of these classes decreased substantially and was 2.98 percent of total expenditure in 2014-15 and which has come down to 2.88 percent in the budget estimates of 2015-16. As far as the tribal sub plan is concerned, the following picture emerges in the last three years. The tribal sub-plan is meant to allocate resources in proportion to the percentage of schedule tribes in the entire country i.e., 8.8 percent of the total population. However the allocations show an abysmal picture with the tribal sub plan being 1.4 percent of the total and 4.8 percent of the planned expenditure in 2013-14. This ratio has come down under Modi’s regime to 4.3 percent of the planned expenditure in 2014-15 and 4.2 percent of the planned expenditure in 2015-16. Further if seen as a proportion of total expenditure, the tribal sub plan was only 1.12 percent of the total expenditure.

The main argument of the Modi government is that Central allocations have declined because it has transferred resources to the state governments in the name of "cooperative federalism". However the figures of state public expenditure show that the track record of BJP ruled governments (especially Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh who have been in power for more than a decade) is not very good.

In BJP Ruled States

The table below explains the patterns of public expenditure on the welfare of scheduled tribes, castes and backward classes in BJP ruled states:

STATE	2013-14 (Budget Estimates)			2013-14 (Revised Estimates)			2014-15 (Budget Estimates)		
	PLAN	NON-PLAN	TOTAL	PLAN	NON-PLAN	TOTAL	PLAN	NON-PLAN	TOTAL
CHHATTISGARH	2.62	1.86	2.19	2.71	1.80	2.21	0.73	0.25	0.53
GUJARAT	7.33	0.74	2.67	7.91	0.93	2.87	6.88	0.36	2.70
MADHYA PRADESH	10.87	0.86	4.03	11.43	0.89	4.25	7.94	0.84	3.50

Source, *State Finances: An Analysis of Budget*, RBI 2015.

The table above showing the declining state expenditure on the welfare of the scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes shows the lack of commitment of these BJP governments towards removing historical inequities. This has had its own long term impact.

These are also the States where the most vicious campaigns are conducted by the RSS to divide and weaken tribal communities' resistance to policies which seek to grab their land, forests and resources.

Any movement for the betterment of the lives of tribal communities must therefore necessarily fight against the BJP-RSS model of communal and pro-corporate “development” for adivasis.

RSS Against India



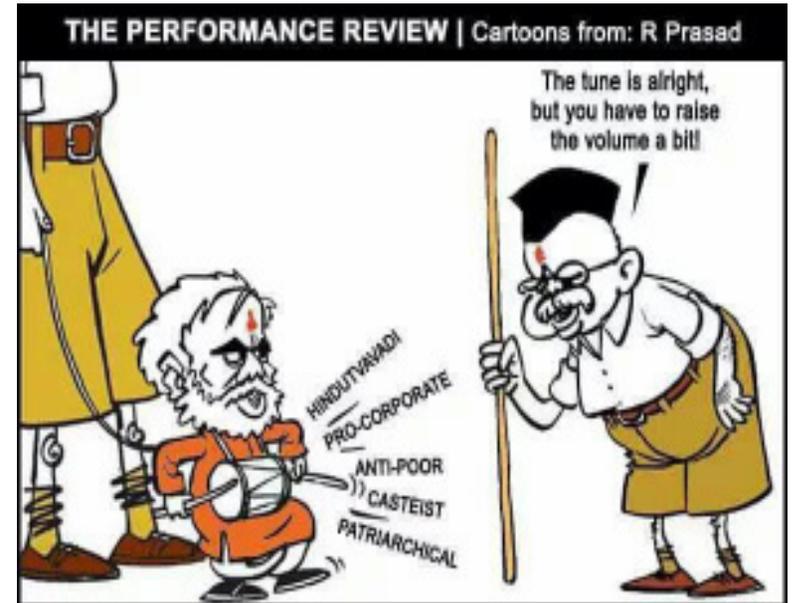
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RSS Against India

2



Ideological Blinkers of the RSS

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