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Communal Harmony in Medieval Bengali Literature

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Abstract:

Medieval Bengali literatures are one of the best examples of communal harmony. After the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal the two communities started to live together. In a very short period of time they known to each other and started to exchange their rich culture. As a result an extraordinary mixed culture was formed which was a gem in our cultural history. Both the Hindus and Muslims contributed to create such harmonic culture. This culture helped to construct communal harmony in medieval Bengal. This cultural heritage is our national pride.

1. Introduction

Bengali literatures during mediaeval period are the absolute example of communal harmony. If we observed the mediaeval Bengali literature we can find out the communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. After the invention of Bakhtiar Khilji in 1199 A.D. the Muslims came and starting to settled in Bengal. During a short period of time they knew each other. As a result a mixed culture was formed and they lived harmoniously and united since then. Besides some unexpected incidents the two communities lived here together for more than eight hundred years.

Legendary social reformer Sri Chaittannya Dev played a very important role to establish communal harmony in mediaeval Bengal through his Bhakti movement. In one hand he made the Hindu religion division free and universal, and the other hand he changed the acrimonious Muslim administrator into peace lover. His liberal Bhakti movement opposed the extremist Muslims, but he took the moderate Muslims as his disciples. Not only untouchable Haridas, a large number of Muslims also took shelter under his Boishnob religion. His enlightenment started a 'Renaissance' not only in Bengal's religious life, but also in the history of Bengali society, language and literature. Many Muslim poets were indite pure 'Boishnob Padaboli' then. Beside this religious cult, the 'Bauls' and the 'sufis' were free from bigotry. Their religious practices of one God and simple, honest livelihood affected the life of the poor common people very deeply. In the earlier period of the Muslim rule there were communal dispute between Hindus and Muslims, but as the result of resided together for a long time, influence of different communitarian religious movement and the economic exploitation of the 'Subadars'(provincial rulers) united the people of these two religions together.

After overcame so many tough hurdles in our time we have received some literary resources, which are prove of communal unity during mediaeval Bengal. We needed to categorised these literature into three different sections-----

- a. Literatures of collective religious cult
- b. Hindu religious poetry indited by Muslim poets
- c. Islam oriented literary thought by Hindu poets

These different sections are needed to analyse:

1.1. Literatures of Collective Religious Cult

We could found Hindu, Muslim communal harmony in Pir worship and Baul religious practises. Both the Hindus and Muslims were deferential to the Pir. He disguised himself as Manik Pir, Satya Pir, Makor Pir or Bador Pir and fulfil the wishes of his devotees. Both the Hindus and the Muslims were indited Pir dignified poetry. Among this Pir dignified legends Satya Pir occupied the most important position. Satya pir worship helped to united both the Hindus and the Muslims. Satyapir Panchali was found in the name of Rameswar Bhattacharya, Shankar Acharya, Krishna Hari Das, Bharat Chandra Roy and Seikh Faisulla. Without this Pir worship we can found collective religious practices in Baul religious cult. Sij Sain, the teacher of Lalan was Muslim in religion but Islamic bigotry was never affected him. The Baul song was indited by the both Hindus and Muslims.

1.2. Hindu Religious Poetry Indited by Muslim Poets

It was a very significant incident in the history of mediaeval Bengali literature. We wondered that around 70 to 80 Muslim Poets indited Boishnob literature by avoided the strict regulations of the Koran and the Hadis. Beside this, Boishnobic thought of a large number of Muslims were got life in those cantos, who inducted themselves in the sixteenth century Boishnob Bhakti movement. Jhanoba Devi had a Muslim disciple. Rasikananda, a disciple of Shyamananda made conversion of many Muslims. Some important

poets among the Muslims are Syed Murtaza, Nasir Mamud, Ali Raza, Chand Kazi. As the poets were so much affected by the Krishna dignity, they felt Maulanas as lord Krishna. Beside this so many writers wrote pure Hindu religious books. Sadek Ali wrote 'Ramchandrer Banobas', Mohammad Khan wrote 'Satya-Koli-Bibad-sambad' and many other Muslim poets wrote pure Hindu religious books.

1.3. Islamic Literary Thought by Hindu Poets

Islamic Literatures written by Hindu Poets were very least in number. In last of the Seventeenth century we got pure Islamic poetry written by two Hindu Poets. 'Imamer jung' was written by Radhacharan Gop. It was a traditional Jungnama book. Another book was 'Husien Parbo', writer was a Hindu named Mali Dharmodas. Beside these two poets we received some cantos of Manik Das. The village song was written by the both religious poets and the audiences were the common village people. Stage drama like Mohua, Molua, Velua Sundori, Kamola, Chandraboti are the best example of communal harmony.

In this way if we analyse mediaeval Bengali literature we must found the communal harmony in this literary acts. The song of pirs, village poetry and other folk literatures are proves of Hindu-Muslim communal harmony in Bengal. This communal harmony is the pride of our nation.

2. References

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