

The Study on “Psycho-Social Analysis of Religious Impact on Muslims Behaviour of Rural Karnataka towards Education”

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ABSTRACT: *The paper illustrates the role of religion in shaping the educational behaviour of people, especially Muslims, in rural Karnataka. Rural society is relatively much influenced by religion. Religious ethos plays a significant role in determining the social conditioning of human beings. The paper draws attention towards the educational trends among rural Muslims in the State of Karnataka in India. The paper is empirically rich where it explains the demographic profile of sample villages of Davanagere district. Five villages of five sub-divisions have been studied and an interpretative understanding has been attempted of Maktab (Muslim religious educational institutions) at the village level. It brings to light the educational behaviour of rural Muslims. The paper briefly aims to arrive at two points. First, parents realize the importance of modern education which is the need of the day, but at the same time they are not ready to leave their religious education. Rural Muslim population is inclined to adopt the curriculum which is the combination of both modern and traditional elements. Muslim religious educational institutions that have introduced modern subjects have attracted larger chunk of students although government schools have offered several incentives in various forms.*

Keywords: *Educational behaviour, Muslims, Rural Karnataka, Religion*

I. INTRODUCTION

Religion has been identified as important component of human societies from the very beginning. Instances, to explain certain unexplainable situations and experiences of everyday life through religion, have been noticed in both primitive and civilized societies. Religion has also been found associated with human attempt to find purpose and meaning in life. Scholars, from the very beginning, have found religion as a guiding force to the human behaviour and have used it as an independent and important variable to understand the human behaviour. Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber and others have analysed the impact of religion in the process of formation and crystallization of human behavior.

Durkheim, as a functionalist, says that religion reinforces ‘collective conscience’, without which society cannot exist. Of course, he talked about different forms of religions appeared, according to him, through the process of social evolution and always recognised their conscious or unconscious impact on human actions and behaviour. Advocating the importance of religion in society, he questioned the people who labelled religion as mere fantasy. He asked: ‘how could a vain fantasy have been able to fashion the human consciousness so strongly and so enduringly.

Karl Marx recognized the role of religion in society and criticised it for its negative role vis-à-vis revolution. In his understanding religion is ‘the opium of the people’. Religion acts as an opiate to dull the pain produced by oppression. He attached greater value to religion by saying that it acts as a mechanism to social control, in maintaining the existing system of exploitation and reinforces the class relationship.

Max Weber in his book “Protestant Ethics and The spirit of Capitalism” analyses the whole affair by putting the religion as base. He tried to show how religion, that is Protestants ethics, led to the development of capitalism. In the same manner, Rodenson tried to analyse the role of Islamic ethics in producing the spirit of capitalism. He found that Islam as a religion does not have ethics conducive for the emergence and development of capitalist economy.

Similarly, there are other studies undertaken by scholars on the different aspects of the fore mentioned subject. They arrived at different conclusions in terms of its positive and negative roles. But the important point to notice in this particular context is that none of them has ever discarded the importance of religion and its role in shaping the behaviour of individual and the structure of societies.

Scholars recognised the force of religion, as reflected from their scholarly works, but simultaneously they also predicted about its future termination. They believe that with the development of scientific and rational thinking religion will lose its importance. Weakness of religion, as an institution, was being observed in a

negative correlation with the rationality and scientific thinking. It means that religious institutions will get weak whenever and wherever the rationality and scientific temperament nurtures.

Thus, urban areas are labelled as much rationale and scientific than their counterpart rural one. Of course we do not have a water tight compartment between urban and rural areas, rather it is a continuum. In this continuum we find some units from both the categories overlapping each other. It means that there may be many villages or rural areas, as per government records, having higher degree of urbanism than some towns in the country and vice versa. But for the purpose of understanding, it would be safer and better to overlook the overlapping units and take the obvious ones only from both the categories for the purpose of understanding the differences clearer in terms of the religious impact and grip in the process of social formation. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, sharing dining tables irrespective of religion and caste, homosexuality and lesbianism are the behaviours of big urban societies which are against religious prescriptions. Here we are not touching upon the moral and social implications of these behaviours. The very purpose of mentioning these emerging social practices is simply to show the weakening grip of religion among urban dwellers. We do not find open space for those practices in rural areas, instead see the instances of strong hold of religious beliefs and practices in their day to day lives.

In this milieu an attempt is being made to understand the impact rather role of religion in shaping the educational behaviour of rural Muslims. The study does not bother about the non-school going children, causes for dropouts and quality of education etc. It is simply a psycho-social analysis of religious impact on Muslims' behaviour of rural Karnataka towards education. What are the factors influencing the decisions when they take about the education of their children?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. The major purpose of such studies is to describe the affair as it exists. Qualitative researches are based on the measurement of quality. This aims at discovering the underlying motives and desires of human behaviour. It bothers about the phenomenon needed an in-depth understanding. Through such researches we can analyse the various factors which motivate people to behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing.

Sampling technique, which is the best solution to finish the work in a best possible manner within the available resources, is used for the study. Whenever field studies are undertaken, the considerations of time and cost, almost invariably lead to the selection of respondent. The selected respondents constitute what is technically called a 'sample' and the selection process is called sampling technique.

There are many designs of sampling to be used according to the nature and requirement of the study undertaken. According to the need of this study stratified and purposive sampling design has been used. Under stratified sampling the population is divided into several sub-populations who are individually more homogenous than the total. The selection of items from each sub-population was made to constitute a sample. Accordingly, the district (Davanagere) understudy is divided, at first stage, into five strata as it has five administrative sub divisions.

At the second stage of sampling, one village is taken as sample from each sub-division through purposive or deliberate sampling method. In this type of sampling, the researcher selects items from the strata deliberately that he feels of his purpose. In other words, under purposive sampling the organisers of the inquiry purposively choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample, on the basis that the small mass that is selected out of a huge one will be a representative of the whole. While selecting the sample villages, from each sub-division, its distance from the respective towns, availability of basic infrastructure and composition of its population in terms of religion is taken into consideration. Each village is distinguishable in all aforementioned aspects from the other.

The data from the sample villages, is gathered through observation and unstructured interviews of the villagers. Of course it was not possible to interview the entire population of the villages that was ranging from 600 to 2430. After separating the Muslim names from the voter list a random table was used to pick the individual samples to be interviewed. Twenty people were interviewed from each village.

III. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The village folks have to go to town to meet all their basic needs like little shopping, medical assistance, post office etc. The connecting road is nothing but a kind of passageway made of soil only. It is neither of tar nor of cement and like most of the Indian villages, no public transport facility is available. People have to manage their own transport to come to the town. Most of them are having bicycles and bikes.

At least one member from each family is working either in Gulf countries or in Mumbai. Most of them are in informal sectors. Of course, the ratio of people working in Gulf is much lesser than the people working in Mumbai. They are earning relatively a satisfactory amount of currency and, in the context of Indian villages, leading a decent life. Land holding pattern of the village is not much different from its population composition.

More than 80% of the village land is under the control of Muslims and of course, that symbolizes their domination. Most of the people among Muslims claim to be literate but are not able to go for government or any other jobs where skill of reading and writing is needed. Because they are hardly able to read Urdu and Hindi that they learned from the maktab¹⁵ of the village. Among the young generation about 14 people are getting higher education at different institutions. But the worthy point to note here is that about 10 of them have reached to this level through oriental stream that is through madarsa education.

Politics of the village, beside other areas, has played an interesting role in education also. The village has two equally strong political factions. Both the factions are associated with two local political leaders of two different political parties. The political interplay between factions caused many interesting things. But here we will stick merely with the educational behaviour of the villagers.

The whole picture reveals that religion is still determinant to the educational behaviour of the villagers. Scholarship, midday meal and free dress and books are attractions, but not on the cost of religious education. Of course, primary school was there with all free facilities but it could not attract any Muslim student just because of the lack of religious education in its syllabi. When they got the chance to bag the free facilities along with religious education they rushed there without any fear with modern education. The same situation is with Al-Farooq Public School. It is situated in Itwa, the main town, where many other government schools are running since before its establishment but Muslim students did not go there because of the lack of religious component in their syllabi. Al-Farooq introduced mixed syllabi of orient and modern subjects and attracted many students though it is costliest than the older schools running there.

Muslims of the village are sending their children to the maktab with the intention to make them aware about religion. They feel that maktab will enable them to perform the basic religious duties. They also feel that government school of the village will spoil their children in terms of their religion. At village they do not have any option to get modern and religious education simultaneously. At time when it comes to choose within available they prefer religion over secular education.

IV. CONCLUSION

Observation made from the villages reveals the changes taking place in the behaviours of Muslim rural population. Of course the impact of urbanization and globalisation has reached to the villages through media and mobility. Out of the impact of these unavoidable processes modern education became an important need of the market of the day. Muslim population, being part of the same society, is no exception to this impact. They felt the coercive nature of the modern education.

But the oriental education reacted against this penetration in identity assertive model and rural Muslims could not shift themselves completely from oriental to modern education. They adopted a mixed pattern of both the entities and that has become very popular among them.

Rural Muslims did not choose syllabi only with modern education. Government schools are available with many incentives at all villages. But negligible number of Muslim students gets enrolled there. They prefer to stay in maktab without modern subjects than to go government schools. They are eager to the curriculum that gives them combination of both modern and oriental subjects, so whenever they get chance go for it. Making the syllabi a combination of modern and orient becomes so important that it is being used as a political tool and point of competition from the people.

The towns had Christian missionary schools. Despite their good performance and attractive discipline, they could not attract Muslim students much simply because of the absence of religious education there. But when a school was opened on the same pattern and of the same standard by Muslims it received as much admission seeking applications, as it could not accommodate them all. The only attraction with them is the blend of oriental and modern education.

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