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Hierarchy and Pluralism in an era of globalization

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Abstract

Hierarchy and pluralism is an arrangement of items which is respectively above, below, at the same level and pluralism maintain unique cultural identities by the wider culture. Most of the Indian sub-continent countries are hierarchical society. In a pluralistic society, where people respect each other, where there is opportunity for a free flow of ideas, a meeting of minds which generate an atmosphere conducive to national growth and integration.

Keywords: *Hierarchy, pluralism, purity and pollution, caste system.*

Introduction

Hierarchy is an ordered set which can link entities either directly or indirectly in our social life. There are many traditional rules in hierarchy associated with order, castes, religions, regions, purity, and pollution. Even there are many educated people, particularly among South Asian urban elite class are practicing and representing it. Thus, even as they deny it, these progressive affirm the continuing significance of traditional rules of purity, pollution and hierarchy in South Asian countries. Cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a large society maintain their unique cultural identities, and whose values and practices are accepted by the wider culture. In a pluralistic society, where people respect each

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other, where there is opportunity for a free flow of ideas, a meeting of minds, this alone can generate an atmosphere conducive to national growth and integration.

Hierarchy

A hierarchy is an arrangement of items (objects, names, values, categories, etc.) in which the items are represented as being "above," "below," or "as the same level as" one another and with only one "neighbor" above and below each level. These classifications are made with regard to rank, importance, seniority, power status or authority. A hierarchy of power is called a power structure. It means generally an order set which work vertically or horizontally. In so far, as they are hierarchical, are to one's immediate superior or to one of one's subordinated, although a system that is largely hierarchical can also incorporate other organizational patterns. Indirect hierarchical links can extend "vertically" upwards or downwards via multiple links in the same direction, following a path. All parts of the hierarchy which are not linked vertically to one another nevertheless can be "horizontally" linked through a path by travelling up the hierarchy to find a common direct or indirect superior, and then down again. This is akin to two co-workers or colleagues; each reports to a common superior, but they have the same relative amount of authority.

Indian sub-continent is a hierarchical society. Within these countries culture, whether Muslim or Hindu, urban or village, virtually all things, people, and groups of people are ranked according various essential qualities. If one is attunes to the theme of hierarchy in India, Bangladesh, one can discern it everywhere. Although these countries are political democracy, in daily life there is little advocacy of or adherence to notions of equality.

Castes and caste like groups those quintessential groups with which almost all Indian subcontinents are associated are ranked. Within most villages or towns, everyone knows the relative rankings of each locally represented caste, and people's behavior toward one another is constantly shaped by this knowledge. Between the extremes the extremes of the very high and very low castes, however there is sometimes disagreement on the exact relative rankings of castes clustered in the middle. Castes are primarily associated with Hinduism but also exist among other religious groups. Muslims sometimes expressly deny that they have castes-all Muslims are brother under God-but observation of Muslim life in various parts of Indian sub-continent reveals the existence of caste like groups and clear concern with social hierarchy. Among Christians too, differences in caste are acknowledged and maintained.

Throughout South Asia, individuals are also ranked according to their wealth and power. For example, there are "big man" and "little man" everywhere. Even men of nearly equal status who might share a string cot to sit on take their places carefully, the higher ranking man at the head of the cot, the lower ranking man at the foot. Within families and kinship groupings, there are many distinctions of hierarchy. Men outrank women are the same or similar age and senior relatives outrank junior relatives. However, an older sibling may address the younger by name even in the business or academic setting, where colleagues may not openly espouse traditional observance of caste or class ranking behavior, they may set up fictive kinship relations, addressing one another by kinship terms reflecting family or village style hierarchy.

Purity and Pollution

Many status differences in South Asian contextual society are expressed in terms of ritual purity and pollutions. Notions of purity and pollutions are extremely complex and vary greatly among different religious, castes, groups and regions. However, generally speaking, high status is associated with purity and low status with pollution. Some kinds of purity are inherent, or inborn; for example a high ranking Brahman or priestly caste is born with more inherent purity than a member of low ranking Sweeper caste. Unless the Brahman defiles himself in some extraordinary way, throughout his life he will always be purer than a Sweeper.

Purity is associated with ritual cleanness-daily bathing in the flowing water, dressing in properly laundered clothes of approved materials, eating only the foods appropriate one's caste, refraining from physical contact with people of lower rank, and avoiding involvement with ritually impure substances. Even during the menstrual period, a woman is considered polluted and refrains from cooking, worshiping or touching anyone older than an infant. Especially, these kinds of events are happening in Nepal, Bhutan, and India in a wide range. These and a great many other traditional rules pertaining to purity and pollution constantly impinge upon interaction between people of different castes and ranks in South Asia.

Pluralism

Pluralism basically used for as cultural pluralism which denotes a smaller group within a large society maintain their unique features or cultural identities and their values and practices are accepted by the wider section of the society. South Asian people came to contact with successive bands of foreigners like Greeks, Parathions, Scythians and Turks who came as invaders and where ultimately absorbed in the vast population in Asia especially in India.

They were completely merged in Indian society and adopted the language, religions, culture, and customs of the land without retaining any trace of their foreign origin. This reveals to us the catholicity of Hindu society of the period, in sad and striking contrast to the narrow rigidity and exclusiveness, which characterized it at a later age. There are other evidences to show that the Hindu society of this age was a living organism, which could adapt itself to new environment and changing circumstances.

An impression is sought to be created that the future of India's secular polity is at stake. This is highly misleading, if not mischievous. Excesses of this kind only give an erroneous impression to the outside world that India's pluralist and liberal mindset is under siege that we have surrendered our glorious inheritance, and have now embarked on a process of undermining our historical experience of successfully managing a multiethnic, multi-religious, multi-caste society and policy.

Conclusion

In a pluralistic society, where people respect each other, where there is opportunity for a free flow of ideas, a free mind, these alone can improve national growth and integration. Hatred and intolerance are bound to vitiate the atmosphere and economic growth. If a section of the population is discriminated against and denied participation in the developmental activities there will not be any unity of purpose and will be drifting in different directions. Secularism suits the genius of a multi-religious, multi-caste and multilingual country in South Asia.

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