

THE POLITICAL THEOLOGY OF HINDUTVA

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ABSTRACT

Rohith Vemula's death is not just an institutional murder; rather it is the systemic stratagem of a deadly design. His death has raised eyebrows of the entire world, as it is the continuum of the Hindutva assault on Dalit assertion. In many ways the radical Dalit politics espoused by groups like the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) is diametrically opposite to that of Hindutva. Nothing else punctures the pompous claims about Hindu civilisation, culture and rashtra, as effectively as the radical Dalit politics. Ever since Phule-Ambedkar discourse, the radical Dalits have pointedly questioned the very existence of a Hindu society, culture and civilisation.

Examining it from the Dalit-Adivasi viewpoint is crucial since it would unfold the dynamics of the social, religious and politics of communal fascism to the lowest level. In a broader perspective, communalism of polity is preliminary to fascism of polity. In today's context what is going on in India it is not mere communalism of polity, rather it is the politics of fascism under the Hindutva brigade married to the corporate capital.

Thus in this paper I engage with a critical outlook of the very political ideology and how would it matter to the Dalits and Adivasis (or Indigenous people). I also engage with the questions of how caste fascism is the political theology of domination? What is the Indian perspective to understand the fascism of caste? What was the ideological upsurge of Hindutva? How did it domineered all aspects of indigenous life?

Keywords: ***Hindutva, Caste, Fascism, Ideology, Dominance, Dalits, Adivasis, Indigenous***

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If anyone not of our own
 Happens to read this manuscript:
 Heads will roll
 Hearts will beat to death
 Brains will curdle.
 All that one has learned
 Will be lost.
 Now, I have placed curses
 On my own words.

N. T. Rajkumar

(translations from the Tamil *Panirendhu Kavithaigal*)

A Preface to the Current Discussion

Rohith Vemula's death – an institutional murder of the casteist-communal combine has led to numerous discussions and debates these days around the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the political ideology of Hindutva. This is not the first time that the BJP-RSS twin has surfaced in controversies in recent times. Nor that it is the first case of suicide by a Dalit-Adivasi in higher educational institutions. In recent decades RSS along with its frontal organisations rose to prominence with three incidences starting with the anti-reservation riots in Gujarat in 80s, followed by Advani's *rathayatra* and the attempt to demolish Babri Masjid and the Muslim genocide in Gujarat in 2002.

Vemula's death has raised eyebrows of the entire world, as it is the continuum of the Hindutva assault on Dalit assertions. In many ways the radical Dalit politics espoused by groups like the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA) is diametrically opposite to that of Hindutva. Nothing else punctures the pompous claims about Hindu civilisation, culture and *rashtra*, as effectively as the radical Dalit politics. Ever since Phule-Ambedkar discourse, the radical Dalits have pointedly questioned the very existence of a Hindu society, culture and civilisation. Against tall claims of Brahmanical spirituality, this discourse laid bare the inhumanity of Vedas¹ and Smritis in justifying and establishing the system of caste brutality. Against claims of a unified Hindu world existing through the millennia, this discourse highlighted the continued opposition to Brahminism in history through Charvaka philosophy, Buddhism, Sramanic traditions and radical sections of the Bhakti movement. Thus, the hindutva forces cannot accuse radical Dalit politics of being a conspiracy of a westernised elite, or de-classed intellectuals. It is organically Indian, and is a result of the real life experiences of one sixth of the most marginalised and poor Indians.

¹ The concept of Varna can be traced to the Purusha Sukta verse of the Rigveda, however there is a contention that it was inserted at a later date (Jamison et al.2014). The Rigveda: the earliest religious poetry of India).

The radical Dalit discourse has also resisted the culture of domination and rejected the patronising overtures of reformist caste Hindus, like Gandhi rechristening erstwhile untouchables as Harijans, or the more recent claim of Narendra Modi in a 2007 book *Karmayogi* that cleaning garbage is a spiritual experience for scavenger castes. Ambedkar's announcement that 'though I was born a Hindu, I solemnly assure you that I will not die as a Hindu,' encapsulates the relationship of radical Dalit consciousness to Hindu religion. The hegemony of upper caste Hindus over Indian society in modern times grew out of the failure of Ambedkarite radical separatism in the face of Gandhian intimidation that led to the 1932 Poona Pact. While there indeed is a generalised hostility towards Dalit among caste Hindus, the contradiction of radical Dalit consciousness is sharpest with Brahmanical Hindutva. The former in its Ambedkarite form stands for rational humanism and liberation of all irrespective of caste, gender and ethnicity, the latter's motivating force is communal hatred, and its organising principle is religion based, patriarchal and violent nationalism.

It would not be out of place to state that these philosophical and ideological postulations have not arisen from the blue, rather it had a steady and thorough progress in history. It is time to examine these ideological positions, which essentially has a communal colour. Examining it from the Dalit-Adivasi viewpoint is crucial since it would unfold the dynamics of the social, religious and politics of communal fascism to the lowest level. In a broader perspective, communalism of polity is preliminary to fascism of polity. In today's context what is going on in India it is not mere communalism of polity, rather it is the politics of fascism under the Hindutva brigade married to the corporate capital. Hence as a critical outlook, I would like to emphasise some of the major threats faced by the Dalits and Adivasis (or Indigenous people).

Fascism and the Political Theology of Dominance

Before getting into a detailed discussion, let me place what fascism espouses. Fascism is a terrible political domination capable of infringing any eligible rights of any individual or group to an unpredictable magnitude. Historically it took different shapes and forms, depending upon the particular social order. Although it was coined as a political ideology in 1919 with the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, it has much older roots in India and some parts of world (George 2006).

Fascism is a form of extreme right-wing ideology that celebrates the nation or the race as an organic community through transcending all other loyalties. It emphasises a myth of national or racial puritan to be celebrated as natural higher beings. It could also be the resurgence of a particular race after a period of decline or destruction. To this end, fascism calls for a 'spiritual revolution' against signs of moral decay such as individualism and materialism, and seeks

to purge 'alien' forces and groups that threaten the organic community. Fascism as a rule celebrates masculinity, youth, mystical unity, and the regenerative power of violence. Often, except in exceptional situations, it restores to racial superiority doctrines, ethnic persecution, imperialist expansion, and genocide. At the same time, fascists may embrace a form of internationalism based on either racial or ideological solidarity across national boundaries. Usually fascism espouses open male supremacy, though sometimes it may also promote female solidarity and new opportunities for women of the privileged races or nations (George 2006).

Fascism's approach to politics is both populist and elitist. While the former seeks to activate 'the people' as a whole against perceived oppressors or enemies in the later it treats the people's will as embodied in a select group, or often one supreme leader, from whom authority proceeds downward. Fascism seeks to organise a cadre-led mass movement in a drive to seize state power. It seeks to forcibly subordinate all spheres of society to its ideological vision of organic community, usually through a totalitarian state. Both as a movement and a regime, fascism uses mass organisations as a system of integration and control, and uses organised violence to suppress opposition, although the scale of violence varies widely (George 2006).

Understanding Fascism of Caste in Indian Perspective

In Indian context historical fascism could be widely observed in caste domination and feudal relationship, championed by Hindutva. This is more vibrant than the modern paradigms of communal fascism. The mythical stories of killing of Shambhug by Ram, denial of Eklavya of his right to education and the subsequent chopping off of his right thumb, the counterfeited assassination of Asur king Ravana, the deceitful murder of Bali are only some impulses of this trend of domination over indigenous people. Further these communities were addressed as rakshashas, (wild) melecha (filthy) barbarian, wild, uncivilised, and so on goes this list. Both Vedic and Sanskrit texts have justified the invasion and exploitation of Aryans and explicitly support the superiority of Aryan race and Vedic philosophy to the extent that their fate of being in the higher beings is god given (George 2006).

The present phase of fascism is a more organised and systematic blend to sustain the caste-class-communal legacy for a prolonged period. In modern times it started with the emergence of Hindu Chauvinism and Cultural Nationalism under the leadership of RSS led camp. This camp learnt various things from different sectors. They learnt the skills in organising and mobilising from Communist parties, mastered the management techniques from Churches and Christian institutions, the one-man dictator model of Adolph Hitler and the methods of maintaining private militia. In nutshell, the wholesome exercise was to sustain and strengthen the same old ideology of

purity of the three upper varnas and Shudras and Panchamas as impure and pollutants. This has resulted in a twin strategy of dictating the ex-untouchables and non-Hindu groups, which is the present form of communal fascism in India. The current mode of communal polity coupled with sustained casteism apparently speaks of this truth (George 2006).

The Ideological Upsurge of Hindutva

In modern times the ideological upsurge of Hindutva has got a definite periodicity and it could be traced from early nineteenth century. It arose as a system to put a break on the increasing reforms within Hindu religion. These reforms could be listed as advocating freedom to women through abolition of Sati, child marriage, opening the boundaries of educational institutions to women and to certain levels opening up educational space for the Shudras and untouchables.

However since the Muslims constituted a sizeable population, they were considered as a big threat to the Hindu society. Christian who opened health and educational institutions for all, particularly in Dalit and Adivasi areas, thus threatened the social fabric of caste at one end and on the other Christianity was accepted as the mainstream faith line by these oppressed groups as a means to escape the order of caste. Thus Christian conversion turned to be a major threat to thwart away the Brahminical social hierarchy of caste. Hence a counter ideology was obligatory for the sustenance of Hindutva. The ideological formulation in the Indian context could be seen in three different phases – first is the sowing of seeds in modern India, second the consolidation of Hindutva as an ideological and third is the delved and devised programmatic patterns (George 2006).

Perhaps Bankim Chandra Chatterjee first sowed the seeds of communalism through his novel 'Anand Math'. This novel could be said as the foundational text of the current Hindu Cultural Nationalism. There is a specific backdrop of this novel during British rule in India, where the context is projected against the white supremacy applying for a prolonged process of piecemeal conquest and prudent consolidation. This text fuelled discontent, resentment and resistance at every stage, wherein disposed Rajas, Nawabs or uprooted Zamindars and landlords often led a series of rebellions during the first hundred years of British rule. Peasants, ruined artisans, demobilised soldiers and discontented people formed the backbone of such rebellion. These rebellions were generally localised involving armed bands of a few hundreds to several thousands. The civil rebellions grew in Bengal and Bihar as British rule was gradually consolidated and further spread to other places. There was hardly any year without an armed rebellion in some part of the country. From 1763 to 1856 there were more than forty major and hundreds of minor rebellions. Dispossessed peasants and demobilised soldiers of Bengal were the

first to rise.

One of the major rebellions was the *sanyasi* (saint) rebellion of Bengal, which was described artfully in *Anand Math*. This is the background from where a clear divide between the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal began. It is in this novel the song *Vande Mataram* surfaced first, which the Indian nationalists chose to sing in praise of 'Mother India'. It comes from a tradition of mythologising a fictive imagined nation personified as a Devi (goddess). In the novel the context of the anthem was overtly anti-Muslim and treat them as a separate nation. Invocation of the deities like Durga, Kali and Lakshmi all runs counter to the secular credentials. This was basically meant to instil inspiration among the Hindus to work for the destruction of the Muslim rule in Bengal.

The hero of the novel, Bhawanand is an ascetic. He recruits men for his mission. He meets a youth, Mahender. He then tries to explain him the meaning of *Vande Mataram* and warns him that unless the Muslims are banished from the Indian soil, his faith shall be in constant danger. Mahender asks him if he would face the Muslims alone. Bhawanand replies asking would not the 30 crore voices with 60 crore swords in both their arms be enough for the mission. (vide the third stanza of *Vande Mataram*) When Mahender is not satisfied even then, Bhawanand takes him to *Anand Math* (the title of the novel). The Brahmachari of the Math takes Mahender inside the Math. The Math is half-illuminated with a narrow entrance. He enters the Math where he sees a big idol of Vishnu flanked by Lakshmi and Saraswati on either side. The Brahmachari introduces it to Mahender as the Mata and asks him to say *Vande Mataram*. He then takes him to another chamber where he describes the female deity as Jagatdhatri, the sole keeper of the Indian soil. He exhorts about the glorious past of India, symbolised by these goddesses, then he takes him to a chamber where he shows him the naked Kali. She is black, unclothed and wears a garland of skulls, symbolising death, decay and impurity. Kali is described here as crushing Mahadeva, who is the said symbol of peace and unity. He synonymises the present state of the country with Kali. Finally he takes him to a chamber where a magnificent idol of goddess Durga is kept symbolising the future of the nation, which is to be upheld by her. Here the Brahmachari prays the goddess chanting: 'we worship ye, O Mata Durga, who possesses ten hands. Ye are the Lakshmi whose abode is lotus. Ye are the bestower of knowledge.' (Vide the fourth stanza) Now Mahender receives the inspiration and takes a pledge (Islamic Voice: 1998).

The eighth chapter in the third part contains incidents of arson and bloodshed, which inspires the Hindus to turn the lives of the Muslims difficult. Voices are being raised to loot the Muslims and kill them. The atmosphere is filled with *Vande Mataram*. As a result, the Muslims try to take shelter far and near. The devotees of the Mata ask, 'when would the time come

when we would destroy the mosques and construct the temples of Radha and Mahadev?’ To this the hero of the novel replies, ‘now the English have arrived who will protect our life and property’ (Islamic Voice: 1998). The pertinent question that arises in this text is eventually who is the aggressor, against whom is the aggression aimed at, and perpetrated at which levels? The convenient political negotiations and suitability of crude nationalist assimilatory purposes sow the seeds of a divisive politics at every level, which finally culminates in the division of East and West Bengal.

Yet, Hindutva was not established as a political ideology neither in theory nor in practice. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar carried strings from Bankim Chandra. Hindutva became an ideology through his writings when his book ‘Essentials of Hindutva’ had come into the public in 1924. Savarkar (1924: 43-44), in 1920s, stated that an Indian could be only that person who could claim his *pitribhumi* (fatherland), and who addresses this land of his religion as *punyabhumi* (Holyland) both lay within the territorial boundaries of British India. These are the essentials of Hindutva – a common *rastra* (nation) a common *jati* (race or caste) and a common *sanskriti* (culture). Furthermore, there had to be a commitment to a common Indian culture, inevitably defined by Hindutva (ibid. 33-37). These qualifications automatically led to regard Muslims and Christians as foreigners.

Subsequently Golwalkar (1939: 89) added Communists to this list. Both Savarkar (1924) and Golwalkar (1939) introduced race and language as qualifiers of supremacy. While comparing these ideas and symbols with that of their European counterparts, these were the contemporaries that dominated fascist movements at those ends. Thapar (2004) refers this as the periods of confusing change where the preference is for a theory that simplifies the social world into *ëusí* and *ëthemí* (Thapar 2004). Savarkar along with Golwalkar was the early ideologue of the entire thesis of Hindutva.

It is with this intention that the Hindu Mahasabha was formed. Further Savarkar was the inspiration behind the formation of RSS. Hedgewar, an Andhra Brahmin settled in Maharashtra, a disciple of Balkrishna Shivram Moonje and a close friend of Savarkar, established the RSS in 1925 at Nagpur. Hedgewar was sent to Kolkata by Moonje in 1910 to pursue his medical studies and unofficially learn the techniques of terror from the secret revolutionary organisations like the Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar in Bengal. He became a part of the inner circle of the Anushilan Samiti to which very few had access. In 1915 after returning to Nagpur he joined the Indian National Congress and engaged in anti-British activities through the Kranti Dal. He was also a member of the Hindu Mahasabha till 1929 (Ramaswami 2003).

Although, Hedgewar established RSS, Golwalkar was the man behind the entire growth of RSS. Like Savarkar he took this idea of Hindutva further. In his book ‘We or our Nationhood Defined,’ he gives an outline of his ideology

and later his articles were published as a compilation, 'Bunch of Thoughts.' In both these books (Golwalkar 1939; 2000) and also in various other outpourings of his, he denigrates democracy and pluralism on one hand and upholds fascist concept of nationhood and sectarian version of culture on the other. His writing is most intimidating to the outcastes and minorities in particular. He was the chief of RSS for 33 long years and was instrumental in giving RSS a direction, which assumed menacing proportions in times to come. He strengthened the foundations of the 'hate minorities' ideology resulting in the consequent waves of violence, undermining the democratic norms in the society. He can also be credited with giving the sharp formulations, which laid the ideological foundation of different carnages in India (Puniyani 2006).

Golwalkar praises Manu as the greatest lawgiver mankind ever had (Golwalkar 1939: 117-118; 2000; 239, 258, 264). It was the same lawgiver Manu's book, which was burnt by Ambedkar in his pursuit of getting justice for the Dalits. In current times, Golwalkar's successor also demanded a throwing away of Indian constitution, to be replaced by the one which is based on Hindu holy books, implying Manusmriti, of course (Puniyani 2006).

Golwalkar's formulation of Hindutva fascism is so blatant that even his followers struggle hard to cover many of ostensive judgments. He portrays an ornate love of caste, naked hatred for minorities and eulogise the Nazi Germany. Curran (1979: 39) in his classic study says that the ideology of Sangh is based upon principles formulated by its founder, Hedgewar. These principles have been consolidated and amplified by the Golwalkar through critical indoctrination of Sangh volunteers (Puniyani 2006). What does Golwalkar say in this book?

He rejects the notions of Indian nationhood or even India as a nation in the making. He rejects the idea that all the citizens could be equal. He goes on to harp the notions of nationhood borrowed from Hitler's Nazi movement. He rejects that India is a secular nation and posits that it is a Hindu *rashtra*. He rejects the territorial-political concept of nationhood and puts forward the concept of cultural nationalism, which was the foundation of Nazi ideology. He admires Hitler's ideology and politics of puritan nationalism and takes inspiration from the massive holocaust, which decimated millions of people in Germany. Golwalkar uses this as a shield to propagate his political ideology. It is this ideology, which formed the base of communal common sense amongst a section of the population (Puniyani 2006). He builds a parallel between Hinduism and Nazism.

'German national pride has now become the topic of the day. To keep up purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic races – the Jews. National pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany has also shown how

well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into a united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by' (Golwalkar 1939: 87-88).

Today the Modis and Togadias brought up on these lines, do believe in all these ideological propositions, but the language of expression is being made more polished so that the poison is coated with honey and administered with ease. Golwalkar (1939: 104-105) goes on to assert,

'...from the standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd nations, the non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of Hindu nation i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude towards this land and its age long traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, for less any preferential treatment, not even the citizen's rights.'

Interestingly these sections never participated in the national movement. As a matter of fact RSS and Golwalkar were very contemptuous towards the anti British movement. There is no mention of presence of RSS in the anti British movement even in most of the sympathetic accounts written about it. Since Golwalkar propounded religion-based nationalism, there was no place for anti British stance. Nor did it had any sympathy for the anti-caste movement led by Ambedkar, Periyar, Iyyankali, Mangu ram and others.

'The theories of territorial nationalism and of common danger, which formed the basis of our concept of nation, had deprived us of the positive and inspiring content of our real Hindu Nationhood and made many of the "freedom movements" virtually anti-British movements. Anti Britishism was equated with patriotism and nationalism. This reactionary view has had disastrous effects upon the entire course of freedom struggle, its leaders and common people' (Golwalkar 2000: 120-121).

No wonder the British ever repressed RSS. The collusion between religion based nationalism and colonialism can be understood from such statements. Later the world saw that in tune with this pro imperialist ideology, Golwalkar was to support the US aggression on Vietnam and his successor Sudarshan defended the US aggression against Iraq while Modi is the champion of communal genocide in Gujarat.

Domineering Indigenous Life

Controlling all avenues of life at large is the general strategy of RSS and this is

part of the larger design of 'cultural nationalism' to the extents of power domain through political life. In the present time the most crucial aspect of the communal segment is to control the wholesome dynamics of indigenous life and its systems. These champions of communal-caste brigade applied the stratagem of taking over all the possible institutions of the community and civil society, right from primary schools to the electronic media, in order to create a sensation of inferiority and thus to manipulate the masses.

Among the indigenous people two processes went in parallel. One was the deliberate formation of institutions such as Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, Ekal Vidyalaya, Bal Bharti, Saraswati Sishu Mandir and Dalit and Adivasi Sanghs at the lowest level to train-up children and youth cadres and thus to inculcate a feeling that indigenous traditions and cultures are too little and inferior to that of Hindu religion. Thus Hindu culture and civilisation turned out to be the only standard and ideal option left for such groups, let alone they practise the duties assigned under their caste to attain a higher *janma* (birth) in the next round. Hence ardently following the dictums of the ideal culture and religion become the doctrinal duty of all caste groups. Secondly, the open support to capitalist forces through corporates thereby inducing the consumeristic culture in such areas. Both these process went in parallel and are inter-related and empowers the coexistence. One of the outcomes of these trends is the crucial osmosis of Hindu strings and civilisation with all its flaws among the indigenous people plus a bonus of corrupting them as units of consumer market (George: 2006).

This fondness of controlling indigenous had reasons to perpetuate social and cultural slavery along with the clear establishment of political power and taking over the control over community life though legitimised the social mechanics at one end, while on the other to establish an unquestioned command over the resource zones spread over indigenous regions. Therefore a complete enslavement of social, cultural, political and economic nature remained the overall diabolic design. This could easily evade the precipitate of geocentricity of the thitherto-untouchable strata. Another vicious conspiracy is the development of internal colonisation to cohere the Dalits into their fold in order to continue the historical mode of oppression in new forms and incarnations.

Contrary to the Dalit situation, Adivasis were never part of Varnashram. Adivasis life, a wonderful model of egalitarianism and naturocentricity, who had a lively past in proximity and harmony with nature are being on target of the principles of development. Unlike Dalits, they have hardly experienced the life of slavery. Uprooting them off their nature and culture was and is part and parcel of this concoct design. In the result an egalitarian society is being transformed into an exploited class. Jharkhand, Odisha and Bastar are the best examples to check the impact of such trends and processes. Thus both

Dalits and Adivasis have been placed in the category of exploited strata. Earlier these aspects were efficiently engineered through the socio-religious structures, but today it is taking an important political formation too, which in fact is communalisation of polity or inculcating the culture of fascism among the indigenous masses.

Dalits and Adivasis – the Logical Targets

Communal-fascism has been exploring its way to elaborate its base, activities and action by building of philanthropic and religious institutions other than mentioned above. Institutions like Deen Dayal Shodh Sansthan, Sanskriti Bihar, Vikas Bharit, Gayatri Pariwar, Brahmakumari Samaj and Samajik Samarasta Manch are some of the intervention points to create inroads among the Dalits and Adivasis. Such institution essentially engages in recruitment of young boys from these communities into the cadre of RSS, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP; International Hindu Council), Bajrang Dal and arming them with hatred and intolerance against minorities. Another plot has been the steady and systematic capturing of the community panchayats and organisations. Mobilising Dalits and Adivasis against Muslims in Gujarat, operations such as *ghar wapasi andolan* (return to home movement or reconversion movement) in Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand or the creation of vigilante army like Salwa Judum (peace movement) are the best example where there exists a complete stranglehold.

All these have added impelling force to the Hindutva card among Dalits and Adivasis. By and large this consists of concepts like de-Dalitisation and de-Adivasisation. Eventually this tendency empowers the fascist forces and broadens its space. Expansion of fascism has so far and is disintegrating the Dalit-Adivasi ideology, theology, identity and intimidates the very existence. Apparently this ruptures the community, deteriorates the noble notions of sharing, caring and co-operation, expansion of patriarchy and battered the inkling of community ownership over resources and every single aspect of common property.

To Conclude...

Never before in the history have we witnessed such a period of deliberate drift of further confusing and disempowerment of Dalits and Adivasis. It has constantly succeeded in gearing up its organisational tactics and mobilisation methods to subtly crush the energy of people or divert it; thus draining off their capacity to fight for their rights and their ability to resist injustice. This is the circumstance where the case of Rohith turns more prominent.

It is clear that without fighting Hindutva ideologically and politically, the legacy of Rohith Vemula cannot be carried forward. The larger challenge lies in envisioning and making a programme for a caste free society. Indian

constitution has tried internal reform of Hinduism, outlawing untouchability but not caste. Its half way measures have failed to stop caste brutality against Dalits. In the meanwhile caste domination has acquired newer forms in the seemingly modern institutions of market, bureaucracy, schools and universities. The political successes of Hindutva are growing out of the castism, patriarchy, insecurities and superstitions of the generalised Hindu common sense. It is high time social forces fighting against Hindutva realise its casteist core, and understand the nature of its assault on anything that is different or radical. The specific patterns and form of Dalit oppression in modern India needs to be confronted head on. The nature of injuries caste system inflicts on sensitive spirits in modern spaces is much unpredictable which is a means of 'ramified oppression', where human rights and alienation turn out to be the core of it.

The big challenge is to continuously engage with the liberatory movement and shatter the vice grip of caste on Indian society. Under this circumstance, where humanitarian norms and values are degenerating and the indigenous people stand at the receiving end, is it possible for us to go back to the communities and unveil the wolf inside the goat's skin? Dr. Ambedkar had shown the way by burning Manusmriti. Do we have the courage to engage? Can the indigenous people rediscover the socialist, secular, democratic and decentralised egalitarianism?

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