

Book Reviews

Globalization, Hindu Nationalism and Christians in India. By Lancy Lobo. Jaipur/New Delhi: Rawat Publication, 2002. pp. 240. Rs. 450. ISBN 81-7033-716-X.

The book-comprising six main chapters and a host of appendices – explores the dynamics of the twin processes of globalization and Hindu nationalism, and their effect upon the ‘minority’ Christian community in India. The ‘introduction’ that provides a panoramic view of the book, situated the problem of ‘Hindutva’ and highlights its ‘harvest of hatred’ against the backdrop of demographic details of the Christian community in India. It then juxtaposes the process of globalization with that of Hindutva in order to point out the nexus between them. The second chapter differentiates between ‘Indian nationalism’ and ‘Hindu nationalism’, the former being “largely western inspired, with universalistic values and yet deeply rooted in Indian ethos as represented by Jawaharlal Nehru and others”, while the latter, “appears as a political ideology and less of a religious faith” (p.58). An appraisal of both is undertaken to show how the upper castes have profited from such forms of nationalism. The second chapter concludes with a profile of the Hindu nationalist organizations (pp. 60-73).

The third chapter entitled, ‘Hindutva Script of Christians in India’ discusses details of the accusations and fabrications peddled by Hindutva ideologues – notable, Arun Shourie and M.V.Kamath – who deify Hinduism and demonize Christianity so as to target the latter. The author shows how Hindutva aims at the creation of communal ‘cognitive cultural models’, shaped by Nazi and Fascist ideologies, in order to whip up hatred and hostility towards the minorities, especially the Muslims and Christians (pp. 95-103). The fourth chapter, “Globalisation and Hindu Nationalism,” opens with an exposition of the nature and dynamics of the various forms of globalization – political, economic, cultural – indicating the inherent dangers and substantiating these with adequate data. The final part (pp. 131-4) indicates how globalization is gaining ground in India and finds a suitable bed-partner in Hindutva.

The fifth chapter of the book describes how Christians in India have tried to respond to the dangers of Hindutva. The most noteworthy response is what the author describes as a ‘paradigm shift from a paternalistic to a participatory model’ (pp. 147-56). Lobo also provides a chart that compares that two models (p.155). The final chapter assesses how churches worldwide (pp. 158-64), including the Indian church (pp. 164-7), can view globalization. As an antidote to Hindutva, the author

espouses a thorough examination and evaluation of all our 'evangelisation' activities. The chapter contains many guidelines that will engender reflection and, hopefully, action. Finally, the book has many appendices that provide details of the many incidents of violence against the Indian Christian community, some letters and articles by Hindutva ideologues, and copies of inflammatory anti-Christian pamphlets that were distributed prior to the Christian bashing in Gujarat's Dangs district (1998).

The book is important because it focuses on two burning issues of our time. The author deftly delves into the dynamics of both, globalization and Hindu nationalism. However, what seems lacking is a focused analysis on how these two processes work in tandem to marginalize minorities and also destroy the diversity that distinguishes India. More care could have been taken in the textual reference and the bibliography. For instance, certain authors are mentioned in the text – Thapar (p.50), Anderson (p.58), Baxi (p.82), Sahmat (p. 133) – but bibliographical details are missing. The book is highly recommended because it opens up vistas for discussion and decision. Lobo's work urges Christians in India to decipher the writing on the wall of find themselves as second grade citizens in a '*rashtra*' far different from any India of their dreams.

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