

# Ignoramuses of the Hindutva Brigade?

Subhash Gatade

PERHAPS IT IS HIGH TIME that one gets to know the recent controversy around a textbook brought out by the NDA government in Orissa. One can just imagine that if it would have been any other state ruled by the 'pseudo secularists' then by now a full scale violent agitation would have seen the light of the day with all the affiliated organisations of the Sangh Parivar, lending their support. Unfortunately it is not the case. And the person in charge of education department is none other than Mr Samir Dey, a hardcore RSS pracharak from his early days.

A leading mainstream daily recently gave an insight into the matter. In its report on its front page captioned 'In NDA Orissa, a textbook equates BJP with Lashkar' (*Indian Express*, Delhi, 2nd February, 2007) it states about the manner in which a textbook on 'Indian Polity' for second-year degree students in Orissa clubs Lashkar-e-Toiba with BJP. According to the report, the chapter on the 'Existence of Terrorist Organisation' says : "Terrorist organisations create tension in the country. Communal parties like the BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal, Hurriyat Conference and Lashkar-e-Toiba are responsible for fomenting violence..leading to the killing of hundreds in the country and especially Kashmir."

It is worth noting that the said textbook—which is written by Amarendra Mohanty and Shyama Charan Mohanty, teachers of political science, has been taught since 2003. The matter could come to light only after a BJP worker in Salepur, about 60 km from the state capital, noticed it and lodged a FIR. As of now an embarrassed government immediately announced a monitoring committee to screen all textbooks and BJP workers took to the streets and burnt copies of the book.

Looking at the fact that the Sangh Parivar—which is hell bent upon making Orissa the second Hindutva Laboratory—has egg on its face *a la* this episode, it can be presumed that the whole matter would be hushed up. But the issue does throw light on the mental abilities of the plethora of activists of the Hindutva brigade who needed around five years to notice this 'discrepancy' in the textbook.

Of course it is not for the first time that Sangh Parivar or one of its affiliated organisations was forced to withdraw a book published under its own supervision. A look at one of their own publications brought out on the occasion of the silver jubilee celebrations of the BJP illustrates this in no uncertain terms. As reported in a national daily (*Indian Express*, 9 th May 2006) :

Mystery surrounds the sudden withdrawal of one of the 16 volumes of an official account of the Jan Sangh-BJP history, four months after it was released as part of the silver jubilee celebrations in Mumbai. The series, written by historian Makhan Lal under the supervision of senior BJP leader J P Mathur, carry a foreword by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha L K Advani.

While the sudden withdrawal of one volume titled *RSS Aur Bharatiya Jan Sangh Ki Sthapana Ka Itihas* (The History of Creation of the RSS and Bharatiya Jan Sangh) appears bizarre, till date one has yet to get any official explanation from the BJP about its action. Looking at what Ram Madhav, the ex-

spokesperson of the RSS had to say, it can be inferred that the Parivar people felt agitated over the admission in the book that both RSS and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the predecessor of BJP, were set up as anti-Muslim forces.

Apart from the genesis of the RSS (and Bharatiya Jan Sangh) the Sangh bosses seem to be annoyed with references which according to another report (*The Telegraph*, May 10, 2006) 'contains references that are too anti-Muslim even for the RSS.' The references to Mahatma Gandhi where the book peddles the conventional wisdom in the Hindutva Brigade that 'the origin of "minority-appeasement" was in Gandhi's attitude towards the Muslims' has also been found unpalatable to the Sangh fraternity. It is clear to everyone that of late it seems to be cosying up to the Mahatma, including him even as one of its *Pratahsmaraniya* (worth remembering in the morning).

May it be the case of the Oriya textbook or for that matter the withdrawal of a volume four months after release such foolish attempts by the Hindutva brigade people pale in significance if one gets to know the manner in which a whole book by its second supremo, M S Golwalkar was surreptitiously withdrawn.

It is common knowledge that the first of Golwalkar's theoretical contributions for the cause of Hindutva had appeared in the form of a *pamphlette* called 'We or Our Nationhood Defined' (1938) which was so straightforward in his appreciation of the 'ethnic cleansing' of Jews undertaken by Hitler and such an unashamed proponent of the submergence of 'foreign races' in the Hindu race that later day RSS leaders have tried to create an impression that the said book was not written by Golwalkar but it was merely a translation of a book 'Rashtra Meemansa' by Babarao Savarkar.

A quote from the 77 paged book would be opportune at this moment:

"The foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights. There is at least, should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation; let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal, with the foreign races, who have chosen to live in our country".

It is a different matter that in his Preface to *We or Our Nationhood Defined* dated March 22, 1939, Golwalkar himself described *Rashtra Meemansa* as 'one of my chief sources of inspiration and help?' The American scholar Jean A Curran who did a full length study on RSS in early fifties, in his sympathetic book, *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics : A Study of the RSS* (1951) confirms that Golwalkar's 77-page book was written in 1938 when he was appointed RSS General Secretary by Hedgewar and he calls it as RSS's 'Bible'.

Coming back to the Oriya textbook it is being learnt that the said committee formed by the Chief Minister would look into the legal aspects and act against the publishers. A spokesperson of the BJP has even demanded arrest of its authors.

All empty words.

Perhaps they learn that instead of following their agenda of hate and targeting their ire on innocents they learn the essence of harmony. Only then it would be

possible for them to read as well as comprehend in a better manner, at least they would be saved from the disgraceful revelation that they need around five years to understand an article. □□□