

Naiju Jose Kalambukattu and Benny Thettayil, ed., *The Stunned Populace, Religio-Political Manoeuvres in India: A Theological Response (Samanvayam Contextual Theology Series 10 & Sadharmayam Research Series 2)*, Bengaluru: Dharmaram Publications, 2020, Pages xii+324. ISBN 978-81-945014-2-8

In the postmodern era, there is a shift of understanding of theology from philosophical reflection to concrete action for the renewal of and the reflection on the society because of the influence of liberation theology. Doing theology becomes more important than the pursuit of intellectual reflection. Concrete action for the liberation of the downtrodden, *dalits* and *tribals* is part and parcel of theology today in the Indian Context. The Book, *The Stunned Populace Religio-Political Manoeuvres in India: A Theological Response*, edited by Naiju Jose Kalambukattu and Benny Thettayil, is a contextual theological reflection on emergence of fundamentalist movements like Hindutva that oppress tribal culture for the monolithic cultural nationalism in Indian scenario and a response of the Church in the face of the tribals and others facing injustice. The editors emphasize the same in the introduction: "The fundamentalist groups in India make use of many of the uninformed tribals and subalterns to fight a battle that is not their own" (1). The *Sanga Parivar* is trying for the establishment of the *Hindu-Rashtra* through Hindutva agenda. Monolithic cultural tendency of Hindutva is trying to dominate other cultures and religions especially tribal cultures. The present work is a heuristic study on the tribal roots of Indian culture. The editors have successfully collected, edited and arranged fourteen articles into a single volume, which presents various aspect of the theme.

The Foreword by Zephyrinus Baxla SDB, an apostle from and to the tribals, sets the tone of this book by explaining certain historical events in the life of tribal people. Baxla states that history of India is a history of betrayal of tribal people's long cherished dream of third country, a tribal country apart from India and Pakistan. The general introduction by the editors presents the quintessence of all the entries in the volume by various authors.

The opening article "Ancient Conflict Aggravated" (11-32) by Archbishop Thomas Menampampil speaks of the great tribal tradition of the great ancient Indian heroes like Ashoka and Buddha and prominent role of heterodox religions like Buddhism and Jainism. Henry Angel, in his article "Stunned Tribals Facing Injustice and Onslaught" (33-60) mainly deals with domination of the Brahminical culture on Tribals, and reminds the Church of her duty to have solidarity with the tribals. Shaji George Kochuthara's article

“Injustice Done to Women in India: The Response of the Church” (61-88) speaks of the unjust situation of women and their miserable life in Indian scenario. It also discusses about the influence of patriarchy in the Church.

The contrast between Hindutva philosophy of cultural nationalism and Gandhian territorial nationalism is expounded by Joseph Lobo in his article, “Populism and Sacralization of Politics the Plagues of Our Times: Towards an Integral Response” (89-116). George Kaniarakath in his article, “A Tolerant God and His Intolerant People” (117-140) establishes that God in the Old Testament is a God of compassion, love and slow to anger. God’s vision is not narrow but universal. “The Liberatory Face and Beauty of Jesus’ Gospel” (141-160) by Thomas Srampickal is a heuristic search for the liberatory face of Jesus who transformed community and liberated people with the law of love and also presents the revolutionary mission of Paul making Christianity a universal brotherhood of humanity. Paulachan Kochappilly in his article “Alienation from the Land as Death or Affection for the Land as Life for Adivasis: A Creation Perspective for Contextual Theology” (161-180) describes the ongoing struggles of the tribal people for water, land and forest which are considered most sacred, Holy and priceless by the tribals. Poulouse Mangai’s article, “Religio-Politics of Hindutva and the Subalterns: Spiritual Perspectives for a Proper Response” (181-210) describes contemporary Religio-political Hindutva Movement and its social impact on the India society. In “Exclusion in our Violent Land” (211-238), based on the background of biblical-theological reflections, Benny Thettayil gives an overall picture of the present Indian scenario characterized by injustice in building up *Hindu-rashtra*.

“Contextual Theologizing: A Paradigm Shift in Theological Methodology” (239-276) by Jose Chittooparampil highlights the need of paradigm shift in theological methodology from ‘faith seeking understanding’ to ‘an articulation of the faith of the community in their struggle for liberation. Najju Jose Kalambukattu, in his paper “Contextual Theological Education for Mission: Samanvaya Model” (277-292), explores the relevance of contextual theological education for mission as envisioned in Samanvaya Theology College and narrates how Samanvaya model of contextual formation and theological education enables the students to be in the shoes of the carpenter of Nazareth. In “Among the Tribals: An Experience for a Better Life” (293-302) Melbin Elamplasseril describes his village experience and draws certain kingdom values from tribal life. The tribals are known for their simplicity, sincerity, honesty, truthfulness,

equality, fraternity and hospitality. In the following article, "Cockfight: A Theological Reflection" (303-310), Jibin Koottanal describes cockfight as corrupted dimension of the tribal culture and its irrelevance in the context of growing concern of cosmo-centrism. In the last entry (312-315), Sebastian Elavathingal presents the pictorial vision of Samanvaya emblem and motto. He stresses that the learning and formation in Samanvaya follow the integration model depicted in the emblem as its ideal.

The volume gives a comprehensive vision of the Hindutva Challenges on tribal life in order to establish a monolithic culture or nationalism based on Hindu culture. A separate entry, which gives the philosophical basis of Hindutva and its founders that, would have been helpful for the beginners of theology. This book covers almost all spiritual and social life of the tribal people who have undergone deculturation due to Hindutva forces. This book reminds us of spirituality as 'prophetic solidarity,' with people who are suffering and it is well explained as the mission of the Church in Indian context. The special theological contribution of these authors consists in having brought out and illustrated the cultural importance of the tribal people. The editors Naiju Jose Kalambukattu and Benny Thettayil deserve great appreciation for this achievement. The attractive cover page, which depicts the life and theology of the tribals, the reader-friendly formatting, systematic and progressive arrangement of the themes, a detailed index, etc., are other attractive features of the book. I recommend this volume to the students of theology and spirituality, especially to those who are interested in the theology of liberation in the Indian context.

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