

Hindutva is a pre-requisite for progress in India.

The victory of the BJP in three states out of four in the recent assembly elections has been projected as having been achieved by keeping Hindutva on the back-burner. At the same time, the analysts have recognised the excellent performance of the party in the vanvasi areas. They have acknowledged that this is due to the consistent work being done by the Sangh parivar organisations like Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram. What they do not want to acknowledge is that the basis of the work of VKA is Hindutva.

The problem in India is that discussions take place without first setting out the definition of terms. Thus, a party which aligns itself with the Muslim League is called secular, but one which projects Hindutva is called communal. And a party, or a group of parties, which opposes the BJP is called secular, even if the party or the group is heavily into vote-bank politics.

Justice requires that not only the guilty are punished, but the innocent are not harassed. Also, true peace is achieved not merely by absence of tension, but also by the presence of justice. Hindutva is ensuring justice is done to the Hindus. And in so doing, it does not position itself as against anyone, except those who want to cause harm to the Hindus and Hinduism.

So to discuss Hindutva in context of progress, one has to first set out the parameters of Hindutva. As proponents of Hindutva, we set out the following as the main ones:

- * A belief in Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudda Vadanti.
- * Reconstruct the temples at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi, Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi, and Shri Kashi Vishwanath.
- * Introduce Uniform Civil Code.
- * Abolish Article 370.
- * Modify Articles 25, 26 and 30 in the Constitution to remove special privileges given to state-funded minority run educational institutions.
- * Give temple management to the people.
- * Do away with the Haj subsidy.
- * Teach history in the right perspective.
- * Accept that Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Rana Pratap Singh, Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj, etc., are genuine national heroes.
- * Restore ancient Hindu sites, so that there is a genuine pride in our history
- * Formulate economic policies which encourage indigenous entrepreneurship.
- * Ban cow slaughter
- * Show no mercy for terrorists.
- * Ban religious conversions and prevent foreign preachers from coming to this country.

Before dealing with the issues, we would like to state that the order listed does not indicate the priority, nor is the list exhaustive.

The principle of Ekam Sat Viprah Bahudda Vadanti (Truth is one, sages have located many ways to achieve it) is the essential spirit of Hinduism. It does not divide the people into those who achieve salvation and those who do not. It says that a person has to find his/her own way to salvation through a proper spiritual exercise. It expects a person to accept that another can have his own path which is valid for him/her. It is an inclusive concept.

The issue of reconstructing the temples at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi, Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi and Kashi Vishwanath is with an objective of returning to the Hindus what is legitimately due to them. The original temples were deliberately destroyed so as to provide Hindus with an ocular reminder that they are slaves and that Islam rules even over holy Hindu sites. Asking Hindus to bear the sight of the monument of their slavery is a sure sign of wanting to continue the tensions that has persisted on this account, ever since the destruction of the temples. The Hindu generosity is exemplified by the fact that the return of the thousands of others are not sought.

Hindus have made sincere efforts at trying to find a peaceful solution to the problem. In the recent past, Hindus have been involved in negotiations with three prime ministers of India – Shri VP Singh, Shri Chandrashekar and Shri PV Narsimha Rao. In addition, many well meaning people have made genuine efforts to find an amicable solution – the one by Swami Jayendra Saraswati, the Kanchi Shankaracharya, being the latest one. In each case, the efforts were vetoed by an obscurantist Muslim leadership with the active support of those who call themselves as secular. In the ultimate analysis, a policy of vote-bank and an appeasement of the minorities has scored over

justice to Hindus.

The present status of the civil codes in India leave much to be desired for all communities. Adoption is available only to Hindus, while the members of other communities can at best be guardians. This causes big problem when it comes to the issue of inheritance and other rights of the adopted children. The divorce law for Christians was only recently modified to make it gender just, while in Islam the woman is at the mercy of the man. We grant that there are certain aspects of Hindu laws that need modification. A holistic exercise needs to be undertaken to do justice to all section of the society.

It is necessary to abolish Article 370, to achieve true integration of Jammu & Kashmir with the rest of India. Also, it is necessary to recognise that the article was intended to be a temporary one, as the heading in the constitution clearly states. Jawaharlal Nehru, in response to Shri Atalji Vajpayee in the early 1960s, stated that the article is being eroded and will soon vanish. The large funds allocated to the development of Jammu & Kashmir have been used to line up the pockets of the local politicians and administration, and the Article 370 comes in the way of effective dealing with the issue.

Shri Jagmohanji, in his book “My Frozen Turbulence”, has catalogued the various reasons for doing away with the article, and also adequately established the huge maladministration that is prevalent in the state.

Articles 25, 26 and 30 in the Constitution give special privileges given to state-funded minority run educational institutions. This is against the principles of true secularism. Also, there is no way to control any mismanagement of such institutes, which is detrimental to the students of the institutes. Obviously, in such a situation, the quality of education will suffer.

The so-called secular governments have taken over the management of various Hindu temples, particularly where the devotees give large sums of money as offering to the deity. Only a small sum of money is needed for the management of the temple, and the rest is often used for political purposes. The money is also used as a budgetary support of the state, and not for propagation of Hinduism.

At the same time, the same principles are not used when it comes to churches and mosques. There are many examples where there is misuse of the funds of such religious places of worship. But in the practice of politics of vote-bank, such institutes are not touched.

The provision of the subsidy to the Muslims who go to Haj on pilgrimage is part of the programme for appeasement of the community, particularly its obscurantist leadership. It goes against the principles of secularism. Furthermore, insult is added to injury when Hindu pilgrims have to pay extra charges to visit their places of pilgrimage.

Hinduism is the oldest surviving civilisation. People who have studied it in a genuine manner have admired it for the high levels of intellectual thought that has been achieved. Past becomes an excellent guide to what can be achieved in the future. When the people of India are taught that there is nothing in their past that they need to be proud of, they become disengaged from their civilisation. In the process, the essential unity of the people of the land is also destroyed. Instead of creating empathy with each other, a spirit of unhealthy rivalry is created.

Therefore, there is a need to teach history in the right perspective. For example, the people have to be told that there was no Aryan invasion, the Islamic invaders created havoc, the Goa Inquisition nearly devastated Hinduism, etc. In the process, the objective is to tell the events factually and not to create hurt in some sections of the society – in any case, how telling the truth causes hurt is not fathomable.

Being the oldest surviving civilisation, even after the huge vandalism that has been suffered, there are many ancient Hindu sites which speak of the glory of our history. To inculcate a genuine pride in our history, it is necessary to restore these monuments, from which we can all receive inspiration to bring India back to the rightful place in the world community.

Every country needs role models who can be emulated. This not only gives pride to the people of the country, but also makes them more tuned to the civilisation. Thus, it is necessary to accept that Shri Ram, Shri Krishna, Rana Pratap Singh, Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj, etc., are genuine national heroes. The attempt to denigrate their memories is a clear sign of trying to wean the people away from their past, and thus create an artificial image of themselves.

Hindutva asks for formulation of economic policies which encourage indigenous entrepreneurship. What is being asked for is not favours, but to remove the obstacles that exist in conducting of business. What has been done in the name of globalisation is that the policies have often put the indigenous entrepreneurs at a disadvantage. More

so when precious little is being done to move towards a genuine internal liberalisation. Furthermore, nothing is being done to address the issue of corruption which is one of the most anti-development feature of any economy.

Hindus worship cow as a sacred being. The cow is provider of not only milk, and fertiliser, but also many medicines. Therefore, it is not only a case of sentimental attachment, but also has significant economic merit.

Terrorism is a method used by our enemies to try and bleed our society, not only in terms of economic development, but also to create social tensions. Terrorism is another cause for reducing the level of development. When there was a recent terrorist attack in Mumbai, the prices in the stock exchange fell. Such terrorist have to be dealt with firmly and without any mercy. In addition, those who show mercy to the terrorists should also be placed in their rightful position.

Religious conversions cause a huge amount of social tensions. Even those who are in an active programme of conversion intensely dislike when their own members adopt another religion, even when it is done without fraud or pressure. Such tensions diverts the attention necessary to work out programmes for economic development. Thus there is a need not only to ban religious conversions, but also prevent foreign preachers from coming to this country.

Economic and social development are activities which the Hindus have not neglected, given that there are proper policies put in place. Immediately after independence, the people of this country gave Nehru an opportunity to put his vision of creating what he called temples of modern India in place. They gave him sufficient time to show that his vision causes not only economic development, but also social progress.

History clearly indicates that Nehru failed on both accounts. However, his followers, instead of admitting the mistakes, blamed the Hindus for the slow progress until 1980. They postulated that there was something deficient in the Hindu civilisation that is holding the country back – clearly implying that we have to move away from our cultural norms if there has to be development.

While Nehru set about putting his plans in action, the Hindus decided to keep the Hindutva issues in the background. However, the Hindus could not be denied either development or Hindutva. So, beginning from the early 1980s, even as they aggressively put the Hindutva issues in the forefront, they did not neglect development. The empirical data clearly shows that the Hindus are able to function at multiple levels. They have wholeheartedly adopted the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi movement, and also grew at the high rates of growth, increased the literacy levels, etc.

Yes, there is much more that we can achieve. But can this done by people who have no moorings to their civilisation? Can we motivate the people of this land by telling them that their ancestors were primitive people, and that for economic progress we need to look outside? Can we do this by negating history and glorifying invaders who came here not only to destroy the people but also the civilisation? Can this be done when there is no justice or in a climate of social tensions?

We do not think so. For a holistic development of the society, many issues have to simultaneously dealt with. Putting effective economic policies in place, and getting the benefits of these policies, can happen only when people feel confident about themselves and when there is justice. And justice demands that Hindutva be the central point of our programme to place India in the rightful place in the world community.

The Hindu agenda and a dazzling India

From: Vishwa Hindu Parishad
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There is a shining India and the people of this country are feeling good about themselves. This is a fact. The people have been waiting for a long time and have made many sacrifices in the past, and the economic and social prosperity is something that they have earned for themselves. What we have to understand what has caused this big change from a few years ago so that we can sustain the achievements made so far.

It is not only the economic progress that people are feeling good about. The fact that we are a nuclear power is something that makes the common man feel proud. The manner in which the country has repulsed the attack by Pakistan in Kargil makes us hold our head high. Despite the bomb attacks by Islamic terrorists in various parts of the country, Hindus have not gone into a shell.

The NDA government has taken some steps which has lightened the burden of government on the people, particularly in the economic field. But should we call all these steps as reforms? Correcting the silly policies in the telecom sector cannot be really called reforms. There are many areas where real reforms have not taken place – as in the case of the inspector and licence raj relating to trade and industry.

The taxation policy – both direct and indirect – not only places a burden on the society, but there is still a lot of harassment. The manner in which the Value Added Tax (VAT) for sales tax was being planned would have increased the level of nuisance from the authorities.

The large road building programme, a long overdue investment, is still in the implementation stage, and the benefits in terms of improving the transport system will be seen only in the future.

It is to the credit of the Hindus of this country that they have taken advantage of whatever little has been done, and have shown that they are more than capable of performing. So one can imagine what would be the state of affairs if there are complete reforms, and there is true justice and peace.

While the role of the NDA government for whatever little has been done so far is recognised, we hope that when they come back to power they will do much more, and take India from shinning to dazzling, and convert the feel good factor to feel great factor.

This can be done only when it is clearly understood the background in which the BJP has achieved the present status in politics. The transformation from a party at the fringe to taking the centre stage has taken place when it adopted the slogan “Jo Hindu hith ki baat karega, wohi desh par raj karega”. For the first time, the people of India felt that there is a genuine alternative to the Congress party at the central level.

There have been many parties which have been ideologically opposed to the Congress right from their formation. The BJP is the first such party which has scored over the Congress not only in many states, but more importantly at the centre. And Shri Atalji is the first prime minister of our country who has never been in the Congress.

It is because of this massive change in the political scenario, which has not received its due attention, that we today see policies put in place which are radically different from the ones that the Congress had attempted in the first forty years of our independence. The BJP has been able to come to this stage because the people strongly believed that it would do something for the Hindus, not in a communal sense but in a civilisation sense. After all, more than 95% of the Muslims and Christians have had Hindu ancestors.

We do not think that it would be unfair to the BJP to say that they have not been able to truly fulfil the vision that they offered to the Hindus when they took up the slogan. We also do not think that it would be completely unfair to blame the compulsion of coalition for this state of affairs. We do understand that for coalitions to work there has to be certain amount of give and take. We do not know whether the demerits, from the national point of view, have been fully explained by the non-BJP members of the coalition with respect to the primary issues that the BJP had taken up. And we are unaware of the issues that the other coalition members have set aside as part of their share of the compromise.

Slogans are necessary to explain to the people in a simple language. While slogans, like Ram Rajya, are instinctively understood, many others are not so clear. Thus, the party taking up the slogans has to spell out the content so that the implementation becomes easy.

It is in this context that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has come out with the Hindu agenda, the contents of which are as follows:

1. Return of the most important of the vandalised holy sites to the Hindus.
2. Remove the interference on Hindu mandirs.
3. Ban cow slaughter.
4. Clean the Ganga and other rivers.
5. Protect historical and civilisation monuments.
6. Support Sanskrit language.
7. Eliminate jihadi terrorism.
8. Ban religious conversions.
9. Stop infiltration.
10. Abolish Article 370.
11. Implement a uniform civil code.
12. Revamp the education system.
13. Protect the Hindus abroad.

Before taking up the first issue, let us discuss the other twelve.

Remove the interference on Hindu mandirs.

If India is a secular state, the state has no business to run Hindu mandirs. Of course, improper running of mandirs would go against the interests of the Hindus. But this thing can be said for other public institutes – both secular and religious. There are sufficient laws available to prevent such misuse in these cases, and the same can be applied in case of the mandirs – as is the case in those mandirs which are out of the government control. If this is done, then a non-essential activity is taken out of the government purview and it will have more time to involve in truly development issues.

Ban cow slaughter.

The cow is a holy animal for the Hindus, and that is why they desist from eating its flesh. Recently the Deoband Islamic seminary issued a fatwa against cow slaughter, on the very grounds that the Hindus have a special attachment to the cow. With the work done by Hindu organisations, it has been clearly established that the cow can have good economic value – as providing fertiliser, medicines, etc. Moreover, one of the directive principles in the constitution states that cow slaughter be banned. So undertaking this programme only means that the constitution is implemented in its true spirit.

Clean the Ganga and other rivers.

Just as cow is worshipped by the Hindus, so also many of the rivers. Important pilgrimage sites are located on the banks of these rivers. Cleaning them is truly a civilisation dharma of the government. Doing so will also mean undertaking development in terms of improved economic activity on account of increase in yatras. This has been adequately demonstrated by the large increase in pilgrims to Vaishno Devi mandir after the Jammu & Kashmir government removed the encroachments in the approach to the site, and spent the mandir funds to improve the facilities. This will also improve the spiritual well-being of the Hindus.

Protect historical and civilisation monuments.

Hinduism is the oldest surviving civilisation. Its greatness in all aspects of life has been well accepted. It is a shame that very little sincere efforts are being made to preserve the monuments that reflect our glorious history. Like the previous point, this has also an economic dimension, in terms of increased tourist activity.

Support Sanskrit language.

It is a reflection of practice of a perverted secularism that one of the previous governments took a stand in the Supreme Court that support for Sanskrit would go against the principles of secularism. The preservation and propagation of Sanskrit is needed for economic well-being, since much of the ancient science is preserved in the documents written in that language. Translations that have been done are often with an intent to denigrate the past. A concerted effort to ensure that this knowledge is utilised for the benefit of the whole mankind is necessary. For example, it is now accepted that the ayurveda leads to better medical remedy than the allopathic treatment.

Eliminate jihadi terrorism.

Our country has been suffering the ill-effects of Islamic terrorism for a long time. The objective of this programme is to destroy our great civilisation. In other places, such programmes have been successful in the past. But the Hindus have resisted the terrorism, and so have preserved their culture and ensured that our history is part of a living consciousness. Despite the proven resilience, the efforts to destroy have not reduced. In the recent past they have been actively supported by the fundamentalist elements in Pakistan. Eliminating the terrorism will

lead to increased security of the people and reduced tensions between communities, which will further lead to increase in economic well-being.

Ban religious conversions.

All communities have actively detested religious conversions. The aggressive proselytisers – namely the Christian churches and the Islamists – themselves are against the members of their religion join other religions, even when this happens without force or inducement. Banning religious conversions will reduce social tensions, and the energy of the society can be better utilised for development in all spheres. In true Hindu tradition, we are asking for such a ban only in case when the conversion is done due to fraud or inducements.

Stop infiltration.

It is conservatively estimated that there are more than two crore infiltrators in our country, particularly from Bangladesh. This programme was started by many so-called secular politicians with an object of creating a vote bank for themselves. As in case of such monsters, it has acquired a life of its own. Many of the border districts in West Bengal and Assam are today populated by people who are not citizens of this country. It is said that the people from Bangladesh are ‘migrating’ for economic reasons. Even if this is true, surely it is not the responsibility of the Hindus to take care of those who voluntarily parted company, and did so with a lot of violence against the Hindus. Stopping infiltration will improve the security climate in our country. Besides, the infiltrators taking the jobs of the genuine citizens of this nation. The infiltrators are utilised in anti-social activities, even to the extent of indulging in terrorism. So, stopping infiltration will lead to a better social and secure climate, which is important for economic development.

Abolish Article 370.

One of the primary programmes of the Jana Sangh, and later the BJP, has been the abolishing of Article 370. As a member of Lok Sabha, in the early 1960s, Shri Atalji wanted to move a bill asking for doing away with this pernicious part of the constitution. The harmful effects were recognised by those who framed the constitution, and they added the word ‘temporary’ to the heading of the article. It was on this ground that the then Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, dissuaded Shri Atalji from moving the resolution and had said at the time that many of the original provisions of the article have been done away with, and that it is being slowly eroded. In his various writing, Shri Jagmohanji has documented how this article has been used by the terrorists in the state of Jammu & Kashmir to create a feeling of separateness amongst the Muslims. Moreover, the article goes against the true spirit of federalism enshrined in the constitution. Abolishing the article will not only uphold the original intention of the constitution but also reduce a major irritant amongst the Hindus in the way they look towards the Muslims of this country. This will give a big blow to terrorism in the state and in the rest of the country, and will lead to improved economic activity, particularly in Jammu & Kashmir.

Implement a uniform civil code.

Due to a lack of a uniform civil code, adoption is permitted only amongst the Hindus. This goes against natural justice. Enacting such a code will greatly benefit the non-Hindu children and the adults who have treated such children as their own. Similarly, making it illegal to have more than one wife will greatly reduce the suffering of many women and their children. We would like to ask who will oppose a uniform civil code – the non-Hindu women, brothers and father of such women, the children of the women? We think only the religious leaders of the community will be adversely affected since it will remove their power over the community – a power that can be utilised only when the community is in a state of discontentment.

Revamp the education system.

As colonialists, the British tried to implement a system of education which attempted to alienate the people from the civilisation glory. So deep rooted was the impact that those who considered themselves as educated continued with the policy in an independent India. It was not just a question of negating historical facts, but also pervert the meaning of whatever facts were correctly mentioned. If such a policy is continued, the people of this land will cut off the link between themselves and their ancestors. And in the process disintegrating tendencies will set in. This environment is not conducive to have sustained long term social and economic growth.

Protect the Hindus abroad.

Hindus have legally migrated to different parts of the world for various reasons. It is a character of the Hindus never to give any trouble to the host community. Even as they kept their own civilisation identity alive, they have whole-heartedly assimilated with the culture of their place of abode and have made significant contribution to their new country in all walks of life. Often this has not prevented them from being persecuted in their new lands – sometimes overtly, often covertly. It is necessary for our country to stand up to their rights wherever the Hindus have been persecuted – a persecution which is not imaginary but real.

Return of the most important of the vandalised holy sites to the Hindus.

So, let us now come to the first point – namely the return of the holy Hindu sites. This return is being asked on the basis of justice and not as a favour. Vandalising the indigenous holy sites has been a feature of Islamic and Christian invaders all over the world. The objective of such an act was to eradicate the past so that a new paradigm would be easy to implement. And wherever a new structure was constructed in its place, the objective was to provide an ocular reminder to the indigenous people that they are now slaves of the foreign masters.

Where the civilisations were completely destroyed, there has been none who could come forward to reclaim the holy sites. However, where the civilisations were not destroyed, the monuments of slavery has caused increased bitterness amongst the people in whom the memory of their ancestors is still alive.

The historical facts surrounding the vandalism has been provided by the Hindus. It is only those who want to play a game of vote-bank politics indulge in negating the facts. Also, in true Hindu tradition, sincere efforts have been made in the past to find a negotiated solution. These negotiations were not allowed to reach their logical conclusion by those whose interest is to remain in power by appeasing the Muslims. Justice demands that the sites be returned to the Hindus – not as a favour to them but to accept their rights. And the magnanimity of the Hindus is obvious when they have said that they are asking not for the thousands of vandalised sites, but three of the most holy ones – namely the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi, Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi and Kashi Vishwanath.

Recently we see political parties joining together to fight the elections. In many cases, just prior to the coming together, these parties had stated that they are politically at different poles. Often these parties had parted companies a short time before. We also see people joining parties, people who have accused the party of having all sorts of negative characteristics. Often these people had left the party on one ground or the other. It would seem to us that the objective is to merely win elections, and not development. We think that even if the elections are won, such alliances and newcomers will retard development plans.

Without having an agenda in which issues which benefit to the people are clearly stated, there will not be a road map for the party to follow. The VHP is of the firm belief that this agenda should be followed not only by the NDA but by all political parties. All the elements of the agenda will lead to justice, reduced tensions, and increased security. And it is only on this basis that India will move from shining to dazzling and the people will start to feel great.