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A STUDY OF MAHIMA DHARMA OF ODISHA

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ABSTRACT:

Mahima Dharma in Odisha was founded by Mahima Gosain. The Philosophy of Mahima Dharma is religious tradition of Odisha. Religion can rescue the earth. Mahima dharma is the concept of god as Sunya – Brahma and Abadhut Prabhu Parama Brahma. Mahima Gosain was against idol worship and believed in one formless god. He was started the most revolutionary in the religious history of Modern India. He was create a social reform in hindu caste based society and protest against the dominance of Brahmanism. The main focus of the paper is origin and development of Mahima Dharma and how the under privileged caste take part in the socio religious customs. Mahima Dharma based on ultimate goal of humanism. It gives a new form of life and self-respect in the society.

Key Words: Culture, Humanism, Religion, Sacrifice, Superstition

INTRODUCTION:

In the 19th century, Odisha experienced the appealing form of Hindu rigid customs, conventions, various beliefs and superstitions like caste prejudice, low status of women, child marriage, caste hierarchy and 'Sathidaha Pratha' etc. These lead to many gruesome practices and hurried customs of human sacrifice. At that time Mahima Gosain was started Satya Sanatana Mahima Dharma or Alekha Mahima Dharma in Odisha. He was the contemporary of Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Rama Krishna Paramahansa and swami Dayananda Saraswati. He was create a new religious organization which avoid idol worship and believed in one formless God while Rammohan Ray was influenced by western ideas and culture, Dayananda Saraswati rigid in vedic culture at that time Mahima Gosain was absolutely innocent of modernization. The religious movement which Mahima gosain stated was perhaps the most revolutionary in the religious history of modern India. Its essential Character is humanism. Its message is the deliverance of man. It prescribes the path of complete submission to Alekha Brahma for transmigration of soul. Mahima Dharm by its simple practice could reach the common people in the village of Odisha. It took its birth out of the two great religion i.e Hinduism and Buddhism.

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAHIMA DHARMA:

The founder of Mahima Dharma is Guru Mahima Gosain. He was also known as Mukunda Das Jogeswar baba. He was belonged to Brahmin family. Mahima Gosain travelled many regions and at last appeared at Puri (Odisha) in 1826 AD. At that time, He used to sleep on the bare ground. Therefore he was known as Dhulia Baba. During the period of his stay at Puri, he was propagating the theory of Advaitabad which means God is one. He tried to establish his theory before the Mukti mandapa Sabha. Mukti mandapa Sabha's Pandits are association of learned men. Mahima Gosain conforms Brahma is Nirguna and Sunya.

Latter on from Puri Mahima Gosain moved to hill caves of Khandagiri, Dhauligiri, Nilagiri etc. near Bhubaneswar. During those days Mahima Gosain only lived on water for 12 years so, people use to call him Nirahari baba. In 1838 Mahima gosain moved to Kapilash hill of Dhenkanal District of Odisha and meditated for long 24 years. During those period he put on the bark of Kumbhi tree. He lived on fruit first 12 years which were supplied to him from the forest a tribal named Sadananda of near by Deogram Village. So, he was called as 'Phalahari Baba'. For the next 12 years, he lived on milk which provide by Raja Bhagirathi Mahendra Bahadur of Dhenkanal.

He attained Siddhi at Kapilash hill in 1862 A.D. After that Mahima Gosain moved to Kakanpada village of Redhakhol with his first disciple Govinda Baba. Govinda das baba was the first of the 64 siddhas of Mahima Dharma. And was from Balasingh village of Boudh. They met a blind person named Bhima Bhoi and Mahima Gosain blessed him with eyesight Bhima visualised swami and next moment with all humbleness prayed swami to make him blind again as the torture of mankind is intolerable to Bhima. Swami blessed him for composing poem on Nirguna Brahma to spread the Mahima culture in different part of Odisha. At last he came to Joranda, Dhenkanal district of Odisha and took Samadhi in 1876. The place where Mahima Swami disappeared is called Mahima Gadi. It is the heart of all Mahima movement around world.

SPREAD OF MAHIMA DHARMA :

Govinda Das was his first disciple and Bhima Bhoi was the second disciple and gradually many disciple including the great Biswanath baba were produced. From 1862 to 1875 Mahima Dharma spread all over Odisha. He deliver his doctrine in Odia language. His ideas found expression through the writing of Bhima Bhoi.

Mahima Dharma drew the whole hearted support from a large section of the society in the name of Sanatan Dharma, that champions social disparity from the works of Bhima Bhoi we get a broad picture of the then society. So a perfect social morality is an important for this Dharma as the moral perfection in the individual level. Without a harmonious society the perfection in the individual life is not possible. The historical compulsion for the genesis of Mahima Dharma finds expression in its concern for the society. Expecting Buddhism no other form of traditional Dharma showed such a great amount of concern for the causes of the uplift of the society.

Attaching importance of Tungi culture it reveals the imaginative genius of Mahima Gosain and his intelligence. This was his ideas by which arose the dormant conscience of the people of far from areas and he made the tungi a hub of socio-cultural activity. In our village Kantapal colony No-4, Kankadahad, Dhenkanal also this culture has been practicing till date. There is a Tungi house made by our village people. At first Shyama Sundar Baba preside the Tungi mela and now Dayanidhi Baba carry on this culture. I have seen our neighboring village also have been running this culture.

PRACTICES :

Mahima Dharma opposes the caste system and idol worship. This religion strictly forbid the consumption of any intoxicants, violence and consumption of any flesh. Food and water has to be taken before sunset. The Mahima devotees should leave their bed around 4 AM early morning and perform Darshan before sunrise. Saran/Darshan is the act of complete surrender of self to Mahima Gosain. The same is repeated 2 times a day i.e before sunrise and evening before sunset.

The devotees have to lead a life of poverty celibacy, piety and constant movement as the monks are not allowed to sleep in the same place on two consecutive nights nor take meal twice from same house in a day. There is strict ordered of Mahima Gosain to avoid any kind of idol worship. The Mahima Principle is derived from Veda and Upanishads. It is believed by scholar of neo Vedanta movement Mahima culture. It is a revivalism of the Vedantic trust and reformist movement of Odisha within the Sanatan Hindu fold.

LITERATURE OF MAHIMA DHARMA :

Many works have been written on Mahima Dharma of Odisha. These are as:

1. Biswanath Das was the Author of following two books.
 - (i) Bhagavatasar Satya Dharma
 - (ii) Satya Mahima Dharma

By these two valuable books, he has mentioned only the philosophy of Mahima Dharma, different types of Mahima Dharma, food habit's, different Darshana and description of Parambrahma and Advaitabada.

1. Achyutananda Das- "Achyutananda's Mlika"
2. Sridhara Gosain- "Sidha Chandrika"
3. Gangadhar Baba- "Mahima Sahitya"

These books only refer to the code of conducts, duties of devotees, ritual practices philosophy of life.

4. Kshetrabasi Baba- 'Prabudha Purana'
5. Mahindra Baba- 'Mahima Kalptaru'

These two books were mentioned the information about the life of Mahima Gosain, Biswanath Baba and Bhima Bhoi.

6. Bima Bhoi, who is popularly known as Santha Kabi was written many books as:
 - (a) Bhajanamala
 - (b) Bhabisya Gupta Malika
 - (c) Nirguna Mahatmya
 - (d) Stuti Chintamani
 - (e) Astakavihari Gita
 - (f) Bramhanirupana Gita
 - (g) Nibedita Sadhana
 - (h) Adi Anta Gita
 - (i) Sruti Nisedha Gita
 - (j) Chautisha Mala

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MAHIMA DHARMA:

Mahima Dharma objectives are casteless and classless society where there would be no exploitations, universal brother-hood, non-violence, good neighbor-hood, peaceful co-existence, and Freedom from greed, kindness for all including birds, animals, and insects, principle of non-Dualism.

According to it, God is one and none next to him. He is Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent. He is the supreme soul and the cause of the creation of the universe. He is also without form inexpressible, without body & without name. God is present in every creature starting from insect to man. Teacher or Guru occupies a pivotal position in the teachings of Mahima Gosain. A teacher or Guru can show the path of Deliverance. Without him practice of Dharma is worthless. He can show path to a disciple and guide him for attaining transmigration of soul. Bhima Bhoi was mentioned that without the grace of Mahima Gosain, he would not have realized the God. Thus, Guru occupies lofty position among the Abadhut monks. Satya Sanatan Mahima Dhrama believes in the principle of Vasudhaiva kutumbakam. The Mahima doctrine conceives the whole universe as a single family and desires the welfare of all. Happiness for all and peace to all. It is the motto of this religion. Even, the life of one may be tinged with Sorrows and sufferings but one should pray for the happiness of others.

CONCLUSION :

Mahima Dharma is a revivalism of the Vedantic philosophy and a reform of Odisha. A way of life and a code of conduct, in which avoided the superstitious and complicated visuals of Hinduism. Above all, it criticized the Brahmanical interpretation of the religion.

It contains some noble features and interprets the deep Indian Philosophy in a simple manner. It accepts the Saguna and Nirguna Dharma to appeal the mind of all. The common men were attracted towards it because it was free from the ritualistic practices for Vedas.

Now it has been practiced in various part of Odisha like Cuttack, Balasore, Ganjam, Khurda, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Anugul, Nayagarh etc. Bhima Bhoi's noble ideas and great humanism which is reflected in his valuable books and it gives us internal pleasure that a stanza which is written in the UNO assembly wall as it is in Odia language. :-

“PRANINKA AARATA DUKHA APRAMITA DEKHU DEKHU KEBA SAHU, MO JIBANA PACHHE NARKE PADITHAU JAGATA UDHAAR HEU”

This means, who can bear to see the infinite affliction of living being, O God, let my soul dwell the hell while save the Earth from its among.

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