

TARGETING TIPU

OF LATE, KARNATAKA HAS BEEN in the thick of the news for high level corruption, language chauvinism, spreading canards about Tipu Sultan and raking up religious and communal controversies on place of worship, all by none other than those in power. As expected the communal fangs of the opportunist JDS-BJP coalition government in Karnataka are getting unfolded, interestingly the Chief Minister Kumaraswamy stated that he didn't know the meaning of secularism when he took charge of the Karnataka State. From the inception of this Government, Karnataka has been ruled as the feudal fiefdom of H D Devegowda, the former Prime Minister, and the father of Kumaraswamy. BJP, the coalition partner has found unforeseen opportunity to implement its communal fascist agenda. As a part of this agenda they have been trying to establish Brahminical Agama style of worshipping at Bababudangiri and take total control from the Muslim Mutawalis. Bababudangiri has been a symbol of Hindu Muslim syncretic culture throughout the centuries. This year they seem to be successful in mobilising the masses by manipulating the Government in favour of the Sangh Parivar. Massive Datta Mala Abhiyan was organized by BJP under the leadership of BJP president Sadanada Gowda. This, in spite of the High Court ruling stating that all the rituals in practice before 1975 should only be allowed. Recently Shankaramurthy the Higher Education Minister of Karnataka made a statement that Tipu Sultan was anti-Kannada as he used persian language during his regime. His statement led to strong protest from democratic forces which forced him to apologize. Even JDS supremo H D Devegowda came out supporting Tipu as a martyr and warned against BJP pursuing agenda beyond the common minimum programme of the JDS-BJP coalition. Historically, it is known that during Tipu's administration more than three languages were used.

It is a fact that till the other day the rest of the country hardly knew the name of this man. But today everybody is talking about this minister for Higher Education in the JDS and BJP coalition government in Karnataka.

Definitely if it would have concerned some minor affair in the history of Karnataka then the news would have hardly reached outside. But that is not the case. Rather it would be more opportune to say that Murthy's attempt to recast the Karnataka history books in the Sangh Parivar's mould and especially his move to obliterate the great Tipu Sultan's name from the pages of Kannada history that has angered a broad cross-section of people cutting across party lines.

For him it hardly matters that Tipu Sultan was a ruler who was much ahead of his times, who was apostle of Hindu-Muslim unity, who was fond of new inventions, who is called innovator of the world's first war rocket, who felt inspired by the French Revolution and despite being a ruler called himself Citizen, and even planted the tree of 'Liberty' in his palace.

For Murthy it is a minor matter that Tipu sensed the designs of the British and tried to forge broader unity with the domestic rulers and even tried to connect with French and the Turks and the Afghans to give a fitting reply to the hegemonic designs of the

British. Perhaps the Sangh Swayamsevak which is lurking inside the minister for higher education does not want the future generations to even know that Tipu defeated the British army twice with his superior planning and better techniques and who died in the battlefield itself fighting the Britishers again with his sword in his hand.

The pretext of anti-Kannada bias in Tipu Sultan runs hollow when one knows that the Archeological Department of Mysore State is in possession of over thirty letters by Tipu to the Shankaracharya of Shringeri Math. These letters are written in the Kannada characters.

The move to obliterate Tipu's name from the pages of Kannada history is another vindication that Sangh Parivar has taken it upon themselves the task left unfinished by the British colonialists. ❧❧❧

[contributed]