

CULTURAL CONFLICT IN MARK TULLY'S "KUMBH MELA"

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Abstract

India is the birthplace of many different religions. India, being a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society and multi-cultural society celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. Throughout the history of India, Indian culture has been heavily influenced by Dharma religions and most influenced are Hinduism and Islamic religions. Conflict between Muslims and Hindus is perhaps nowhere more acute than in India, where historically Hindu and Muslim populations have struggled with co-existence. The culture of India is different and diverse. India's languages, religions, traditions, dance, music, architecture, food, festivals and customs differs from place to place within the country. The Indian culture, often labeled as an combination of several cultures. Mark Tully is one the world's leading writers and broadcasters on India. Mark Tully has written a lot about India and mostly about its social, political. cultural and religious aspects. Mark Tully's analysis of India and its problems are quite disruptive. He makes no attempt to hide the realities. The "Kumbh Mela" by Mark Tully is extracted from his book 'No Full Stops In India'. Tully, in his essay describes Kumbh Mela as on the greatest religious festivals of India. Lakhs and Lakhs of people gather during this festival. More than five hundred religious organizations take part in it. It is of course a great religious festival, the world's largest we are told, but there is much more to it than just the great bathing day, spectacular though that In the essay, Tully describes and focuses about the cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims. This essay portrays a different side of India's Cultural diversity and also focuses that after so many years of independence, people of India still live in the cage of blind beliefs and superstitions.

Keywords- *Travel, Kumbh Mela, Conflict, Hindus, Muslims*



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INTRODUCTION

India has a long tradition of cultural tension. The culture of India is different and diverse. India's languages, religions, traditions, dance, music, architecture, food, festivals and customs differs from place to place within the country. While there has been historic tension between Christians and Muslims, Hindus and Christians and numerous other religions, one of the most significant, sustained religious and cultural conflicts has been between Hindus and Muslims. In the 20th century, this was the major factor in the partition of the British colony of India into the new states of India and Pakistan. Hindu-Muslim conflict in India has been

going on for centuries; it is nothing new. Throughout the Middle Ages, Muslim community expanded into the Indian Peninsula, threatened the Hindu way of life. Also in time, some Indians converted to Islam. Indian culture has been heavily influenced by Dharmic religions and most influenced are Hinduism and Islamic religions. Throughout the Modern Age, Indian Muslims and Indian Hindus coexisted within a fragile system, with violence often breaking out between the two groups.

Sir Mark Tully is one the world's leading writers and broadcasters on India and the presenter of the much loved radio programme '*Something Understood*'. Mark Tully is one the world's leading writers and broadcasters on India. Mark Tully has written a lot about India, he writes about India and for India and mostly about its social, political, cultural and religious aspects. Mark Tully's analysis of India and its problems are quite disruptive. He makes no attempt to hide the realities. Tully, in his work didn't imposed his own views and thoughts about "Kumbh Mela". Mark Tully has written a lot about India and mostly about its social, political and social aspects. Tully describes and focuses about the cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims. Every year several million people make the pilgrimage to Allahabad to perform that ritual at a gathering called a Mela. Every 12 years, when the alignment of the stars is considered particularly auspicious, the gathering is an order of magnitude larger, and a giant tent city rises out of the Ganges floodplain to host the Maha Kumbh Mela, or Kumbh. Kumbh Mela lasts nearly two months and is considered to be an especially auspicious time to bathe in the holy river for purification from sin. The Maha Kumbh Mela is reportedly the world's largest gathering of people. Around there are number of devotees swarming Allahabad's banks is between 70 and 100 million. During the six-week festival, pilgrims press to take a holy dip in the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati, the mythical rivers. The water is believed to wash away all the sins and offer relief from the cycle of rebirth. Millions of people gather at one place and more than eight hundred religious organizations take part in it. There are lakhs of colorful holy men, naked sadhus and saints, fakirs and blind believers. Mark Tully came across many sadhus and 'babas' during his visit to Kumbh Mela in 1989, one of them, according to people was 300 years old and he was an ageless person.

He explores that according to Hindus, the mother India or Bharat Mata only belongs to Hindus as for Hindus, India is the land of Lord Ram and they are even ready to sacrifice their lives for Lord and they just want Muslims to go away but because of the strict rules and political benefits of the government, the prominent political parties have to compromise to void communal rights. It is important to note that many Hindus consider the Kumbh Mela

sites to be the most favoured places at which to die, and ritual suicide, though discouraged by the government, it is still practiced. Sadly, there were plenty of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims. Some where there are low level conflicts and riots, some civil wars and some all out of wars. Usually these were for destroying or desecrating some temple or sacred site, disturbing a religious procession like there is this issue of regarding temple in Ayodhya, where God Lord Ram was born. The Mughals built a mosque there and it is clear they did so by destroying a Hindu temple just because there are Hindu Images or columns inside the Mosque. According to Hindus, Ram is under house arrest and for the government it can be a very serious political issue, so to avoid communal riots, government has suggested compromises which could defuse the issues. There is nothing that Hindus respect more than austerity in others, no matter how much difficulty they may find in practicing it themselves. According to the people, Muslims in India are the minority class so every time majority class that is Hindus have to compromise to avoid political n communal riots. For them Muslims stole their land, Pakistan belongs to Muslims and Hindustan for the Hindus.

According to Muslims on the other side have this opinion that Hindus have this perspective that India is part of the global anti-Islam phenomenon. Other religions think that if Islam took centre stage then they will be neglected and sidelined. They fear from Islamic system that is based on the laws of Almighty which is all justice and equality. In Islam, serving humanity is the greatest serving to God. Islam encourages humanitarian works; it has a complete system of charity and philanthropic activities and Kumbh Mela is the best place for serving humanity.

Despite having people who believe in the Hindu mythology as the majority of this nation, India has successfully managed to accommodate with other religious beliefs of Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, etc. Whatever be the reasons, people of all the communities should respect and accept each other's beliefs and laws but not on superstitions .A belief in the theories about who created this universe and who governs our lives is actually used a medium to blend with each other. Indians who are Muslims, have grown upon in a wonderful place which taught them to accept people with different identities. Indians who are Hindus, have also grown upon in a wonderful place which taught them to accept people with different identities. Both Hindus and Muslims just need to be open minded and open hearted. Having peace between them and respect for each other won't be easy with fresh memories from past influences and attacks but with a little humanity, patience and time, it can be done. Holding a grudge is very easy, forgiving is tough but it is the right thing to do. They should learn to live and let live. They should treat others firstly as humans, and perhaps also as

creations of their God. However, this work by Mark Tully portrays a different side of India's cultural diversity and how still after so many years of independence, people of India still live in the cage of blind superstitions and beliefs. This work is really appealing as it is convincing and realistic about the beliefs and portrayal of religious India. One who has never been to Kumbh Mela can be remarkably benefitted by portrayal.

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