

Ambedkar on Muslims

(Myths and Facts)

By

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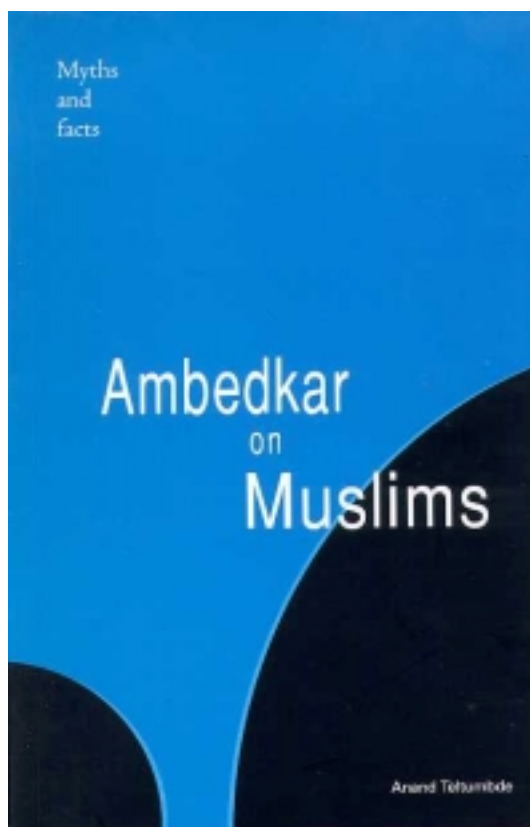
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This book is written in the backdrop of the recent controversy created by certain statements of Mr. Vinay Katiyar, the President of BJP, Uttar Pradesh claiming that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had called Muslims terrorist, that he was anti-Muslims, that Hindus and Muslims could never live together etc. The manner in which he responded to certain rejoinders that appeared in Press could create an impression in the minds of majority of people that what Mr. Katiyar was claiming was true. He was seemingly referring to a book – ‘Pakistan or Partition of India’ authored by Dr. Ambedkar in 1940 on the contemporary problem that had seized the imagination of the entire country. The book was so exhaustive and objective

in its treatment of the problem that soon it was used as an authentic resource by both, Hindus as well as Muslims in their pre-independence parleys. None could ever accuse it of any bias for or against any community. Such a book was being used by Mr. Katiyar to tarnish the image of Ambedkar by painting him so petty as to be against Muslims. It was not only an issue of hurting the sentiments of entire Dalit community for whom Ambedkar is a God, but it was also an affront to all those who considered Ambedkar as an icon for liberal democracy.

The book does not entirely concern with the Katiyar controversy, however. It is not the first time that such a canard against Ambedkar is fabricated and issued from the Sangh Pariwar. In their endeavor to co-opt Ambedkar, they have painted him in as deep saffron as they could. He was mutated to fit in their communal agenda. He who vociferously discarded Hinduism was made out to be the greatest benefactor of the Hindus, he who envisioned human destiny in terms of liberty, equality and fraternity was made out to be petty nationalist. These and many such myths about Ambedkar are causing considerable damage to the democratic fabric of our republic. As for Dalits, the Sangh Pariwar largely succeeded in wooing the self-seeking Dalit elites into its fold but now it is eyeing the Dalit-masses to be its foot soldiers. Controversy around Ambedkar, whether in deifying him as '*Ptatah Smaraniya*' or maligning him as 'false god' is thus linked to this larger agenda of demolishing emancipation project of Dalits and secular democratic fabric of Indian Republic.

The importance of this small book lies in effectively nail these lies. It has adopted a direct 'Myth & Facts' format to do the job. It deals with 11 myths that were selected through a brain storming process, largely concerning the Muslim community and covering the entire familiar canard against Dr. Ambedkar. These myths are: 1. Ambedkar was against the Muslims, 2. Ambedkar called Muslims terrorists, 3. Ambedkar believed in two-nation theory, 4. Ambedkar believed in cultural nationalism, 5. Ambedkar considered Muslims as vandals, 6. Ambedkar's 'Pakistan or Partition of India' is an anti-Muslim text, 7. Ambedkar thought Muslims always sang hymn of hate for Hindu and India, 8. Ambedkar believed that Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully, 9. Ambedkar detested Muslims as Anti-Reform, 10. Ambedkar was on the side of the Hindus, and 11. Ambedkar was a nationalist. These myth blasting are enveloped in an illuminating Introduction that sets the context for the text and Concluding Remarks which tries to restore true radical Ambedkar as an icon for the ensuing struggle against fascist programme of the Sangh Pariwar.

The author is a well known scholar-activist of Dalit and Human Rights movements who has carved out an image for himself as a radical interpreter of Dr. Ambedkar and his work. He has competently handled the task at hand in presenting the arguments buttressed by exhaustive quotations from the original sources as to make them iron clad and impregnable. The book was test-read by many activists and scholars, all of whom praised it for its lucidity, conciseness and scholarly precision. The book is an important aid to all the scholars who are

interested in Dalit movement, Ambedkar-thought, Hindutva-movement and a must to all activists working in people-oriented movements.