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Topic of Research: Impact of Saudi Salafism on Religious Institutions in Bihar

Findings

This study highlights that Saudi-influenced Salafism has penetrated the Muslim demography in the state not as a single, unilateral phenomenon either through social remittances or through the international preaching of the Salafism from Gulf countries but as a transnational religious current having its impact on multiple fronts and that is constantly negotiated within local institutional settings. Rather than replacing Bihar's existing Islamic traditions, Salafism has interacted with Deobandi, Barelvi and Sufi orientations, producing both contestation and selective adaptation. Below are some of the key findings that have come out of this research work

It has been found through the research that Saudi Salafism's presence in Bihar is multidimensional especially Gulf migration, religious scholarships. Social remittances from Gulf in general and Saudi Arabia in particular serves as a reforming agent in respect to new religious ideas and practices. The remittance incurred socially doesn't have the sole capital of personal piety, but it also tries to renegotiate the religious authority, educational curriculum choices and selective adaptation of the religious rituals

Another key finding is the transformation of religious marketplace Salafism has caused among the Muslims of Bihar. As per their literalist inclination many religious institutions like mosques and madrasas have also adopted architectural styles, revised sermon as per their literalist inclination. Madrasas have adopted a very particular practices increasingly prioritize Arabic, Quranic exegesis and other educational approaches like Hadith based instructions where the Salafi approach differs significantly from the dominant centrality of South Asian texts linked to Hanafi jurisprudence.

Another important find is that Salafism has intensified the debate between the various strands of Muslims in the state like Deobandis, Barelvis, Sufi etc... They are challenged by the Salafi thoughts in matters of their certain practices like shrine devotion, mawlid, urs and other long standing religious practices. The centrality of these debates lies in the fact that these debates are not merely theological, but they are also an intra Muslim struggle for legitimacy, leadership and representation of authentic form of Islam. The debates have at times turned into violent conflicts both verbally and non-verbally.

Along with the influence caused by Salafism it is also categorized as a movement not merely imposed from outside, but it is also showing the impact of Glocalization a term used in the Sociology of

Religions by the contemporary theorists like Roland Robertson where the global religious doctrines have been adapted by and modified as per the local context. In the state of Bihar, we see agents of Salafi propagations using Urdu and other local languages along with softening stand on certain religious practices to attract followers and it has resulted in the increased adherent of Salafi teachings. This also highlights that even a rigid literalist movement needs to adapt to local circumstances for their sustenance.

Finally, the study points that Salafism has contributed in bringing doctrinal changes among the Muslims in Bihar however the impact is not totalizing and the existing religious institutions in the state has participated in the confrontation on theological, ideological and last but not the least sociological level.
