



## DOMINATION OF BRAHMINS IN VIZHINJAM

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### ABSTRACT

Like that of other parts of Kerala and India, Brahmins came to Vizhinjam near Thiruvananthapuram and established their hegemony over the land and the people. History has witnessed forceful invasion, violence and consequent domination over the society. But Brahmins were peaceful people who came to this area with out arms and ammunition. But after centuries things turned upside down in Vizhinjam. The people who came to this area with the belief in God and chanting of Vedic hymns became the masters of the land. This domination of the land and the people did not happen overnight but it happened as a result of well conceived strategies. Here the colour of the skin, monopoly of education, abstention from manual labour, Brain-to-Brain transfer of acquired knowledge, cleaver use of fear of God, brainwashing of the people with the so called divine revelation, sharing of knowledge with the elites for money, land and positions, and last the fabrication of myths and legends to suit their purpose played a prominent role in subduing a society to a position of subordination. This article is an attempt to understand the strategies and methods adopted by the Brahmins to get domination of the land.

### KEY WORDS

Vizhinjam, Domination, Aryans, Vedas, Monopolisation, Brain- to -Brain.

### INTRODUCTION

Vizhinjam is a land located twelve Kilometers away from Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala. Like that of other parts of Kerala it was Negrito race who came and settled here first time. But later the Mediterranean and Proto-Astraloid people came here and pushed the Negrito race to the fringe areas. The Dravidians people of the present time are the representatives of the Mediterranean and Proto-Astraloid people. They produced kings and other occupational groups of the land and dominated in all aspects of the life of Vizhinjam. Due to their activities Vizhinjam became one of the emporiums of trade in South Kerala. Foreign traders flocked here from different parts of the world and exchanged goods with the native people. This resulted in the flow of wealth from different parts of the world and the affluence of the place increased. Different foreign visitors had noticed this place and they include Ptolemy and Pliny. They called it Balita. The economic wealth brought by affluent foreign trade invited people from different parts of south India and they started settling in this place. There were classes among these people who had engaged in different professions. But no profession was considered superior or inferior and no class was considered as elite. Even though the society was not egalitarian, it was not hierarchically arranged. But this condition began to change after the period of Sangam age which fell in the fifth century AD. One of the important features of the Post-Sangam age was the slow migration of the Brahmins from Northern part of Kerala. They came in different waves like that of other parts of India including Kerala. The

Malyali Brahmins were known as Namboothiris. They came here with no lethal weapons. No war was fought, no violence was engaged but the Aryans had subordinated the Negro, Meditaranians and Proto Astraloid people who came in Vizhinjam at an earlier time.

History has witnessed the subordination of the people and land with weapon and war but without these how the Brahmins had dominated the land is a interesting question and this subordination of the land and the people lasted till the arrival of the European people.

There are a number of theories regarding the original home land of the Aryans. It is generally accepted theory that Aryans migrated from Steps that is the land which lays in the Southern part of Russia. As the temperature in this place is lower than the tropical climatic region of India, the people who live there are white people and when they migrated and reached here they found here black or brown coloured people who are living in the tropical region for a long time. They devised caste or Varna system to protect their purity. The condition which existed in Vizhinjam was also the same when they came here they were admired and adorned with respect as they have white skin. Because, from time immemorial white skin is associated with beauty and hygiene. So these white coloured people were looked with respect and admiration by the natives who were black or brown coloured. This created the first division among them and injected a sense of inferiority in the minds of the natives and some sort of superiority consciousness in the minds of the Brahmins.

The people of Vizhinjam had no strong religious belief system at that time. They had inherited a number of ways of worship of their ancestors and God but it was not very strong belief system like that of Semitic religions which prescribe one God and one way of worship. They had liberal way of worship of God which was ready to accommodate any other forms of God and religions. The people believed that God is one and all the paths are leading to the same destination and they did not take an antagonistic position as we see in the case of the hostilities of Abrahamic religions. So they had easily accepted the way of worship of the Brahmins without any hostility. So this also provided an easy way of acceptance of Brahmins in the society. In turn the Brahmins also did not try to intrude upon the religious faith of the natives and sometimes they had assimilated some of the good aspect of Dravidin religion and even the Dravidian gods got an accepted place in the Brahmanic scheme of things. The same thing happened among the Dravidians of the place they also accepted Brahminic Gods and religion and even emulated the worship of the Brahmins and started worshipping Aryan Gods. So this mutual acceptance of each others religion without trying to violently uproot the existing beliefs of the Dravidians of this area also increased the respect of Brahmins among the Dravidians of Vizhinjam. But this policy of tolerance did not last for a long time. After some time when they got acceptance in the society they isolated from the society and the downtrodden Dravidians and took a highly reactionary position against them. But here also the killing spree of the non- believers practiced by Semitic religions were completely absent among Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

A life dedicated to religion and God also helped the Brahmins in several ways. The incoming Aryan society was divided into several professional groups and the Brahmins were the people who dedicated their life to religion and Education.

Belief in God and religion elevated their minds from the world of flesh to a higher level of consciousness and wisdom. This spiritual elevation helped them to lead a much more refined and civilized life than the Dravidian people who were leading a life of superstition. A life dedicated to religion helped them to lead a much more balanced life combining material and spiritual aspects of life and move above the social scale.

The educational system brought by the Brahmins was also superior to the natives of Vizhinjam. The Brahmins had formally or informally created an educational system. This educational system included the study of Vedas, Upanishads, Vedangas and a number of other things. First of all it was purely religious in nature but later this education included secular subjects also. They studied about the movement of the stars and planets, seasons, agriculture and other things which are very much essential for the worldly existence of human being. This study of religious and secular subjects gave them enlightenment of the soul and prosperity to the material world, which the Dravidian brothers were lacking. So they had got a definite edge over the natives of Vizhinjam. More over this education was monopolistic in nature also. Through the Chaturvarna doctrine they created a belief in the minds of the people that the four Varnas were created by God and Brahmins alone had the right to education and a way of religion. So the right of education was confined to them and consequent enlightenment. The other Dravidian section of the population who formed the majority of the population did not have the avenue for education, thinking and enlightenment. More over their religious literature did not contain knowledge regarding the otherworldly things alone but it had definitely dealt with a number of worldly things and secular affairs. It contained the knowledge of Agriculture, movement of the planets and stars, seasons plants, medicine, astronomy, astrology, art music, architecture etc. Due to this superior spiritual and material knowledge they were very much demanded by the rulers, landlords and other elite section of the society. So this monopolistic education and knowledge also played a prominent role in taking them to the apex of the society and keeping them there.

Monopoly of education was followed by abstention from physical labour. They had concentrated on intellectual labour alone. Humanity made progress only through conscious study of the world and phenomenon around us. This study is not perfect at any point of time. It is a continuing and is an unending process. It was this conscious study and it's application to solve and satisfy man's needs which has taken human beings from Barbarism to civilization. History has proved that the societies and nations who consciously promote this education will emerge as masters of their time. In Vizhinjam and other parts of India Brahmins alone have the right of education and the available leisure time motivated them to invest further in the seeking of knowledge. After getting education what an ordinary Brahmins did was to engage in the creative pursuit in different aspects of knowledge and research. So this monopolistic education combined with exploration of knowledge definitely gave them an upper hand in the society and the Rulers, administrators, rich man all need this expertise for their spiritual and material well being. This elite section of society relied on the Brahmins and the Brahmins used this friendship for their own benefit and enhanced their position in the society.

Monopoly of education was followed by the safe transfer of education and knowledge in a very confident manner through Brain- to- Brain Method through Mouth and Ear. History knows people who had preserved education and knowledge through language and in written form. But the Brahmins had taken special care to see that the knowledge was not preserved in written form. It might have come from their fear that the outcastes may steal it and the Brahmins may lose their knowledge monopoly. More over the Brain- to -Brain Method and consequent storing of this knowledge in Brain than in books, sharpened their brains to unimaginable level and helped them to contribute in all creative fields of human life. More over this razor sharp intellect was used in a fair and foul means to dominate the society, exploit the fellow Dravidian brothers, and to lead a life ease and comfort. So this Monopolization of Education and Brain-to-Brain transfer of knowledge Through Mouth and Ear also helped them to preserve their edge over other communities and their domination in the society.

Through out history God is a silent actor but human beings acted as the mouth for saying the whims and fancies of god in the name of prophecies. Humanists like Christ and Buddha used this intermediary role between God and man to pronounce the noblest doctrines to wipe out the tears of the human beings. But all these prophecies and revelation of this intermediary middle men always did not come from a noble and humanist heart. There were people in history who used the intermediary status for their own selfish pursuits. Hinduism is a classic example of how the so called 'words of God' can be distorted to satisfy the selfish ends of a few people. Nobody know definitely the mind of God but in the name of divine will the priests of Hinduism taught very strange doctrines which are mainly meant to satisfy the selfish ends. In the name of God they preached Chaturvarna, untouchability, unseeability and unapproachability in Vizhinjam and they made the unfortunate people of Vizhinjam to believe that these social evils were divinely ordained. As nobody knows the mind of God the unfortunate people believed that all these things are the will of God, revealed through the Brahmin priests and nobody had the right or might to question these evils spread in the name of God through Brahmanic religion. And the unfortunate people believed in these false prophecies because of fear. The fear of God which is the basis of religion did not allow them to question these wrongs spread in the name of God and religion in Vizhinjam. The Hindu priests cleverly utilized the fear factor to inject their selfish ideas into the minds of the people and to keep them away. The law of Karma and innumerable tenants of Hindu religion were distorted to suit their selfish ends. The people were taught that they were suffering because of the evil deeds that they had committed in the previous birth. In other parts of the world when Buddhism and Christianity did noble, humanist and virtuous things in the name religion the opposite things happened here. The innocent people also believed in these distorted theories. They also convinced the ruling classes that they were the chosen people on earth, sometimes God themselves and respecting them, favouring them and acting in accordance with the whims and fancies will bring blessings and boon to the ruling classes. They also convinced that the religious practices like Yagas and rituals will bring credit to the patrons. In that way they had brain washed the ordinary people and the elite in the locality. So they got exemption from punishments, taxes,

monopoly of education, cushy jobs, and respectable position in the society. This enabled them to control the society from above.

Before the arrival of the Brahmins the society of Vizhinjam did not have any caste system though there are different professions. The people were not hierarchically arranged based on caste status. In the society of Vizhinjam there were haves and havenotes.. The land of Vizhinjam was in the hands of a community called Nairs and they were the rulers and elites of the society. The Brahmins came here made friendship with this class and captured their minds through fair and foul means. The Brahmins had impressed them with their superior knowledge, and distinct religion. The Nairs were said that they are the fighter class of the land and so different from the other Dravidians. They were placed just below the Brahmins in the caste hierarchy and they were taught that the other fellow Dravidins of the locality were inferior caste. As a result of this brainwashing the Nairs broke their relation from their fellow brothers and joined hands with the Brahmins. From this time onwards the Nairs became the executing arms of the Brahmins in Vizhinjam. The subordination, suppression, exploitation, and other social injustices were committed by this unholy nexus between the Brahmins and Nairs. To cement this relation they brought into existence social institutions like Sambandham. According to this practice the Brahmin male had temporary sexual relation with Nair women especially in the cover of night. Consequently, Nairs emerged as the biggest protectors of Chaturvarna system in Vizhinjam. In that way the friendship with the landed Dravidian class of Vizhinjam .i.e. Nairs helped them to establish their hegemony in the land of Vizhinjam.

The superior knowledge of the Brahmins earned through monopolisation of education and its safe transmission to the next generation definitely gave them an edge over others and they became a distinct class by themselves. Their intellectual brilliance astonished the ruling class of Vizhinjam and consequently they were appointed as ministers, advisors, civil servants etc. In lieu of their service they were not given cash salaries instead they were given land. Some times the land may be cultivable land, forest land or barren land. So, huge area of land was brought under the control of the Brahmins. Here they were sometimes superimposed on the Nair landlord. The Brahmins had to use the service of Nairs as supervisors of the land and the Nairs in turn used the physical labour of the scheduled caste population of Vizhinjam commonly called Pulayas. So the Brahmin landlords were imposed from above. Below them came the Nair supervisors and at the bottom of this pyramid came the Pulaya cultivators. Huge amount of land was given to the Brahmins in lieu of salary. Apart from this they were officiating in the temples as priests. To maintain the priests, the rulers used to give land grants known as Brahmaswam, which were tax free lands. In this way also they have got enormous areas of land. In most of the cases the Brahmins did not know where their lands were lying. It was Nairs who acted as faithful supervisors and they have got it cultivated with the help of Pulaya cultivators and at last surrendered the yield before the Brahmins. These type of land grants also played a prominent role in making Brahmin landlords in this area. The natives especially Pulayas were degraded into landless labourers and serfs.

More over the Brahmins created fanciful stories like one which can be found in 'Keralolpathi'. Keralolpathi is a text which was written in the twelfth century. In this text there is a story that Kerala was created by Parasurama, who was a Brahmin

after throwing his axe from one end of Kerala to another. The water in the oceans receded from this portion of the fall of the axe. In this way the emerged land was called Kerala. After that incident Parasurama distributed the land to Brahmanas. It is generally believed that Keralopathi was written in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. But Kerala came into existence centuries before that so it is proved that the story narrated in Keralolpathi is a false one. But the Brahmins believed that it is right and convinced the rulers about this theory and got enormous amount of land as gift, as land was given to them by the creator of Kerala named- Parasurama. In this way the Brahmins who migrated from other parts of Kerala became the landlords of Vizhinjam area by bringing under their control enormous area of land.

### **COCLUSION**

In this manner Brahmins became the pivots of Vizhinjam society especially after the 12<sup>th</sup> century. History knows about violent and sudden invasion from other areas and the domination of the land and the people. But the migration and the subsequent domination of the Brahmins was a slow process which lasted for centuries. It was after the period of Sangam age especially after the fifth century that Brahmins started coming to Vizhinjam area. At that time land, power, money were with the so called outcastes, they had self-esteem, they contributed to culture, and they were the masters of the land. But when it came to the twelfth century, they lost their land to Brahmins and power was usurped by the Brahmin-Nair nexus. The Pulayas of the land were transformed into serfs or slaves with no dignity and rights of life. Social life was split up into watertight compartments and hierarchical caste with every one group saying that 'I am greater than you and I am dearer to God than you'. Religion was used to practice the most inhuman things of untouchability, unapproachability and even unseeability of the sons and daughters of God. In short the arrival of Brahmins here made things upside down and it was surely a perverted social revolution in the land of Vizhinjam.

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