

# **Brahminism continues in Hindi media till today, the fascination of the golden ethnic past is drooling**

**Mrinal Pandey's book explains the history of Hindi media along with its politics, economics and sociology, explains the reason for its downfall at the time of climax.**

**Yogendra Yadav**

Where have we come? The moment which could have been a time for Hindi journalism to rise to the sky, why did Hindi journalism end up in the abyss?

I was at Aaj Tak — founded by standards of journalism and my elder brother Surendra Pratap Singh, fondly called 'SP'. Came on this channel after a long time. I am often invited to speak on this channel's English twin 'India Today', but, there must be some reason why I have not been called on 'Aaj Tak' these days, neither on the topic of my previous birth elections nor on that Only on the farmer's movement in which I had a direct participation. Someone told that there is a hint from above to Hindi channels, but, now what is the truth in this — Ram only knows!

That show of 'Aaj Tak' was on Karnataka elections. The script of the channel was very clear: Congress has won the election by playing the OBC card which divides the society. The haste in which Rahul Gandhi gave his support to the caste census proves the same thing. The channel's script did not hide the unspoken message: BJP lost not because of its weaknesses and corruption, but because of the dirty politics of caste, which is part of a vicious mindset that culminated in the demand for a nationwide caste census. is going to happen. In order to paint a clear picture of the decline of politics, the anchor thought it necessary to remind the audience that there was a time in the country when 13 of the 20 Chief Ministers and a quarter of the Lok Sabha MPs were Brahmins. There is no 'but-but' in front of it, no hesitation or hesitation! The fascination of the golden past was drooling in front of the audience without any wrap, a living example of what Suraj Yengde describes as the ideology of 'Brahmin superiority'.

## **Like there is a shower of mud...**

Now the image of 'SP' was revolving in my mind. Born in a Rajput family of eastern Uttar Pradesh and brought up in Kolkata, 'SP' used to keep a close eye on issues related to caste injustice and used to avoid any reporter who used insensitive or careless language in the news related to social justice. I am a witness to how he created a fabric of social diversity in the newsroom in the early days of Aaj Tak.

Obviously, I was upset to see this form of 'Aaj Tak'. Nevertheless, when I turned to the anchor's questions, I acted with restraint and mainly said four things in response. Firstly, the political dominance of 3 percent of the population is not something to be proud of. This should be a matter of concern for any civilized

society. Secondly, Aaj Tak's own accurate exit poll clearly disproves the belief that there was a massive mobilization of the OBC community behind the Congress in this Karnataka election as compared to the last time. Thirdly, BJP like other political parties also practices caste politics, BJP has caste-based most loyal but invisible vote-bank of Dwij or forward castes. Fourthly, if the opposition is demanding a caste census, then there is nothing new in it because the BJP had supported the caste census in Parliament in 2010 and in the year 2018, the then Home Minister Rajnath Singh had also promised OBC census. It was good that I was given full time to say my part. After the show was over, I put my own video of the channel on Twitter taking a jibe at Aaj Tak's Brahmin-infatuation. Obviously, I did not write a single word about the anchor in my tweet, anyway I know very little about him.

That's all, then the sewer of mud opened. The anchor's response was what is described in logic textbooks as an 'ad hominem' fallacy, when a personal attack is made rather than a counter-argument. In the matter of facts and arguments, I could not say anything to the anchor, but in response, he started the work of distributing my horoscope in such a way that there was no way left to talk to my mother and sister. I was labeled as frustrated, opportunistic, bigoted and (yes, you guessed it) a traitor to the country. Two years ago, India Today Group fired Shyam Meera Singh because of the group's social media policy that employees limit their posts to news only and not use profanity. Perhaps this guideline would have been limited to save the Prime Minister.

In no time, my tweet turned into a game of 'Whoever wants to come and whatever they want to hear'. Under the leadership of Dilip Mandal ji, the fighters of social justice entered the field, who used to be angry with me sometimes. The channel and the anchor were cursed by name, it was rightly said that all of them are in favor of Brahminical supremacy, but some people also made personal and indecent remarks about the anchor. On the other hand, I was called a Brahmin-hater (while I did not say a word against Brahmins), the 'Yadav' clan was cursed (how is it allowed to abuse any caste in public?) and when nothing else came to my mind. Abominable comments (including 'journalists' were involved in this meanness!) were made on me and on my parents who passed away because of my childhood name. I tried to reply but soon realized that there was no point in indulging in this mud play.

### **a book written on hindi journalism**

In the midst of all this, a question was troubling my mind: Why is Hindi-journalism, especially television journalism of Hindi news, in such a pit? Had SP been there, I would have asked this question to him only because most of the trainee journalists of his group have reached the post of Channel Head, but alas! That SP left early, at that time when 'Aaj Tak' could not take the form of a full channel.

To find the answer to my question, I picked up a recent book by Mrinal Pandey. Mrinal Pandey is one of the few remaining members of a small and fast-shrinking clan of respected Hindi editors, who also has the credit of being the first woman editor of any major Hindi newspaper (Hindustan Dainik). Mrinal ji's book titled "The Journey of Hindi Language Journalism in India: From Raj to Swaraj and Beyond" is a beautiful sample of a research study made of an interesting combination of personal anecdotes, socio-scientific research and archival history, in which Hindi the story has been told from the early days of journalism to the dominance of news television and the rise of digital media. This is not a book narrating the sad story of first uplift and then downfall, but a glorification of the continuous progress of Hindi media. Mrinal ji has recorded the lives of those Hindi language journalists who fought against the English-rule, faced economic difficulties and suffered the slavery of English in their own office and while walking this difficult path of hardships, they spread Hindi media. - Turned into a tremendous venture in terms of numbers, reach area and profits. This book tells how Hindi media defied the global trend of decline in print-journalism, how it left English journalism far behind in the race and finally reached the position of power it deserves.

But this story told in the book deepened my question even more. When an enterprise booms, as happened in the Hindi media, you can assume that the professional standards associated with that enterprise must have also improved. Mrinal ji's book tells how the industry of news kept getting better and better due to the change in information technology, how from the appearance of newspapers to the size and style of printing and advertisement, there was improvement, but, why did the journalistic standards related to news and opinion (opinion) get eroded? Of course, Hindi journalism is no exception in this matter. The story of English journalism and English language journalists is also no different from this and to be honest, there has been a decline in the quality of media even outside India, even though this decline is not as much as in India.

Mrinal Pandey's book was not written to answer my questions, but the author does not hesitate to point out the decline in the world of Hindi journalism such as the rise of sensationalism and the trend of "feudalization of the public sphere".. The word 'Lokvrit' is used in Hindi for 'Public Sphere', the original concept is of German-thinker Jürgen Habermas. From Mrinal ji's book, three sources were found to understand the deplorable state of Hindi media, especially Hindi television journalism-politics, economics and sociology.

### **Television news-world: Domination of forward castes**

The first and most obvious reason is the role of politics. Although Hindi media has always been close to political power, but after the year 2014, a new regime of 'censorship and self-censorship' has been seen. The media blesses the Nizam government with rewards and facilities for worshipping the Nizam government, but if someone raises questions on the government's line of understanding, he is cursed, efforts are made to seal his mouth.

Another big reason is the economics of the media. Actually, there is no such way that media as a business can earn decent amount of money and also keep itself independent. Without going into the formal debates of political economy, the book describes how America's old masters were replaced by a new generation of educated people, how editors were replaced by managers, how reliable news was replaced by cheap news. Grabbed and how 'Paisa Do-News Banao' i.e., the phenomenon of paid news went on becoming an everyday thing.

The last thing in this series is that the book also explains the sociology of Hindi newsroom. Mrinal ji has pointed out that the interference of women in the newsroom is very less. However, 'the television world of news has proved to be a little better in giving space and opportunities to women because it was believed that the audience would like to see young and beautiful faces as anchors.'

I am glad that Mrinal ji has also looked into the issue of caste structure of Hindi newsrooms. It is not hidden that the Hindi media, especially the Hindi television media, is a bastion of upper caste Hindus, most of whom are Brahmins. In this matter Hindi media is worse than English language media. It is obvious that the reduction in the number of Brahmins holding power in newsrooms with such a social structure becomes a natural matter of concern, touching a sore ethnic chord.

Commenting on this whole incident on Aaj Tak, media critic Urmillesh said that he was not surprised at what happened to me. In his words "It is a special kind of Mediapuram! There is even more 'Hindu Upper Cast Affair' in the world of TV channels!" According to him, since 2019, "the operators and executives of the channels have further strengthened the 'Varnashrami supremacy and its ideological militancy' in their respective institutions". He also challenges: "If anyone doubts what I am saying, they should conduct a survey of the social background of people working in TVpuram, especially those in its decision-making positions, or ask such institutions themselves to make this data public. tell to". After listening to him, a desire arose that someone should disclose the caste background of the journalists and managers of 'Aaj Tak', but I do not think that I will be called soon to give this information.