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Bharat as a civilization and its consciousness

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Abstract:

“India that is Bharat” Written by J. Sai Deepak, a mechanical engineering graduate from Anna University, who completed his bachelor's degree in law at IIT Kharagpur's Law School in 2009. He has established himself as a skilled litigator specializing in civil, commercial, and constitutional cases. In his thought-provoking and meticulously crafted book, J. Sai Deepak undertakes a profound exploration into the enduring ramifications of Europe's colonial consciousness and the persistent mindset that continues to shape perspectives even in the post-independence era. With a discerning and analytical approach, Sai meticulously dissects the nuanced meanings inherent in the terms Colonialism, Coloniality, and Decoloniality, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics that underlie these concepts. His narrative unfolds as a narrative tapestry, revealing how Europeans, historically driven by a sense of superiority, have engaged with and interpreted global phenomena through a distinct lens. Sai artfully illustrates how this Eurocentric perspective has, over time, permeated the conceptualization of fundamental notions such as "modernity" and "rationality," thereby casting a biased light on Indic social and religious institutions. He skillfully argues that these distortions, forming what he terms the "dark legacy" of European colonialism, persistently influence our understanding of history, contributing to a nuanced and often overlooked narrative of historical influence that warrants thoughtful consideration.

Keywords:

Consciousness, Bharat, comprehensive approach, interconnectedness, accomplishments

The author employs a meticulous and comprehensive approach in presenting his historical analysis, skillfully dividing it into three distinct sections that serve as the cornerstone of his narrative. These designated sections, namely Section I: Coloniality, Section II: Civilisation, and Section III: Constitution, are not just organizational divisions but intricate layers that contribute to the depth of his exploration. Through careful examination, the author systematically establishes historical interlinkages that intricately weave through these sections, creating a cohesive tapestry of historical understanding. Each section unfolds as a crucial chapter, adding layers of insight to the broader narrative. This deliberate structure not only enhances the overall clarity of the historical analysis but also facilitates a nuanced exploration of the dynamic interrelationships between colonial influences, civilizational trajectories, and constitutional developments. In adopting this thoughtful approach, the author not only enriches the reader's engagement with the material but also provides a thorough and insightful examination of the complex historical forces at play. Bharat, steeped in the grandeur of its ancient civilization, unfolds a historical narrative that predates many contemporaneous civilizations worldwide. This distinctive backdrop serves as the canvas upon which Bharat reached its civilizational zenith, forging a path of intellectual, spiritual, and cultural prosperity that resonated globally. The narrative of Bharat's achievements encompasses a rich tapestry of religious exploration and innovative processes, meticulously recorded and celebrated across diverse disciplines. From the realms of Philosophy to the precision of Mathematics, the celestial insights of Astronomy, the profound wisdom of Astrology, the agrarian prowess of Agronomy, the holistic healing principles of Ayurveda, and the economic acumen displayed, Bharat emerged as a reservoir of knowledge and enlightenment. Central to this narrative is the profound impact of Sanathana Dharma, an ancient philosophy that not only encapsulated the essence of harmonious coexistence with nature but also delved into the profound understanding of life's utility and futility on this earthly plane. The holistic achievements of Bharat's Indic Civilization, marked by a synthesis of scientific, spiritual, and societal advancements, acted as a magnetic force on the global stage.

Even before many other nations embarked on their respective journeys of civilizational development, Bharat had already carved out an indelible legacy. In the grand tapestry of world civilizations, the Indic Civilization stands as a beacon of enlightenment, showcasing not just technological or scientific prowess but a holistic way of life. The comparative analysis of Bharat's achievements with those of other civilizations reveals a unique synthesis of ancient wisdom and progressive thinking. While other civilizations may have excelled in specific domains, the multifaceted accomplishments of Bharat in areas ranging from metaphysics to applied sciences create a distinctive narrative. What sets Bharat apart is not just its accomplishments but the interconnectedness of its achievements across various disciplines. The profundity of its philosophical thought coexists seamlessly with advancements in mathematics and scientific fields, creating a comprehensive worldview that transcends compartmentalized knowledge. This interconnectedness is reflected in the magnetism of Bharat's civilization, which attracted distant countries from around the world, fostering trade and educational relationships. As we delve into the annals of history, it becomes evident that Bharat's civilizational grandeur was not merely a historical relic but a living legacy that continues to influence the contemporary world. The echoes of its achievements resonate in the intellectual pursuits, spiritual insights, and societal principles that have enduring relevance. The Indic Civilization serves as a testament to the enduring power of holistic knowledge, embodying a timeless wisdom that transcends the boundaries of time and continues to inspire the global community. The systemic neglect of Bharat's consciousness, as elucidated by J. Sai in his book, underscores the pervasive impact of coloniality on the present mindset. Despite the self-professed commitment to challenging colonial hegemony over time and subjectivity, postcolonial thought in Bharat remains entangled with colonial perspectives, particularly in its characterization of the 'subaltern' influenced by assumptions rooted in the native society's structures, notably the 'caste system.' The collaboration between postcolonial and Marxist schools in Bharat further complicates this dynamic, as both inadvertently perpetuate European and Middle Eastern colonialities, fragmenting the awareness within the indigenous mindset or assimilating it. Notably, Marx's Eurocentrism is evident in his belief that British colonialism served a dual purpose in India, involving the destruction of traditional Asian society and the establishment of Western

society's material foundations in Asia. Despite Marx's awareness of the selfish nature of British colonization, his endorsement of it as an "unconscious tool of history" reflects a paradoxical stance. This Marxist perspective on colonialism is entrenched in Bharat, as contemporary colonized elites echo the view that European colonialism was beneficial for the country, citing examples such as the development brought about by the establishment of the railway network. The fundamental presumption here aligns with the Marxist school, suggesting that without British colonialism, Bharat would have remained unfamiliar with scientific temper, progress, and development. In this regard, Unintentionally, Marxism shares the Eurocentric view that reason is a universal concept but that science is the exclusive domain of the West. This intricate web of colonial influences has deeply shaped Bharat's intellectual landscape, reflecting a continuous struggle to disentangle from historical imprints and forge an authentic postcolonial identity.

The challenge lies in navigating the nuances of indigenous consciousness, acknowledging the impact of external ideologies, and fostering a nuanced understanding of postcolonial discourse that transcends the inherited colonial baggage. As Bharat grapples with the complexities of its past, it becomes imperative to critically engage with these historical narratives, recognizing the interplay between indigenous perspectives and external frameworks. The call is for a decolonization of thought that goes beyond mere rhetoric, acknowledging the inherent contradictions within postcolonial discourse and working towards a more inclusive and authentic representation of Bharat's consciousness. In doing so, a reevaluation of collaborative alliances, such as that between postcolonial and Marxist schools, becomes essential to disentangle from Eurocentric influences and carve a path towards a truly decolonized intellectual landscape in Bharat, where the richness of indigenous perspectives can flourish free from the shackles of historical impositions.

Sai delves into the intricate fabric of perspectives that define Bharat as a civilization-state, weaving together diverse viewpoints that paint a nuanced portrait of its identity. Within this mosaic, scholars like Dr. Koenraad Elst emerge as proponents of Bharat's classification as a civilization-state, grounded in a cultural self-understanding that seeks resonance with the ideas articulated by Zhang Weiwei in 'The China Wave: Rise of a Civilizational

State.' Elst advocates for India to adopt a similar stance, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the deep cultural roots that bind the nation together. This perspective, however, encounters historical opposition, echoing voices such as John Strachey, who questioned India's unity through the lens of European ideas. The echoes of such historical debates reverberate in present times, where Bharat grapples with a complex tapestry of perspectives, revealing a lingering uncertainty in its self-awareness and historical narrative. These uncertainties serve as poignant reminders of the enduring impact of colonial remnants, lingering in the very fabric of the nation's consciousness. In this context, Sai raises a crucial concern – the potential relegation of the notion of India as a civilization-state to a mere buzzword or rhetorical point. This cautionary note underscores the imperative for a thorough examination and validation of Bharat's identity, extending beyond theoretical musings to practical implications. The multiplicity of perspectives within the discourse prompts a deeper reflection on the need to align such conceptual frameworks with tangible legal and policy structures. Sai's apprehension resonates with a plea for a comprehensive and holistic understanding of Bharat's identity, one that transcends mere academic debates and translates into actionable policies that reflect the diverse layers of its civilization-state status. As Sai navigates these intellectual landscapes, he carefully differentiates the layers of Bharat as a civilization-state. The majority of the voices are Indic and pro-Indic, amplifying the chorus that resonates with the belief that Bharat is indeed a civilization. This conviction draws strength from a profound knowledge of history and a keen awareness of the nation's consciousness. The interplay of these voices, rooted in a rich tapestry of cultural heritage, serves as a counterpoint to historical skepticism and Eurocentric critiques. Sai's narrative thus becomes a narrative of affirmation, highlighting the importance of embracing a multiplicity of voices that contribute to the complex narrative of Bharat as a civilization-state.

In essence, Sai's exploration transcends the mere academic realm, transforming into a literary journey through the intricate corridors of Bharat's identity. It becomes a narrative not just of contrasting perspectives but also of the continuous dialogue between history, consciousness, and the ever-evolving present. The tapestry woven by Sai serves as an invitation to delve into the

depths of Bharat's past, acknowledging the complexities and contradictions that shape its present. As Bharat navigates the challenges of self-discovery, Sai's narrative stands as a testament to the ongoing quest for a more profound understanding of the nation's identity – a journey marked by diverse voices, historical echoes, and the persistent, resonating pulse of a civilization-state in the making. J. Sai eloquently identifies a transformative period in Bharat's history—a period that he aptly dubs as the onset of an Indic Renaissance within the realm of historical discourse. This intellectual awakening burgeoned in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a time when Bharat's very identity and aspirations for self-determination faced intense scrutiny, challenged by colonial assertions that it had never cohesively existed as 'one nation.' In response to this questioning of Bharat's unity, a cadre of Indic voices emerged as torchbearers, embarking on a mission to fortify the nation's cultural and historical fabric. Their endeavors took the form of rigorous scholarship, deliberately challenging the colonial narrative and confidently asserting two key propositions. First, they contended that Bharat's indigenous identity must be traced back to an era preceding the disruptive forces of Islamic invasions and European colonization, highlighting a rich historical tapestry independent of external influences. Second, and perhaps more significantly, they underscored 'the Hindu religion' as the cohesive force binding this diverse civilization together. However, these assertions were not made without careful consideration. The Indic scholars, aware of the nuanced complexities and challenges posed by the colonial context, issued a crucial caveat. They insisted that Indic Organized Educational Thought (OET) systems should not be misconstrued through the lens of the faith of the European colonizer, even as they employed the term 'religion' for the sake of colonial comprehension.

This nuanced approach reflected a strategic yet principled stance, aiming to communicate with colonial powers on their terms while steadfastly maintaining the authenticity and distinctiveness of Bharat's indigenous perspectives. Importantly, some of these scholarly works found their way into the English language, a strategic choice that allowed these voices to reach beyond national borders and engage with a wider audience. In doing so, they not only articulated their perspectives but also strategically incorporated citations and quotations from European scholars. However, this was not an act of

submission; rather, it was a deliberate strategy to engage in a dialogue with the European colonizer. The Indic scholars aimed not only to present an alternative narrative but also to restore indigenous consciousness's agency and give it the freedom to speak for itself and chart its course through history. The contribution of these Indic scholars becomes even more significant when viewed against the backdrop of the challenges they faced. Their intellectual endeavors were not without suffering, as they navigated the intricate terrain of challenging colonial narratives and reclaiming a narrative that was both authentic and empowering. In a period marked by colonial dominance, these scholars exhibited intellectual resilience and fortitude. Their suffering lay not only in the struggle against historical erasure but also in the pursuit of an alternative discourse that asserted Bharat's unity and identity.

In essence, the Indic Renaissance in history, spearheaded by these scholars, stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of intellectual inquiry and cultural affirmation. Their contributions, marked by resilience and strategic engagement, laid the foundation for a counter-narrative that sought to redefine Bharat's historical consciousness. Through meticulous scholarship and a conscious effort to communicate within the colonial framework, these scholars not only endured challenges but also emerged as architects of a historical discourse that would shape the understanding of Bharat's past for generations to come. J. Sai offers insights, drawing upon the extensive body of work by Radha Kumud Mookerji, a distinguished scholar who dedicated over four decades to examining various facets of the Indic civilization. Mookerji's exploration revolves around what Sai terms the "triple matrix" encompassing "faith," "nature," and "patriotism." This intricate matrix becomes a crucial delineator, demarcating the indigenous perspective from the European colonizer's worldview. Mookerji underscores the unique lens through which the land of Bharat is treated, akin to a sacred pilgrimage site. This perspective forms a distinct line of demarcation, emphasizing the profound divergence in attitudes between the European colonizer and the indigenous societies. The pilgrimage concept, as articulated by Mookerji, serves as a profound metaphor, reinforcing a deep reverence for nature and solidifying the fundamental unity between the land and its people as inheritors of a shared civilization. In essence, Mookerji's scholarship, as illuminated by Sai, encapsulates the

intricate interplay of faith, nature, and patriotism within the Indic civilization, portraying it as a unique paradigm that shapes the indigenous worldview and distinguishes it from colonial impositions.

Radha Kumud Mookerji, in the endeavor to establish Bharat's civilizational character, staunchly positions the unity of this ancient land far ahead of the advent of the British colonizer, underscoring that the claim of the colonizer to have unified and created 'India' is unfounded and historically inaccurate. Mookerji draws upon the evocative using names like 'Jambudvipa', and 'Bharatavarsha' to designate this expansive geography, both by its indigenous inhabitants as well as external observers. Importantly, he delineates the dual nature of these names, clarifying that 'Jambudvipa' serves as a geographical reference while 'Bharatavarsha' holds political significance. The distinction is crucial to Mookerji's thesis because it represents a cohesive political and geographical consciousness that existed before the idea of a British identity. The use of such names, according to Mookerji, signifies more than mere linguistic labels; it is a testament to a deep-seated unity in diversity, anchored in historical and political realms. Mookerji's exploration delves into the historical richness encapsulated in these names. 'Jambudvipa,' a term referencing the vast geographical expanse, transcends a mere descriptive label; it encapsulates a shared awareness among the people of Bharat about the diverse landscapes and ecosystems that constitute their homeland. This geographical consciousness, rooted in millennia, becomes a foundational aspect of the civilizational identity, marking the unity that flourished long before external influences sought to reshape narratives. On the political front, 'Bharatavarsha' emerges not just as a territorial demarcation but as a profound political symbol.

Mookerji emphasizes that this name signifies a unified political consciousness, reflecting a collective identity that extends beyond regional and linguistic diversity. The assertion that Bharat existed as a political entity with a common identity challenges any notion that external forces, particularly the British colonizer, played a foundational role in shaping the unity of the land. Mookerji's underlying premise resonates with the idea that the act of assigning a common name to a landmass, teeming with diverse natural and human elements, is not a mere linguistic convenience. Instead, it becomes a historical

and political proclamation of unity in diversity. The conscious choice of names like ‘Jambudvipa’ and ‘Bharatavarsha’ transcends mere nomenclature; it signifies an ancient awareness of a shared destiny and collective heritage. In essence, Mookerji’s exploration illuminates the intricate interplay of political and geographical consciousness within the civilizational fabric of Bharat. It dismantles the colonial narrative that suggests external powers were instrumental in unifying the diverse regions into a coherent entity. Instead, Mookerji’s scholarship underscores the indigenous roots of unity, entrenched in a deep understanding of the geography and politics that have shaped Bharat’s identity for millennia. The names themselves become echoes of historical resonance, testifying to the enduring spirit of a civilization that found unity not through external imposition but through an intrinsic connection to the land and a shared political consciousness that transcended the ebb and flow of time. Mookerji reinforces his central claim in the book by citing various instances from what he terms ‘Hindu Sources.’ Sai, in his discussion, refers to this as Indic Organized Educational Thought (OET). The establishment of intricate networks, even tailored for individual sects, serves a clear objective – to mitigate any emergence of regional parochialism within the belief systems of worshippers.

Simultaneously, it seeks to disseminate philosophical tenets throughout the expanse of Bharat. This strategic design aims to create a sense that the deities and devotees are not confined to specific regions; rather, they collectively belong to the entirety of Bharat, and reciprocally, all of Bharat is considered the domain of the deities and their followers. The profound territorial link between Indic Organized Educational Thought (OET) systems and Bharat forms the essence of their native connection to this land. Inherent in this relationship is an explanation for why OETs that fuel Middle Eastern and European colonialities are not indigenous to Bharat. This assertion is not rooted in subjective opinions or expressions of xenophobia; instead, it stands as a factual statement grounded in the unique historical and territorial dynamics that shape the native character of Indic OET systems within Bharat. The deliberate design of these networks, aimed at fostering a holistic and unifying spiritual experience across the diverse geography of Bharat, reinforces their innate connection to the land and elucidates the stark contrast with OETs that

originate from external colonial influences. In a straightforward assertion, J. Sai posits that individuals seeking to comprehend Bharat's history are essentially presented with two viable options. They must either align with a perspective that refutes the antiquity, unity, and Indic consciousness of Bharat or embrace a viewpoint that acknowledges the legitimacy of Bharat's indigenous Organized Educational Thought (OET). However, the latter choice comes with a crucial caveat – the necessity to expunge 'Hindu nationalism' from the Indian mindset. It embodies the innate desire for decolonization, a silent yet resolute call from the muted voices of the indigenous to recover and re-establish their existence. When this expressive endeavor is dismissively and fearfully depicted as 'Hindu nationalism,' a discerning analysis leads to the logical conclusion that every society and culture is entitled to exercise the decolonial option, except Bharat. The implicit message suggests that it could have been appropriate for Bharat, like the Americas or Africa, to mourn its history largely through a racial prism if it had accepted the religion of the colonial powers. However, as Bharat has steadfastly clung to its native Organized Educational Thought (OET) systems, its pursuit of decolonization is conveniently branded as 'Hindu nationalism.' In addition to oversimplifying a complex process, this labeling creates the impression that the safety of "national minorities"—spaces that were falsely or forcibly established by Middle Eastern and European colonial influences at the expense of and in opposition to Bharat's indigenous consciousness—is in danger. The danger lies not only in the potential misrepresentation of Bharat's narrative but also in the failure to effectively memorialize its colonization and colonialization if the authentic voice of its native consciousness remains unheard. Without allowing Bharat's native consciousness to narrate its story as experienced, the world, including Bharatiyas themselves, stands to remain ignorant of the profound impact of colonization on Bharat. This ignorance not only perpetuates a distorted understanding of Bharat's history but also hinders the crucial task of memorializing the complex layers of its colonization and colonialization. The term 'Hindu nationalism' emerges as a simplification that obscures the multifaceted nature of Bharat's struggle to reclaim its narrative, reducing it to a potentially misleading and polarizing characterization. It becomes imperative to recognize and respect Bharat's endeavor to decolonize as a nuanced and essential aspect of its historical journey, devoid of overly simplistic labels that

may inadvertently contribute to the erasure of its authentic voice. To neglect the unique narrative that Bharat's native consciousness seeks to articulate is to perpetuate a historical void, denying both Bharatiyas and the global community the opportunity to comprehend the depth and resilience of Bharat's cultural identity in the face of colonization. The safeguarding of this narrative is not an exclusionary act but a collective endeavor to preserve the rich tapestry of Bharat's history, ensuring that the decolonial urge of its silenced voices finds resonance and recognition on a global stage. It is a plea for the world to listen, learn, and appreciate the intricate journey of Bharat's native consciousness as it strives to re-emerge from the shadows of colonization and reclaim its rightful place in the annals of history.

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