

Religion under Globalisation

This paper looks at the interface of religion and globalisation. It points out that the major religions of the world are being used as purveyors of the globalisation agenda and this is often accompanied by an unprecedented flow of funds into the third world. The major consequences of globalisation have been: the transmutation of traditional religions and belief systems; the beginning of the disintegration of the traditional social fabrics and shared norms by consumerism, cyber-culture, newfangled religions and changing work ethics and work rhythms; the fast spreading anomie forcing an ever increasing number of individuals to fall back upon the easily accessible pretentious religious banalities, and attributing to religion the creation and acceleration of extremist, fundamentalist and terrorist tendencies in the third world countries.

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It may sound apocryphal that no social phenomenon other than globalisation has ever made the third world so captive to the master world. As individuals, social groups and countries at large have of late begun to grapple with its pernicious effects on them which are pervasive, it looks as though the world would remain preoccupied till doomsday with debates, discourses, demonstrations and 'actions' packed in related modes on how best to resist, and if not, adjust and adapt to the stalking of this global monster.

In this context, this paper looks at the interface between one of the main support systems of society, namely, religion, and globalisation, and its nature in India. Its main arguments are the following:

- (a) The interface between religion and globalisation is contrary to conventional sociological wisdom that as societies progress the traditional significance of religions declines.
- (b) For the success of globalisation, especially in the third world, its dramatis personae have been using the major religions of the world as purveyors of their globalisation agenda, with unprecedented flow of funds for the purpose from the master world to the third world.
- (c) The major consequences of globalisation have been (1) the transmutation of traditional religions and belief systems; (2) the beginning of the disintegration of the traditional social fabrics and shared norms by the invasion of consumerism, cyber-culture, newfangled religions, social fads, and changing work ethics and work rhythms; (3) the fast spreading anomie (in the Durkheimian sense) forcing an ever increasing number of individuals to fall back upon – for moral and social support – the easily accessible pretentious religious banalities; and (4) attributing to religion the creation and acceleration of extremist, fundamentalist, and terrorist tendencies in the third world countries, which are intended to destabilise them, and strike at the root of their civilisation, and multicultural and pluralist nature.
- (d) Paradoxically, however, the resultant vicious nexus and vicious circle make these countries look to the same monster and its creators for their sustenance in a world in which they have become more vulnerable.

To place these arguments in perspective, religion is looked at in social, global, and globalisation contexts, and religion and globalisation are looked at in Indian context.

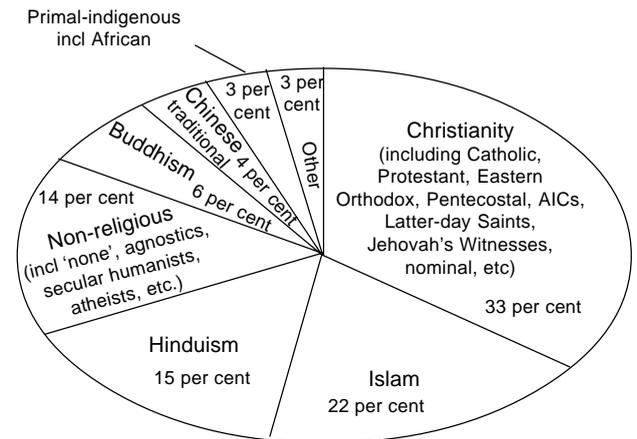
Social and Global Contexts

The nature and functions of religion in society have been under speculation and discourse for several centuries; the approaches to the understanding of religion – philosophical, theological, anthropological, sociological – and the related dimensions of religious ideas have been very old; and the nexus between religion and society has been very close, with wide, complex, intricate and elaborate ramifications: The role of religion in giving spiritual and moral sustenance to individuals, the related regulation of social life and moral order, creating and regulating cultural forms, and the integration of society. One may go with the French sociologist Emile Durkheim's postulate (endorsed by, among others, the English anthropologist A R Radcliffe-Brown) that "the main role (or "function") of religion [is] to celebrate and sustain the norms upon which the integration of society depends" [Geertz 1968: 402].

Among the major religions of the world Christianity accounts for one-third (33 per cent), followed by Islam (22 per cent), Hinduism (16 per cent), Buddhism (6 per cent), and Confucianism (4 per cent). The web site *Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance*, has claimed the following:

Christianity has been largely abandoned in Britain and the rest of Europe. It has partly faded in Canada, where only 10 per cent of adults attend church regularly. In about the year 1990, it started to fall in the US. The percentage of American adults who identify themselves as Christians is dropping by about 10 percentage points per decade. If these trends hold, then sometime during the 2020s, Christianity will become a minority religion in the US. North America is rapidly becoming more religiously diverse. But there may not be a strong enough foundation of religious tolerance to support this future diversity without massive conflict.

Major Religions of the World



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Whether Christianity has been on the decline as a belief system should not be a matter of serious concern. For one thing, it is still the largest religion of the world, and church attendance is not the real measure of religious identity in a world, which is increasingly governed by power, pelf, and identity politics. More so, when the percentage point mentioned is negligible. For another, what Christianity has been losing in the wave is being gained by it in the wind. The worldwide call by Pope John Paul II, especially since his visit to India in November 1999, has not gone unheard. Indeed, Arun Shourie, an erstwhile Indian journalist, and present union minister of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ruling at the centre and a communalist of the Sangh parivar,¹ caricatured it as *Harvesting Our Souls* in his controversial book under the same title.

It is important to know in the context of religion vis-à-vis globalisation that some of the religions especially founded religions such as Christianity and Islam had gone global (in the sense of spreading them across the world) centuries ago, often with violence and warfare. Though Buddhism also tried to go global its influence was mostly in Asian countries.

If religions had gone global, one might ask whether they really had any 'globalising' force. The answer is partly in the affirmative. The spread of Christianity in the west is a clear case. In fact, there have been apprehensions about the political and social implications in the third world of a rising global Christianity, especially in the context of the north-south relations. These apprehensions have to be seen in the context of the apprehension about the decline of Christianity in the US and the call for 'harvesting' by Pope John Paul II.

What is even more important is whether globalisation is a product of Christianity, and whether Christianity could be related to imperialism as a prelude to the emergence of globalisation as its new face. In other words, it is relevant to ask whether there was any social process as Christianity and imperialism, as we now have the social process religion and globalisation. Answers to these have yet to be explored.

Religion and Globalisation

Globalisation of religions in the past in the sense of certain religions going global is qualitatively different from what is understood as globalisation today. James Kurth in *The Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs* observed:²

Globalisation is often described as a process: steadily progressing over time, pervasively spreading over space, and clearly inevitable in its development. But globalisation is also a revolution, one of the most profound revolutions the world has ever known. Indeed, globalisation is the first truly world revolution.

All revolutions disrupt the traditions and customs of a people. Indeed, they threaten a people's very security, safety, and even identity. The world revolution that is globalisation in some measure threatens the security of every people on the globe (emphasis added).

The disruptive effects of globalisation on religion are particularly worrisome. On globalisation as a global mantra and its effects, James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer wrote:

Globalisation is at the centre of diverse intellectual and political agendas, raising crucial questions about what is widely considered to be the fundamental dynamic of our time – an epoch-defining set of changes that is radically transforming social and economic relations and institutions in the 21st century. (2001: 11)

Petras and Veltmeyer have dismissed the 'inevitability bogey' – embedded in the surfeit of literature on globalisation, which

has conjured up a seemingly fatalistic global agreement that it just happened and everyone must adapt to it – as part of yet another sinister imperialist agenda. At the same time, they have elaborated the very same bogey for better understanding of its underlying chicanery:

As both a description of widespread, epoch-defining developments and a prescription for action, it [globalisation] has achieved a virtual hegemony and so is presented with an air of inevitability that disarms the imagination and prevents thought of and action towards a systemic alternative – towards another, more just social and economic order ... The "inevitability" of globalisation is a critical issue. But a more critical issue, perhaps, is what the discourse on globalisation is designed to hide and obfuscate: the form taken by imperialism in the current, increasingly worldwide capitalist system for organising economic production and society (pp 8, 13).

The "inevitability" of globalisation and the adjustment or submission of peoples all over the world to free market capitalism depends on the capacity of the dominant and ruling classes to bend people to their will and convince people that their interests are the people's interests, make them see the interests of capital as their own. It also depends on the capacity of these dominant classes and their ideologues to undermine the growing resistance to the model of free market ... (p 8)

The authors have also exposed the class project behind globalisation, namely, "the attempt to obfuscate rather than accurately describe what is going on worldwide", and "the attempt to throw an ideological veil over the economic interests of an emerging class of transnational capitalists" (p 8):

In these interests, the existing world economic order is in the process of being renovated so as to create optimal conditions for the free play of greed, class interests and profit-making. In the same interests, this New World Order is portrayed as both inevitable and necessary, the driving force of the development process and harbinger of future prosperity. It is presented as the only road available (p 8).

As Petras and Veltmeyer would have it, globalisation is little more than imperialism in a new form, yet another phase in the long historical process of imperialist expansion. Their reasoning is that globalisation was created by deliberate policies put in place by powerful states under the control of dominant classes to divert attention away from the resurgence of imperialist powers, and it is not a structural part of the capitalist system, it is instead

an ideological smokescreen used to divert attention away from the resurgence of imperialist powers.

Another way of looking at globalisation is in terms of the emergence of a global market. It involves assaults on local, national and regional consumer habits and material products, and political and cultural practices (including, of course, religion), by powerfully packaged and marketed ideas, consumer and cultural products and practices.

Globalisation is not merely an economic phenomenon. It has multiple manifestations such as political, social, cultural, and religious. These manifestations are ghastly and gruesome, especially in the developing countries. The political dimension is evident from the global “super-cop” stalking the world making countries of lesser might live in insecurity. The other manifestations have begun to unfold particularly in the developing countries, where societies have begun to disintegrate under the invasion of consumerism, culture, and social fads.

In the ultimate analysis globalisation is not global integration by breaking the barriers across and among the nations through a global compact for turning the world into a ‘global village’. On the contrary, it is an insidious agenda for perpetrating the hegemony of one country over the whole world, by force and fraud.

In an article, ‘Religion and Globalisation’, Jim Spickard (University of Redlands)³ made a number of observations on both subjects. Some of these are relevant to note here:

- Popular images of “globalisation” stress its economic and political character, especially the global reach of transnational corporations that are shifting power away from states – and thus from citizens – efforts to control their own fates. In these images, religious organisations respond to globalisation, sometimes by supporting anti-global movements (e.g. anti-WTO protests, north/south economic justice efforts, neo-fundamentalisms, etc).
- A second commonly noted attribute of globalisation is increased migration, which has also had religious consequences.
- Religions are at the forefront of the globalisation process.
- Globalisation fundamentally alters power relationships, both religious and scholarly.
- Globalisation highlights “religious” processes that extend far beyond church life. One can, for example, analyse human rights in the light of the Durkheimian notion that religion gives us a symbolic image of social life.

Though the growth and use of science is supposedly central to globalisation, it is relevant to know whether science and religion are irreconcilable. Albert Einstein had explained this unequivocally:

Does there truly exist an insuperable contradiction between religion and science? Can religion be superseded by science? The answers to these questions have, for centuries, given rise to considerable dispute and, indeed, bitter fighting. Yet, in my own mind there can be no doubt that in both cases a dispassionate consideration can only lead to a negative answer. What complicates the solution, however, is the fact that while most people readily agree on what is meant by ‘science’, they are likely to differ on the meaning of ‘religion’. As to science, we may well define it for our purpose as “methodical thinking directed toward finding regulative connections between our sensual experiences.” Science, in the immediate, produces knowledge and, indirectly, means of action. It leads to methodical action if definite goals are set up in advance. For the function of setting up goals and passing statements of value transcends its domain. While it is true that science, to the extent of its grasp of causative connections, may reach important conclusions as to the compatibility and incompatibility of goals and evaluations, the independent and

fundamental definitions regarding goals and values remain beyond science’s reach. As regards religion, on the other hand, one is generally agreed that it deals with goals and evaluations and, in general, with the emotional foundation of human thinking and acting, as far as these are not predetermined by the inalterable hereditary disposition of the human species. Religion is concerned with man’s attitude toward nature at large, with the establishing of ideals for the individual and communal life, and with mutual human relationship. These ideals religion attempts to attain by exerting an educational influence on tradition and through the development and promulgation of certain easily accessible thoughts and narratives (epics and myths) which are apt to influence evaluation and action along the lines of the accepted ideals.⁴

Globalisation is not science or a scientific project. It is a political and imperialist project, which uses both science and religion in an irreconcilable manner. In some sense the attack on the World Trade Centre (WTC) on September 11, 2001 was a counter-blast against globalisation. So also the so-called terrorist attacks in different parts of the world. Here what have been used are not the tenets of any particular religion or scriptural injunctions, but versions of religion for drawing sustenance to take on the might of the empire. So, it is wrong to conclude that sporadic counter-blasts are extremism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, and terrorism,⁵ and naively believe in the chicanery by the American Presidents and their lackeys that much more lethal attacks, devastations and destructions (including of religious and cultural heritage) by the US have been in the interest of democracy and world peace. Their hypocrisy and double-speak are in stark contrast to what Noam Chomsky described as the golden rule of democracy.

George Bush, characterised by many social critics as a ‘born-again Christian’, was not above his belief system when, following Samuel Huntington’s misguided missile ‘clash of civilisations’, he referred to the ‘retaliatory strikes’ (whatever that may mean in the absence of any concrete evidence) against Afghanistan as a ‘crusade’.

The Bush-Blair blitzkrieg in Iraq with utter impunity and scorn to the UN and international opinion, the effect of which on Islam, Islamic World, Islamic fundamentalism, and Islamic psyche has yet to unfold, is one of the many crude, cruel, hideous, and horrendous manifestations of this fast unfolding US “usurpation” of the third world countries on the pretext of crushing (religion-linked) terrorism. It is probably only a foretaste of what is in store for the other third world countries if they prove recalcitrant and fail to kowtow to the diktats of the US establishment.

In the book *Religion and Globalisation* Peter Beyer asked: How religion is important in a globalised society? What role does it play in a highly interconnected world? Reviewing the book (as reproduced in the publisher’s web site) Richard Roberts summarised its theme thus: will systematic world religion prove capable of generating the kind of “global civil religion” (albeit diversified) that is much needed where functional differentiation and cultural fragmentation have destroyed shared norms?

Destroying the shared norms has been precisely the work of globalisation, which in turn has been systematically weakening the religious fabric of the third world.

In an interview to the Indian Weekly, *Outlook* (January 3, 2000), Chomsky observed:

The consensus of the rich and powerful is that the weak and defenceless should be subjected to market discipline, while the rich and powerful should continue to shelter under the wings of the nanny state ... The global consensus is achieving its aims of

enriching small sectors, dismantling social bonds and social support systems, and undermining democracy – one of the chief goals and consequences, of liberalising capital flow ... “disposable people are being removed from society, either left in deteriorating urban slums and collapsing rural communities or sent to prison. Though crime rates have been declining, incarceration has sharply increased, targeting the poor and minorities by various devices, primarily, a ‘drug war’ that’s recognised to be utterly fraudulent by serious criminologists, a consequence of a deliberate social policy designed to remove the superfluous population. Other industrial societies are proceeding along similar paths, though in different ways.

While on religion and globalisation, it is important to know whether globalisation unites or divides religions; results in newfangled religions; and has a direct nexus with fundamentalism and religion-linked terrorism.⁶ It is also important to ascertain whether for its new imperialist project globalisation has been exploiting different religious forms; whether fundamentalism and religion-inspired terrorism have increased since the advent of globalisation; and whether religions, far from being belief systems in their traditional sense, have spawned new dimensions which are far removed from the ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ realms.

Indian Context

India, whose population accounts for about one-sixth (about 1.3 billion) of the world population, and is home to all the major religions of the world – Hinduism (82 per cent), Islam (12.5 per cent), Christianity (2.4 per cent), Sikhism (2 per cent), Buddhism (0.8 per cent), and Jainism (0.4 per cent) – may soon turn out to be an accomplice, a villain, and a victim of globalisation, through the manoeuvres of the Sangh parivar.

However, with Hindu gods and goddesses accounting for about one-fourth (330 million) of India’s human population, the superabundance of myths can be socially satiating and subliminal, as for instance the belief that to gaze on the phallic emblem of Shiva standing in his temple is as beneficial as a vision of every god and goddess separately [Fuller 1992: 29]. Cultic religion comprising several godheads believed to be living on earth in human form (incarnations or ‘avatars’) as godmen and godwomen, – which is presumably unique to India – and undoubtedly India’s bane and shame – has been a booming industry in India and through India in other countries, especially in the globalisation context.

To understand the impact of the presence and praxis of the godheads on society, culture, polity, and economy, some understanding of the way they have been perceived by social critics is necessary. Among the various sources only three are cited here. (1) India is a fertile breeding ground for self-styled godmen ranging from international[ly] fame[d] Chandraswami, ... Sai Baba, Kalki, Premananda, and umpteen other swamis, big and small. The whole band of these thugs⁷ thrive on the faith of the people in god, religion and their superstitious beliefs in the efficacy of the magic powers of these frauds in gratifying their needs and desires.⁸

(2) The number of babas, swamis, gurus, bapus, bhagats, and their ilk in India is legion. They evoke fierce loyalties and attract an expanding clientele for a while and then fade away. People rank these sects according to the number of their adherents, specially if among them are famous personalities and foreign disciples. Some of these godmen have established empires in foreign lands. They live in regal splendour and have radio and TV stations, planes and a fleet of expensive cars. All this adds to the prestige of the godmen [Mehta 1996].

Stating that a sizeable section of Indian society today is still living in ignorance and religious misconceptions of the medieval era, a third source observed that over eight million fake sadhus and swamis are flourishing on the alms offered by such people in the name of religion.⁹ As these fake swamis form a hierarchy from the lowest to the highest, some observations on their nature will also be in order. For this purpose, two lengthy reports are reproduced below.

(1) On August 10, 2002, the *Times News Network* reported the following:

Hyderabad: The Market police arrested two fake swamis, who decamped with valuables from the devotees visiting their ‘ashram’ to solve their problems. The arrested persons were identified as Girish Joshi and Ranchot Lal, natives of Rajasthan. (http://203.199.70.171/cgi-bin/acceptclickthrough.cgi?random_key=20/8/20034:39:370.8502765613532803&host_name=www.google.co.in&url_name=www.timesofindia.com/search.) According to police, both the accused, along with two others – Chetan Joshi and Navin Joshi – came to the city in June this year and started ‘ashrams’ at Monda Market, Ministers’ Road in Secunderabad, Kachiguda and Banjara Hills. They give advertisements in the local dailies claiming that they have powers to cure ailments and help people get out of distress and other psychological disorders. A lady doctor, whose name was not disclosed by the police, approached the fake swamis at their ashram in Market area in July this year. The accused asked her to tell the age of her husband, and on informing her husband’s age as 40, they asked her to get 40 tolas of gold to perform it. She was also asked to bring the gold in a packed box for conducting and [when returned] told not to open [the box] until she reached home.

The swamis performed on the box for four days and returned it to the doctor. But the doctor, on opening the box after returning home, found the gold kept inside the box missing. She immediately rushed back to the ashram, but the swamis had abandoned the place. Likewise, an engineer from Khairatabad also lost 79 tolas of gold and Rs 1 lakh cash, while another woman was cheated of 15 tolas of jewellery.

In all, the thieves have taken away 130 tolas of gold and Rs 2 lakh cash before decamping from the city. On the complaint lodged by the victims, North Zone DCP, A Ravishankar, formed a special team to trace the accused. Based on inputs received from the cellular phones of the accused, the Market police went to Ahmedabad and nabbed two of the four accused persons. Efforts were on to apprehend the remaining cheats, the police said.

(2) A Reuters report, ‘India opening its eyes to tricksters who prey on blind faith’ dated October 3, 2002, by Jayashree Lengade: Bombay – In tradition-bound India, if someone claims to be able to exorcise ghosts, levitate or pull a gold chain out of thin air, it does not take long for him to become known as a ‘godman’. While many godmen are not confidence tricksters, there are numerous ‘miracle babas’ who are just out to get rich by duping as many people as quickly as they can. But Bombay police are cracking down on the charlatans and have enlisted the help of a group known as the All-India Committee to Eradicate Superstition and Blind Faith to convince people that special power is more often than not a sleight of hand or an illusion.

“The campaign is meant to be an eye-opener. We want to put a complete stop to those posing as godmen. They are involved in outright cheating and violent acts,” S S Vagal, joint commissioner of police for crime in Bombay, said. Mr Vagal said the campaign, which includes public meetings and television programmes, has begun to show results. “Certainly, we have been able to make an impact. Several people have voluntarily made complaints, and we have nabbed at least 25 of the fake godmen,” he said.

Activists say the ‘miracle babas’ come to India’s commercial hub

from poorer parts of the country and seek their fortune by exploiting people's insecurities. "It's easy money – without any investment. As long as fear exists among people such godmen will thrive," said Narendra Bhabolkar, founder of the 20-year-old committee that seeks to expose the tricksters. A committee worker at a public gathering shows how a gold chain that looked as if it had been plucked out of the air had actually been tucked up a sleeve. "It's simple. If you want people to bow down at you then you perform a trick," said magician Anand Tayade, who is helping with the campaign against the fraud. "There's no such thing as performing miracles on this earth.

"These godmen are unlike learned saints who renounce worldly life, give sermons and induce a feeling of positive energy. They are out to cheat gullible people to make money," Mr Tayade said. In another demonstration, a man clad in saffron robes and a false beard seems to sit suspended in mid-air without any support but for a hand resting on a pole. A superstition-busting activist tells the hushed crowd of more than 100 people that the long garment actually hides a wooden seat fixed to the pole.

Many godmen call themselves 'tantrics' – followers of the esoteric Hindu and Buddhist tradition of ritual and yoga. Some claim to be able to perform miracles and solve just about any problem under the sun – from helping jilted lovers and solving marriage problems, to comforting those with job worries and healing the sick. "It's the environment one grows up in that's usually responsible while others are looking for avenues to overcome stress in adversity," said Shyam Manav, another activist trying to educate people about superstition.

The godmen charge anything from about 150 rupees (\$ 5) up to millions of rupees. And people seeking help from all walks of life can fall prey to their tricks. While most godmen restrict themselves to relatively harmless fraud, others get caught up in much more sinister affairs, including human sacrifice to appease 'evil spirits'.

In July, a nine-year-old boy was found dead on the outskirts of Bombay. A man told police he killed the boy after a godman told him doing so would save his troubled marriage. "We have intensified patrolling day and night to arrest fake godmen. Another human sacrifice cannot take place," R D Jagtap, assistant police commissioner, said.

While Bombay police say the fake godmen are becoming scarce in the city, the activists campaigning against superstition are travelling to towns and villages to spread their message. "We understand that blind practices cannot be ended easily. It will take generations. But our effort will continue," committee member and Bollywood actor Shreeram Lagoo said.

Some of the 'high-profile' religious tricksters such as Sai Baba, Premananda, and Chandraswami with international following are based in India, and some others such as goddess Narayani are busy augmenting their wealth and following by peddling 'bliss' in the bliss-seeking west. The misdemeanours of these 'super-dupers' can put to shame any discerning citizen. Sai Baba and Kalki, like many other godmen, appropriated the title Bhagavan (god) to put on the aura of divinity as godmen, and for greater following. The upstart Ravi Shankar prefixed his name with Sri Sri.¹⁰ In its report of March 1996 Justice Milap Chand Jain Commission, which probed into former Indian prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, wanted the government of India to probe into Chandraswami's role in the assassination.

That these religious tricksters are indeed dubious and dangerous should be clear from the following report:¹¹

Many of India's high profile super godmen are closing down their shops. Swami Sadachari, once spiritual advisor and *tantric* of many top politicians including Indira Gandhi, former prime minister, has been in jail for running a brothel, following his exposure by

Indian rationalists. Gone with the wind is Swami Premananda, again to jail, following sex scandals including rape charges. Chandraswami, mastermind behind the 'milk miracle'¹² who had India's top politicians including former prime minister Narasimha Rao at his fingertip, faces charges of bribery and cheating. One fine day all of them lose their divine magic and the golden aura around them turns dirty grey. The rest is police business, court procedure, media sneer and silence.

In the face of overwhelming proof, Sai Baba stands accused of consistent child abuse and homosexual abuse of young disciples in numerous cases. London's *Daily Telegraph*, in a cover story, has pieced together a shocking dossier of his crimes. In the centre of the report stands the case of the now 20-year-old American Sam Young, son of two ardent devotees of Sai Baba and frequent visitors of his ashram over the last 20 years. Sam, 16 when he came to Puttaparthi for the first time, was picked up and granted many private audiences with Sai Baba, during which the godman regularly kissed and fondled him, tried to rape him and successfully silenced him. He used to "produce" holy oil out of thin air and to rub the boy's genitals with that. And he produced watches, golden rings and money to keep him silent. After four years, Sam gathered courage to reveal his plight to his parents. Once Sai Baba was publicly accused, the dam of silence broke and hundreds of similar cases came to light. Devotees left Sai Baba centres abroad in hundreds, some of the centres have already closed down.

The close nexus of the dubious godheads, especially of the internationally sought after types, with politicians, their hangers-on, criminals, middlemen, and fixers is well known.

L K Advani, a Hindu communalist had a major role in assiduously building up (and in the process 'building himself up' as a politician) Hindu-Muslim communal hate through his infamous 'rath yatra' from Somnath to Ayodhya in 1990. The rath yatra not only transformed just another opposition politician into the ideological mascot of Hindutva, but also and more importantly, through its political journey redefined the trajectories of Indian politics. Advani himself described it as a movement of mass awakening – one that catapulted the BJP on to the national centre-stage, and made Hindutva a core political issue. It culminated in the demolition of Babri masjid on December 6, 1992.

Despite compelling evidence that the BJP, the dominant force in India's present coalition government, abetted the anti-Muslim riots that convulsed the western state of Gujarat in February 2002, as union home minister, Advani openly defended and unabashedly gave a 'clean chit' to the Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi.

Advani was seen hobnobbing with Ravi Shankar apparently with a religious mission. This was after the enactment of a legislation by the government of Tamil Nadu prohibiting conversion from Hinduism to other religions, when Ravi Shankar – the man behind the money-spinner, *The Art of Living Foundation* – was made to say that leaving the religion in which one was born and embracing another religion is sin.¹³

In *The Japan Times* in 1999 Angela Jeffs reported at length on Mata Amritanandamayi's visit to Japan from May 28 to 31 May, a gist of which is given below.¹⁴

Amritanandamayi is acknowledged throughout India as a *living saint* (emphasis added). A hug from her is said to bring happiness – something that many Japanese feel is in short supply as the nation's economic slide throws more people out of work and cuts into their savings. She has been known to hug 20,000 people in a single session.¹⁵ In her homeland – and increasingly abroad – she is known as the *hugging saint*. For the past three days, thousands of Japanese have flocked to a hall in Tokyo for a loving embrace from her on the Japan leg of her world hugging tour.

Throughout this week people have been queuing patiently outside her carpeted room, breathing in the incense-filled air and listening to strains of devotional songs. *She has come up with a remedy for Japan's economic blues that has escaped even the most astute politician – give everyone a hug* (emphasis added).

So, here is a religious remedy to the economic ills caused by globalisation, namely, get hugged, hugged, and hugged by a woman who has been deified by the media as living saint, embracing saint, hugging saint, god, global guru, spiritual leader, heavenly soul and so on. But as one woman cannot hug the world's desolate and despondent millions, and there are not many women of Amritanandamayi's deified stature, it is pertinent to ask how to materialise more Amritanandamayis with all the make-believe divine powers and devotional trappings commensurate with the number required to make the world a better place through 'divine hugging'.

In this context it is worth considering, in keeping with the theme of some of the Malayalam short stories, whether an illiterate Amritanandamayi who in the traditional caste hierarchy would have belonged to one of the bottom-most and disprivileged groups has been really a wonder-woman or victim of a religious mafia – the unscrupulous commercial ascetics from whose religious trap she has no way of escape.¹⁶

The Week – published from a place not far from Amritanandamayi's ashram, had her for its cover feature of September 21, 2003. The feature, with its main title 'Embracing the world' and subtitle 'Devotees worship her as god', is an important instance of the commercial exploitation of religion by the print media. Amritanandamayi turned 50 on September 27, 2003,¹⁷ and her ashram at Kollam, Kerala, celebrated the occasion four days from September 24, "in tune with", as *The Week* wrote "her exalted status as a spiritual leader". Tended by some 12,000 volunteers, with a reported ten lakh people participating in her "divine show" and many more watching it on the TV channels – with thousands from the west who descended upon Kerala, – some out of curiosity, some as tourists, some as pleasure seekers, some as nowhere people, and probably some as devotees, hogging the limelight – the cover feature was a real 'cash crop' to *The Week*. The presence of these westerners and for that matter a sprinkling of non-Hindus from India does not alter the essentially Hindu character of the four-day 'divine extravaganza'.

As *The Week* reported, Amritanandamayi (popularly known as Amma, meaning mother) has grown from an illiterate child with strange spiritual experiences to a global guru who presides over an empire of charity; she is Kerala's 'hugging saint' who straddles the material and the spiritual worlds; her ashram figures at the top of the list of charities receiving donations from abroad; in 1998-99, for instance, the ashram is said to have received more than Rs 50 crore.

Going by press reports on September 27, 2003 rituals were performed at her 'holy feet' on her 50th birth anniversary after dawn, after which 'Amriteswari', as she is worshipped (emphasis added), addressed the sea of humanity which had gathered since morning to hear the *love incarnate* (emphasis added). That sea of humanity comprised people from 191 countries who participated in the celebrations and charity activities, including Indian president A P J Abdul Kalam, deputy prime minister L K Advani, human resource development minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, Karnataka chief minister S M Krishna, former US senator Larry Pressler, Martin Luther King's daughter Yolanda King, and Hotmail founder Sabeer Bhatia.¹⁷ Newspapers showed Amritanandamayi hugging Advani and kissing his pate.

While Amritanandamayi's ashram may be building houses for the poor, hospitals, and educational institutions, and many other

ashrams may be swindling the huge funds which they have been receiving from abroad, the very idea of social service through the conduit of religion, that too primarily the majoritarian Hindu religion, in a secular and pluralist society, where religion is not expected to play any role in the public sphere, raises at least two issues.

One, the failure of a democratic state to perform and deliver thereby creating a deepening paradox of enabling various self-styled 'divinities' and 'god incarnates' to use it to perform and deliver through make-believe spiritualism through the state though the state is expected to be secular and pluralist in letter and spirit.¹⁹

Two, the effect of this 'divine delivery' on the functioning of a secular pluralist democracy and the role of globalisation in creating spurious godheads who would not have had the kind of weird spin doctors, networks and media savvy images but for technocracy itself turning into spiritualism embedded in globalisation. Whether such a democracy should draw legitimacy from self-made – and those forced into the spiritual trap dubious godheads, or from people's will is a challenge to the very notion of democracy.

Apart from the self-styled godheads, there are the 'institutionalised' ones – the Sankaracharyas. Dubious godheads, and religious heads like Sankaracharyas dabbling into politics of late has disastrous consequences for the secular and pluralist nature of Indian democracy, for the diversity of Hinduism, and for minority religions.

The main source of income for these godheads has been the 'spiritually starving' regions of Asia, say, Japan, and Europe and America. By one estimate some of the godheads are worth thousands of crores of rupees. Globalisation has certainly augmented their wealth.²⁰

The most alarming development in Indian context, however, has been the rise of rabid Hindutva for the creation of a Procrustean Hindu rashtra or Hindu nation, which in some sense is a variant of the globalisation monster. Godmen and godwomen are useful to the Hindutva politics. While inaugurating the 50th birth anniversary celebrations of Amritanandamayi (*Amritavarsham-50*) on September 24, 2003, India's deputy prime minister, L K Advani asserted that the spiritual strength of a country was more important than its advances in the fields of agriculture, industry or knowledge, and went to the extent of drawing from Alvin Toffler's *Powershift* that nations consider their strengths in physical, economic and knowledge spheres as important aspects of progress, but only spirituality elevates the society, and this fact added to the relevance of personalities like 'Amma'. But coming as this does from a person who as a purveyor of communal hate has deeply wounded the spirit of India, his very mention of spirituality distorts this term. In any case, as the inauguration was by none other than Advani, apart from turning spirituality into another communal weapon, it could be as disastrous as his 1990 rath yatra, inasmuch as it has given a boost to his rabid Hindutva²¹ from Amritanandamayi's blessing and its implicit approbation of his style of divisive and destructive politics.

The four-day celebrations from September 24 to 27 could as well turn out to be the Sangh parivar's bliss and Kerala's blight, and undermine whatever the Leftist movements of over half a century managed to gain as secular, pluralist and democratic space, which made Kerala the 'model state' of India.²²

As a result of the rise of rabid Hindutva, minority communities of religions such as Islam and Christianity have been victims of Nazi-type ethnic cleansing. The oppressed and exploited among the Hindus at the bottom of the traditional caste hierarchy have been trying to embrace other religions. However, they are being prevented from doing so by the 'dog-in-the-manger' attitude of

some of the states ruled by the BJP and brahmins with the BJP mindset, and their Hindu-biased actions, much against the mandate of the Indian Constitution for a pluralist secular democracy.

The traditional Hindu culture has been a deepening paradox, with the Sangh parivar trying to drag the country back to the illusory Vedic age, and the younger generation dragging it in different directions, many succumbing to the temptation of consumerism – a fallout of the economic dimension of globalisation, the aberrations and absurdities of the tinsel world, and the temptation of migration to the US for making quick bucks. Conventional religion has become computerised religion, as for instance, many in far-flung Chennai or Delhi can have rituals through the Internet in the far-flung US or UK temples and vice-versa. That the result of a search using Google on February 28, 2004 for Hindu worships through Internet was a mind-boggling 31,600 links clearly shows the magnitude of this aspect of religion under globalisation. Globalisation has also given a new lease of life through the Internet. Almost all websites which have some bearing on India have astrology, numerology, palmistry, vaasthu, Vedic predictions, and so on to cater to the needs of the gullible millions;²³ and spiritualism through the TV channels or what has been aptly termed ‘TV spirituality’.²⁴ All these have made god a money-spinner through cyber-chicanery.

Meanwhile, the politics of religion has resulted in the mushrooming of religious centres – not so much out of devotion or for worship as for competitive communal politics in the public sphere.

Conclusion

In a context like this, if the third world has to be on its own, it has to disable the US empire – which is more of a vampire now – by whatever means, and its globalisation agenda. While there has been no dearth of suggestions on the possible remedies, three suggestions are mentioned below:

One, by Virginia Saldanha in the article mentioned earlier:

Religious people who struggle for a more inclusive and peaceful world should return to the roots of our religions where we will find the truth. Those of us who are Christians will remember the words of Jesus spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, “Blessed are the poor in Spirit ... blessed are the peace makers, blessed are those who work for justice.

Two, by Andre Mukenge:²⁵

I am an African, and my God isn't yours. I'm a Muslim. I can't live together with the Christians. The Asiatic trusting system isn't the same in Europe and in Africa. That is what we understand everywhere in the street, in the conferences, in the seminaries, when they are discussing. Men are so proud of themselves that they make borders between one another in the name of God. Each one has his God, here, the god had been given a name, there he is worshipped as a man, and there again as a Spirit and so forth. *These differences are so big that ... conflicts appear and wars occur. And yet, if we take it global, we are the sons and the girls of one God – being him allah, yehowa, jesus, krishna, boudha or other kind of lord, he is our father. In all kind of religion, God is supreme, infinite. He is known as being love. His attributes are justice, mercy, wisdom and goodness. The Globalisation is in religion since the creation of the world.* (emphasis added)

Nowadays the manner that people trust in God in Asia, in Europe and in America is very well known: but let's know if it is possible to put together the African and the other system of religion in the world. God is not African, Asian or European. God is Global. But how do African people worship? They believe in a high God who is

the creator and [ultimate] cause of all things. He has a distinct personality and is known by a personal name. In Comgolese system of belief, there are no priests, no intermediaries, no temples and no special public worship is addressed to him. The names and attributes assigned to his supreme divinity may vary greatly from one ethnic group or subgroup to another.

Three, by the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance:

You, and I, and everyone else have two options:

- Promote religious tolerance – the right of people to hold religious beliefs that are strange to us, without hindrance or oppression.
- To continue living in a world saturated with religious intolerance. We will then experience more religiously-based wars, terrorism, and civil disturbances, as we have seen recently in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cyprus, India, Kosovo, Israel, Macedonia, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, etc. The ultimate cause of the 9/11 terrorist attacks was religious hatred and intolerance.

It 's your decision to make. What kind of a world do you want for yourself and your children?

While the meaning and message of the above quotes are only too obvious, one important issue that needs special attention is the nature and extent of democratic space available for articulation of various forms of social demands, societal dynamics and pressures, and social aspects, of which religion is only one. When all is said, the 20th century has been characterised as ‘democracy’s century’. Have the countries, which became free during this century from colonial rule and turned democratic, really created the much-needed civil space for democratic articulation? Religion is, obviously, an integral part of these countries, irrespective of the effect of globalisation on them.^[26]

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Notes

[This is an extensively revised version of a paper presented at the international conference on ‘Religion and Globalisation’, held at Payap University, Thailand, from July 27 to August 2, 2003.]

- 1 Sangh parivar literally means an organisation’s family. Here the reference is to the Bharatiya Janata Party, Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, and related organisations, all of which have been working for transforming India into a *Hindu Rashtra* or Hindu nation through rabid Hindutva.
- 2 PRI Wire: *Religion and Globalisation*, Vol 7, May 1999.
- 3 Published in the *Newsletter* of the American Sociological Association Section on Religion, Fall 2001.
- 4 This was in a response to a greeting sent by the Liberal Ministers’ Club of New York City. Published in *The Christian Register*, June 1948. Published in *Ideas and Opinions*, Crown Publishers, New York, 1954.
- 5 The views on fundamentalists and their acts vis-à-vis religion vary widely. For instance, Virginia Saldanha, in a write-up ‘Fundamentalists are not rooted in the truth of their religions’, in the *National Catholic Reporter* of April 23, 2003 observed: (1) “The extreme right wings of the world’s four main religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism) seem to be on the rise and gaining strength. Furthermore, the rise is coupled with the consolidation of political power by an elite class of politicians and business interests”. (2) “All fundamentalists have the same agenda, namely, gaining political power to boost their economic power”. (3) “Fundamentalists achieve their goal by using religion to gain control over the lives of people. Fundamentalists interpret religion to suit their own ends. They claim to speak and act in the name of God”.
- 6 In this context it is important to note the following observations (as reported in the Indian English daily *The New Indian Express* on September 17, 2003) by Indian prime minister, A B Vajpayee, at Ankara, on September 16, 2003, during his three-day tour of Turkey:

Do not discredit Islam; it's not a terror source. Describing international terrorism as a 'global monster', Vajpayee flayed the 'selective approach' and differing standards of some countries in combating the menace, and dismissed the western belief that Islam is a source of terrorism. About the tendency in the west to subscribe to the view that Islam is a source of terrorism, he said: "We totally dismiss the proposition that any religion is a source of terrorism. Such arguments seek to discredit one of the great religions of the world." No religion, he said, prescribed violence against innocent people. "Our battle is against extremist elements who misuse and misinterpret religion to justify terrorism and incite violence".

Though the above observations might have gladdened the people of Turkey, one might wonder if these were not disingenuous inasmuch as Hindutva, an aberration of Hinduism, particularly under Vajpayee's dispensation as India's prime minister, has indeed been a terror-source, as evident from, among others, the communal carnage in Gujarat.

7 These 'thugs' rise to 'divine' status mainly through their spin-doctors who indoctrinate the innocent masses. Many of these spin-doctors are none other than pseudo-academics. A case in point is the 'White Paper on Kalki Bhagavan' by Vasudha Narayanan. While admitting that there have been controversial articles on 'Kalki Bhagavan' in the Indian press, she ignored all of them and tendentiously based her report solely on devotees' experiences, knowing full well that there cannot be a better way of indoctrinating the innocents than through such one track and unverifiable rumour-mongering on devotees' experiences.

A sample of Vasudha Narayanan's report: "About 15 million people around the world think of Kalki Bhagavan as the Supreme Being who will usher in a new age. This golden age was inaugurated on September 25, 1995, and will be fully realised in the year 2012. The Vishnu Purana and several other sacred texts consider Kalki to be the last incarnation (avatar) of Lord Vishnu." From the cache of <http://www.montclair.edu/risa/d-kalki.html> (September 29, 2002).

It is not that these pseudo-academics and money-chasers through fake-spirituality cannot be critical. The fact is that they do not want to be, as there is more money in spinning myths and superstitions than in

spreading reason and scientific temper. Vasudha Narayanan's another feat was propagating through attractive visuals India's 'sacralisation' of the US using deities of Brahminic Hinduism, especially Vishnu, who is supposed to be dominating the whole universe, for which temples have been built in the US.

- 8 'Beware of Godmen', *The Modern Rationalist*, September 1997.
- 9 'Mass Education from religious platform', Vol 36, web site.
- 10 'Sri', derived from Sanskrit, is a salutation. It is also an auspicious usage. One does not confer it on oneself. It is only used for addressing others. So the use of 'Sri Sri' is an appropriation by Ravi Shankar to add an aura of respect and auspiciousness to his name and person.
- 11 Sanal Idamaruku. 'Now It Is Sai Baba's Turn!' *Rationalist International*, Bulletin No 53, October 29, 2000.
- 12 The reference is to the reports that the idol of Ganesha drank milk on September 21, 1995 in different parts of the world. See for details, 'Hindu Idol Drinks Milk!' *Hinduism Today*, Issue 95-11, 1995. This hoax should be seen as yet another aspect of the cyber chicanery under globalisation.
- 13 On November 12, 2003, *The New Indian Express* carried a lengthy interview with Ravi Shankar, by addressing him as 'His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar' and thus trying to add to his make-believe aura. Though surveys found that many Hindus do not care what is built in Ayodhya as reported by the *Indian Express*, Ravi Shankar betrayed his true RSS and Sangh parivar mindset in his response to a question that "you cannot ignore the sentiments of the rural people who can see Ram only in an idol or in a place of worship".
- 14 From the web site Amma.org.
- 15 During Amritanandamayi's visit in July 2003 to Japan the Indian English daily *Herald Tribune* carried a front-page report that "if there were a world record for hugs, it would surely go to Mata Amritanandamayi".
- 16 A case in point is the recent Malayalam film 'Yuvaturky' about a godman, with Gunasekaran becoming godman Somendraj. The film brings out luridly the politics of communalism, and the politics-godmen nexus.
- 17 The day was also deified as 'Amritavarsham', literally meaning the year of Amritanandamayi or the showering of nectar.

- 18 The report did not say how the presence of these personalities singled out for special mention added to the religiosity and divinity of the supposed godhead, and of those whom she hugged and kissed, and whether the celebration was religious or secular.
- 19 In this context, the religious import of Kerala chief minister, A K Antony's observation during the *Amritavarsam-50* celebrations that the government alone cannot change a society; we need institutions like the (Amritanandamayi) Math to execute projects in a symbiotic manner, should not go unnoticed.
- 20 On October 19, 2003 the Indian English tabloid *The Milli Gazette* reported the following:

American funding of Hindu hate organisations exposed
 "Spread of sectarian hate in India can be halted if the money flowing from the US to the anti-Muslim, anti-Christian Sangh Parivar (RSS family) organisations involved in this nefarious design stops," said Biju Mathew, professor, Rider University, New Jersey, US, at a press conference here on November 20.

The press conference was organised to expose huge funding of Hindu hate organisations through US-based charities. A campaign to halt the funding for spreading hate in India has been formally launched with the publication at the press conference of a comprehensive report about this funding.

Called 'The Foreign Exchange of Hate', this 91-page report is now available on the Internet at <http://www.stopfundinghate.org>.

The press conference was organised by "The Campaign to Stop Funding Hate" (CSFH), a US-based NGO to release its report which has been painstakingly compiled using published and unpublished sources about this funding which is routing to the hate outfits through 'cultural' and 'educational' front organisations floated by them in various parts of India. CSFH is an organisation of people from all walks of life sharing a common concern that sectarian hatred in India was being fuelled by money flowing in from the US.

"Not only India, the US has also become a nation of hateful Hinduism, thanks to the RSS and the India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF), a US-based 'charity' which has been providing millions of dollars to organisations connected with the Sangh parivar," said Biju Mathew, a core member of CSFH.

The report, based on detailed analysis by a team of dedicated researchers of the US and India, is a testimony to the misuse of fund by the IDRF which it obtains from leading companies in the US in the name of 'secular activities' in India.

According to the report, the IDRF submitted an application for tax exemption certificates to the Internal Revenue Service of the US. The Form 1023 filed by the IDRF in 1989 identifies nine representative organisations like Vikas Bharati (Bihar), Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (Tamil Nadu), Sewa Bharati (Delhi), Jana Seva Vidya Kendra (Karnataka), Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Madhya Pradesh), Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Gujarat), Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (Nagar Haveli), Girivasi Vanvasi Sewa Prkalp (Uttar Pradesh) and G Deshpande Vanvasi Vastigrah (Maharashtra), that the IDRF sought to support in India.

Surprisingly, all the nine organisations mentioned by the IDRF belong to the RSS family. According to the Sangh literature, the origins and growth of Vikas Bharati is described as the one 'which originated in the fountainhead called Sangh'. Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (SVRDS) is a sister organisation of the VHP in Tamil Nadu. While, Sewa Bharati is the most commonly RSS identified service organisation.

Besides these nine organisations, there are other organisations which play an active role in IDRF activities. Ekal Vidyalays (One Teacher Schools) is a VHP project aimed at the indoctrination of students in remote, tribal villages. Vikasan Foundation strives to promote Indian culture in India and abroad. Bharat Vikas Parishad aims to involve entrepreneurs and well-off sections in its activities. Sewa International is IDRF affiliate in India and oversees its Indian operations.

Highlighting the main points, the report details disbursement of about \$4 million between 1994 and 2000 to dozens of Sangh organisations by the IDRF mostly used for persecuting Muslims and Christians. In 2000 alone, using US government tax exemption status for charities, it collected \$1.7 million.

The distribution of IDRF funds by ideology is as follows — 83 per cent to the RSS, VHP and other RSS family organisations, 8 per cent to other Hindu and Jain religious organisations, 2 per cent to secular organisations and 7 per cent to unknown ideology. That means most of the funds went in for anti-Muslim, anti-Christian programmes in India.

Similarly, 69 per cent of the funds were directly provided for the Hinduisation efforts, reconversion to Hinduism and on education to tribals and Hindus living in rural areas on fascist lines. Only 15 per cent of the rest was spent on relief, 8 per cent on welfare and health and 4 per cent on 'development'. Share of religious activities other than Hindu was only 2 per cent. However, most of the 'development' was in terms of building Hindu temples and other such sectarian activities. According to the report, "The IDRF participated in fundraising efforts with the Hindu Swayamsewak Sangh (HSS) in the US to raise money for Bangladesh Hindu victims of communal violence. Similarly, it also raised money for Kashmiri Hindus victimised by militants in Kashmir. More recently, it announced a donation of \$25,000 towards relief efforts following the World Trade Centre collapse. In all three cases, the people responsible for perpetrating the disaster were Muslims, and the victims largely non-Muslim, the IDRF felt. However, in contrast, to date, the IDRF has not announced any relief for the victims of communal riots in Gujarat in February and March 2002."

The campaign activists are of the view that the IDRF was not only encouraging communal hatred in India, but in the US also. Because of its partisan role, Hinduism in the US is becoming a less respected religion. They said that funds coming from abroad for the minority-run organisations in India reach them only after a thorough investigation by the authorities, while the same procedures are not always applied to the RSS family organisations. Blaming the central government, they said since the major party of this coalition government (BJP) is the political wing of the RSS family, so the strict procedures are not followed in their case.

The activists were disappointed with the ill treatment meted out to the minorities in India by states and the Centre. They said that such misuse of donations had been harming the Indo-American community, and if it were not stopped, the funds for genuine relief work and other developmental programmes would be reduced to the minimum.

They also announced the launch of 'Project Saffron Dollar' to bring to an end the collection and transfer of funds from the US to organisations spreading sectarian hatred in India. The campaign filed a petition on November 19 in the US seeking immediate cessation of the transfer of funds to IDRF. It has also dispatched its report to ten leading US corporations to prevent IDRF from using their facilities for fund raising.

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- 21 It is not clear whether Amritanandamayi herself is aware of this danger or whether she is working in tandem with the Advanis and Malkanis for the further spread of rabid Hindutva.
- 22 The Amritavarsh-50 also saw the launch of Amrita TV channel by union minister of state for information, Ravi Shankar Prasad, who hoped that the channel would help inculcate spiritual awareness among the public.
- 23 Astrology in traditional south India in the context of the caste-Hindus was the caste-based task of a section of the brahmins called Panchangam (Calendar) brahmins. They could have hardly earned a living from this occupation. But they are in great demand in this cyber age, which is again a contribution of globalisation.
- 24 In this context, an article in the *Outlook* dated October 20, 2003, 'Bhakti Button' by Harsh Kabra, makes fascinating reading. Its opening paragraph runs thus: "Preaching was never so lucrative. With salvation outsourced, the boob tube now wants to be your drawing-room deliverer, promising armchair enlightenment and remote-controlled emancipation."
- 25 Andre Mukenge, 'Religion and Globalisation', South Corporation Journalism (Online), pp 1-2.

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