

## MARANATHA: REALIZED KINGDOM OF GOD AMIDST POVERTY IN INDIA

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**Introduction:** One of the worst enemies of humanity is the poverty. It is a severe force which makes the life of the people miserable. Millions of people are affected by the extreme poverty. Many are dying every day because of poverty. It is a major issue in the Third World countries as well. As a result of that poverty has been the root cause of not only socio-economic problems but emotional, psychological, and political problems in India. At this juncture of unrest life condition realized kingdom of God is proposed in the light of Maranathato address the poverty in India.

**Understanding Maranatha:** The word Maranatha is found in the New Testament only once in Paul's greeting at the end of 1 Corinthians (16:22). Linguistic analysis offers two possible meanings for the Aramaic phrase, depending on whether it is read *Maranatha* "Our Lord, come", or *Maranatha* "Our Lord has come." Apostle Paul used the term in his closing words to the Corinthians to emphasize his eschatological belief and to encourage them that Jesus would be returning within their lifetime. Figuratively, it is translated as the Lord is coming or the Lord is with us. Therefore, Maranatha is all about good news for the believers in Corinthian because it offers new motivational and hope, and also empower them to sense the establishment of kingdom of God here on Earth.

**2. Understanding Realized Kingdom of God:** Realized Kingdom of God

meanse xperiencing the revelation of God's unconditional love and fulfilment of the will of God here on Earth (Lk. 4:18) especially in moral aspects: love, care, justice and equality etc. This realized kingdom of God is qualified in Jesus' proclamation by saying that the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believed in the good news (Mark 1:15). It replaces "the kingdom is near" with "the kingdom is here on Earth" towards its final consummation. On the other hand, the realized kingdom God is also correlated with C.H. Dodd's idea of realized eschatology.

**3. Understanding the plight of poor**

**in India:** According to World Bank Report on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2016, 33% of world's poorest people live in India. It is calculated that around 40% of the people in India are living below poverty line. They don't have enough income to have sufficient food, shelter and to have education and health. Poverty

compels them to live in slum, the most unhygienic conditions. They go to bed with a single meal in a day, with a square meal or without any meal. Therefore, poverty has caused malnutrition which in turn contributes to different diseases such as tuberculosis, anaemia, fatigue, ultimately the premature death etc. Moreover, most of them are bond-slave workers because of that justice and proper wages are denied to them. We can say that in India poverty is institutionalized where accumulation of wealth by few is found among the capitalistic structure such as Globalization and its allies such as Multi-National Companies, TNC and New Economic Policy etc.

**4. Realized Kingdom of God and the Poor:** Jesus Christ envisions of a new society which is inherent in the concept of the realized kingdom of God because it is the first and foremost liberating love of God which Jesus brings into all humanity. The realized kingdom of God invites to leave the ways that are enslaving and dehumanising to one that is leading to freedom, fellowship and justice. It is the place where the poor become the privileged ones to experience God's love, mercy and justice. Therefore, realized kingdom of God is a message of hope and comfort to persons in real situation of suffering and deprivation.

The good news of the realized kingdom of God implies giving importance to the neglected ones especially the poor. Because as long as

the poor remain poor then there would be no realization of Kingdom of God. Therefore, Jesus identifies Himself with the poor in order to show them His care and concerns, He is solidarity with them. Moreover, the realized kingdom of God is a place where the hungry would be satisfied and oppressed would no longer be miserable because the Kingdom is ruled by Christ Himself.

**5. The Poor Inherit the Realized Kingdom of God through Christian Community:** The poor inherit the kingdom of God through a Christian community where justice, equality, sharing and compassion are living realities. Jesus gathers around him a community consisting of the poor and needy, the outcasts and sinners. The members may represent unequal socio-economic status but all are trying to submerge into the reality of oneness in Christ. Within this community even the poor and powerless are offered a status of dignity and identity. The community determines to have no poor among them and are willing to share their possession of their treatment to the poor and needy. A new spirit of equality and justice was clearly present in which division of rich and poor was eradicated.

Moreover, while realized kingdom of God concerns on the economic sharing within the Christian community, it does not ignore the Christians' concern for the poor outside the community. It promotes Christian love should extend beyond the bounds of Christian community to embrace all

people and above all the poor and suffering in the country irrespective of faith, beliefs, caste and gender. Therefore, Christian communities are intended to be centre of compassion, and sharing for all humanity where the fruits of justice, equality and mercy are produced.

**6. Two Visions of Realized Kingdom of God:** In relation to the contemporary socio-economic realities in India, two visions of Realized Kingdom of God are proposed for the empowerment of the poor in the following ways:

**6.1. Emancipation of the poor:** Since God is the God of the poor and defender of the lowly. He has a special interest in the poor and the needy so, the realized kingdom of God sees the rich in the community of believers as stewards of God's resources and agents in the welfare of the poor. Unless the rich take up the cause of the poor and help them to overcome their poverty and suffering then building a new society of emancipation cannot be achieved. Therefore, alleviation of poverty is the responsibility of rich people as they should share and contribute to the welfare of the poor (Lk. 18:18-30). The poor are deserving emancipation under the initiative of rich people who are receiving God's blessings.

**6.2. Administering justice:** The issue of justice here implies giving importance to the poor who are denied

of their basic rights due to the unjust socio-economic structure. The realized kingdom of God upholds equal distribution of wealth, safeguarding the welfare and justice to the poor. It challenges the structure and system that promote poverty. Likewise among the community of believers the helpless and disempowered people are to be administered justice. It is only through justice that they can be uplifted. Therefore, administration of justice to the poor is the very essence of good news to the poor and forming to new liberating structures in society.

### **Conclusion**

From the above discussion it is clear that poverty crippled many lives in India. Taking this into consideration Maranatha has the power to give hope and motivation to the poor by bringing about the realized kingdom of God in the state of their socio-economic and political poverty. Therefore, Maranatha can unlock the realization of Kingdom of God that is established here on earth.

