

Proud to be a complaining Indian

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We as Indians must be proud that our country remains the ONLY country to survive with its democratic-secular constitution out of 30 countries which got freedom after the World War II. Of course, the 'only survivor' had to face immensely critical situations like 1975-77 Emergency, violence against minorities-Dalits and terrorist attacks.

One unfortunate aspect of our post-Independence governance has been that whenever country witnesses the large scale violence against minorities and Dalits, the search for perpetrators continues endlessly and criminals rarely punished. Major incidents of violence against minorities like Nellie massacre (1983), Sikh massacre (1984), Hashimpura custodial massacre of Muslim youth (1987), pre/post-Ayodhya mosque demolition violence against Muslims (1990-92), Gujarat carnage (2002) and Kandhmal cleansing of Christians (2008) are testimony to this reality.

The status of anti-Dalit violence is no different. The major incidents of persecution and massacre of Dalits; [1968 Kilvenmani massacre](#), [1997 Melavalavu massacre](#), [2013 Marakkanam anti-Dalit violence](#), [2012 Dharmapuri anti-Dalit violence](#) (all in Tamil Nadu), [1985 Karamchedu massacre](#), [1991 Tsundur massacre](#) (all in AP), [1996 Bathani Tola Massacre](#), [1997 Laxmanpur Bathe massacre](#) (all in Bihar), [1997 Ramabai killings, Mumbai](#), [2006 Khairlanji massacre](#), [2014 Javkheda Hatyakand](#), (all in Maharashtra), [1999 Bant Singh killing, Punjab](#), [2000 Caste persecution in \(Karnataka\)](#), [5 Dalits beaten/burnt to death for skinning a dead cow](#) 2006, [2011 killings of Dalits in Mirchpur \(all in Haryana\)](#), [2015 anti-Dalit violence in Dangawas \(Rajasthan\)](#) are some of the thousands of incidents of the Dalit persecution. In almost all these cases perpetrators are yet to be identified. Even if identified the prosecution rate never exceeded 20%.

On the other hand, the Dalit and minority perpetrators of violence are efficiently put on trial by constituting special investigation teams and punished by fast track courts. But when the victims are Dalits or minorities no such urgency is shown. In such cases Indian State is fond of playing commission-commission. Commissions after commissions would be constituted to see that the heinous crimes disappear from the public memory. The 1992-93 Bombay violence can be an interesting case for study in this regard.

According to BN Shrikrishna Commission enquiry report for December 1992 violence against Muslims important leaders of Hindutva organizations were found responsible. They were not even called for questioning what to talk of penalizing. On the contrary for January 1993 violence many Muslim perpetrators of bomb blasts in Bombay were hanged. This is true of 'Khalistani' violence. The 'Khalistanis' were hanged or killed on roads but for 1984 massacre of Sikhs Indian State is yet to conclude its process of finding the real culprits. Hashimpura massacre where 42 Muslim youth in police

custody were shot dead on the banks of a river by a PAC team all the culprits who were on bail were finally acquitted by the court in 2015. In almost all the anti-Dalit violence cases the culprits have been acquitted or released on bail despite murder charges against them.

It may be interesting to note here that first two convicts to be hanged after Independence were two peasant activists, G. Krishta Goud & J. Bhoomaiah. Moreover, 80% of those who are on the death row presently belong to Dalit, minority and poor sections.

It was happening when the ruling elite were normatively committed to a democratic-secular polity and a Constitution based on the principles of egalitarianism. Despite this commitment we were practicing two systems of justice delivery, one for the religious majority/Haves and other for Dalits/Minorities/poor. Any violence by the former was regarded as 'riot' and one by the latter as 'terrorism'. However, this commitment in principle to a democratic-secular polity though often superficial and unstable did not let the sufferer lose heart in the system as judiciary and civil society often stood with the victims.

However, with the present RSS/BJP government in power even this normative commitment to democracy & secularism seems to have dissipated. PM Modi when he was CM of Gujarat while talking to Reuters journalists on July 12, 2013 identified himself as 'Hindu nationalist'. He also declared himself to be a RSS swyam sevak nurtured by Guru Golwalkar. It was first time in the history of Independent India that a constitutional functionary identified himself as a 'Hindu nationalist'. Shockingly, the term 'Hindu Nationalist' 'Muslim Nationalist' originated in a specific historical context both being committed to two-nation theory and opposed to freedom struggle. Moreover, those who killed Gandhiji described themselves too as 'Hindu Nationalists'. Moreover, if Modi is 'Hindu Nationalist' then naturally there will be Muslim/Sikh/Christian nationalist also.

Only PM Modi is not a swyam sevak of RSS most of his ministers, BJP chief ministers and Governors fall in the same category. They naturally are committed to convert India into a Hindu rashtra as RSS English organ, Organizer just on the eve of Independence (14 August, 1947) rejected the whole concept of a composite nation (under the editorial title 'Whither'): "In Hindusthan only the Hindus form the nation...the nation itself must be built up of Hindus, on Hindu traditions, culture, ideas and aspirations."

When the Constituent Assembly of India finalized the Constitution of India RSS was not happy. Four days after it (**November 30, 1949**) ORGANIZER in an editorial complained demanded promulgation of Manusmriti as constitution as laws of

"Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits that means nothing".

This mindset has led India to the situation which we are witnessing today. 'ghar wapsi', 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' (a slogan which RSS cadres never raised against the British) and 'cow' have left minorities and Dalits at the mercy of vigilante gangs who run parallel state and have been provided with police escorts. Attacks on Muslims who are mostly Dalits did not create ripples but Dalits showed that they are not Muslims and will not submit to the fate. Today India seems to be at a cross-road; whether to stick to a democratic-secular polity or embark on a journey to undo it.

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