

Communalism on the rise



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Monjib Mochahari 22 September 2008 9180 views

AUGUST 15, 1947 is a major date in history. It was on that day India awoke to life and freedom from injustice and domination, as Jawaharlal Nehru declared in his 'Tryst with Destiny' speech. The event is significant as it sowed seeds of democracy in our country. However, the country has become a fertile ground for communal forces over the past decades.

Constitutionally, India became a secular state, but after 61 years of its independence, there is no need for doubt and confusion that a large-scale communal riots has become a hallmark of the second largest democracy in the world. Down the history of India, since 1947, the waves of religious intolerance are reflected in frequent eruption of communal tensions between different religious communities.

Although, India is generally known for religious pluralism, the emergence of Hindutva ideology - 'one people, one faith, one language, one culture and one religion' - has ignited in the repeated attacks on both Muslim and Christian communities in recent decades. The anti-Sikh riots of 1984, killing of Graham Stains in 1999, Godhra genocide in 2002 are obvious examples of such attacks. And now, the messiahs of communal violence are leading a crusade in Orissa, Karnatak, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The proliferation of religious fundamentalists has become a mockery of secularism as enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The organized arms training by some of the anti-social elements in camps is insidiously, yet publicly arming Indian civil society, creating a climate of animosity, threats and engineering communal disputes against minorities. Yet, the role of some political parties in instigating communal violence is an open secret and unfortunate for our country as they are paving the way for social disharmony to capture political power.

The trauma of communalism is not over. Yet the debate over communal violence continues and the people even in a secular country continue to live in grief and pain. Who can save us- yet the question remains unanswered.

Today, the country as whole needs a stringent law to deal with communal riots. Both the central and the state governments cannot remain mere spectators. Unless and until the government formulates specific law to prevent such atrocities, the potential threats to secularism will continue to operate against the religious minority communities.

The fabrics of secularism in our country will take its root only if anti-social elements are ever given a chance to fail again and again.

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BY MONJIB MOCHAHARI

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