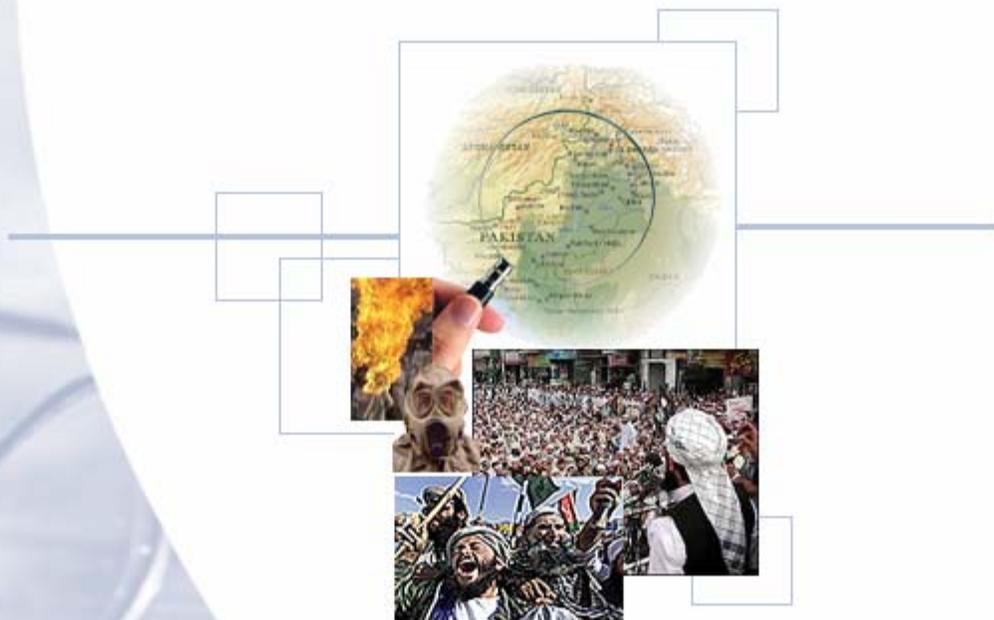


# **Setting India on Fire!!!**

## **Hindu Fascist Violence against Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and minorities in India**

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# Setting India on Fire!!!

## Hindu Fascist Violence against Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and minorities in India



**"It is a matter of deep humiliation to confess that we are a house divided against itself that we Hindus and Mussulmans are flying at one another. It is a matter of still deeper humiliation that we Hindus regard several million of our own kith and kin as too degraded even for our touch."**

**M.K. Gandhi's address to the US through Columbia Broadcasting System in 1930s:**

Such discrimination, as noted by Gandhi himself, forced many Dalits to convert to Islam, in the hope of gaining some social standing in the society that refuses to consider them human otherwise. But the VHP led Hindu right took this to be an unforgivable sin. To abandon their religion and that too for Islam outraged the hardliners to the core. The VHP saw this as a serious threat to its notion of Hinduism.

India, the world's largest secular democracy is everything but that. This rhetoric sounds good but only for so long. It becomes nauseating when this hypocrisy takes such toll that humans are openly butchered in the streets while the government prides itself to be a representative of those very people.

## Prologue

Indian history of the past sixty years has been marred by religious, political and communal violences. An interesting trend to note is that only certain religious issues become prominent in politics; causing agitation and leading to communal riots. This essay attempts to ascertain the sociological, psychological, economic, and political explanations for incidents of communal violence, in Gujarat, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Maharashtra, Orrissa and Delhi in India.

The first major riots that occurred in India between Hindus and Muslims after the bloodshed of partition in 1947 can be traced back to as long as 1961, in Jabalpur a central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. (sic) They were followed by riots in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh with periodic violence erupting elsewhere.

Similarly, thousands of Sikhs were murdered in Delhi in 1984. The assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the hands of two Sikh bodyguards triggered that violence; a response from Sikhs at the killing of innocent worshippers at the holy shrine when the Indian Army stormed into the temple with full force under her orders. But the roots of present day violence can be best traced to the 1980's.



**Hindu mob is beating a helpless Sikh during violence against Sikhs in Delhi in 1980.**



**Sikhs burnt alive in the streets of Delhi. (1980)**

Gujarat riots of 2002 were another horror story where thousands of Muslims were burnt alive, raped and slaughtered by Hindu fascists in the first genocide of 21<sup>st</sup> century. The recent anti-Christian violence in India is being viewed by the world with concern as it is a sign of how quickly such violence can spiral out of control. The last thing the world want is another incident similar to the Gujarat riots of 2002 or the destruction of Babri Masjid of 1992, which gave way to months of fierce unrest.



**This is the man, a terrorist of Bajrang Dal who with that weapon in his hand had split/pierced the womb of the Muslim woman in Gujrat and slaughtered her unborn baby as well with her with this same weapon. The picture with the weapon having blood on it was published by press then.**

Following the demolition of Babri masjid in 1992, some 2000 people were killed in communal riots in Ayodhya, Bombay and beyond. Hindu hardliner parties, including the Vishwa Hindu Prashad (VHP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - used Ayodhya as a rallying call to Hindus throughout India. They said the 16th century mosque at the site was located on the birthplace of the Hindu Lord Rama and that a temple had to be built there. The temple till date has not come up but the memories of the destruction of the mosque still haunt the minorities in India.

Some analysts blame the Hindu-Muslim rioting in India on the Muslim movement for an independent Pakistan which sharpened the divisions on religious lines and saw millions of Muslims slaughtered in 1947 by Hindu fascists. But deeper analysis prove this hypothesis wrong as Hindu religious intolerance has not remained confined to Muslims only. Other minorities including Christians, Sikhs and lower caste Hindus, otherwise known as *dalits*, have also borne the brunt of the fascist Hindu ideology that fuels this violence.

The problem is much bigger than what is taken to be in explaining these disturbing tendencies. In all the above mentioned incidents what remains consistent is the fact that the aggressors are always fundamentalist Hindus, who seek justification of their horrendous sins in divine rulings. Thus this mindset can be best made sense of with an understanding of Hinduism itself.

**“Inequality is the soul of Hinduism,” wrote Ambedkar.** He characterized the oppressive caste system as the tyranny of Hinduism. After spending a lifetime in a crusade against the oppressive Hinduism, Ambedkar finally renounced Hinduism, and converted to Buddhism and exhorted his followers to do the same. It is an irony that BJP and other Sangh Parivar outfits are now trying to prove him right by their fascist violence against Indian minorities.

Some claim that India was a country that preached non-violence ever since the Vedic period. This also sounds ironic especially when today's India has become a conundrum of violence with BJP-led Saffron Brigade trying to create a Hindu Rashtra.

This has resulted in terrible and outrageous violence against the minorities living in India, which in actuality expose and challenge the secular credentials of India.

The new wave of attacks against Christians was triggered by the killing of a Hindu leader, Swami Laxanananda Saraswati, along with five other people at Tumudibandh, Kandhamal District, in Orissa on 23 August 2008.

The rebellious Maoist Naxalite groups prominent in this region have claimed responsibility for the murder of Swami and his followers. In addition, the state police authorities have stated that the killing was carried out by the Maoists. However, leaders of certain fundamentalist Hindu organizations like the Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini blamed Christians for these killings. Despite the condemnation expressed by Christian groups and churches at the killing of the Swami and his associates and their demand for the culprits to be caught and punished, in retaliation, the extremist Hindu organizations have engaged in a series of attacks against Christians throughout the Sate of Orissa.

The minority Christians in Orissa have been experiencing various forms of atrocities in recent weeks including looting, destruction of churches and church-run institutions, brutal attacks against priests, rape of nuns, church workers and other members of the Christian community, most of whom are Dalits and Adivasis (tribals).

Reports from various sources confirmed that at least fifty thousand Christians in Orissa have been displaced; hundreds of Christians have fled their homes and taken refuge in forests; many others are living in as many as eighteen relief camps, which offer them only so much relief in the wake of the mayhem that has wrecked their lives.

The plight of the victims and survivors of this communal carnage, the fear and trauma they are experiencing, the poor and unhygienic facilities in the government-run relief camps, the inefficiency of government machinery in tackling the violence, continue to be a serious concern.

The upsurge of religious extremism in Orissa in recent weeks has left many Christians in Orissa virtually defenseless



(House belonging to Christian family burnt to ashes. Thousands of houses of Christians were burnt by Fanatic Hindus during recent violence in Orissa and other states of India).

### **Insight into the communal violence in India**

Though Hindutva ideologues often try and confuse matters by claiming that India is already a Hindu Rashtra, which translated in English means a "Hindu nation", they know that their model of Indian society, if it is to come about, requires the prior establishment of a Hindu state under Sangh control, which in coordination with the RSS, alone can dramatically reshape the Indian society/polity demanded by a proper Hindu Rashtra. But there are only two routes to achieving such radicals strong state power — through an electorate to secure an absolute or near-absolute majority for the BJP in Parliament; or bypassing altogether the

constitutional-electoral route and carrying out an authoritarian coup either of a military-police kind, or a civilian unconstitutional coup of the Emergency-type. Through this a dominant but minority party comes to power in a coalition through elections but then overthrows all democratic-electoral restraints and establishes its authoritarian state. Fascism in Germany and Italy combined the electoral and unconstitutional processes and attained central control in this manner.

Gujrat is being used as a rallying point by BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal, Durga Vahini, Balidani Dasta of Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena and Vishav Hindu Parishad. Taking it to be the starting point, they wish to take their malicious agenda forward to Orissa and beyond.

### **Organized violence against Christians in India**

This new wave of organized violence against Christians, which started in Orissa, has now spread to other States such as Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

Attacks launched by Hindu extremist groups against the Christians are considered as a well thought-out plot and just one link in a long chain of events that have continued to strain communal harmony and inter-religious relations in the country. Although the attacks against Christians are interpreted as religious violence, in most circumstances the under current is based on socio-economic factors. Christians in the country have been repeatedly accused of encouraging conversion to Christianity. Various Churches have been unequivocal in their official documents and statements and have insisted that conversion to Christianity by force or fraudulent means is strictly prohibited.



( Cross at stakes - Many Churches destroyed in Orissa recently)



Churches being vandalized in Delhi



### 3. What the constitution of India says?

Contrary to what the Indian constitution states in terms of protecting minority rights, Hindu militant groups are trying to replicate the example of Bajrang Dal. The Bajrang Dal was set up in 1984 as the youth arm of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Mr Prakash Sharma was made its Kanpur unit convener. At that time, it was “active only in a few districts of Uttar Pradesh. Today it has some 1.3 million activists spread across most of the States and the aim is to cover every district of the country. The Bajrang Dal leader denied that his organization was involved in the violence against Christians in Kandhamal district of Orissa or in Mangalore and elsewhere in Karnataka, although the Karnataka unit chief Mahendra Kumar, had issued a statement accepting its role. Mr. Sharma listed the tasks before the Dal as “seva” (service of the people) and “suraksha” (protection). Its volunteers were given tough physical training to

help them protect themselves and the people. He insisted that they were not trained in firearms, and were trained only in “aiming with air guns for which we run regular camps.”

Mr Sharma very openly and nonchalantly admitted that the minorities can only live in a Hindu Rashtra if they stop preaching their religion. “We do not say do not go to mosques or churches. But conversion must be stopped. We have re-converted to Hinduism through the Ghar Vapasi (home-coming) programme about 10,000-15,000 people since I became Bajrang Dal convener in 2002.”

Here is another chilling reality that somehow is escaping the Government of India. The violence and threats against the Christians/minorities of India is an assault on the Constitution of India. The Indian Constitution declares India to be a “sovereign socialist secular democratic republic” which secures to all citizens “justice; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; and equality of status and opportunity”. Under articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution, discrimination based on religion is prohibited. Article 25 guarantees the right to freely practice and propagate religion. In addition to these constitutional guarantees at the domestic level, India is also party to several international treaties that stipulate human rights obligations. Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights establishes the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Article 26 bars discrimination on the grounds of religion while Article 27 stipulates that in “those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion...”.

India now has seven states, which have legislation banning religious conversions. The seven Indian states with anti-conversion legislation (known as the Freedom of Religion Acts), include Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Hindu extremists commonly use anti-conversion legislation to falsely accuse Christians of converting people through force or allurement; thus justifying subsequent attacks on Christians. They also deflect prosecution away from themselves by pressing charges of “forcible conversion” without any evidence.

### **The response of the church in India**

Atrocities committed against Christians are horrendous and their unspeakable state is no less than a nightmare. In August 2008, a crowd of up to 4,000 Hindu militants attacked the Brethren in Christ Girls Hostel at Nuagoan, one of nine such facilities funded through the Scholarship Program for International Children’s Education (SPICE). The mob set the hostel and church ablaze, destroyed its water tank, and demolished the campus. Ten policemen who were on guard at the hostel fled when they saw the approaching crowd. Staff, girls, and local believers, some of whom were beaten, managed to flee. The Cuttack-based offices of the Brethren in Christ Church in India were also a target, and several pastors and church planters lost all their belongings when their homes were looted and burned. People, including pastors, who had to take refuge in forests, lost everything. They are without food and clothes and at risk of snake bites and malaria.

The Churches and Christian leaders in India have been making persistent efforts for appealing to people to strive for peace and reconciliation. The call given by the United Christian Forum comprised of the National Council of Churches in India, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India and the Evangelical Fellowship of India to observe a Day of

Prayer and Fasting for Peace and Reconciliation was very well received by Christians all over the country. People at large have appreciated the efforts by various churches to promote and restore trust and goodwill among people of all religions and communities. The Church leaders in India appealed to all members of Christian community in the country to work for the welfare of all sections of people in society in spite of such horrific experiences of violence and death of some members of the community.

The World Council of Churches is deeply disturbed by these developments of religious violence in Orissa and has expressed its concern in a letter by the General Secretary addressed to the Prime Minister of India. A pastoral letter from WCC General Secretary expressing sympathy and solidarity to suffering Christians in Orissa was sent to WCC member churches in India and the National Council of Churches in India.

### **India, Secular?**

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh strongly defended India's secular credentials when the European Union conveyed its "serious concerns" over attacks on Christians in India. "We are a secular state. We are a multi-religious, multi-cultural nation," Manmohan Singh said emphatically. "The Constitution guarantees all citizens of India the right to profess and propagate a religion of their choice," he said. Manmohan Singh admitted there have been "sporadic attacks" on Christian shrines but underlined he had already condemned these incidents as "acts of national shame." An 'act of national shame,' indeed it was. But such gruesome violations of human rights demand a more stern response than this. The Indian Prime Minister was covering it up cosmetically since he had to do it. But the ground realities are absolutely different. As the growing religious extremism and increasing violence against religious minorities in India is putting the secular credibility of India at risk.

### **The reality check India should go in for**

Secularism is a term employed most rashly by the Indian National Congress. The Chief Minister of South Indian state, Tamil Nadu made his mind clear regarding this and launched a scathing attack on the Prime Minister.

Questioning the secular credentials of India, Karunanidhi alleged that the Congress was neither a true secular party nor a force that was interested in the country's integration. Referring to the killings of Sikhs in the north in the wake of assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, he wondered whether the Congress could be called a secular party. Secularism was not a term to which the Congress alone could claim ownership; he said asking "have the people given patta (title deed) to the Congress to use the term?"

Karuna Nidhi had carefully chosen his target when attacking the Congress for he was aware that India has not been able to free itself of communalism even after more than sixty years of independence, however much it tries to deny it. If anything, it has been getting worse year after year. There has not been a single year in post-independence period, which has been free of communal violence though number of incidents may vary.

Indian talks of pluralism, secularism and a great tradition, are made to seem nothing more than a mockery by the Hinduvta dream of carving out a 'Hindu Rashtra'.

### **Now there are few incidents that would stun the readers:**

In the year 2002 the first reported riot took place in Kozhikode (Calicut), Kerala on 3rd January. In the clashes between two communities (Hindus and Muslims) five persons were killed. The clashes occurred on the question of eve teasing. The whole region came in the grip of violence. More than twenty persons were injured including five women. Properties worth lakhs of rupees were destroyed. The police had to be heavily deployed to bring the situation under control. Kerala in India is generally thought to be free of communal violence, experiencing only occasional frenzy and bout of communal violence. But this time a vicious terror campaign overtook it, aimed at its Christian community.

Gujarat was next to come under the stretch of communal carnage. Nowhere in history can there be found an example of the violence of this kind in India except at the time of partition. The communal carnage in Gujarat shook the entire world. It was difficult to believe such intense communal frenzy could be incited by the BJP for its political gains. More than 2000 Muslims were killed most cruelly in this carnage according to very reliable sources even though Government records show dead to number no more than 1000. What is worse the Chief Minister Narendra Modi justified such frenzy and described it as reaction to action in Godhra. And all this happened with full complicity of the police and bureaucracy. The honest officers who did not allow carnage in their areas were instantly transferred by the Modi Government.

Some ministers who led the mobs have been named in FIRs. Many mosques and mausoleums were demolished and ground was leveled. Some accounts maintain about 700 such religious structures were brought down or severely damaged. Ahmedabad, Baroda, Mehsana and Panchmahal districts were the worst affected districts covering entire north and central Gujarat. Properties worth more than 10,000 crores were looted or burnt, though these figures are disputed. The business loss due to closures and migration of labor is several times this figure. Hundreds of Muslim families were totally uprooted. The carnage continued for more than five months

On 17th March communal incidents took place in Loharu in Bhivani district of Haryana. Loharu was once under a Muslim ruler and was known as Nawwab of Loharu, which explains the considerable number of Muslims residing in that town. A mob of three hundred incited by the rumor of cow slaughter attacked two mosques and at least 15 shops and houses belonging to the Muslim minority community were set ablaze.

According to a UNI report quoting the police sources said that a mob of 300 Shiv Sainiks set fire to another mosque near the railway station also including many shops in Purana Bazar. And in this area all 15-20 shops and houses belonging to minority were burnt down. The palace of Nawwab of Loharu was also surrounded by a mob but additional reinforcements were requisitioned from other places which were thus saved from being damaged.

Next incidents of communal violence took place in three places in Rajasthan in which three persons were killed on 25th March on the occasion of Muharram. The immediate provocation was the holding of poornahuti yagnas (a Hindu religious ritual) and Kirtans (devotional songs) for Rama at various temples on the route of Tazia processions. Curfew had to be

clamped in the town of Gangapur, 80 kms from Sawai Madhopur, in central Rajasthan where 3 people were killed and 15 injured in police firing.

According to the police violence broke out when activists of the VHP, BJP and Bajrang Dal collected at an ancient Hanumanji Mandir for a Yagna and Kirtan. The police asked them not to gather but they defied police orders and began to shout provocative slogans when the Tazia procession came closer to the temple. The police was compelled to open fire when tear-gassing and cane charge had no effect.

The Gangapur city has 25% Muslim population and earlier was considered to be the stronghold of SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India) in Rajasthan. It has always been prone to minor communal irritations although this is the first time that violence has erupted on such a large scale. In different parts of Southern Rajasthan where the Sangh Parivar has strong presence communal tension was simmering. But the situation was kept under control.

### **Christians' massacre starts again:**





The recent wave of the communal violence in Orissa's Kandhamal district was an 'unprecedented' attack on the Christian community in India, according to a rights group in its fact-finding report. 'We are saddened to acknowledge that the violence in Orissa, which left at least four killed and 730 houses and 95 churches burnt, will go into the history books as an unprecedented attack on Christians in India,' said Joseph D'Souza, president of the All India Christian Council (AICC). 'The tragedy is deepened by the fact that the violence was avoidable if the authorities had enforced the rule of law'.

Bajrang Dal activists have been involved in bomb blasts often blaming it on Muslims, so as to prove their stance on Muslims being responsible for the terror activities in India. Today spokesmen of the Congress led UPA Government in India are asking for a ban on Bajrang Dal. The faster it is done the better it would be for India as a country as there is every reason to believe that it may just implode from within as political parties like BJP have undertaken a mad, mad cannonball run.

## RSS/VHP/Bajrang Dal and its activities

The RSS was founded in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hegdewar is the ideological fountainhead of the modern Hindutva movement. Organized around the concept of Shakas, a local cell formation where young men would gather for physical and ideological training, under the tutelage of a brother or dada, the RSS ideology as espousing the national cause was articulated over the next decade or more. Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, who was appointed the head of RSS shortly before his death by Hegdewar, clarified the idea of the nation in his treatise:

"We, or Our Nationhood Defined": We believe that our notions today about the Nation are erroneous... It is but proper therefore, at this stage, to understand what the Western Scholars state as the Universal Nation idea and correct ourselves.

Based on a racial idea of Nation, Golwalkar in praise of Hitler says: To keep up the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by her purging the country of the Semitic Races - the Jews... Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for Races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by".

These Hindu extremist organizations are also imparting military training to Hindu youth for taking on non-Hindus. The formal training is now underway to ensure the spread of a militant ideology. The Shiv Sena chief has condoned the arms training of the Bajrang Dal. He also mentioned that the Indian army is ill-prepared for war and that his political party, the Shiv Sena also will be arming their cadre.

<http://news.indya.com/india2006sena.html> At the Sarojini Nagar Camp of Lucknow this is what was released to media: "The number of people being trained in the Sarojini Nagar camp at present is 100. But according to the convener of UP branch of Bajrang Dal, Avadh Bihari Mishra, the objective of this camp is to prepare a group of two thousand trained and active young men who could **train a million** youth in martial arts and **handling of arms** in camps at various places. In addition to this, the objective is also to create such atmosphere and mentality which was seen in the country at the time of demolition of Babri Masjid."

## Women branch of RSS/Bajrang Dal armed militants

Among the Sangh Parivar's affiliate organizations actively participating in giving training in martial arts are the RSS's women's branch (Rashtriya Sevika Samiti), the Bajrang Dal and the Bajrang Dal's women's branch (Durga Vahini). Though training camps and trainings are not new for these organizations (they have been imparting training in "lathi" wielding and riot mongering for a long time), they have now started arming their volunteers in a military pattern. <http://www.milligazette.com/Archives/01092001/31.htm>

Though the current training exercises are being carried out with air-guns, the Bajrang Dal state chief Ved Prakash Sachan said he plans to give volunteers a feel of **real guns**. "This is the induction stage. Later we will train our boys with proper guns and rifles," he admitted

over the telephone, while claiming, “This is part of our drill to ensure protection of Hindus.” Sachan is personally supervising the camp, which was not the first of its kind in the state. According to him, similar camps have been held in Varanasi, Mathura and Meerut. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2000/jun/25bd.htm>



(Females activists of **Durga Vahini**, the women wing of Bajrang Dal are being imparted weapons and sword training at its camps for taking part in future activities against minorities.)

#### **Chronology of terrorist activities by Bajrang Dal, RSS**

- \* Aug 25, 2008 : Two die in Kanpur when a bomb explodes. It transpires these were Bajrang Dal activists who were making explosives.
- \* Aug-Sept 2008: Spate of attacks on Christians in Orissa and Karnataka. Karnataka unit head Mahendra Kumar arrested. Home ministry says Bajrang Dal is behind the attacks
- \* April 2006: Two Bajrang Dal activists die in Nanded while making bombs. Of them included a suspect of the 2003 Parbhani mosque blasts
- \* Jan 1999 : Dal mob led by its local leader, Dara Singh, burnt alive a Christian priest Graham Stains and his two little sons in Orissa

And the list continues as the saffron assault brigade takes charge of turning India into a Hindu Rashtra. The Bajrang Dal is said to have been at the forefront of murderous gangs that killed Muslims and burnt their homes in Gujarat in 2002. On several occasions, Dal activists

have acted as moral police, catching unmarried couples on Valentine's Day and forcing them to apply sindoor or tie rakhi against their wishes. The record of Bajrang Dal's lawlessness is endless. And now the Dal, the 24-year-old sword-arm of the Hindutva brigade, is in the news again — as almost always, for wrong reasons. A number of political leaders have been demanding its ban.

In the middle of September, anti-church violence erupted in Mangalore where prayer halls of the evangelist New Life order were attacked. Soon violence enveloped other denominations, and then churches in the new economy city of Bangalore were vandalized. A month earlier similar anti-Christian attacks rocked Orissa and trouble is still simmering there.

In the middle of the violence that broke out in Mangalore was the figure of Mahendra Kumar, Bajrang Dal "convener" for the state, who claimed responsibility for some of the attacks, said they were a "spontaneous Hindu upsurge". While the Dal said it was inflamed by New Life's "conversion activities", prayer halls were not the only targets. The Adoration monastery, where nuns live a cloistered life, dedicated to prayer, was not spared either, its windows broken and crucifix vandalized. Saffron groups and Christian organizations have clashed over conversions and re-conversions as they jostle for influence from remote tribal homelands of Rajasthan's Banswara to the north-east.

### **Human Rights report of violence against Christians/Minorities in India by saffron parties**

**“Christians are the new scapegoat in India's political battles. Without immediate and decisive action by the government, communal tensions will continue to be exploited for political and economic ends”,**

**says Smita Narula**

**Researcher, Asia Division of Human Rights Watch**

The problem is that poverty is eating into India and the people are finding Christianity a lucrative option with many NGO's working overnight for conversions. Conversions are not forced upon yet they number highly due to the desperate living conditions in India which have been worsened by the food shortages. An escape from death in return of a faith that has only served them humiliation is considered a fair deal by many downtrodden Indians. It is basically in Northeast of India that includes states like interiors of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura where conversions have been high. Down South it is Orissa, Kerala, Karnataka where Christian NGO's have gone overboard with the conversions. And that is irking the saffron parties since they are seeing this to their own dream of 'Hindu Rashtra' and that is where the problem begins.

The Indian government has failed to prevent increasing violence against Christians and is exploiting communal tensions for political ends, Human Rights Watch charged in a report released this month. The 37-page report, Politics by Other Means: Attacks Against Christians in India, details of violence against Christians in the months ahead of the country's national parliamentary elections in September and October 1999, and in the months following electoral victory by the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party, known as the BJP) in the state of Gujarat.

Attacks against Christians throughout the country have increased significantly since the BJP began its rule in mid of March 1998. They include the killings of priests, the raping of nuns, and the physical destruction of Christian institutions, schools, churches, colleges, and cemeteries. Thousands of Christians have also been forced to convert to Hinduism.

**The report concludes that as with attacks against Muslims in 1992 and 1993, attacks against Christians are part of a concerted campaign of right-wing Hindu organizations, collectively called the Sangh Parivar, to promote and exploit communal clashes to increase their political power-base. The movement is supported at the local level by militant groups who operate with impunity.**

#### **Conclusion:**

When Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, a charismatic Hindu priest fond of violence against Christian missionaries, was shot dead in the eastern state of Orissa in August, police blamed “Naxalite” Maoists. But hardliner Hindu groups decided Christians were responsible. In an ensuing rampage, dozens of churches were burned, tens of thousands of Christians fled their homes, and at least 20 people died. By this week the violence had touched four more states. In Karnataka in the south, 20 churches have been desecrated in a few days.

India’s Hindu majority and its tiny Christian minority mostly rub along peacefully. But since the early 1990s, the rise of ideological Hindutva (“Hinduness”) and of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), now the main opposition, has seen intermittent outbreaks of sometimes vicious agitation against Christian missionaries. They are accused of forcibly converting poor Hindus. Gauri Prasad Rath, general secretary of the Vishnu Hindu Parishad, or World Hindu Council, in Orissa, says that the thuggery was caused by, “the fraudulent conversions Christians are doing. They burned their own churches.”

However the claims of VHP are mere accusations as all the funds Christian organizations get from abroad are thoroughly monitored by government in India, as opposed to the huge funds Hindu extremist organizations like VHP, RSS and Bajrand Dal spending on different terrorist activities which have never been audited.

It is true that missionaries are busy in much of India, especially the tribal belt that runs through Orissa. Here, traditionally nature-worshipping forest dwellers, among India’s poorest people, have found institutional Christianity, with its free schools and health care, especially attractive. Indeed many church leaders believe that the proportion of Indian Christians is a couple of percentage points higher than the census reckoning of 2.3%. In six of the 12 states ruled by the BJP, either on its own or in coalition, laws designed to discourage Hindus from switching faiths by banning forced conversions have been introduced. Convictions, however, are rare. Muhammed Shafi Qureshi, chairman of the government-appointed National Commission for Minorities, says on inquiring as to how many people had been convicted under the state’s 1967 law; the answer was none.

Tensions have been exacerbated by a row over “reservations”, the affirmative-action benefits, such as privileged access to government jobs and education, afforded to low-caste Hindus.

Most Hindu converts to Christianity come from the lower castes but lose these benefits when they switch faiths. Their calls for inclusion in the system have infuriated many Hindus.

With general elections due by next May, such issues have proved effective rallying cries for Hindu groups aligned with the BJP. Mr Qureshi points out that Karnataka, scene of some of the worst violence, this year voted in its first BJP government. The party is also part of the ruling coalition in Orissa. "This madness", he says, "is political."

Every conflict can be explained in more than one way, but historians know that one way of sifting out bad explanations is to look for plausibility.

Here, we're being asked to believe that the thousands of extremely poor people who make up the populations of these relief camps are self-arsonists running a compensation scam. This is not just a bad explanation; it's an explanation made in bad faith. What we're seeing in Orissa is the attempt to replicate Gujarat's 'success' and Golwalkar's object on a smaller scale. Thus, Christians are driven out of their homes to live in limbo as destitute, vagrant wards of the State in camps, or else allowed to return to their villages as neo-Hindus purged of an alien possession. This is, or should be, unacceptable. The use of murder, rape and arson against civilian communities to achieve a political object (in this case ethnic cleansing) is a form of terror, and this republic's government needs to treat it as such.

As the violence spreads to many districts of India against Christians after Orissa episode, other minorities including Muslims are also being targeted. Just today (October 12, 2008, Sunday) six Muslims of a family including 3 children were burnt to death at Watoli village Andhra Pradesh district when their house was set on fire. The village is 13 km far from the communal violence-hit Bhainsa town. Three bodies were charred beyond recognition, the rest were burnt partially, police said.

Keeping in view the numerous incidents of violence and massacre of minorities at the hands of extremist Hindus in India, the credentials of being a Secular country are highly questionable.

The slogan of being biggest democracy and a secular country seems only a rhetoric and catchy phrase to bluff the world.

Though recently US and UN have expressed concern over massacre of Christians by Hindu fanatics in India but there is a need for more strong a measure to be taken by the international community in this regard.

The world should take notice of the brutalities being meted to minorities including Christians and Muslims and low cast Dalits by Hindu extremists in India; the matter should be taken for debate in the United Nations by the world so that these oppressed people of India can get some justice.



**Hindu Zionist fascism – the terror needs to be dealt with**

End.

**(Source: Inputs from different news reports, Human Rights organizations' reports)**