

Religious Fundamentalism – A Challenge to Democracy in India

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There has been a tremendous upsurge in religion all over the world. All religions are interacting with modernity which is enshrined in human freedom, market freedom and value freedom as encapsulated or manifested in secularism and democracy. In this march they are positioned differently: Christianity was the first one to negotiate, confront, contain and come to terms with modernity. It has been in the tip of the arrow in this march. The Christian fundamentalism or Christian right as it is known is a reaction or a result of the interaction between modernity and Christianity. Islam and Hinduism, the other major world religions, are way behind in this march. But they are reacting violently through Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism to the onslaught of modernity, secularism and democracy. The character of these religions itself is changing swiftly laced with politics. Religion has become a tiger. Those who ignore this tiger are likely to be swallowed up by it.

All fundamentalisms aim at triumphalism, establishing a global church, *umma*, nation to reclaim the moral high ground lost to modernity by influencing political agenda of their governments, largely through the media. There is an unholy nexus between religion and politics whose main agenda is to batter secularism and democracy.

Christians in India are subjected to atrocities of Hindutva or Hindu cultural nationalism and Islamic terrorism. There is also the “symbolic violence” of Christian fundamentalism.

Christians in India

A few figures would clarify the quantum of humanitarian work undertaken by the Christians in India whose beneficiaries are cutting across caste, creed and language.

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Educational Institutions:

Primary schools	7,926
Secondary schools	3,820
Colleges	292
Other educational institutions	3,785

Social Welfare activities

Technical and training schools	1,526
Hostels and boardings	1,765
Hospitals	774
Dispensaries and health centres	1,792
Leprosy centres	136
Rehabilitation centres	102
Home for the aged and destitutes	466

Source: Menezes in TOI December 1977

To this one must add relief work done during natural disasters and calamities, and developmental work done by the church in India. In fact the Church organisations are doing what the State should have been doing, especially in rural and remote areas viz., reaching education, health and development. It is said that twenty five per cent of all voluntary sector work is done by Church-related organisations in India. If this service is not a proof of patriotism I wonder what else it is. This too by priests and nuns who leave family attachments and remain wedded to God and to his people in service. However, Christians are made to feel outsiders, anti-nationals, and relegated to second class citizenship. Increasing surveillance on their activities, money, motives and methods is being kept by the state as if they are criminals.

***Vastraharan* (disrobing) of Missionaries**

In the recent past attacks, assaults, atrocities, arson, loot, killings, rapes, incidents of parading missionaries naked, setting them on fire have been on the rise. They began in Gujarat which was the laboratory, then put into action in BJP – ruled states like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh or where it was a coalition partner such as Orissa and Karnataka. If from 1950 to 1990 the recorded atrocities against Christians were 120 they have geometrically increased thereafter. Now they are happening on a daily basis.

Christians have been targeted in a systematic manner since the 1990s in Gujarat. Then came the gruesome burning alive of Dr. Staines and

his two little children in Orissa, which shook the world and left an indelible stain on India's record of tolerance and non-violence. This was followed by the rape of nuns in Jhabua, the parading naked of a Catholic priest (Christu Das) in Madhya Pradesh and more killing arson and assaults on missionaries in many states of India. Recently atrocities were committed on Orissa Christians during Christmas (2007). In the attacks that took place after the murder of Swami Lakshmananda. 81 Christians are reported to have lost their lives, 4,500 houses completely destroyed, 50,000 of them ran away into the forest hiding, scores of them are in relief camps, 236 churches have been vandalised, burnt and desecrated (cbcipro.net.in dated 24.2.2009). A young Catholic nun of the Cuttack - Bhubaneswar diocese working in Jan Vikas Kendra, the Social Service Centre at Naugaon in Kandhamal, was reportedly gang-raped on 24 August 2008 by groups of Hindutva extremists.

Rape as we know is a deadly weapon when used against a woman; she is not alone in being traumatised and dishonoured: her menfolk, her social class, her caste, her religion, her profession, her race, her country—whatever may be involved—all are shown just where they stand. A single act of rape has a wide and potent effect whose intent is to subjugate. To rape a nun – dedicated to God and to the service of humanity by giving up sex and family – is a heinous crime. Rape of a nun is a rape of all that she stands for – love, compassion and service.

According to political theorist Raymond Aron, “An act of violence is labelled ‘terrorist’ when the psychological effects are out of all proportion to its purely physical result”. In collective violence individual members participating feel less responsible for their actions and are willing to commit greater atrocities because they are acting in the name of what is perceived as a higher cause; be it religion, political beliefs, or loyalty to an ethnic group or nation.

How do we make sense of violence directed at the Christians most often with fabricated accusations? In all this one must remember majority of Hindus are still non-violent and tolerant but it is those who subscribe to the Sangh Parivar ideology who are violent. This ideology is Hindutva or Hindu nationalism or cultural nationalism which has been actively propagated during the last few decades. It is assumed that religious fundamentalism gives rise to violence. So what is the nature of religious fundamentalism?

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is a term drawn from Protestant Christianity. It is an American coinage that refers to a group of early twentieth-century Protestant activists who organised against Darwinian evolution and who championed the literal reading of the Bible (D'Souza 2008:2). However, today the western analysts describe religious revivals around the world in terms of the growth of fundamentalism. But not all revivals are fundamentalist. There is an uprising of religion all over the globe, except in Europe, where secularism has taken root. We see a resurgence of Muslim piety not just in the Middle East, but also in Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Turkey and East Africa. Even in Turkey, which was the only secular Islamic country, is sidelining secularism.

“There are, of course, Hindu militants and Islamic radicals of the Bin Laden type, and they are indeed a menace to the world. But the growth of religious militancy and the growth of religion are very different. One may seek to benefit from the other, but the two should not be confused. There is a resurgence of the global revitalisation of traditional religion. This means traditional Hinduism, traditional Islam, and traditional Christianity that has been understood and practised over the centuries. This is the type of religion that is booming” (D'Souza 2008:3). How then is revivalism different from fundamentalism?

Amaladoss (2009: 25) explains that fundamentalism is often associated with religion. As a matter of fact, it is a very complex phenomenon. Fundamentalism can take different forms in different places. 1. Fundamentalism began by being religious. Threatened by modern scientific discoveries or by liberal cultural and political ideologies, some believers hang on to what they consider the fundamentals of their religion. They may organize themselves to defend their belief. They may be perceived as conservative or revivalist. 2. A particular group of people, gathered together in the name of religion, ethnicity, caste, language, etc. may think that they share the same economic and political interests which they seek to pursue and defend, together. This is more commonly called communalism (at least in south Asia). This may happen when there are wide economic and social disparities in society and a group feels unjustly exploited and/or discriminated against. 3. A communal group may imagine itself as a nation, discovering its historical roots. A very powerful force that can weld such a group together is

religion. Such a group may fight for autonomy or independence or seek domination over other groups. 4. Finally, a group with a strong identity looks on other groups, not only as different, but as inimical to their interests. In a religious setting the others can be demonized, when one group thinks that God is on its side. This can lead to defensive or aggressive violence, particularly when it experiences itself as the victim of deprivation, injustice and oppression. Indiscriminate violence against the innocent is called terrorism. Let us now dwell on different religious fundamentalism such as Hindu, Muslim and Christian in India.

Hindu Fundamentalism/Hindu Cultural Nationalism: New Face of Hinduism

Hindutva, in short, stands for Hindu Nationalism. *Hindutva* means, Hinduness or conscious of being a Hindu or Hindu as the dominant identity. It aims at a Hindu nation state (Hindu *rashtra*).

Nationalism as an ideology originated in the west either using language or religion seeking political expression. It attempts to create a national identity by a process of inclusion and exclusion. It includes people with little cultural differences and excludes those who have greater differences. Through inclusion it does away with internal differences and achieves a kind of homogeneity. Hindu religious nationalism passes off as cultural nationalism which is more of a political movement. Caste divides, but culture unites. It is a religious cover for political power.

What all of these castes have in common is the intense hatred towards the non-Hindus, especially the Muslims. Memories of historic wounds are kept alive and Muslims are demonized as the “other” who need to be subjugated, cleansed and relegated to second class citizen status. Next on the list are Christians and they are taken to task for their conversion activities as conversions expose the porous boundaries. Muslims and Christians are targeted as if they are the cause of all ills affecting the Hindus.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was born when fascism ruled Italy, and Hitler was about to capture power in Germany. RSS founders were great admirers of Mussolini and Hitler. The organization, from the dress, to the greeting mode to the basic philosophy of hate was modelled on fascists of Italy and Nazis of Germany. According to Goldhagan (1997) the cognition of anti-Semitism subsumes three notions:

1. The Jew was different from the German 2. He was a binary opposite of the German, and 3. He was malevolent and corrosive. As a result, two policies emerged: 1. to turn Jews into socially dead beings, and 2. to remove Jews thoroughly and permanently from social and physical contact with Germans.

A similar cognition of the Muslims and Christians has been created after 1980s in the minds of the people (inclusive of all classes and masses) with horrendous stereotypes, through sustained vernacular media campaign, *rathyathras*, *ramshilapujans*, *kathas*, video shows and audio cassettes. The media has no doubt played a great role in mobilising the Hindu masses.

The activities of Hindutva organisations are varied. One group of activities targets the minorities, especially the Muslims and Christians. They have set up competing institutions in the area of health and education, especially in backward tribal areas. Relief and reconstruction during natural disasters is the second area which was mainly with the Christian missionaries. Another set of activities are related to the media: printing tons of literature against these minorities and also the use of the electronic media to demonise the minorities. Political mobilization of the masses is another area of activities. A fifth area of activities is celebration of Hindu festivals and religious events on a massive scale, thus trying to Hinduising tribals and Sanskritise the lower castes.

What follows is crafting religion-based riots and communal violence — intense hate campaigns through print and electronic media, provocation of the minorities, use of the arms of the state which are already taken into confidence, frustrating the legal process for the victims and twisting judiciary and the police in favour of the Sangh Parivar, and harassment of secular and liberal Hindus. When violence occurs it is made to appear spontaneous while most of it is premeditated.

The phenomenon of Hindu nationalism has, by and large, been interpreted in India as the resurgence of Brahminism. Brahminism is not strictly limited to Brahmins alone, but an attempt by the middle and upper castes to safeguard their privileges, perks, status, wealth and power, which was theirs in the traditional caste hierarchy. The higher the caste, the greater was its power, position and wealth. It was the secular and democratic Constitution of India that challenged these traditional

hierarchies through institutional changes (educational, legal and political) wherein the upper castes saw the threat to their cozy existence. They are reacting violently now (Lobo 2002: 10).

Islamic fundamentalism

Christians in India are not much affected by Islamic fundamentalism except perhaps through terror attacks in general. The phenomenon of Muslim fundamentalism at the global level is interpreted as follows: There was a gradual shift of power from the Islamic world to the Christian world of Europe and the USA since the fourteenth century. World capital too has moved away from the Islamic countries. Muslims began to be conscious that they were no longer at the same level as the West in capital, science, technology, literature and art. Many Muslim territories were colonised by the West. The patron became the recipient. For the past several centuries, Muslims have not been creative in the scientific domain, nor have they been masters of technical development. They remain excluded. Secondly, most Muslim countries rich in resources became the target of western powers. In 1953, in Iran, the duly elected Prime Minister was deposed and the Shah was brought back. The USA blindly supported Israel and co-opted corrupt Arab leaders in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. This humiliation of Muslim countries and resentment as individuals and collectivity is exploited by persons like Bin Laden and is manifested through religious fundamentalism.

Christian Fundamentalism

Pentecostalism that began in the 1920s in India has been experiencing extraordinary growth since 1980. It is fast becoming the face of Christianity in India. It is fundamentalist in the sense that it is based on the implicit politics of eventual Christian domination. The agenda includes conversion, an aggressive stance towards non-Christians and the use of the media to extend their sphere of influence.

Thomas (2008:xiii) argues that Christian fundamentalists, like their Islamic counterparts, belong to a global *umma* and harbour real and perhaps imagined, even delusional, longings directed towards making all of God's people Christian (2008:xv). These Christian groups may not use real physical violence, though they are well-versed in using the media and non-media means to propagate "symbolic violence" that is often backed up by economic enticements to persuade individuals and communities to become Christian.

Common in All Fundamentalisms

Religious fundamentalists normally have a political agenda and the media are used to further this agenda. The meticulous and systematic uses of the media by Hindu nationalist forces in India, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the BJP, as much as by Pat Robertson and others of his ilk in the USA, backed by the technologies of marketing, have played a key role in their ascendance in the public domain.

Project Fundamentalism identifies a list of family resemblances or characteristics of fundamentalism (Thomas 2008:5). This list includes five ideological and four organisational characteristics:

Ideological:

1. Reaction to the marginalisation of religion in the context of secularisation.
2. Selectivity in their response to modernity and in highlighting their own traditions.
3. Moral dualism – dividing the world into black and white, right and wrong.
4. Absolutism and inerrancy in their interpretation of the scriptures and belief in core fundamentals.
5. Millennialism and messianism or belief in the end of time and victory for the faithful and just.

Organisational:

1. Elect membership – the belief that the faithful, who are ordained by God, will prevail over the unfaithful masses.
2. The drawing of sharp boundaries between those who are born again, those who are saved and those who have been damned.
3. Authoritarian organisations like the RSS and the Sangh Parivar and belief in charismatic leaders such as Bin Laden.
4. Behavioural requirements that adherents follow a strict code of discipline including the expectation that the individual member's identity is subsumed into the larger collective identity.

Modernity and modernisation

Modernisation is the process of social change whereby less developed societies acquire characteristics common to more developed societies. This process is activated by international, or intersocietal, communication

(Learner 1968:388). This transformation entails achieving wealth-oriented behaviour which reshapes all social values, such as power, respect, rectitude, affection, well-being, skill and enlightenment. Criteria of modernity takes into account economic resource allocation, non-economic factors such as population growth, urbanisation rates, family structure, the socialisation of youth, education and the mass media. The operational values of modernity are: 1. a degree of self-sustaining economic growth, 2. measure of public participation in the polity, 3. a diffusion of secular-rational norms in the culture, 4. and increment of freedom in personal, physical, social and psychic. The West has undergone modernisation first and traditional societies followed suit.

When modernisation takes place disruption of tradition takes place. Secondly, modern institutions from another culture cannot be transferred; they must be transformed. Life ways cannot be adopted; they must be adapted. Modernising countries are subject to all kinds of invasions – cultural, social and political. These invasions create tensions and reactions. Religious fundamentalism is one such reaction as it offers solace to tensions.

Secularism

Secularism is an outcome of the modernisation process in the West. Enlightenment, progress of science and reason were brought to bear on religion. The State and the church were separated. Atheism, materialism and secularism dealt blows on religion reducing its influence in the lives of people at the personal, familial and societal level. In the West organised religion was relegated to the background and to private realm. For some atheism, materialism and secularism itself became a religion. In major universities one was considered to be bright if he ridiculed religion.

However, it must be noted that except in Europe secularism has not found solid base. Religion as we see has come back with a bang. In India, the terms secular and pseudo-secular are prevalent. The Constitution gives equal respect to all religions. Religion far from confining itself in the private space has come to dominate the public space. Hence, one cannot speak of secularism in the singular but acknowledge multiple secularisms.

Democracy

“Demos” in Greek means people and “kratos” means power, i.e., power of the people or rule of the people as opposed to kingly and dictatorial power. It was Greece that gave rise to democracy and modern democracies were born in the West (Sartori 1968:115). Democracy was a by-product of the entire development of western civilisation. There are various types of democracies that include all kinds of political systems falling short of outright dictatorships such as socialist democracy, liberal democracy and so on. Each democratic country presents a variant of democracy.

Democracy is an ideal. It is a way of saying no to inequality, injustice and coercion. Democracy upholds equality, justice and freedom. Hence, one can talk of social democracy and economic democracy. Social democracy exists when there is a levelling of status differences. Economic democracy exists where wealth is redistributed and equality of opportunities exists. Political democracy exists where each person irrespective of gender, religion, caste, creed, region and language has the same power; say voting power, one man one vote. In this sense democracy can be developed or advanced or be progressive where the ideal of democracy is advanced, where freedom is secure, justice is delivered and inequality is minimal.

Alfred Stepan (2009:109) writes, “Some simplistic versions of modernization theory imply that there are at least four reinforcing and compounding dichotomies related to modernity and religion: traditional versus modern societies, high religious practising societies vs. strict separation of the church and the state, and non-democratic regimes vs. democratic ones.” The table below depicts State-Supported Religion.

Religion, Politics and Democracy

The values of democracy, civil liberties, secularism, equality of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, region or gender, which the Indian people had fought for in the course of their national liberation struggle against colonialism and had proudly nurtured for over half a century after independence, are today under severe threat – threatened by communal forces which are spreading their ideology of hate at the grassroot level, even among children including various state apparatuses such as the bureaucracy, police, media, the education system and the judiciary.

Percentage of Western democracies with state support for religion (excluding the US)

Form of State Policies of Support (or monitoring) of Religion	Percentage
Government funding of religious schools or education	100
Religious education standard (optional in schools)	76
Government collects taxed for religious organizations	52
Official government department for religious affairs	44
Government positions or funding for clergy	40
Government funding of religious charitable organizations	36
Government funding of religious charitable organizations	36
Established/Official religion some clerical positions made by government appointment	24

Source : Stepan (Ibid: 111)

“There is an indication of a continuing danger for civil society institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, cooperatives and NGOs, and for the world of art, literature and sciences. In particular, all the universities, except a few in the private sector, have sharply declined in quality due to continuous interference from the government and the ruling party in the crucial decision-making bodies such as the syndicate and the senate. The space for freedom of thought and dissent has already shrunk and is likely to shrink further, which is likely to hamper creativity essential in any art, literature or science. We have to be constantly vigilant of the behaviour of the men and women governing the state” (Shah, Patel & Lobo 2008: 22).

When BJP (NDA) was at the Centre, communal ideology was promoted by Murli Manohar Joshi, then human resource/education minister who not only tried to influence the school text books at the national level as well as in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharati schools run by the RSS which have grown substantially in number particularly in remote

and backward areas. In 1993 the total number of schools run by Vidya Bharati was 6,000 with 40,000 teachers and 1,200,000 students in BJP-run states. With the BJP at the centre in 1998 there were 14,000 schools with 80,000 teachers and 1,800,000 students.

“Some of the text books which are currently in use at primary level in Saraswati Shishu Mandirs present an extremely virulent communal view of Indian history... the intolerant and extremely crude style and language, as well as the totally uninhibited way of historical ‘facts’ have been fabricated are designed to promote not patriotism, as is claimed but totally blind bigotry and fanaticism....These textbooks should not be allowed to be used in schools”.

There was a consistent effort to replace secular history with communal history. Let me give you some illustrations of what is contained in these books (Mukherjee et al 2008:23). On the rise of Islam it is written:

“Wherever they went, they had a sword in their hand. Their army went like a storm in all the four directions. Any country that came (in) their way was destroyed. Houses of prayers and universities were destroyed. Libraries were burnt. Religious books were destroyed. Mothers and sisters were humiliated. Mercy and justice were unknown to them”.

It strangely does not occur to the Hindu communalist how apt this above description is or what they have been upto in Gujarat, Pune and Ayodhya in recent years. In Pune the library of the Bhandarkar Institute was vandalized; in Gujarat mothers and sisters were humiliated, and in Ayodhya the Babri Masjid was demolished.

Christians are portrayed as anti-national and a threat to the integrity of India (Mukerjee, 2008: 27). “It is because of the conspiratorial policies of the followers of this religion that India was partitioned. Even today Christian missionaries are engaged in fostering anti-national tendencies in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and other regions of our country because there is a grave danger to the integrity of present day India”.

The air of childhood which is fresh and clean should not be permitted to be sullied and fouled. In recent years, with the active use of state power the RSS has succeeded in spreading this hate agenda to unprecedented levels in the name of spreading education and culture. It becomes the duty of the government and us to ensure that in no school

is a child exposed to communal prejudice and hatred. All literature calculated to promote communalism, fascism and hatred must be weeded out.

In contrast to this cultural nationalism of Sangh Parivar the Christian Parivar has been upholding the following orientation in its educational institutions. Over the years, we have educated a variety of students, pundits, scientists, activists, journalists, technocrats, bureaucrats, politicians, businessmen, sportspersons and women. We have never imposed a world-view of our own on the students. Instead we have encouraged critical thinking and learning.

Christian response to Cultural Nationalism

Shashi Tharoor, in Times of India on September 28, 2008 wrote, “The murderous mobs of Orissa sought to kill Christians and destroy their homes and places of worship, both to terrorise the people and send the message, ‘you do not belong here’. What have we come to, that a land that has been a haven of tolerance for religious minorities throughout its history should have sunk so low? How dare a bunch of goondas shrink the soaring majesty of the Vedas and the Upanishads to the petty bigotry of their identity politics? Why are the voices of Hindu religious leaders not being raised in defence of the fundamentals of Hinduism: not to discriminate, attack another, destroy another’s places of worship!”

Some of the Hindus living in Europe and America are supporting Hindu nationalism while others have condemned Hindu nationalism. There are similar following among the Muslims. It is due to such people that the fundamentalists, whether Hindus or Muslims, have tempered down. Can Christians too garner similar strengthen/support base among such people in the West?

Christian missionaries have been ostensibly targeted because of conversions. A citizen of India has the freedom to choose a religion. Many states have passed anti-conversion laws and these should take care of the controversies around conversions. The role of the state is not to deal with souls as much as law and order, equality, security and the basic needs of citizens. The BJP-ruled states consistently are conniving with the Sangh Parivar, letting loose communal terrorism on Christians. It is the role of the state to uphold law and order and punish those taking law into their own hands.

What the Sangh Parivar refuses to acknowledge is that missionary work has empowered the poor. Missionary work lets the poor get out of the clutches and control of the upper stratum of society. They want to reimpose the caste hierarchy viz., their dominance over the rest. In Gujarat we hear from some of the Hindutva friends, “Fathers, you convert as many as you like, but please do not open schools in tribal areas.” The anti-conversion law passed in many states especially in BJP states must be seen not from religious conversion but socio-economic conversions. At the same time can the Church have a conclusive say on the question of saving souls? Isn’t saving souls outdated?

The recent atrocities by the Sangh Parivar have proved that their Ghar Vapsi or reconversion efforts under threat and intimidation in Kandhamal in Orissa were only to assert that it should have the monopoly of conversion and no one else. While the majority culture in any country has the upper hand, can we also be sensitive of the minority rights and reservations which are causing conflicts and tensions between Dalits and tribals?

Missionaries are accused of disturbing the culture of the people. In fact it is the Sangh Parivar which is disturbing the tribal culture and imposing its own Sanskritic culture on them through a cultural invasion. Sanskritisation and Hindutvaisation and going on far rapidly now than in the past. Dalits and tribals who were considered outside the fold of Hinduism are now speedily being accepted by the Hindus. However, one must ask whether in the long run the cultural inclusion of tribals, Dalits and OBCs will also make them eligible for other rights: political and economic!

The Sangh Parivar’s violence is not because they have taken the cause of the poor but because it wants resources and power. It is through violence they capture vote banks. In fact, the Sangh Parivar is anti-poor. They use the poor when they have to hire them as foot soldiers to indulge in violence against the minorities.

In the recent (2008) Orissa violence, the Sangh Parivar has deliberately brought the Christians in between them and the Maoists. The situation of Kandhamal is of extreme poverty. The efforts of the missionaries have empowered the Dalits and produced a rift among the upper castes and classes. Instead of fighting the Maoists who have claimed

responsibility for killing Swami Lakshmanand, the Sangh Parivar has attacked a soft target, the Christians.

Communalism of the majority community is equated with nationalism. Communalism is akin to racism. The very concept “nation” has no room for a particular religion or ethnic group. Modern citizenship transcends caste, creed, region, language and religion. Society is made up of communities and communal harmony and amity ensure their co-existence and mutual furtherance. We have no historical evidence that stands for or speaks out for “One nation, One religion, One culture” and the myth has been rejected by the people who have upgraded their social common sense. Religion happens to be a personal matter and it is an accepted fact, both in modern state and citizenship. Modern India is inclusive. The Constitution is the Scripture of this country.

Is the character of Hinduism changing? Can it be still labelled as tolerant? Can the majority tolerant Hindus isolate the intolerant individuals and organisations among them? Why are Hindu religious leaders silent? Studies are needed from different social sciences to understand the changing face of religion.

The incidence of atrocities against Christians has geometrically increased. All in the name of restoring Hindu pride. But can the Hindu pride be not better served by fighting for issues such as violation of human rights, children’s rights, and marginalisation of women, caste oppression and ill-treatment of minorities?

Christians, unlike Muslims and Hindus, have strong organisational structures. It appears strong on paper but it is fragmented and diffused in operative terms. However, as a collectivity we come across as, 1. Weak, docile and passive as we do not protest enough in defence of our rights, 2. Not able to influence power structures, leave alone policies even in areas where we have a name viz., education, health and social work. 3. Christians are exclusive and need to be inclusive and impact the mainstream.

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