



Communalism In India: Prejudice, Conflict and Violence

About the Lecture

Communal violence needs to be distinguished from communal prejudice and communal conflict. Prejudice, conflict and violence are inter-related, one leads to the other and yet these three sociological expressions of inter-community relations have an autonomy of their own.

Prejudice is an attitude that predisposes a person to think, feel and act in an unfavorable way towards a group and its individual members. Prejudice results in five types of rejective behavior; taking ill of the other group with friends, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, and in its extreme form it leads to wanting extermination of the other group.

Rational conflict arises when two groups compete with each other for better share in scarce resources like political power, government jobs and social status. Conflict may also arise if two groups follow mutually contradictory goals in matters of political and cultural policies, such as proportional representation in legislatures and government jobs.

As regards violence, even during the Congress regimes, Police had often shown strong bias against Muslims and sided with the Hindu mobs in cases of communal riots. Unfortunately in the last five years mob lynchings of Muslims without any provocation has almost reduced Muslims into second class citizens with no security of personal life and property.

The primary responsibility of providing security and discrimination-free environment to Muslims as individuals lies with the administration, but Muslim leaders too should dispassionately analyse why the Hindus hate them, and therefore are easily swayed by the RSS and Bajrang Dal propaganda against them. Hindu parents aspire to send their kids to Christian convent schools, why not to Madarsas? If institutions controlled by Muslims - and this includes Aligarh Muslim University and Jamia Milia - could become world class, image of Muslims would certainly improve & bias would be reduced.

About the Speaker

Naresh Saxena has been a career civil servant. Topper of his batch (1964) in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Dr. Saxena retired as Secretary, Planning Commission. He also worked as Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, and Secretary Minorities Commission in Government of India. During 1993-96 he was Director, National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, where he also worked as Deputy Director from 1976 to 1980.

On behalf of the Supreme Court of India, Dr Saxena monitored hunger based programmes in India from 2001 to 2017. He has chaired several government committees, such as on 'Women's Land Rights', 'Identification of poor families', 'Implementation of Forest Rights Act', 'Joint Review Mission on Elementary Education' and 'Bauxite Mining in Orissa'. He was a Member of National Advisory Council, chaired by Ms Sonia Gandhi during 2004-08 & 2010-14.

Author of several books and articles, Dr Saxena did his Doctorate in Forestry from the Oxford University in 1992. He was awarded honorary PhD from the University of East Anglia (UK) in 2006. He has worked on development issues in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, East Timor, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Afghanistan. He is a Member of Editorial Board, Development Policy Review, London and Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry, Stockholm. He was a Visiting Professor to Regional Community Forestry Training Centre, Bangkok 1993-98 and Member, Governing Council, ADB Institute, Tokyo, 2002-04.

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Venue: CCMG, Video Conference Hall