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One Year of Modi Sarkar: Hate Speech Galore

For BJP another escape clause is that its associated organizations like VHP, Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and Bajrang Dal are formally different organizations though they are also part of RSS controlled Sangh Parivar. They all are working in tandem with BJP for actualization of agenda of Hindu Rashtra. So while BJP is not directly responsible for their actions, the direction of the actions is the same. Many a people call these organizations as fringe elements, while as a matter of fact there is a division of labor between these organizations. These have become more aggressive during this time. And surely after the Modi Sarkar coming to power their vitriol has become more intense.

The coming to power of Narendra Modi in a way gave an open license to all the affiliates of RSS combine to indulge in open hate speech against the religious minorities. The current agenda behind the hate speech is to consolidate the communal polarization of the society along lines of religion. The well known case of MIM's Akarbar Uddudin Owaisi's hate speech has been despicable and very rightly Akbaruddin Owaisi had to be in jail for some time. The case against him should be pursued and the legal course of action must be followed. At the same time what about the hate speech indulged in by the likes of Pravin Togadia, Subramaniam Swami, Giriraj Singh, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti, Sadhvi Prachi, Sakshi Maharaj, Yogi Adityanath, Sanjay Raut and company?



Apart from these associates of Hindu right wing patriarch, RSS, who are reported in the media, there are many more indulging in the divisive speech and worsening the communal situation. During this year they have started feeling emboldened as they know it is 'their' Government and they can get away with it. Day in and day out they are becoming more aggressive and vicious in their language. The hate speech against religious minorities has been stepped up.

One recalls even before Modi Sarkar assumed the seat of power the divisive activities of 'BJP associates' in the form of propaganda of love jihad and Ghar Vapasi were on, and they continued without any respite during this year. Soon after this Government came to power in Pune, Mohsin Sheikh, a person working in IT was hacked to death by activists of Hindu Jagran Sena, in the aftermath of morphed pictures of Bal Thackeray and Shivaji being posted on the social media. The attack on Churches was very glaring and the process

which was dominant in Delhi and Haryana was also witnessed in places like Panvel near Mumbai, Agra in UP amongst other places.

Sakshi Maharaj not only said that Godse was a patriot, he also went on to say that Hindu women should produce four children, as Muslims are overtaking the population. Sadhvi Prachi went to prescribe eight children for Hindu women. She also gave a call that the Muslim film actors, Amir Khan, Shahrukh Khan and Salman Khan should be boycotted. Pravin Togadia has been the leading person in making hate speeches; he has the highest number of cases regarding hate speech against him. Yogi Adityanath, BJP's MP keeps making very derogatory remarks. He said that in 'love jihad' if one Hindu girl is converted then 100 Muslim girls should be converted to Hinduism. The propaganda around love jihad keeps simmering and various small and big leaders keep using it to divide the society. Same Yogi went on to say that Mosques should be converted into dens of pigs and that Muslims should not be allowed to come to Hindu holy places.

Two central ministers of Modi Sarkar, Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti and Giriraj Singh made very insulting and humiliating remarks about non Hindus and the color of skin of UPA chief Sonia Gandhi. Niranjan Jyoti stated that all those who are non Hindus are illegitimate. Haramzade. Giriraj Singh had earlier said that those not voting for Modi should go to Pakistan. Interestingly he said this before the elections and despite such a record he was elevated to the level of minister in the Modi Sarkar. He made racial comments about Sonia Gandhi recently. Sakshi Maharaj also held Godse as a patriot, while his another party colleague from Kerala, one Gopal Krishnan wrote in RSS mouth piece Keasri that Godse chose a wrong target in killing Gandhi, he should have killed Nehru instead. Subramaniam Swamy, one of the very senior leaders of BJP, said that God lives in temples alone, not in mosques and

Churches. The hidden implication of this statement is fraught with danger. These are few of the samples from what all has been stated during this year. Its impact in increasing the sense of fear amongst religious minorities is more than obvious. BJP ally Shiv Sena's MP Sanjay Raut went to the extent of demanding that the voting rights of Muslims should be revoked.

As such one realizes that 'Hate speech' is the outcome of the politics of divisiveness, it is the concentrated expression of the 'social common sense' prevailing in the society, it is the forth right and blunt way of putting things, which communal parties propagate anyway. It is not out of the blue that these formulations suddenly crop up, their infrastructure, the base of these has already been made by a section of political outfits.

Also 'Hate Speech' in case of India is an accompaniment of the politics in the name of religion and language, and also many times it precedes the violence or helps in polarization of communities for electoral benefits. While BJP was on the upswing during Ram Temple campaign; one recalls that Sadhvi Ritambhara, was propped up for pravachans (religious discourses) by RSS combine. She was bluntly talking anti minority things, duly endorsed by communal political organizations. This took place around the Babri demolition period.

One has been hearing similar things from many a sadhus of VHP, small and sundry members of communal gang, some Muslim communalists and the ilk of Togadia. There has been a more sophisticated presentation of the similar formulations by many others. Modi, in his initial rise to power talked divisive language, but kept changing the form in a very subtle way to suit the needs of his political strategy. When he said that post Gujarat refugee camps should be shut down as they have become factories of production of children, he was reinforcing the propaganda about Muslims having more number of children.

In the wake of Mumbai

riots Bal Thackeray had indulged in Hate speech, inciting his Shiv Sainiks to undertake violence. He also got away with it due to clever way of putting his vitriol and due to the lack of adequate laws, which can distinguish the Hate speech from freedom of expression, which can distinguish between one's political opinion and painting the 'other' community in a negative light. Incidentally it is important to distinguish between criticizing a community and criticizing a political organization. While political organizations can and must be criticized, communities should not be humiliated or insulted. Also no political organization can be synonymous with the religious community, whatever its claims.

It is not only disturbing but totally against the values of our democratic society that such 'hate other' ideology and speeches have become the weapon in the hands of a type of politics, which thrives on exclusion, which identifies a particular religious community as synonymous with the nation state. Again this 'hate speech' is the language of a section of those who thrive on identity politics far away from the real issues of the society.

As such Hate speech in India entered the political arena with the rise of communal streams in politics, like Muslim League on one side and Hindu Mahasabha and RSS on the other. These streams believed in the nation based on one religious community. These streams came from the sections of earlier rulers, landlords, Nawabas and Rajas etc. The ideology of religion based nationalism is narrow, and it excludes 'other' from its notion of nationhood. These beliefs then get converted into Hate other, and later turn in to 'Hate speech'. This did form the basis of many a communal violence in pre independence era and also during the last two decades. Varun Gandhi, allegedly said 'he will cut the hands', is a BJP MP.

In this atmosphere once a while the BJP spokespersons will say that the view expressed by the particular leader are 'personal' and stop at that. ■ Ram Puniyani