

## This is not Ambedkar's India

He stood for constitutional morality. Modi regime does the opposite

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India has become the Head of G-20 countries this time by rotation. The BJP-RSS combine has been projecting it as an achievement of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, not as respect and responsibility on India. The publicity is so wide across the country that 'one earth-one family-one future'. There is publicity in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that "India's G-20 agenda will be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented and decisive. Let's work together to shape a new paradigm of human-centric globalization."

This is a great preaching to the international community. But one should know what India is today. In 2022 India has been ranked at 107 among the countries of the world as far as global Hunger Index is concerned, at 150 in Press freedom index, at 136 in world happiness index, at 85 in corruption perception index, at 71 in food security index, at 77 in rule of law index and at 46 in democracy index. The neo-liberal economic policies aggressively pursued by the present regime have led to this disaster.

The present regime headed by Modi is pursuing not an inclusive human-centric agenda but a divisive sectarian exclusive monolithic communal one. The conditions of socially discriminated sections and minorities of our country are before the international community to understand what India is today. Ambedkar's prescient warnings are before everybody to see in this regard.

"Minority communities may be crushed. If not crushed they may be tyrannized and oppressed. They are sure to be discriminated against and denied equality before the law and equal opportunity in public life." These lines generate an unmistakable impression that a sensitive commentator of politics and political developments must have written to express her/ his anguish because of the plight

of minorities who are at the receiving end owing to reckless majoritarianism followed by Modi regime. But the author of these lines is none other than Dr B R Ambedkar and he wrote them in a chapter devoted to majorities and minorities in his book: 'Thoughts on Linguistic States'.

On the solemn occasion of the anniversary of his Parinirvan on December 6, we need to be poignantly mindful that his words have come true. He in fact, issued warnings that minorities would feel insecure and get excluded from all spheres including politics because of the communally charged electoral process.

Shockingly the communally charged electoral process has become a frightening reality in India and it has become a determining factor for positive electoral outcomes in favour of the BJP, whose leaders target minorities in the name of their faith, dress, food and their choice of love and marriage. Ambedkar's idea of minorities included not only Muslims, Christians and other religious minorities but also Dalits and other weaker sections of society.

Sixty six years after his passing away, India is confronted with a dire scenario shaped by the politics of targeting minorities. It is well known that some of the BJP legislators are openly calling for the comprehensive social and economic boycott of Muslims who constitute 12 to 14 per cent of the population and are the single biggest component among minorities.

Ambedkar as a visionary could foresee the possibility of social and economic boycott of minorities in independent India. Therefore, in his draft Constitution for the United States of India which he prepared in 1945, he put the issue of boycott of minorities in the chapter on Fundamental Rights. Therein he prescribed that any measure, in the form of word or deed, for boycotting minorities would be dealt with deterrent penalty and the future legislature of India would enact legislations with provisions for exemplary punishments against the guilty. In fact, Ambedkar submitted a

memorandum to the Constituent Assembly in March 1947 and it contained the above mentioned boycott issue adversely impacting minorities.

The debates of the Constituent Assembly including the documents submitted to it constitute the legislative intent of the Assembly which are often invoked by the Supreme Court to ascertain if the legislations passed by the legislatures have been framed without violating, among others, the legislative intent. On the Parinirvan Divas in 2022 we need to humbly hark back to the articulations of Ambedkar on boycott issue and crushing and tyrannizing of minorities when people are celebrating 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence.

If Ambedkar could raise voice apprehending boycott of minorities then why is Prime Minister Modi and his ministerial colleagues, desperately claiming to appropriate Ambedkar, remain silent when the BJP legislators are brazenly calling for boycotting minorities? The silence of the Prime Minister is indeed deafening and it indicates that he is not in tune with the vision of Ambedkar and legislative intent of the Constituent Assembly.

Ambedkar passionately upheld the constitutional morality and emphatically underlined the point that cultivation of constitutional morality by every citizen is a categorical imperative to uphold the constitutional vision of India which is secular, plural, diverse and all inclusive. The Prime Minister blows his trumpet by shouting 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas' but in actual practice he and his party target minorities and sadly remain silent when calls for genocide and boycott of Muslims are issued by people belonging to his party or aligned with it.

India's image is getting badly tarnished at the global level because of such sinister developments. For the first time in the history of independent India, the Gulf countries and several others very strongly reacted, demanded apology from India and boycotted Indian goods when disparaging remarks were made on Prophet

Mohammed by a BJP spokesperson. All these indicate the rampant violations of human rights in India.

Therefore, India's democratic and secular credentials are diminishing at the global level. It is tragic that our country has been described as an elected autocracy and a partially free country. Ambedkar would have been shocked and shaken beyond measure by the deliberate devaluation of the Constitution, constitutional morality and the legislative intent of the Constituent Assembly by those controlling the State apparatus of our country. He called for the adoption of constitutional method to achieve constitutional objectives and cautioned that any other method would spell grammar of anarchy.

The call for genocide of Muslims, their social and economic boycott and their increasing tyrannization will not only spell grammar of anarchy but fatally cause permanent social and economic turmoil beyond the control of any power. Therefore, those ruling India should be mindful of the afore-mentioned issues raised by Ambedkar and adopt constitutional method to save India from the impending calamity.