

Media – Coverage of Communal Conflict

In all societies, with different political structures, be they authoritarian or democratic, the role of the media is a unique one. It records, it exposes, it comments, it reflects and it postulates.

There are tendencies within more authoritarian societies for the media to come under attack, often to face life threats.

The tragic death of **Daniel Pearl (official report of his death was released on Jan 29, 2002)** within Pakistan recently is an example. Within Indian democracy, the increasing growth of authoritarian tendencies under the garb of communalism, have in recent decades hampered and endangered the functioning of journalists.

In any democracy, the right to equality, the freedom to practice one's faith and the right to live with dignity go hand with hand with the freedom of expression which includes the right to dissent. If minority rights are fundamental to a democracy, democracy is unimaginable without the freedom of expression.



What is Communalism?

Communalism

One of the more widely accepted definitions of the word, communalism, is the exploitation or manipulation of religion and religious symbols for the pursuit of political power.

Communal ideology and the parties that are the proponents of this ideology are inherently anti-democracy because the edifice of their worldview posits a world in which one religious identity assumes emphasis and superiority over others.

Communal parties, outfits and their ideologies are anti-equality and equal rights since they posit different/varied rights to persons of different faiths.

They deny the concept of equal citizenship, equality before the law and right to faith and worship.

The growth of communalism and communal ideologies within the Indian subcontinent therefore endangers the free functioning of the media. Threats to media persons, attacks and assaults on their persons and properties become common.

Worldwide, conflict situations of different kinds, be they military, ethnic or otherwise pose a greater danger to the lives and functioning of media practitioners

Media as Victim

Here are some examples:

1. *December 6, 1992: Journalists and photographers covering the demolition of the Babri Masjid were brutally bashed up by kar sevaks and a woman journalist molested simply because she had a cap on her head.*

The President of the Delhi Union of Journalists, Mr. Anand K. Sahay, in a statement said that journalists all over the December 6, were witness to the brutal attack on journalists, the first of its kind in the annals of modern Indian democratic life.



Karsevaks manhandling journalist

Media as Victim

2. *While Pricilla Raj recently obtained bail, historian, author and columnist Professor Muntasir Mamun, writer and social activist Shahriar Kabir and freelance journalist and writer on development issues Saleem Samad suffer in prison for nearly three weeks under vague charges of "sedition" and section 54 of the CrPC simply because they have written and been associated with films on Islamic fundamentalism and the plight of minorities in Bangladesh*

---- South Asia Free Media Association

3. *Daniel Pearl was killed, brutally in Pakistan while on a journalistic, investigative mission in Pakistan. The Wall Street Journal reporter was kidnapped and then murdered early in early 2002 .*

4. *A total of 19 journalists were killed worldwide for their work in 2002. This number marks a sharp decrease from 2001 when 37 journalists were killed, eight of them while covering the war in Afghanistan. Of the 19 journalists killed in 2002, most were targeted in direct reprisal for their work, and their killers had not been brought to justice at year's end.*

---The Committee to Protect Journalists, New York

Media as Victim

5. *Print media journalists and television reporters and camera crews were attacked on more than a dozen occasions during and after the genocide in Gujarat 2002. The chief minister Narendra Modi's veiled threat that any journalist covering communal violence in Gujarat "could face the fate of Daniel Pearl" has been interpreted as nothing short of a threat.*

The culmination was the attack on women television journalist Barkha Dutt on Sunday, December 15, 02 in Maninagar constituency and the involvement and hostility of the local police in the attack.



Communal Politics

Hindutva's firm belief in the historic tensions and irreconcilabilities between the Muslim and Hindu psyches or worldviews, is closely linked to its commitment to the first claim of the Hindu citizen over this land, its culture, and in today's context even citizenship. That is its concept of Hindu Rashtra.

The two-nation theory that was the basis for the creation of Pakistan similarly proclaims this inherent “difference” between different religious communities and built up a movement for Pakistan on the fear that Muslims cannot expect equal treatment in a majority-Hindu land and therefore, a Muslim nation/country was a necessity.

The bloodbath of Partition and the mass displacement of persons across artificially drawn borders is a wound that a majority of Indians in north and western India resonate with, or react to even today.



Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar

Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak of the RSS, who wrote in his book, *We Or Our Nationhood Defined*, in 1939 defined Hindutva:

“The foreign races in Hindustan (read all Muslims and Christian) must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence (sic) Hindu religion, must entertain no idea

but those of the glorification of Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation and must lost their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges far less any preferential treatment – not even citizen’s rights. There is, at least should be, no other course for them to adopt.” (9)...“German race and pride has now become the topic of the day. 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. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. 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” (10).



Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar

Religion not other aspects of human existence is the critereon for the classification and differentiation of societies for both the proponents of this ideology. Shared histories, geographies, cultures, language, gender, class and caste are aspects of person's identities that are entirely subsumed in the religious one.

Communal ideologies play on history and community driven myths to build images of the “enemy other.”

The image of the ‘enemy within’ in the Indian subcontinental context is sustained by the existence of the ‘enemy without.’

Muslim Communalism and the Two Nation Theory

Ironically, just as the national movement was gaining ground against the British and had drawn in freedom fighters from all communities, the ugly face of both Hindu and Muslim communalism reared its head.

The fight was for competitive space and also for the idea of India. As we have seen above, the RSS and Guru Golwalkar's notion of India is encompassed in *We and Our Nationhood Defined*.

In addition, V. Savarkar's work 'Hindutva: Who is Hindu' (1923) became and remains the basic text defining this political concept.

Side by side with this notion of the 'Hindu State', the simultaneous rise of Muslim communalism in the politics of the Muslim League and its most vocal advocate, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, not only did sectarian nationalism dominate the debate but the sub-continent experienced brutal communal polarization with Partition.

Jinnah and the Muslim League had articulated vocally and later, aggressively for a Muslim nation on the grounds that there could never be justice or fairplay for Muslims under 'Hindu' rule. The constituency of the Muslim League was limited to the Muslim elite but the damage by such aggressive articulations affected the sub-continental polity.

Most poignant was the desperation felt by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan also known as Badshah Khan and 'Frontier Gandhi' who literally felt betrayed by the Congress when they finally accepted Partition. His famous quote at the Congress session said, "You have thrown me to the wolves."

Frontier Gandhi is a unique figure in our history as he, influenced by Gandhi's non-violence persuaded the Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province to lay down their swords and accept the path of non-violence.

His story and contribution used to figure in Maharashtra state's History texts till the seventies.

Since, then with the acceptance of a sectarian Hindu nation within our polity, he has disappeared from our texts here. Our children are deprived of being introduced to this great figure of sub-continental history.

(More of the history of communalism in the separate module)

Therefore:

Just as the Indian Muslim is held guilty even today for the tragedy of partition, though only a small percentage of the Muslims in undivided India supported the idea of division

Temples are demolished in Pakistan and Bangladesh and the Hindu and Christian minorities targeted there after attacks on minorities take place within India. This happened soon after the Babri Masjid was demolished at Ayodhya

These images of the enemy other, the stereotype and the 'demon' are cleverly sustained by myths and stereotypes.

These images of the enemy other, the stereotype and the 'demon' are cleverly sustained by myths and stereotypes.

In this process, the media also plays a part. Peace time is when the propaganda is systematically spread, bearing fruit at points of heightened tension and violence. This makes the role of the media critical and decisive.

Media and Democracy

Knowledge of Law, the Constitution and International Human Rights Law .
Knowledge of the History of Conflicts, especially communal conflicts
What is media's commitment to equity and justice that is genuine democracy? Should the fourth estate have such a commitment at all?

Increasingly over the past few decades, we have seen the shrinking of space within the media for democratic issues, issues that affect the vast majority of the people.

For example: Issues of drought Hunger, Employment, Opportunity Poverty , Gender, Labour, etc etc.

Celebrity journalism, beauty contests seem to dominate our images today. Within this, the failure of the media to recognise and reflect the character of parties that propagate an anti-democratic worldview and to remind people of this characteristic of communal parties serves to exonerate them. Similarly, attacks on minorities that have increased within India over past decades have been portrayed as such, as attacks on a section of the population.

A better and more comprehensive understanding of the Indian Constitution and our Fundamental Rights would enable media practitioners to project such attacks not simply on religious minorities, but on Indian citizens who have been granted equal rights and protection before the law.

(Details in Subsequent Sessions on MEDIA and LAW)

However, in brief, Media Practitioners in a Democracy need to have a fundamental understanding of the concepts of equal citizenship, i.e. equality and non-discrimination for all regardless of caste, class, religion, or gender –rights that have been severely eroded in recent years and Freedom of Faith and Expression.

Symptoms in media coverage

A sketchy knowledge of laws, international and national

Public amnesia/short memory

Failure to track processes

Concentration on Event or Tragedy

Abandoning the Fallout of Events

Valorising the Communal Criminal

Media and Hate Speech

Stereotyping the Minority

Symptoms in media coverage

- **Knowledge of Laws, International and National**

The sketchy knowledge of international and national law results often in the events being portrayed without their implications being pointed out.

That is, *Which rights have been violated?*
Which laws broken?

When violent attacks on minorities take place
which of their rights are violated ?

When a Shiv Sena leader says, “ Kick them Out!” about a religious minority which law is he violating?

Sensationalising the Event

**Often the media fails to track an event *until it occurs and*
Fails to record it's manifold fallout.**

Example.

In mid-1994 in Mumbai leading city dailies abruptly stopped coverage of the daily hearing of the Justice BN Srikrishna Commission. One senior editor justified it by saying, 'that none of our readers objected.' The other was more apologetic stating it was an error of 'omission not commission.'

As a result of this major media lapse, significant findings against communal criminals were kept from the public eye.

The media therefore unwittingly played along in *suppressing events*.

(The Sounds of Silence, *Communalism Combat*, August 1994)

Valorising the Communal Criminal

Another aspect of the media has been its tendency to blow up and sensationalise the utterances and statements of leaders of communal parties who are party to major communal crimes *without reminding the public that they have been guilty of such*.

No better example of these can be than those of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad who indulge in consistent hate speech and even the country's deputy prime minister, Lal Krishna Advani.

Example:

India Today, the same fortnightly, that reacted with shock to the bloodletting following the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 had, barely two years previously, in November 1990, glorified the man behind the crime.

The *India Today*, in November 1990, in a cover story titled 'The Lotus Blooms' had featured L.K.Advani's face on the cover, failing to link his political ascendancy with brutal communal crimes unleashed all over the country.

Several newspapers that included *The Times of India*, *Sunday* magazine, *The Telegraph*, *the Economic Times*, and *The Sunday Observer* had, reflected accurately and graphically the systemic violence that the rhetoric of the *Rammandir* was actually unleashing in Gonda, Karnataka, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Purulia, West Bengal, Bombay, Maharashtra. But these publications did little to remind the reading public of the antecedents of India's home minister when he campaigned for his party during the polls in 1996, 1998 and 1999 elections with a 'clean halo' and 'high moral image.'

Did the media abdicate it's primary responsibility in turning a blind eye to Advani's dark past? As home minister and deputy prime minister, Advani has breached propriety of his office when he

1. Exonerated the RSS, BD and VHP for the murder of Graham Steins in January 1999 saying that they should not be investigated. " I don't think so. They have no criminal record." (*The Times of India*, January 26, 1999)
2. Defending criminal Chota Rajan on grounds that he was a 'Hindu' criminal.

Stereotyping the Minority

Lack of Research and Background

The media's lack of research background of issues, the desire to embrace stereotypes has done damage to coverage of communal violence.

1.Minority leadership.

The likes of Syed Shabuddin, Imam Bukhari and the Muslim Personal Law Board are embraced by media practioners in their terminology as 'leaders of the minority' never mind the fact that they do not command any respect within.

In 2000, when a Mumbai-based secular action group started a city-based campaign for signatures demanding that the Srikrishna report be implemented, the *Times of India* stereotyped the campaign by depicting a Muslim woman in a burkha signing the appeal.

2. Personal Law/Uniform Civil Code.

The issue of personal law and uniform civil code has been used by majority parties and supported by the minority despite the fact that women within the minority have suffered from outdated and retrograde practices like triple divorce from which they want change.

The male leadership within the community does not want to grant this change. But the situation of women from the majority is not much better socio-economically, vis a vis violent treatment etc.

In fact female foeticide, dowry killings and domestic violence are experienced by majority women as much or more than minority women. Why then does Aameena make a headline and the declining sex ratio in India's most progressive states remain a statistic?

In 1971, the Indian Parliament enacted a change in India's secular law related to birth, marriage, divorce and death.

This amendment affected and favoured the majority community.

Indian Parliament enacted an amendment to the Special Marriages Act that allowed a Hindu partner in any secular alliance to retain his/her right to inherit or gift away property according to Hindu personal law. This is not a right under that act available to a person of any other religious denomination in India

Conversions.

Much of the attacks against the Christian minority and Christian religious institutions has in past years been justified on grounds that this community is in the business of “converting”.

Official statistics show that Christians who formed 2.6 per cent of the population in 1961, 2.4 per cent in 1981 constitute only 2.3 per cent of our population today. (Tata Statistical Handbook)

Yet the media has been lax in clearly portraying these figures when repeated efforts are being made to enact laws that in effect are a denial of the freedom of faith of individuals.

Expressions of Intolerance

- * *Aubrey Menon's O Rama is targeted for fundamentalist attack by Hindu chauvinist sections in India (1950s)*
- * *The Last Temptation of Christ, a fictionalised critique of the Biblical version is the target of fury by the Christian orthodoxy. many western countries forced to ban / restrict viewing ; in India too, there are protests demanding a ban. (1960s).*
- * *Jesus Christ Superstar, another fictionalised biography of Jesus, on the stage and films is similarly targeted. (1970s).*
- * *Shakepeare ki Ramayana, a play scripted by Iqbal Khwaja and staged in Bombay is disrupted by Vikram Savarkar of the Hindu Mahasabha, the playwright forced to touch Savarkar's feet in forgiveness ; the play is never performed again. (1987).*
- * *Mohammed, the Idiot, the title given to a short story in the Deccan Chronicle generates such rage from Muslims in Hyderabad that offices of the newspaper are attacked and set ablaze. (1987)*
- * *Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Riddles of Hinduism on Ram and Krishna generated violent objections from the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra which were silenced only after a massive show of strength from Dalits in support of the book. (1988)*

** Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses generates worldwide furore, a price is put on Rushdie's head ; the author has been forced into a life in hiding ever since. (1989).*

** Public showings of Ram Ke Naam, a documentary film by Anand Patwardhan that severely critiques the Ramjanmabhoomi movement have often been marred by violence and the filmmaker subjected to violent threats from various wings of the Hindutva brigade. (1990 onwards)*

** Nikhil Wagle, the outspoken editor of the Marathi evening paper, Mahanagar has thrice been roughed up, and copies of Mahanagar burnt by Sainiks for his courageous criticism of the Sena (first in 1991).*

** Professor Mushirul Hasan survives a murderous attack on his life by Jamia Milia students after he defends Rushdie's right to freedom of expression. (1992).*

** Dr. Abid Raza Bedar, Director of Patna's Khuda Baksh Oriental Library faced a violent witch-hunt from Muslim students and other fundamentalists when he made bold to say that the word kafir meant someone who rejects faith ; hence Hindus should not be called Kafirs but mushrik, someone who has more than one God. (1992).*

- The Rape of Sita, a critique of the anti-feminist perspective of the Ramayana is banned in Indonesia (1992).
- * Hum Sab Ayodhya, an exhibition put together by the Sahmat group Delhi faced violent objections since among many other panels, it displayed the Dasaratha Jataka that depicts Ram and Sita as siblings. (1993)
- * Activists and MLAs of the Jharkand Mukti Morcha threaten Sunil Gangopadhyay for his book, Prothom Aalo for “uncondonable derogatory references to Goddess Kali”. (1993).
- * Taslima Nasreen faces the wrath of the Bangladeshi clergy for her book Lajja and outspoken remarks against organised religion. (1993).
- * Schindler’s List, the award winning film by Stephen Spielberg is banned by many Muslim countries because it “portrays Jews as a persecuted minority and encourages racism!” (1994)



- **Media Amplifies the Voices**
- **Voices that Drive the Conflict and**
- **Voices that Rise above the Rabble and push for Dialogue**
- **As a Media Practitioner, which do we amplify and when?**
- **The choice can make the critical difference.**

Post September 11, 2001 the world has been full of voices that re-affirm the world stereotype of Muslims as fanatics and aggressor never mind that the War Against Iraq has been the modern world's most unjust war. What role has the world and Indian media played in this conflict? (Subject for Home Project)

Some quotations from the West

"War is a crime against peace which cries for vengeance before God," said Archbishop Renato Raffaele Martino, speaking on Vatican Radio. "Do not reply with a stone to the child who asks for bread," he said. "They are preparing to reply with thousands of bombs to a people that have been asking for bread for the last 12 years."

"I want to remind UN members and particularly those who make up the Security Council that the use of force is the last resort after having exhausted all peaceful solutions, as stipulated by the UN charter," the Pope told tens of thousands of worshippers gathered in St. Peter's Square.

***(War crime in Iraq: Vatican, March 18, 2003,
Communalism Combat March 2003)***

"We look to them to condemn suicide bombers and terrorists who use Islam as a weapon to destabilise and destroy innocent lives. Sadly, apart from a few courageous examples, very few Muslim leaders condemn clearly and unconditionally the evil of suicide bombers who kill innocent people.

We need to hear outright condemnation of theologies that state that suicide bombers are martyrs..." he said in a lecture in Rome as his successor Rowan Williams, a strong advocate of a dialogue between Christians and Muslims, prepared to address a conference of Christian and Islamic scholars in New York.

**John Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury:
The Hindu, 28 May 2004**

OR

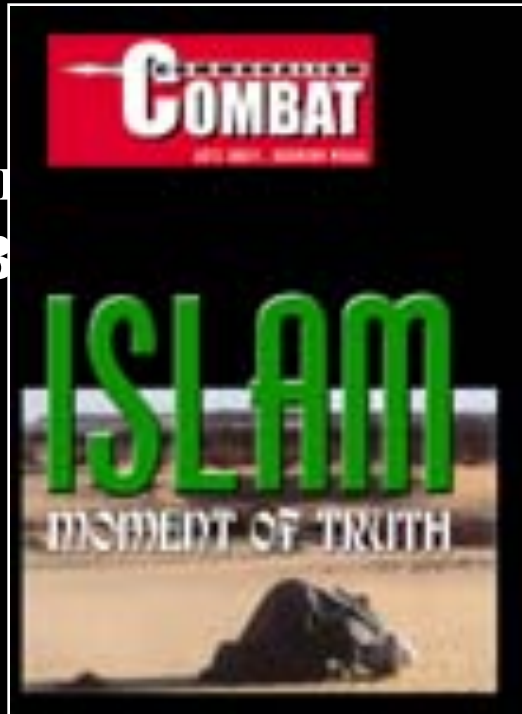
"We might as well admit it. Our churches and cathedrals are more beautiful than their Mosques."

Orianna Fallaci, Italian born best known political interviewer of her generation, in *Corriere delta Sera*

“None of the friends of Bin Laden are named Bobby Smith. So Muslims have to tolerate our suspicions.”

**Bill Maher TV presenter of a popular show in the US,
*‘Politically Incorrect’***

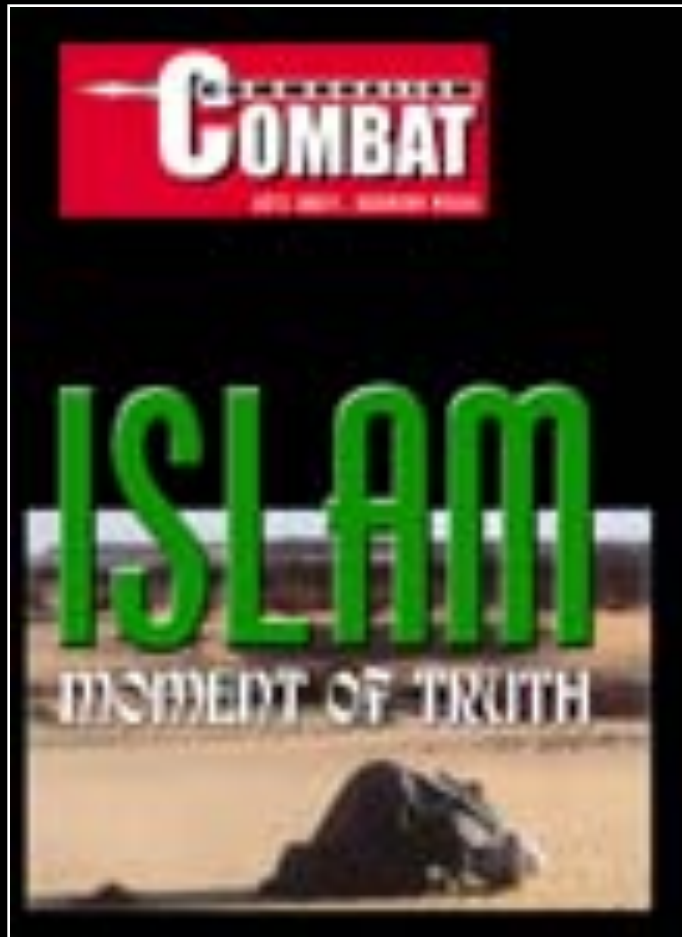
Which of the VOICES from the WEST do we choose to project?



What is the reaction of the West to 9/11?

What role did Media Practitioners play here?

But then what about 9/11 ? ? ?



Quotations from Muslims

“ When I heard on the news about the death of 3,000 people in the World Trade Center crash, I was saddened. The loss of lives of so many innocent Americans was a costly blow. But I would like to point out that the lives of people killed in other terrorist attacks are no less precious. And America has had a hand, directly or indirectly, in most of these movements.....I believe, Islam has been targeted after the Sept. 11 attacks. Osama Bin Laden was shown to be guilty. Mullah Omar was shown to be guilty. All without adequate proof. “

Imam Bukhari (www.newsindia-times.com)

“All good and concerned Muslims are implicated in the unchecked rise of fanaticism in Muslim societies. We have given free reign to facism within our midst and failed to denounce fanatics who distort the most sacred concepts of our faith.”

Ziauddin Sardar, liberal Muslim writer based in UK, in *The Observer*,
London September 23, 2001

"I have never known such venom and such hatred and such constant, unchecked, fascistic expression of daily appalling, often fabricated, always imagined, always exaggerated verbiage as there has been against the Muslim community... . We have entered a new dark age of injustice and it is frightening that we are overwhelmed by it."

These are not the words of a Muslim rabble-rouser, but have been taken from a recent speech by **Gareth Peirce**, one of Britain's most respected and high-profile human rights lawyers. And lest she should be accused of a pro-Muslim bias because she is currently representing families of several British Muslims languishing in the Guantanamo Bay prison, let me add that in the past she has also fought for the rights of non-Muslims wrongly jailed or persecuted in Muslim countries.

The Hindu - 30 May 2004

- **Which is the absolute reality and truth that we may represent**
- **Can the situation be adequately represented without adequate complexities?**
- **How Does Media Deal with Hate Speech?**
- **What is the law on Hate speech?**

The law

The critical choice in reportage between FREEDOM of EXPRESSION (ARTICLE 19(1) of the Indian Constitution) and curbs on that freedom. (Article 19 (2).)

More Specifically India has specific laws against

HATE SPEECH.

What are these?

Offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code

Section 153A : *Promoting enmity between different religious groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc and doing acts prejudicial to the maintainance of harmony.*

Punishment –Imprisonment upto 3 years or with fine or both

Section 153B: *Imputation, assertions, prejudicial to national integration.*

Punishment-Imprisonment upto 3 years or with fine or with both

Section 295A: *Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting his religion or religious feelings*

Punishment—Imprisonment upto three years or with fine or both

Section 298: *Uttering words etc with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings.*

Punishment –Imprisonment upto one year or with fine or both

An Example of Hate Speech

Saamna Box

Thus wrote Thackeray: December 8, 1992: 'Muslims should draw a lesson from the demolition of Babri Masjid otherwise they will meet the same fate as Babri Masjid. Muslims who criticise the demolition are without religion, without a nation.'

Thus ruled the HC: 'According to these articles, by the fissiparous mentality created in the minds of Muslims by the aforesaid anti-social elements, Muslims started drifting from the mainstream of life...

these articles do not criticise Muslims as a whole but Muslims who are traitors to India....

‘It is true that in some of these articles due to the emotional outburst, high-flown and caustic language is used but this per se will not fall within mischief of sections 153A and 153B of the Code.’



Thus wrote Thackeray:

January 8, 1993: 'Stop the armed bands of traitors before it is too late. hand over the 'Mini-Pakistans' of Bombay to the Indian army. Unless the rioting traitors are shot on the spot, normalcy which the police refer to would not be restored.'

Thus ruled the HC:

'The aforesaid portion of the article refers to the lukewarm attitude taken by the police and S.R.P. at the behest of the government taking the role of by standers and it is from this point of view, the part of the editorial refers to the government to take stringent measures against the rioters by firing on the spot. In the article reference is made to the violence which erupted at Bhendi Bazar, Null Bazar, Dongri and traitors are held responsible for it and suggestion is made that in such type of situation shooting at sight will be an appropriate action. In our opinion, this article also cannot come within the ambit of section 153A and 153B of the code.'



Thus wrote Thackeray:

January 9, 1993: 'The ugly and violent form of Muslim traitors was witnessed by the city yesterday. During the 26-year tenure of M.K. Gandhi, Muslims from Malabar to Noakhali grew progressively violent and Hindus became non-violent... Our prophecy has come true. A Muslim whichever country he belongs to, whichever position he occupies, is first a Muslim. To him his religion is the first concern. Nation is of secondary importance to him. In the last two days patriotic people have been subject to attacks. These attacks constitute attacks on the nation.'

Thus ruled the HC:

'The aforesaid article when read as a whole, refers to the activities of Muslim traitors who were destroying culture, tradition, piety, family, law, truth, affection, public administration and other such cherished values and showing their cruelty before the police and army... according to this article, the army, the police in the city instead of stopping the traitorous activities of anti-national Muslims, are taking the role of bystanders, mutely looking at the scene. This attitude of the army and the police is abhorred. This article does not create feeling of ill-will, spite and hatred in the minds of Hindus against Muslims.' * ("Crime and Punishment", CC, January 1995)

Muslim leaders warn of `counter-terrorism`.

Muslim leaders warned here today of Islamic "counter-terrorism" in response to the "Hindu terrorism" of the VHP, RSS and threatened to move the United Nations to carve out a `safe haven' for Muslims in India on the lines of the Kurdish area in Northern Iraq.

Maulana Saiyad Musannah Miyan, chief patron of the Jamia Qadria Ashrafia, alleged in a statement circulated at a press conference that the Prime Minister was according "tacit endorsement" to the VHP and the RSS.

"It would be a mistake to imagine that Muslims in India are not capable of self-defence against religious terrorists," they said. They were reacting to the reported statement of VHP leaders that the Government action against its proposed rally in Ayodhya could start riots.

The Hindu - MUMBAI Oct. 16

The Media everywhere has a critical responsibility in it's understanding. perspective and reportage at all times but especially in times of internal and external conflict.