

Abstract

POWER, INEQUALITIES AND VULNERABILITIES: A CASE STUDY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN INDIA

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India is a pluralistic country comprising multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural characteristics. But today this notion of Indian reality is under great threat. The Hindutva (Political Hinduism) forces are increasingly seeking to homogenize the culture of India towards an upper caste, Sanskritic, Brahmanic Hinduism. Anything outside this cultural orbit is denied legitimate existence in Indian society. In the perception of Hindutva, the Christian mission is an unwanted and foreign body in Indian culture and civilization, and therefore to be eliminated from the holy soil (*Punya Bhoomi*).

While the Hindu fundamentalist organizations, through their homogenization policy, claim that the tribals and Dalits (Untouchables) are backward Hindus, the tribals and the Dalits on the other hand reject this superimposed identity. They are struggling for their survival, human dignity and cultural identity.

Conversion movements have been one of the means by which the untouchables and tribals have been moving up in the social ladder of Indian society. A large number of Dalits (untouchables) and tribals have converted themselves to Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. The tribal and Dalit perception of Christian mission is not the same as that of Hindutva. A large number of them view Christianity as a process of social and cultural emancipation. More than sixty percent of Indian Christians today are from these lower layers of Indian society.

This openness of the Untouchable castes and tribals to Christianity angers the upper castes and this leads to violence against Christians to stop them to embrace Christianity.

My paper deals on this subject of power conflict and persecution of Christians in India.