

COMMUNAL RIOTS — A THREAT TO NATIONAL UNITY

“We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.”

— Swift

India is a country consisting of a large number of state and union territories. People belong to different castes and creeds. They speak different languages and have different modes of worship. In spite of this apparent diversity, there is a definite streak of unity running through the entire country. Some anti-social elements and vested interests are, however, always on the look out for an opportunity to undermine this unity. They do not hesitate from inciting different sections of the people on various pretexts. Communal differences come very handy to such people. Small incidents sometimes lead to big riots which result in a large-scale violence, loot and arson. They have always resulted in a lot of bloodshed and destruction. Man becomes a wolf to man and is out to kill and destroy. The various state and central governments have been doing their best to put such riots down with an iron hand but they continue to raise their ugly head at various times at various places. Sometimes, it is Delhi, at another time, it is U.P., Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Mumbai, or any other state. People come out in the streets on small pretexts and start indulging in bloodshed, riots and arson.

Such outbursts of violence have been on the increase in the country in the recent past. Clashes between different communities, economic groups and political parties are quite frequent. They not only result in a great loss to national life and property but also create a bad blood amongst different section of the people. All this poses a great danger to the unity and freedom of the country.

Growing fissiparous tendencies in the country must be controlled on a top priority basis. This can be done only by inculcating a spirit of integration and oneness in the country. National integration is the crying need of the hour. India is a secular state where everybody is free to practice any religion with honour and dignity. All the communities must learn to live together in a spirit of co-operation and mutual goodwill. Similarly, people speaking different languages, practicing different ways of life and belonging to different cultural and social groups must realize that they are the sons and daughters of the same mother India and are, hence brothers and sisters. They must not quarrel over petty

issues for selfish gains. They must all work for a strong, united and prosperous India.

It is unfortunate that some fanatic religious groups continue to indulge in objectionable and undesirable activities. Foreign missionaries are also active in certain backward areas of the country. They are abetting religious conversion by force, fraud or guile. This also leads to communal clashes sometimes. The government must put a ban on all such conversions. Places of worship are sometimes used as a heaven for fanatics and militants belonging to particular religious groups. Such activities must not be used as a heaven for fanatics and militants belonging to particular religious processions should also be drastically reduced and misuse of religious places should not be allowed.

Government investigations have revealed that foreign governments are encouraging and helping the undesirable elements in our country in a big way with funds and weapons. They are fanning the flames of violence and disruption. Some political parties and some unscrupulous leaders patronise groups of anti-social elements and use them to create disturbances wherever they like. They are past masters in the art of producing riots whenever and wherever they want. Such elements should be singled out and given a deterrent punishment. The national publicity media like the newspapers and periodicals, the television and the radio, should gear themselves to the needs of the country and inculcate a spirit of unity and integration amongst the people. School and college textbooks should also reflect a unified organization should rise to the occasion and organize such programme as carry the message of national integration to the farthest corners of the country.

The people in India must come to realize that India is their own country and they have a moral responsibility to build her up into a great land. It is a land blessed by the gods and the goddesses. We have no reason to be disappointed or disheartened. Pessimism would not help. Let us follow in the footsteps of our great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda and Guru Nanak and make this great land of ours once again the "Jagad Guru."