

## **Religious Apartheid in India**

The world reacted to Apartheid in South Africa with widespread condemnation and pressure to end the discriminatory regime, primarily through international sanctions, boycotts, and diplomatic isolation. With the United Nations leading the charge, particularly after the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960, which drew global attention to the brutality of the system, this pressure eventually contributed significantly to the dismantling of apartheid and the release of Nelson Mandela. Bishop Tutu, a moral voice of the world, played a significant role.

### **Religious Apartheid in India is at a Dangerous Level**

Religious apartheid, in the context of India, generally refers to systemic discrimination or segregation based on religious identities, leading to unequal treatment of different religious communities. Over recent years, religious apartheid in India has reached a monumental level. Especially since 2014, it has been worsening by the day.

Some intellectuals and visionaries were able to foresee this much earlier. Prof. Puran Singh was such a person. I am using some of the excerpts from his letter:

Prof. Puran Singh's open letter to Sir John Simon (Head of the Simon Commission) in 1928 foretold the fate of minorities and the have-nots after the end of British rule over India.

When things descend to melancholy, details of daily life, and the carrying out of these fine Constitutions in the spirit of practical sympathy, there is very little man-material in India, which can be singled out truly as cultured and rightly trained to deserve the title "Indian," which means one who, like a Japanese or an Englishman, will place before himself the interest of the country as a whole, first and foremost, and who would burn with a passion of its service. There are Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Christians, Parsis, and Jains in India but very few Indians. As strange as it may sound, it is quite true that those who have removed those labels are empty bottles without having any character of wine, acid, or poison. They are of no account because, for centuries, in India, the formation of character has been associated not with the practice of broad-minded patriotism but with certain racial prejudices and social superstitions. It is, therefore, not extricable from the so-called religious bias and bigotry. Self-government in India means Government by a few cunning and aggressive individuals who, once in possession of authority, would twist all laws and constitutions to suit their wills and make them work in favor of communal or so-called religious biases.

In conclusion, I would request you not to be so small as to be partial in any way to any community and not to be so large as to give over India into the hands of one powerful community and thus reduce the other minor communities to eternal slavery even under democratic Institutions. By cutting up the country into Muslim provinces and Hindu provinces, you would be only introducing a slow-eating consumption of civil anarchy, which could kill the weaker communities. Where the Hindus prevail, Muslims shall suffer, and where the Muslims prevail, the Hindus shall suffer. As I have already said, virile communities like that of the Sikhs may risk fighting to death at asking for a purely Sikh province.

Puran Singh

October 21, 1928.

P.O. Chak No. 73/19.

(Via Nankana Sahib, N.W. Ry., Punjab)

Swami Dharma Theertha was another intellectual who documented in his book *The Menace Hindu Imperialism*, 1946

Statement Submitted by the Indian Social Congress to The British Parliamentary Delegation to India:

Human freedom is now denied in India as a result of cruel customs and superstitions inherited from an unknown past, which the British Government has continued to preserve for reasons one cannot understand.

### **Denial of human rights**

The following are some instances of the denial of elementary human rights:

#1. To be free-born is the most elementary and most fundamental of all rights of man. The Hindus deny this. The status and rights of a Hindu were determined before birth, and nothing thereafter can alter them.

#2. Even in such simple matters as eating and drinking, Hindus cannot associate with Hindus, nor can Hindus, Muslims, or Christians associate as equals.

#3. Freedom of marriage was denied on account of the restrictions imposed in the name of caste and creed and numerous social customs backed by the State.

#4. The right to inheritance and succession is also interfered with by the enforcement of unreasonable traditions and ancient laws.

#5. Daily insult is offered to self-respecting persons, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and others by the observance of discrimination, exclusiveness, and untouchability in public places, like hotels, schools, colleges, government offices, factories, railway stations, etc.

#6. These unjust discriminations are carried into every department of the country's administration, including educational institutions, lockouts, registration offices, birth and death records, police records, selection to the public service, and election to local bodies and legislatures.

#7. Women are denied their legitimate share of the benefits of civilization, their economic rights to equal justice in marriage, and state recognition of the special services rendered to society by motherhood, as well as their freedom to move about like other human beings without being confined to the Zenana or the Purdah.

#8. Freedom of religion and worship is also made practically impossible by unconscionable customs.

#9. As a result of all these State-recognized restraints and divisions, the people of India are cut up into thousands of meaningless and exclusive groups in the name of caste and creed. The State, both under the Indians and the British Government, has made it almost impossible for the people to unite and become free by any ordinary means. As things stand, no Indian can assert their human rights without coming into conflict with the law and administration of the British in India.

#10. After subjecting the people of India to enforced social and religious disunion and injustice, the British Empire sanctified the Soloman recognition, making it a cruel market for them to unite and present a united front for freedom.

Swami Dharam Theertha's criticism of the bill to Codify Hindu law introduced in the central legislative assembly (March 1943)

#1. Lacking definition and clarity.

1. The term 'Hindu' is not defined satisfactorily. Its scope is made to depend on the scope of Hindu law. But the bills do not say what is 'Hindu law.' Hence, the courts and the people left, as hither, to the mercy of the ancient scriptures.

(b) Terms like caste, Varna, Gotra, Pravara, etc., are not defined but refer to Hindu law.

The term Hindu may be so defined as to include "any native of India by birth or domicile whose is not governed by Christian of Muslims or any other law of marriage inheritance and succession in force in British India."

He also recommended that this leaning on Hindu law is quite unnecessary and is resorted to because the Bills want to preserve some ideas and customs, which are quite irrational and

It cannot be explained or justified except by reference to another unintelligible authority, which he called Hindu law.

### **Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy:**

Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy's school of thought posits that there was no religion by the name of Vedic Hinduism derived from the name of a place. With no distinct doctrines and no sacred book, it was said to be an imaginary religion preaching the superiority of the Brahmin, the inferiority of the Shudra, and the untouchability of the Panchama. He left the Indian National Congress after unsuccessfully trying to convince Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi to help him end religion-based segregation in Indian National Congress-run schools in Tamil Nadu.

### **Winston Churchill:**

In Britain, Winston Churchill, a prominent Conservative politician who was then out of office but later became Prime Minister, became a vigorous and articulate critic of Gandhi and an opponent of his long-term plans. Churchill's bitterness against Gandhi grew in the 1930s. He called Gandhi the one who was "seditious in aim," whose evil genius and multiform menace was attacking the British empire. Churchill called him a dictator, a "Hindu Mussolini," fomenting a race war, trying to replace the Raj with Brahmin cronies, and playing on the ignorance of the Indian masses, all for selfish gain. Churchill attempted to isolate Gandhi, and the European and American press widely covered his criticism of Gandhi. It gained Churchill's sympathetic support, but it also increased support for Gandhi among Europeans. The developments heightened Churchill's anxiety that the "British themselves would give up out of pacifism and misplaced conscience."

As is his hatred for Mahatma Gandhi, a figure he repeatedly mocked, calling him (among other things) a "malignant subversive fanatic" and "a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace."

### **Archibald Wavell:**

Archibald Wavell, the Viceroy and Governor-General of British India for three years until February 1947, had worked with Gandhi and Jinnah to find common ground, both before and after accepting Indian independence in principle. Wavell condemned Gandhi's character, motives, and ideas. Wavell accused Gandhi of harboring the single-minded idea to "overthrow British rule and influence and to establish a Hindu raj" and called Gandhi a "malignant, malevolent, exceedingly shrewd" politician. Wavell feared a civil war on the Indian subcontinent and doubted Gandhi would be able to stop it.

Some of the other prominent Indian leaders of British India, e.g., Lala Lajpat Rai. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Vir Savarkar, and Lala Hardyal were fighting for a Hindu Raj, not the freedom of India.

Here are some of the key issues that are contributing to the perception of religious apartheid in India:

1. Discrimination Against Religious Minorities:

- Muslims: India's Muslim population, which is the most significant minority, has faced rising incidents of discrimination and violence, particularly in the context of communal riots, mob attacks, and hate crimes.
- Dalit and Adivasi Christians and Muslims: There is a history of caste-based discrimination in India, and when Dalits (historically oppressed communities) convert to Islam or Christianity, they are often denied the same affirmative action benefits as Hindus who convert. This has led to social and economic marginalization.

2. Hate Speech and Religious Violence:

- There has been a rise in hate speech from some political and religious leaders, which has contributed to anti-Muslim sentiments. This includes derogatory remarks, media narratives, and calls for the exclusion of certain groups from mainstream society.
- The increasing frequency of lynching incidents and violent attacks against Muslims, often justified by allegations of "cow slaughter" or "love jihad," has intensified fears of growing religious apartheid.

3. Media and Political Representation:

- There is concern that certain political narratives, particularly from Hindu nationalist groups, are fostering an environment where religious minorities are portrayed as a threat to national unity. This has led to policies and political rhetoric that are viewed as discriminatory, such as the push for a uniform civil code or restrictions on religious practices in certain states.
- The media often amplifies religious divisions, with some outlets focusing on issues like interfaith marriages or minority rights in a way that stokes division.

4. Economic and Social Segregation:

- Religious segregation is also evident in economic disparities, as many Muslims and Christians remain economically disadvantaged compared to the majority Hindu population. Access to education, employment, and housing remains unequal, with discrimination sometimes being embedded in social practices and policies.

- In urban areas, religious segregation can be seen in the form of "ghettoization," where minorities live in specific regions with limited access to resources, opportunities, or mobility.

#### 5. Legal and Policy Issues:

- The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) have sparked widespread protests, particularly among Muslims. Critics argue that these policies discriminate against Muslims by implicitly questioning their status as citizens in a way that does not apply to other communities.
- Additionally, religious freedom is under scrutiny, with laws in 13 states regulating the freedom of religious conversion or criminalizing certain practices, which some see as infringing on individual religious rights.

#### 6. Social Cohesion and Identity Politics:

- Religious identity politics have become increasingly prominent in India, where political parties often seek support based on religious lines. This has deepened divides between Hindus and Muslims, with some fearing that India is heading towards a more religiously exclusive society.
- This heightened religious identity politics has led to tensions not only in the political sphere but also in social spaces, such as interfaith relationships, communal celebrations, and public expressions of faith.

### **The Consequences of Religious Apartheid**

- **Increased Polarization:** A deeply divided society makes it more challenging to foster unity, coexistence, and harmony. Communities may increasingly view each other with distrust and suspicion.
- **Loss of Secularism:** India's constitutional commitment to secularism and equal treatment of all religions is being questioned, as policies and actions often seem to favor one religion over others.
- **Potential for Violence:** Persistent discrimination and injustice can lead to violent outbreaks, as seen in past communal riots, with potentially devastating consequences for national stability and security.

In conclusion, religious apartheid in India, if left unchecked, poses serious risks to the fabric of its pluralistic society. The increasing divisions and perceived exclusion of religious minorities could undermine the country's democratic and secular foundations. Addressing these issues would require significant efforts in terms of policy reforms, education, and fostering interfaith dialogue and understanding.

Riots against Muslims in India have been a recurring and tragic issue, with several high-profile incidents taking place over the decades. These riots are typically characterized by violence, destruction, and the loss of life, often fueled by religious tensions, political motives, or economic grievances. While there are numerous instances of such riots, several have drawn significant national and international attention.

## **Key Incidents of Riots Against Muslims in India**

1. **Gujarat Riots (2002):** One of the most infamous and devastating instances of anti-Muslim violence occurred in Gujarat in 2002. The violence began after the burning of a train in Godhra, in which 59 Hindu pilgrims were killed. This incident triggered widespread rioting in the State, leading to the massacre of Muslims. It is estimated that over 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed, and thousands more were displaced. Many homes, businesses, and mosques were destroyed. Local authorities reportedly facilitated the violence, and the handling of the situation by then-Chief Minister Narendra Modi has been the subject of significant controversy.
2. **Delhi Riots (2020):** The Delhi riots of February 2020 were another significant episode of violence against Muslims. These riots occurred against the backdrop of protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which many critics saw as discriminatory against Muslims. Clashes between pro-CAA and anti-CAA groups sparked the riots but quickly escalated into targeted violence against Muslim communities in northeast Delhi. At least 53 people died, mostly Muslims, and hundreds of others were injured. Numerous reports pointed to organized mob attacks on Muslim homes, businesses, and mosques.
3. **Muzaffarnagar Riots (2013):** In 2013, communal violence broke out in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh, following clashes between Hindu and Muslim communities. The violence resulted in the deaths of over 60 people, with many more injured. Thousands of people were forced to flee their homes and take refuge in relief camps. The riot had long-standing communal tensions and political undertones, and many believe it was inflamed by local political leaders to stir up divisions.
4. **Babri Masjid Demolition and Subsequent Riots (1992):** The demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 by Hindu activists led to widespread communal violence across India. The mosque's demolition, which was carried out by Hindu extremists who believed the mosque was built on the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram, sparked riots that led to the deaths of over 2,000 people, mostly Muslims. This event deepened religious divisions and fueled further violence in the following years.

5. **Kashmir Conflict:** Though the Kashmir issue is complex, it has often been a site of violent clashes between Indian forces, Muslim separatists, and local civilians. The region has faced periods of heavy military presence and alleged human rights violations. Since the 1990s, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a violent insurgency, with Muslims often being at the receiving end of state repression. The violence has claimed thousands of lives and displaced many.

## **Causes of Riots Against Muslims**

**Political Exploitation:** Communal violence is sometimes incited or worsened by political leaders or parties seeking to gain electoral benefits by polarizing religious communities. By exploiting religious divisions, politicians can rally support from one community while scapegoating another. This has often been a factor in large-scale violence.

**Religious Tensions:** India has a long and complex relationship with religion. Hindu-Muslim tensions have existed for centuries, often exacerbated by historical events like the partition of India in 1947. In recent years, there have been attempts by certain groups to reframe Hindu-Muslim relations in more antagonistic terms.

**Economic Disparities:** Muslims in India, especially those from marginalized backgrounds, often face significant social and economic disadvantages. These disparities can become a source of frustration, and in times of unrest, they are sometimes exacerbated or blamed on the Muslim community.

**Media Sensationalism:** The media, especially in its sensationalist form, sometimes contributes to the inflaming of religious emotions. Misreporting, biased coverage, and spreading inflammatory rhetoric can all contribute to sparking or escalating communal violence.

## **Manipur Riots**

The Manipur riots refer to a series of violent clashes and disturbances that have occurred in the northeastern Indian State of Manipur, particularly in 2023. However, the region has also experienced sporadic conflicts in the past. These recent riots have been marked by ethnic tensions between the Meitei community, predominantly Hindu and living in the valley region, and various tribal groups, mainly the Kuki and Naga communities, living in the surrounding hill areas.



## Key Events in the 2023 Manipur Riots:

1. **Ethnic Tensions:** The core of the unrest in Manipur is based on ethnic, social, and political divisions. The Meitei community, which is in the majority in the Imphal Valley, has long been demanding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status, which would grant them certain privileges related to reservation and land rights. The Kuki and Naga tribes, living in the hilly areas, are wary of these demands, fearing that granting ST status to the Meiteis might alter the demographic and political balance in the region.
2. **Triggering Incident:** The violence began in early May 2023, when protests erupted after the State's High Court directed the state government to consider the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Meitei community. The decision was perceived as a threat by the tribal groups, which led to violent clashes. These protests escalated into full-blown riots, leading to widespread destruction, arson, and violence.
3. **Escalation of Violence:** The conflict quickly spread to various parts of the State, especially in the hill districts of Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Tengnoupal. The violence resulted in hundreds of deaths, with many injured and thousands of people displaced from their homes.
4. **Involvement of Armed Groups:** The Kuki insurgent groups, such as the Kuki National Army (KNA) and the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA), became involved in the violence, escalating the scale of the conflict. The Meitei side also has armed militias and sporadic clashes between these armed groups further fueled the chaos.
5. **Impact on Civilians:** The violence has caused a humanitarian crisis in the region, with large-scale displacement, destruction of property, and loss of lives. Ethnic communities have been forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge in makeshift camps.
6. **Response from the Authorities:** The central and State governments have struggled to control the violence. The Indian Army and paramilitary forces were deployed to restore order, but sporadic incidents of violence continued. The state government has imposed curfews and internet shutdowns in several districts to prevent the spread of misinformation and control mob violence.
7. **Political Dimensions:** The conflict has also brought political divisions to the forefront. Various political groups in Manipur have either supported or opposed the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Meiteis, further complicating the situation. The state government's handling of the crisis, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has been criticized by some as inadequate, particularly regarding the protection of tribal interests.

8. Ongoing Tensions: Despite some efforts at peace talks, the situation in Manipur remains fragile. The state government is working on measures to restore peace and normalcy, but deep-rooted ethnic and political divisions continue to hinder long-term reconciliation.
9. As of May 3, 2024, 386 religious structures, including churches and temples, were vandalized in the ethnic violence in Manipur, India. The violence began on May 3, 2023, between the Meitei people and the Kuki-Zo tribal community. Unofficial figures are higher than the Government's reported numbers.

### **Broader Implications:**

The Manipur riots reflect the complex ethnic and political dynamics in India's northeast, where various indigenous groups have historically been in conflict over issues like land rights, political representation, and autonomy. The ongoing instability in the region necessitates a nuanced approach that takes into account the concerns of all communities and fosters peace and integration.

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5. **Kashmir Conflict:** Though the Kashmir issue is complex, it has often been a site of violent clashes between Indian forces, Muslim separatists, and local civilians. The region has faced periods of heavy military presence and alleged human rights violations. Since the 1990s, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a violent insurgency, with Muslims often being at the receiving end of state repression. The violence has claimed thousands of lives and displaced many.
6. **Loss of Life and Displacement:** Riots result in the death and injury of thousands of individuals, most of whom are from the Muslim community. Many people are displaced from their homes and face long-term socio-economic challenges.
7. **Discrimination and Marginalization:** Muslims often bear the brunt of systemic discrimination in the aftermath of such riots. This may include loss of property, opportunities, and a general sense of alienation.
8. **Polarization:** These events can deepen the divide between Hindu and Muslim communities, leading to long-lasting social fragmentation.

### **The number of mosques destroyed**

or damaged over the last 20 years in India has been linked to various factors, including communal violence, land disputes, and political

conflicts; however, there isn't a comprehensive and consistent record specifically detailing the destruction of mosques over two decades.

### **Key incidents include:**

1. Babri Masjid (1992): The destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by Hindu extremists is one of the most prominent cases. Though it occurred slightly more than 20 years ago, its aftermath still influences the ongoing discourse on religious violence and the protection of places of worship in India.
2. Riots and Local Conflicts: Mosques have also been targeted in localized conflicts and riots, such as those during communal riots in Gujarat (2002), Maharashtra (2012), and Uttar Pradesh (2013). In some instances, mosques were damaged or destroyed during these periods of violence, though the precise number is difficult to ascertain.
3. Demolition by Authorities: In some cases, mosques have been demolished by local authorities under the guise of urban development or encroachment removal. A notable case involved the demolition of mosques in the aftermath of illegal construction drives in various cities.
4. Bulldozer culture has grown during BJP rule. Homes and religious places of minorities are destroyed with bulldozers without any legal process.

**Anti-Muslim remarks:** INDIA bloc MPs push for impeachment as calls to remove Allahabad HC Judge Shekhar Yadav is growing for publicly insulting Muslims.

### **Bangla Desh:**

The interim Government has accused India of spreading misinformation about anti-Hindu violence to destabilize the caretaker regime, with rightwing Indian media making unsubstantiated claims of a "Hindu bloodbath" over the border.

"There is an orchestrated attempt to undermine the interim government led by 2006 Nobel peace laureate professor Muhammad Yunus," said Shafiqul Alam, press secretary to the interim leader. "Some Indian media have blindly supported Sheikh Hasina's corrupt and brutal dictatorship over the last 16 years. They seem to be unhappy that Hasina was ousted from power in a student-led popular mass uprising."

Alam said they had invited Indian media to the country to "find out the true picture, but it seems they are not interested in covering the story from the ground."

Sikhs have criticized the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) government for its policies and actions as being anti-Sikh, mainly due to its approach to issues related to the Sikh community's religious, cultural, and historical concerns. These concerns are primarily rooted in the following areas:

### **1984 Operation Blue Star:**

Attack on Golden Temple and 72 other Sikh shrines in Punjab and killing hundreds of thousands of innocent Sikhs by the Indian State.

### **Operation Shanti:**

One of the most significant and controversial issues in the context of BJP's policies involves the 1984 Operation Shanti (Sikh Genocide), which was triggered by the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. Thousands of Sikhs were killed, and their properties were destroyed. Some Sikh groups have accused the BJP of not doing enough to bring justice to the victims of the riots, and its leaders have sometimes been linked to the perpetrators. Critics claim that the BJP-led Government has failed to address the lingering trauma of the riot victims fully.

BJP's Response has often been insufficient, and its leaders have been slow to hold the guilty accountable.

#### **1. Controversial Statements by BJP Leaders**

At times, individual BJP leaders have made controversial remarks that have been perceived as disrespectful to the Sikh community. Such statements often fuel suspicions about the party's stance on Sikh issues. For example, derogatory comments about Sikh symbols or language by certain BJP members have led to anger within the community.

Example: BJP leaders like former MP Subramanian Swamy and other figures have occasionally made remarks that have been interpreted as dismissive of Sikh culture or religion, deepening resentment among Sikh groups.

#### **2. Sikh Farmers' Protest (2020-2021)**

The 2020-2021 farmers' protest, which had significant participation from Sikh farmers, especially from Punjab, against the Government's new agricultural laws, resulted in a deepening of tensions between the Sikh community and the BJP-led Government. Many farmers saw the farm laws as pro-corporate and potentially harmful to their livelihoods.

BJP's Response: The Government's handling of the protests, including labeling the protesters as "anti-national" or "terrorists," and its dismissive stance towards their demands, alienated many Sikh farmers. The BJP's close relationship with the farmers' opposition to the reforms was also seen as problematic, furthering the belief among critics that the party was not supportive of Sikh interests.

### 3. Attempts to Curb Sikh Religious Practices

Critics have claimed that certain BJP-led state governments have taken actions that restrict or marginalize Sikh religious practices. For instance, in some BJP-ruled states, there have been moves to curtail the operation of Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) or the activities of Sikh religious institutions. Additionally, issues related to the protection of Sikh religious symbols and heritage have raised concerns.

Example: The issue of the so-called "Sikh religious flag" (Nishan Sahib) in specific public spaces or laws impacting the rights of Sikhs to display religious symbols freely has created tensions between the community and local BJP governments.

### 4. Sikh Genocide Recognition

Sikh community activists have long demanded that the 1984 anti-Sikh riots be officially recognized as a genocide. Many Sikh organizations have criticized the BJP for not formally acknowledging the violence as genocide and for failing to address long-standing grievances related to the aftermath of the riots.

### 5. Sikh Minorities in Kashmir

The BJP's policies on Jammu and Kashmir and its actions related to the revocation of Article 370 in 2019 have been perceived as problematic by certain sections of the Sikh community, particularly in Kashmir. The status of Sikhs in the region following the revocation and the challenges they face regarding their safety, property rights, and religious freedoms have raised concerns.

### 6. Promotion of Hindutva Ideology

The BJP, as a rightwing Hindu nationalist party, advocates for the promotion of "Hindutva," a form of Hindu nationalism. Critics argue that this ideological stance marginalizes non-Hindu communities, including Sikhs, and promotes policies that can erode the secular fabric of India. Sikhs, while being part of the Indian religious and cultural fabric, sometimes feel alienated by policies or statements that emphasize a homogeneous vision of India dominated by one religion.

Example: The BJP's Hindutva-oriented policies have often been perceived as ignoring the pluralistic and diverse nature of Indian society, of which Sikhism is a significant component.

## 7. Hindu-Muslim Divide and Its Impact on Sikhs

Sikh communities have also been concerned about the increasing polarization between Hindus and Muslims in India. Sikhs, historically positioned as a third group in the religious landscape, fear that the growing Hindu-Muslim divide fostered by BJP policies may undermine the space they occupy in India's multi-religious society.

## 8. Sikh Representation in Politics

Though the BJP claims to include Sikhs in their party leadership, the overall representation of Sikhs in key positions within the party is quite limited compared to other communities. This has led to accusations that the party is not giving adequate importance to Sikh issues or adequately addressing the concerns of the Sikh community.

## **Gurdwaras Burnt, Demolished or converted need Attention: A Brief.**

Dr Dalvinder Singh Grewal

"Though the list of Gurdwaras burnt, demolished, or converted in India is very large, I shall limit the brief to Historical Gurdwaras relating to Guru Nanak at 1. Mechuka in Arunachal Pradesh, 2. Guru Dogmar in Sikkim, 3. Gyan Godri in Hardwar, 4. Nanakbari in Hardwar 5. Gurdwara Nanak Bari near Reetha Sahib in Uttarakhand, 6. Gurdwara Nanak Padao near Reetha Sahib, 7. Gurdwara Almora in Uttarakhand, 8. Gurdwara Paua Sahib Gwalior related to Guru Hargobind Sahib, 9. Gurdwara Manji Sahib Kalsi, Uttarakhand, is associated with Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Gurdwara Smadh Rani Jind Kaur at Ram Kund Nasik, Maharashtra."

Transnational oppression is another anti-Sikh campaign of the BJP government. They have been openly bragging that they can invade your house to kill you. They have killed Sikh leaders and Kashmiri leaders in Pakistan by paying money to the Afghans. They have killed a Sikh leader and the president of the local Gurdwara in Surrey, Canada. They tried to assassinate Gur Patwant Singh Pannu for organizing the referendums for the Sikhs in different countries to decide if they wanted to be free and have their homeland or stay with India. The overwhelming Response of the Sikhs is in favor of an independent Sikh state. The Sikh leader Bhai Khanda was also poisoned in England. Pres. elect Trump has appointed Harmeet Kaur Dhillon as Assistant Attorney General at the Department of Justice. She is a Sikh who was also spoken supporting the farmer's strike in India. Shamefully, Indian media

The BJP has been opposing our appointment even though this is none of their business. They are trying to interfere in US educational institutions and other aspects of life.

The current behavior of BJP/RSS representatives, who espouse Hindutva and Brahmanism, is best described by George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945): "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

In the end, I am pleading to the freedom-loving people of the world and democratic countries, especially Western countries who profess to be supporters of human rights, to boycott the Indian Government's businesses and all the private Indian companies like Mr. Adani who support Religious Apartheid in India by supporting the Modi government.