

Going from Bad to Worst

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The communal situation is getting from bad to worst. It's time for the nation and for all of us to stand against radicalism and show maturity. The prevailing situation does not augur well for the democracy or the economy. The growing radicalism on both sides and its manifestation, and inaction by the authorities in some cases and hyper action in others, is not good for the nation. Peace and justice is prerequisite to the economic growth and social development.

For Muslim community the worrying situation is that general perception in the society, as gauged by social media reactions, is at new low. Whatever little sympathy Muslim community got due to the nonsense utterances of the BJP leaders, we lost no time in reversing the situation by street agitations. Predictably, there is over reaction by the State machineries and heavy use of force and a large number of cases, some unjustified, being slapped. While instigators and provocateurs may escape, heavy cost will be paid by the families of many innocent agitators.

We as a community have still not learnt what works for us. There are campaigns demanding the arrest of Nupur Sharma. Can we really afford her arrest? Are we ready to face massive potential backlash?

Can we not see her popularity graph on social media? While we demand arrest of Nupur Sharma, and rightly so, but I am yet to come across a single Muslim, demanding the arrest of Tasleem Rahmani, who provoked the debate? The poor Muslim on the ground is paying huge price, but have we even condemned such characters?

Let's learn today, or at a hefty cost tomorrow, that neither the one sided business will work, nor the My way or the High way? To put it bluntly, the community has got no political leverage with the current regime. But the community is full of issues where the government support is needed. We wish to defeat BJP, but love all those acts and individuals, who help it harvest the political crop, election after election. We doubt the integrity of those who talk sense and workable solutions, but, admire as great self-styled 'secularists' and blindly follow the polarising agents, who give clarion calls to defeat BJP.

Have we ever analysed what are the intentions or implications of their radical utterances, hysterical speeches and tear shedding videos? It is quite profitable to be in this business to be liked by the right wing for political help to them and be loved by the community as great secular warriors. It is difficult to tread moderate path, which gets you on firing line of both sides. IMPAR faces this challenge from day one. Our vocal extremists want the world to change for us without we changing an iota. I recall early days of IMPAR, there was a dedicated debate on one English channel, "Why IMPAR"? The well meaning anchor asked the five member IMPAR panel that you wished the world to change for you, what are you willing to change? There was complete silence. Even today we have no answers. There will be plethora of Hadith produced against any reforms initiated. The essence of religion is forgotten. It has been confined to skullcap.

We continue refusing to read bold writing on the wall. The trends obtaining indicate to more problematic days ahead, unless we change our thoughts and actions and become wiser and more circumspect in our approach. Let's not count on the Arab world and be so jubilant on what recently happened. Resurgent India will be unwilling to accept it. The common Hindu is upset and is getting increasingly radicalised and aggressive. We have to have trust in our systems and institutions, no matter what flaws. There is no other way, but to improve our conduct and contribution and work hard to win over the hearts of common man. The overdose of religion and resultant bigotry have destroyed great societies. We can be no exception. The world is unwilling to listen that Islam means peace and the Muslims are most peace loving people. We must show it in action from our conduct and character.

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