

# MINORITIES IN INDIA: CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS & ACTUAL GOVERNANCE

Nadirshaw K. Dhondy\*

## 1. Introduction

Justice Frankfurter said: "Democracy is always beckoning goal, not a safe harbour. For freedom is an unremitting endeavour, never a final achievement...."

When our forefathers of various minority communities reposed their faith in the Indian Constitution at Independence, they were confident that it would result in an organized civil society. A society where all citizens would be respected for their religious beliefs and practices. Everybody would be enjoying true freedom, which comes from the annihilation of fear; where Justice and Equality before law would prevail and caste class and creed distinctions would be obsolete. Alas that was not to be so. As our eminent Jurist Mr. Nani A. Palkhivala has put it: In the last fifty years we have a constitution which is "defaced and defiled."

Our founding fathers who legislated the provisions concerning the proclamation and the use of the provisions of "Emergency" genuinely believed that even "tragic freedom" was preferable to "compulsory happiness." Today we have constitutional review commission which thinks otherwise. We are being told and informed that a comprehensive review of the Constitution will go a long way in increasing the happiness parameters of the citizens. There is already a clamour for erasing rights guaranteed to the minorities. A nation is at cross roads with its destiny. It is a time everybody here sit up and took serious notice.

Although there were "emergency provisions" in the Constitution all citizens at the time believed that they need not come in the way of a free nation-living in tolerance with some diehard elements in the society. Over the years practical experience has proved to be otherwise. It is the other way round: The diehard-fanatic elements have been merrily going about imposing their will on all sane segments of the society and state institutions. Those

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\*Mr. Nadirshaw K. Dhondy is the advocate of the Supreme Court of India.

entrusted to protecting lives and limbs of the citizens are nowhere on the scene.

There is no action forthcoming from those entrusted with good governance and the rule of law. These fundamentalistic elements have sought to impose their radical actions on an unsuspecting populace. A populace which swears its allegiance to the Constitution and not a *parivar* or a *shakha* known for their rabid communalistic ideologies.

## 2. The Minority Communities

In a very recent episode at Nasik a group of Christians were watching a Christian video presentation, when a group of goons attacked them. The police arrested 33 of them. When they were released no other than State cabinet minister Mr. Pawar was present to welcome them. The reason: He did not want lose his constituency's votes.

You are already aware of the scope of my lecture. The minority communities are suddenly being told in hard, harsh, strident tones and actions that their freedom to practice and propagate religion is under fire. The constitutional guarantee available to Christian citizens is fast becoming a mirage. Between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000 and today (30 June) over 76 serious instances of violence has been reported against Christians. Please read Examiner dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 2000 and 27<sup>th</sup> May. The article is entitled "The endangered species" is annexed herewith. At the best of times people in India in the last decade never felt secure with the law and order they were witnessing and experiencing.

In fact, so feeble have become the law enforcement agencies that they can no longer seriously enforce law. That is why one witnesses the slow but sure decline in the conviction rate. That is why we witness the crumbling of the legal machinery.

In a recent case Fr. Francis Correa of a Catholic School at Mankhurd was arrested just because one student who failed the final examination committed suicide. Notwithstanding Supreme Court's express guidelines on when and how to arrest. The entire procedure was given a total goby and the father was arrested-though he was not a criminal. So much for the law enforcement agencies understanding of the legal provisions. Add to it a communal fervour and we have a ready prescription for a social meltdown.

Let me warn you: Law and order has broken down in most parts of India. In some parts the situation is so serious that the army is in occupation, not in charge.

The parliament statistics clearly show that on an average the army was called out in India once every four days to do some job or the other. If one gets into the habits to use the army as a badly police force then we are grave trouble. Add to this is the constant interference by the politicians in the day to day functioning of the force and we have a sure prescription for national anarchy.

If there could be anarchy descending on the majority community in the form of non-governance like Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa, Assam, U.P., then what would be the fate of the minorities?

The essential point is that while we cannot totally avoid calling out the army, let us avoid the necessity of calling out the army. No where in the world does its own citizen become refugees in their own country in times of peace. Look at our Kashmiri Pandits – they have become refugees in their own country. They have emigrated to safer places like Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, New Delhi, etc., when the state which is enjoined to protect the life and limb of its citizens cannot protect them against the fundamentalistic forces where will minorities stand against secular fundamentalism which is sweeping our country.

Nani Palkhivala, the eminent Jurist, singularly laments “Constitutional integrity must be sharply distinguished from constitutional fundamentalism.” While Pakistan has gone in for religious fundamentalism, India’s besetting sin is secular fundamentalism.

### **3. The Fate of the Indian Constitution**

We interpret our Constitution as if it were an exercise in grammar. In *Ismail Farouqi V/s Union of India 1994 6S.C.C. pg. 360* the Supreme Court has by a majority held that the State can in exercise of its sovereign power acquire places of worship like Mosques, Churches, Temples etc. which is independent of Art 300A of the Constitution. If it is necessary for the maintenance o law and order. Such an acquisition does not violate per se Art 25 & 26 of the Constitution. What is protected under Art 25 & 26 is a religious practice which forms an essential and integral part of religion.

The right to worship does not include the right to worship at any and every place, so long as it can be practiced effectively, unless the right to worship at a particular place is itself an integral part of that right. The implications are many and what is applicable to the Muslims is also applicable to the Christians.

In the case of *Rev. Stanislaus V/s State of M.P.* AIR 1977 SC pg.908 the Supreme Court upheld the validity of an act which forbade conversions. It observed: "if an attempt is made to raise communal passion e.g., on the ground that some one has been forcibly converted to another religion, it would, in all probability, give rise to an apprehension of a breach of public order, affecting the community at large. Therefore, legislation prohibiting forcible conversion of one's own religion in the interest of public order can be passed and is valid. Article 25 (1) specifically grants person the right to practice and propagate one's religion. In this regard the famous case of *Bommai V/s Union of India 1944*. S.C. pg. 1918 is of great consequence.

The 9-member judge bench has categorically ruled.

1) The Constitution prohibits the establishment of a theocratic state. (Art 156, 162)

2) Not only the State is prohibited to establish any religion of its own, but it is prohibited, further, to identify itself with or favouring any particular religion (at para 156) because the state is enjoined to accord equal treatment to all religions and religious sects or denominations.

3) Secularism as comprising the foregoing ingredients (a) is a basic feature of our Constitution (para 28, 124) and (b) any State Govt. which violates any of the foregoing mandates, or pursues any "unsecular" policies or course of action, renders itself amenable to action under Art. 356. (paras 2, 80, 162, 163, 165, 167(viii) 263, 275, 452(10))

4) Section 123(3)-(3A) and allied provisions of the Representative of Peoples Act are to be interpreted in the light of the basic features of our constitution, such as that of "secular democracy" (paras 132, 187, 263) Communalism of politics is anti secular. (para 132). However, in real practice one has to go to Gujrat and Orissa to see how elections were communalised to actually believe.

At a time when some of the founding fathers of the U.S. Constitution were still alive. Joseph Story made a profound observation which is very apposite to our own situation when we are fortunate enough to have still in our midst some of the architects of our Constitution.

“It depends on the present age, whether the national Constitution shall descend to our children in its masculine majesty, to protect and unite the country; or whether, shorn of its strength, it shall become an idle mockery, and perish before the grave has closed upon the last of its illustrious founder”.

There is a very real threat that this may just about to come to be true if we don't stop tinkering with the constitution. Already a review committee has been set up and has drawn much flak from almost the entire intelligentsia. The minorities are already up in arms against the composition and the reference of the constitution's review committee.

It is a common adage to say that “Child is the father of Man...” It is the inputs that you get when you are young that forms the greater part of your life. No wonder the Church states that saints are formed at the feet of a mother. It's the early years that are most formative and absorbing for the child. Whether you grow up to be a noble citizen or a criminal depends on what inputs you get when you are young and in impressionable age.

In ancient shadows and twilight  
Where childhood had strayed,  
The world's great sorrows were born  
And its heroes were made.  
In the lost boyhood of Judas  
Christ was betrayed.

It is high time we all did a serious introspection as to the quality of teachings imparted to young minds; whether they be in a Gurukul, *Madressa*, crèche, *shakas*, *parivars*.

For it is written: As you sow, so will you reap.

#### **4. The Real Swaraj**

As my talk fast draw to a close; it would be incomplete if I did not mention to you what Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the Chairman of the Minorities Sub committee of the Constituent assembly, had to say:

We in the government have been dealing with the RSS movement. They want that Hindu Rajya of Hindu culture should be imposed by force. No government can tolerate this.

You be the judge of what is happening today.

In 1947 when people were jubilant that we attained Swaraj there were two persons who struck a note of dissent - Mahatma and Sardar Patel. The response of Sardar Patel to Independence gained in 1947 was memorable.

What we have is not Swaraj but only freedom from foreign rule. The people still have to win internal Swaraj, abolish distinctions of caste or creed, banish untouchability, improve the lot of the hungry masses and live as one joint family - in short to create a new way of life and bring about a change of heart and a change of outlook..."

It's not too late to give a clarion call for the launch of the second freedom struggle in the ideals of the great Sardar Patel and Mahatma. In the economy of God nothing is ever too late. Now is the acceptable time. Now is the season of grace. Come let us all drink the living waters which well up to life eternal.

*(Acknowledgment: Selected writings of Shri N.A. Palkhivala.)*

## Annexes

### **ANTI-MINORITYISM: STRATEGY OF THE FUNDAMENTALIST BRIGADES FOR POLITICAL POWER**

The following are the summary of attacks against the Christian institutions in India by fundamentalist organizations since January 2000 as reported from different parts of India in the national dailies and in the Christian periodicals.

#### *January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000, Orissa*

While demanding an immediate judicial inquiry in to the ghastly police firing on Christian tribals in Majhiguda village of Gajapathi district in Orissa on Dec. 30, 1999, the All India Christian Council and the All India Catholic Union strongly deplored the incident as part of a systematic communalisation of the tribal belt of Orissa by vested interests.

#### *January 1<sup>st</sup>, Panipat*

The priest of the Catholic Church at Panipat in Hariyana, under the model town police station area, Fr. Vikas Alves IMS, who is the manager of the St. Mary's Convent School, was severely beaten up with sticks and stones and received serious head injuries and fractured hands by unidentified men on Saturday who escaped, leaving Fr. Vikas unconscious as the father's other companion Fr. Ashwin raised the alarm. The police when contacted by Fr. Ashwin while the attackers were still beating up the priest reportedly told him to come to the police station and register a complaint instead of coming to their rescue immediately. For the last couple of years the mission school had been receiving threats, troubles and cases of intimidation.

#### *January 19<sup>th</sup>, Assam*

The principal of St. Joseph's School, Sonari in Sivasgar district of Assam, Fr. Lazar Kakkacherry, is accused of causing the death of the student Damayanti Nag (12) who died of anemia on 19<sup>th</sup> January 200 by the Sonari Town mandal Committee of the BJP and have filed a case against the Principal. The student of class V, Damayanti had vomited once in the school corridor in the morning on the day but she continued attending classes in a normal condition. However, at 2.00 p.m., when the school was closed for the day, she walked to board the school bust stationed outside the school compound and there she collapsed suddenly. On being informed about the girl the

principal sent his assistant, Fr. Ambrose Ekka, with a jeep and reached the student to her home around 3.00 p.m. At about 8.00 p.m., as her parents were rushing her to the medical college at Dibrugarh, 75 kms from the place she breathed her last. The principal later said "The allegation merely to turn the people against the School. Parents have no complaint. In fact they appreciated our gesture of care and concern for the child. We declared the day of the funeral a holiday and went for her burial".

***January 20<sup>th</sup>, Ahmedabad (Times of India Report)***

The state government has roped in a private charitable trust to find out, among other things whether its scheduled caste and scheduled tribe officials have adopted other religions. In a circular sent to all departments, the government has asked its employees Class II and above to fill up a personal form, which includes a query "...when have you converted to Buddhism/Christianity/Islam"? Another sensitive information demanded in the survey is regarding inter-caste, inter state marriages in the family of the employee concerned. The survey, being carried out by three Guru Dattatray Charitable Trust's managing trustee Dalpatbhai Shrimali, who himself is a scheduled caste, has set the cat among the pigeons with officials questioning the credentials of the trust and the future use of the information.

***January 22<sup>nd</sup>, New Delhi***

The United Christian Forum for Human Rights which held a memorial service for Graham Staines and his two sons today, in a statement mentioned that while killers still eluded the police force, the official machinery was working overtime and issued several notice to Christian Organizations in Orissa telling them to obey the nefarious Anti-Conversions Act of the Orissa government which violated the freedom of religion-enshrined in the constitution the statement further said that the Central Government through the Department of Posts and Telegraph canceled postal facilities for scores of Christian magazines and newspapers in many states.

***February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ambala***

The Convent of Jesus and Mary School in Ambal was threatened with demolition because it failed to admit the grandchild of the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. Among the application for admissions for the new academic year in the school, one was of Apparichita, the granddaughter of Governor Suraj Bhan of UP. The child was over-age (over 4 years and six months according



to the schools prescribe criteria for joining the kindergarten), and was therefore not considered for the interviews. According to the school principal Sister Tara RJM, "on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2000, the school received a telephone call from the District Collector R.B. Verma, IAS leaving a message to contact him in return. The School tried to contact him but he was not available. On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2000, the DC again got in touch and told the principal, You are too busy to contact the DC, are you?" In the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 2000, the principal got a message from the Executive office of the Municipal body saying he was coming to the School to inspect the sanctioned plans of 1995 for the school building. The Officer reached the school in five minutes of the telephone call and asked for the sanctioned plans of the building and the ownership papers of the property which the sisters did not have ready at that moment. The municipal building inspector who had come with the Executive officer wanted to measure the building and structures while the school was in session and did as he wished though it disturbed the students and the younger ones among them started crying. Half an hour later the Municipal authorities told the sisters that they would demolish major portions of the building as they had violated the rules, though they were told clearly that no rules had been violated. The municipal authorities accused the school of encroachment on public property and unauthorized construction when there was none of such violations.

#### ***February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Rajgarh***

A Catholic priest Fr. Abraham of a School at Rajgarh district of M.P. was accused of forcible conversion and attempts to torture younger boys between the age group of 10 to 12 who belonged to the SC/STs. This allegation was raised by the former BJP MLA from Rajgarh, Mr. Raghunandan Sharma. The case as is evident was an attempt to harm the Priest and the School as part of a well-planned allegation raising the bogey of *forcible conversion*.

#### ***February 18<sup>th</sup>, Dindigul***

Anti-social elements, armed with deadly weapons, entered the Damian Leprosy Hospital complex run by Catholic nuns for the past 31 years, some 2 kms south of Nilakottai near Dindigul. The hospital complex includes leprosy prevention centre, Sophia General Hospital, Lillian Middle School for the Handicapped, Polio-Surgery Centre, free Handicraft School for poor girls, Lillian School for the Mentally Challenged. T.B centre, free eye hospital, a home for street children and a retreat within the campus used by the

nuns has been completely ransacked. The looters caused extensive damage to two jeeps and many of the hospital equipment. The total destruction caused is more than Rs. 12 lakhs. The district administration who rushed to the spot, and are camping in the place ever since, do not rule out the involvement of the RSS in the event as the churches and holy places in the complex have been their main target of attack.

### *February 25<sup>th</sup>, Gujarat*

The Gujarat BJP has temporarily postponed the introduction of the controversial Bill that seeks to prohibit religious conversions in the state. The Bill ironically named the Freedom of Religion Bill, 1999 was widely seen as a move against the Christian minorities in the state.

### *March, Bulandshar*

A school run by nuns at Bulandshar was attacked, around the same time when two Catholic priests of Agra were illegally detained by police at Hariparbat Police station after a former teacher, who left St. Paul's School Agra without tendering a notice 8 years ago and wanted to be reinstated this year, registered a case against the priests on a "trumped-up" charge of trying to tear the clothes of her at a busy crossing on the morning of March 31. The priests were arrested when the local police officer discovered that his child failed in his exams on the same day in the missionaries school.

### *March, Gujarat*

Three months after the death of a Jesuit Priest, the Gujarat state tried to serve him a court notice for his involvement in rehabilitating people who were displaced by the US\$4 billion Sardar Sarovar Project. Fr. Idiakunnel had launched a people's movement against the project some 20 years ago and had later withdrawn from the movement as other leaders took over. Social activist Girish Patel who teamed up with Father Idiakunnel and Medha Patkar in leading the Narmada Bacho Andolan said the priest's initiative had helped to unite tribals.

### *March, Orissa*

The VHP alleged that Christian volunteers under the guise of relief-work for the Orissa cyclone-victims had converted 25,000 people. When many of the Hindu individuals have praised the stupendous and selfless service done by

Christian volunteer groups who never mixed relief work with religious work not even one Hindu organization has given recognition to this dedicated service rendered by the church organizations but indulged in spreading lies against their good works.

### ***March 8<sup>th</sup>, Mysore***

An organization describing itself as Jai Hanuman Bajrang Samit is a cause for fear and threat for the Mysore Christians ever since the self-styled Hindu organization in a letter to the Mysore Bishop Joseph Ray has demanded that the church for the construction of a temple of the sacred bull Nandi. Among other demands by the Hanuman samiti are that they will be installing an idol of God Ganesha in St. Anne's church in Gandhinagar, 40 km from Mysore, and to hand over an acre of land at Mysore's Dorannahalli village in K.R. Nagar, on the right side of the St. Antony's church to construct a grand Ram temple. Three years ago a temple had already come up behind the St. Philomena's College, around the same area on the land belonging to the church institution. The church authorities had kept silent then and simply erected a wall to maintain peace.

### ***March 8<sup>th</sup>, Basara***

On March 8<sup>th</sup> 2000, some men broke down the rear wall of the Ish Mata Church of Basara Parish and took 60,000 rupees. The priest Fr. Aseem Raj, saved himself from the attackers by locking himself in the bathroom. "Police say the looting is economically motivated but I wonder why only Catholic churches are singled out for attacks" asks Fr. T.R. Thomas the diocesan administrator.

### ***March 12<sup>th</sup>, Ghaziabad***

The computer centre sponsored by the Government, and run by the Capuchin Priests at Suryanagar, Ghaziabad, was attacked, and the attackers took away 23 computers after locking the priests and the inmates inside their rooms.

### ***March 12<sup>th</sup>, Kadi***

The group of 20 armed men allegedly broke into St. Ann's Convent and Sandya Visharam- old people's home, after beating up the guard, at Unteshwari on the outskirts of Kadi town, some 55 kms from Ahmedabad. The attackers who came during the early morning hours on 12<sup>th</sup>, before

leaving the place with cash worth Rs. 8,000 and a camera, threatened the sisters and had asked them to leave the place, failing in which they will have to face severe consequences.

### *March 13<sup>th</sup>, Orissa*

The amendment in the Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967 (made during the time when Mr. Gridhar Gamang was the state CM) is clearly anti-Christian and infringes upon religious freedom of the Christians and others. Church leaders met the present CM, Mr. Navin Patnaik and warned him of the possibility of police officers and others misusing their powers, delay matters and cause problems to the Christians due to the amended version of the Act which had stated that religious heads conducting conversions should inform the district magistrate a fortnight ahead. Then the magistrate on being informed, will ask police to ascertain whether there is any objection to the conversion and submit a report. The Christian delegations that met Mr. Patnaik raised also the issued regarding a letter received by some Church authorities asking them to furnish names and addresses of people who have been converted during the last five years through their respective churches. The Christian bodies in the state pointed out that the state government, and the magistrates, and collectors, as a way of discrimination had selectively issued notices (notification No. 63286 of 26.11.99) only to the heads of churches and not to any other religious organizations asking them to furnish details immediately on conversion in the last five years.

### *April 1<sup>st</sup>, Ghaziabad*

A group of around 10 men armed with sticks, knives and iron barged into the Capuchin missionaries-run Christ Vihar Hindu medium primary school in the Dasna-Masuri area and ransacked rooms after beating up the priest, Fr. Skylark George (27) in the early hours of April first. They took away cash amount to more than 40 thousand, which was meant to pay salaries to the staff.

### *April 2000, Lucknow*

The Bajrang Dal in UP declared war against St. Paul's School, Lucknow after accusing its Principal Fr. Simon Fernandes, of harassing the girl students. A teacher at St. Paul's School, Mr. Bhagwan Singh who claims to be the spokesperson for the VHP in UP has initiated the controversy by levelling charges against the principal. The Bajrang Dal promptly staged a dharna

demanding the ouster of the Principal and an inquiry into the affairs of the school. Mr. Bhagwan Singh had started targeting the principal after the principal complained to the school's managing committee that the teacher was inciting communal passions. This principal had done this one receiving complaints from the parents stating that Mr. Bhagwan Singh had started using his Moral Science classes in the school to spread the VHP ideology in the school. However, the Bajrang Dal activists refused to identify or produce the girls who had reportedly been 'harassed' by the principal, saying that this would cause embarrassment to the students and their parents. In this context of a possible attack by the Bajrang Dal goons alleging "Harassment" of students, the principal said, "We have been provided with some security, but I would like a thorough investigation, so that the truth could be exposed". The UP government officials or the VHP officials refused to comment on the issue.

#### *April 6<sup>th</sup>, Mathura*

A mob of about 150 people, mainly parents and relatives of the children detained from promotion due to poor performances attacked the Sacred Heart Convent School and resorted to stone throwing, and threatened to burn down the school library and also to attack the school in future.

#### *April 7<sup>th</sup>, Bihar*

The killing of a convent watchman Shakir Hussein (40) of the Holy Cross Convent in Belatanr, Giridih district on 7<sup>th</sup> and stoning of a Jesuit Social Service Centre have caused alarm among Christian in Bihar. Unidentified gunmen shot Shakir and tow days later in West Champran district nearly 600 kms north some 50 children allegedly instigated by Hindu fanatic groups threw stones at the Rural Education and Development (READ) Centre of the Jesuits. According the report in the *Indian Currents* weekly (7 May), the trouble at the Jesuit centre started after some local Hindus attempted to build a temple at the entrance to a housing community in which the families of 23 READ volunteers live. A group of more than 200 people including children met at the proposed temple site, where construction was foiled by the police as it was illegal, raised slogans against Catholic Priests and threatened to liquidate the construction. As reported in the *Indian Currents*, a police officer of the West Champran district headquarters of Bettiah, described the incident as "a game plan to create a Hindu-Christian divide" to score publicity.

***April 9<sup>th</sup> Mathura***

The principal of St. Dominic Convent School in Mathura Contonement, Fr. Joseph Dabre was roughed up by a group of persons armed with iron and sticks.

***April 10-11 midnight***

Around 20-armed men attacked St. Mary and St. Gloria in the premises of St. Teresa Scholl of Nandgaon road, near Mathura and beat them up with sticks. The attackers broke into the residence of Fr. K.K. Thomas, the principal of the school and priest of the local church, beat him up on the head and left the bleeding and unconscious man, thinking him to be dead. The domestic help Ms. Mary Murmo, was also beaten and was critically wounded on the head. They escaped after robbing valuables and money amounting to nearly 1 lakh from the almaras.

***April 11<sup>th</sup>, Howrah***

St. Thomas Church School at Howrah, one of the largest and oldest English medium schools in the town was forced to shutdown after the trouble and protests by some senior students and parents started on 11<sup>th</sup> over the tuition fee hike from Rs. 275 per month to Rs. 475. The school authorities said that they were compelled to raise the fees in order to pay the teachers salaries in keeping with the recommendation of the Fourth Pay Commission. The School authorities pointed out the fact saying, "We are the only English medium institution in both Calcutta and Howrah which has not increased the fees for two years", while most of the other schools of this category have hiked the fees twice since the past three years.

***April 16<sup>th</sup>, Bijnor***

A group of 15 persons carrying firearms and sharp edged weapons on 16<sup>th</sup> night attacked the Saint John's Convent Hostel in Timerpur village, situated two km from Bijnor Kitwali police station area. The group also tried to enter the convent where 10 nuns were sleeping.

***April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Agra***

A group of Christians from Hyderabad was attacked by around 20 to 30 Dajrang Dal activists and their Bible burnt, after beating up the Christians and attempted to set their van on fire, in Jagdishpur on the outskirts of Agra

at Nagla Ajita, under the pretext of their objection to the *forced conversion* by the group.

***April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Rewari***

Three Christian nuns at the Deepti Ashram who have been actively involved with the empowerment of women to fight against social evils, Sisters Anandi, Pramila, and Gertrude, were attacked by an unidentified man on a scooter (number Divine Liturgy-2CK-5604), on their way to Easter-eve midnight Mass in Rewari in Hariyana. Since a few days prior to the incident there has been a few local publications threatening to get rid of the sisters, and through anonymous calls the nuns were threatened of dire consequences if they do not leave the place. The condition of one of the victim sister Anandi was serious and had been admitted to the intensive care unit at the Holy Family Hospital, Delhi.

***April 26<sup>th</sup>, Kottayam***

Three Christian Pastors were attacked by around 6 assistants and a tent put up for a convention was razed to the ground while a prayer was going on in the pandalon April 26<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday at Kaduvkulam near Kottayam in Kerala. The attackers destroyed loud speakers, generator sets and chairs before fleeing the place.

***May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Jhansi***

Six unidentified masked men assaulted and beat up the nuns and looted their convent, desecrated their residential sacred Chapel in the house, and robbed money and valuables on the night of May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Paricha in Jhansi, "even as the BJP commended the National Commission for Minorities on Thursday for its *prompt and factual* report on the recent attacks on Christian institutions in UP".

***May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Dangs***

A group of Christians were beaten up when its members were engaged in a sound – and light programme at Subir, 33 km from Ahwa in Dangs district of Gujarat April 3<sup>rd</sup>. It was the same area where Bajrang Dal activists had attacked and burnt the prayer halls, churches, houses and vehicles two years ago.

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, Patna**

There was tension in the prestigious St. Xavier's School of Patna on May 4<sup>th</sup> when the brother with political connections of a boy who fainted in the remedial class, managed to create trouble. The Jesuit Principal Fr. Peter was accused of *harassment* and misbehaviour with the students in the counseling sessions. The incident occurred because Fr. Peter seeing some of the students very poor in Physics organized remedial classes for them so that those weak students who cannot manage can pass in the exam. When the boys returned for the tuition class which the principal conducted freely on his own initiative, one of the boy felt dizziness and fell down and recovered later and continued attending the class. It happened because it was too hot and the boy had been playing earlier. But later the father and brother of the boy managed to organize the disgruntled elements in the school including two teachers who were waiting for a chance to malign the principal's name and also those who were denied promotion and admission in the school. Police had to be called up for the security of the school, and the school decided to call a parent-teachers meeting the next day to explain the situation and to sort out the tension.

**May 5<sup>th</sup>, Ara, Bihar**

The Catholic management School at Ara in Bihar was attacked on 5<sup>th</sup> May by a group of anti-Christian men. They damaged the School building and broke doors and windows. But the greatest hurt feeling inflicted on the Christians was when the criminals brock the statue of Mary Mother of Jesus in the school compound. After the attackers made effigies of Christian persons and burnt them. The incident coming as part of a continuous chain of events against Christians have created fresh fears among the Christians of Bihar.