

Rising Trend of Islamophobia in India

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As we know that the world is in the grip of a raging coronavirus pandemic and uncertainty and fear are gripping everywhere. Amidst the widespread of Covid 19 when every country is taking steps to contain and trying to find a way to tackle one of the worst disease of recent times, TV anchors and media organisations and right wing hatemongers in India are leaving no opportunity to demonize, harass and vilify Indian Muslims. Indian media is busy in spreading bigotry and communal hatred in relation to the Tablighi Jamaat event. The way media is reporting on Tablighi Jamaat and Islam plays a role in the spread of Islamophobia. Islamophobic hashtags and memes started soon on social media after the alleged so called Tablighi Jamaat event.

Since the right-wing hatemongers and fringe groups have taken advantage of people's fears and vulnerabilities amid coronavirus pandemic in order to push disinformation, fake news and Islamophobic tweets and posts on digital platforms to vilify Muslims. As a result of their actions, attacks against Muslim escalate and call for economic boycott of Muslims in India has been increasingly becoming everydayness of routine. The hashtag #Islamophobia_In_India is in response to right-wing hatemongers, unbridled media trial & vilification of Tablighi Jamaat and unending witch-hunt of Muslim scholar-activists as well. Social media users especially Arabian and Indian Muslims and their followers stood against Islamophobia as well anti-Muslim propaganda by turning the hashtag #Islamophobia_In_India into top trending topic on Twitter for several hours in worldwide and particularly in India.

Earlier, the hashtag #coronajihad was used nearly 300,000 times between March 29 and April 3, predominantly in India and the U.S., according to Equality Labs, a South Asian digital human rights group based in the U.S. The organization tracked hundreds of anti-Muslim hashtags, many of which depict Muslims as suicide bombers strapped with "virus bombs" and included terms like "#IslamicVirus, #Biojihad, and #MuslimVirus." (reported by huffington post)

News headlines ran with the story that the Tablighi conference was the source of the national Covid-19 outbreak. In swift order, Hindutva nationalists took to social media, dubbing the virus "Corona Jihad" and the "Muslim Virus." These labels were accompanied by vile caricatures of Muslims spitting on bystanders and physicians, and doctored videos of Muslims disobeying stay at home orders.

OIC's tweet on growing tide of Islamophobia in India

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (OIC-IPHRC) alleged that "Islamophobia" is on the rise in India and had urged India to take "urgent steps" to protect rights of the Muslim community.

The body tweeted,

"OIC-IPHRC condemns the unrelenting vicious #Islamophobic campaign in #India maligning Muslims for spread of #COVID-19 as well as their negative profiling in media subjecting them to discrimination & violence with impunity."

"[We] urge the Indian Govt to take urgent steps to stop the growing tide of Islamophobia in India and protect the rights of its persecuted Muslim minority as per its obligations under international Human Rights law," wrote in another tweet. Calling on the Indian government to take steps to protect Muslim minorities who are being "negatively profiled," facing "discrimination and violence" amidst the COVID-19 crisis, the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has criticised what it called "growing Islamophobia" in India.

PM Modi calls for unity and brotherhood

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said on Twitter that COVID-19 does not see race, religion, colour, caste, creed, language or borders before striking. Our response and conduct thereafter should attach primacy to unity and brotherhood. We are in this together.

Many social media users shared a tweet of UAE **Princess Hend Al Qassimi** widely in which she had warned those who are writing anti-Muslim and anti-Islamic posts on social media. She wrote on Twitter that

"The ruling family is friends with Indians, but as a royal your rudeness is not welcome. All employees are paid to work, no one comes for free. You make your bread and butter from this land which you scorn and your ridicule will not go unnoticed."

Nabiya Khan, Muslim activist raised voice against state suppression and ongoing witch-hunt of Muslim scholar-activists. She wrote on Twitter that

"Real inciters and instigators of violence are having a free run whereas the voices that have peacefully been demanding something as noble as equality & justice and called for end to hate are being silenced brazenly. The irony is for everyone to see."

A tweet by Kuwaiti based scholar **Dr. Abdullah Al Shoreka** went viral on social media in which he had wrote that We hope that the Gulf states and the world will expel every racist person who incites human rights violations in India and incites crimes against humanity. In his another tweet, he emphasized the importance of syncretic culture in India, said that

"India is a country of security and peace in which people live in mutual respect, but the actions of some organizations and people are spoiling the beauty of India."

The calamitous outbreak of Covid-19 virus and pandemic was unanticipated and unprecedented, but the existing architecture and design of Islamophobic persecution and spree arrest of Muslim activists in India now has been firmly in place.

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