

Cause and Effect

The convictions of the accused in the 1993 Bombay blasts case are intended to be a form of redress for the 250 families who lost their dear ones in the serial blasts and aim to send the message that the Indian system delivers justice for all crimes, especially mass crimes of unspeakable brutality. But the bomb blasts of March 12, 1993 were only the external symptoms of a cancer that had gnawed away at Mumbai's vital organs with the abject failure of the state machinery to protect the city's Muslim minorities during the horrendous communal riots of December 1992 and January 1993.

The bomb terror of March 12, 1993 must be recalled with the same horror as the mob terror of December 6, 1992, in Ayodhya, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives all over the country. The causes of the blasts, too, must be revived in public memory. As the Srikrishna Report observed : "The serial bomb blasts were a reaction to the totality of events at Ayodhya and Bombay in December 1992 and January 1993. The common link between the riots and the blasts was that of cause and effect."

It is the Government of India, and the government of Maharashtra which have to convince the people of India of their commitment to fair play and equality in the administration of justice.

One set of people have been punished—those held guilty of involvement in the Mumbai bomb blasts which followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid by frontal organisations of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

There is another set of guilty—those Hindutva activists who orchestrated a brutal revenge on the Muslims in one of the most savage massacres in India in 1993. Justice Sri Krishna, who investigated the pogrom, identified the politicians and others involved in the violence, and the many policemen who instigated, protected the killers or just looked the other way.

The policemen have been promoted, a few given polite punishments of transfers and so on. The politicians continue to exercise power over the city defying the law on a daily basis

This erodes the citizens' confidence in the State and the rule of law.

For minorities such as Christians, it is frightening that even a numerically large minority such as the Muslims cannot trust the state in the final analysis where justice and equity is concerned.

Innocent priests, pastors and nuns are harassed, beaten and locked up on false charges of forcible conversions. The killers, rapists and attackers, all of them identified as active members of frontal organisations of the Bharatiya Janata Party, walk free, and often commit their crimes with the police looking on.

The authorities must devote as much energy and resources to obtaining justice for the victims of the Mumbai riots as it mustered up for the victims of the Mumbai bomb blasts. Only then will the deep wounds caused by the targeted violence of 1992-1993 heal, bringing enduring peace. □□□