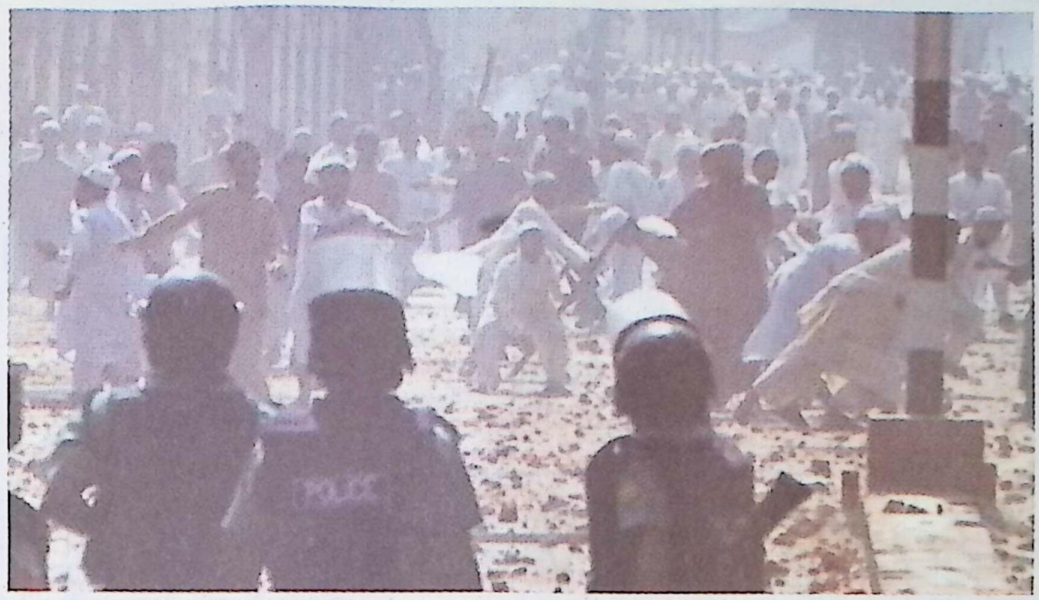


There were no significant institutional developments in recognising the rights of religious minorities as pointed out in the chapter 'Right to Freedom of Religion', but there were significantly fewer reports of interference with the practice of religion.

but there were significantly fewer reports of interference with the practice of religion. There were random reports of destruction of idols and Hindu temples and the house of Abdus Sattar, President of the Ahmadiya Muslim Jamat, was burnt down in February 2007.

According to data compiled by Save the Children, UK a total of 1,712 children (1,454 boys and 258 girls) were admitted into 57 jails in the six divisions of the country throughout the year, as highlighted in the chapter 'Prisoner's Rights'. With the continuing arrest of people under SoE, the prison population stood at 78,000, almost three times its capacity of 26,000. There was also overcrowding in the female prison cells -- 3,256 women prisoners were held in the capacity of 1,128. While the Jail Code allocates a space of 36 square foot for each prisoner, there was no more than one square feet of standing space in some jails.

The number of acid attacks came down from 249 in 2003 to 95 in 2007 (Chapter -- 'Women's Rights') but there was no significant downturn in domestic violence, dowry related violence and fatwa instigated violence although the Domestic Violence Bill was publicly recognised by the Chief Advisor's office. The Caretaker Government (CTG) also adopted the National Policy on Advancement of Women although they did not respond in a strong, proactive manner to the criticism of the Policy by Islamist groups.

Despite having an Adibashi leader in the caretaker government machinery (Devasish Roy) and 2007 being the 10th anniversary of the signing of the historic Peace Accord, Bangali settlement continued throughout the year in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Chapter -- Rights of Adibashis) reducing the Pahari population to roughly 50-60 percent of the population. On August 27, 2007 the High Court issued a ruling to the government to showcause why the CHT peace treaty should not be considered 'unconstitutional' after a writ petition was filed by Advocate Md. Tajul Islam challenging the legality of the Peace Accord. Although the write did not dismantle the Peace Accord, the settlers were included in the planned December 2008 national elections. According to the Peace Accord only permanent residents of the CHT could be included in the voter list.

Other chapters in the book include -- 'Legislative and Institutional Developments, 'Judgements on Fundamental Rights', 'Impunity', 'Right to Liberty', 'Right to Fair Trial', 'Right to Freedom from Torture', 'Right to Shelter', 'Children's Rights', and 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

One issue that was unfortunately missing from the report is the rights of the domestic workers. Although there have been reports of gross violence against domestic workers in all parts of the country, and ASK lawyers have represented the cases of many of them, it only gets a passing mention in the chapter on women. The fact that there is no legislation even recognising them as workers and that they work inside homes with little or no access to the outside world, makes them one of the most vulnerable groups of people.

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