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Humanity at Stake

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For thousands of years people of this region were proud of their rich cultural diversity and communal harmony. But the divide and rule policy of the colonial lords put severe dents on this harmony. In 1947 two countries emerged in this subcontinent at the cost of thousands of lives claimed by brutal communal riots. Six decades later we are witness to the vicious manifestation of communalism in Jessore, Dinajpur, Ramu and so on. But there is a difference between what had happened during 1947 onwards and the current wave of terror against communities.

In 1947 the population of Hindus in the then East Pakistan was 29 percent of the total population. But by 1970, this population was reduced to 20 percent. The reason behind this drastic reduction was the communal riots. Communal riots and violence compelled these Hindus to leave their ancestral homes and migrate to India. After the emergence of Bangladesh with a secular constitution, it was assumed that people of Bangladesh would revive their golden memories of prosperity and communal harmony. But dreams remained dreams.

Persecution of religious and ethnic minorities went on, mostly on Hindus which is the second largest religious group after Muslims in Bangladesh. Now the Hindus, once rich and influential community of Bangladesh, comprise only 8-10 percent of its total population. The question is why is this going on despite the existence of laws to tackle it? If we observe the nature of the recent assaults, it is easy to see that minorities are being attacked sometimes by a particular group but mostly by the unified gangs of all parties with Jamaat taking the lead, incited by political leaders and excited about grabbing the property of the victims.

Since there is a land-greedy political mastermind behind these assaults, administration usually does not dare to take punitive measures against the attackers. Not only that after each of this attack, two main political parties Awami League and BNP start to blame each other and ultimately try to shelter their activists involved with violence. This sort of political indemnity is a big reason why incidences of communal attacks are repeated in Bangladesh. And for this kind of