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MUMBAI

## Violence gaining ground: Agnivesh



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### RSS guiding BJP ideology; space for free speech diminishing, says social activist

Social activist Swami Agnivesh on Monday said that the atmosphere of religious intolerance, communal violence and violence against various communities is increasing by the day and was being covered up under the garb of religion and 'Hindutva mobilisation'.

#### 'RSS in control'

Addressing a press conference in the city, Swami Agnivesh said that with the Bharatiya Janata Party ruling in over 20 States, everything was being controlled from Nagpur by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). "With the ideological background of RSS and the government being controlled by Mr. Modi, the same ideology is being implemented everywhere," he said.

Swami Agnivesh

Swami Agnivesh recalled that when he was active in Haryana politics, Mr. Modi was an RSS pracharak.

"He was lifted from there and made the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Mr. Modi made a laboratory out of Gujarat and experimented with the Godhra riots, after which he ruled the State for 10 to 15 years, and now he is responsible for an entire country."

The social activist, who has been a victim of mob assault on two occasions in recent times, said the Prime Minister then decided that Haryana, Maharashtra and the courts all over the country should also have a 'sangh prachark' (an organisational secretary, which the RSS has) and the government is even trying to pressure the media, under which, one incident follows the other.

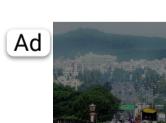
"I find it quite surprising that the otherwise vocal Prime Minister, who speaks at every instance, in and out of the country, fails to find his voice when it comes to matters like these. This 'orchestrated silence' is a sign that everything is happening on his directions. His silence is an acceptance for spreading hate, and eventually bring in a majoritarian governance like Hitler did in Germany," he said.

On the murder of rights activists, Swami Agnivesh said, "There were no leads in the Narendra Dabholkar case for so many years. But suddenly when the Karnataka SIT found the leads in the Gauri Lankesh case, the leads travelled all the way from Bengaluru to Maharashtra. It is suggested after the ATS took action that the same weapon was used to murder Narendra Dabholkar and Gauri Lankesh, and the likes of Govind Pansare."

#### 'Environment of fear'

Swami Agnivesh said there is an environment of fear and diminishing space for free speech and people who speak against the wrong policies of the government.

He said, "Activists are being arrested under the tag of 'Urban naxals', a new term that they have coined. Any organisation working for poor and marginalised sections of society is called Maoist, being linked to a Christian missionary or termed anti-national."



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