

Witch-Hunting the Dissenters

Democracy Ala Modi

During the period of conducting G-20 Summit in our country recently Prime Minister Modi proclaimed that 'India is the mother of democracy'. On the other hand, his U.S. mentors are constantly claiming that they have been advising him with regard to maintaining of human rights in our country.

But we are baffled when the news portal NewsClick and its staff were raided and arrested on the pretext of investigating them for a "terror case with Chinese links". This is against the real meaning of democracy and human rights.

Very often Modi and BJP talk about the dark days of internal emergency of 1975, imposed by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and pose themselves as the champions of democratic rights. But they brazenly assault on free expression and democratic rights of the dissenters who criticize and differ with the policies of BJP's government. They are trampling and stifling the voice of dissent with a 'righteous' posture without even declaring an emergency.

Earlier, the Delhi Lt. Governor granted prosecution sanction against author Arundhati Roy for speaking in a conference held by the Committee for Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP), under the banner "Azadi - the only way" in Delhi ,13 years back on Oct. 21, 2010.

While the Union Broad-Casting Minister Anurag Thakur has been announcing that "if anyone has committed anything wrong, agencies are free to carry out investigations against them under set guidelines". The police under the direction of his government are witch-hunting those who are carrying out such investigations and releasing the findings. NewsClick had questioned about the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the Delhi riots that followed and the farmers' agitation on the farm laws.

Ms. Roy has been an out-spoken political and social activist who has written on various issues including human rights and the environment. That is why critics like them are hounded in the name of sovereignty and territorial integrity, showing them as "anti-national" and "threat to national security" and implicating them into false cases under the draconian UAPA and other such acts. They are criminalising the 'thinking' and the past 'political speeches' now.

In the recent past we witnessed how the offices of BBC raided in Delhi and Bombay since it broad-casted a documentary exposing the real Modi and how that documentary was barred from being aired in India in 2023. We have seen previously how NewsClick and NDTV were implicated in false money-laundering cases, B.B.C and Dainik Bhaskar in income tax-evasion cases, Media One in 'National security' case, Fahid Shah for 'glorifying terrorism', Siddique Kappan for 'disrupting peace'.

Now the BJP government, which received Rs.49 crores donations of the Covid-19, which include PM CARES, is 'righteously' prosecuting NewsClick for its suspected links with one of its investors who is supposed to have a link with China. Very recently the BJP Government proceeded against Editors Guild of India for ferreting out the facts in Manipur.

The ranking of India on the World Press Freedom Index is gradually declining from 140 out of 180 countries in 2014 to 150 in 2022 and to 161 in 2023 even below the Taliban-run Afghanistan, which speaks volumes about the unending assault on free expression and democratic rights in India. Probably this must be the idea and essence of the concept of the democracy envisaged and propagated by BJP and PM Modi.

Even the Judiciary which is supposed to protect the fundamental rights of freedom of expression etc, is looking the other way without taking any corrective action.

It is becoming clear that the BJP and Modi are intending to profit in the oncoming general elections 2024 by harassing and silencing dissenting voices in the name of national security and sovereignty by flaring up antagonism against 'China' and 'Kashmir' sentiments.

All this witch-hunting of dissenters exposes the fascist-type nature of the BJP rule in India.

Real democracy is possible when such totalitarian governments can be ousted and checked by the people!