Punjab Assembly and Religious Minorities
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Preface

The foremost yardstick for knowing about how a state is serious for promoting and protecting the rights of its Non-Muslim citizens is the adoption of friendly laws for them. The framing of such statutory laws and then their implementation with letter and spirit makes it clear to anyone that to what extent a state is interested to recognize all its inhabitants as equal citizens.

Raising of voice on the floors of the ‘Legislative House’ of a country or a province regarding a particular community, which is numerically inferior, in terms of protecting its fundamental rights is of too much importance in deciding the fate of these segments of a society. In modern nations and balanced societies much focus is kept on protecting the basic rights of religious minorities through internal legislations and honoring the International obligations.

But, when it comes to Pakistan, we see that much work in terms of legislation and its implementation is required to protect and promote the fundamental rights of minorities here. Pakistan mainly consists of four provinces and, Punjab is the largest one in terms of population. Though, a portion of all minorities house in every province of the country, but Punjab is the one that contains about 80 percent population of Christians of the total minorities’ population in Pakistan.

It plays a major role in forming and changing governments in Pakistan. Following its political role, it is important to look that: how religious minorities are treated here, and to what extent this province is serious in making laws to protect the rights of its Non-Muslim population. As after the 18th Amendment minorities is a provincial subject, therefore knowing about how serious the provincial legislature is over the issues of these communities was important. For this purpose, South Asia Partnership-Pakistan, being
member of the “REAT” Network—a network to protect and promote the rights of religious minorities—has published this report. SAP-Pakistan has been constantly demanding to ensure the fundamental rights of these secluded groups of the society. It has been working for all down trodden sections of the society for the last 25 years.

This report reflects the business of the Punjab Assembly taken up for minorities during its second parliamentary year—June 2014 to June 2015. It covers the “in-House” contribution of the Assembly members to the cause of minorities during this period. We hope that this effort will help understanding the situation of religious minorities besides reminding the nation do the need full.

Mohammad Tahseen
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Minorities: An Irrelevant Subject for the Legislative Assembly of the Punjab

Before looking into how serious is the Legislative House of the Province (Punjab Assembly) about the issues minorities are confronting here, and how the National and International legal instruments guarantee their rights, taking minorities’ persecution into account is very important.

Although, the Constitution of Pakistan provides certain guarantees to protect the fundamental rights of religious minorities and the International instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), binds our government to protect the rights of minorities, the situation is entirely otherwise.

How these minorities are oppressed, ignored and disgraced contrary to what our National and International commitments state reflects through the reports of human rights organizations. Rising extremism and brutal incidents taking place against minorities also substantiate these claims.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)’s annual report for the year 2014 depicts a real picture of the poor plight of minorities. This reflection raises a number of questions for the nation in general and those sitting in the power corridors in particular that: Are the people belonging to religious minorities the citizens of Pakistan? or they live in a society of might is right?

This report says that in November, 2014, a young Pakistani Christian couple-Shahzad and Shama-were burnt like pieces of coal in Kot Radha Kishan, some 40 kilometers from Lahore in the brick kiln they worked at. They were burnt alive by fellow villagers after accusations of
blasphemy were leveled against them from the pulpit of the local mosque. The Punjab government took ‘strict’ notice of the incident, just as he did after the Gojra riots in 2009 and the Joseph Colony attack. Joseph Colony incident claimed the lives of eight Christians besides torching of 150 houses and two churches respectively.

More than 3,000 people had rampaged through the Colony in 2013, when allegations of blasphemy against Sawan Masih, a Christian man, were leveled. Sawan was sentenced to death for blasphemy in March 2014. He appealed against his conviction, claiming that the charges were trumped up to speed the eviction of Christians from the area. The police had initially said they would investigate whether or not the businessmen in the area have instigated this violence aiming to seize the land, or exploited the blasphemy allegations for political gains. But they did not and most of the rioters were released on bail.

In reaction, a rights group, Amnesty International (AI) condemned sending of Masih to death. “This is a travesty of justice. There are serious concerns about the fairness of his trial, and an argument between two friends is not a basis for sending anyone to the gallows. Sawan Masih must be released immediately and unconditionally,” said David Griffiths, AI’s Deputy Asia Pacific director.

According to AI and other rights investigators, although, dozens of the suspected perpetrators [of rioting] have been charged, but nobody has yet been convicted. “A riot should never have been allowed to effectively destroy one of Lahore’s oldest Christian neighbor hoods,” Griffiths said. “Sawan Masih’s harsh treatment under the law is in stark contrast to how others suspected of deliberately burning down people’s homes have not yet been brought to trial. It sheds light on discrimination against Christians and other religious minorities through blasphemy laws and Pakistan’s justice system in general,” he added. In January, an elderly
Briton was sentenced to death in Pakistan for blasphemy, though his lawyers said the court had failed to consider “overwhelming” evidence of his mental illness. Dr. Mehdi Qamar, a US-based cardiologist visiting Pakistan for a week, was shot 10 times and killed in Rabwah in May 2014. He was Ahmadi.

A majority in Pakistan seems to have accepted that one can be killed by hardliners because of one’s faith. Implication of non-Muslims under such laws is getting rampant. Religious extremism is increasing day by day, which in fact is the real cause behind this plight of religious minorities.

This mindset has been developed in Pakistan basically due to discriminatory laws, poor state run policies and tolerance for religious extremists. It is also the reason for not to consider religious minorities as equal citizens of the country. All it has also led for attacks on religious or worship places of minorities, land grabbing, torching, forced conversion, kidnapping and burning alive and implication in false cases to settle personal scores. It is just a little part of the story, which negates the tall claims of the rulers for a balanced society of Pakistan and of one nation.

Equally important to note is that Punjab in terms of population is the largest province of the country. It contains 80 percent population of Christians living in Pakistan, but a province where religious minorities are persecuted to the utmost level. On the contrary, how these minorities are given importance in the legislative House of the province is deplorable; this report is an effort to highlight how serious this House was to address and redress the issues and problems of minorities during its whole one year business for the public in Punjab from July 2014 to June 2015.
Minorities in Punjab Assembly

This Report is all about the business of the Punjab Assembly taken up for minorities during the second parliamentary year (June 2014 to June 2015). It covers extensively the minority members’ “in-House” contribution to the cause of their communities during the period under review.

It contains the detail of resolutions the minority members tabled in this House over various issues including: Attack on twin churches in Lahore, terrorist attack on a bus in Karachi in which 46 members of Ismaeli community were killed, arrest of several innocent Christians on the charges of lynching two Muslim young men in Youhanabad and condemning the publication of blasphemous sketches in a French magazine and illegal occupation of Hindu land in Layyah (Punjab).

It is a reflective of what the minority members go through during the Punjab Assembly sessions in terms of ‘attitude’ of their colleagues and the Speaker. It also helps readers take a stock of the current state the minorities are in here and what even their representatives expect from treasury. Although, no bill about minorities was tabled in this House this fiscal year, the minority members who are eight in total number put their focus on bringing resolutions. On the other hand, the lone Hindu minority member was concerned about legislation regarding ‘Hindu Marriage’ whose bill has been tabled in the National Assembly of Pakistan, but has yet to be adopted.

Besides giving a brief account of the Hindu Marriage Bill 2015, this report also brings forth the minority members’ efforts to seek formation of a Standing Committee on minorities in Punjab Assembly that could take up matters related to it. In addition to that the opposition’s minority member criticized the Punjab government for not

It highlights as how the government expresses its helplessness in taking back the encroached and occupied land of minorities including graveyards from land mafia. The government also appears to be least interested about implementing five percent job quota for minorities in government departments.

It speaks about the minority members’ demands like: returning the missionary schools and property to them, name a government building or road after Maharaja Ranjeet Singh and giving additional marks to their children for learning their holy books and purging syllabus of hate material.

Minority Member’s Concerns

Ms. Shunila Ruth is a lone opposition minority member who got elected on one of the reserved seats for minorities on the Pakistan Tahreek-i-Insaf ticket in 2013. She expressed serious concerns over the attitude of the Speaker of the House for often not entertaining her requests to speak on point of orders. “The ‘Chair’ is not comfortable allowing me, being a minority member, to speak for the rights of the minorities in the House,” she says. “It is surprising that there has been no ‘Standing Committee’ on Minorities in the Punjab Assembly that reflects seriousness and commitment of the ruling party’s government for the rights of the minorities.” She adding said that it should be a matter of concern for the treasury’s minority members that if the House is not an ‘appropriate’ forum for them to raise the voice of the people they are representing in the Punjab province.”
Treasury Members’ Attitude

Ms. Ruth further said that the treasury members’ behavior is ‘non-cooperative’, and whenever issues relating to minorities such as quota in government departments and retrieving of occupied lands are raised in the House. “Treasury members do support us (minority legislators) on issues relating to torture, killing and attack of worship places of minorities. However, they always refrain from similar support, when it comes to their (minorities)’ right to education and equal citizenship,” she said.

Treasury Members’ Concerns

Discriminatory treatment is not what the opposition minority member only complains about, as the treasury members too have such concerns. “Although, we do not face discrimination in this House, but such atmosphere prevails,” Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN)’s MPA Shahzad Munshi said.

Views of Journalists

It is equally important to highlight about how journalists, deputed for the coverage of provincial Assembly’s business, view the proceedings of the ‘House’ in terms of its business relating to minorities. Asim Shahzad, a senior reporter of Daily Express, says that the Speaker does not easily allow a non-Muslim member to speak on a point of order, as he shows ‘extra caution’ in handling minorities’ matters. However, when a major issue concerning minorities, like attack on twin churches, takes place, the Chair (Speaker) permits the both minority and majority legislators of the House to speak on such issues, he added.

He further said that during sessions (June 2014 to June 2015), issues related to Christians were discussed more than Hindu and Sikh communities. He said that as only one
minority member belongs to opposition therefore the voice for minorities’ rights is not raised effectively in the Punjab Assembly. (This situation was comparatively better in the previous Assembly (2008-13). He said that although, this House passed dozens of laws during 2014-15, but none of them for minorities.

**Development Funds**

The Punjab Government allocated Rs.320 million development funds for minorities for the year 2014-15, but not a single penny was spent on schemes related to them, opposition member Shunila Ruth said. Drawing attention of the House, she said that out of Rs.320 million, 20 million were allocated for scholarships to minority students, but they were denied of it. Punjab Minister for Minorities, Khalil Tahir Sindhu could not defend the government that why it happened.

**Increased Allocation**

Although, the Punjab government has failed to spend on minorities from Rs.320 million funds, but it has increased this budget to Rs.1 billion for 2015-16. Interestingly, this is a ‘block allocation’ that can be used for any other project. Ms. Shunila Ruth raised this issue during the post budget debate this June (2015). “Who would ensure spending of this budget for minorities’ projects besides granting scholarship to non-Muslim students? We will not let the government spend this budget at ‘Metro Bus’ in Multan or at some other irrelevant project,” she added.

**Encroachment and Illegal Occupation**

The opposition raised the issue of illegal occupation on a Christian graveyard at Bund Road Lahore. Ms. Ruth on a point of order said that land of this graveyard has been unlawfully occupied and encroached by influential people of the area. She demanded the Chair, looking into this
matter, do the needful as earlier as possible. She submitted an adjournment motion on this issue.

**Safety and Healthy Environment**

Ms. *Ruth* raised the issue of covering up *Sattukatla* drain, especially in the areas where Christians reside in order to provide them a safe and healthy environment. She also submitted an adjournment motion in this regard. “I have been constantly raising voice over the issue in question and will keep it up till the government takes up this matter seriously and cover the drain to provide clean and safe environment,” she said.

**Police Torture**

The opposition raised the issue of police torture against nurses. The police tortured them while they were protesting for the regularization of their services. A seven-month pregnant Christian nurse along with her three other colleagues suffered multiple injuries when police thrashed them severely.

She was tortured when she and her other colleagues reached the Mall Road for their demands on March 14, 2015. The Punjab police also ‘detained’ five nurses and sent them behind the bars, but they were released after some time at the directions of the Provincial Government.

The injured nurses were rushed to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital where doctors kept the pregnant nurse under observation to prevent intrauterine death of her fetus due to the abdominal trauma. Her other colleagues suffered head and bone injuries. Seven-month pregnant, *Asia Bibi* of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, could not bear severe pain and went into coma after facing severe torture. She was rushed to Sir Ganga Ram Hospital where she underwent ultrasound and other diagnostic tests, which suggested abdominal bleeding and some other gyne-related complications.
Raising this issue on floor of the House, the PTI members condemned the torture and demanded strict action against the responsible. Ms. Shunila Ruth demanded independent inquiry into the matter. However, no one from the treasury including its minority members supported this demand of the PTI's member. She also raised the issue of paramedical staff’s strike.

The paramedical and health support staff of teaching hospitals, under Punjab Paramedical Alliance (PPA), protested for not getting service structures for grade-1 to grade-4 employees. While, implementation on promised service structure of grade-5 to grade-17 paramedics was stopped and health professional allowance was also denied. They demanded regularization of employees of the ‘Boards of Management’ and daily wagers in hospitals. Shunila Ruth raising the issue on a point of order also demanded an immediate resolution of this problem of the paramedics.

Service Quota

Both the treasury and opposition’s minority members raised the issue of ensuring five per cent job quota for minorities in the Provincial Government Departments. Mr. Shahzad Munshi and Kanji Ram of the treasury benches on a point of order said 5 per cent quota for minorities in the Punjab government was not being implemented with letter and spirit. Mr. Ram said, the Federal Government was implementing this (5 percent) quota, but the Punjab Government failed to follow the suit.

Mr. Munshi demanded that a seat belonging to the minorities’ quota in the Punjab government departments should remain vacant if the same is not filled by a minority person. Meanwhile, opposition’s Ms. Shunila Ruth moving an adjournment motion in the House over this issue
demanded strict implantation of this quota in every department of the provincial government.

Meanwhile, Provincial Minister for Minorities’ Affairs Tahir Khalil Sindhu told the House that a committee comprising parliamentary secretaries for law, education and minorities would look into the matter and give recommendations to the leader of the House (Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif).

Missionary Schools and Property

Mr. Shahzad Munshi on a point of order demanded returning of ‘Missionary Educational Institutions’ to the minorities. (There are still several schools like St. Francis High School, Anarkali Lahore and Mission’s land in Ghari Shahu). Mr. Munshi said that still there are many educational institutions and Mission’s land in the province, which is yet to be handed back to their lawful owner (the Mission). He said that the government’s decision in 2004 to return these institutions and land to the Mission could not be implemented. Minister for Minorities told the House that a committee comprising the Education, Minorities and Human Rights’ Ministers and Secretaries had been constituted to look into this matter.

Sikh Trader’s killing

Treasury’s Mr. Ramesh Singh Arora on a point of order in September 2014 raised the issue of the murder of a Sikh trader in Peshawar. He demanded to ask the Kyber Pakhtua Khawa Government what measures it had taken to arrest the culprits.

The Punjab Assembly on the request of Mr. Arora wrote to the KP Government. The KP Government in response said that the Sikh was killed in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas). Meanwhile, the Minorities’ Minister informed the House about the KP government’s reply, which Mr.
Arora rejected. He demanded an end to this brutality against Sikhs.

Naming of a Government Building or a Road

Mr. Ramesh Singh Arora, in this March, submitted a resolution in the House for naming any government building or a road after Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who ruled from Kabul to Delhi. He said Ranjit Singh was the true leader of Punjab, while the rest were either the British or Mughal invaders. This resolution is lying pending in Speaker’s office.

He submitted another resolution demanding issuance of a ‘special postal stamp’ in memory of the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak (Spiritual leader of Sikhs). He demanded to observe the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak at the official level. “There should be a public holiday at this day,” he demanded. This resolution is also pending with the Speaker’s office.

Visit of Foreign Sikhs:

The delegations of Sikhs from India, Canada, USA and Europe visited the Punjab Assembly (PA) in last November and in May- June 2015. They observed the proceedings of the PA and exchanged their views with members, especially with Mr. Arora over the issues of minorities in Punjab.

Provision of Additional Marks

This March, treasury Member Kanji Ram on a point of order demanded the government to grant 20 extra marks to minority students for memorizing their holy books the way this provision is available for the Muslim students. He said that there is always a tight competition among the students at matriculation and intermediate levels when every single mark matters a lot. He said that these marks make a major
difference, and play a vital role for admissions in engineering and medical colleges. He demanded that the government must extend this concession to students belonging to religious minorities. This matter was referred to the Punjab Education Minister.

**Purging of School Syllabus of Hate Material**

Ms. *Shunita Ruth* of the opposition demanded this June on the floor of the House that the government should take immediate steps for purging school syllabus of hate material. Hate material in school books is not only causing hatred towards minorities, but also promoting intolerance in society. She said demanding that it must be done on priority basis to curb extremism.

**Hindu Marriages**

This March, Mr. Kanji Ram on a point of order said that the whole Hindu community should be taken on board, while making amendments to the Hindu Marriage Bill 2015. He said that the Pakistani Hindus would not accept any amendment to the Bill without developing a consensus among its community-mostly living in Sindh province. (The National Assembly’s Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights has recently deferred the approval of ‘The Hindu Marriage Bill, 2015’ till mid of July, 2015. This committee made the decision on a private member bill that was jointly moved last year by Ramesh Lal of Pakistan People’s Party and Dr. Darshan of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. Minister for Law, Pervaiz Rashid, in March 2015, moved the Hindu Marriage Bill 2015 from the government side.

This bill aims at establishing rules and regulations for registration of marriage and divorce for Pakistani Hindus; as currently in the absence of such a law, Hindus in the country do not have a legal document as proof of their marriage. On the other hand, the provinces are yet to give
a reply to the request of NA’s Standing Committee in which it had asked all federating units to pass resolution in their Assemblies empowering the Parliament to pass Hindu Marriage Bill 2015. This is being asked because minorities have now become a provincial subject after the 18th Amendment. According to the official record, the National Assembly’s body sent a letter to all the provincial governments on May 14, 2015, one day after the directives of the Supreme Court for doing required legislation to resolve marriage issues of the Hindu community).

The Provincial Minister for Minorities said that the issue of marriage registration of minorities, particularly of Hindus, was very sensitive and must be dealt with accordingly. He said that the newly married couples could not register their marriages at the union council level. “Christians are often forced to convert only to get a divorce, which is a despicable situation,” he said this while speaking in the Assembly.

Opposition member Shunila Ruth said, “The chief justice of Pakistan had ordered that the union councils should register these marriages but this order was not implemented.” “The age (of the couple) is often not taken into account. Girls and even boys, as young as 10 years old, can be married and legally it cannot be challenged. The age limit for marriage among the minority communities should be at least 18 years so that they, especially girls, could learn vocational skills and complete their education,” she suggested.

Ms. Ruth, on a point of order, further said that for the Muslims cases were brought to the Family Courts, but for Christians such cases remain pending for years in Civil Courts. For Hindus, the situation was even worse. The Hindu Marriage Bill was in the Punjab Assembly and yet nothing was being done about it, she deplored. This opposition’s member also said, “There were no
proceedings on the Christian Divorce Bill either.” “All minorities should be taken on board when discussing these family laws, not just the clergy,” she suggested.

Ms. Ruth complained that minority representatives were not elected. Instead of it they are selected by their parties, which meant that those in the assembly are not real representatives of their communities. She adding said that, however, once these members reached to the assemblies, they should work for the betterment of their communities. MPA Kanji Ram has expressed some reservations on the proposed bill, expressing that Hindu community was not taken into confidence before the government presented this bill.

Forced Conversions

Mr. Kanji Ram in last October’s session was not allowed by the Speaker of the House to speak at a point of order concerning ‘forced conversions’ of Hindu girls. “Although this matter relates to Sindh where most Hindu community lives, but I wanted to raise this issue here to condemn the trend,” Mr. Kanji Ram added. The Hindu bodies want strict legislation to stop forced marriages and conversion of Hindu girls to Islam.

Harassment and Arrests

MPA Shahzad Munshi on floor of the House on March 27, 2015 protested that several innocent Christians were being picked up and tortured by police in its pursuit of apprehending those who had lynched two Muslim young men. He said that the Christian community cooperated with the Punjab government and had dispersed the highly charged Christians after Youhanabad blasts. Meanwhile, Finance Minister Mian Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman claimed that the police was picking only those people who were clearly highlighted through media footages. He said that a Christian delegation, led by Federal Minister Kamran
Michael, was meeting the government and assured that this issue would be resolved properly. Ms. Shunila Ruth said that the police was picking up Christians from their localities without any confirmation of their involvement in the lynching; their families did not have any idea where those people had been taken to. “Police claims that religious leaders of Christians have allowed these steps, but these leaders told me personally that they have not,” she said adding that harassing people like this is inhuman.

RESOLUTIONS

Standing Committee on Minorities:
Ms. Shunila Ruth submitted a resolution on October 2014 demanding formation of a ‘Standing Committee on Minorities’ early this year. “The PA office has been delaying my resolution since long,” Ms. Ruth said adding that she had requested time and again to take up her resolution, but to no avail. “I am frustrated that to whom I must take up this matter, as the Custodian of the House (Speaker) is not willing to listen and Leader of the House (CM) hardly turns up to this House,” she said.

Killing of Ismailis:
Leader of the opposition Mian Mahmood-ur-Rasheed on May 15, 2015 tabled a resolution condemning the May 13 terrorist attack on a bus in Karachi wherein 46 people were killed. Calling this attack a national tragedy, the resolution stated that the nation is grieved over this incident. Stating that such incidents could not shatter the resolve of the nation for the war against terrorism, the resolution said that the nation is standing by the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies. It said that the war against terrorism would continue till the elimination of terrorists. It condemned the foreign hand in the terrorist activities in the country. Meanwhile, the House assured the Army and
security agencies of its support over war against terrorism. It also prayed for all those killed in this attack and expressed condolences with bereaved families. The House offered Fateha for those killed in these incidents and observed one-minute silence for the foreigners.

**Suicide Bombing at Churches:**

The Punjab Assembly on March 27, 2015 unanimously adopted a resolution to condemn the March 15 suicide bombing in two churches at Youhanabad, and lynching of two Muslims by an unruly mob. This resolution was presented by Finance Minister Mujtaba Shujaur Rehman, following suspension of the Assembly’s rules of business. This resolution states that the House expresses its grief over the suicide attack on churches that led to the killing of several people, including women and children. It also lauded the valor of policemen and security guards who did not let the suicide bombers go inside the churches and laid their lives to save others. It said that the House would not let anti-state and terrorist elements succeed in the society and would see that such elements be identified and given exemplary punishments.

The House condemned the lynching of Hafiz Muhammad Naeem and Babar Numan as an aftermath of the suicide bombing. It demanded that all responsible should be brought to book. It was an issue on which both Muslims and minority members spoke on point of orders and expressed their resolve to fight terrorism till the elimination of the last terrorist in Pakistan.

**Blasphemous Caricatures:**

A resolution moved by Mr. Khalil Tahir Sindhu, Minister for Human Rights and Minorities’ Affairs condemned the publication of blasphemous sketches in a French magazine. It demanded the United Nations to completely ban such actions. It also demanded the UN to pass
legislation and bare all countries from publishing profane sketches. It also demanded the Federal Government ask the UN to pass a legislation barring publication of any blasphemous content against prophets. The House, strongly condemning the magazine, unanimously passed this resolution.

Land Grabbing:
Treasury Member Mr. Sheik Allauddin moved a privileged motion on Oct 22, 2014. It was regarding transfer of 4300 acres land of Bhratri Trust, a Hindu Property in Layyah, in the name of Evacuee Trust Property Board, and later seized by “Qabza group” through claims of inheritance. The Provincial Minister for Minorities assured the House of investigating this matter.

Legislation
The Punjab Assembly during second parliamentary year passed about 37 laws besides referring about the same number to the concerned committees of the House. Among all of the passed bills, just two bills-The Punjab Prohibition of Expressing Matters on Walls (Amendment) Bill 2015 and The Punjab Sound System (Regulation) Bill 2015-can be beneficial, to some extends, to religious minorities. They can be beneficial for minorities on the basis that much of the persecution against them is triggered through hate material put on walls or literature and through the misuse of loudspeakers.
CONCLUSION

The Provincial Assembly of the Punjab during this parliamentary year (2014-15) has been much focusing on government business, particularly legislation, but not for the protection and promotion of the rights of religious minorities. It has been doing this without realizing that how important was it to make laws for minorities. On the other hand, another major reason for ignorance of religious minorities is their ineffective and insufficient representation in this ‘House’ of 371 members. It seems that the only major contributing factor for legislation over wall chalking and sound systems was the tragedy of Army Public School attack.

Observing the overall practice of the House, it is strongly felt that till the minorities are brought in the mainstream politics and their effective and enhanced representation is not ensured in Assemblies, their situation is not likely to be improved. To stop persecution against them, the political parties representing the nation in Assemblies must honor their commitments which they had made through party manifestoes. Equally important is the ‘election’ of minority representatives on general seats other than selection.