

## EDITORIAL



The nation's creative minds have done the country proud. They have stood up to condemn the rising attack on freedom of expression, the worst manifestation of which was the killing of Prof M. M. Kalburgi who was murdered by extremists. Irrespective of the language and the state creative minds have registered a powerful protest against this poisonous atmosphere of intolerance. Even eminent institution like 'Sahitya Akademi' did not respond to the killing of one of its awardees and a former member of its Council. By returning the awards bestowed on them and by resigning from the positions they hold in the Akademi, they along with eminent educationists, academicians, historians, social scientists, scientists, film directors and intelligentsia of various domains of art, literature and culture have also spoken out against the growing attacks on plurality and cultural diversity by the fundamental, communal forces.

This has now snowballed into a powerful collective voice of protest with scores of prominent intellectuals either returning their awards or resigning from their position in various eminent institutions. They constitute the best intellectual talent of the country. They are of opinion that the various institutions including the 'Sahitya Akademi' have failed in its duty to stand with the creative minds to uphold freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution.

The president of the 'Sahitya Akademi', Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari, has given spurious arguments for his and the Akademi's silence. They range from disapproving the form of protest by the writers, to stating that it is not the Akademi's job to get involved in politics and when cornered, citing the cost involved in calling an emergency meeting of the Board. For

the writers who have protested, the issue is not politics but the elementary defence of writers and the freedom of expression which is wholly in the Akademi's ambit. The recent killing of Mohammed Akhlaq in Dadri on the false charge of eating beef has added to the creative minds' concern at the growing intolerance and hatred.

In fact, the refusal of the Central Government to speak out against the attacks on writers and intellectuals has encouraged the Hindutva hoodlums. Situation has worsened due to some irresponsible words uttered from the Central Cabinet. Even this type of statement has been heard that the background of the writers returning their awards should be probed.

The Central Government of the country does not find it necessary to condemn the climate of intolerance and hatred that is being generated. Speaking on the Dadri incident, the Prime Minister called it, 'sad and unwarranted but has nothing to do with the Central Government'. Critics argue that it was a disavowal of any responsibility for the Hindutva offensive unleashed by the rightist forces in power.

The onset of a Hindutva fuelled authoritarianism is being sustained from below with the fascistic attacks on writers, secular intellectuals and minorities and from above by the Central Government's official patronage and encouragement to the Hindutva ideology.

What is heartening about the protest action of the creative minds is the range and variety of the intellectuals who have stood up to be praised. What binds them is their deep moorings in secular and democratic values. It is a clear and bold expression of how the secular, democratic, pluralistic country will not succumb to Hindutva authoritarianism.