

Even after generations of Christian faith, the shadow of caste looms large. Christian churches, especially in rural areas, often reflect the same caste divisions found in wider society. Higher caste converts tend to congregate together, forming their own separate churches, while lower caste Christians find themselves in a different corner, still battling the same prejudices they sought to escape by converting. This caste-based segregation within the church is the elephant in the room that nobody wants to acknowledge. The Indian Christian leadership has, for the most part, remained silent on the issue, preferring to ignore the divisions rather than address them head-on. The result is a church that is weak, splintered, and divided, where the message of Christ's love and unity is overshadowed by age-old Hindu Caste prejudices.

Christian missions in India have been more than just religious enterprises; they have been transformative movements that have radically changed the social landscape. Take, for instance, the abhorrent practice of Sati, where widows were forced—or rather, expected—to immolate themselves on their husband's funeral pyres. This barbaric tradition was not just an isolated cultural practice; it was emblematic of a society that devalued women to the point of treating them as expendable. Christian missionaries, alongside enlightened Indian reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, were instrumental in raising awareness and pressing the British authorities to outlaw Sati in 1829. This wasn't just a victory against one practice; it was a

step toward recognising the basic humanity and rights of women in India.

The rise of Hindu nationalism in India, backed by the political ascendancy of the BJP, has led to an increased focus on promoting Hindu identity while marginalising religious minorities. The concept of "saffronisation" involves rewriting Indian history to fit a Hindu-centric narrative, glorifying Hindu rulers while erasing or downplaying the contributions of Muslims and Christians. This rewriting extends to educational reforms, renaming of cities, and public celebrations of Hindu festivals, all reinforcing the notion of Hindu supremacy.

The spread of this Americanised gospel is even more disturbing in a country like India, where millions live below the poverty line. Preaching wealth to a people struggling with basic survival is not only insensitive—it is dangerous.

It is no surprise, then, that millions of Dalits have turned to Christianity over the years. Unlike Hinduism, which offered them no path to social or spiritual redemption, Christianity preached equality, hope, and the promise of eternal life. For the first time in their lives, many Dalits found dignity and a sense of worth in Christianity, a faith that treated them as equals in the eyes of God. This mass movement toward Christianity, particularly among Dalits and tribal communities, has become a major point of contention for Hindutva proponents, who accuse Christian missionaries of coercing people into conversion through allurements or inducements.

