

Union min is wrong, Muslims are a minority: Jurist

Eram Agha, TNN | Dec 4, 2014, 10.04PM IST

Aligarh: Eminent academician and jurist Faizan Mustafa on Thursday criticised Union minister Najma Heptullah over her views about Muslims not being minorities, saying that any community constituting less than 50% of the population falls under the minority category.

The minority affairs minister, in May, had waded into the definitional issue of minorities when she opined that Parsis and not Muslims were the minorities of the country as their numbers have dwindled in the last few decades. "Muslims are not minorities. Parsis are. We have to see how we can help them so that their numbers don't diminish," the grand-niece of freedom fighter Abul Kalam Azad had then said.

Finding holes in the minister's theory, Mustafa said "any community with a population of less than 50% is in the minority". He further said that just because Muslims are not on the verge of extinction does not mean that they are not accorded the minority status. "In her view, Parsis with a dwindling population are minorities. But threat of extinction is not a barometer to determine which community is in the minority," said Mustafa, who recently came in the news for winning the SAARC Best Law Teacher Award.

The Aligarh Muslim University professor delved further into the contentious 'minority' debate. He explained the two theories that determine minority community: statistical or numerical approach (one that has been adopted by the government in recent years) and power relationship. In the latter, a community is deemed to be in the minority if it wields less power compared to the size of its population. "In both sense, Muslims are in the minority. Numerically, we constitute 15% of the country's population, while in the power test, I'd like to know how many Muslims representatives do we have in the country's power structure," he said.

He also demanded the extension of SC/ST scholarship schemes for minorities, besides asking for the establishment of an equal opportunity commission.

Speaking at a seminar organized by Aligarh Muslim University's department of commerce, he spoke about how assimilation and integration of a community are two disparate matters.

"Mainstreaming is a sophisticated term for assimilation, which would require a community to leave its distinctiveness. Since India is a 'salad bowl' and not a 'melting pot' like USA, we should talk of integration instead. The distinct identities should be kept intact as in a salad bowl."

Dr Arvind Mayaram, secretary of ministry of minority affairs, and Mohammad Adeb, former MP, were the other speakers at the convention.

Courtesy:

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/Union-min-is-wrong-Muslims-are-a-minority-Jurist/articleshow/45376798.cms?utm_source=email&utm_campaign=toimobile&utm_medium=referral