


At a mere 7 per cent, Bangladesh Hindus under threat, says US rights activist

By Express News Service | Published: 25th March 2018 03:45 AM |
Last Updated: 25th March 2018 03:45 AM | **A+ A A-** | 

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The minority Hindus in Bangladesh are facing the threat of ethnic cleansing, US rights activist Richard L Benkin has said. Delivering a lecture organised by the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) here the other day, he said the Hindu population there had witnessed a major decline and it is even likely the entire community will be wiped out in the future if there is no effective intervention.

Benkin said he is carrying out an indepth research on the Hindu population's dwindling numbers which now stand at a mere 7 per cent as per the 2016 figures. Compared to this, the Hindus accounted for 35 per cent of the population in the then Eastern Pakistan in 1947 which slumped to 20 per cent following the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971.

"The Hindu population is suffering a major fall in the numbers. The ethnic cleansing of Hindus in that country should be opposed tooth and nail. The global community should put pressure on Dhaka on the issue," he said while blaming this on the intolerance shown by the majority Muslim population.

According to Benkin, rights activists world over, who highlight the abuses in Syria ,Yemen, and Afghanistan as well as other parts of the globe, remain tight-lipped on the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh's Hindus face a constant onslaught of government tolerated murder, rape, abduction, forced conversion, land grab and more, including a 2009 pogrom, which took place right behind a Dhaka police station. Yet, the world has remained silent until now," he said.

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Benkin's tome 'A Quiet Case of Ethnic Cleansing: The Murder of Bangladesh's Hindus' which has accounts of the horror by Hindus in Bangladesh may well bring the issue into public focus and trigger meaningful intervention. SJM state convener Ranjith Karthikeyan presided over the meeting.