

COMMUNALISM

Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Harasses, Threatens Muslim Vegetable Vendor

This communal incident occurred a day after another BJP MLA was reportedly pulled up for targeting Muslim vegetable vendors.



Brijbhushan Rajput. Photo: Facebook/Brijbhushan Rajput



The Wire Staff



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New Delhi: There appears to be no way to stop Bharatiya Janata Party leaders from targeting Muslim vendors in Uttar Pradesh during the COVID-19 lockdown. Just a day after the state BJP issued a show cause notice to a party legislator for urging people not to buy vegetables from Muslim vendors, a video of its MLA Brijbhushan Rajput has emerged. Rajput can be seen harassing a vendor and threatening him to go

away after it was revealed that he was from the minority community.

In the video, which has gone viral, Rajput is seen harassing the vegetable vendor and asking him to enter to his colony again after it is revealed by a minor accompanying the man that he was actually a Muslim.

In the video, which was shot by one of Rajput's neighbours, the MLA is seen asking the vendor for his name.

Here is the video pic.twitter.com/txueQOwBDO

— Anil Tiwari (@Interceptors) [April 29, 2020](#)

The video shows that when the vendor said his name was “Rajkumar”, the MLA insisted it was not and asked him for the real name. “*Sahi bolo nahin to maar maar kay theek kar doonga tumhay* (Tell me correctly or I will beat you up),” the MLA was then heard saying.

The legislator then asked a minor accompanying the vendor what his real name was, threatening that the vendor would go to jail otherwise. The boy then blurted that the name was “Ajiz-ur-Rahman”.

Then the MLA exclaimed, “*Saala jhooth bol raha thaa Musalmaan hokay* (You were lying about being a Muslim).”

As two men in the video asked the vendor why he was lying, the child intervened saying, “*Chhod do, ab nahin karengay* (Leave us, we will not do it again).”

Also read: [How Indian Muslims Engaged in COVID-19 Relief Efforts Are Countering Hate With Love](#)

Even as the vendor and the minor were leaving, the MLA was heard shouting: “*Dikh mat jaana yahan mohallay main* (Do not be seen in this locality again).”

Rajput later accepted that he had put out the video. He insisted that when asked, the vendor gave a false name. He also argued that there was high incidence of COVID-19 cases amid vegetable sellers in some parts of Kanpur and Lucknow.

Yes, it was my video. I reprimanded him because he was lying. He said his name was Rajkumar while his name is Rehmuddin. He wasn't wearing masks&gloves. We know,16 vegetable sellers in Kanpur&1 in Lucknow tested COVID-19 positive: BJP MLA, Brij Bhushan Sharan pic.twitter.com/3Vi12bP4ZW

— ANI UP (@ANINewsUP) [April 29, 2020](#)

Though ANI called the MLA Brij Bhushan Sharan – which is the name of a BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh – the MLA's name is in fact Brijbhushan Rajput.

Ever since a large number of COVID-positive people travelled from the Tabligh Markaz at Nizamuddin in Delhi to various parts of the country and this resulted in spread of the virus, many BJP leaders have taken to ostracising the entire Muslim community.

Attempts by the party leadership to curb these instincts have not yielded the desired results.

As Sharan's video shows, there is no impact of even show cause notices on the leaders. On Tuesday, the UP **BJP issued a show cause notice to an MLA, Suresh Tiwari**, for asking people to not buy vegetables from Muslim vendors.

Tiwari, the MLA from Barhaj, was shown in a video telling people: "*Ek cheez dhyaan mein rakhiyega, main bol raha hoon openly, koi bhi miyan ke hathon sabzi nahi lega* (I am saying this openly: don't purchase vegetables from Muslims)."

He had later acknowledged having made the remarks saying: "On April 17 or 18, I was distributing masks and sanitisers among the people. When I reached the boundary of the nagar palika, around 17-18 people came to me and started complaining against Tablighi Jamaat members creating chaos and spreading coronavirus and also contaminating vegetables with their saliva."

Tiwari further said: "I told them not to fight with them or take law into their own hands, but simply to stop purchasing from them. There are many Muslim vendors in Barhaj too and I only advised people not to purchase from them to be saved from the deadly virus."

The UP media in-charge of the BJP, Manish Dixit, said in a statement that Tiwari has been asked to reply within a week. He said the party central leadership held Tiwari's remarks to be "highly irresponsible". Dixit also conveyed that BJP national president JP Nadda had "pulled up" the state leadership for allowing such a transgression and stated that the party will not "tolerate" such remarks.

However, Sharan's similar outbursts seem to convey that the message has not filtered down to the leaders and the cadre.



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