



Data Collection & Profiling of Citizens in MMRDA region without Public Disclosure

Mumbai-Thane-Mira Road Bhayandar - Complaints from Christian Community

The Bombay Catholic Sabha and Citizens for Justice and Peace, Mumbai, have received reports from citizens across the city, spanning areas like Vikhroli, Gokuldhama, Goregaon East, and even Thane. According to these reports, *individuals using an App-based software under the guise of the Maratha Reservation Survey (attached form) are inquiring about the Maratha community as well as asking Christians (based on received reports) about their religion and conversion history, while refusing to disclose their own identities.*

In all three municipal jurisdictions in is Mumbai Mahanagar Palika, Thane Mahanagar Palika, Mira Road Bhayander Municipal Corporation who are reportedly conducting these surveys.

In one case, particularly disturbing, the persons entered the building society, a cosmopolitan area, zeroed in on the few Christian homes there, made a beeline for these and started asking objectionable questions. This suggests prior profiling of the locality that brings back haunting memories of 1992-1993 when our brethren from the Muslim community, their homes and businesses were profiled preceding targeted attacks.

Please note this is happening without the persons who appear to have been outsourced for this (no details of any organisation etc) are given, the persons are using an APP Based Software and asking these questions. While the survey was supposed to conclude by January 31, 2024 there is every danger and likelihood that this is being continued.

Dangerous example: In a housing society at Mahim, central Mumbai consisting of 56 members, the surveyor visit was only to a house which had a Christian resident escorted by the security person of the building. When the security guard was confronted, he said this gentleman wanted to visit this particular apt and I escorted him. When the resident confronted the survey guy, asked him to provide authorisation, he got nervous, fumbled and left the place immediately.

Another Dangerous Example: In Gokuldhama, Goregaon Society members were given a Survey form, a copy which is attached here. Whereas the survey mentioned about Maratha Reservation, but the other columns mentioned Religion / Caste of other members and their occupation details. What was the need for that?

As responsible citizens of this metropolis we demand full disclosure and accountability from the state government.

Free Press Journal has also carried a report of this wherein Melwyn Fernandes, Secretary, Association of Concerned Christians, said that community members have called him to report that in Thane, Mira-Bhayandar. *"Many of my workers are from Uttar Pradesh. They were asked when they had come to Mumbai. Where is the need for such questions?"* asked Fernandes. Another Thane resident, 86-year-old Ignatius Quadras, was asked whether he owned any property in his home state which is Karnataka. *"I told them I have been living in Thane for 60 years and did not own any land or house there,"* said Quadras.

In Mira-Bhayandar, respondents did not find a column for Catholics in the questionnaire. Merlyn D'sa, a corporator in Mira-Bhayandar Municipal Corporation, was confused when she saw columns only for East Indian Catholic, East Indian, and Nadar Christians. *"I am neither of these. I am Catholic but ticking the column for East Indian*

Catholic is giving wrong information because East Indian Catholics are classified as 'Other Backward Class' which I am not," said D'sa.

In Mumbai, there are reports that residents of Marol in Andheri, and in Juhu were asked details of the number of people living in the house and also informed him that the survey was done to give food rations to one particular community. "We are alerting the Christian community not to entertain (the surveyors) and refuse to answer such questions," said Fernandes.

In Mumbai, there are also reports that residents of Marol in Andheri, and in Juhu were asked details of the number of people living in the house and also informed him that the survey was done to give food rations to one particular community. *"We are alerting the Christian community not to entertain (the surveyors) and refuse to answer such questions,"* said Fernandes.

Questions that need to be answered by the State Government and Various City Corporations:

Who are the organisations that the Mumbai Mahanagar Palika and Thane Mahanagar Palika and Mira Road Bhayander corporation is "outsourcing this survey?"

Who has designed the questions and what is the APP Based Survey being used? What are the guarantees of Data Security?

Is not the government required under the Constitution and law to make a full public announcement, reassure citizens and then conduct such an exercise

We shudder to think of what implications this has for far flung rural areas where marginalised sections live in isolation.

There is a complete and utter absence of clarity in the "survey" being conducted by the Mumbai Mahanagar Palika on behalf of the Maharashtra Government.

The Bombay Catholic Sabha has alerted its vast membership to alert the organisation's leadership if any further complaints are received.

Dolphy Dsouza
President
The Bombay Catholic Sabha.

Teesta Setalvad
Secretary,
Citizens for Justice & Peace

February 15, 2024
Mumbai Press Club