

3RD INTERNATIONAL DHARMA-DHAMMA CONFERENCE GETS UNDERWAY

Misunderstood beliefs causing religious intolerance: Mahajan

● OUR STAFF REPORTER
Indore

Amid a raging debate over 'growing intolerance' in the country, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan here on Saturday said misunderstood beliefs and inadequate knowledge of religion is causing religious intolerance in the society.

"People talk about tolerance without proper knowledge of religion. This inadequate knowledge coupled with misunderstood beliefs lead to growing intolerance in the society," she said while addressing the inaugural function of the 3rd International Dharma-Dhamma Conference on "Harmony of Religions - Welfare of Humankind" at Brilliant Convention Centre here, on Saturday.

Mahajan said people often mix-up dharma with religion. "Dharma is a way of life while religion is all about religious practices. However, the core principles of both are - Love, Tolerance and Humanity," she said.

She further said that lifestyles of people may differ as per their faiths, but the core principles of all the religions remain the same. "People should follow these principles for harmony and peace in the society," she added.

Apart from the Lok Sabha Speaker, RSS Sarkaryavah (general secretary) Bhayyaji Joshi, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan and Bhutan Foreign Minister Lyonpo Damcho Dorji also addressed the inaugural function of the conference which got underway on Saturday. Ahead of Simhastha-2016 which is to be held in Ujjain, this conference has been jointly organised by the Centre for Study of Religion & Society (Indian Foundation), Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies and Department of Culture, Government of Madhya Pradesh.

Religious leaders from different parts of the world, including Japan, Bhutan and Sri Lanka have come to participate in the conference.



Religion not meant for violence: CM

Emphasising on the religious unity and harmony, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan said religion is not meant for violence but for the welfare of the living being.

"Whatever evil is done on the excuse of religion is not permitted by the religion. No religion permits anyone to do wrong things in its name," Singh said adding that the one who does good for everybody is a religious person and the one who harms others is anti-religion.

He further said that the problems begin when one starts saying that his religion is better than that of others. "We should respect all religions then only there will be harmony and peace in the society," he said.

The CM said that after Indore, a conference on



religions will be organised in Ujjain in May. "After that conference,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release a declaration on religions."



Religion is misused to tear lives apart: Bhutan minister

Bhutan Foreign Minister Lyonpo Damcho Dorji said that religion, which should be a guiding principle, is unfortunately misused to tear lives and country apart.

Praising India's religious diversity, he said that in the world's biggest democracy people of different religions have been living together for centuries.

"India is the birthplace of the world's four major religions — Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism — and people belonging to these religions have been living together in India for centuries. Indian's diverse culture can show the way to the world," Dorji said.

Dorji also praised the state government for organising the conference which he said will help in enhancing "harmony and understanding" between different religions.



We should have respect for all religions: Joshi

Without mentioning the controversy over beef, RSS general secretary Bhayyaji Joshi said that one should have 'respect' for all religions and adopt principles of non-violence.

"Diversities are there in different religions, but people are free to choose their own religion and follow religious practices. However, we should become someone, who has respect for all religions," he said.

"Indian intellectuals have said that God can be reached through various ways. Therefore, we should have the same perspective and respect for all religions as only that will lead to universal development," he said. Emphasizing the need to differentiate between religion and sect, Joshi said "There is a huge confusion in the world about the meaning of religion and sect. Both are different concepts. Religion teaches us how to fulfill our duties and our rights are incorporated in it. "However, when human beings start discriminating between religion and sect, they tend to forget religion in the process, which leads to empowerment of sects. We should adopt principles of non-violence in our behaviour so that we should not hurt anyone with our words and deeds."



Spiritual leaders arrive in city to attend Dharm-Dhamma Conference at Brilliant Convention centre. FP PHOTOS