

The Agony - and the Healing Touch!

In 1984 Kuldeep Kaur saw her husband being burnt alive by a mob of anti-Sikh rioters in Delhi.

"I want him hanged. I want to see him die. What's in a ticket? He will continue to live his life, while we have none," said the widow last month. She was left with three small children to bring up alone when the mob killed her husband 25 years ago.

The narrow bylane leading to Block 32 in Trilokpuri, where Kuldeep was witness to her husband's death, saw as many as 350 Sikhs killed.

No one, who has lived to tell the tale from the east Delhi neighbourhood that was home to mechanics, drivers and carpenters - Kudeep's husband was one - is ready to forgive or forget.

A neighbour said the woman lived in Tilak Vihar, known as "Widow's colony" because the wives of men killed in Trilokpuri, Kalyanpuri, Mangolpuri, Sultanpuri and Nangloi had been allotted flats by the Delhi Development Authority there.

To the families of the dead, the withdrawal of tickets to Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar, accused of inciting the killer mobs, means nothing.

"There were women from our colony, widows like Darshan Kaur and Anwar Kaur, who told the court that Congress leaders Sajjan Kumar and H.K.L. Bhagat led the mobs that killed their husbands... Who will get these women justice? asked a protester burning Tytler's effigy.

Kuldeep, who works as a school peon, said: "without my husband, look what has happend to my children." Her elder son drives an autorickshaw while the younger is jobless. Her daughter runs a beauty parlour from their home.

The Punjab unit of the Congress felt dropping Tytler and Sajjan was "a wise decision and would go a long way in pacifying hurt Sikh sentiments."

[Courtesy: Ananya Sengupta, *The Telegraph*]

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Last April, Sonia Gandhi again heeded her "inner voice" - and got Jagdish Tytler and Sajjan Kumar to drop out of the Parliamentary election in the fact of mounting anger among Sikhs over their candidature.

The Congress president allowed Tytler, an accused in the 1984 riots that killed 4,000 Sikhs to explain his position and "unilaterally" decide against fighting from North-east Delhi. Known to go by her "inner voice" and "instincts", Mrs. Gandhi felt the party should bow to Sikh sentiments without bothering about losing two Delhi seats.

Sonia's "inner voice" had spoken famously on May 18, 2004, when she stunned the country by turning down the post of Prime Minister, inducting Dr. Manmohan Singh.

