

# COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA – A CRITICAL STUDY

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## INTRODUCTION

India the biggest democratic country stands in unity with diversity with people from different religious, customs, dialects etc. live together harmoniously. Violence a curse to humanity has affected the most of our societies by various ways. Violence with if different form physical, sexual, verbal or psychological scares the humanity to a large extent whether inflicted by the group, individuals, organisations, nations and soon. In India violence has taken the shape of communal due to different community religion and different group of people. It is also sometimes provoked by the political parties for their own interest which causes the great damage to the common people and the sovereignty of nation. The relationship between violence and religion became a central concern after the attack on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Recent in the world wide religion is the source of inspiration for the violence and non- violence activity. In India, communal violence is a major issue in peace breaking and disturbing the law and order with society. In the country like India where religion, customs, language and culture vary place to place raises a gap of harmony, brotherhood among them. The followers of one religious group differ from the follower of other religious group and it leads to Riot. Sometime these communal violence happens due to the laws of the society. Some are the famous communal violence in the form of rioting 1992 - Bombay riots( Protest over the demolition of the Babri masjid ),2002 – Gujarat riots (The burning of a Train in Godhara) these are the some leading cases and there are many more riots.

In India constitution has given the right to everyone to follow his or her own religion without any fear. This fact can neither be ignored, opposed or diluted. We need to believe in the theme of "live peacefully and let other live peacefully". Once we stand united respecting the people of other religion and caste, admiring the views and principles will never give any scope of communal violence. Unity is strength. But it's the adversity of our country that ever after the

70 years of Independence India is not free from the curse of communalism. Communal violence happens when there is conflict of different groups of people. Now a days communal violence become a cancer for the society which not only affect the some people but public at large and particular those religions which have conflict and due to which that communal violence rise.

Communalism in its horrifying manifestation of Hindu-Muslim riots poses the greatest threat to the well-being and stability of society and state. Other religious and linguistic minorities have also suffered tremendously during the last decades. Atrocities against Christians came in sharp focus in burning alive of Stein and his two minor sons in a car. Although this incident shocked the nation and the world but Christian homes and churches continued to be torched in Gujarat and several other parts of the country. Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and U.P. gave a serious jolt to the unity of the country and Sikhs continued to suffer in Punjab and other places. The Kashmiri Pundits were systematically alienated and forced to become refugees in their own country. Similar crimes by militants of different hues made life miserable for North Indians in Mumbai and North East.

Sometimes also called inter communal violence refers to a situation where violence is perpetrated across ethnic lines, and victims are chosen based upon their belonging to that particular ethnic group. this term is commonly used in South Asia to describe those incidents where conflict between ethnic communities result in massacres.

Communal violence is mostly an exaggerated feeling of hatred, ill- will and religious conservatism, orthodox thinking and fanaticism. It is usually seen-

- (a) Between different races.
- (b) Between different members of the same race of different communities but of different sects.

## **CAUSES OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE**

In communal violence various causes and multiplicity of factors are responsible for the generation and aggravation of communal Riots.. Each of these factors, individually and collectively, contributes to creating the communal passion in which even the mildest of

provocations erupts into irrational violence. There are some other sparking factors in addition to the communal environment engineer the fire of communal violence in any area.

Following are the three main causes for the communal violence :-

1. General causes,
2. Religious causes, and
3. Trivial causes.

## **GERERAL CAUSES**

Communal violence takes place due to various reasons and these reasons are very complex. The reason for the break out of communal violence, its continuance, ineffective policing and other efforts and delay in restoring normalcy are varied and interrelated. It is necessary to know the reason behind the problem of communal violence.

The general causes may be divided into further sub categories:-

### **(A) DIVIDE AND RULE POLICY**

The divide and rule policy adopted by the British ruler before independence had a very wide impact and impression on the Hindu-Muslim relationship. This policy had sown seeds of discord between the communities, who indulged in serious skirmishes posing threat to the security and very existence of the nation. It was the Revolt of 1857, where the British Ruler found themselves on backfoot, they adopted the policy of "Divide and Rule" and differentiated the communities on communal lives particularly Hindu and Muslim. It was one of the main reasons that the British rulers undertook the first census in Colonial India in the year 1872. The census of 1872 articulated the cleavages of minority and majority and created communal consciousness in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The policy of divide and rule led to the division of Bengal in 1905 was a unique example of fomenting communalism. Communal perception was again perpetrated through the political instrument of separate electorates, wherein religious minorities were given separate seats in the legislative bodies according to their proportion of population in the provinces. This widened the prevailing communal antagonism in the country. Mahatma Gandhi struggled hard to bring back the spirit of brotherhood. Since then hatred and

dissonance is prevalent between the Hindu-Muslim relationship and had been, or bitter than ever before and has grown manifold. The Indian ruling class continued the 'divide and rule' policy of the British rulers in the post-partition period in relation to the masses of the two communities to keep them divided and always fighting.

### **(B) POLITICAL FACTORS**

Unless and until the communal ideology and socio-economic structure of the society is attacked which sustain it, we cannot expect the communal politics let down. Almost communal violence is politically motivated. There is a growing tendency to maximize political gains by adopting short cuts in terms of usage of ancient identities, money and muscle power, communal slogans, doctrinaire issue, etc. The main reason behind the communal conflict between the Hindu and the Muslim elite was to have monopoly over political power as well as control of economic resources. Zenab Bano believes that "the outcome of communalism in the form of group prejudices, communal contradictions, tensions and communal violence is due to the struggle for control over the resources of power. Communalism's roots are deep in economic power and domination." Prabha Dixit also regards communalism as "a political doctrine that makes use of religious and cultural differences in achieving political gains."

The country witnessed the havoc of communalization of politics in the 1980s decade. 'Minakshipuram conversion' episode was an example of being exploited by the then Prime Minister to retain his political power by mobilizing the upper and middle caste Hindu support. Due to the political issues communal riots occurred in Hyderabad (1983), Bombay (now renamed Mumbai)-Bhiwandi (1984) and Aurangabad (1988). In the late 80s, communal riots that broke out in Meerut (1987) and the Bhagalpur (1989) were directly the result of 'Ayodhya dispute', the dispute was essentially political in nature Political Parties always try to obtain the favour of one community against another community for political gain. End to achieve this goal a violent competition is always prevalent among them. As a result, communal groups are gaining support from the political parties. Both religious as well as secular leaderships try to take advantage of this situation for their political and non-political ends. Politicians have no interest in bridging the gap between communities, but have, in fact, a positive stake in ensuring that it remains as wide as possible. They succeed in misguiding their ignorant co-religionists in the wrong direction and towards the wrong goals, which are against the interests of the people themselves.

### **(C)SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES**

It has been established that in Indian society disputes among various trends within Hinduism or Islam did take place. Often socio-political issues also engineered communal violence. The principal aspect that came to the surface was 'cow protection' and 'Urdu-Devanagari' controversy. The demand for the use of the Devanagari script, first made by some Banaras (now renamed Varanasi) Hindus in 1868 and granted by Lt. Governor MacDonnell in 1900 was connected with the tension between old and new elites of UP.<sup>i</sup> The local Gorakshini Sabhas began springing up in many parts of Northern India from the late 1880s, and became more militant and brought acute social tension. On the other hand, Muslim revivalist trends were simultaneously insisting on the necessity of the 'Bakharid' (i.e. the festival of sacrifice) sacrifices. Thus, the ground was prepared for communal violence in 1893. In 1967, country also witnessed the communal violence in Ranchi after attempting to make Urdu, the second official language in Bihar. In 1994, the introduction of a short 'Urdu News Bulletin' from the Bangalore Doordarshan (DD) had sparked off communal violence in Bangalore. However, it was clear that apart from 'linguistic sentiments' there was certainly a political motive to the entire events.

### **(D)ECONOMIC FACTOR**

The economic factor behind the communal violence cannot be denied. The imbalanced economic development between Hindus and Muslims has also been a big factor for economical competition that leads to the social tension and turns into communal violence. An important cause of communalism and communal violence springing from it has been unbalanced and exploitative economic relations in Indian society. In 1929, Mumbai riots were explained at the time as the outcome of an economic conflict between Hindu strikers and Muslim strike breakers, mixed in with Hindu antipathy towards Muslim moneylenders in the city. Several accounts of the partition riots in Punjab have also focused on the role of land shortages and conflicts between indebted Muslim farmers and mainly Hindu money lenders in the country side and between Muslim and Hindu business interests in the cities.<sup>ii</sup> The inter-dependence between the Hindus and the Muslims in trade and commerce in places like Varanasi, Moradabad, Aligarh and other places have given rise to pressure groups among the artisans and weavers who put pressure on the fanatical members of their respective communities to call off the projection of any communal issue, as in the process the communities stand to lose



economically. Due to economic factors communal violence occurred in Udaipur (1965 – 1966); Godhara (1990 -1981); Bihar Sharif (1981); Meerut and Baroda (1982) and in the industrial belt of Bhiwandi-Thane-Mumbai (1984). During 1980, either electoral politics or economic competition played great role in engineering some major riots.

Different sources asserts that the reason behind the Ayodhya issue violence was the overtake of the trading of the products of Hindus by Muslim Artisans and weavers. The intense economic competition led to conflicts and riots. *The Gopal Singh Committee in its Report (1983)* also testifies to the economic factors, local rivalry, acquiring control over and sharing of the gains of economic ventures.<sup>iii</sup> It is asserted that most of the employers, industrialists, etc., are Hindus, whereas most of the workers and artisans are Muslims. Therefore, communal violence is a distorted form of class conflict. Communal clashes encourage in ensuring that people do not begin identifying themselves with the economic class to which they belong. Social tension is obvious outcome of economic competition. It was an underlying cause of communal riots being frequently mentioned in some recent writing on the subject. We find the burning instances of Riots including Aligarh, Bihar Sharif, Udaipur, Muradabad are the outcome of economical competition.. Mushirul Hasan explains that the riots in Moradabad, Khurja, Aligarh, Bhagalpur, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Surat were specially targeted because in these towns Muslim craftsmen, artisans, foundry owners and weavers reap the reward of favourable economic climate and trading relations with oil rich Gulf countries.<sup>iv</sup> The economic crisis in our society leads not only to communal violence but also to atrocities over women, Scheduled Castes (SC) and members of weaker sections of society.

### **(E) BUSINESS RIVALRIES**

Business Rivalries also turns into communal disturbance. The interdependency in its business activities of all the communal groups violate peace and harmony among them. Hindu and Muslim entrepreneurs and artisans cannot flourish without each other's assistance. The bitter relationship among them affects not only the whole industry adversely but also qualitative perception being felt in many areas. Communal forces have identified certain contradictions in their relationships to create situations in which further communal clashes are encouraged. The contribution of land mafias in communal violence is visible in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. In Hyderabad riots (1990-91), it was found that the role of land mafias in collaboration with their political mentors was derisive in engineering and sustaining these riots for long periods.<sup>v</sup> The

riot of Bhiwandi (1970) is the clear example of business rivalries among traders resulting in planned and organized attacks on the looms working for rival traders. Similar tendencies are visible in some other riots also. The economic targeting of Muslims in the Gujarat riots (2002) is unprecedented. Muslim businesses have been systematically destroyed. The Tribunal recorded extensive evidence of the divesting loss of property of the Muslim community in the state. Due to business rivalry, the anti-social elements are encouraged to attack the opposite business establishments.

#### **(F) ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURES**

Flexible policy of law and order also causes communal violence. After partition, the most of communal violence took place because of the weak law and order. There were many burning instances of the failure of weak law and order administered by the police and administrative officers are prevalent. This failure caused many serious communal riots including Ahmedabad and Baroda (1969), Bhiwandi (1970), Hyderabad (1978 & 81), Bihar Sharif (1981), Bhagalpur (1989) and several other major riots. The Report of the Srikrishna Commission on Mumbai riots (1992-93), which was submitted in 1998, points out that the failure of state administration was primarily responsible for the extra-ordinary situations. The Srikrishna Commission Report indicts that “four precious days were lost for the Chief Minister to consider and issue the orders as to effective use of army for controlling the riots.”

#### **(G) PARTISAN BEHAVIOUR OF POLICE**

The partisan role of state machinery particularly police goes in sustenance of communal violence and reactive motivation by the group feeling. The partisan attitude of police allows petty clashes to turn into a major communal violence. The Madon Commission on Bhiwandi riots (1970) has recorded that the concerned police officers and personnel showed communal bias and actively assisted the Hindu rioters in burning and looting Muslim properties and the communal discrimination was practiced in making arrests. The police turned a blind eye to what the Hindu rioters were doing. The Moradabad riots (1982) and the Maliana and Hashimpura episode in Meerut (1987) are the glaring examples of one-sided action of the Uttar Pradesh (UP)-Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC). Harish Sharma quoted the statement of the then State Minister, Abdul Rahman Nashtar, regarding Meerut riots, “after Moradabad

riots, Meerut became the second instance when the PAC was blamed along with the local administration for the riots. In both the cases, a minor issue was given the colour.

V.N. Rai, an ex-police officer of UP held the police partisan as the cause of communal violence. He feels that it is already imprinted in the police mind that Muslims initiate the communal riots and hence as precautionary measures, the police arrests particularly Muslims and searches their homes. He describes that in all the major riots including Ahmedabad (1969), Bhiwandi-Jalgaon (1970), Tellicherry (1970), Meerut (1982 & 87) and Bhagalpur (1989), role of the police has been highly anti-Muslims. The Srikrishna Commission Report indicates that the police personnel were found actively participating in riots, communal incidents or incidents of looting arson and so on. The partisan role of the police in Mumbai riots (1992- 93), Gujarat killings and in Orissa riots (2008) has been equally shameful. The partisan role of the police in Mumbai riots is well documented in a compilation from the Times of India. The Srikrishna Commission accuses the Mumbai Police of 'built in biases' against Muslims, which became more pronounced after attacks on the force.

#### **(H) RUMOURS**

False and exaggerated rumours pave an easy way to communal violence. In almost all riots the role of rumours in rousing communal zeal is quite famous. Rumour plays a mischievous role in fanning the flames in a surcharged atmosphere. It is always a key in the hands of communal elements to engineer communal violence. The most effective to incite the mass is the rumour of the women or girl of one community being molested, raped or kidnapped by the members of another community; or the killing of a cow by a Muslim; etc. In 1950, rumours about alleged ill treatment of Hindus in certain districts of East Bengal, reports of alleged forcible mass conversion to Islam, desecration of images of Hindu Gods, etc., invoked communal violence in a number of districts of West Bengal. In 1961, rumours played a vital role in Jabalpur riots. The communal violence was provoked by rumours about a Hindu girl being assaulted by two Muslims. The main cause of Nellie, Assam riot (1983) was rumour that the Bengali Muslim had cut off the breasts of Hindu women and displayed them in the Hindu areas to show their power. In Bhagalpur riots (1989) too, the role of rumours was significant.

In December 1990, during the second phase of kar seva in Ayodhya, violence broke out in Aligarh, among other towns on December 7. On December 8, rumours gripped the town that



Muslim doctors at the J.N. Medical College, A.M.U., Aligarh, deliberately killed a number of Hindu patients. Such rumours and propaganda did maximum damage.

During Gujarat killings (2002), the Gujarati press became the agent provocateur. Sandesh published false reports, rumours and biased reports, which aggravated the flames of communal violence. The story starts with the Godhra incident. On February 28, Sandesh published a front page story that, “10 to 15 Hindu women were dragged away by a ‘religious fanatic’ mob from the railway compartment.” The story was entirely false. Next day, Sandesh carried a follow up to this false story with the heading “Out of kidnapped young ladies from Sabarmati Express, dead bodies of two women recovered— breasts of women were cut off.”<sup>vi</sup> This false story has spread like wildfire across Gujarat and was compounded by extreme sexual violence and bestiality against Muslim women.

Rumours are circulated rapidly and their distortions grow with each repetition. It should be the imperative duty of the district administration to counter rumours floated around by unscrupulous persons.

### **(I) LACK OF COMMUNICATION**

During communal violence, there is no free exchange of views and opinions between the two communities and both the communities perceive as inimical. Such absence of inter-group communication is favourable for communal violence. During communal violence, both communities paste and distribute posters and pamphlets thereby increasing communal tensions and continuation of communal violence. Such communication preaches communal hatred and prejudice to incite communal violence. Isolated individual instances of injustices and loss, rightly or wrongly are published and communicated in the newspapers and consequently communal groups get support for continuing communal violence, as one community perceives that the other community committed violent acts against it.<sup>vii</sup> An individual personal attack is sometimes misconstrued as an attack against the entire community. As a result, people become scared and frustrated and thereby more violence takes place.

## **RELIGIOUS CAUSES**

One of the most prominent factor behind the communal violence is religious cause. There are a number of discussion over the issue of communal violence through different angles but the scholars might forget the violative point of religion as the perpetrator behind communal violence.

However, it has been observed by various studies that religion was not the sole factor responsible for the origin or growth of communal violence before and after partition.

However, religion acts more as an agent determining the attitude of its followers than the motivation or mainspring of communal violence. Religion has become a cat's paw in the hands of unscrupulous elements. Let us now examine some causes in order to understand the problem of communal violence from the religious aspect and the religious causes responsible for communal violence may be discussed under the following heads:

#### **(A) PROSELYTISATION/CONVERSION**

Proselytisation is a source of communal conflict and communal violence. Frequent conversions caused a great resentment among people. Assimilation is peaceful co-existence in a heterogeneous system, which presupposed passivity on the part of the assimilated. During the continuous phases of communal violence in Bengal from 1905 to 1947, and pre-partition communal riots in several parts of the country, conversion was one of the main causes of communal violence. After, partition, the fundamentalist also did not give up the idea of conversion. The conversion of Dalits to Islam at Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu communalized the Hindu mind in India. The outbursts of communal conflicts after the 'conversion' episode indicate that caste and communal problems have become intertwined in Indian politics.<sup>viii</sup> The conversion issue intensified communal discord in the country and resulted in communal violence in many parts of the country. The communal violence in Ahmedabad, Pune and Sholapur in 1982 had been the direct result of the Meenakshipuram conversions.

#### **(B) RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS**

Before partition people of every community was convinced by the communal organisation to find the solution of then problem and non-religious issues in their own religion because their problems were due to other Religionists/Religion. There is a general religious revival among the different communities in our country. The newfound faith in religion by the communities has, however, given rise to several problems. Every religion teaches its followers that its understanding and interpretation of God, Prophet, etc., is the best and the ultimate. The tremendous faith in one's religious beliefs and a feeling that nonbelievers in these are misguided people who derive to be told regarding the correct path, lead to conflicts, which may be termed as religious conflicts.

Normally, the destruction of places of worship of other community and forced or voluntary conversions were supposed to be part of religious duty. Thus, communal violence breaks out because of 'Jehads', 'Crusades', etc., the religious dogmas, division and worship lead to open conflict, threats to social order and integration.

### **(C) RELIGIOUS/COMMUNAL ORGANISATIONS**

Before partition people of every community was convinced by the communal organisation to find the solution of then problem and non-religious issues in their own religion because their problems were due to other Religionists/Religion. This was the basic cause of widespread communal violence between the two communities. Later to strengthen their theory a number of organisations were established by both Hindus and Muslims such as Bajrang Dal, RSS, Shiv Sena, VHP, Jamat-e-Islami, AIMALB etc to protect their interests. and as a result communal tensions and violence have increased. Similarly, people have become conscious of religion and religious fanaticism has increased among Hindus and Muslims. These organizations have vast resources and command workers to protect their interests due to alleged injustice done to them. These organizations have enormous capital formation, buildings, workers and land and regular massive income from their patrons. The issues rose by these organizations and large-scale mobilization of the people to achieve communal objectives, helped such organizations in gaining legitimacy by posing themselves as the real representatives of their community.

These organizations have been promoted as the prestigious forums of a particular community and they take a lead to create all types of communal disturbances. Several inquiry commissions

have classified the active and direct role of communal organisation in fomenting the communal violence by violating the law and order, persuading one community people to another community people. The Madon Commission (1970) held branches of communal organizations like the Shiv Sena, Bhartiya Jan Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha and Tamir-e-Millat responsible for fomenting communal tension. The communal violence is thus organized by vested powerful semi and quasi-politically affiliated groups. It is, therefore, necessary that such organizations should not be allowed to ransack the lives and properties of innocent people.

#### **(D) RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS AND CELEBRATIONS**

The Religious procession and celebration is an old tool for the political leaders to manipulate. Processions became significant vehicles of violence, when local power politics was at stake. Communalists use religiosity for boundary definitions in political and other spheres. They emphasize on Religious festival, processions, etc. Any infringement in their religious processions and festivals gives them a scope to exaggerate the incidents and engineer the communal violence. The revisionalism as a weapon was pressed into service by political leaders to develop base after 1920. The communalists are also behind the increase of religious ceremonies and processions like 'Bhagwati Jagran', 'Durga Pooja', 'Ganesh Utsav', 'Rath Yatras', 'Shiv Jayanti', 'Ramnavmi Utsav', 'Laxmi Puja', 'Sarasvati Pujan', 'Ganesh Pujan', 'Ram Lila', 'Tazia', etc. These religious processions have increased in number and the scale of participation over the years.

Recently, due to religious celebrations and processions communal disturbances have been reported from Baroda, Sewari, Moradabad, Jabalpur, Titwala, Ahmednagar, Ujjain, Nandurbar, Lucknow, Bareilly, Hyderabad, Dhule, Malerkotla, Varanasi, Kolhapur and Azamgarh. Thus, religious processions become an irritant for causing communal violence. Further, other religious processions, on occasions of both Hindu and Muslim festivals are primary factors responsible for communal violence.

#### **(E) HURTING RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS**

It is frequently seen that religious sentiment becomes the big factor for communal violence. Hurting of Religious sentiment provoke every community to spread hatred and anger against



other community and communal violence spread like wildfire. In 1968, at Tinsukia in Assam, communal violence took place due to the killing of a cow by a Muslim. In December 1986, communal riots broke out in Bangalore and Mysore, because of defamatory article against last Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). The Moradabad riot (1980) was due to the intrusion of a pig into the Idgah during 'Eid' prayer. The incident had its repercussions in many other towns of the state and in Delhi, MP and Kashmir. In 1982, communal violence broke out in Amritsar and Patiala, due to the demand for a total ban on smoking and cigarette sale in Amritsar, a holy city. The demand was mainly because of religion as the use of tobacco was forbidden to Sikhs. Both politicians and priests of their religion succeed in stoking the flames of communal hatred, bias and prejudice and in triggering communal clashes whenever convenient to them.

#### **(F) SPENDING ON RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES**

People in order to maintain internal peace, progress and prosperity and freeing frustration and stress, follow the both of their religion and become more religion than they should be.

and as a result, communal bodies are flourishing all over the country taking advantage of liberal democracy and freedom of association. Increased number of sacrifices and yagnas at the cost of thousands of rupees are organized and a large number of people visit religious places and attend celebrations. The activities of religious groups, by spending on religious and semi-religious activities have been held responsible for communal violence. The real cause of conflict between two communities in Moradabad riots (1980) was economic competition and the increased degree of spending on religious and semi-religious activities such as construction of more mosques, madarsas and makhtabs, which were construed as flow of Arab money into India to strengthen the Muslim fundamentalists. Thus, such activities could easily cause a greater degree of hostility among the other communities and succeeded in creating an atmosphere for communal violence. Sharp reactions are also seen where any place of worship is erected or established by one community in an area where the other community exceeds in numbers.

It should also be kept in mind that contrary to the impression carried by the people in general, religion is not the root cause of the communal violence; it is rather a powerful instrument in the hands of those interests, which seek to play their game through it. Religious causes are sometimes peculiar to the extent that one fails to understand the real motive behind the fire except that of the religious rigidity. However, religious issues should not be taken as single causative factor of communal violence.

## TRIVIAL CAUSES

The studies on communal riots have established a clear nexus between various trivial causes and communal violence which cannot be denied. Besides the general and religious causes, some of the trivial causes responsible for communal violence and disturbance are summarized as under:

- Changing the root of processions.
- Clashing of times of prayers of different communities.
- Cow slaughter. → Demarcating new places for Tazias.
- Desecration or destruction of places of worship.
- Disputes over places of worship.
- Dispute between property owners and tenants.
- Distribution of objectionable pamphlets.
- Disturbances in religious processions/functions.
- Due to the migrated Muslims and refugees.
- Emotion and insecurity.
- Intolerance during fairs and festivals.
- Laying the foundation for new statues.
- Marriage, eve-teasing and sexual relations between members of the opposite groups or cases of elopement.
- Mischievous media reporting.
- Objection to playing of music, singing and dancing in front of mosque and other religious places.
- Objectionable speeches.
- Obstructions placed during religious processions.
- Pelting stones to disturb the religious processions.
- Performing Qurbani (i.e. sacrifice) in a public place.
- Petty quarrels between members of different communities.
- Personal quarrels.
- Presence of objectionable animals at the time of prayers as happened in Moradabad riot in 1982.

- Provocative and abusive slogans against the other community.
- Publishing of provocative articles and objectionable writings.
- Reaction for religious conversions.
- Reaction and repercussion of riots of other places, i.e., Delhi riots of 1987 as a fall out of Meerut riots of 1987, etc.
- Road accident.
- Sacrificing of cow on 'Bakharid' (i.e. the festival of sacrifice).
- Sexual offences.
- Showing signs or symbols of insulting.
- Sudden quarrel.
- Taking out processions through unconventional and non-permitted routes.
- Throwing of colours, gulal, etc., on mosque or other religious places.
- Throwing of colours, gulal, etc., on persons who resent it.
- Throwing of liquor and flesh of objectionable animals at religious places.
- Vulgar display of religious fervors on the localities especially at the places inhabited by the members of the other community, etc.

The other causative factors responsible for communal violence inter-alia, are free-rumour mongering, lack of counter measures to dilute the effect of rumours, transmission lag in the information flows, lack of effective implementation of laws, lack of public cooperation, unrestrained use of loudspeakers at religious places and other similar practices, no regulation on religious processions, existence of different disputes, lack of responsive and responsible behaviour by local administration and lack of coordination between the various administrative units on the spot. The tension between the two communities has placed them on two opposite poles, where the scope of compromise is possible only if flexibility in interpretation of religious tenets is shown. Humayun Kabir believed that "in a plural and democratic society communalism is inevitable because of the clash of interests between minority groups and the majority community.

THERE ARE VARIOUS legal provisions relating to communal violence as contained in general and special laws on the subject, e.g.,

1. The Indian Penal Code, 1860;
2. The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973;
3. The Police Act, 1861;
4. The Arms Act, 1959;
5. The Explosives Act, 1884;
6. The Explosive Substances Act, 1908;
7. The Explosives Rules, 1983;
8. The National Security Act, 1980;
9. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967;
10. The Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984;
11. The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991;
12. The Press Council Act, 1978;
13. The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1911;
14. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955;
15. The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988;
16. The Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; various constitutional provisions; etc., and other miscellaneous provisions. The Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2011 has also sent for the adoption by the Parliament for prevention and control of communal and targeted violence.

We have adequate legal provisions relating to communal violence to prevent and control communal violence provided they are enforced timely, impartially and firmly. In this chapter we will discuss various provisions of laws—preventive as well as punitive, constitutional provisions and other miscellaneous provisions dealing with communal violence.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS**

The framers of Indian Constitution have taken plenty care to see that the concept of FRs finds a place of honour in the Constitution. Indian Constitution as well as various other laws of the



country contains valuable and detailed provisions on the protection of individual as well as minorities rights; and the directive principles enshrined in the Constitution also aim at the protection of human rights and human dignity.

## **PREAMBLE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution says that India is a secular democratic republic securing justice, equality and fraternity. It was to give effect to these objectives that the fundamental rights (FRs) (Part III) and the directive principles of State policy (Part IV) were enacted and through them the dignity of the individual was sought to be achieved and maintained. India is a secular State in the sense that the State shall not make any discrimination whatsoever on the grounds of religion or community against a person professing any particular form of religious faith. The secular nature of India is one of the basic structures of the Constitution as held in *Kesavnanda Bharit's* case.<sup>ix</sup>

## **FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS**

The FRs rights relating to the present study may be summarised as under:

### **Article 14**

This article guarantees to every person the right to equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws. The words 'equality before the law', is a declaration of equality of all persons within the territory of India. The other words 'the equal protection of the laws', direct that equal protection shall be secured to all persons within the territorial jurisdiction of the Union.

### **Article 15**

Article 15 prohibits certain classifications and expressly prohibits discrimination against any citizen inter alia on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, by the State, and provides for a free access to all public places and public utility services for all citizens.

**Article 16**

The article 16 guarantees an equal opportunity to all its citizens in the matter of appointment to any office under the State.

**Article 17**

Under this article, untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. It also declares that the enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with the law.

**Article 19**

Article 19 (1) declares that all citizens shall have the right: (i) to freedom of speech and expression; (ii) to assemble peaceably and without arms; (iii) to form associations or unions; (iv) to move freely throughout the territory of India; (v) to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and (vi) to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. Freedom of speech and expression is the foundation of democracy, because without free public discussion, public education, which is so essential for the proper functioning of a government, is impossible.<sup>x</sup> This freedom encompasses the right to express freely one's convictions or opinions by speech, writing, printing, pictures, or in any other form. It is settled law in India that the right of freedom of speech and expression includes the liberty of the press as well.<sup>xi</sup>

Freedom of speech and expression is protected under article 19 (1) (a). However, the rights under article 19 (1) are not absolute. Clause (2) of article 19 enables the legislature to impose reasonable restrictions in the public interest on the right of freedom of speech and expression on the following grounds: (i) sovereignty and integrity of India; (ii) the security of the State; (iii) friendly relations with foreign States; (iv) public order; (v) decency or morality; (vi) contempt of court; (vii) defamation; or (viii) incitement to an offence.

Reasonable restrictions under above-mentioned heads can be imposed only by a duly enacted law and not by executive action.<sup>4</sup> The Constitution of India under article 19 (2) attempts to strike a balance between individual liberty and State control and authorizes the State to impose certain reasonable restrictions.<sup>xiii</sup> Reasonable restrictions will not be *ultra virus* if it satisfies the test of reasonableness within the ambit of article 19 (2) of the Constitution.

**Article 21**

The Constitution of India provides for protecting of life and personal liberty as the FR to every person. This article enshrines the principle that no one should be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. This article, though couched in negative language, confers on every person the FR to life and personal liberty, which has become an inexhaustible source of many other rights.<sup>xiii</sup> It is the fundamental right of everyone on this country, "...to live with human dignity, free from exploitation. This right to live with human dignity enshrined in article 21 derives its life breath from the directive principles of State policy."<sup>xiv</sup>

**Article 25**

Article 25 declares, subject to public order, morality and health and to other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. The logic underlying the constitutional guarantee regarding 'practice' of religion is that religious practices are as much a part of religion as religious faith or doctrines.<sup>8xv</sup> 'Propagation' is concerned with right to communicate beliefs to another person to expound the tenets of one's religion, but does not include a right to forcible conversions.<sup>xvi</sup>

**Article 26**

Subject to public order, morality and health, every religious denomination shall have the right: (i) to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes; (ii) to manage its own affairs in matters of religion; (iii) to own and acquire movable and immovable property; and (iv) to administer such property in accordance with law.

**Article 27**

This article prohibits for payment of taxes for promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination.

**Article 28**

This article prohibits compulsory religious instruction at educational institutions maintained out of the State funds. Under this article, the State kept itself away from the charge of promoting religious instructions of whatever denomination.

**Article 29**

Article 29 gives the right to every citizen, which has a distinct language, script or culture of its own to conserve it; and no one can be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving State funds on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

**Article 30**

This article provides rights of minorities, which include both *linguistic* and *religious* minorities, to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The State cannot discriminate against such institutions either in granting recognition or in providing aid. These articles of the Constitution are of fundamental importance for preserving the religious practices and identities of minority communities based on religion or language and culture. For the Muslims in particular, who constitute the largest religious minority, these provisions are of special importance.

**Article 32**

The Constitution sets out in article 32, the right of victims and their families to have access to remedies for the enforcement of FRs when they appear to have been violated, as in the case of the alleged abuses committed during the riots in Gujarat in 2002.

**DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF STATE POLICY**

The Directive Principles of State Policy enumerate certain important provisions pertaining to human rights. The relevant principles relating to the present study may be summarised as under:

**Article 38**

The article 38 (1) says that the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of the national life.

This article incorporates part of the Preamble within it concerning ‘justice, social, economic and political’.



### **Article 39-A**

The State shall secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice, on a basis of equal opportunity, and shall, in particular, provide free legal aid, by suitable legislation or schemes, to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities.

### **Article 44**

This article requires the State to take steps for establishing a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India.

### **Article 46**

The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs), and shall protect them from social injustice and exploitation.

## **FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES**

The relevant duties pertaining to communal harmony are as below:

### **Article 51-A (e)**

It is the duty of every citizen to promote harmonious relations and spirit of common brotherhood among all its fellow beings without distinction.

### **Article 51-A (i)**

It is also a duty of every citizen to safeguard public property and adjure violence. The duties are enforceable by law with penalties on its failure.

## **EMERGENCY PROVISIONS**

### **Article 355**

It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State from external aggression and internal disturbance, and to ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

### **Article 356**

Under this article, the President may impose President's rule in a State, if the government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Thus, it is evident that the framers of the Indian Constitution had explored various areas where human rights and civil liberties could be infringed upon and therefore, enunciated the rights of citizens and provided for their constitutional protections.

## **PREVENTIVE LEGISLATIONS**

The object of every law is to prevent the commission of crime. The legislations dealt under this head are preventive in their scope and object and are aimed at persons who are danger to the public by reason of the commission by them of certain offences. In order to perform this preventive function, the police are vested with certain powers under different laws to prevent communal violence to occur.

For the prevention of communal violence, a number of preventive provisions available under different Acts are discussed below.

### **INDIAN PENAL CODE, 1860**

The following sections of the IPC are cited by way of an example.

#### **Mistake of Fact**

#### **Sections 76 & 79**

Under s. 76, a person believes himself bound by law to do a thing and thereby feels that he is under legal compulsion to do a thing. While under s. 79 a person acts because he thinks that he is justified in doing so and thereby believes that there is a legal justification for his action.

The purpose of these two sections is thus, to provide protection from conviction to persons, who are bound by law or justified by law in doing a particular act, but due to mistake of fact, in good faith, committed an offence. Private persons acting under ss. 38, 43, 72 & 73 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Cr.PC) are also protected under s. 79 of the IPC.

## **JUDICIAL ACTS**

### **Sections 77 & 78**

The object of protection given under these sections to the judges and their ministerial staffs, who are executing the orders of the judges, is to ensure the independence of the judges and to enable them to discharge their duties without any fear of the consequences. The protection is based on public policy. Apart from these two sections, there are two other analogous Acts, namely, the 'Judicial Officers Protection Act, 1850' and the 'Judges (Protection) Act, 1985', which extend protection to such officers.

### **Right of Private Defence**

A State is under duty to protect life, limb and property of its people. At the same time, a State cannot extend its help to all and in all cases. Therefore, every person has a right to defend his 'own' body and the body of 'other' person against any offence affects the human body, and his 'own' property and the property of 'other' person movable or immovable. This right is based on the principle that it is the primary duty of a person to help him. The right of private defence is provided under ss. 96 to 106 of IPC.

Crimes committed during communal violence are: murder, grievous hurt, kidnapping, abduction, rape, looting, arson, etc. Against these crimes the right of private defence is absolutely necessary.

### **Overview of Sections 96 to 106**

Section 96 lays down the general rule on the right of private defence. Section 97 deals with the subject-matter of the right of private defence of body and property and lays down the extent of the right of private defence, and proclaims that every person, subject to restrictions contained

in s. 99, has a right to defend his own body and the body of another person, against any offence affecting human body, and right to defend property of his and of any other persons. Section 98 gives the right of private defence against certain acts of persons whose rights are exempted from criminal liability. Sections 102 & 105, deal with the commencement and the continuation of right of private defence of body and property respectively. Sections 100 & 101; 103 & 104, deal with the extent of the harm (including voluntary death) that may be inflicted on the assailant in exercise of the right of body and property respectively. Section 106 allows a person to take the risk of harming innocent person in order to, in exercise of the right of private defence of body,

save himself from mortal injury. The right of private defence is fundamentally a defensive right and it is available only when the situations clearly justify it. It is exercised only to keep away unlawful aggression and not to punish the aggressor for the offence committed by him.

#### ❖ **The Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr.PC), 1973**

The primary object of the Code is to provide machinery for the administration of substantial criminal law. The Code enacted certain preemptive preventive measures for prevention of crime and certain other precautionary measures for the safety and protection of the society.

For the prevention of communal disturbances, following sections of Cr.PC are relevant.

## **PREVENTIVE ACTION BY THE PUBLIC**

### **Section 37**

Every person is bound to assist a Magistrate or police officer demanding his aid in the taking or preventing the escape of any other person whom such Magistrate or police officer is authorized to arrest; or in the prevention or suppression of a breach of the peace; or in the prevention of any injury attempted to be committed to any public property.

### **Section 39**



This section lays down that every person, aware of the commission of, or of the intention of any other persons to commit, any offence punishable under ss. 143 to 145, 147, 148, etc. of IPC, shall without delay give information to the nearest Magistrate or police officer of such commission or intention.

#### **Section 40**

Under this section, every person residing in a village shall forthwith communicate to the nearest Magistrate or to the officer in charge of the nearest police station, any information which he may possess in respect of any matter likely to affect the maintenance of order or the prevention of crime or the safety of person or property respecting which the District Magistrate (DM) has directed him to communicate information.

#### **Section 43**

Under this section, any private person has right to arrest or cause to be arrested any person who in his presence commits a non-bailable and cognizable offence, and to make over or cause to be made over any person so arrested to a police officer or take person to the nearest police station.

The right of arrest is also applicable where the attempt to commit an offence is itself an offence and such attempt is made in view of the person arresting.<sup>10</sup> The law authorizes a private person 'to use all means necessary to effect the arrest'. The words 'all means' are very wide and include the taking of assistance from others in effecting the arrest.<sup>xvii</sup>

## **CASE STUDY**

### **MASSACRES IN GODHRA**

The ongoing violence in Gujarat was triggered by a Muslim mobs' torching of two train cars carrying Hindu activists on February 27, 2002. The attack followed an altercation between Hindu activists and Muslim vendors at the train station in Godhra that morning, around 8:00

a.m., but the sequence of events is still disputed.<sup>0xviii</sup> Fifty-eight passengers were killed, including fifteen children and twenty-five women, according to Gujarat state officials.

Among the victims of the Godhra massacre was Gayatri Panchal, a sixteen-year-old girl who saw her father and sisters burnt alive. She told the press, “After pelting stones, they poured kerosene on our compartment and set it afire. I was pulled out of the broken window. I saw my father and sister inside. I saw them burning.”<sup>xix</sup> After a visit to the massacre scene, the chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, Justice J.S. Verma stated, “I saw the burnt coach and saw chappals [sandals] still strewn. There were chappals of children too.”<sup>xx</sup>

Godhra, a city of 150,000, is evenly split between Hindus and Muslims, most of whom live in separate neighborhoods. Godhra was placed under curfew for a year after communal clashes in 1980. Serious clashes occurred again in 1992 after the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

The Godhra railway station is situated in an overwhelmingly Muslim section of the city. For three weeks preceding the killings, trains carrying Vishwa Hindu Parishad activists had been stopping daily in Godhra. The activists were coming to and from Ayodhya, where the VHP sought to begin construction of a Hindu temple on the disputed site of the mosque destroyed by Hindu activists there. VHP leaders had set March 15, 2002 as a deadline to bring thousands of stone pillars to the site in order to begin construction of the temple. There are significantly divergent accounts about the events leading to the dispute that resulted in the Godhra killings. Human Rights Watch was not able to independently verify the accuracy of these varying accounts, but it was widely reported that a scuffle began between Muslim vendors and Hindu activists shortly after the train arrived at the station. The activists, who had been chanting Hindu nationalist slogans, were said to have refused to pay a vendor until he said “Jai Shri Ram” or “Praise Lord Ram.” As the train then tried to pull out of the station, the emergency brake was pulled and a Muslim mob attacked the train and set it on fire. Initially Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi claimed that the killings were an “organized terrorist attack.” Federal government sources speculated that they were “pre-meditated,” or the work of Pakistan’s InterServices Intelligence (ISI). However, senior police officials in Gujarat have now concluded that the killings were “not preplanned” but rather the result of “a sudden, provocative incident.” In addition, a report from the Railway Protection Force (RPF) has concluded that the

killings resulted from a spontaneous altercation between VHP activists and merchants on the railway that escalated out of control, rather than a planned conspiracy.

There was some forewarning of violence from within the police itself. Additional director general of police G. C. Raigar, had provided intelligence ahead of the Godhra incident that VHP volunteers were moving in and out of Gujarat and could instigate communal violence. He was removed from his post after presenting evidence to news media that law and order in the state could be compromised by VHP volunteers coming to and from Ayodha. He had also questioned the government's ability to provide security to the Hindu activists or take other measures, despite repeated warnings.

Over sixty persons have been arrested for the Godhra train attack. Unlike the persons who have been arrested for revenge attacks on Muslim communities in Gujarat, the Godhra arrestees were initially charged with crimes under the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, now the Prevention of Terrorism Act.<sup>21</sup> The charges under POTO were eventually dropped after considerable pressure, but Chief Minister Modi reserved the state government's right to pursue charges against the Godhra arrestees under POTO at a later time "if thought fit."

In response to heightened national security concerns, and as relations with Pakistan deteriorated and violence in Kashmir and elsewhere escalated, the Indian government introduced POTO, a modified version of the now-lapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) of 1985, which facilitated the torture and arbitrary detention of members of minority groups and political opponents. POTO was introduced as a bill during India's winter session of parliament in 2001 and signed into law by the president pending parliamentary proceedings on the ordinance. POTA was passed on March 27, 2001. Under TADA, tens of thousands of politically motivated detentions, systematic torture, extrajudicial executions, and other human rights violations were committed against Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits, trade union activists, and political opponents in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In the face of mounting opposition to the act, India's government acknowledged these abuses and consequently let TADA lapse in 1995. Civil rights groups, journalists, opposition parties, minority rights groups, and India's National Human Rights Commission unequivocally condemned POTO. POTA sets out a broad definition of terrorism that includes acts of violence or disruption of essential services carried out with the "intent to threaten the unity and integrity of India or to strike terror in any part of the people." Since it was first introduced the government has added some additional safeguards

to protect due process rights but POTA's critics stress that the safeguards don't go far enough and that existing laws are sufficient to deal with the threat of terrorism.

## **CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION**

The mobilization of sections of the society on the basis of religious beliefs for the purpose of political power is a central point in the intensification of communalism in modern social infrastructure. This perception has materialized during the last decade. Along with religious differences, many other socio-economic, cultural, historical and political forces were also behind communalism, which gave real shape to it and creates the deep differences and conflicts among the communities. Religious differences are a visible force while the other forces are latent, which in reality, hasten the conversion of graceful religion to aggressive communalism. It is not difficult in India to get the whole community together in the name of religion because religion in India is deep-rooted in almost everyone's life and it accompanies them from birth to death. The politicians coin some common religious cause, for the different sects of a religious community, to bring them together on one platform and use it as an instrument, for gaining political power. The construction of Ram Temple as a common cause for the mobilization of the Hindus regardless of sectarian differences is a glaring example of this kind. Although in several parts of the country, especially in West Bengal, Maharashtra and South India, Ram is not a popular deity, yet in these areas, the temple campaign has succeeded in bringing Hindu masses together on this issue. It further brings forth that communalism had an apparent influence on the whole political infrastructure of India. The electoral process has been badly distorted owing to the communalization of the secular polity.

The interventions of global powers in the internal matters of nations and the deliberate work of divisive forces are widening the gap between societies and communities. Racial and communal conflicts are proving to be lethal in almost all parts of the world. Petty religious indifference, if not tackled properly at the right time may develop into communal antagonism and religious fundamentalism. In India also, the anti-national forces which aim at destabilizing the nation are trying to exploit the situation. Employing violent methods to eradicate such a menace has proved to be ineffective in the past.

The measures taken by the state machinery to control the riots and violence are proving to be short-lived. A non-violent approach based on Gandhian satyagraha methods can effectively counter communal problems.

### **IMMEDIATE MEASURES SUGGESTED**

- i. Peace committees shall be constituted in communally sensitive districts with representatives of all religions.
- ii. Representatives of political parties, social and charitable organizations and responsible police officers in charge of law and order shall be included in such committees.
- iii. The media should act sensibly and responsibly at the time of communal conflict. Communal riots are often a national calamity and the media should keep self-restraint.
- iv. Spreading of the news regarding the attack on one community and showing the pictures from a riot scene always affect the mindset of the general public.
- v. Therefore the government may take necessary actions to control the spread of canards and rumours at the time of communal clash by effectively monitoring the media
- vi. Decommunalization of the police and administrative machinery is a vital matter
- vii. The officials must take stringent actions to the decommunization of this area and ensure the presence of secularist officers to deal with the riot situations.
- viii. The community leaders should abstain from making statements affecting each other's sentiments.
- ix. Misunderstandings existing between the communities shall be cleared through dialogues and discussions
- x. The victims and the convicts must be given proper counseling by which their abnormal mind can be normalized.

### **LONG TERM MEASURES SUGGESTED**

- i. De-communalization of the lower and middle strata of society is essential to control communal conflicts. The engineers of communalism always rely upon the lower



and middle-class people in the practical application of religious antagonism. Awareness should be given about the vested interest behind propagating communalism and its irreligious nature. People shall be educated through media and other channels about the disasters communalism can cause. When people began to realize the importance of other social problems to be solved, they will understand the meaninglessness of fighting in the name of religion. Gandhi's principle of equality of religions should be given more emphasis in social life through publications of government.

- ii. Controlling political parties having communal identities is necessary. Political field must not be allowed to get communalized. Election commission may ban political leaders from contesting in any elections, which deliberately use religious emotions to win elections. Gandhi's struggles ended in victory because his social and political life was based on the values of various religions. Clinging to the purity of means results in peaceful resolution of conflicts. Religious ethics practiced in political sphere should be encouraged and the practice of using religion to gain political ends should be discouraged by political parties.
- iii. Education has a major role in moulding the minds of every person. Whatever one grasps from the educational institutions is a decisive factor. Value based education free from violent ideologies, abolishing the portions of distorted history, restructuring the history from its communal classifications etc should be implemented. The spirit of freedom struggle in which lakhs of people attained martyrdom, irrespective of religion, caste and class, should be made compulsory in the school syllabus. Gandhian principles and ideologies bear the message of love and peace. It lays emphasis on communal harmony and non-violent ways to counter communalism. So it should be introduced into the educational system, particularly in the higher education sector.
- iv. Bottom level conflict resolution bodies can work effectively in checking all social evils including communalism. The Gandhian Shantisena model peace brigades can be formed in schools, colleges, universities and other government institutions. Extending the work of such trained non-violent peace brigades functioning on the basis of Gandhian conflict resolution techniques can act as a preventive measure against communal clashes. Gandhian organizations or other social organizations

which imbibe Gandhian values can very effectively work in a decentralized manner to bring about communal peace.

- v. More opportunities to the study of various religious scriptures and more platforms for inter-religious dialogues will help to eradicate religious misconceptions and misunderstandings. Universities or other institutions of public interest may take initiative to conduct such programmes. A permanent authority should be constituted for the promotion of inter-religious co-operation. Congregational prayer meetings, seminars and symposia in communal harmony and allied subjects, arranging common platform for inter-dining and inter-caste marriages can well be undertaken by this authority. Community living on the model of Gandhian Ashrams should be encouraged through which the message of communal harmony and peaceful co-existence can be propagated.

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