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Communalism and Communal Violence

The rising trend of communalism and the accompanying violence have created a feeling of insecurity among the religious minorities and ethnic groups. Muslims and Sikhs, in particular, fear discrimination and confrontation in the days to come. This may just be a fear, but the nation cannot afford to let about one-sixth of the country's population to fall victim to panic, suspicion and insecurity. The events of 1990 and 1991 in Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam and Andhra Pradesh give ample evidence and taste of the destructive outcome of the communal virus in its varied forms. Muslims, Sikhs and other religious minorities in India are protected by the Constitution which provides for the existence of perfect justice, tolerance, equality and freedom. But in an age in which religious fundamentalism is on the verge of becoming religious bigotry, intolerance and narrow mindedness, the notion of 'Ram Rajya' is misinterpreted by Muslims to mean the rule of the god Ram, i.e., Hindu rule. The presence of police near the gurdwaras to keep an eye on and to check the abode of terrorists in the religious shrines is viewed as interference in religious faith. Therefore, to prevent damage to the peace and integrity of the nation, there is a need to analyse and debate on the problem of communalism and communal violence. It has become absolutely important to define 'communalism' today. Also it is equally pertinent to discover who is 'communal'.

If a Hindu declares with pride that he is a Hindu, is this communalism ? If a Muslim says, he is proud of being a Muslim and

would give his life to stay a good Muslim, would that be communalism? When a minority community feels (rightly or wrongly) that it has been suppressed by decades of injustice and is being exploited and deprived and reacts and protests sharply, sometimes even violently, can this be called communalism? If the Christians, the Buddhists and the Parsis lead their personal and private lives in the way they like, according to their own beliefs and creeds, are they communal? Do those Hindus, who accuse Muslims of hurting their religious sentiments and sensibilities by a variety of acts of omission and commission, be permitted to feel that they are above public accountability by dint of sheer superiority in numbers when they themselves commit the same sin of hurting Muslims' sentiments and faith in a systematic fashion ? Can those people who fight over one particular place of worship and neglect thousands of temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras and similar holy places, which are crumbling because of lack of repair and maintenance, be called religious leaders ? Is a religious leader bigger than the nation ? Should the religious leaders be exempted from the definition of communalism ? All these factors compel us to precisely define 'communal' and 'communalism.'

Concept of Communalism

Communalism can be considered an ideology which states that society is divided into religious communities whose interests differ and are, at times, even opposed to each other The antagonism practised by members of one community against the people of other community and religion can be termed 'communalism' This antagonism goes to the extent of falsely accusing, harming and deliberately insulting a particular community and extends to looting, burning down the homes and shops of the helpless and the weak, dishonouring women, and even killing persons.

'Communal persons' are those persons who practise politics through religion. Among leaders, those religious leaders are 'communal' who run their religious communities like business enterprises and institutions which raise the cries of 'Hinduism, Islam or Christianity in danger,' the moment they find that donations into their holy 'corporations' begin to dwindle, or their leadership has been challenged, or their ideology has been questioned. Thus, 'communal' is not one who is 'a man of religion' but 'one who practices politics by linking it with religion'. These power politicians are not good Hindus

nor good Muslims nor Sikhs nor Christians nor Parsis nor Buddhists. They can be viewed as dangerous political 'scum'. For them God and religion are merely instruments to be used to live luxuriously as the 'king parasites' of society and attain their political goals. (*Day After*, June, 1990 : 35-36).

Communalism can be practised in many ways: for example, as political communalism, religious communalism and economic communalism. Political communalism is the product of abiding or lasting political expediency and developing and conserving in which covering up one's wrongs and, at the same time, diverting the attention of the people by a series of 'lid off' exercises to pass the 'communal buck' and shift the blame of one's rival constitute the familiar game plan. In this political game plan, leaders invariably say what they do not mean and mean what they do not say.

T.K. Ooman (1989) has suggested six dimensions of communalism : assimilationist, welfarist, retreatist, retaliatory, separatist, and secessionist. *Assimilationist* communalism is one in which small religious groups are assimilated/integrated into big religious group. Such communalism claims that Scheduled Tribes are Hindus, or that Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists are covered by the Hindu Marriage Act. *Welfarist* communalism aims at the welfare of a particular community, say, improving living standard and providing for education and health; for example, Christian associations working for the betterment of Christians, or Parsi associations working for the uplift of the Parsis. Such communal mobilisation aims at working only for the members of one's own community. *Retreatist* communalism is one in which a small religious community keeps itself away from politics, for example, Bahai community, which proscribes its members from participating in political activities. *Retaliatory* communalism attempts to harm, hurt, injure the members of other religious communities. *Separatist* communalism is one in which one religious group wants to maintain its cultural specificity and demands a separate territorial state within the country; for example, the demand of some Mizos and Nagas in north-east India or Bodos in Assam, of Jharkhand tribals in Bihar. Lastly, *secessionist* communalism is one in which a religious community wants a separate political identity, and demands an independent state. A very small militant section of Sikh population demanding Khalistan is engaged in practising this type of communalism. Of these six types of communalism, the last three create problems engendering agitations, communal riots, terrorism, and insurgency.

Communalism in India

The pluralistic society of India is composed not only of religious groups such as Hindus (82.63%), Muslims (11.36%), Christians (2.43%), Sikhs (1.96%), Buddhists (0.71%), Jains (0.48%), and so on, but these groups are further divided into various subgroups. Hindus are divided into sects like Arya Samajis, Shivites, Sanatanis, and Vaishnavas, while Muslims are divided into Shias and Sunnis on the one hand, and Ashrafs (aristocrats), Azlafs (weavers, butchers, carpenters, oilmen), and Arzals on the other. The strained relations between Hindus and Muslims have existed for a long time, whereas some Hindus and Sikhs have started viewing each other with suspicion only for the last eight years or so. Although in one state in South India, we now hear of some conflicts between Hindus and Christians and Muslims and Christians too, but by and large, Christians in India do not feel deprived or exploited by other communities. Among Muslims, Shias and Sunnis do bear prejudicial attitudes towards each other. Here, we will mainly analyse Hindu-Muslim and briefly Hindu-Sikh relations

Hindu-Muslim Communalism

Muslim attacks on India started from Xth Century A.D., but early Muslim conquerers like Mohammad Ghazni and Mohammad Gori were more interested in looting rather than establishing religious dominance. It was when Qutubdin became the first sultan of Delhi that Islam found a footing in India. Later, it were the Moghuls who consolidated their empire and Islam in the process Some of the policies, proselytisation efforts, destruction of Hindu temples and construction of mosques over these temples by Moghul rulers aroused communal bickerings between Hindu and Muslim communities. When the British established their dominance in India through the East India Company, they initially adopted the policy of patronising Hindus, but after the first war of independence in 1857 in which Hindus and Muslims fought shoulder to shoulder, the Britishers adopted the policy of 'divide and rule' which resulted in fostering communal clashes deliberately for keeping intact their hegemony. The relations between Hindus and Muslims were further strained when during the freedom struggle, power politics came into play. Thus, though antagonism between Hindus and Muslims is an old issue, but Hindu-Muslim communalism in India can be described a legacy of British rule during the freedom struggle. Communalism

operates today in a significantly changed social and political milieu. It is now perceived as a problem that impedes and warps the process of development of our country. It is the single largest threat to the secular ideals that our Constitution emphasises. The sectarian interests keep on fanning the flames of communal hatred.

Let us examine the genesis and historical roots of Hindu-Muslim communalism in order to provide some understanding of this phenomenon in its contemporary context. What were the religious and political ideologies and aspirations of the political parties that participated in the freedom struggle ? Given the diversity of Indian society, the nationalist movement had to accommodate the interests of all groups—economic, linguistic, and religious. The nationalist appeal was to address itself to two important factors to unite the diverse groups: first, freedom from the exploitation of colonial rulers and second, democratic rights for all citizens. Did major political parties such as the Congress, the Muslim League, the Communist party and the Hindu Maha Sabha share these sentiments ? Perhaps not. What was the policy of the Congress party towards communalism and communal parties? According to historian Bipan Chandra (*Communalism in Modern India*), the Congress from its very inception adopted a policy of 'unity from the top' in which the effort was to win over the middle-class and upper-class Muslims who were accepted as leaders of the Muslim community, leaving it to them to draw the Muslim masses into the movement, instead of making a direct appeal to the anti-imperialist sentiments of both the Hindu and the Muslim masses. This 'unity from the top' approach could not promote Hindu-Muslim cooperation in fighting imperialism. The Khilafat movement launched by the Muslim League against the British interference in Turkey hinged on a religious issue. The Congress only extended its support to this movement. All the serious efforts between 1918 and 1922 at bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity were in the nature of negotiations among the top leaders of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities and the Congress. Quite often, the Congress acted as an intermediary among the different communal leaders instead of acting as an active organiser of the forces of secular nationalism (*Frontline*, 2-15 April 1988 : 99-104). There was, thus, an implicit acceptance within the early nationalist leadership that Hindus Muslims, and Sikhs were distinct communities which shared only the political and the economic concerns but not the religious, social and cultural practices. This is how seeds of communalism were sown in the first quarter of the twentieth century. However, the Muslim League and

the Hindu Maha Sabha remained fairly weak organisationally till 1936. In the 1937 elections, the Muslim League won only 22.0% of the total seats reserved for Muslims (482) in the provincial assemblies. It did not fare well even in the Muslim-majority provinces. It was only after 1942 that the Muslim League emerged as a strong political party and claimed the right to speak for all Muslims. M A. Jinnah described the Congress as a 'Hindu' organisation, a claim that the British supported. Within the Congress itself, some leaders like Madan Mohan Malaviya, K.M. Munshi and Sardar Patel took up pro-Hindu positions. Thus, the Congress could not purge its ranks of communal elements. The slogan of Pakistan was first articulated by the Muslim League in Lahore in 1940 Different sections of the Muslim population had different perceptions of Pakistan. For the Muslim peasant, it meant freedom from the exploitation of the Hindu Zamindar; for the Muslim business class, it meant freedom from a well-established Hindu business network; and for the Muslim intelligentsia, it meant better employment opportunities. Later, when the Congress leaders accepted the partition in 1946, it led in 1947 to the displacement of millions of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs amid bloodshed and carnage. About 2 lakhs persons were estimated to have been killed in the 1947 partition riots and about 6 million Muslims and four and a half million Hindus and Sikhs became refugees Even after the partition, the Congress failed to come to grips with communalism It could, therefore, be said that Hindu-Muslim communalism in India had politico-social origins, and religion alone was not the cause of the conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Economic interests and cultural and social mores (such as festivals, social practices and lifestyles) were factors that further divided the two communities.

Today, the Muslims constitute the second largest religious community in India as well as the second largest Muslim minority in the world. Approximately, 120 million Muslims are spread out over all parts of our country, and the ratio of Muslim population over Hindu population exceeds the national average (1 · 7 3) in some states like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and West Bengal. India's Muslims are as varied in language, culture and socio-economic conditions as the Hindus. There is little in common between the Muslims in Uttar Pradesh and the Muslims in Kerala or in Jammu and Kashmir. Their unifying factor is religion but the fact is that they do not even have a common language. Though over 11.0% of Indians are Muslims, only about 5.0% speak Urdu, and all those who speak Urdu are not Muslims.

A closer look reveals that the 16 cities which are more susceptible to Hindu-Muslim communal riots are Moradabad, Meerut, Aligarh, Agra and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh; Aurangabad in Maharashtra; Ahmedabad in Gujarat; Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, Jamshedpur and Patna in Bihar; Silchar and Gauhati in Assam, Calcutta in West Bengal; Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh; Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir; and Cuttack in Orrisa. Of these cities, 11 lie in the northern belt of India, three in the eastern belt, and two in the southern belt. Except in Jammu and Kashmir and Lakshawdeep which are predominantly populated by Muslim citizens, the Muslim concentration varies from 20% to 50% is other states. Could it be presumed that the Muslims in the south of India are culturally better assimilated because of their involvement in trade and commerce which calls for goodwill with all the communities ? But this is true in the case of five towns in Uttar Pradesh also. We have, therefore, to find another explanation for this phenomenon.

The Hindu-Muslim antagonism can be ascribed to a complex set of factors: These are: (1) Muslim invasions in which the invaders looted the property and constructed mosques over/near Hindu temples. (2) British encouragement of Muslim separatism for their own ends during their imperial rule. (3) The behaviour of some of the Muslims in India after partition who hoisted Pakistani flags when the Pakistani team won the cricket match and observed the national Independence day as a 'black day' after a call given by some Muslim leaders created a feeling among a majority community that these Muslims were not patriotic. The stereotype image of a Muslim which is entrenched in the Indian psyche is that of a bigoted, inward-looking outcaste. A Muslim similarly looks upon a Hindu as a conniving, all-powerful opportunist and he views himself as victimised by him and alienated from the mainstream of society. (4) A new aggressiveness on the part of the Muslim political parties in an effort to find a place in the sun. Reports are rife about some Muslim extremists obtaining 'foreign money', turning into 'foreign agents', indulging in a well-designed plan to soil the secular ideal of the country, and attempting to incite Indian Muslims. (5) A failure on the part of Muslim leaders to unite Muslims and resolve their problems is perhaps due to frustrations because they have been influenced by the wave of Islamic fundamentalism sweeping West Asia and Pakistan The leaders have only exploited the numerical strength of the Muslims (especially in Kerala and U.P.) to strike barter deals, secure a chunk of Muslim seats in the Parliament and legislatures and to seek power and pelf for themselves and their friends. (6) The

government is also responsible for neglecting the Muslims, large sections of whom feel alienated and hence become willing victims of selfish leaders. The ruling elite merely preaches religious amity and has little understanding of the real problems of the Muslims. The Hindu leadership only deals with those Muslim leaders who toe their line.

The Indian Muslims, not surprisingly, tend to consider their future as a question of 'Us' versus 'They'. When they make their demands known, as any segment of society would do to voice their grievances, it most often than not explodes into an orgy of Hindu-Muslim violence which leads to accusation of foreign incitement. Should the Muslim problem be perceived only as a communal problem ? Is it not a fact that the Hindu-Muslim issue is not any different from the anti-Brahmin agitations in Tamil Nadu or the inter-caste conflicts in U.P., Bihar and some other states, or the Bengali-Assamese trouble in Assam, or the Maharashtrian versus non-Maharashtrian conflict in Maharashtra ? The problem in reality is one of social and economic change.

The militant Hindus maintain that the Muslims in the country are being pampered. The recent Ramjanam Bhoomi–Babri Masjid issue has further affected the balance of communal harmony. After losing hope in the Congress (I), the Muslims developed faith in the Janata Dal (1990) However, the break-up of the Janata Dal and the emergence of Janata Dal (S) in power (November, 1990) followed by the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (May, 1991) has created confusion. The Muslims today feel far more concerned about their safety and security.

Hindu- Sikh Communalism

The Sikhs constitute less than 2.0% (1.3 crore) of India's population. Though dispersed widely over the entire country and even outside the country, their largest concentration is in Punjab, where they form the majority of the state's population. Sikhism started as a reform movement against the dogmas of Hindu religion. After the tenth *guru*, the tradition of *gurus* among Sikhs ended and the *Granth Sahib* was accorded utmost reverence. The Sikh shrines (*gurudwaras*) remained under the control of priests, some of whom misused their position and amassed personal wealth. In the early years of the twentieth century, some young Sikhs started a movement against the hegemony of the Sikh *mahants*. These people—called *Akalis*—wanted shrines to be managed by a body of democratically elected representatives. The SGPC (Sikh Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee), thus, came into existence in 1925 after the Sikhs waged a hard struggle to liberate their

gurudwaras from the corrupt *mahants*. Since its inception, the SGPC has been a seat of great power. It's president (Mr. Tohra remained its president for 18 years with a respite of six months in 1986. He relinquished the office of presidentship in November, 1990 but resumed it again in November, 1991) has always played a major role in Sikh affairs. He has even been described as a maker or demolisher of the Chief Minister of Punjab. No *Akali* survives without his support.

Another group (sect) called the *Nirankaris* started a movement against the dogmas, rituals and traditions which crept into Sikhism. Thus, the *Nirankari* movement was a reformist movement (purely religious in character) against the induction of Hindu religious practices in the Sikh system of worship.

It emphasized the elimination of the worship of several dieties and revived simplicity, austerity and purity in rituals and ceremonies. The *Nirankaris* remained within the Sikh fold till 1943 after which there was tension. In 1973, the undivided Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh demanded 'autonomous status' for Punjab dominated by Sikhs. On 17th October, 1973, the *Akalis* passed a resolution, now popularly called the Anandpur Resolution, in which they made 45 demands. Later, the *Akalis* came to be divided into extremists and moderates. One militant group led by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale emerged as a powerful group in the early eighties. Initially, he launched a movement against the *Nirankaris* to purify the Sikh religion but ultimately he started a Sikh separatist movement and began a demand for Khalistan. Though a small section of Sikhs continues to work for this demand, the majority of the *Akalis* are for a state in which the authority of the Centre is to be confined to defence, foreign relations, communications, railways and currency.

The Sikh agitation, which started in the early eighties with the murder of a local editor, hijacking of a Srinagar-bound flight, and the issuing of passports to a fictitious nation called Khalistan, began to intensify. The number of killings and firings increased and the Sikh protests became organised, militant and increasingly violent. However, despite the Sikh agitation, the relations between Hindus and Sikhs have remained cordial. There is goodwill and respect among them for each other's religious beliefs and places of worship.

Ethnic Violence

Besides the Hindu-Muslim conflicts and Hindu-Sikh skirmishes, how do we perceive the relations between different ethnic groups, say

between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, or between the Assamese and the non-Assamese? In Assam, for nearly 150 years the economic development of the state was fuelled by the labour and enterprise imported from outside the state. Over this period spanning a century and a half, Assam has been home to generations of the so-called 'outsiders', who have known no home, no land other than the soil of Assam itself. Some have indeed grown rich, but most have remained desperately poor The Assamese population (Ahors) have now raised the question of nationality. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AGSP) agitation (which fathered the AGP as a political party) confused 'outsiders' with 'foreigners' (including Bengali refugees from the Bangladesh). Fantastic figures were brandished ranging from five million at one stage, six million at another and then seven million at yet another stage as the number of 'foreigners' (*bahuragat*) illegitimately lurking in the Valley. This issue of ridding Assam of foreigners held the state to ransom for six years—from 1979 till the Assam accord on 15th August, 1985. Hatred was stoked against the Bodos, the Bengalis, the Marwaris and the non-Assam Muslims This secessionist movement was responsible for thousands of innocent deaths. The massacre of 1,383 women and children and some men in ten villages in and around Nellie in Nowgong district was a part of this ethnic violence. The AGSP which remained in power in between 1985 and 1990 could not contain the ethnic tension.

The ULFA militants launched a movement in the state and it is with little wonder that the President's rule was imposed in the state in November, 1990 instead of holding elections due in January, 1991. The army and the security forces launched an operation to round up the rebels and recover weapons. The President's rule was lifted on 30th June, 1991 when the new Congress (I) government assumed power in the State But the ULFA militants jolted new government by kidnapping 14 government servants including eight top ONGC officials from different parts of the state on the very first day of government's tenure. The militants are yet to realise that Assam is like all other states in India, and it belongs to all the legitimate citizens of India whatever the language they speak, whatever the religion they follow and whatever the rites and rituals they practice.

How do we explain the caste carnage in Belchi, Pantnagar, Jamshedpur, Narainpur, Dohia, Parasbigha, Gonda and many other villages in U.P., Bihar and other states ? Some of these incidents of

communal violence started because of the tension between the 'upper castes' and the 'backward castes' while others started over land disputes. Also the orgies of killing and rape, the incidents of assault, loot and arson are in many ways fanned by political leaders for their own ends.

The ethnic violence in Sri Lanka still rages. On the question of the future of the Tamil majority in the North-Eastern province, the rebel group LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) keeps on fighting with the Sinhalese government and troops, refusing to heed to the intervention of the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) and demanding its withdrawal. The British had taken more than 10 lakh Tamil labourers from different parts of Madras to Sri Lanka promising alluring terms of employment in the tea and coffee gardens in the 19th century. For over hundred years, these Tamils laboured for the prosperity of Sri Lanka but in 1948-49, the Sinhalese government passed stringent citizenship laws which deprived them of their citizenship. Their representation was reduced to eight seats in the 75-member Sri Lankan Parliament. On this issue, discussions continued between the Tamil and the Sinhalese government and an agreement was signed in 1964 by the governments of India and Sri Lanka (known as Srimavo-Shastri Pact) which provided that 5,25,000 Tamils would be sent back to India and Sri Lanka would confer citizenship on three lakh Tamils during a period of 15 years. Still there remained one and a half lakh Tamils without citizenship. After some time, there was a further agreement between the two governments that each of them would absorb 50,000 of the stateless Tamils. But since 1976, the Sri Lankan government had been extending the time limit of 15 years provided in the pact. In 1982, India refused to grant any further extension. The hostility of the Sinhalese towards the Tamils and the escalating ethnic violence worsened the situation. Tamils have been claiming mass killings of the people of their community, burning of their factories, hotels and shops and atrocities committed by Sinhalese soldiers on them. In this perspective, the Indo-Sri Lankan accord was signed by the Indian and the Sri Lankan governments on July 29, 1987 and the IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka to maintain peace in that country. In their efforts to restore peace and help the Sri Lankan government in the running of hospitals, power-houses and schools, more than 1,100 Indian soldiers and officers were killed and 30,000 were injured. Gradually, however, the new Sri Lankan President asked for the withdrawal of IPKF from Sri Lanka and all IPKF soldiers were

ultimately withdrawn in 1990. But the Tamils continue to fight for their rights and the ethnic violence continues to persist.

Communal Violence

The Concept

The problems and characteristics of communal violence are different from those of student agitations, workers' strikes and peasants' movements. At the conceptual level, we have to differentiate between communal violence and agitations and terrorism and insurgency. This difference has been examined at six levels: mass mobilization and degrees of violence, degree of cohesion, target of attack, flareups, leadership and victims, and aftermath experiences (Singh, V.V., 1990).

The *mass mobilisation* in agitations is to register protest and voice grievances and demands in the form of processions, demonstrations and *gheraos* In communal violence, the involvement of people is mobilised against another community The movements here are unpredictable, uncheckable and carry an emotional fury and violent expressions which take the form of rioting

The degree of violence and the methods of executing violence also vary in agitations and communal riots. In terrorism, the support of masses is passive, latent and clandestine Considering the insurrection impossible, it is a few active armed terrorist groups who use violence systematically. In insurgency, the mass support is mobilised to change a political order as against communal violence in which resentment is expressed against the social order Insurgency is fought by trained groups whereas people participating in communal riots are untrained In insurgency, propaganda among masses is against a regime but in communal riots, it is against social discrimination, social neglect and social and religious exploitation

The *degree of cohesion* also varies in communal violence, agitations, terrorism and insurgency The high degree of cohesion in a communal riot situation is built around hostility, tensions and polarisation of population while in agitations it is based on rationalisation of interest In terrorism and insurgency, the cohesion is between activists and the leader; in masses it exists relatively at a lesser degree.

The *target of attack* in insurgency and terrorism is the government, in agitations it is the group in power, and in communal violence it is members of the 'enemy' community. Sometimes, violence in both

agitations and communal riots is exercised against public property in the form of loot and arson. Anti-social elements are given a free hand to operate in agitations and communal riots but this is not the case in terrorism and insurgency. The weapons used against targets in insurgency and terrorism are more modern and sophisticated than those used in agitations and communal disturbances.

The *flare-ups* in communal disturbances are restricted to particular structures whereas in insurgency and in terrorism, the flare-ups are indefinite and uncertain. In agitations, flare-ups do not depend on particular structures but are dependent on perceived deprivations and the organisation of people..

The *leadership* in terrorism, insurgency, and agitations is easily identifiable but not always so in communal riots. There is no leadership in communal riots which could control and contain the riot situation. In agitations, terrorism and insurgency on the other hand, actions emanate from leaders' decisions who have effective control over the situation.

Lastly, the *aftermath of* communal violence is intensified animosity, prejudice and mutual suspicions of one community against the other. In agitations, the human loss is comparatively much less though the loss of property is sometimes large. When agitations are settled, the animosity against government agencies also subsides and the revengeful attitude dies down in the due course. In terrorism, the victims are mostly innocent. They remain passive against terrorists and feel more secure in passive behaviour. Victims can never think of revenge because of the terrorists' anonymity and their being armed in an organised way with sophisticated weapons. In insurgencies, the victims are mostly the members of the security forces or government servants who help in counter-insurgency measures.

It could, thus, be said that communal violence is based mainly on hatred, enemity and revenge. This brings us to the question of features of communal violence.

Features of Communal Riots

A probe of the major communal riots in the country in the last four decades has revealed that : (1) Communal riots are more politically motivated than fuelled by religion. Even the Madan Commission which looked into communal disturbances in Maharashtra in May, 1970 had emphasised that "the architects and builders of communal tensions are the communalists and a certain class of politicians—those all-India and

local leaders out to seize every opportunity to strengthen their political positions, enhance their prestige and enrich their public image by giving a communal colour to every incident and thereby projecting themselves in the public eye as the champions of the religion and the rights of their community". (2) Besides political interests, economic interests too play a vigorous part in fomenting communal clashes. (3) Communal riots seem to be more common in North India than in South and East India. (4) The probability of recurrence of communal riots in a town where communal riots have already taken place once or twice is stronger than in a town in which riots have never occurred. (5) Most communal riots take place on the occasion of religious festivals. (6) The use of deadly weapons in the riots is on the increase.

Incidence of Communal Riots

In India, communal frenzy reached its peak in 1946-48 whereas the period between 1950-1963 may be called period of communal peace. Political stability and economic development in the country contributed to the improvement of the communal situation. The incidences of rioting shot up after 1963. Serious riots broke out in 1964 in various parts of East India like Calcutta, Jamashedpur, Rourkela, and Ranchi Another wave of communal violence swept across the country between 1968 and 1971 when the political leadership at the Centre and in states was weak (The Congress was divided in 1969 and SVD governments were in political power in some states) The total number of communal riots in the country between 1954-55 and 1988-89 have been listed: 1954-55 : 125, 1956-57 100, 1958-59 · 60, 1960-61 : 100, 1962-63 : 100, 1964-65 : 675, 1966-67 · 310, 1968-69 : 800, 1970-71 : 775, 1972-73 : 425, 1974-75 : 400, 1976-77 : 315, 1978-79 : 400, 1980-81 · 710, 1981-82 : 830, 1982-83 · 950, 1983-84 : 1090, 1984-85 : 1200, 1985-86 : 1300, 1986-87 · 764, 1987-88 : 711, 1988-89 : 611 (Sarolia, 1987 : 60 and *The Hindustan Times*, 2 April, 1990).

The communal riots in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in November-December, 1990 are a pointer to the disastrous turn which the communal situation has taken. In the riots which took place between 8th and 11th December, 1990 in Andhra Pradesh, more than 50 people died in clashes In Aligarh, in the riots which took place in the same period, more than 100 people were reported to be killed. In Kanpur, at least six persons were killed, 27 were injured and several cases of arson and loot were reported In Etah, 13 persons were killed.

From the communal point of view, while 61 districts out of 350 districts in India were identified as sensitive districts in 1961, 216 districts were so identified in 1979, 186 in 1986, 254 in 1987 and 186 in 1989. Apart from the loss in terms of lives, the communal riots cause widespread destruction of property and adversely affect economic activities. For instance, property worth Rs. 14 crore was damaged between 1983 and 1986 (*Times of India*, 25 July, 1986). In the 2,086 incidences of communal riots in 3 years between 1986 and 1988, 1,024 persons were killed and 12,352 were injured.

The highest number of communal riots in 1988 was in Maharashtra (96), followed by Uttar Pradesh (85), Bihar (84), West Bengal (74), Madhya Pradesh (43), Rajasthan (19), Assam (8), Jammu and Kashmir (5), Haryana (3), Kerala (2), and Delhi (2) Gujarat in recent years has degenerated into a hunting hound of communalists of all hues Against 142 riots in 1986, there was 146 riots in 1987 and 69 in 1988.

Causes of Communal Violence

Two approaches may be used to understand the problem of communal violence: (a) viewing the functioning of structures, and (b) reasons for process of its emergence. In the former case, communal violence can be understood by looking at the functioning of social system or the operation of structures in the society, while in the latter case the emphasis is on the planned/unplanned or conscious/unconscious methods which perpetrate communal violence. Communal violence is taken as a 'fact' or as a 'given' incident in the first case and then explanations for it are sought, while in the latter, an attempt is to find correlates for the emergence of communal violence so that it can be studied as a process.

Different scholars have approached the problem of communal violence with different perspectives, attributing different causes and suggesting different measures to counter it. The Marxist school relates communalism to economic deprivation and to the class struggle between the haves and the have-nots to secure a monopoly control of the market forces. Some political scientists view it is as a power struggle. Sociologists see it as a phenomenon of social tensions and relative deprivations. The religious experts call it a diadem of violent fundamentalists and conformists.

In this multi-factor approach, ten major factors have been identified in the etiology of communalism (Sarolia, 1987 : 62). These are: social, religious, political, economic, legal, psychological, administrative,

historical, local, and international. The *social* factors include social traditions, caste and class ego, inequality and religion-based social stratification; the *religious* factors include decline in religious norms and secular values, narrow and dogmatic religious values, use of religion for political gains and communal ideology of religious leaders; the *political* factors include religion-based politics, religion-dominated political organisations, canvassing in elections based on religious considerations, political interference, political justification of communal violence and failure of political leadership, the *economic* factors include economic exploitation and discrimination, lop-sided economic development, competitive market, non-expanding economy, displacement and non-absorption of workers and the influence of gulf money, the *legal* factors include absence of common civil code, special provisions and concessions for some communities in the Constitution, the special status of some states, reservation policy and special laws for different communities, the *psychological* factors include social prejudices, stereotypical attitudes, distrust, hostility and apathy against another community, rumour, fear psyche and the misinformation/misinterpretation/misrepresentation by mass media; *administrative* factors include the lack of coordination between the police and other administrative units, ill-equipped and ill-trained police personnel, inept functioning of intelligence agencies, biased policemen, police excesses and inaction and poor PAC; the *historical* factors include alien invasions, damage to religious institutions, proselytisation efforts, divide and rule policy of colonial rulers, partition trauma, past communal riots, old disputes on land, temples and mosques; the *local* factors include religious processions, slogan raising, rumours, land disputes, local anti-social elements and group rivalries; and the *international* factors include training and financial support from other countries, other countries' mechanizations to disunite and weaken India and then support to communal organisations

Against these approaches, we need a holistic approach to understand the problem of communal violence The emphasis of this approach would be on various factors distinguishing the major from the minor Like Cyril Burt (1944), we can classify these factors in four sub-groups: most conspicuous, chief cooperating, minor-aggravating, and apparently inoperative. Specifically, these factors are communal politics and politicians' support to religious fanatics, prejudices (which lead to discrimination, avoidance, physical attack and extermination), the growth of communal organizations, and conversions and

proselitisations. Broadly speaking, attention may be focussed on fanatics, anti-social elements and vested economic interests in creating and fanning violence in the rival communities. My own thesis is that "communal violence is instigated by religious fanatics, initiated by anti-social elements, supported by political activists, financed by vested interests and spread by the callousness of the police and the administrators." While these factors directly cause communal violence, the factor which aids in spreading violence is the ecological lay-out of a particular city which enables rioters to escape unapprehended.

The case studies of Baroda and Ahmedabad communal riots in Gujarat in Central India; Meerut, Aligarh and Moradabad riots in Uttar Pradesh; Jamshedpur in West Bengal; and Srinagar in Kashmir in Northern India, Hyderabad and Kerala riots in South India; and Assam riots in East India support my thesis.

From all these cases, we can take one case as an illustration—the case of communal riots in Meerut in May, 1987. In the last 45 years, there have been over a dozen serious outbreaks of communal violence in this city. Meerut has a population of over eight lakhs The 1987 riots started in Meerut on May 16, spread to the walled city of old Delhi in 24 hours, and over the next few days affected Modinagar, Bulandshahar, Hapur, Ghaziabad, Muradnagar, Muzaffarnagar and Moradabad. The incident was sparked off by the murder of a Hindu boy by four Muslims over a land dispute. When police went to arrest these Muslims, three constables were dragged into the lane and their rifles snatched. The fight, which initially was only a fight between the police and the protectors of the accused persons, soon assumed a communal hue. A shop was set ablaze and the shop-owner was stabbed to death During the melee, some fanatists used the mosque loud-speakers to call 'the believers of the faith' to come and protect their religion. This brought both Muslims and Hindus into the fray leading to ugly scenes.

In the following ten days, the army, para-military forces and armed police laid siege to the city to stamp out violence. During this period, the fanatics and the anti-social elements looted/destroyed property worth more than Rs. 20 crore, killed 150 people and wounded about 1,000 persons. The callousness of the administrators and bureaucrats was evident from the withdrawal of police contingents who were patrolling the city following riots barely two months earlier This indifference is telling especially in the light of the fact that the intelligence reports had indicated that members of both communities had begun to stockpile huge quantities of arms The administration

even went as far as releasing those detained for disturbing peace in the previous riots. There was enough indication of trouble when there was a relay of announcements from places of worship. In this riot, communal and anti-social elements exploited the religious sentiments of the people, while the religious leaders had given fiery and provocative speeches about a month before (the Muslim leaders had addressed three lakh Muslims in Delhi gathered from all over the country while the Hindus leaders had addressed a congregation of one lakh Hindus in Ayodhya) The administration had done nothing about intelligence reports and many politicians worked to add fuel to the existing trade rivalry between Hindus and Muslims in local crafts like scissor-making and the textile business. Even the PAC platoon showed communal bias killing people and burning houses (in a nearby small cluster of villages) in the name of keeping the tension under control.

All this shows how religious fanatics, anti-social elements, politicians and bureaucrats together with the police were responsible for the origin and flare-up of the communal tension and violence in the city In this holistic approach, a few factors need explanation. One is the illogical feeling of discrimination among the Muslims. Muslims constitute 11 4% (7.5 crore) of the total population at present in the country. Upto 1986, the percentage of Muslims in the IAS was 2.9, in IPS it was 2 8, in banks 2 2 and in the judiciary 6.2 Muslims, thus, felt that they are discriminated and denied opportunities in all these fields. The fact is that the number of Muslims who compete for these jobs is very low But they have tried to find excuses in accusations of religious discrimination and nepotism. The feeling of discrimination among Muslim is ludicrous and irrational.

The other factor is the flow of money from the Gulf and other countries to India A sizeable number of Muslims migrate to the Gulf countries to earn a handsome income and become affluent. These Muslims and the local rich Sheikhs send money to India generously for building mosques, opening *madarsas* (schools), and for running charitable Muslim institutions This money is, thus, believed to help Muslim fundamentalism. Pakistan is one country whose rulers always had a feeling of hostility for India. They have been continuously interested in creating instability in India It has now been officially established that Pakistan is actively supporting Muslim and Sikh terrorists (of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab) by providing training and military hardware These destabilising efforts of Pakistan and other governments have further created ill-feeling and suspicion among the

Hindus against the Muslims. The same thing can be said about Hindu militants and Hindu organisations in India which whip up antagonistic feelings against the Muslims and Muslims organisations. Issues like the Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute in Ayodhya, the Krishna Janam Bhoomi and nearby masjid alteration in Mathura, the dispute between Kashi Viswanath temple and its adjoining mosque in Varanasi, and the controversial masjid in Sambhal claimed to be the temple of Lord Shiva from the days of Prithviraj Chauhan, and Shahbuddin's (M.P.) giving a call for non-attendance of Muslims on Republic day and the observing of January 26, 1987 as a 'black day', have all aggravated the ill-feeling between the two communities.

The press and the media also sometimes contribute to communal tensions in their own way. Many a time the news published in papers are based on hearsay rumours or wrong interpretations. Such news add fuel to the fire and fan communal feelings. This is what happened in Ahmedabad in the 1969 riots when 'Sevak' reported that several Hindu women were stripped and raped by Muslims. Although this report was contradicted the next day, the damage had been done. It aroused the feelings of Hindus and created a communal riot.

One of the issues which has been agitating both the Muslims and the Hindus in recent years is the Muslim Personal Law. With the decision of the Supreme Court in favour of Shah Bano, the Muslims fear that their personal law is being interfered with. The politicians also exploit the situation to keep themselves in power. The Bharatiya Janata Party, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Shiv Sena and the RSS are the organisations which claim to be the champions of Hinduism. Likewise, the Muslim League, the Jamait-e-Islami, the Jamait-Ulema-a-Hind, the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Musalmeen, and the Majlis-e-Mushawarat, use Muslims as their vote banks by championing their religious problems The communal politics in Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are examples of such behaviour. Politicians charge the social atmosphere with communal passion by their inflammatory speeches, writings and propaganda. They plant the seeds of distrust in the minds of the Muslims while the Hindus are convinced that they are unjustly coerced into making extraordinary concessions to the Muslims in the economic, social and cultural fields. They also exploit the deep religious traditions of both the communities and highlight the differences in their respective practices and rituals. The leaders also try to use economic arguments to instil fear and suspicion in the minds of people and prepare their followers to start a

riot at the least provocation It has happened in Bhiwandi, Moradabad, Meerut, Ahmedabad, Aligarh and Hyderabad.

Social factors like the Muslims refusing to use family planning measures also create suspicion and ill-feeling among the Hindus. In 1982, leaflets were distributed in Pune and Sholapur in Maharashtra by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad downgrading the Muslims for not accepting family planning programme and practicising polygamy with an aim to allegedly increase their population and install a Muslim government in India All this demonstrates how a combination of political, economic, social, religious and administrative factors aggravate the situation and lead to communal riots

Theories of Communal Violence

Communal violence is a collective violence. When large sections of people in the community fail to achieve their collective goals, or feel that they are being discriminated against and deprived of equal opportunities they feel frustrated and disillusioned and this collective frustration (or what Feierabends and Nesvold have called 'systematic frustration') leads to collective violence However, it is not the whole community which launches a violent protest. In fact, the action planned by discontented people against the ruling group or the power elite (against whose ways they protest) is often non-violent. It is only a small band of protesters who consider non-violence ineffective and violence essential for the success of the struggle, who snatch every precipitating opportunity to use violence to assert the strength of their ideology.

This sub-group indulging in violent behaviour does not represent the whole community or the total group of discontented people. The behaviour of this sub-group, by and large, is not equivocally supported by the rest of the community My contention, thus, falls close to the old 'riffraff theory' of violent riot behaviour which holds that the majority of the people disown and oppose the violent/delinquent behaviour of the sub-group of describing it as 'irresponsible' behaviour

The question is, what causes the 'group of individuals' to be violent. Two of the important theoretical propositions on collective violence are: (i) it is a normal response to provocation, and (ii) it is a response that is consistent with norms supporting its use. This calls for the analysis of some of the important existing theories Excluding the psycho-pathological theories (because they focus on the aggressors' psychological personality characteristics and pathological disorders as the chief determinants of violence, and I consider this important for

explaining individual violence but not collective violence), other theories may be classified into two categories: (a) on the level of the socio-psychological analysis, and (b) on the level of the socio-cultural or sociological analysis. In the first group, theories like Frustration-Aggression Theory, Perversion Theory, Motive Attribution Theory and Self-Attitude Theory may be included, while in the second group theories like System Tension Theory, Anomie Theory, Theory of Subculture of Violence, or Social Learning Theory may be included. My contention is that all these theories fail to explain the phenomenon of collective violence in communal riots. My theoretical approach (called Social Bond Approach) concentrates on the sociological analysis of social-structural conditions.

Social Bond Theory

The conditions which lead to collective communal violence are : stress, status frustration and crisis of various kind. My thesis is that aggressors use violence because they suffer from insecurity and anxiety. The origin of these feelings and anxieties can be traced to social barriers created by the oppressive social systems, the power elite, as well as the individual's background and upbringing which have probably put up hurdles for him and which serve to aggravate his tendency to irrational and unrealistic attitudes to social norms and social institutions. My theory also takes into account three factors in aggressors' behaviour, namely, adjustment (in status), attachment (to community) and commitment (to values), as well as the social environment (in which individuals/aggressors live) and the socialised personalities of the individuals (aggressors) My theoretical model, thus, gives importance to the social system, the personality structure of individual aggressors, and sub-cultural patterns of the society in which individuals use violence. In social system, I include strains and frustrations which are the result of the functioning of social structures in society; in personality structure, I include adjustment, attachment and commitment of the individual aggressors; and in sub-cultural patterns, I include the values which operate as a means of social control

My thesis is that the maladjustment, non-attachment, and non-commitment lead to a feeling of relative deprivation Relative deprivation is the perceived discrepancy between a groups' expectations and their capabilities (conditions of life individuals/groups think they are capable of attaining or maintaining, given the proper opportunities and legitimate means). Here the important term is

'perceived' (by the aggressors); hence different variations in behaviour, or relative deprivations do not always lead to violent behaviour.

Relative deprivation (of a group) occurs when (i) expectations increase while capabilities remain the same or decline, or (ii) when expectations remain the same while capabilities decline. Since both expectations and capabilities rest on perception, therefore, value orientations of a group have an important bearing on (a) the way the group will perceive deprivation, (b) the target to which it (relative deprivation) will be directed, and (c) the form in which it will be expressed. Since each group/individual is subjected to different forces, each group/individual will respond differently in terms of violence or participation in collective communal violence.

Let us take one case out of several cases of collective communal violence—Aligarh in 1978, Jamshedpur in 1979, Mordabad in 1980, Hyderabad in 1981, Meerut in 1982 and again in 1987, Bhiwandi and Delhi in 1984, Ahmedabad in 1985, Jaipur in 1990 and Varanasi in 1991. We take the Ahmedabad riots of 1985. The violence in Ahmedabad was the result of the feeling of deprivation. The main issue was the reservation issue, where both groups—the anti-reservationists as well as the pro-reservationists—felt deprived and frustrated. Their frustration was exploited by the political parties for their vested interests and the reservation issue came to be linked with caste and religion. Anti-social elements engaged in bootlegging and thriving on political support were used to spread communal distrust. Even a minor provocation was enough to cause flare-ups in the population which was sharply divided along communal lines.

My Social Bond Theory is not essentially an elitist theory of violence where a small group, ideologically superior, takes the initiative to spread violence and decides how to use it 'for the good' of the whole frustrated group on whose behalf it violently vocalises its protest. Further, the small group does not depend upon the widespread collective action of the frustrated masses. In this context, my explanation is opposed to the orthodox Marxist theory because Marx did not envisage this kind of uprising and mass revolution.

Theory of Polarisation and Cluster Effect

Recently, a new conceptual paradigm has been developed based on an empirical study of communal riots in Uttar Pradesh to explain the inter and intra-community violence in India (Singh, V.V., *Communal Riots,*

1990). The paradigm is based on three concepts—polarity, cleavage, and cluster. *Polarity* is "sense of affinity, affiliation, belongingness, concern and identity which people share with a particular issue". The issue may be religious, ideological, political, or economic in nature. *Polarization* is the "heightened sense of identity and belongingness resulting in emotional, mental or physical mobilisation of individuals or groups to cause cohesion." *Cleavage* is a phenomenon by which population in a particular place is divided into two different polarities which have conflicting, contrasting or opposite principles or tendencies. *Cluster* refers to the habitation pattern of the people belonging to one polarity sharing commonness in a given area at a particular time. The paradigm has been built up on the basis of the facts in 'pre-riot', 'riot' and 'post-riot' situations and the analysis of group behaviour of individuals belonging to different social groups (polarities) in animosity with each other. Since the communal disturbances involve two antagonistic social groups, it necessitates a careful analysis of animosity (state of mind and psyche), structural conduciveness (physical situation), and prejudices.

The individual in isolation is weak and insecure. The strength lies in assemblies, collectivities and groups. The individual joins them for his gain and security

Various polarities exist in the society at all times To each individual, these polarities are references in the matter of inter-personal relationships. The polarities are of two types—permanent and temporary. To the former category belong ideology, religion, language, caste, region and sex. These polarities constitute individual's basic identity which lasts with the individual. To the second category belong occupation, profession, functions based on vested interests Though normally the polarities ar not mutually exclusive but they become exclusive when the society undergoes a cleavage phenomenon due to perceived difference and division of the population as a consequence of polarisation. When the masses in general assign the same closeness to single polarity, it becomes a dominating polarity at that time at that particular place for that particular population. This dominant polarity sets the pattern of inhabitance of the population (cluster-formation), that is, the polarity- based clusters dot the demographic living pattern Such clusters in old cities and towns are based on religion, caste and sect, but in modern cities these are more class-based. When such clustering takes place due to two different polarities (say of religion/ or religious sects), there is a clash

The social dynamics of living in clusters is that they prove highly conducive to the emergence of a riot-prone situation, as inter-personal relationships deteriorate and build irritants which are often perceived as deliberate insult, deprivation and injury by one to the other. The incidents affect most people in the clusters due to the physical proximity. This prompts people to build contacts among one's own polarity population and also facilitates the building of mass insurrection

The communal call given at the level of leadership also accelerates the process of polarisation. For example, Shahi Imam Bukhari's inflammatory speech in Meerut city to the Muslim population in 1982 sparked off a great reaction among Hindus to polarise against Muslims to safeguard their interest which ultimately resulted in communal riots in the city He gave a similar provocative speech in Anantnag, Kashmir on April 8, 1988, inciting Kashmiri Muslims by claiming that they have been enslaved since the Partition. He asserted that the Centre has not created better economic conditions for them, they are being deprived of their rights, and their problems are not looked into.

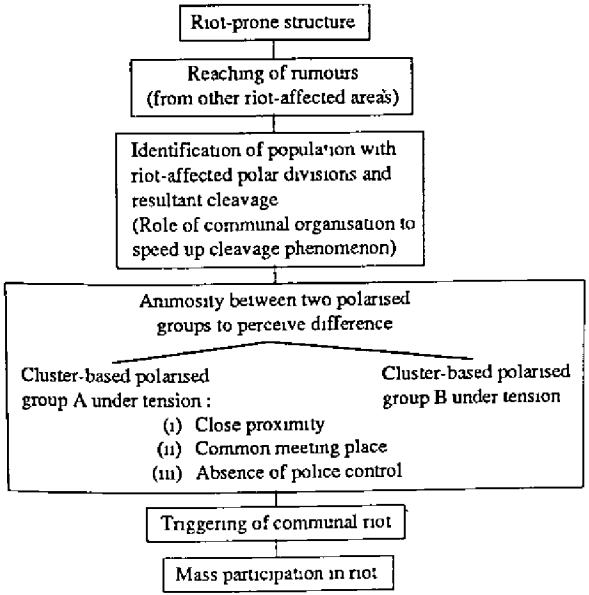
The nature of polarity dominance depends upon five factors' (1) time and space (that is, period, area, location and situation or geographical limits), (2) social structure (that is, caste, community and social group), (3) education (that is awareness of interest), (4) economic interests, and (5) leadership (that is, emotional speeches, promises and polices of the leaders).

On the basis of the above analysis, V.V. Singh describes the riot-prone (communal) structure as follows :

(1) Bi-polarity population in identifiable clusters;
(2) Close proximity,
(3) Common interest and resultant animosity;
(4) Potency of polarised population Potency is based on numerical strength, economic prosperity, state of possession of arms, cohesion, type of leadership, and the strength of activity; and
(5) Administrative expediency and inefficiency of district police and public administration

The flare-up (of communal riot) process is explained by him as follows·

Diagram 1 : Process of Flare-up of Communal Riots



Role of the Police

The role of the police in communal violence is to arrest trouble shooters, disperse rioters congregated at one place, protect public property from loot and arson, prevent the spreading of false rumours (which instigate people of different communities in other districts and states), and maintain public order. The police cannot perform the role of enforcing law and order without the active co-operation of politicians, bureaucrats, judiciary and the people at large. It is seen that, by and large, the bureaucrats in our country are ritualists, politicians function on the basis of vested interests, judicial officials are traditionalists, and people have no confidence in the police The police have, thus, to face many constraints in enacting their expected roles. Controlling riots and preventing communal violence by police have, therefore, to be examined in the background of these constraints.

The prevention of communal violence requires a check on the symptoms of tension-building and tension-management in riot-prone

areas The police has to identify riot-prone structures in states, districts and cities where communal riots take place frequently and keep a watch on the various polarity-based clusters of population in the city lay-outs. Clusters of polarity-based populations are not alike. A cluster can be predominantly fundamentalist or liberal or radical or a mixed one. Clusters vary in their callings, behavioural patterns and response to leadership. Keeping a watch on individuals in different clusters and their militant tendencies and modus-operandi is vital for the police to. identify sensitive zones, common meeting places, targets of violence, insecure belts, hide-outs and shelter places at the time of rioting.

Tension-management in riot-prone areas requires working out indices in relation to inter-group conflicts. These indices are: identification of tension-building issues, discovery of group anxieties, treatment of issues and restoration of fractured status, negotiation, mobilisation of functional group and stopping of rumours. Rumour management involves isolation of rumour zone, counter balance, rendering rumour mongers inoperative and sensitivising public administration

Prescriptive Measures

The canker of communal confrontation is widespread in India Many cities have been a communal powder keg these last several years. There are a good number of states where communalism has taken deep and seemingly permanent roots and communal politics is in full bloom. About 4,000 people were killed in communal riots during the 1980s. This was almost four times the figure as compared to the 1970s, when there had been relative lull after the Ahmedabad riots of 1969 when 1,500 people were killed The support for communalists has certainly swelled in the last few decades. Communal organisations, numbering less than a dozen in 1951, have grown to over 500 now (1991) with an active membership running into several millions. The number of districts affected by communal violence has grown. People with established criminal records are supporting leaders with communal philosophies and are using them as a shield to protect themselves from police action and as a crutch of respectability.

If the surging tide of communalism is not reversed, it will swap the country The solution is both politico-psychological as well as administrative-economic. Before Independence, it was easy to argue that communal violence was the result of the British policy of divide and rule Now the reality is more complex. Religion has come to be

politicised and the politics has come to be criminalised. Unless all communities consider themselves a part of one nation, the containing of communal disharmony will remain difficult. A country that prides itself on the secular character of its policies has to be wary of politicians who speak only for their own religious community. It has to expose and alienate the bureaucrats who consider secularism only as a theoretical possibility. The police can no longer afford to allow communal issue to foster in the manner that it has. Stopping communally minded politicians and debarring them from contesting elections, giving deterrent punishment to religious fanatics, adopting corrective measures like keeping the police department free from the politicians' control, strengthening the police intelligence section, restructuring the police force, gearing the police administration to be more sensitive, and reworking the training programme of police officials and enabling them to acquire a secular outlook and making them responsible for their failures could prove to be effective measures to tackle the problem of communal riots. An efficient police organisation, enlightened policemen, well equipped and specially trained police wings are bound to yield positive results.

The government has also to take measures for removing the feeling of discrimination and deprivation which do not actually exist. Symbolic gestures will not suffice. It is necessary to look at the real problems of the Muslims in terms of employment, literacy and getting them a fair share of representation in every field. Efforts are needed for the development of the minority communities and removing their mass illiteracy and unemployment. Secular structures have to be promoted and preserved Vigorous attacks need to be launched on religious institutions which foster communalism. Suspicions between communities must be rigourously weeded out. A common civil code in the country is the need of the day. There should be no special laws for specific communities and no special status for any state. The reservation policy has to be abandoned. Political manipulation has to be tackled. Politicians interfering with police functioning and disallowing arrests of trouble shooters have be severely dealt with. Public opinion and mass enlightment have to be brought about to make secular values functional.

Along with these measures, other measures that should be undertaken by the government to contain communal violence are (1) Posting of secular-minded district and police officials in riot-prone areas. (2) Earmarking of special courts to try communal offences

(3) Providing immediate relief and adequate financial assistance to victims of communal riots for their rehabilitation. (4) Taking severe action against all those who incite communal tensions or take part in violence.

Thus, multi-pronged measures are needed to contain the communal tensions and bring about communal harmony in the country. We have not only to fight religious communalism but have also to contain political communalism which is more degrading and dangerous. A vast majority of Muslims and Sikhs in India have no appetite for communal violence, and this mirrors the sentiments of most Hindus. Even the members of the Muslim and Sikh communities are convinced that the growing tension can be stopped if politicians are somehow prevented from exploiting people for their narrow ends. The Muslim on the street is slowly recognising the exploitative intentions of politicians Religious sloganeering does not affect him so much now. He no longer harbours a sneaking desire to seek economic redress across the border He feels considerably more secure here.

If Muslims and other minorities are encouraged to consider themselves as a valuable commodity to be traded at election time, rather than being equal citizens of a free India, they can never be enthused to greater endeavour for the national good Social scientists and intellectuals have to take serious interest to control the national malaise of communalism and in related issues like religious violence, separatism, secessionism, and terrorism

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