

A decorative archway with floral patterns and a central emblem, set against a light blue background. The archway is divided into several rectangular panels. The text is overlaid on this background.

COMMUNALISM IN INDIA
A Historical And
Empirical Study

Asghar Ali Engineer

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Preface

This book is the result of the work done in connection with the fellowship awarded to me by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Delhi. The fellowship enabled me to devote my time to study the problem of communalism and communal violence in India beginning with the British period. I feel *The communal phenomenon cannot be properly understood without adopting an integrated approach which takes into account the communal interpretation of medieval history, the role of the British regime, the freedom struggle which ultimately led to the partition of the country and the political developments in the post-Independence period. This study of communalism adopts this integrated approach.*

I am extremely grateful to the ICSSR for granting me senior fellowship for two years which enabled me to undertake this study. I hope it will add to the growing literature on this important subject in the country.

I am also thankful to Ms. Saundarya and Ms. Farida for typing parts of the manuscript.

Asghar Ali Engineer

Introduction

Communalism is a very complex phenomenon. It cannot be located only in the present social and political context. It has its historical antecedents both medieval as well as modern. An integrated approach has to be evolved in order to understand it in its entirety. Piecemeal approach should not do. The communal forces invoke medieval history for legitimation of their acts today. Thus Babri masjid was sought to be reclaimed on the grounds that Babar, an outside invader, had 'demolished' the Ramjanambhoomi mandir located at that place. Also, it is maintained by the communal forces that the Muslim rule was a period of unceasing tyranny and humiliation for the Hindus. The Hindus must avenge it today when they themselves are exercising political hegemony, they argue.

Also, it is maintained that most of the Muslim rulers demolished Hindu temples and constructed mosques thereon. Those who revolted against the Sultans or Mughal rulers are lionized and termed as national heroes. Thus Rana Sanga, Rana Pratap, Shivaji and several others belong to this category. They are projected not as those fighting for their power but for freedom of the Hindus from the Muslim rule.

It is, to say the least, a simplistic approach to history. The rulers, according to this approach, are divided according to their religion, not according to their motives. It is assumed that all Muslim rulers were wicked by nature and that their religion required them to be fanatical, aggressive and violent. Similarly, all the Hindu rulers, were tolerant, compassionate and guided by their *dharma* i.e. duties. It is also assumed that the 'Hindu period' was the golden period of Indian history and that real conflict started only after the Muslims captured power.

The Muslim communalists, on the other hand, assume that the 'Muslim period' was the golden period of Indian history and that before the advent of the Muslims it was all darkness and that Indians were uncouth and uncivilized. It is the Muslims who made them civilized and cultured. Muslim historians glorify Muslim rulers for subjugating the '*kafirs*' and putting them in their place. The Muslim kings are also glorified as *ghazis* who bravely fought for the spread of Islam and subduing *kufr* in India. Thus each religious group claims the period of its own rulers as the 'golden period'. The very concept of 'golden period' is erroneous. No period of history is free from violence and conflict and no ruler can be absolutely just or wicked. Also, it should be understood that behaviour of any historical ruler is motivated by his/her interests rather than religious beliefs. Even for rulers like Mahmud Ghaznavi and Aurangzeb it would be incorrect to assume that they were totally motivated by their religious beliefs though these beliefs perhaps played a greater role in moulding their conduct than in the case of other rulers. Almost all the rulers, Hindu or Muslim, were primarily motivated by their political interests. Their religious beliefs, more often than not, either did not matter or were of secondary consideration. What ultimately determined their behaviour was their political interests. It is very well brought out in the dialogue between Emperor Alauddin Khalji and Qzai Mughis.

Often the fact that no ruler ruled by himself without alliance with a ruler from the other religious groups is also ignored. A Muslim ruler had alliances with Rajputs or Marathas and a Hindu rebel often challenged the Mughal or other monarchs with the help of Pathans or other Muslims. It is also ignored that the rulers belonging to one religion fought against each other as much as the rulers belonging to different religions. Thus Babar fought against Ibrahim Lodhi and Humayun against Shershah Suri. Not only this, son fought against his own father like Salim against Akbar and Khusro against Jehangir. Aurangzeb finally seized power by imprisoning his father and murdering his brothers. Similarly there were across-the-religion alliances in the struggle for power. It is well known that even Mahmud of Ghazna had Hindus in his army and one of his generals was a Brahmin called Tilak and the Hindu army of taught with him as much

as the Muslim army when he attacked Somnath. When Babar attacked Ibrahim Lodhi, Rana Sanga was his ally and when Akbar fought against Rana Pratap, Raja Mansingh was on his side and Hakim Khan Sur on the side of Rana Pratap. It was Hakim Khan Sur who was defending Haldi Ghati. Similarly when Aurangzeb fought against Shivaji it was Mirza Raja Jaisingh who headed his army and Shivaji's chief of artillery was a Pathan Muslim. The communalists from both sides ignore these plain facts of recorded history.

Another factor to be noted in the communalist writing of history is its selective approach. For example, the Hindu communalists cite certain examples of Muslim rulers demolishing Hindu temples but they keep silent about Hindus or Buddhists demolishing each others places of worship. For example the Buddhist king Harsha of Kashmir systematically demolished Hindu temples and caused the idols to be dragged through the streets and lepers were made to spit and urinate over them. He had appointed an officer for demolition of temples called *devotpadana nayaka*. Similarly many Hindu rulers systematically destroyed Buddhist temples. It was the Hindu king of Patliputra who cut down the Bodhi Tree beneath which Mahatma Buddha gained enlightenment, and constructed a Hindu temple there. Similarly the Jain temples were destroyed by the Hindu kings. It is also ignored that some of the Muslim rulers like Mahmud of Ghazna and Aurangzeb also destroyed masjids. Mahmud Ghazni destroyed many masjids in Multan before he attacked Somnath in alliance with the Hindu ruler of Lahore. Aurangzeb destroyed a masjid when he attacked Adilshahi ruler in Golconda. It is also not mentioned that Aurangzeb gave *jagirs* to many temples in Benaras, Ujjain etc.

Thus partial, sectarian and communal approach to history not only distorts it but also arouses religious passions. Also communal politicians use it as a powerful tool to mobilize voters on communal lines. History, therefore, should be treated as a science like other social science and rigorous methodology should be evolved to understand it. It has to be understood in its entirety, rising above any religious, communal or sectarian motives. It should not be allowed to be hijacked by communalists for political purposes.

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It is also important to emphasise that communalism is a modern, not a medieval phenomenon. It is, to be precise, a product of the British period. There are a number of reasons for this. The British followed the policy of divide and rule and created rift between the Hindus and Muslims which really did not exist on such a scale earlier. In fact the British were terrified by the Hindu-Muslim unity during the 1857 'mutiny' (i.e. war of independence) and the fact that both Hindus and Muslims declared Bahadurshah Zafar to be their leader.

The British employed the services of Eliot and Dawson to write history and provide source material for it by selectively translating from Persian sources what depicted eternal fight between the Hindus and Muslims. These two British historians deeply influenced the process of history-writing in India. The periodization of history by the British as 'Hindu', 'Muslim' and 'British' also was a mischievous one. This kind of periodization identified earlier periods with respective religions while identifying their own period with their nationality.

The other genetic cause of communalism was on account of what can be described, for want of a better term, as 'structural shift' both in polity and economy. The colonial polity and economy replaced the feudal polity and economy. Both feudal polity as well as economy were non-competitive. In feudal period power was wielded through sword while in modern democratic power is obtained through competitive ballot box. Similarly, feudal economy was non-competitive in as much as the production was mainly for local consumption and not, unlike the modern capitalist economy, for market. The colonial polity as well as economy were competitive and it is partly the phenomenon of competitive polity and economy during the British period which gave rise to the communal phenomenon.

The British introduced highly controlled doses of democratization which created a sense of competition between the elites of the two major communities i.e. the Hindu and the Muslim. Thus when the British introduced the Local-Self Government Act in early seventies of the 19th century, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the modernizer among 19th century Muslims, opposed it saying that the democracy does not suit India as it will lead to competition for power between two major

communities of India; it suits European countries inhabited only by the Christians. Sir Syed had a point and his prognosis had a validity of its own. It was introduction of democratic measures which brought about conflict between the Hindu and Muslim elites for sharing power. The Muslim elite demanded certain share which was resisted by the Hindu elite and this question could not be resolved until the country was partitioned. Thus political competition between the elites of the two communities proved divisive and strengthened the forces of communalism. Similarly the competition for British jobs gave rise to communal feelings. The British rulers replaced Persian by English as the language of administration at higher levels and by Urdu and Hindi respectively written in Persian and Nagri scripts at the district levels. A circular by the U.P. Governor required that the aspirants for government jobs at district level should know both Hindi and Urdu written in Nagri and Persian scripts respectively. This created strong resentment both among the Hindus and Muslims. The Hindus argued that Hindi written in Nagri script should be the language of administration while the Muslim elite argued that it should be Urdu written in Persian script. Thus the question of language as a means of obtaining government jobs brought about a cleavage among the Hindu and Muslim elites.

Communalism, it should be noted, is not a religious phenomenon but a phenomenon connected with the interest group of a religious community. It does not involve any conflict about sectarian questions but about worldly interests. Of course, the elite groups often invoke religion not for conviction but for legitimation. Communalism right from the 19th century has been generated by conflicting interests of educated elite, not the masses. It is also interesting to note that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan represented the interests of upper class Muslim elite and distanced himself from the interests of Muslim masses. It was orthodox *Ulama* led by Maulana Quasim Ahmad Gangohi, Rashid Ahmad Nanotvi and others and were in close contact with the Muslim masses and represented their interests. These orthodox *Ulama* were totally and uncompromisingly opposed to the British rule as it had ruined the Muslim masses on account of introduction of British manufactured goods and deprived the *Ulama* of powers which the Shari'a courts had given them when the Muslim dynasties ruled.

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan advised Muslims to keep away from it while these orthodox *Ulama* led by Quasim Ahmad Nanotvi urged them to join it and fight against the British rule along with the Hindu brethren. Not only this, Maulana Nanotvi collected about hundred *fatwas* from various *Ulama* to this effect and published them under the title of *Nusrat al-Ahrar* (i.e. help for those fighting for the liberation from the British rule). These *fatwas* urged upon the Muslims to wage *jihād* against the British rule as India under the British was *Darul Harb* i.e. abode of war. This contrasting behaviour of a modernist like Sir Syed and orthodox *Ulama* like Maulana Nanotvi also indicates that communalism is a conflict of interests, not of religion. The orthodox *Ulama* were fraternizing with the Hindus in their fight against the British whereas the Hindu and Muslim elites were fighting amongst themselves for their interests, communalizing the situation.

Modern terminologies like 'secularism' and 'nationalism' did not appeal to Indian masses. These terms were in vogue only among the educated elite. The masses were left cold by them. Hence those who were in touch with the masses like the *Ulama* or persons like Tilak from amongst the Hindus had to invoke religion for mobilisation of Indian masses against the British. It did inject a dose of religion in the nineteenth century liberative politics but there was hardly any other option. It was, so to say, a contextual need. But it is also important to note that this induction of religion in the fight for freedom did not as much communalize our polity as the conflict of interests between the elites of both the communities. It is a strange contradiction that these educated elite who opposed mixing religion with politics were responsible for communalizing our politics.

Freedom Struggle and Communalism

Let us briefly discuss the freedom struggle and communalism as it ultimately led to partitioning of our country. Here it has to be pointed out that association of religion with our freedom struggle did not prove as harmful as it is made out to be. We have already seen that Tilak had to use religious festivals of Hindus to mobilize them politically against the British. Tilak, it must be appreciated, was more aggressive and militant, though religiously quite orthodox, for achieving freedom from

the British compared to Gokhale and others who, though quite liberal and secular in outlook and opposed to mixing religion with politics, were moderate and were more interested in liberal reforms than outright freedom from the British rule. Similarly, Mahatma Gandhi, proud of being Sanatani Hindu, was quite uncompromising in his fight against the British and was strikingly successful in mobilising the Indian masses in freedom struggle. He also showed deep respect for other religions in India and supported the Muslim cause of Khilafat with great verve. His support of the Khilafat movement greatly enthused the Muslim masses and the *Ulama* and won them over the Congress. Besides the Khilafat Committee, the *Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i-Hind* was formed which comprised of many prominent Islamic scholars and theologians who consistently supported the freedom struggle. These *Ulama* unflinchingly supported the cause of composite nationalism and at a later stage, when the concept of two-nation theory was mooted, opposed it. M.A. Jinnah who was quite liberal and secular in outlook to begin with, and had even opposed launching of the Khilafat movement on the grounds that the *mullahs* should not be involved in politics, led the Pakistan movement and ultimately succeeded in having the country divided.

The British used the Muslim elite to form the Muslim League when the Indian National Congress (INC) began to acquire popularity. The League had, to begin with, the support mainly of the feudal lords, nawabs and jagirdars. The noted Muslim historian and theologian Maulana Shibli Nomani in his essay written in 1912 attacked the Muslim League as the party of vested interests and of the British boot-lickers who had nothing to do with the Muslim masses. The Muslim League later was captured by the educated elite but still it never became, unlike the INC, a party of the masses. The League remained elitist in its character throughout the freedom struggle. No wonder then it lost heavily in the 1937 elections. Jinnah never believed in mass politics. For him politics was the business of 'gentlemen' only and the illiterate masses should be kept out of it.

It would be wrong to believe that Muslims as a whole did not take part in the freedom struggle. In fact, all minority communities—Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians, took part in it no less

enthusiastically. Thousands of them were arrested by the British. Their sacrifices, in fact, were second to none.

It is also wrong to believe that all Muslims were supportive of Pakistan movement. In fact masses of Muslims can hardly be said to have supported the partition. Many towering Muslim leaders like M.A. Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Mohammad Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Rafi Ahmad Qidwai and several others were staunch nationalists. All of them were second to none in their sacrifices for the cause of India's freedom. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a noted theologian and a great commentator on the holy Qur'an, became the Congress president several times and he refused to accept the two-nation theory. He even dubbed it as anti-Islamic. The other prominent *Ulama* led by an eminent theologian Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani strongly condemned the two-nation theory. As soon as the Lahore resolution was passed, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani undertook countrywide tour urging upon Muslims not to be misled by the propaganda for Pakistan. He was attacked by the Muslim League supporters at a number of places. The Maulana argued that the composite nationalism is the tradition of the Prophet. He and other *Ulama* maintained that when the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Madina, he established a composite society there giving full freedom to all religious groups—Jews, Pagans, Christians and Muslims—to practice their respective religions. The Prophet himself decided cases according to the teachings of their religion. The Maulana also argued that one must distinguish between the concept of *millat* which is religious and *qaumiyyat* (nationalism) which is territorial. Muslims are a part of Islamic *millat* on one hand, and, part of Indian territorial nationalism, on the other. The two, in his view, did not contradict each other. He cited several Qur'anic verses in his support to show that territorial nationalism can be shared between the believers and the non-believers. He wrote a book *Muttahida Qaumiyyat* (i.e. Composite Nationalism) to prove his point.

Besides Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, even the Ahrars of Punjab led by Attaullah Shah Bukhari opposed the Muslim League tooth and nail and condemned it as a party of capitalists and advised the Muslims not to support it. The Muslim majority provinces like the Punjab and Bengal were quite cold towards the concept of Pakistan.

Various opposition parties like the Socialist Party, the Congress (O) led by Morarji Desai, the Jan Sangh etc. merged together and formed the Janta Party. The leaders of the Janta Party took oath at the Gandhi Samadhi to espouse secularism and democracy. But soon the Janta Party voted to power at the Centre was dogged with controversy about dual membership as the Jan Sangh members refused to resign from the RSS. The Socialist members objected to their dual membership leading to the fall of Central Government fell on this question. Meanwhile the RSS was instrumental in organising some major riots during the Janta Party regime in Jamshedpur, Benaras, Aligarh and other places. Thus in 1977-78 the country once again witnessed major communal riots.

Mrs. Gandhi came back to power in 1980 though with reduced majority. Her policy underwent a major change. She became unsure of the Muslim vote and tried to woo the middle caste Hindus who had acquired economic clout due to land reforms, green revolution etc. and began aspiring for political power. Mrs. Gandhi tried to win their support and now her emphasis on secularism was not as vigorous as during the late sixties. She was no longer a strong critic of the RSS. A major communal riot broke out in Moradabad in 1980 but she kept quiet. *The Times of India* carried articles by Girilal Jain advocating theory of 'foreign hand' in Moradabad riots. But these were not contradicted by any responsible government authority. Mrs. Gandhi did not even visit Moradabad.

It also appears that she began to take advantage of pro-Hindu sentiments emerging on the political scene. In Meenakshipuram, a few dalits converted to Islam as they were insulted by the upper caste Thewars. This raised temperature of Hindu communalism in the country. The VHP, otherwise a non-political organisation, jumped into the fray and launched an aggressive campaign against the conversion. Mrs. Gandhi, it is alleged, subtly encouraged it to elicit the Hindu support. There again followed a series of major riots in Biharsharif (1981), Meerut (1982), Baroda (1982), Bombay-Bhivandi (1984), Ahmedabad (1985) etc. The VHP played very aggressive role in some of these riots, specially in the Meerut riot. Mrs. Gandhi no longer denounced the RSS or VHP for their role. She was now following the policy of soft Hindu communalism.

They had no fear of being swallowed up by the Hindu majority. It was the elite of Muslim minority provinces who feared Hindu majority and tended to support the politics of the Muslim League. The people of North West provinces led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan were totally opposed to the partition. It should also be kept in mind that there was no universal franchise during the British rule; hardly 10 per cent of the population was enfranchised. Thus 90 per cent of the people had no voice at all and could not hope to influence the political processes at that time. A scholar has recently worked out on the basis of available records that of the 10 per cent enfranchised not more than 5 per cent people voted in the elections of 1945 and of those who voted, 3.5 per cent supported the Muslim League. Thus it will be seen that a minuscule minority of Muslims supported the Pakistan movement. It is absurd, therefore, to blame all Muslims of that time for formation of Pakistan. Also, it is clear that the basis of formation of Pakistan was not Islam as all noted *Ulama* were uncompromisingly opposed to the concept of Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan was creation of elite interests and not the religions interests. It would also be wrong to entirely blame on Jinnah and the Muslim League for partition. Certain Congress leaders including Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel were also responsible for it. The Hindu Mahasabha led by Vir Savarkar also believed in the two-nation theory though they did not demand partition of the country. But their demand was that the Muslims should live in India as secondary citizens or non-citizens which was as absurd as the formation of Pakistan.

Post-independent India and Communalism

The partition was thought to be the final solution for communal problem. However, this view proved illusory as the communal forces raised their ugly head again. Though there were no communal disturbances during the fifties (not withstanding serious linguistic riots, specially in Bombay) a communal riot in Jabalpur in 1962 shook the country. The Jabalpur riot was mainly on account of economic competition between a Hindu and a Muslim beedi manufacturer. The religious frenzy was, however, aroused as the daughter of the Hindu beedi manufacturer fell in love with the son of the Muslim beedi manufacturer and both decided to marry. Local Hindi papers stated that

Pakistan was in touch with the Jabalpur Muslims through a transmitter installed inside a mosque and was inciting the riots. Such rumours fanned the religious frenzy.

Most of the other riots in the early sixties were caused by the stream of Hindu refugees coming from the erstwhile East Pakistan. Their tales of woes and suffering caused many major riots mainly in eastern India in places like Durgapur, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, West Bengal and some other places. Then the political scenario began to change with Mrs. Indira Gandhi coming to power in the late sixties. She split the Congress to get rid of the Congress bosses and nationalised the banks to win the support of the poorer masses. She also gave the slogan of *gharibi hatao* (banish poverty) and emphasised secularism as the mainstay of Indian democracy thus winning the support of Muslim minority. Her winning electoral arithmetic was support of Muslims and *dalits* on the one hand, and that of the left and Brahmins on the other. In order to oppose the unchallenged hegemony of Mrs. Gandhi, the Congress (O), the Swatantra Party and Jan Sangh joined hands in Gujarat and caused a communal riot to weaken her political position. The Ahmedabad riot of 1969 was a great communal catastrophe. It once again shook the country. The Ahmedabad riot was followed by the riots in Bhivandi and Jalgaon in 1970 in which the Shiv Sena, formed just two years ago, played the main role. The Shiv Sena was also helped by some anti-left forces in the Congress. The Sena combined both linguistic and communal chauvinism. Thus it will be seen that communalism is basically a political phenomenon which varied in intensity according to the political situation in the country.

During the early seventies there were no major riots. In 1970-71 India was busy helping in the liberation struggle in Bangladesh. Mrs. Gandhi was at the height of her popularity and commanded great respect even from the opposition. However, soon her popularity began to decline again and Jai Prakash Narain, a Sarvodaya leader, launched a popular movement against her. This led Mrs. Gandhi to declare emergency in the country. It must be noted that during the emergency there were no incidents of communal violence as most of those belonging to the RSS, Jan Sangh, and the Jamaat-e-Islami had been arrested. But as excesses were committed during the emergency she became even more unpopular and lost the subsequent elections.

Mrs. Gandhi was unfortunately assassinated by her Sikh bodyguard in November, 1984 and this was followed by anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and several places in North India in which more than 4000 Sikhs lost their lives. Congressmen were mostly involved in these riots. It was again a major communal catastrophe for the country. The Indian mainstream polity was now being communalized. The BJP which had adopted Gandhian socialism and secularism as its political creed under the leadership of Atal Bihari Bajpayee soon came out in its true colours and once again adopted the policy of aggressive communalism.

Meanwhile other major developments took place which further lent edge to communal forces. The Shah Bano movement opposing the Supreme Court judgement awarding maintenance beyond the *iddah* period of three months to a Muslim wife, assumed very aggressive proportion and proved to be a watershed in the history of communalization of Indian politics. The Rajiv Gandhi Government knuckled under fundamentalist pressure and enacted the Muslim Women's Act depriving the Muslim women of a secular law of maintenance. This was a serious blow to secularism in the country. Not only this, the Rajiv Gandhi Government struck a deal with the Hindu fundamentalists also on the question of opening the doors of the Babri masjid for Hindus to worship. Thus the Ramjanambhoomi question acquired a new edge. This controversy proved to be the biggest challenge for the secular forces in the country.

The implementation of the Mandal Commission report in August 1990 by the V.P. Singh Government seriously upset the Hindu communalists who were trying to consolidate the Hindu votes under the banner of Ramjanambhoomi and thus they further intensified the Ramjanambhoomi movement by announcing the *Rathayatra* which turned into, as some newspapers put it, blood yatra. Large number of communal riots broke out all over the country. In the late eighties the major riots, mainly on account of Ramjanambhoomi-Babri masjid controversy took place in Meerut (1987), Bhagalpur (1989), Jaipur (1989, 1990), Hyderabad (1990) and several other places. The ultimate event of this controversy on Masjid, i.e. demolition of Babri December 6, 1992 resulted in widespread communal violence in Bombay, Surat, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Delhi, Calcutta, Patna etc. It resulted in great deal of loss of lives and properties. The eighties and early nineties were the

worst decades and surpassed all others in communal carnage. No serious history of communal violence India can ignore these catastrophes. It is also important to note that the role of law and order machinery in all these riots was not such as to cover itself with glory. In some of the riots the role of the police, the most visible part of the law and order machinery, was highly partisan. Various inquiry commission reports have clearly brought out this fact. The role of the police in 1984 riots in Delhi, in Bombay riots of December, 1992 and January, 1993 was highly condemnable. Many constables and low level police officers openly took part in killing, looting and arson on the side of the Hindu mobs. What is worse, the Government of Maharashtra also proved to be totally ineffective and did nothing against the guilty police officers. Thus there is great necessity to secularise the police force if incidence of communal violence is to be checked.

In order therefore, to understand the phenomenon of communalism we have to adopt an integrated approach and evolve a methodology which takes into account medieval history, British rule, the freedom struggle leading to partition of our country and rise of communalism in the post-Independence period. It is only this integrated understanding of communal phenomenon that will enable us to understand it and find a remedy. This book attempts to evolve this methodology to grapple with the phenomenon of communalism.

Chapter 1

Medieval History and Communalism

Communalism, needless to say, is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Though, as most scholars agree, it is a modern phenomenon, some vested interests, in order to serve their political purpose, attempt to trace its origin to the medieval period of Indian history so as to prove that Hindus and Muslims were engaged in hostilities ever since Muhammad bin Qasim invaded India. These hostilities continued until the British rulers consolidated their rule and established their political hegemony. This is, however, an erroneous notion as we will presently show. It can be called 'political misuse of history'. History is a science and must be analysed and understood in the light of socio-economic, political, religio-cultural and other factors of the period it is supposed to chronicle. It should be as rigorously and objectively analysed as humanly possible. One's religious affiliation should not affect its understanding at all. But thanks to historians with communal proclivities and politicians with powerful vested interests, our medieval history has been communalized, and with disastrous effect. Such a projection of history has very adversely affected the Hindu-Muslim relations in our own time. Not only this, such an interpretation of history also casts shadow over our freedom struggle. The separatist movement and the two-nation theory partly derive legitimacy from communal distortion of history.

Before we throw some light on communal distortion of history we would like to understand why we are so emotionally attached to our past. We tend to glorify our past and feel extremely proud of our heritage. More often than not, we even tend to be chauvinistic in our

attitude to our past. It is, in a way, a sort of escape mechanism for many of us. The more we are humiliated in our present, the more we look to our 'golden past'. It provides us great emotional and spiritual balm. Also, our present is full of conflict and so we look back on our past as a period free from conflict when people were more honest and value-oriented. Such a thinking about our history soothes our tense nerves. When the British consolidated their power in India, we felt quite humiliated and began to invent a golden past. This past was thought to be totally free of any conflict and full of "achievements". Also, since Hindu-Muslim relations also began to sour with the coming of the British—partly because of its divide and rule policy and partly because of indigenous reasons to be examined later in this book—we began to look upon the period during which Muslim dynasties ruled the country as the beginning of all our troubles. Some communal historians went to the extent of saying that our Hindu past was glorious indeed and all our problems began only with the invasion of Muhammad bin Qasim. The Muslim communally-oriented historians, on the other hand, thought that there was nothing in the pre-Islamic India to be proud of. It is Muslim rulers who gave it culture and political stability. Needless to say both views are highly simplistic and even naive.

Such views of history to say the least, are highly communal. India had great achievements to its credit much before Muslims came. One can have fairly good idea of these achievements if one reads accounts of India recorded by some Arab travellers and historians. Al-Beruni, the noted scholar who accompanied Mehmud of Ghazna to India and stayed back when Mehmud left after plundering the Somnath temple, has also paid glorious tributes to achievements of Indian astronomers, philosophers, mathematicians and others in his famous book *Kitab al-Hind*. Another noted work in Arabic *Tabqat Ibn Sa'd* also refers to Indian achievements. In fact the Arabs borrowed the concept of mathematics from India. The word for mathematics in Arabic is *Hindsa* i.e. from Hind that is India.

It is true some Muslim rulers like Babar did not have much to commend about India. His remarks about India in his *Tuzak-i-Babari* are even prejudicial. Thus he writes:

"The country and towns of Hindustan are extremely ugly. All its towns and lands have a uniform look: its gardens have no walls; the greater part

of it is a level plain. The banks of its rivers and streams, in consequence of the rushing of the torrents that descend during the rainy season are worn deep into the channel ...

Hindustan is a country that has few pleasures to recommend to it. The people are not handsome. They have no idea of the charms of friendly society, or frankly mixing together, or of familiar intercourse; they have no genius, no comprehension of mind, no politeness of manner, no kindness or fellow-feeling, no ingenuity or mechanical invention in planning or executing their handicraft works, no skill or knowledge in design or architecture; they have no good horses, no good flesh, no grapes or musk-melons, no good fruits, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread in their bazars, no baths or colleges, no candles, no torches, not a candlestick."¹

These remarks about India by Babar, it is true, are highly uncomplimentary. However, it appears, he wrote this by way of his first impression about India. Moreover, Babar seems to be alone in such observations. Most others, as pointed out above, have written very highly of India. Babar's observations should not be generalised but some communally minded Muslim historians have done precisely that.

Communally minded Hindu historians too distort Indian history by simply glorifying it. They feel ashamed that they were ruled for several centuries by Muslims and hence indulge in reviling that period as period of "slavery of Hindus", a period which is characterised by "humiliation of Hindus", "demolition of their temples and destruction of their culture". They feel, that the pre-Islamic period of Indian history was a "golden period". All the rulers in this pre-Islamic period, were guided only by *dharma* and that there was consequently no conflict. Either they tend to ignore conflict during this period or minimize it. They forget that there were internecine wars between various rulers who tried to seize each others' territories and even invited outsiders to humble their rivals. They also minimize the caste conflict and oppression of tribals and destruction of their ways of life. Chanakya himself taught various ways to his master to conquer his rivals' territories. Even cheating or fraud were legitimized to achieve political aspirations. Various Hindu rulers collaborated with Muslim invaders. For example Anandpal of Thanesar helped Mehmud of Ghazna despite his (Mehmud's) clear intention to demolish idols. Thus says Yogendra Mishra: "When Anandapala learnt the news of this

(Mehmud's) attack, he offered to deliver fifty elephants if the Sultan spared Thanesar which was held in great veneration by the Hindus for its idol called Chakrasvamin. But the Sultan declined to alter his plans, saying that he stood for rooting out the worship of idols from the face of India. The answer was communicated to the *raja* of Delhi under whose immediate protection Thanesar was. In spite of the open declaration of the Sultan's motive, Anandapala, being the subject and tributary, not only sent to his aid the promised contingent of 2000 men, but also ordered his merchants and shopkeepers to look after the needs of the commissariat of the Muslim army. Hence he has rightly been compared with 'Porus, who bravely opposed Alexander but later submitted and helped him in subduing other Indian rulers.'²

It would thus be wrong to project pre-Islamic or Islamic period as an ideal period. It is a gross misrepresentation and mutilation of history. No period of history can be projected as a golden period. All the so-called 'golden periods' are, if examined honestly and without religious prejudice, full of conflict and clashes of interests. It is wrong to periodise history as a 'Hindu period' or a 'Muslim period'. This concept of periodisation was given by the British who had their own political axe to grind. While they divided medieval history in the 'Hindu and Muslim periods' they called their own period as the British period, a period based on their nationality rather than their religion, Christianity, while they divided other periods on the basis of religion. This periodisation of history damaged our understanding of those periods. With such religious concept of periodisation of history it became easier for them to inject communal poison in the minds of Indians. By describing their own period as the 'British period', they cleverly avoided prejudice against Christianity. In fact, as pointed out by the JNU historians,³ it is wrong to divide history into religious periods. Neither there was 'Hindu rule' nor was there anything like the 'Muslim rule'. It can more aptly be described as 'dynastic rule' such as the Maurya period or Gupta period or Tughlaq period or Khalji period or the Mughal period. These dynasties had their own interests and ambitions and they did what helped them achieve their ambitions.

No ruler rules according to the teachings of his/her religion. One may, if necessary, invoke religion to legitimatise one's actions or ambitions. A historical actor has very complex motives. It would be

wrong to judge his motives by his proclamations. A little reflection on human behaviour would show that an ordinary human being also does not always act according to his/her religious beliefs. It would be utterly simplistic to assume that a historical actor, who has to handle a much more complex situation than an ordinary person, would behave entirely as per his religious beliefs. Our own democratic rulers today invoke religion to mobilise votes. Would the medieval rulers not be disposed to use it for their own political ends? Are our democratic rulers today genuine about invoking religion? Are they really believers? Or do they really act as genuine believers? Is the Ramjanambhoomi issue really a religious issue or a powerful religious symbol being exploited for political ends by the Hindutva forces? Can we then maintain that whatever medieval rulers did, in the name of religion, was in keeping with their faith? Or was it only an act of legitimatisation? Did the Muslim rulers demolish the temples because they were against idol worship or did they have some other motives?

It is often said that Mahmud of Ghazna demolished Somnath Temple because he was, as a Muslim, against idol worshipping. While plundering the temple at Somnath and breaking the idol he is reported to have said I do not want to go down in history as idol seller (*but farosh*) but as idol breaker (*but shiken*). Do we take his words at face value and conclude that he broke the idol and plundered the wealth of Somnath for religious reasons? If we examine all the circumstances it would not be difficult to conclude that Mahmud demolished the temple at Somnath not so much out of love for his religion as for the temptation of plunder wealth. Noted historian Romila Thapar observes:

“Temples were depositories of vast quantities of wealth, in cash, golden images, and jewellery—the donations of the pious—and these made them natural targets for a non-Hindu searching for wealth in northern India. Mahmud’s greed for gold was insatiable. From 1010 to 1026 the invasions of Mahmud were directed to temple towns—Mathura, Thanesar, Kannauj and finally Somnath. The concentration of wealth at Somnath was renowned, and consequently it was inevitable that Mahmud would attack it. Added to the desire for wealth was the religious motivation, iconoclasm being a meritorious activity among the more orthodox followers of the Islamic faith.⁴

One of the Arab sources also mentions this tragic event and says :

When the Sultan went to wage religious war against India, he made great efforts to capture and destroy Somnath in the hope that Hindus would become Muhammadans. He arrived there in the middle of December 1025. The king looked upon the idol with wonder and gave orders for the seizing of the spoil and appropriation of the treasures. There were many idols of gold and silver and vessels set with jewels, all of which had been sent there by the greatest personages in India. The value of the things found in the temple and of the idols *exceeded twenty thousand dinars*.⁵

It would be interesting to note that medieval historiography had its own style of writing. History was not treated as a secular science. It had strong tinge of religious belief. If a king attacked a country, the chronicler (*waqi'a nigar* i.e. one who recorded the events), often employed by the king, would ascribe a religious motive to it, in order to earn some merit in the eyes of his employer (i.e. a king). Thus these court historians tried to portray their kings as most virtuous and great believers and doing everything to earn religious merit. This glorification of the kings by court historians has caused misinterpretation. The passage quoted above from Qazwini, an Arab chronicler, is an example of this. According to him the king came to India to "wage a religious war against India" but further on he betrays the real motive of the king when he says, "the king looked upon the idol with wonder and gave orders for seizing of the spoil and the appropriation of the treasures." Thus one has to understand the style of medieval Muslim historiography in order to capture the essence of what the chronicler has recorded. All the events are attempted to be portrayed as those of great religious merits. In fact they were not at all so or at best it happened to be the case of mixed motives, as Romila Thapar has pointed out above.

It should also be noted that if Mahmud had real intention of earning religious merit by destroying the Hindu temples why should he have attacked the Muslim ruler of Multan before proceeding towards other Hindu principalities? Much before he demolished Somnath in 1025 A.D. he marched to Multan in March-April 1006 against Abul Fath Daud. Not only this, for his invasion of Multan he sought the help of Anandapala. Anandapala, however, refused help as the Amir of Multan was his ally. The Amir of Multan, in turn, sought and got the

help of Anandapala. Mahmud plundered Multan and caused great devastation killing a large number of Qaramita Muslims (a heterodox sect) and arrested Daud who died in Mahmud's prison.⁶ It can be argued that the Amir of Multan was a Qaramita Muslim. But before that he fought against Muhammad bin Thuri, the ruler of Ghaur who was very much a Sunni Muslim.

Majumdar, Raychaudhuri and Datta, the noted historians have summed up the real character of Mahmud: "... to the historians of India he (Mahmud Ghaznavi) appears mainly as an insatiable invader. He was neither a missionary for the propagation of religion in this country nor an architect of empire. The main object of his eastern expeditions seems to have been the acquisition of the 'wealth of Ind' and the destruction of the morale of its custodians ... He drained the wealth of the country and despoiled it of its military resources to an appalling extent."⁷

Rulers, place their own interest far above their ideals and religious beliefs. Romila Thapar has aptly observed, "Religion did not count unless it could serve a definite political purpose. Where it could, however, it was exploited to the full."⁸

This is further borne out by the dialogue between Qazi Mughis and Alauddin Khalji. Once Allauddin Khalji asked Qazi several questions in respect of *Shari'ah*. Qazi told him what the *Shari'ah* position was and what the Sultan was expected to do. Obviously Alauddin's conduct did not conform to *Shari'ah*. Allauddin told the Qazi:

You say my acts are against the *Shari'at* Now this is how I act. From the horseman who fails to come to the review (*arz*), I have ordered three years salary to be demanded back. I cast into dry wells all who drink or sell liquor. If a man rapes (*sifah mi kunad*) another man's wife, I order the man to be castrated (and the woman I order to be killed). In cases of rebellions, I slay both the good and the bad, the mature and immature; and I reduce their women and children to poverty and destitution. I demand back public money from corrupt revenue officers by kicks and blows, and till the last *jital* has been realised, I keep them in bonds and chains. Political offenders I imprison for life. Will you say all this against the *Shrai'at*?"⁹

Many more such instances can be found when rulers deviated from the *Shari'ah*. According to a conversation attributed to Sultan Balban (1266-86), Iltutmish used to say that it was not practicable for a king to

observe the commands of the faith (*Dindari*). It was enough if he could be a defender of the faith (*Dinpanah*). Balban then went on to say that so far as he himself was concerned he not only could not observe the religious commandments (*Dindari*) he could not even act as the defender of the faith (*Dinpanahi*). He felt that it would be enough for him if he could dispense justice (*Adl.*).¹⁰ Similarly it is recorded in *Sahifa-i-naat-i-Muhammadi* that one day the *Ulama* of the Court of Iltutmish (1211-1236) went to the Sultan and said that since the Brahmins were the worst enemies of the Prophet of Islam, devotion to the Prophet enjoined upon the King of Islam to force the Brahmins either to change their faith or to suffer execution. Iltutmish was rattled to receive this demand from the court *Ulama*. He replied that he would give an answer the following day. The next day the King's Minister told the *Ulama* that since the Muslims in the kingdom were so few as to be like 'salt in food', their demand could not possibly be met in such a situation. However, he said, when the situation changed and the population of the Muslims increased, it might be possible to act according to the demand of the *Ulama*.¹¹ It was a diplomatic answer given by the King to the *Ulama*.

The *Ulama*, more often than not, took a very rigid and impractical view of religion whereas the kings and rulers could not afford to be idealistic and theoretical. The *Ulama* had their own problems. Often there was competition amongst them for higher positions and this was possible only if they tried to be more 'religious' than their rival. Also, these *Ulama* had no practical experience of any kind. They regaled in taking 'scriptural' view. But the tragedy was that in that they too often went by the letter rather than the spirit. Even the Prophet's successors known as Caliphs often took practical view of things. For example, the third Caliph Uthman accepted the Berbers of North Africa as *ahl al-Kitab* (i.e. the people of the book) and negotiated *jazia* with them. Strictly speaking Berbers were tribals and had no revealed scripture of their own. But political compulsion required that they be accepted as such. The *Ulamas*, however, took extremely narrow view and created difficult problems for the rulers. The rulers however, could not easily ignore the opinion of the *Ulama* as they had their own followers in the court. Ways had to be found to act contrary to the opinion of these theologians. But some strong rulers like Alauddin Khalji could openly

defy religious opinion. Akbar could also keep the *Ulama* under check. Jehangir, even imprisoned the most influential of the '*Alim Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani*' though he had to release him later.

While using the medieval source material a historian has to be very careful. He should not go by what an '*alim* or a theologian said. Otherwise it would appear that all the Muslim rulers did was to implement the provisions of orthodox *Shari'ah* and humiliated the *kafirs*. What Qazi Mughis told Alauddin makes an interesting reading in this respect:

What is the status of Hindus as payers of tribute? Honesty would have required the Qazi to say that the Hindus are not referred to by name either in the Qur'an or the authentic collection of the Prophet's *Hadises* (Precepts), and that the *Ulama* have based their arguments merely on analogy (*Qiyas*) from the Prophet's peaceful arrangements with the Zoroastrians of Beharain; and that there was considerable difference of opinion on the matter. Instead of this the Qazi uttered two provable lies very dear to Barani's heart, but lies nonetheless. First, that 'The Hindus were the greatest enemies of the Prophet Mohammed and that the Prophet has ordered the Hindus to be killed, plundered and enslaved.' The Prophet never came across a Hindu in his life and no such order is found in the six authentic Sunni collections of Prophet's *Hadises*. Second, that while Imam Abu Hanifa, 'to whose school we belong' has permitted peace with Hindus on the payment of the *jaziya*, other religious scholars have left no alternative for them except 'Islam or the sword'. This again shows Barani's terrible ignorance which he repeats with greater emphasis in the *Fatwa-i Jahandari*.

Allauddin Khalji's reply to Mughis' points was equally interesting. He said, "Maulana Mughis! Though I have no knowledge and have read no book still I was born a Musalman and my ancestors have been Muslims for so many generations. To prevent rebellions in which thousands of lives are lost I give such orders to the people as I consider to be beneficial for them and the state. But the people of these days are bold, heedless and do not obey me properly; so it has become necessary for me to meet out harsh punishments to them to ensure obedience. I issue commands which I consider to be beneficial to the state and appear prudent under the circumstances. I do not know whether they

are permitted by the *Shari'at* or not. I do not know how God will treat me on the Day of Judgement.¹²

This conversation gives us an inkling of what the qazis and the *Ulama* thought and how the kings and rulers acted. Thus while using these sources one is likely to quote what the qazi said to prove how anti-Hindu the Muslim ruling class was.

Another problem is of selective approach to history. We use only those sources which suit us. The approach is often very selective and in keeping with historian's own biases. Not only this, a historian is like a cook. He cooks history in his own way and to his own taste. According to E.H. Carr, the noted British historian, the facts are not sacred as we select facts as we desire and use them in our own way. Carr says, "History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts. The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish on the fish monger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him".¹³ We generally maintain that facts are sacred. But here too one has to be cautious in one's approach. Carr says: "It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context. It was, I think, one of Pirandello's characters who said that a fact is like a sack—it won't stand up till you have put something in it. The only reason why we are interested to know that the battle was fought at Hastings in 1066 is that historians regard it as a major historical event. It is the historian who has decided for his own reasons that Caesar's crossing of petty stream, the Rubicon, is a fact of history, whereas the crossing of the Rubicon by millions of other people before or since interests nobody at all".¹⁴

Thus it will be seen that historical facts have their own limitations. It all depends what facts have been selected by the historian to present his version of history. Thus the element of subjectivity plays an important part in writing of history.

We hear much about demolition of temples by the Muslim rulers but we hardly talk of temples and other religious places and shrines demolished by the Hindu or Buddhist rulers or the iconoclasm of Harsha of Kashmir. Kosambi talks about this iconoclasm: "King Harsha of Kashmir (A.D. 1089-1101; not to be confused with the

seventh century emperor Harsha) systematically melted down all metal images throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom, with just four exceptions. The work was carried out under a special 'minister of uprooting gods' (*devotpadananayaka*). Each image was publicly defiled by leperous beggars who voided urine and excrement upon it before dragging it through the streets to the foundry. Not the slightest theological excuse was offered. The king did have a Muslim bodyguard of mercenaries, but went out of his way to offend them by eating pork."¹⁵

Such facts are never highlighted in our history for presenting a perspective. We highlight the demolition of temples only by the Muslim rulers irrespective of their motives. Selectivity in the process of writing history, though based on facts, can create wrong impressions.

About Mahmud Ghaznavi too the historians are quite selective in recording the facts. We highlight the fact that he demolished and plundered Somnath temple. But we do not throw light on the facts that he employed Hindus in high positions in his army and administration. Among his Hindu generals the names of Tilak, Sondi, Rai Hinda and Hajran are mentioned in *Tarikh-i-Bayhaqi*. He also richly rewarded a Hindu poet and had Hindu pundits in his service. Coins were issued in his reign bearing Sanskrit inscriptions. Also, Mahmud's son and successor, Mas'ud, employed Tilak as the head of an army to crush the rebel governor of Lahore, Ahmad Niyaltigin. Some Hindu generals were trusted councillors of the Ghaznavid monarchs.¹⁶ The historians also do not highlight the fact that the Hindu kings destroyed many Buddhist and Jain temples.

The historians do not mention that some of the Muslim rulers who destroyed Hindu places of worship also gave *jagirs* to some other temples. Aurangzeb is much maligned and rightly so for destroying some of the most sacred temples like the Shiva mandir at Benaras but hardly any historian mentions that he gave *jagirs* to many Hindu temples including one at Benaras itself. The *firman*s issued by Aurangzeb granting *jagirs* to the Hindu temples have been well-documented, yet hardly quoted. B.N. Pande says, "When I was the Chairman of the Allahabad Municipality (1948-53), a case of mutation (Dakhil Kharij) came up for my consideration. It was a dispute over the property dedicated to the temple of Someshwar Nath Mahadev. After

the death of the mahant, there were two claimants for the property. One of the claimants filed some documents which were in the possession of the family. The documents were the *farmans* issued by Emperor Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb conferred a *jagir* and a cash gift on the temple. I felt puzzled. I thought that *farmans* were fake. I was wondering how Aurangzeb, who was known for demolition of the temples, could confer a *jagir* on a temple with the words that '*jagir was being conferred for the puja and bhog of deity*' How could Aurangzeb identify himself with idolatory?"¹⁷

Pande further continues, "I felt sure that the documents were not genuine. But before coming to any conclusion, I thought it proper to take the opinion of Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who was a great scholar of Persian and Arabic. I laid the documents before him and asked for his opinion. After examining the documents. Dr. Sapru said that these *farmans* of Aurangzeb were genuine. Then he asked his *munshi* to bring the file of the case of Jangum Badi Shiva temple of Varanasi, of which several appeals were pending in the Allahabad High Court for the past 15 years. The mahant of the Jangum Badi Shiva temple was also in possession of various other *farmans* of Aurangzeb granting *jagir* to the temple. ... As advised by Dr. Sapru I sent letters to the mahants of various important temples of India requesting them to send me photostat copies, if they are in the possession of the *farmans* of Aurangzeb, granting them *jagir* for their temples. Another big surprise was in store for me. I received copies of *farmans* of Aurangzeb from the great temples of Mahakaleshwara, Ujjain, Balaji Temple, Chitrakut, Umanand Temple, Gauhati and the Jain temple of Shatrunjaya and other temples and Gurudwaras scattered over Northern India. These *farmans* were issued from 1065 AH (1659) to 1091 AH (1685)". (Ibid)

Also much has been made out of the *farman* Aurangzeb's banning construction of new temples which was published, for the first time, in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* in 1911. However, if the entire *farman* is read, it does not give such anti-Hindu impression as it is made out to be. The *farman* of 15 Jamadil Awwal, 1065 A.H. (10 March, 1659) reads as follows:

"Let Abul Hasan worthy of favour and countenance trust to our royal bounty, and let him know that since in accordance without innate kindness of disposition and natural benevolence, the whole of our untiring energy

and all our upright intentions are engaged in promoting the public welfare and bettering the conditions of all classes, high and low. In accordance with our holy law, we have decided that the ancient temples shall not be destroyed, but new ones shall not be built.

In these days of our justice, information has reached our noble and most holy court that certain persons interfere and harass the Hindu residents of the town of Banaras and its neighbourhood; and the Brahmin keepers of the temples, in whose charge these ancient temples are; and that they further desire to remove these Brahmins from their ancient offices, and this intimidation of theirs causes distress to that community.

Therefore our royal command is that, after arrival of this illustrious order, you should direct that, in future, no person shall in unlawful way interfere or disturb the Brahmins and other Hindu residents at these places, so that they may as before, remain in their occupation and continue with peace of mind to offer prayers for the continuance of our God-gifted empire, so that it may last for ever. Treat this order as urgent."¹⁸

It will be seen that Aurangzeb too, like other rulers, had many sides to his personality. He was much more than a demolisher of Hindu temples. As pointed out in the case of Mahmud Ghazni also, temples were not demolished only to fulfil religious requirements. More than that it fulfilled economic or political need. In case of Harsha of Kashmir who systematically demolished temples, as pointed out by D.D. Kosambi, it served an economic need. He melted gold and silver from temples and used for minting coins. Many Muslim rulers did not demolish the Hindu temples to offend their subjects. They did so more often than not, to humiliate or punish their rival Hindu ruler. The message often intended was that a ruler who could not defend a sacred place of worship could not defend his subjects. Or, a ruler who cannot defend a sacred place of worship does not deserve to rule. It will be seen that even Aurangzeb demolished those temples which were in the enemy territory and protected those which happened to be in the area of his allies. There are no instances of demolition of temples in Rajputana area under Raja Jaisingh who was Auangzebi's ally. On the contrary he gave *jagirs* to such temples. Thus it should not be surprising that while he demolished certain temples he gave *jagirs* to others. Many Hindu rulers also behaved in similar manner. The Marathas also destroyed temples in the enemy territory. During the reign of Tipu when Marathas invaded his territory they destroyed the famous temple at

Seringapattam and it was Tipu who repaired it. The Marathas wanted to humiliate Tipu by destroying the temple as well as loot its wealth whereas it was Tipu's concern to protect the temple and replenish all the loss so as to again inspire confidence among his subjects. It would be naive to ascribe such acts merely to the religious beliefs of a ruler. Many of our historians, especially those motivated by their political ideology, do not want to explore these motives and straight away ascribe it to the religious beliefs of the ruler. And if, the religion of the ruler conforms to that of those whose place of worship is destroyed that information is suppressed. Aurangzeb also destroyed a mosque within the territory of Tanashah of Golkunda and dug out wealth hidden below it which had been hoarded for avoiding payment of *kharaj* to the emperor. This is hardly ever highlighted as it does not suit the political slant of our communally-minded historians as it would show that in demolishing temples Aurangzeb must have had motives other than his religious belief since he also destroyed mosques.

The Demolition of Viswanath Temple

There has been great debate about demolition of this great temple at Benaras by Aurangzeb. It is, as usual, ascribed to Aurangzeb's religious bigotry. But Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in his famous book *The Feathers and the Stones* has a different story to tell. According to him while Aurangzeb was passing near Varanasi on his way to Bengal, the Hindu Rajas in his retinue requested that if the halt was made for a day, their Ranis may go to Varanasi, have a dip in the Ganges and pay their homage to Lord Vishwanath. Aurangzeb readily agreed. Army pickets were posted on the five-mile route to Varanasi. The Ranis made a journey, took their dip in the Ganges and went to the Vishwanath temple to pay homage. After offering puja all the Ranis returned except one, the Maharani of Kutch. A thorough search was made of the temple precincts but the Rani was not to be found. When Aurangzeb came to know of it he was very angry. He sent his senior officers to search her out. At last they found that the statue of Ganesha which was fixed in the wall was a moveable one. When the statue was moved, they saw a flight of stairs that led to the basement. To their horror, they found the missing Rani dishonoured and crying. The basement was just beneath

Lord Vishwanath's seat. The Rajas expressed their vociferous protests. As the crime was heinous the Rajas demanded exemplary action. Aurangzeb ordered that as the sacred precincts had been despoiled, Lord Vishwanath may be moved to some other place, the temple be razed to the ground and the mahant be arrested and punished. Dr. P.L. Gupta, former Curator of Patna museum also corroborated this account.¹⁹

This further shows that there were factors other than religious beliefs for demolition of temples and places of worship. It has been quite aptly observed by Dr. Bhagvandas and others that:

"These stories of idol-breaking and forcible conversions give colour to the view generally canvassed in our histories which represents the whole movement as if it was a continued religious war between Hinduism and Islam extending over eight centuries. Even those writers who seem to understand its political nature by their general treatment of the subject invariably leave upon the mind the same impression. Muslim kings are regarded as zealous crusaders whose dominant motive was the spread of Islam and whose method for achieving this object was the destruction of temples and forcible conversions. Thus the real drift of affairs and the constructive trend of the political events is lost sight of and a wrong perspective is set which altogether blurs the view. All the facts and conditions of Indian life which militate against this view are slurred over. The Muslim writers deplore the want of true religious feeling in Muslim kings in permitting idolatry to persist in their dominion and the unbelievers to prosper, while the Hindu writers bewail the weakness of the religious sentiment in Hindu rulers and their want of patriotism in not combining effectively against a foreigner in defence of their religion and their country".²⁰

It is of course not true that the Hindus and Muslims were at war with each other throughout medieval history. This is at best projecting back the conflict between Hindu and Muslim elite which started in the late 19th century. In fact, history is neither all war between two communities nor all harmony. There were both conflicts as well as harmonious relations. History should be seen in all its complexity. Some times they collaborated with each other in one phase and fought against each other in another. For example, Rana Sanga collaborated

with Babur against Ibrahim Lodi, and agreed to attack Delhi from the south and west whilst Babur attacked from the north. This he believed would enable him to take the capital, and having done so he would dispense with Babur and inherit the Sultanate. Trouble from Gujarat, however, prevented Sanga from keeping his part of the agreement, and the battle at Panipat ended in victory for Babur. What was worse for Sanga was the realisation that Babur intended to stay in India and rule from Delhi. The alliance broke and in 1527 Sanga was in action against Babur: he was defeated, and after his death, Mewar gradually sank into a minor state.²¹

Thus there was alliance between the two rulers and this alliance was immediately followed by war. There was nothing Hindu or Muslim about it. It was struggle for power, pure and simple. In this struggle not only Hindu and Muslim rulers were involved but also Hindu against Hindu and Muslim against Muslim. A rough count will show that of all the rebellions against the Mughal rulers, more than half were by the Muslim princes and provincial rulers. Since Babar had defeated the Lodhis (Pathans), the Pathans always fought against Mughals and joined hands with those who challenged them. Thus when Akbar's forces attacked Haldi Ghati to defeat Rana Pratap, Hakim Sur, a Pathan general of Pratap's army defended it. Akbar's army, on the other hand, had Rajputs led by Man Singh, Hakim Khan Sur fought very bravely against the Moghul army and the Ghati could be won by the Mughals only on his dead body. Before that Humayun was pitted against Sher Shah Suri both of whom were Muslims. Similarly, it would be wrong to portray the conflict between Aurangzeb and Shivaji as a religious one. It is true that Aurangzeb was much more orthodox than any other Mughal ruler but he was also an astute politician. The Hindu communalists totally condemn him and Muslim communalists idolise him. Both are extreme positions. Aurangzeb was neither pure evil nor a saint. Aurangzeb fought Shivaji not because he was Hindu nor Shivaji fought Aurangzeb because he was Muslim. Shivaji challenged Aurangzeb's authority and the conflict ensued.

Throwing light on the conflict between Shivaji and the Mughals, the noted historian Satish Chandra says, "The early efforts of Shivaji, the son of neglected wife of Shahji, were aimed towards his father's *jagir* in Poona. His growing ambitions, and the manifest inability of the

Bijapur government to curb his activities, brought him into clash with the Mughals who were reluctant to see a new state arise on their southern border and were suspicious of the plundering proclivities of Shivaji. A tussle with the mighty Mughal empire faced Shivaji with a difficult choice—whether to strike out for independence or to come to terms with it.”²²

To begin with, Shivaji was not in conflict with the Mughals. As pointed out by Jadu Nath Sarkar he, in fact, had entered into an agreement with the Mughals according to which he would have benefited monetarily and status-wise too. Shivaji, according to this agreement, was to pay 40 lakh *huns*...be loyal and obedient to the Mughal government, refrain from plundering the imperial dominions, and perform service in the Deccan whenever called upon to do so. His son, Shambhaji, was accorded the *mansab* of 5,000, and accompanied by Netaji, the trusted lieutenant of Shivaji, was to attend on the *Subahdar* of Deccan.²³

Sarkar further says, ...Thus Shivaji was given autonomy within an area which, if the Bijapur campaign proved successful, would actually yield him an income greater than what he had enjoyed before. He was also exempted from personal service (except in the Deccan)—a privilege extended only to the Rana of Mewar, the most illustrious and the oldest ruling house in Rajputana. The *mansab* granted to Shivaji's son was also not a lowly one, being equal to that held by the Rana of Mewar. But it was not likely to satisfy Shivaji since similar ranks had already been granted to a number of Maratha chiefs regarded by Shivaji as inferior to him in status and power.²⁴

The ambition of Shivaji was to obtain a status higher than that of other Maratha chiefs which basically brought him into conflict with Aurangzeb, and not his religion. Moreover, when he fought against Aurangzeb, again the Pathan Muslims joined him. His own personal secretary was Maulvi Haider Ali Khan who handled his private and confidential correspondence with Aurangzeb and other Mughal officials. His chief of artillery was also a Pathan Muslim Ibrahim Gardi Khan. Also, Aurangzeb fought against Marathas with the help of Rajput Army and Mirza Jai Singh was very close to him. 'Mirza' was a title conferred on Jai Singh by the Mughal Emperor. These Rajput allies were quite loyal to Aurangzeb. Thus by no stretch of imagination

the conflict between Shivaji and Aurangzeb could be projected as a religious conflict. Moreover Aurangzeb's conflict with the states of Bijapur and Golkunda, both Muslim states, was perhaps more acute than with the Marathas under the leadership of Shivaji. Satish Chandra, says "Aurangzeb went to the Deccan in 1681, ostensibly in pursuit of prince Akbar. But the threat from the side of the Prince soon passed, and the Emperor's main pre-occupation became the conquest of Bijapur and Golkunda."²⁵

Even when there was conflict with Shivaji, Aurangzeb, astute politician that he was, tried to retain loyalty of Shivaji's grandson Shahu who was, Shambhaji's son whom Aurangzeb had executed. Shahu was granted a *mansab* of 7,000 which was also conferred on Shambhaji in 1678 and accorded the title of Raja, and lodged inside fortress-prisons like the deposed rulers of Bijapur and Golkunda.

Much has been written about orthodoxy and bigotry of Aurangzeb. He was undoubtedly an orthodox Muslim and also, to some extent, a religious bigot. But, like other Mughal emperors he too, was a king first and a Muslim later. He was far too cautious to outrage Hindus as a whole, inspite of particular acts of intolerance, says Percival Spear.²⁶ It would be interesting to quote Spear's assessment of Aurangzeb:

"His rise to power through a dramatic civil war with the imprisonment of his father and the destruction of brothers, son, and nephew provided his European portrait through the publication of Bernier's *Travels* in 1670, later writers contrasted his bigotry with Akbar's tolerance, his failure against the Marathas with Akbar's success with the Rajputs. He provided the reverse to the Akbarian model of genius and this in general is the current picture of his today except in Pakistan, where many proclaim him the greatest Muslim ruler of India. It is forgotten that he governed India for nearly as long as Akbar (over forty eight years) and than he left the empire larger than he found it. In fact, though Aurangzeb's rise to power was ruthless as well as dramatic, it was not more so than of others of his race. Aurangzeb succeeded not because he was more cruel but because he was more efficient and more skilled in the current game of statecraft with his father and made away only with those who 'touched the sceptre'. ...He differed from Akbar in consciously tolerating Hindus rather than treating them as equals, but his supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on temple site in Benaras."²⁷

One may or may not agree with all that Percival Spear says about Aurangzeb but one thing which must be understood is that one cannot rule over India with a vast majority of Hindu population by deliberately antagonising them. A ruler has to exercise caution in such matters. History cannot be read merely in terms of religion of the ruler; his motives and his interests are equally important.

Also, history should not be confined only to rulers. Unfortunately in our history almost entire emphasis is on rulers and the ruled hardly matter. Also, there are several trends determine history within same period of time. While Aurangzeb was displaying his orthodoxy, his brother, Dara Shikoh executed, by him, was a great liberal who studied Upanishads in Benaras in the company of great Sanskrit scholars and wrote a book *Majma'ul Bahrain* i.e. meeting of two great oceans, Hindusim and Islam. In this valuable work of comparative religion he tries to show that there is much in common between the two. In the chapter "Discourse on the Elements" ('Anasir) he says, "Know that the constituents are five in number and that these five alone form the constituents of all the mundane creations—First 'the great element', ('*Unsur-i-A'azam*), which the men of faith (*Shar'*) call "*Arsh-i-Akbar'*, or the 'great throne'; Secondly, the wind; Thirdly, the fire; Fourthly, the water and Fifthly, the dust." And in the Indian language these are called *Panch Bhut*, namely, *akas*, *ba'i* (i.e. *vayu*), *jal*, and *pirthi* i.e. (*prithivi*). Thus Dara goes on comparing the concepts and terminologies in the two great religions. If Dara had succeeded to the throne of Delhi, he would have adopted very different policies. He might have repeated Akbar's policies or might have even outdone him in liberalism. But it was not to be.

We also have to bear in mind the contribution of Sufi saints. They were much closer to the masses, both Hindu as well as Muslim. Thousands of them flocked to their hospices. The Sufis believed in the doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud* (Unity of Being). This doctrine had very far reaching religious consequences. It demolished the wall between Hindus and Muslims. The founder of this doctrine Muhy'i uddin Ibn Arabi is reported to have said that *my heart is a temple, a church, a mosque, a synagogue and a fire-temple*. Thus this doctrine diffused the sharpness of different separate religious identities. The Sufis believed

more in theosophy than theology, more in spiritual practices than formalities of *shari'ah* (though they did not discard *shari'ah* as such). Thus the Sufis' worked out a synthesis of Islam with Indian religions, mainly Hinduism.

The Sufis usually wrote in Indian regional languages and not only in Arabic or Persian. Thus Baba Farid who lived in Punjab, wrote in Punjabi and is considered as one of the early Punjabi poets. Guru Nanak has quoted him extensively in the *Adi Granth Saheb*. Similarly a sufi called Shaikh Mohammad from Maharashtra wrote in Marathi and became so popular in that region that, according to Dr. P.V. Ranade, "his works were accorded almost a holy sanction in the Maharashtrian *Warakari Silsilah*. No less a poet than Saint Samarath Ramdas, said to be the spiritual mentor of Shivaji Maharaj, paid salutation to Shaikh Mohammad:

"Glory to Shaikh Mohammad. You have unfolded the mystery of the universe in such diction and style that baffle the reason and logic of ordinary mortals. You have truly perceived the fundamental unity and identity of the entire universe. You have obliged us and put us in your debt which we can never pay back to you, even if we put out body and soul at your feet. I will carry the sacred dust raised by your feet on my head."²⁸ (Free translation of Ramdas's verse as quoted by Bendre).

Shaikh Mohammad wrote number of poetical works like *Yoga Sangram*, *Pavanvijay*, *Achar Bodh*, *Vichar Bodh* etc., all in Marathi. According to Dr. Ranade, these "poetical compositions of Shaikh Mohammad veer round the doctrine of *Tawhid* which is equivalent to Marathi and Sanskrit term *Advaita*. Overcoming the alienation of man from universe and restoring the bond between the two were the twin objectives of *tawhid* or *advaita* philosophy. This called for censuring the ritualistic plurality practiced by the fake and untruthful gentry of Kazis, Maulanas, Sanyasis, Jogis, Jangams, Bairagis, Mullas and Pandits. Shaikh Mohammad did not spare any of such untruthful godmen whom he subjected to ridicule and fun in almost every of his compositions.²⁹ Khuldabad, in Maharashtra, was a centre of Sufi saints and Shah Sharifji is supposed to have blessed Mauliji, Shivaji's grandfather's wife, also lived here. It is said that Shivaji's grand father had no children and he sought blessings of Shah Sharifji as a result of which two sons were born to him.

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was another great Sufi saint who ultimately settled in Delhi during the Sultanate period. The cornerstone of Nizamuddin's mystic ideology is the formation of God-conscious personality. His belief was that whoever developed love of God in his heart ceased to be vulnerable to sin. For his God was an all-embracing reality present in his ethical, intellectual and aesthetic experience. As divine beneficence did not discriminate between one individual and another, so also a mystic was expected to transcend all barriers of cult, race, language and geography in extending his bounties. All human beings are the children of God on earth and it was our duty to treat them alike with sympathy and affection. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya demonstrated the working of this concept in his social relationship.³⁰

Shaikh Nizamuddin believed that one who caused pain to any human heart could not attain spiritual excellence.³¹ He cited Shaikh Abu Sa'id Abul Khair's remark that though there were innumerable ways leading to him but bringing happiness to human heart was the surest way to gnosis.³²

Similarly many sufis believed that Allah had sent his prophets to Hindustan also as he has promised in the holy Qur'an that he had sent guide to every people. Sufis like Mazhar Jan-i-Janan believed that the *Bedas* (i.e. Vedas) were the revered books of God and that Ram and Krishna, the two greatly revered figures in India, must have been prophets of God. He also felt that the Hindus were not idolators like the pre-Islamic Arabs and hence one must distinguish between the two. Thus the Hindus in India cannot be equated with the *kafirs* of Arabia. Thus he says, "The Vedas contain divine commandments regarding actions that are positive and negative i.e. dos and don'ts, and account about the past and prophesies about the future."

He compares the idol-worship of Hindus with that of Sufi practices and says, "The Hindus make their idols and pictures of human form, in order to meditate on them, to concentrate their attention on them, and on account of this concentration for a period of time they develop a spiritual relationship with these objects, who indeed are expected to fulfil their needs in this life and hereafter. This practice of theirs resembles the commonly prevalent Islamic sufi system of meditation with the form of the *pir* in mind in which the appearance of the spiritual

guide is imagined and benefits are derived from it. The only difference is that the Sufis do not make the physical form of their spiritual guides.³³

Similarly some Sufis from Gujarat described Muhammad the Prophet of Islam as an *awtar* of Krishna and Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet and his spiritual successor, an *awtar* of Vishnu. The Isma'ili Khojas considered Ali as the tenth (Dasham) *awtar* of Vishnu. These Sufis from Gujarat composed poems in Gujarati to this effect. Also, the masses of people, who hardly matter in history except in *subaltern* accounts, had no vested interest of any kind and they freely mixed with each other and respected each others' faith. They also developed synthetic cults or practices drawing religious elements from each others beliefs. A number of syncretistic sects like Sikh panth, Kabir panth, Pranami panth and several other panths came into existence. It was far from confrontation between the Hindus and Muslim throughout medieval history. Such a conclusion would be unfair and unscientific.

One dare say that there was more co-operation between Hindus and Muslims than confrontation, not in political and religious sphere but also in the spheres of music, painting, architecture and other areas of fine arts, creative synthesis was attempted. Many Muslims translated the Hindu classics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* in Persian and Arabic composed verses in praise of these classics. Ras Khan, Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan and others were Hindi poets. There were many such composite trends in Indian art and culture after the advent of the Muslims. It should also be borne in mind that Islam did not enter India only through invasion of Muhammad bin Qasim but it entered through trade routes in Kerala much before it.

History is a very complex process and throws up many trends. One must, therefore, take a holistic view of history rather than a selective view. Those who take a selective view to serve their political needs are doing injustice to history and also are seeking revenge from those who are in no way answerable for what those rulers did or did not do whose religion also happened to be Islam.

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Chapter 2

The British Rule and Communalism

It is well known that communalism is a modern and not a medieval phenomenon. As explained in the previous chapter, the kings and rulers demolished places of worship not out of spite for a particular religion but to serve their own political needs. Also, the medieval age was characterised by religiosity and not by communalism. Religion is not the fundamental cause of communalism; it is only an instrumental cause. Fundamental cause of communalism is political. Religion is used as an instrument as it has great emotional appeal and hence has mobilizatory potential. Thus it would be incorrect to hold that medieval age was responsible for giving birth to communalism. Medieval people were more religious than communal. A truly religious person is incapable of being communal and a communal person is incapable of being religious. Religion (in its true sense) is always transcendental and hence transcends all worldly interests whereas communalism cannot exist without worldly (particularly political and economic) interests. A communal person (or a party) hardly cares for the noble teachings of religion; he is obsessed with his or a section of his community's interests, particularly the interests of the upper class. That is why a communal person is incapable of being religious though he may pretend to be so. Similarly a religious person, since he is not bothered about his or her own interests or those of his class, but is deeply concerned with either transcendental or metaphysical aspects of religious beliefs, cannot be communal. The best examples of this are Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Both were deeply religious in their own ways and yet both were totally against

communalism. Both supported secular nationalism. Similarly Vir Savarkar on the one hand, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah on the other, were quite modern and westernised and yet both were opposed to secular nationalism as they were more concerned with political and economic interests of upper classes of their respective communities. This makes it quite clear that religiosity and communalism are two different categories. The former is transcendental and metaphysical and the latter is politico-economic in nature.

In this sense communalism is a modern phenomenon which came into being on account of competition for economic as well as political power between the elites of two communities. Here then the question arises did such a competition not exist in medieval age? Why did it start only during the British period? For this we must understand the nature of polity and economy during the medieval and colonial periods respectively. Both the medieval polity as well as economy were non-competitive in nature. The monarchs, unlike the democratic rulers, were not elected but seized power by wielding the sword. Whosoever captured power commanded the loyalty of the people irrespective of caste or community. Loyalty was the by-word during medieval ages. *Namak halal* (loyal to the master's master) and *namak haram* (disloyal to the master) were key words as monarchs and feudal lords demanded loyalty of their subjects. Even if there were two or more communities, their representatives did not compete for power with each other. They simply remained loyal to the monarch who acquired power by wielding the sword. The medieval monarchs generally showed respect for all religious groups within their own territory to retain loyalty of these religious groups.

Similarly, the feudal economy too was non-competitive. Generally feudal production was for local consumption and not for market outside its region and hence the question of competition did not arise. Also, in the feudal period there was a division of labour along caste lines legitimised by religion. In such a production set-up one caste or community did not compete with the other caste or community. On the other hand, they complemented each other. Also, the government jobs went to those who fought in support of the monarch. The jobs in the court were distributed on the basis of loyalty rather than religion. There was no recruitment to the bureaucracy in the modern sense. In fact the

lowly castes, irrespective of their religion, could not hold higher jobs in the courts. Similarly the newly converted Muslims more often than not formed the lowly castes, and were hardly represented in the higher echelons of the courts. Ziaduddin Barani, a historian of the Sultanate period, describes such neo-Muslims as “dogs and swines not worthy of higher education”. Similarly, he recommends for them only so much education as to enable them to fulfil their religious obligations. Also, the concept of *ashraf* and *ajlaf* (i.e. the nobles and menials) was widely prevalent among the Muslims. The neo-Muslims were generally from menial category unless they were converted from the ruling classes.

However, with the coming of the British the entire political and economic scenario changed radically. There was, to use the modern jargon, a structural shift both in polity and economy. The feudal structure was replaced by colonial structure. Howsoever condemnable, the colonial rule was more democratic and competitive compared to the feudal polity and economy. It may not be a virtue in its own way but it did introduce to us the modern concepts like democratic rule, secular nationalism, capitalist economy etc. In fact the concept of democratic polity through elections (howsoever based on restricted franchise) led to a major dispute between the two major religious communities on power sharing. Thus when the Local Self Government Bill was first introduced in 1883 in the Viceroy's Executive Council, it was opposed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a modern Muslim reformer, on the basis of dispute between the two communities on sharing number of seats in municipalities. Sir Syed told the Council:

The system of representation by election means the representation of the views and interests of the majority of the population ... in a country like India, where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of the various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education in its modern sense has not made an equal or proportionate progress among all the sections of the population, I am convinced that the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, for representation of various interests on the Local Boards and District Councils would be attended with evils of greater significance than purely economic considerations. So long as differences of race and creed, and the distinctions of caste form an important element in the socio-political life of India, and influence her inhabitants in matters connected with the administration and welfare of the country at large, the system of election

pure and simple cannot safely be adopted. The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community, and the ignorant public would hold Government responsible for introducing measures which might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever.¹

Thus introduction of limited democratic measures led to conflict between elites of various castes and communities. Sir Syed, who represented the Muslim *shurafa* (i.e. elite) perceived the nature of this conflict and frankly expressed it in the Legislative Council. His fears were of course not personal but those of a minority community. A minority always, and somewhat naturally, fears that it will be dominated by the majority community and that it will be denied proper share in power on the one hand, and, on the other, its religio-cultural traditions will come under attack. The majority community is likely to impose its own culture. This fear, ultimately, became the very basis of formation of Pakistan.

Sir Syed's observations indicate the genesis of communalism in modern India. It is debatable whether Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a communalist. His attitude had not until then hardened. His patriotism could not be questioned. He described India as a bride whose two eyes were Hindus and Muslims and any squint could destroy the beauty of the bride and so any negative discrimination between the two could affect the equipoise of India. However, his communal attitude hardened much later, specially during the thirties of twentieth century.

The sharing of the government jobs also led to bitter controversies in the nineteenth century between the Muslim and Hindu elites. In fact the Muslims in the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh today) where most of the recruitment came from the families of feudal lords, were in very comfortable position as the government and court language was it, though it was not spoken exclusively by Muslims. For example the following table gives the figures of employment of Hindus and Muslims in North-West Provinces and Oudh in 1882.

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against 90 Hindu, 122 Muslim Tahsildars as against 101 Hindu and in judicial services there were 15 Muslim subordinate judges as against 20 Hindu and 47 Muslim Munsifs as against 51 (Source: PSC 1886-7, Report, P.P. 1888, XLVIII, p. 55). Thus the competition for government jobs also promoted communalism in the nineteenth century India. It was further fuelled by the language controversy. Francis Robinson has aptly described it as "Threats to Urdu-speaking elite". Of course, there were Hindus too among the Urdu elites but it is mainly the Muslims who were affected. Among the most influential people among the Muslims were the landlords and Talukadars. However, there was a structural shift after the colonial power established itself and hence the old classes began to decline and new classes began to emerge. Francis Robinson has put it cogently thus:

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the dominance of the Urdu-speaking elite was gradually undermined by several factors, most of them arising from the effects of British rule. For political reasons government was concerned to build up landlord power. Nevertheless, once the bureaucracy began to assume control over matters such as local posts, roads and police, which used to be in the hands of local magnates, it steadily cut down the very landlord power it was concerned to support. At the same time there was another challenge to the magnates' position. Commercial men were growing richer as communications developed, as cash cropping increased, as trade expanded and as the law was enforced more rigorously. In some areas they not only rivalled the influence of the landlords but also began to buy up their land. This general pressure on the influence of landlords forms the background to changes which levelled quite-specific threats at the position of the Urdu-speaking elite, in particular its Muslim members. Government's attempts to develop education, to introduce western learning and to encourage the vernacular languages threatened the elite's religious beliefs, social customs and political position. Reforms in bureaucracy reduced its power in government offices. The introduction of the elective principle in local government undermined its influence, particularly in the towns. Moreover, these changes were taking place side by side with the development of a Hindu revivalist movement which threatened the heart of the elite's political and cultural supremacy.³

Francis Robinson has mentioned almost all the factors threatening Urdu-speaking elite in general and Muslims in particular. Before the British consolidated their position in India, Muslims were not only

political rulers but also had linguistic and cultural hegemony. One cannot be so sure about economic control. It always had been in the hands of the Hindu trading castes. Even during the entire Mughal period the finance ministry was always headed by a Hindu. But the lack of economic hegemony was not felt on account of political and cultural supremacy. After the British took over, the Muslims not only lost political rule but also their linguistic and cultural hegemony was slowly eroded. Bureaucracy, specially, its upper echelons, also now came to be controlled by the British. The colonial rule gave a shattering blow to feudal economy and the rise of Hindu trading class, hurt the landlord class. Not only this the colonial commercial bourgeoisie began to transform itself into an industrial bourgeoisie thus acquiring a great economic clout. On the other hand, the landlords in general and the Muslim landlords in particular began to decline in their influence as they had no historical experience of managing finances and trade. The trading and industrial class among the Muslims, particularly in North India, was very weak. Though some trading communities of west coast prospered during the British period (specially Khojas, Memons and the Bohras)⁴ the centre of Muslim politics in India lay in the north, specially in U.P. and it is the Muslim leadership of U.P. (both political as well as religious) which commanded influence on all-India level and hence their perceptions were much more important than the perceptions of Muslims of other parts of India. It should be borne in mind that communalism has been the phenomenon of North India. It is in this part of India that acute political competition between the Hindu and Muslim elite developed. Very few Muslim leaders of all-India fame came from other parts of India, except Jinnah.

We have also to take into account the revivalist trends among North Indian Hindus. They were perceived as direct threat to Muslim cultural hegemony. This perception became all the more acute as the Muslim elite were getting marginalised politically also. Thus Theodore Beck observed in 1886 that "It must be remembered ... that Mahommedans ruled this part of India for five centuries, and are not prepared to accept a position of political insignificance... If the Government shut to them the door by which they may hope to gain legitimate influence, it will give a dangerous impetus to those with whom the idea of the *jehad* is not yet dead."

Thus the loss of political hegemony was not being duly compensated by gain in influence in the new set-up as far as the Muslim elite perceptions were concerned. It was this sense of loss of political hegemony which began to exacerbate relations between the Hindu and Muslim elites. During the Mughal period preceding the British rule, a composite ruling class had come into existence which was at the helm of affairs. There was no sense of competition between Hindus and Muslims who constituted this composite ruling class. This composite culture was so assimilative of both the cultures that it did not give a cause for complaint to the either constituent. However, this politico-cultural equation between the two communities was undergoing a radical change. The Hindu political, economic and cultural elite was acquiring predominant position in the new situation.

While the Muslim ruling classes were suffering from a sense of great loss of political hegemony, Hindu elite, not only did not suffer from any such sense of loss, they on the other hand, gained more confidence. While the North Indian Hindu elite welcomed the British rule and saw it as beneficial in every respect (except politically conscious elements among them who aspired for freedom from the British rule), the Muslim elite saw nothing but loss of control in every respect. No wonder then that the Hindu elite, right from the days when the British capital was at Calcutta, began to acquire the western education enthusiastically and without any reservation whatsoever. However the Muslim elite saw nothing but threat in western and modern learning. Before the British rule, Persian was the language of the ruling class and the Muslim elite came from *madrassa* education. They wanted to conserve the Persian culture and refused to give place to the modern British culture. The *Ulama* were also determined to resolutely oppose modern education. *Madrassa* education had given them power and prestige. It was the *Ulama* (the Muslim theologians) who were more doggedly opposed to the British rule for two reasons: firstly, they lost their own power and prestige with the introduction of new secular laws. The *qadi* courts were being fast replaced by the British courts. Now even the matters pertaining to personal laws fell in the jurisdiction of the secular British courts. The *qadis* and the *Ulama* had no say whatsoever in such matters. Secondly, the *Ulama* thought that the new laws were opposed to Islamic *shari'ah* and hence

could not be acceptable to the Muslims. The only way to get rid of these un-Islamic laws was to get rid of the British rule and hence they were determined to overthrow it and co-operate with anyone who had similar views. There was yet one more reason for the intense opposition of the *Ulama* to the British rule. Mostly these theologians came from either the rural poor or from the artisan class. These classes had suffered economically much more than the Muslim elite and were ruined by the new British policies. The peasantry suffered in its own way and the artisans were ruined on account of import of the British manufactured industrial goods. Also, the British textiles completely ruined the Indian weavers. Since the *Ulama*, had their roots in this class, they knew their suffering better than anyone else among the Muslims and they also knew it was due to the British domination. Thus they were more determined to fight the British than anyone else, specially among the Muslims.

We would like to throw more light on the role of the *Ulama* in this respect. It is interesting to note that for the reasons explained above the *Ulama* took a very hard attitude towards the British rule and supported any move to oust it from India. One of the Wahabi Muslims even assassinated Lord Mayo in the later part of the nineteenth century much before the terrorists of Bengal became active in early twentieth century.⁵ Similarly, the acting Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court was assassinated by a Muslim on the steps of the High Court.⁶ All this very clearly goes to show that the poor Muslims had been very adversely affected by the British rule.

When the Indian National Congress was formed in 1885, there was great controversy among the Muslims about joining it. Sir Syed and his colleagues were against it. They thought the Muslims should not antagonise the British by joining the Congress and they should better concentrate on education and constructive work. Thus says Francis Robinson:

Syed Ahmed's immediate reaction to the growth of Congress activity in Upper India was to oppose it. This surprised many, both then and later. Indeed, he has been accused of executing a complete volte-face. It is deposed that in his *Causes of the Indian Revolt* he had demanded that Indians should be allowed to serve on the legislative council; that during the British Indian Association days he had laboured to enable the sons of

the Urdu speaking elite to go to England to prepare for the civil service examination; and that in his Punjab tour of 1884 he had made much of Hindu-Muslim unity. Yet as soon as the Congress gained a hold in the U.P., he turned against many of the aims for which he had once fought. Some claim that he fell under the influence of the callow young Aligarh principal, Theodore Beck. Others less charitable, suggest that he was seduced by the favours rained upon him by the government.⁷ But a close examination of the writings and activities of Syed Ahmed and his circle reveals no such sudden change.⁸

After all, Francis Robinson seems to be right. Sir Syed, though one may not necessarily agree with him, was looking at the problem in a very different perspective. He was essentially concerned with the interests of the upper class Indian Muslims and he had his own perspective about it. As pointed out above he thought the best way to compete with the Hindu elite was to concentrate their energies in acquiring western education. He himself devoted his energies to establishing an educational institution for Muslims in Aligarh which he named as Anglo-Oriental Muhammadan College (AMO). He also began to bring out a journal called *Tahzibul Akhlaq* (i.e. refinement of conduct). The Muslim *shurafa* had feudal manners and he wanted them to acquire western manners and realise the value of modern western education. He considered that joining the Indian National Congress was to get involved in political activities which will only earn the British wrath. He had experienced as a sub-judicial officer the horrors of 1857 mutiny and the consequences suffered by the Muslim *shurafa*. He had, therefore, written *The Causes of the Indian Revolt (Asbab-e-Bhaghavat-e-Hind)* referred to above. He was sympathetic to the British as he was their employee and was convinced that the British rule was there to stay and that the Muslims should not try to antagonise it and should, instead, co-operate with it. He thought that if the Muslims associated with the Indian National Congress, they will fall out of favour with the British and will suffer further. Unfortunately, it must be admitted, Sir Syed did tend to take a rather partisan view as a Muslim and regarded the Indian National Congress as an essentially "Hindu Party" and felt that India was not a nation. Thus he wrote to Badruddin Tyabji, a retired Bombay High Court judge who thought it necessary to join Indian National Congress: "The fact that you took a leading part in the Congress at Madras has pleased our Hindu fellow

subjects no doubt but as to ourselves it has grieved us much.”⁹ He further states in the same letter, “I do not understand what the words “National Congress” mean. Is it supposed that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation, or can become a nation, and their aims and aspirations be one and the same? I think it is quite impossible and when it is impossible there can be no such thing as a ‘National Congress’, nor can it be of equal benefit to all peoples.”¹⁰ Then he goes on to say, “I object to every Congress in any shape or form whatever—which regards India as one nation on account of its being based on wrong principles, viz., it regards the whole of India as one nation. Probably you will not like my ideas and therefore I hope you will excuse me for venturing to write so much”.¹¹

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan thus took an extreme view in his opposition to the Indian National Congress. It would be rather debatable to maintain that he was separatist which M.A. Jinnah became during the late thirties and that the Syed would have opted for partition. This view was on account of many other developments which took place after the twenties. But one can say that there were seeds of separatism in what the Syed was saying. It is also true that Jinnah later spoke the same language as the Syed did in the late 19th century and it was all on account of competition for political power and government jobs. It was essentially a fight between the two elites. The very words of Sir Syed that the aims and aspirations of different castes and creeds cannot be same, shows this. It is very clear that when Sir Syed talks of aims and aspirations he talks of aims and aspirations of the upper classes of these castes and communities. It had nothing to do with the poor and exploited masses of his community. In fact, his campaign for education was also essentially meant for the upper class *shurafa* only. Thus when the artisans of Moradabad invited him for inaugurating a school thinking he was a great advocate for modern education, he did not show much enthusiasm for it and told them that their children should not waste their time going to school but should, instead learn their craft and add to the family income.

It would not be correct to say that entire Muslim elite was unanimous in supporting the political views of Sir Syed. The Muslim elite from Upper India had a different perspective from that of the Western India. The Muslim elite from Upper India had suffered on

account of the British rule as they lost their political power and hold over pre-British government bureaucracy. Thus naturally they developed a hostile attitude towards it. It was somewhat different in the western part of India. In Western India some Muslim communities were mercantile and they greatly benefited by establishment of the British rule due to expansion of infrastructural facilities like railways, post and telegraph etc., on the one hand, and, due to expansion of export-import trade, on the other.¹²

Unlike the Muslim elite from Upper India, the Muslims of Western India did not oppose the establishment of modern schools and colleges. Badruddin Tyabji was one of the founders of the chain of Anjuman-e-Islam schools and colleges without any notable resistance from Muslims in Bombay. On the other hand, they made generous contributions. Similarly the Muslim elite from Western India was not opposed to joining the Indian National Congress either. Badruddin Tyabji showed enthusiasm in attending the Congress sessions; in fact, he became its first Muslim president.

Tyabji not only extended his full support to the Congress but also justified its political philosophy. To Syed Amir Ali, the Judge of Calcutta High Court and a noted Muslim intellectual he wrote, "You are no doubt aware that I took somewhat leading part in the last Congress at Madras and I have observed with pain and regret that valued friends like yourself, Syed Ahmad Khan and Nawab Abdul Latif have thought it their duty to keep aloof from the Congress. I have not been able thoroughly to understand the grounds on which this abstention is sought to be justified but it does seem to me to be a great pity that on matters affecting all India as a whole, any section of the Mussalman community should keep aloof from the Hindus and thus retard the national progress of India as a whole. I understand your objection to be that the Hindus being more advanced than ourselves would profit more by any concessions made by Government to educated natives but surely it is our duty if possible to raise ourselves in the scale of progress, rather than to prevent other people from enjoying the rights for which they are qualified. If any proposal is made which would subject the Mussalmans to the Hindus or would vest the executive power in Hindus to the detriment of the Mussalmans, I should oppose it with all my strength, but the Congress proposes to do

no such thing. Its aims are, *and must be for the benefit of all communities equally* and my proposition that is *disliked by the Mahomedans as a body* could take exception. I have already framed a rule to the effect that no proposition to which the Mussalmans generally object shall be considered by the Congress. This rule will be formally embodied in the constitution of the Congress and is I think calculated to remove your objection so far as I can understand it.”¹³ (emphasis in the original)

It is quite obvious from Tyabji's letter that the Western India Muslim elite was not hostile to the Congress philosophy; on the contrary it justified it as he did. The Muslim elite of the north, on the other hand, was hostile towards the Congress. Thus the Muslim community in India as a whole, it should be noted, was far from united in its political approach. Like any other community it was divided along class lines, on the one hand, and on the regional lines, on the other. It should also be pointed out here that the communalists always try to treat the community as a whole, homogenous and united on all the issues. It never happened in the medieval ages nor did it happen during the freedom struggle as a whole. Mohammad Ali Jinnah too, as a leader of the Muslim League, always insisted that he was the 'sole spokes-person' of the whole community but the Congress leadership refused, and rightly so, to accept him as such.

In the nineteenth century too the ground reality was that the Muslim community was deeply divided on various issues, political as well as social. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan himself had radically different views on issues of social reform. He was a great modern reformer and advocate of modern secular education. He enthusiastically welcomed modern science and thought that the Qur'an cannot be against it. He so interpreted the Qur'an that he thought that the 'Word of God (i.e. the Qur'an) cannot contradict itself with the 'Work of God' (i.e. nature meaning thereby science). Syed Ahmad Khan's understanding of the Qur'an was radically different from that of the orthodox *Ulama*. He makes very radical statements in his commentary on the Qur'an. Thus he goes on to say at one place that the verses on 'promise and threat', i.e. on paradise and hell, aim to make man understand in figurative language the highest form of eternal bliss and repose. By employing such language the Qur'an awakens the desire in man to obey

commands and to respect divine prohibition. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to other physical descriptions in Qur'anic eschatology; the 'blowing of the trumpet' is a metaphor for *ba'th wa hashr*, in other words for the radical change of everything at the end of time, and 'the book of deeds (*kitab al a' mal*)' and 'the weighing of the deeds on the scales (*al-mizan wa' 'al-muwazanah*)' is a metonymy for God's justice.¹⁴ Naturally these were very radical views on the Qur'anic interpretation and a very small band of followers of the Syed could accept such views. The conservative section of the Muslim community led by the orthodox *Ulama* were very hostile to Sir Syed for this. Thus there was deep division between the Muslims on religious issues as well.

Here we would like to draw attention to the highly contradictory role played by the *Ulama* in Indian society of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, they held very orthodox, even reactionary, views on all matters of social change. They were, as pointed out earlier, highly opposed to Sir Syed's progressive views on modern education and the process of social change. But, on the other hand, contradictory though it appears, they were politically quite radical and progressive. They were totally opposed to the British colonial rule and wanted to throw them out at any cost and as speedily as possible. The *Ulama* of the Shah Waliyullahi School¹⁵ were, like Badruddin Tyabji of Bombay, for an alliance with the Indian National Congress. They were convinced that the Muslims by themselves could not throw the British out. So when the Congress was formed, these *Ulama urged upon* the Muslims to join it and fight shoulder to shoulder with their Hindu brethren against the British. Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, the Chief spokesman of the Darul 'Uloom of Deoband, issued a *fatwa* asking Muslims to associate with the Congress and against Sir Syed's stand against Muslims joining the Congress. The Wahabis of India had published a book of *fatwas* in support of the Congress entitled *Nusrat al-Ahrar* (i.e. rendering help to the freedom fighters) which comprised some 100 *fatwas* including two from the Deoband leaders.¹⁶

Sir Syed's views both political as well as religious were vehemently opposed by these *Ulama*. He was denounced by them as a *kafir*, or a Christian or a Jew. The *Ulama* were totally opposed to secular English education. For them it represented totally alien culture

and was likely to corrupt Muslims religiously and morally. It would also have weakened their hold over the minds and hearts of the community. Also, they intensely disliked Sir Syed's political views which were quite pro-British.

Initially the British were quite hostile to the Muslims of all classes, especially immediately after the 'mutiny' of 1857. However, after the formation of the Indian National Congress the British thought that the Hindu elite was assuming nationalist stance and hence they began to look to the upper Muslim classes for support. Sir John Strachey expressed the new policy in the following words: "The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India. *The better classes of Mohammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness.* They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population, *whose political interests are identical with ours.*"¹⁷ (emphasis supplied)

The British rulers at the highest levels were thus looking towards a small and energetic loyal Muslim minority to support the British cause. They found one in Sir Syed and his small band of followers. That is why he was given the highest honour of the knighthood by Queen Victoria. One should not think that Sir Syed wanted to sell the interests of the country for the sake of coming close to the British rulers. His sole concern was to promote the interests of the feudal Muslim elite. This, in fact, became the root cause of communal way of thinking. As we shall see later, our country got divided on similar question. As it has been very well brought out in Badruddin Tyabji's letter to Justice Ameer Ali, Sir Syed and his followers, though they performed yeoman service for the cause of modernisation among the Muslims, they did not think on the all-India basis. Their whole fear was that the Hindu elite would overwhelm them Muslims as they were comparatively backward. They did strive for spread of modern secular education but did not shed this 'fear of majority'. It would not be totally wrong to say that the Muslim League ultimately got the support of the Muslim elite on this fear of the majority and partitioned the country. As a clever ploy the elite of the community identified the demands serving their interests with those of entire community. Thus Jawahar Lal Nehru observes that groups of upper class people try to cover up their own class interests by making it appear that they stand for the communal demands of religious

minorities or majorities. A critical examination of the various communal demands put forward on behalf of Hindus, Muslims or others reveals that they had nothing to do with the masses. At the most they dealt with the question of jobs for a few of the unemployed intellectuals but it is obvious that even the problem of the unemployed middle class intellectuals could not be solved by a redistribution of state jobs. There were far too many unemployed persons of the middle class to have been absorbed in state or other service.¹⁸

Thus it has often been theorised that communalism is a phenomenon of petty bourgeoisie and educated middle class. Such formulation might be simplistic but cannot be ignored either. The competition for jobs or competition for political power was usually among such classes. We will throw more light on these aspects later. Here it would be interesting to mention the language controversy which resulted in sharp division among the Hindu and Muslim elite. The question was whether to introduce Urdu written in Persian script as a court language at lower levels or Hindi written in Devnagri script. In fact one can say that the British were engineering such conspiracies in the Fort William College, Calcutta where an attempt to develop Hindi written in Devnagri script was made. This controversy continued throughout the freedom struggle and became one of the factors in dividing our country.

If Urdu written in Persian script was introduced, the Urdu-speaking elite (most of whom were Muslims) would benefit and if Hindi, written in Devnagri script was introduced, the Hindi speaking elite, most of whom came from Hindu community, were at an advantage. "English educational qualifications", says David Lelyveld, "and the demand for Hindi were openly construed in the political debates of the time as an effort to cut back on Muslim dominance of the *kacahari*. And, indeed, the proportion did drop in the course of next decades, though it remained well above 14 per cent—the proportion of Muslims in general population of the province. In 1880s Muslims were over 45 per cent of the gazetted Indian officials, and nearly 30 per cent of those earning more than seventy-five rupees a month. Still, as one Muslim political group complained, 'the Hindus outnumber the Muhammadans in the Government offices'. The increasing relevance of English education threatened to repeat the statistical fate of Muslim office holders in

Bengal, where Muslims, once dominant, held only five per cent of the higher posts.”¹⁹

Sir Anthony Macdonell, the Lieutenant-Governor of U.P. introduced certain changes in the language policy for recruitment to government services. These changes had adverse effect on the Muslim aspirants. In fact, Macdonell thought it just that the petitions to the Government could be made in either script and that all government summonses and proclamations in the vernacular would be in both scripts. This known as the Nagri resolution was passed in 1900 and Macdonell justified it on the grounds that it was no more than natural justice that the bulk of the people should be able to approach government in the script they knew. However, the third and the last clause of this Nagri resolution declared that ‘no person shall be appointed, except in a purely English office, to any ministerial (clerical) appointment henceforward unless he can read and write both the Nagri and Persian characters fluently’.²⁰ This resolution was resented by Muslims. Observes Francis Robinson: ... “Because Muslims did not come across the Nagri script in the normal course of the education, and would not read it for pleasure, the resolution threatened them more than any other vested interest in government service.”²¹

The Nagri resolution and the language policy created great deal of bitterness among the Hindu and Muslim elite and was one of the important factors in the early genesis of communalism in the British India. As a result of this shift in the language policy the Muslims, Kayasthas and Rajputs (who were close to the Mughal administration and had acquired knowledge of Persian) lost out to Brahmins, Baniyas and other Hindus whose position began to improve. Thus Francis Robinson observes: “It shows that between 1886-87 and 1913, the position of Muslims, and to a lesser extent Kayasthas and Rajputs, deteriorated, while that of Brahmins, Baniyas and other Hindus improved. It also shows that from the Mutiny to 1913 Muslims lost their dominant position and Hindus gained a larger share of appointments ... it does suggest that by and large reforms in the bureaucracy were putting pressure on the traditional government service groups, a pressure which under Macdonnell was concentrated almost entirely on the Muslims.”²²

These fights for government jobs were limited to a small number of persons from elite families. However, these elite tried to involve their entire community in the fight as if it affected them all. Thus the statistics reveal that in 1867 there were 333 Muslims earning over seventy-five rupees in North-Western Provinces and Oudh; in 1897 the number was 466. Over the same years the number of Hindus had increased a good deal more, from 692 to 1,069, but not necessarily at the expense of Muslims. Statistics were similar in the Punjab.²³

These figures from David Lelyveld clearly show that a very tiny number of Muslims and Hindus were involved in job competitions. Yet they tried to invoke support of their entire communities by using communal idiom. In fact it must be noted that the communalists treat the entire community and its interests as homogenous and identify them with their own interests. There lies the rub. No community, religious, cultural or linguistic, is ever homogenous in the sense a communalist thinks and projects it to be. All communities are divided horizontally as well as vertically. Thus Sir Syed Ahmad and his colleagues at best represented the interests of the *ashraf* Muslims. Sir Syed was hardly ever bothered about the fate of the Muslim artisans. The vast number of Muslim weavers, bangle makers, brass workers, glass workers, sweepers, tonga drivers, petty traders, poor agricultural workers, oil pressers, mendicants, and hundreds of other *biradaris* had nothing whatsoever to do with such language controversies. Neither Sir Syed nor any other intellectual was at all concerned with their fate. They were left to fend for themselves. No one ever represented their case to the government. Only the Ulama as they were in touch with them. They knew that the policies followed by the British rulers had more or less ruined these poor artisans and there was no way to improve their fate unless these rulers quit India. Hence their Keeness with the mass organisations like the Congress (although the Congress until then was not a very radical organisation but it was certainly more radical than any such other organisation and also it was secular in the sense that it admitted to its fold people of all castes and creeds) which had greater potential of fighting against the exploitative British rule. No wonder that the Muslim elite went a separatist way and the Ulama and the Muslim masses adopted more radical and pro-Congress course of action.

The question of identity was another factor which also helped the genesis and sharpening of communalism. Until the beginning of the British rule the question of respective communal identities had never acquired the kind of significance it did after its consolidation. Again the reason was simple. Until then religious identity served no useful purpose. At best, it created consciousness of belonging to a religious group or a caste group or *biradari*. But now every religious community was worried over its number and for that reason it was necessary for everyone to have a sharpened sense of identity.

There were a number of groups and *biradaris* which had very diffused identities. It was all because of amalgamation of number of customs, rituals and cultural practices. The language used by these groups, Hindus or Muslims, was also local, often dialect. The names too had hardly any sharp religious identity. The Muslims belonging to the lower castes, or those converted from lower castes, never changed their names. Often it was very difficult to find out whether he or she was Hindu or Muslim. Such diffused identities could not meet the new emerging communal challenges any more and hence it was necessary to discard them.

Until then there was no collective identity like the 'Hindu identity'. Caste identity like Brahmin, Rajput, Kayasthas, or from among the lower caste Hindus like malis, mahars, dhanias, matangs, chamar, dhor etc. was more freely used than as an overarching religious identity like the 'Hindu' identity. It was more of a 19th century political construction than a prevalent religious identity. The word 'Hindu' in religious sense was used, at best, for the first time in the 17th century. There was, moreover, nothing like a Hindu religion. Of course there were caste identities, as pointed out before. Also the colonial upward mobility created new aspirations in the minds of lower castes to identify themselves with upper caste 'Hinduism', a scriptural religion. The upper castes also went for revivalism and drawing a sense of satisfaction from a unified and a glorified religion which created a sense of 'Hindu-ness'. The colonial administration also played no mean role in constructing an all-India 'Hindu community' and an all-India 'Muslim community'. Thus says Gyanendra Pandey:

The all-India 'Hindu Community' (and, to a large extent, the all-India 'Muslim Community' too) was a colonial creation for, as I have argued, the social and economic changes brought by colonialism, Indian efforts to defend the indigenous religions and culture against western missionary attacks, the 'unifying' drive of the colonial state—which was marked at the level of administrative structure and attempted political control ('Muslims' must not be antagonised, 'Hindu' sensibilities must not be touched), and the very history of movements like that of cow-protection, widely publicised as they were by the end of nineteenth century, tended to promote the idea of an all-India 'Hindu community' and all-India 'Muslim community' which were supposedly ranged against one another for much of the time. In spite of a widely felt sense of 'Hindu-ness' and 'Muslim-ness', I would suggest that until the nineteenth century at any rate, people always had to work through caste, sect and so on to arrive at the unities implied in the conception of the 'Hindu community' and the 'Muslim community'.²⁴

Thus it will be seen that the feeling of all-India 'Hindu community' or an all-India 'Muslim community' did not exist before the British came to this country. It was the British who created such 'imagined communities' and began to impart a sense of sharply defined separate communities. Also, as some limited democratic measures were being introduced by the British like the local self government the elite of both the communities felt the need for having more and more number of people behind them who could be defined as 'Hindus' or 'Muslims'. Technically there were many communities which were not sharply defined. They could be counted either as Hindus or Muslims. Now there was great need to define them as either Hindus or Muslims. The Muslims, being in a minority, were keen to count as many numbers as possible on their side. The process of Islamisation was launched in various places. Of course some of these movements were motivated by religious zeal. Many Muslims for centuries after conversion had followed the Hindu rituals prevalent in their social *milieu*. Even Durga and Kali puja continued in many cases. Thus we read in Abdul Aziz's book, "Sayyid forbade the beating of drums and offerings to the *pirs* and deities. Durga, Kali, Manasa and all such gods and godlings were anathematized by him. He also forbade all offerings at shrines of *Qadam Rasul*. All irreligious acts, such as veneration of *pirs*, idols and shrines ... were abolished by him. The unholy *khondkers* who wrote

incantations and issued *fatwas* in exchange of gifts ... are now in a pitiable state, as all such practices have been forbidden."²⁵

Such 'purification' attempts were fired by religious zeal and were made by the orthodox Ulama and others to 'purify' Islam of local 'Hindu' influences. This attempt also often created communal tension between the two communities. The Hindu practices continued unabated as it was very difficult to undo these influences which had deep imprint on the minds of the converts. It is only when the social mobility pushed them up the ladder of hierarchy that they began to identify themselves with the socio-religious practices of the *shurafa*.

The influence of Hindu practices was very deep indeed among the Muslims of rural Bengal. At times it was difficult to recognise a group as a Muslim though it was a Muslim group. It will be interesting to quote what a reformist wrote about the Bengali Muslims:

I remember some of the heresies of our people. I will now describe them for your benefit. Although Muslim, they observe (Hindu ceremonies like) *holi*, *diwali*, *dvitya* (the second day of lunar fortnight) etc. ... They follow the Brahmanical ways even though they are Muslims ... The Muslims observe brothers' day (a Hindu rite when brothers are feted by their sisters) and honour cows. They will not give or accept loans on the *Lakshmibar* (Thursdays). Both good and bad (Muslims) observe the practices concerning auspicious beginning to the day's business following Hindu ways ... What more can I say about the heretical ways of our people.²⁶

In Bengali Islam in the nineteenth century (and it was not much different as far Indian Islam was concerned elsewhere), one finds, to quote Abdul Aziz, "a pantheon of confused beliefs which had accumulated semi-divine deities from multi-religious and cultural contacts, superstition, animism, demotic syncretism, *bhakti* movements, *sufi* tolerance, ontological monism, poetic license and several other sources, Indian as well as foreign, but all of them alien to fundamentalist Islam."²⁷

Some of the reformist movements were really not religious in nature but rather had political overtones. The political elite residing in cities inspired such movements in order to draw political advantage. Some of the reform movements, points out Rafiuddin Ahmed, also gave voice to voiceless among the urban poor. "The reform movements", he points out, "in any case, must not be viewed purely as

agencies for religious reform; the poorer sections of the Muslim society found their voice in politics through them. They brought with them a new awareness among the ordinary villagers and, as an inevitable result, helped to transform a people into a community".²⁸ And in the opinion of Gibb, to these movements, even more than to the influence of western liberal ideas, most subsequent changes in Muslim society were due.²⁹

As brought out earlier some of the reform movements were inspired by political considerations. Rafiuddin Ahmed correctly points out, "The well-to-do and the educated among the Muslims were now keen to contact the masses as potential supporters in the increasing rivalry with the Hindus. The *mullahs* and the religious tracts could be useful aids in this effort. The land-owners and the affluent now actively organised the *anjumans* in towns and rural areas, as centres of social and religious propaganda. That such propaganda was crucial for the political mobilization of the masses had evidently been realized."³⁰

Rafiuddin also aptly points out that the Muslim leaders were becoming increasingly aware that to 'throw off the yoke' they needed political mobilisation and concerted action. They also recognised the importance of political pressure in securing concessions and safeguards from the government, notwithstanding the gradual shift in policy in their favour. This shift particularly benefited the Muslim upper classes, who were encouraged to organise themselves as an 'avowedly Muslim pressure group' if only to contain the growing power of the *bhadralok*.³¹

The real roots of communalism thus lay in the competition for jobs and political favours between the elite of the two communities. Religion was not the substantive issue in the whole fight at all. It was, if at all, incidental. Of course religion did play a role in community formation and consciousness raising but it was not at the root of the genesis of communalism. The British too encouraged one or the other community in its demands for greater favours depending on its own political exigencies.

The British, in the interest of stability of its own rule began to realise that it should respect the sensibilities, especially the religious ones. They often had to do tight rope-walking in this respect. The elite of the community would often make demands apparently religious in

nature but political in content. The real intention was to send political signals to the British about their mobilizatory power. Lokmanya Tilak in Maharashtra, for example started Ganpati festival and gave it a political colour. The idea was of course borrowed from the Tazia festival of Muslims. Thus Ganpati festival was also designed to wrest Hindu masses in Maharashtra from the influence of Muslims and give them a distinct political identity. The cow protection movement of nineteenth century was also an attempt to give Hindus a distinct political identity. This movement created quite a stir in the Hindu society at that time and led to rioting in several towns. The city of Bombay was also rocked by communal violence in 1893. Thus the religious reform movements among Hindus as well as among the Muslims were often the expression of political aspirations of the elites of the two communities. With the coming of the British in India, the whole structure of the society, political as well as economic, changed creating new mobilizatory forces and imparting the society a new dynamism. It also brought up new political ideas and opened up new horizons of knowledge. When a society begins to experience a socio-political and socio-economic change, the old equations of power change and new ones are born. But it is not a peaceful process at all. Since the old interests fade away and new interests are born, a struggle between the two begins. What shape this struggle will take will, of course, be decided by the prevalent social and political and economic structure. In Europe industrial revolution triggered off class struggle as the people shared the same religion and the language too, in every country was more or less common. But in India when socio-political and socio-economic changes occurred due to the British rule, it could not have assumed the form of class struggle. It assumed communal form as the elites of the two communities unequally benefited from it. Of course a section of the elite from both the communities was also trying to organise, in the form of the Indian National Congress, a nascent struggle for the rights of natives. But it did not attract the masses of two religious communities as did the sectarian movements or the movements organised around the interests of the elites of two communities.

It was not easy for the nationalist movement to acquire popularity on its own. Nationalism itself was an alien idea for the people of India.

Tilak, therefore, had to resort to religious sentiments to inject political consciousness. Similarly Mahatma Gandhi had to resort to the Khilafat movement to draw the Muslims in the anti-British movement. But for the Khilafat movement it would have been really difficult for the Muslim masses to be attracted towards the freedom struggle. The concept of nationalism did not enthuse them. The Ulama also, as pointed out before, tried to urge upon the Muslim masses through religious *fatwas* to wage *jihad* against the alien British. They had to declare India a *Darul harb* and it was thus obligatory on all Muslims to wage *jihad* to restore their religious freedom. Thus the Ulama, who had no vested interests in the British rule and had not much to get from the favours shown by the British to the economic and political elite in the Muslim community, were determined to throw the British out. They played a politically progressive role in the nineteenth century. The Muslim elite, at least in north India, had everything to gain through the favours showered by the British rule, and since they had to compete for such favours with the elite of the other community, a communal tension was generated and this explains the genesis of communalism in the nineteenth century India.

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Chapter 3

Freedom Struggle and Communalism

As discussed in the last chapter, communalism originated in the nineteenth century after the consolidation of the British rule in India rather than in the medieval period as held by the communal forces. Communalism, it must be understood, is a modern phenomenon and its fundamental causes are secular like competition for share in political power or government jobs etc. Religion is not its fundamental cause but an instrumental cause in as much as religion has great mobilizatory potential. In medieval ages neither there was any competition for power as we have in an open democratic society nor competition for government jobs (as jobs were bestowed by the monarch or the feudal lord according to his whim rather than according to any norms) and thus there was less likelihood of communalisation of polity. Communalism, therefore, is a modern phenomenon which manifested itself during the British regime. Also, as the prospects of freedom increased during early forties the competition for share in political power intensified which, in turn, intensified the communal struggle between the two major communities. As the conflicting interests could not be reconciled, the country was ultimately partitioned.

First we would like to point out that both the key concepts—employed by the Indian National Congress during freedom struggle i.e. nationalism and secularism were of foreign origin and had not grown from Indian soil. In fact both Hindus as well as Muslims, did not have any idea about these two key concepts. Freedom fighters like Tilak had

to use religious idiom and religious festivals to draw the Hindu masses in Maharashtra towards the freedom struggle. The Hindu religious idiom, as pointed out by some scholars, created doubts in the minds of Muslims and it strengthened their perception that the struggle for freedom was being dominated by the Hindus and was likely to result in establishment of a 'Hindu Raj'. As pointed out, Sir Syed had opposed the entry of Muslims into the Congress dubbing it as a 'Hindu Party'. He did it for his own reasons. This stand also served the purpose of the British rulers as they were alarmed at the formation of this nationalist party.

The people of India were fragmented into various castes, religions and regional groups. Each group was referred to as *qaum*, an Arabic word which was also used for 'nation'. Though the words Bharat, Hindustan or India were freely used and people did have an idea about the country as a whole, but they were not wedded to the modern concept of nation. Their basic loyalty was to their own caste, religious or regional group each of which was referred to as *qaum*. Also, they could hardly be inspired by the western concept of 'secularism'. In fact it was a totally alien concept to them. Religious and other social traditions and customs were supreme and determinant of their social as well as political behaviour. Secularism in the West also was product of a long drawn struggle between the princes and the Catholic Church. The Church also held supreme political power during the medieval ages which was challenged, for the first time, by Martin Luther with the help of secular rulers in Germany. Thus there began an acute struggle for political domination between the Church and the secular rulers. The mercantile bourgeoisie which was becoming very strong economically and socially was now aspiring for share in political power. It also supported a struggle against the Church so as to usher in the 'secular' rule. 'Also, there were, on the other hand, struggles between the fast emerging bourgeoisie and gradually weakening monarchies. The bourgeoisie naturally aspired for secular rule as the Church rule meant hegemony of religion which came in the way of scientific discoveries as these discoveries stood to benefit it immensely as a class. Thus Jawaharlal Nehru observes:

The monarchies of Europe developed strong centralised States. The old feudal ideas of lord and vassal¹ were dead or dying. The new idea of country as a unit and an entity took its place. France, under two very able ministers, Richelieu and Mazarin, was the leader in this. So nationalism grew, and a measure of patriotism. Religion, which had so far been the most important element in men's lives, retired into the background and new ideas took its place ...

The seventeenth century is even more notable, in that the foundations of modern science were laid in it, and a world market was created. This vast new market naturally upset the old economy of Europe, and much that subsequently happened in Europe and Asia and America can only be understood if this new market is kept in view. Science developed later, and provided means to supply the needs of this world market.¹

Thus the growth of bourgeoisie in Europe greatly helped weakening of the hold of religion over people's mind and this in turn led to growth of secular forces. Thus the very concept of 'secularism' as a political philosophy was born out of this long drawn struggle between the Church and the bourgeois class. There was no such struggle in India. The mercantile bourgeoisie that existed in India was totally subordinate to the feudal class and had never developed any aspiration for share in political power. It never became, unlike in Europe, a force to be reckoned with. Also, it was never backed up by any scientific discoveries as in Europe. It remained extremely conservative in outlook and religion had great hold over it. Even the industrial bourgeoisie which began to emerge in the nineteenth century India due to colonial domination never became independent in its outlook. In other words it could not develop a secular outlook either. Secularism never grew from out of the Indian soil. It was a borrowed concept for India from the west. At best it appealed to a section of Indian elite.

It would be interesting to note that secularism was welcomed by a section of the lower castes led by Mahatma Phule who saw in this concept a great opportunity for liberation of the low caste Hindus, especially the untouchables, from the clutches of upper castes. He, therefore, enthusiastically welcomed such an opportunity and fought against superstitious concepts which enslaved the low caste Hindus to the twice-born upper castes. However, the upper caste Hindus reacted differently to the British rule as its interests were different. On the one

hand, Raja Rammohan Roy and people of his ilk worked for reform and acquired a progressive liberal and secular views. On the other, a section of upper caste Hindus felt humiliated by the superiority of British rule with its modern and rational trappings and began to assert superiority of Hinduism which led to revivalism. Thus two distinct trends—one of renaissance and another of revivalism—emerged on the Indian socio-political scene. A section of Hindu elite welcomed modernisation and secularisation while another section had rather ambiguous attitude towards the process of change while a section strongly rejected it. One finds more or less similar scenario among the Muslim elite too with this difference that the section of Muslim elite welcoming modernisation and secularisation was much weaker compared to its Hindu counterpart. However, the *Ulama* (Muslim theologians) though religiously quite conservative, played a progressive role politically by accepting the concept of *muttakida qawmiyyat* (i.e. composite nationalism). On which more light will be thrown later. It can be conclude that there was ambiguity towards the concepts of 'nationalism' and 'secularism' in both the major religious communities.

In the case of India, there was one more complicating factor. The colonial rule and administration made it more difficult for the Hindus and Muslims to accept the concepts of nationalism and secularism without reservation. Firstly India's economy could not develop faster, nor had it chance of capturing world market. Thus its bourgeoisie which could develop secular and liberal outlook remained extremely weak. Secondly, the British rule followed, quite naturally the 'divide and rule' policy, sometimes favouring the Hindus and sometimes favouring the Muslims. Such a policy promoted a tendency of separatism between the two major communities. Thirdly, the elites of the two communities developed a sense of competition and tried to mobilise the masses of their respective communities in the name of religion. This further weakened secular and modern tendencies which otherwise would have grown faster and stronger. Because of these factors, secularism and nationalism could not grow unhampered.

Until the formation of Indian National Congress the British were favouring the Hindus and keeping a distance from Muslims as they were adjudged to be the main instigators of the 1857 mutiny. However, after the formation of Congress—perceived by the British as mainly a

Hindu nationalist party—the British reversed their policy and began to favour the Muslim elite. They patronised Sir Syed and his efforts for spread of modern education among the Muslim elite. To strengthen such efforts further, they encouraged, in the beginning of twentieth century, formation of Indian Muslim League. There is evidence to show that the Muslim League was formed at the instance of the British rulers. The delegation which waited on Viceroy Minto comprised of people loyal to the British. Thus Wolpert says, “On October 1, 1906, thirty-five Muslims of noble birth, wealth, and power, from every province of British India and several princely states, gathered in the regal ballroom of the Viceroy’s Simla palace in the Himalayas ... The Aga Khan introduced each of his fellow deputies to the Viceroy, and then Lord Minto read aloud the address, which was printed on vellum and had earlier been sent to his secretary, J.R. Dunlop Smith.² The address contained a warning that:

The Mohamedans of India have always placed reliance on the sense of justice and love of fair dealing that have characterised their rulers, and have in consequence abstained from pressing their claims by methods that might prove at all embarrassing, but earnestly as we desire that the Mohamedans of India should not in future depart from that excellent and time-honoured tradition, recent events have stirred up feelings, especially among the younger generation of Mohamedans, which might in certain circumstances and under certain contingencies, easily pass beyond the control of temperate counsel and sober guidance.³

This clearly shows that those who waited upon the Viceroy were loyal to the British rulers. In fact the memorandum presented to the Viceroy was drafted by Principal Beck of Anglo-Mohamedan Oriental College of Aligarh. The memorandum also stated, “We hope your Excellency will pardon our stating at the outset that representative institutions of the European type are new to the Indian people; many of the most thoughtful members of our community in fact consider that the greatest care, forethought and caution will be necessary if they are to be successfully adapted to the social, religious and political conditions obtaining in India, and that in the absence of such care and caution their adoption is likely, among other evils, to place our national interests at the mercy of an unsympathetic majority”.⁴

Thus the very words of the memorial presented to the Viceroy show that these Muslim men of wealth and power were speaking the

language of vested interests. They were not enthusiastic about democratic institutions. Like Sir Syed they were wary of democratic elections as well as of the intentions of the majority community. This very attitude ultimately brought about partition of the country. These gentlemen did not represent the aspirations of Muslim masses. In fact they were quite alienated from them. They only represented the interests of the Muslim elite and this is what suited the interests of the British rulers too.

Compared to this elite, the orthodox *Ulama* were closer to the pulse of Muslims. The noted *Alim* and Islamic historian Maulana Shibli Nu'mani severely criticised formation of the Muslim League. He calls it "strange-creature" (*'ajibul-khilqat*). Referring to its politics he says, "Is it politics, God forbid, no". "Is it House of Lords, at least it seems so."⁵ Shibli uses many other satirical terms for Muslim League like "a hypothetical useless entity" (*ek farzi bekar chiz*), "mirage" (*sarab*), "a political theatrical" (i.e. *political tamashagar*), "children's play" (*bazicha-e-atfal*) and so on.⁶

Shibli Nu'mani was greatly annoyed by the Muslim League's loyalty to the British and accepting it as a representative government for the people of India. He believed that people have every right to interfere with the functioning of the government, to express their opinion and criticise it. According to him people are governed as well as to govern, they make laws for themselves and implement them.⁷ Shibli was of the opinion that the Hindus had won some concessions from the British through struggle and the Muslim League wanted to carve out its own share from it by begging from the Britishers. In one of his verses he even says that what the lion obtains from jungle through his power, the jackal goes and begs for its share. Thus he likened the Hindus with lion and the Muslim Leaguers with jackal.

Thus it will be seen that all Muslims were not behind the Muslim League as its leaders often claimed. The Muslim masses and their representatives always kept their distance from the League and this continued right upto the partition of the country. It was the Muslim elite who were responsible for the vivisection of the country, and not the Muslim masses

To begin with Jinnah was very close to Gokhale who he accepted as his political guru. He too, like Gokhale, was moderate and liberal in

politics. In fact he thought politics to be the business of educated professionals and masses should have nothing to do with it. He did not approve of Mahatma Gandhi drawing masses into politics. Jinnah initially provided a moderate leadership to the League. In fact he was responsible for the Congress-League pact of 1916 arrived at in Lucknow. Jinnah had to work hard for it. Says Farzana Shaikh, "The efforts to forge unity between Congress and the League on the question of Indian self-government were not, however, without their inherent difficulties. The introduction of separate electorates and 'weightage' for Muslims in 1909 had generated widespread resentment in Congress, and even those, like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who had been sympathetic to Muslim demands were alienated by what they perceived to be Muslim greed for additional representation in excess of their numbers."⁸ It was the influence of the moderate leaders in Congress like Tej Bahadur Sapru and Motilal Nehru that persuaded many members of the Congress to accept the Muslim demand for separate electorate so as to get their support for the fight for constitutional changes and self-government. The Lucknow pact was opposed by a section of Muslims belonging to the old guard who were close to Sayed Ahmad Khan, specially Sayyid Husain Bilgrami. In fact Sayyid Bilgrami expressed his fear that the pact's emphasis on self-government would enable the people of 'very low birth' like Jinnah to rule the Indians. This clearly shows the elitist bias of the so called 'high class' Muslims against the Muslims of 'low-birth'. But it is the irony of the situation that Jinnah later on himself represented the interests of such elite. Similarly in Bengal also, the established notables like Sayyid Nawab Ali Choudhry and Sir Abdur Rahim claimed that the Pact had unjustly deprived Muslims of the gains they had obtained under the reforms of 1909 and forced the League to seriously compromise the principle of 'weightage'. Thus comments Farzana, "As men drawn from the class of Muslim *ashraf*, many of whom regarded their claims to leadership as self evident, both were deeply disturbed by the Pact's apparently cavalier attitude to the 'political importance' of Muslims as a basis for their additional representation."⁹

The Muslim *ashraf* like Sayyid Bilgrami, Sayyid Nawab Ali Choudhry and Mian Muhammad Shafi (from Punjab) always insisted on recognition of special status of Muslims and ensuring for

representation in excess of their population which created problems again and again. As against this the nationalist Muslims and the *'ulama* (theologians) did not insist on such an arrangement. The League, thus always had a very narrow base among the Muslims and it always believed in polite petitioning (as Maulana Shibli also points out, and in fact ridicules such an attitude on the part of the League). The League thus became a liability after Mahatma Gandhi launched the non-cooperation movement. The Muslim masses were with the non-cooperation movement rather than with the elitist League.

It should be noted that human behaviour changes with the context. Thus while evaluating any historical actor's behaviour we have to keep the context in mind. Jinnah's behaviour too, was not unalterable. It kept on changing with the political context. In his early days he was nationalist like others. In Sarojini Naidu's words, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Wazir Hussain were required, before Jinnah would agree to join the League, "to make a solemn preliminary covenant that loyalty to the Muslim League and the Muslim interest would in no way and at no time imply even the shadow of disloyalty to the larger national cause to which his life was dedicated."¹⁰ It is obvious therefore that in those days Jinnah was greatly concerned with the national cause, at least as much as the Muslim cause and he was opposed to sacrifice the national cause for the sake of Muslim cause. It does not, however, mean that Jinnah was not concerned with the Muslim causes. Says Rajmohan Gandhi, "Not that prior to 1913 Jinnah had been indifferent to the Muslim cause. Two years earlier he had introduced the Wakf Validating Bill, designed to safeguard beneficiaries of Muslim family trusts against the folly of any one member of a family. It received the Viceroy's assent shortly before Gokhale and Jinnah left for Europe. The Bill's passage enhanced Jinnah's status among Muslims and doubtless explains Muhammad Ali's keenness to induct him into the League."¹¹

Jinnah as such was quite liberal and modern in his outlook and did not like mixing religion and politics. He was also opposed to taking up the cause of Khilafat as it would lead to interference of religion into politics. Gandhiji's non-cooperation programme on the question of Khilafat was also opposed along with Jinnah by C.R. Das and B.C. Pal but the Mahatma won the majority in the Calcutta Congress with the support of Ali brothers (Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali) and Motilal

Nehru. Jinnah, like other liberals, was not in favour of mass politics as he dreaded their involvement. In response to Gandhiji's letter inviting Jinnah to take his "share in the new life that has opened up before the country, and benefit the country by your experience and guidance,"¹² Jinnah wrote back:

If by "new life" you mean your methods and your programme, I am afraid I cannot accept them; for I am fully convinced that it must lead to disaster. But the actual new life that has opened up before the country is that we are faced with a Government that pays no heed to the grievances, feelings and sentiments of the people; that our own countrymen are divided; the Moderate party is still going wrong; that your methods have already caused split and division in almost every institution that you have approached hitherto, and in public life of the country not only amongst Hindus and Muslims and but between Hindus and Hindus and Muslims and Muslims and even between fathers and sons; people generally are desparate all over the country and your extreme programme has for the moment struck the imagination mostly of the inexperienced youth and the ignorant and the illiterate. All this means complete disorganisation and chaos. What the consequence of this may be, I shudder to contemplate; but I for one am convinced that the present policy of the Government is the primary cause of it all and unless that cause is removed, the effects must continue. I have no voice or power to remove the cause; but at the same time I do not wish my countrymen to be dragged to the brink of a precipice in order to be shattered.¹³

It is clear that Jinnah reacted very strongly to Gandhiji's method in politics as he was totally opposed to involvement of masses in politics. Another thing which is also clear from this letter is Jinnah's concern for his fellow-countrymen. He did not want them "to be dragged to the brink of a precipice in order to be shattered". He was not thinking in terms of Hindus and Muslims but in terms of his countrymen. But what turned Jinnah into pleading only the Muslim cause from the thirties onwards is an interesting story. We will throw some light on it later. It is also interesting to note that Jinnah was not only liberal in his views and politics, he was also thoroughly westernised. He did not mind even eating pork. Here is an interesting story worth narrating. During the election. campaign of September 1923 (Jinnah was also contesting the election), Jinnah and Chagla were going out for lunch. Mrs. Jinnah drove upto town hall with a tiffin basket, and coming up the steps said, "J"—that is how she addressed Jinnah— "I have brought you some

lively ham sandwiches. Jinnah startled "My God! What have you done? Do you want me to lose my election? Do you realise I am standing from a Muslim separate electorate seat, and if my voters were to learn that I am going to eat ham sandwiches for lunch, do you think I have a ghost of a chance of being elected"? They decided to go to Cornaglia's, which was a very well-known restaurant in Bombay. "Jinnah ordered two cups of coffee, a plate of pastry and a plate of pork sausages. In came an old, bearded Muslim with a young boy of about ten years of age, probably his grandson. They came and sat down near Jinnah. It was obvious that they had been directed from Town Hall. I then saw the boy's hand reaching out slowly but irresistibly towards the plate of pork sausages. After some hesitation, he picked up one, put it in his mouth, munched it and seemed to enjoy it tremendously. I watched this uneasily. After sometime they left and Jinnah turned to me, and said angrily, "Chagla, you should be ashamed of yourself". I said: "What did I do?" Jinnah asked: "How dare you allow the young boy eat pork sausages?" I said: "Look, Jinnah, I had to use all my mental faculties at top speed to come to a quick decision. The question was: should I let Jinnah lose his election or should I let the boy go to eternal damnation? And I decided in your favour."¹⁴ Thus it will be seen that Jinnah was not a believing Muslim and did not mind eating pork which is strictly prohibited in Islam.

Rajmohan Gandhi makes an interesting comparison between Gandhi and Jinnah. He says, "Their London training in law and Gujarati backgrounds were not the only things in common between Jinnah and Gandhi. Both wanted Hindu-Muslim unity and self-government. Yet, to note some of their differences, while Gandhi demonstrated his religious beliefs, Jinnah never spoke of them. Gandhi embraced and advocated poverty; Jinnah made his pile and urged other able men to make theirs. Wearing the best tailored suits, Jinnah lived in an opulent house on Malabar Hill; Gandhi wore peasant's clothes and lived in a hut in an arid village. Almost everyone found Gandhi warm; very few knew that Jinnah could be warm. Gandhi was cheerful in austere surroundings, Jinnah austere in cheerful surroundings. If Gandhi cultivated humility, there were times when Jinnah seemed to cultivate arrogance. Gandhi sought to enlist the common man; Jinnah

was content, if we leave out the incident involving Lord Willingdon, to be an elitist. The list of contrast is long".¹⁵

Later on, Jinnah's arrogance, his elitist approach and his egoistic behaviour became some of the factors in bringing about partition. Jinnah took strong position and did not like to be opposed. He was constitutionalist *par excellence* and did not like public agitations involving common people.

Though Jinnah bears the cross for partitioning of the country, he was not the only person responsible for it. There were several other factors which must be taken into account. It is also noteworthy that there were various trends in Muslim politics in India during the freedom struggle. Communal propoganda had created strong impression in the minds of large number of educated people that there was only one principal trend dominated by Jinnah and his Muslim League. This was far from so.

Various Muslim groups hardly ever achieved consensus on various controversial issues. Many liberal Muslims led by Jinnah were opposed to lending support to the Khilafat movement. But many prominent Muslims like Ali brothers, Maulana Azad and several other prominent *Ulama* supported Khilafat movement whole-heartedly. In fact this movement drew millions of Muslims nearer to the Congress As concluded earlier the ideas of nationalism and secularism were alien to the Indian people. On this agenda it would have been nearly impossible to draw Muslim the Hindu masses to respond to the political issues. Gandhiji was a shrewd observer of the Indian political scene and he had his hand on the pulse of the masses. He virtually grabbed the Khilafat issue in order to enthuse the Muslim masses and draw them into an anti-British agitations. Maulana Azad and Ali brothers came close to Gandhiji along with several other Muslim leaders and the *Ulama*, thanks to the Khilafat movement.

Religion in India in general, and in Muslim politics in particular, has always played a very crucial role. As to the influence of religion in some political struggles it would be interesting to quote Maxime Rodinson. He says: "The religious values of Islam, like those of Christianity, can therefore supply an impetus for the struggle against iniquity on the precise lines laid down by the socialist project. We have witnessed a still limited number of Christians participating in the

struggle on this basis; and a man like Palmiro Togliatti recognised that some people could be motivated by religious faith in struggling for justice alongside those who found inspiration in a more secular ideology. Such analogies come naturally to mind, for Muslim culture is not the isolated world which some imagine it to be."¹⁶

It is thus obvious that religion should not be written off in any struggle for social justice or political freedom. Secularism as an ideology in purely western sense may not be much relevant in Indian conditions. Even 48 years after independence, religion is a great force to be reckoned with. Think of the early twentieth century when secularisation was extremely slow and its middle-class base extremely narrow. Gandhiji was, in my opinion, right in making positive use of religion for anti-imperialist struggle. Moreover, a political leader is concerned with immediate situation and has to take his/her decisions in the immediate context. It is pressing urgency which makes him take a particular decision. The Khilafat movement had tremendous anti-imperialist potentiality. How a leader like Gandhi could have ignored it? Gandhiji himself was deeply religious and also knew the deeper religious feelings of Muslims. It was because of the Khilafat movement that millions of Muslims joined the anti-imperialist struggle so enthusiastically. Not only that, many '*Ulama* declared that India under the British was *darul harb* and it was duty of the Muslims to wage *jihad* against the British from outside India. Many Muslim leaders like Ubaidullah Sindhi migrated to Afghanistan and founded a provisional Government there to continue the struggle.

The Khilafat movement produced great leaders like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad though there was marked change in his view later about the Khilafat movement. But it was later development any way. Maulana Azad advocated the cause of this movement with great religious zeal. Of course Azad's entry into the freedom movement was not via Khilafat movement. In fact, Azad got involved with the Hindu revolutionaries in 1905 itself and claimed to have joined one of their groups through the mediation of Shyam Sunder Chakravarty, an associate of Aurobindo Ghose.¹⁷ But Khilafat movement certainly increased his zeal for freedom of the country. Also, the Devbandi '*Ulama* not only co-operated with the Indian National Congress in its struggle against the British imperialism but formed its own

organisation The Jami'at-ul-'Ulama-i-Hind which became a close ally of the Congress. The Jami'at was totally opposed to the partition of the country as we will see later. During the Khilafat movement the 'Ulama took a direct plunge into the freedom movement.

It can be argued, as many scholars do, that the 'Ulama tasted power and their entry into politics was not very healthy. They combined politics with religion and opposed any change in religious law. *The Independent* of Allahabad in its issue of June 3, 1920 warned that 'the control of the Khilafat movement does not fall entirely within the hands of theologians and divines'. The noted modern historian Mushirul Hasan also observes, "It is no doubt true that the introduction of the Muslim divines was fraught with dangers because it heightened the religious aspects and weakened the anti-colonial dimension of the Khilafat movement". But he also admits, "their adherence was vital to the success of the movement, a fact which influenced both the western-educated Muslims and Gandhi to cultivate the 'Ulama and to ignore repeated warnings about the obvious dangers of their involvement in politics".¹⁸ Even Pakistani scholars have adversely commented on the involvement of the 'Ulama in the Khilafat politics.¹⁹ Hasan also points out that, "By early 1921, however, the 'Ulama were proving to be a liability and their alliances had all the signs of a chimera. This was indicated at the Meerut All-India Khilafat Conference in April 1921 when some 'Ulama objected to the Hindu involvement and demanded that its scope be defined according to the *Shari'a*. This was followed by a serious warning given by Abdul Bari that Muslims were ready to desert Gandhi and adopt violent methods for the redressal of their grievances. The 'Ulama demonstrated their impatience with the Mahatma's policy of caution and moderation and expressed dissatisfaction with the limited vigour with which he prosecuted the Khilafat agitation. In May 1921, some 'Ulama seized the initiative and set up *Darul Qaza* courts (House of Justice) in parts of Bihar and the North-West Frontier Province and preached *jihad* against the British in the countryside."²⁰

While there is great deal of truth in Mushirul Hasan's critique of the 'Ulama's role in the Khilafat movement, it should also be borne in mind that in every human group there are different trends from moderate to extreme. Some 'Ulama certainly showed impatience with

Gandhi as in their opinion he was too cautious and moderate while others understood the Mahatma's own compulsions. He had to carry people of the entire country with him. All Hindus were also not united on the Khilafat question. Many of them were quite cool and some even opposed it. Also, within the group of the *'Ulama* there was power struggle and often by taking extreme positions they wanted to seize initiative from others. In a vast country like India there were bound to be differing opinions and power struggles between different groups. For that reason one should not completely reject an essentially anti-imperialist movement specially when secular issues did not inspire Indian people as much as the religious ones. The enthusiasm of the common Muslims for the Khilafat movement surpassed all limits. It would be interesting to quote here an incident that took place in the All-India Khilafat Conference in Bombay. When Maulvi Ghulam Muhammad, after moving a resolution about the cases instituted against Moulvis and others, contributed Rs. 200, others followed and announced their contributions. Amidst great excitement, one Ayub, a fakir of Hyderabad, came forward and said that he wished to subscribe, but had no money. He, therefore, offered himself to be sold as a slave, promising to serve his purchaser faithfully, provided that the purchase money was paid into the fund. He was saved from slavery, however, by a philanthropist who paid Rs. 20 on his behalf to the fund.²¹

The Khilafat movement also produced sober and moderate leaders like Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari. Their contribution was second to none in the freedom struggle. They were not swayed by merely religious sentiments. We should also mention here the name of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi. The miracle of Khan Sahib was that he transformed violent pathans into non-violent Khudai Khidmatgars (i.e. the Servants of God). And one who aspired to become Khudai Khidmatgar, declared on solemn oath: 'I am a Khudai Khidmatgar, and as God needs no service I shall serve Him by serving His creatures selflessly. I shall never use violence, I shall not retaliate or take revenge, and I shall forgive anyone who indulges in oppression and excesses against me. I shall not be a party to any intrigue, family feuds and enmity, and I shall treat every Pakhtun as my brother and comrade. I shall give up evil customs and practices. I shall lead a simple life, do good and refrain from wrong-doing. I shall

develop good character and cultivate good habits. I shall not lead an idle life. I shall expect no reward for my services. I shall be fearless and be prepared for any sacrifice.”²²

Raising of disciplined, peaceful and non-violent force from amongst the Pathans was a real miracle. Khudai Khidmatgars not only remained non-violent but also went to British jails in large numbers for the sake of freedom of the country. They were also not supportive of Muslim communal politics and firmly opposed partitioning of the country.

Abdul Ghaffar went from village to village talking to the Pakhtuns. His companions found that their white clothes got easily dirty. So they decided to colour them. One of them took his shirt, trousers and turban to a local tannery and dipped them in the solution of pine bark prepared for hides. The result was a dark, brown red. Others did the same. When next the group went out, the unusual colour attracted the eye at once. The people left their ploughs in the fields and came to have a look at the red-clad men. They came, saw and were conquered. Abdul Ghaffar adopted the red colour for his workers, Khudai Khidmatgars, and that is why they were known as the Red Shirts also. Their aim was freedom, their motive service. On the march they sang:

We are the army of God,
By death or wealth unmoved,
We march, our leader and we,
Ready to die.
We serve and we love
our people and our cause,
Freedom is our goal,
Our lives the price we pay.²³

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan thus inspired his followers to be non-violent and strictly followed the Gandhian method. Khan Sahib, as is well known, was totally opposed to partition. He always believed in nationalism and was never shaken in his nationalist resolve. Though hailing from Frontier Provinces where religious and ethnic prejudices were (and still are) very strong, he was quite open minded and very liberal in his outlook. His liberal-mindedness can be illustrated from one incident. Mahatma Gandhi, after celebrating his sixty-seventh birthday on October 2, 1936, went over to Banaras to take part in the ceremony of opening the shrine of “Mother India” which was a huge

relief map of India engraved on marble. Bhagvandas welcomed the guests and stressed that the cardinal principles of all religions were the same—furtherance of love, peace and unity. Mahatma Gandhi recited the verse from the Veda which said, 'Mother Earth, spouse of Vishnu, ocean-clad and mountain-breasted, I bow to thee. Forgive me the touch of my feet.' Abdul Ghaffar expressed delight at being present at the function. He said that, in old days, mosques were built where people of all religions could go and say their prayers. He observed that the temple which the Mahatma had just opened, would fulfil the supreme purpose of a common place of worship and prayer.²⁴ Khan Sahib had no narrow sectarian approach and he enthusiastically welcomed a common place of worship. If such an attitude had prevailed among the Hindus and Muslims, our country would have been spared the horrors of communalism and communal violence. His commitment to non-violence is also obvious from the pledge he took in a meeting in Bannu, in NWFP on 26th January, 1938, and, made others, including Nehru to take the pledge, said, among other things, "We recognise that the most effective way of gaining our freedom is not through violence. India has gained strength and self-reliance and marched a long way to *Swaraj*, following the peaceful and legitimate methods, and it is by adhering to these methods that our country will attain independence." The pledge further said, "We pledge ourselves anew to the independence of India and we solemnly resolve to carry on non-violently the struggle for freedom till *Purna Swaraj* is attained." Nehru had naturally great regard for him. Addressing more than 20,000 people in the Bannu meeting, Nehru said, "The province has produced one great man in whom all India took pride. He has lifted the Frontier people out of the morass, changing the whole atmosphere. He created the great army of Khudai Khidmatgars and mobilized such an arms-living race for a heroic non-violent struggle for freedom. It is a miracle that he has performed. The weapon of non-violence is a mighty weapon. Only the bold and daring can wield it. We challenged the British power boldly. Through it, the withering and drooping spirit of India gained vitality. Power alone can meet power. Only air-bombers can face air-bombers, not bows and arrows or even guns-weapons which have become antiquated and useless. So India forged this new weapon of non-violence to face a powerful enemy and shook the British empire to its

foundations.”²⁵ Khan Sahib was a man of iron determination and nothing could shake him from his strong conviction in non-violence, peace, composite nationalism etc.

It is interesting to note that as late as 1946, there was no let up in the enthusiasm of the Khudai Khidmatgars for nationalism and Hindu-Muslim unity. On October 21, 1946 a mammoth gathering of twenty-five thousand people was held which the people from different parts and leaders of the independent Mohamand tribes living adjacent to Sardaryab came to greet Nehru. A welcome address on behalf of Khudai Khidmatgars to Jawaharlal Nehru, “the Vice-President of the Central Government of India”, said:

“Respected leader—today we Pakhtuns through the Khudai Khidmatgars extend a hearty and sincere welcome to you. Valiant general, we all highly appreciate your sacrifices and your trials which you have undergone for attaining the freedom of the country and we think that your contribution to the political progress of the people and wresting authority from the Britishers is great. The Pakhtuns know that you do not *differentiate between Hindus and Musalmans or other inhabitants of the country*. Your way of dealing with the Hindu ruler of Kashmir on behalf of the aggrieved Musalman subjects is a proof that communalism can have no place in your thought, and that is why both the Hindus and Muslims hold you in high esteem.”²⁶ (emphasis added)

This address given at a time when the communal frenzy was at its height is a clear proof, if any proof were needed, of Pakhtuns and their leader’s determination to support composite nationalism based on the Hindu-Muslim unity. It also shows that all Muslims were not united in demanding Pakistan as is commonly believed.

Besides Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, there were many Muslim leaders and intellectuals who were totally opposed to the very idea of partitioning of the country. As pointed out earlier Jami’at-ul’Ulama’i-Hind became allies of the Congress since the Khilafat days and remained its supporters all through. It was, in fact the Muslim League which totally lacked any support of prominent Muslim theologians. The Congress, on the other hand, had on its side the entire who’s who of Indian Muslim theologians. Later on, the Muslim League could boast of only one prominent theologian—Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani who had broken away from the Jami’at on organisational question.

Some of the prominent names of this theologians' organisation are Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, Maulana Hifzur Rahman and others.

Maulana Mahmudul Hasan was a passionate supporter of freedom movement and wanted to see the British out of India at the first opportunity. In the second annual session of the Jami'atul 'Ulama-i-Hind held in October, 1920, the Maulana, in his presidential address stressed that the greatest enemy of Islam and Muslims is *Angraz* (i.e. the British) with whom to non-cooperate is a religious duty of all Muslims. He said that for the freedom of the country (*istikhlās-e-watan*) it is legitimate to seek co-operation of the fellow-countrymen but it should not affect religious rights. He also said that as those fighting for the freedom did not possess cannons, guns, airplanes etc., the weapons of demonstrations, national unity (*qawmi ittihad*) and unanimous stand on demands from the British should be adopted. He also said that Allah must be thanked that He won for the Muslims the support of the fellow-countrymen *hamwatan* for achievement of holy aim (i.e., the Khilafat in Turkey). He stated that he considered the Hindu-Muslim unity most useful and consequential (*mufid aur muntaj*) and had great regard for those who strove for this unity because without it India's freedom would be impossible to achieve ... If these two sections of Indian population and also the Sikhs live in unity and peace, no fourth power, howsoever strong, can crush or defeat them with its coercive might. He warned both Hindus and Muslims not to entertain prejudices against each other. A Hindu should not refuse to drink water from a Muslim's vessel and a Muslim should not refuse to give his shoulder to a Hindu's bier (*arhi*). It is killing poison (*samme qatil*) for the Hindu-Muslim unity.²⁷ These are very inspiring statements indeed.

Another great name from amongst the 'Ulama is that of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani who was successor to Maulana Mahmudul Hasan as Shaikhul Jamia i.e., the Vice Chancellor of the Darul 'Ulum, Deoband, the international Islamic seminary. Maulana Husain Ahmad was also wedded to the concept of composite nationalism (called *muttahida qaumiyyat*). He did not consider it as opposed to the Islamic teachings. In fact the Jami'atul 'Ulama-i-Hind maintained that the holy Prophet also had drawn up a pact (*mu'ahidah*) with the Jews, Christians and pagans of Madina when he migrated from Mecca to that city to live

in peace and harmony with each other and all the religious communities, according to this *mu'ahidah* respected each other's religious freedom.

Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani was challenged by the noted Urdu poet Iqbal on the question of nationalism after the Maulana made a speech outside Jami'ah Masjid in Delhi in December, 1937 where he said that these days nations are based on countries, i.e., geographical boundaries, not on religion (*aaj kal qaumen watan ke bunyaad par banti hain. Mazhab alag alag hain to is se qaumen alag nahin mani jati*). This was the time when the movement for Pakistan was gathering strength and the very basis of this movement was religious nationalism. Also, ideologically Iqbal was opposed to the very idea of nationalism. In his presidential address to the Muslim League in Allahabad in 1930 he had dwelt upon this theme and had maintained that a Muslim, whatever country he belongs to, is a member of the same Islamic nation. He, therefore, felt offended by the Maulana's concept of composite nationalism. This controversy was played up by those Urdu papers which supported the League. Iqbal also composed some verses in Persian which were published by many newspapers. In these verses he said, 'Ajam (non-Arab world) still does not know the secrets of religion otherwise from Deoband what is this strange utterances of Husain Ahmad. He said from the pulpit that *millat* (Islamic community) is from nation (*watan*). How ignorant he is about the status of Muhammad Arabi (the Prophet of Islam). Reach yourself to Mustafa (the Prophet) that he is the embodiment of religion. If you do not reach him it is all *Bu lahabi* (i.e. it is following Abu Lahab, the inveterate enemy of the Prophet).'²⁸

These verses from the great Urdu poet Iqbal's pen denouncing *wataniyyat* (nationalism) on one hand, and Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, on the other, for pronouncing this concept raised great controversy. A spate of editorials, statements and write-ups against the Maulana followed. The Maulana was persuaded, by one of his followers Mr. Talat, to clarify his position. He wrote a detailed letter to Talat in this regard and said that the followers of the League were determined to disturb his meeting which was political in nature. While referring to internal situation in India he said that in modern times the nations are based on geographical boundaries (*watan*), not on races or

religions. All those who live in England are one nation though there are Jews and Christians, Protestants as well as Catholics among them. The same thing applies to America, Japan, France, etc. Many began to disturb the meeting and next day papers like *Al-Aman* published the news that (Maulana) Husain Ahmad says that nationality is determined by country, not by religion. "The context of my speech", he wrote to Talat, "was ignored and my views were deliberately distorted". The Maulana said that he never meant that religion and religious community (*Millat*) depend on geographical boundaries. According to Maulana, even a person of Iqbal's standing could not distinguish between the words '*qaum*' and *millat* though these two words have distinct meanings. *Millat* means *shari'ah* and *Din* (i.e. religion) and *qaum* means a community of men and women sharing common territory. Then he went on to say that Hindustani people meant all those who live in India whether they are white or black, speak Bangla or Urdu, are Hindus or Muslims, Parsis or Sikhs because Hindustanis (Indians) constitute a *qaum*.

The Maulana further explained that the belief that Islam does not believe in racial, linguistic or geographical discrimination does not detract from accepting the differences based on nationalities. There is no clear injunction, according to Maulana Husain Ahmad, in *shari'ah* which goes against the concept of *qaum* being applied to different nations. Then referring to the stark poverty of Indian people and their backwardness he says that there is no other way but to unite all the people of India irrespective of religious and other differences into a nation to fight against the evils whose basis could only be a country bound by geographical limits. Territorial nationalism is the only way out, he wrote. United nationalism was the goal of Indian National Congress.

It is interesting to note that the Maulana criticises even the policies pursued by Sir Syed and later by the Muslim League. Sir Syed, he maintains, made Muslims fearful and loyal to the British. His organisation was anti-Congress. It was this policy, he writes, which culminated in the formation of the Muslim League in Simla at the instance of the English rulers. The British, he says, made this the basis of encouraging *Shudhi* and *Sangathan* to divide the people of India. The League, the Maulana goes on to say, has always been subservient

to the British rulers and in order to serve their masters, the League leaders attack the sincere workers and true servants of Muslim community as well as of the Jami'at al-'Ulama.

However, there is one puzzling passage in the second letter of Maulana Madani in reply to Dr. Iqbal's letter. He states, "I was saying that in the present times nations are formed by *watan* (i.e. territorial limits). This is the statement of present times, outlook and mentality. Here it has not been said that you should do like this. It is statement, not intention. No one has reported it as advice, nor has anyone hinted it as being command or intention".²⁹ This might be a diplomatic statement on the part of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani to buy peace with Iqbal who had great standing in the Muslim community but the fact remains that the Maulana was great supporter of the Congress and its concept of composite nationalism. He was assaulted a number of times by the Muslim League hooligans. We find account of one of such attacks on him in a letter written by one of his followers, Maulana Tyeb Sahib (who later became chief of the Deoband seminary).³⁰

"It is highly agonizing (*kaleja muhn ko ata hai*) to send this letter to you. I am unable to restrain my emotions. Pen is unable to write what the goondas of the League have done to harass and persecute my master and lord Shaikhul Islam Maulana Husain Ahmad Saheb Madani (may his shadow be lengthened). My heart pains and one does not know to what extent immoral and irreverent mischievous and persecutory treatment of Leagui Muslims to a person who has fully devoted himself to Islam can go ...

After the maghrib prayer he set out for Syedpur. There a huge crowd belonging to the League goondas surrounded him and his colleagues and obstructed his way. With great difficulty they came out of the platform. But the League storm troopers were not allowing him to proceed further. They were bearing black flags and shouting death slogans. Many goondas were dead drunk. One Leagui removed the cap from Hazrat Madani's head. Many of his colleagues received hard blows. Coachman was injured. The police was informed but it refused to take any responsibility and it became impossible to go further ... He spent night at the station and returned to Kathiyar in the morning. What happened here was most shameful. The Leaguis (more pupils from schools than goondas) put mud in an earthen pot and brought one garland of worn out shoes and one beehive dipped in gutter putrid water and raised death slogans while waving black flags. (free translation from Urdu)³⁰

Many prominent 'Ulama of repute stood by the Congress and fought against the League and its demand for Pakistan. It would, therefore, be wrong to think that Pakistan was demanded on religious consideration. The whole debate between Iqbal and Maulana Madani makes it clear that Pakistan's demand was not based on Islam. Apart from the Jami'at al-Ulama-e-Hind the demand for Pakistan was fiercely opposed by the Ahrars of Punjab also. Ahrars were the freedom fighters of Punjab. It was led by a legendary figure Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari. Chaudhuri Afzal Haq was another of its leader.

In one of his addresses to the Muslims, Chaudhuri Afzal Haq says, there is only difference in the way of thinking of true Muslim and an honest nationalist Hindu. In practice both are demanding freedom of the country and are each other's dear neighbours. For both of them betrayal of interest of India amounts to being traitor to one's country and community.³¹ The Chaudhuri also exposes the Muslim League and its politics of fear. He said that there is no dearth of honest people in Muslim League. But as a party it is fearful and creates fear of Hindus among Muslims. It is greater animosity towards Islam than the enemies of Islam because it is the ghost of fear which destroys a community and it is because of this, the communities die without being killed ... Those who do not have true spirit of soldier of Islam, only such Muslims are afraid of other communities. The leaders of League who have been brought up in luxury, cannot be the leaders of fearless religion like Islam and mujahid like Musalmans ... Let people of understanding (*arbab-e-basirat*) reflect that what is there in the League except the pull of wealth. The League is far from the spirit of sacrifice and suffering. In Islam existence of capitalism is undesirable and exception to its law of equality.

The Ahrars were also critical of the Congress and many of its leaders as the party was dominated by the Hindu ethos. It appeared more as a Hindu than a secular party. Therefore, many Muslims felt alienated from it. Thus while the Ahrars approved of joint struggle with the Hindus for the freedom of the country, they complained against the dominant Hindu ethos of the Congress. However, they totally disapproved of the League politics. The Congress was an umbrella organisation harbouring within it various trends—extreme right to extreme left, and from secular to communal. Within the Congress there

were those who belonged to the Hindu Mahasabha, an extreme Hindu communal organisation. Such elements, through their utterances, often gave an impression as if the Congress was a Hindu organisation. Such elements within the Congress, strengthened the hands of Muslim League in its propaganda against the Congress and its secularism.

The communal question, it must be pointed out again, had nothing to do with the religious question. No one was doubting whether the Muslims, as a minority, will have religious freedom in independent India. That question was settled when the '*Ulama* allied themselves with the Congress and sought the assurance that the Muslim personal law will not be changed and full religious freedom will be assured to the Muslims. The '*Ulama* had also whole-heartedly accepted the relatively modern concept of composite nationalism. Also, many prominent Muslims, besides the '*Ulama*, were supporting the Congress. They too did not doubt the Congress policy towards the religious minorities in any way. What was in dispute was not freedom to profess and practice religion but the share in power. The communal question mainly related to it. This question of share in power could not be satisfactorily solved until the last and the country got divided. Jinnah's fourteen point charter which he formulated as early as 1929 (after the Nehru Committee Report controversy) and which became very crucial for the Muslim League has nothing much about the religious freedom of Muslims. It mostly relates to secular demands. It relates to effective representation of Muslims in legislatures, separation of Sindh from the Bombay province, continuation of separate electorates etc.³² Had these questions been settled to the satisfaction of both the parties, there would have been no question of division of our country.

The turning point in this respect was the Nehru Committee report. The major demand being voiced by a section of Muslims was that they be given one-third representation in the central legislature though their numerical strength was just 25 per cent. They wanted one-third representation so that the Hindu majority could not legislate anything against the interests of Muslim minority. On 20th March, 1927 prominent Muslim leaders met in Delhi under the presidentship of Jinnah and it was unanimously decided that Muslims will give up separate electorates if the following proposals were accepted: (1) Sind to be separated from the Bombay Presidency and constituted into a

separate province; (2) reforms to be introduced in North-West Frontier Province and in Baluchistan on the same footing as in any other province in India; (3) in the Punjab and Bengal, the proportion of representation to be made in accordance with the population; (4) in the Central Legislature Muslim representation not to be less than one-third. If all these demands were accepted, the Muslims would be prepared to accept joint electorates in all the provinces so constituted and to make to the Hindu minorities in Bengal, Punjab, and North-West Frontier Provinces the same concession that the Hindu majorities in other provinces were prepared to make to the Muslims.³³ Jinnah explained the Muslim view in the following words: "Mussalmans should be made to feel that they are secure and safeguarded against any act of oppression on the part of the majority and that they need not feel that during the transitional stage towards the fullest development of National Government the majority would be in a position to oppress and tyrannise the minority as majorities are prone to do in other countries".³⁴

This, to a large extent, explains the real cause of the country's partition. The real dispute was not religion or religious freedom but share in power and guarantees that the Muslim interests would be properly taken care of in independent India. Also, it was not the Muslim masses who were worried about these questions of representation etc., it was the educated Muslim which sought those guarantees. Jinnah's fourteen points did not show much concern about the poor and illiterate Muslims. No wonder then that the movement for Pakistan was led by a modern educated Muslim like Jinnah and not by any religious authority like Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani or Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad who had great standing as religious leaders. They were opposed to the very concept of Pakistan.

It is interesting to note that the AICC was not averse to these demands formulated by the Muslim leaders in Delhi. The Working Committee of the Congress appreciated the preparedness of the Muslim leaders to accept joining electorates and passed a lengthy resolution on the Hindu-Muslim question for presentation at the AICC session on 15 May, 1927 in Bombay. It is significant to note that it accepted all the Muslim proposals. The AICC unanimously adopted the same resolution with minor alterations.³⁵

The Madras session of the Congress held in December 1927, gave full assurance to the Muslims that "their legitimate interests should be secured ... by the reservation of seats in joint electorate on the basis of population in every province and in central legislature ..." It also agreed to other Muslim proposals regarding Sind, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan.³⁶

Talking about the resolution passed at the Madras session, Congress leader, Govind Ballabh Pant, characterized them "as the best and most suitable arrangement which carried with it the largest amount of support from both the communities". He even said that the resolution had full concurrence of Hindu Mahasabha leaders like M.R. Jayakar and Madan Mohan Malviya.³⁷

However, soon problems arose both on Muslim and Hindu side. The rival faction of All India Muslim League led by Muhammad Shafi refused to give up separate electorate and accused Jinnah of having compromised with the Hindus on this important question. The Hindu Mahasabha too rejected the principle of reservation of seats in favour of any minority community in any province. It also opposed inflexibly on the creation of new Muslim provinces as a price for securing joint electorates. It considered separate electorate a lesser evil than the creation of new provinces.³⁸ Thus communalists on both sides were responsible for creating insurmountable problems for solution of the communal problem. Jinnah had taken a reasonable view and at this stage he was nowhere talking in terms of partition. On the other hand, he made the Muslim leaders accept joint electorates. In one of his speeches he made conciliatory gesture. It appears to be the voice of a leader strongly desirous of communal harmony:

It is absolutely essential to our progress that Hindu-Muslim settlement should be reached, and that all communities should live in a friendly and harmonious spirit in this vast country of ours. No country has succeeded in either wresting a democratic constitution from a domination of another nation or establishing representative institution from within without giving guarantees for the securities of the minorities, wherever such a problem has arisen. Majorities are apt to be oppressive and tyrannical and minorities always dread and fear that their interests and rights, unless clearly and definitely safeguarded by statutory provisions, would suffer and be prejudiced but this apprehension is enhanced all the more when we have to deal with communal majority.³⁹

For the sake of unity, Tej Bahadur Sapru supported Jinnah with regard to the demand for the reservation of seats in the Central Legislature. He described this demand as “not inconsistent with the Nehru Report.” He told his fellow delegates: “We must, as practical statesmen, try to solve the problem and not be misled by arithmetical figures”.⁴⁰

Replying to the debate Jinnah once again emphasised Hindu-Muslim unity for achieving independence. He said:

... If you do not settle this question today, we shall have to settle it tomorrow, but in the meantime our national interests are bound to suffer. We are all sons of this land. We have to live together. We have to work together and whatever our differences may be let us at any rate not create more bad blood. If we cannot agree, let us at any rate agree to differ but let us part as friends. I once more repeat. *Believe me, there is no progress for India until the Mussalmans and Hindus are united and let no logic, philosophy or squabble stand in the way of our coming to a compromise and nothing will make me more happy than to see the Hindu Muslim union.* (emphasis supplied)⁴¹

Thus it comes to light that Jinnah was all for the Hindu-Muslim unity until 1928. His stand was endorsed by many other Congress leaders as well. The responsibility for the failure of Nehru Report was put on the Hindu Mahasabha. In an interview to the Associated Press he said, “The fate of Nehru Report was sealed by the speech of Jayakar at the Convention”.⁴² M.C. Chagla issued the following statement after the failure of the talks on Nehru Report:

I wish particularly to point out that the delegates whom the League sent to the Convention represented the most advanced sections of Muslim thought, that a large majority of them had already expressed their approval of the Nehru Report and that several of them have fought their own people and broken with their own organisation in order to support the national cause ... If these delegates are going to be dubbed as communalists then perhaps there is not a single Muslim nationalist anywhere in the country ... I still hope that, before the Convention concludes its labours, it would be able to see its way to accepting the League's demands. Just as the Muslim League has fought and driven out the Shafi section ... so also the Convention ought to deal with its Moonjes and Jayakars who threaten to leave the convention every time Muslims make any suggestion to alter or modify any of the provisions of the Report.⁴³

However, the Convention could not resolve the issue and this changed Jinnah's attitude and now he thought that Muslims as a body should reconsider their attitude vis-a-vis the Congress. He was convinced in his belief that the disorganised condition of the Muslims had encouraged the Congress to ignore their demands which they had once accepted. Thus the Nehru Report was a turning point in Jinnah's attitude towards the Congress and the communal question. He, thereafter, began to take very hard stance. This was evidenced by the attitude he took in the two Round Table Conferences in London in the early thirties. The idea for creation of Pakistan had not yet been born and Jinnah wanted the solution of the communal problem in the form of Muslim representation in various state legislatures and in the parliament. The Round Table Conference did not succeed and the British ultimately announced their own scheme in the form of 1935 constitution giving Muslims one-third representation in the Parliament. Jinnah felt so disgusted with the development after the failure of Nehru Report that he left India and settled in London and began his practice there.

The second turning point in Jinnah's attitude was the 1937 elections and the refusal by the Congress to take two Muslim League ministers. Though there was no formal or informal pact between the two, there was no confrontation either among them during the election. In fact the Congress and the League in many cases had supported each other's candidates and it was hoped that the Congress might take the League's nominees in the ministry. The campaign speeches made by Jinnah for 1937 elections also showed his concern for the Hindu-Muslim unity. In a speech at Nagpur, on 1 January, 1937, he said:

"Hindus and Muslims should present a united front; they must stand together and work together for the welfare of your province and for the freedom of our motherland ... it (the League) stood for independent and progressive ideals. Their desire was to send out the best representatives in new legislatures who would cooperate with other progressive groups for the uplift, progress and freedom of the motherland. His advice to Muslims as also to the sister communities was to produce by a process of hammering fine steel and weed out those obstructing their march to freedom".⁴⁴

This speech of Jinnah clearly shows that until 1937 he was talking of Hindu-Muslim unity and Indian motherland and that both the

communities should work for the progress and upliftment of their motherland. However, subsequent events and developments brought about radical change in his attitude towards the Congress and Hindu-Muslim unity. Some people argue that it would have been in the interest of the Hindu-Muslim unity if the Congress had included the two League ministers in the Cabinet in U.P. However, there was no such obligation on the Congress. Moreover the nationalist Muslims like Rafi Ahmad Qidwai were instrumental in rejecting the Congress-Muslim League alliance. He wrote to Pandit Nehru on 28 March 1937 from Bara Banki: "My conviction is that the Congress will not be doing its duty to the Mussalmans of India if it ever thought of making pacts and coalitions with the Muslim League ... The Congress cannot consider the case of U.P. singly just to afford facilities to a particular individual"⁴⁵

Nehru was under pressure from some of the nationalist Muslims not to take the two League ministers. It would be wrong to say that the Congress in any way backed out of any formal understanding. Nehru's letter to Rajendra Prasad (21 July 1937) makes the position quite clear. He writes: "During the general elections in U.P. there was not much conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League ... There was no kind of arrangement between the U.P. Congress and the League, but a kind of convention developed ... a little before the working committee meeting, the U.P. Muslim League leaders, Khaliqzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan, made an approach towards the Congress. This had obviously some connection with the possibility of ministries ... When Maulana Abul Kalam Azad went to Lucknow from Wardha he saw Khaliq who told him that he was practically prepared to give him a blank cheque provided two of their number were included in the ministry—himself and nawab Ismail Khan, the president of the U.P. Board. Maulana looked at this all with some suspicion but he felt attracted by the possibility of the whole Muslim League ceasing to exist as a separate group and being practically absorbed by the Congress. We disliked taking in two persons, who from the Congress point of view, were weak. We feared reaction among the Congressmen in general ..."⁴⁶

Thus there were two sides to the debate. The inclusion of the two ministers from League would have led, in all probability, to better

relations between the two parties and would have also consolidated Hindu-Muslim unity further. However, the Congress, as pointed out above, also had to take its implications within the Congress into account. That could hardly be ignored.

However, non-inclusion led to bitterness and now the League launched an all out anti-Congress campaign. But most of the charges levelled by the League were false. Maulana Azad says: "The Muslim League's main propaganda against Congress had been that it was national only in name. Not content with defaming Congress in general terms, the League also gave out that the Congress Ministries were carrying out atrocities against the minorities. It appointed a committee which presented a report making all kinds of allegations about unfair treatment of Muslims and other minorities. I can speak from personal knowledge that these allegations were absolutely unfounded. This was also the view which was held by the Viceroy and the Governors of different provinces. As such the report prepared by the League carried no conviction among sensible people."⁴⁷

The Muslim League was not concerned now with the veracity of its charges. It was more concerned with launching massive propaganda against the Congress among the Muslims. Not only because it was jilted by the Congress but also because it had so far believed only in elitist politics. The election results opened its eyes. It had lost heavily and it could win only 109 of the 482 seats it had contested in the 1937 elections. Besides, it also failed to win a majority of seats in any of the four Muslim majority provinces.⁴⁸ This was a terrible blow for a party which claimed to be the 'sole representative of Indian Muslims.' It was greatly embarrassed by the election results and now wanted to woo the Muslims. It could be done by raising a spectre of 'discrimination against Muslims' by the 'Hindu' Congress. Jinnah was a supreme tactician and used all possible tactics to create ill feelings about the 'Hindu' Congress among the Muslims. Such propaganda further alienated Muslims, especially the educated Muslims from the Congress.

It must be stressed here once again that the Muslim League, as shown by the 1937 elections also, never had popular base among common Muslims. Among the educated intelligentsia too, it had greater acceptability only in the Urdu speaking Muslim minority provinces like U.P. and Bihar and to some extent in Bombay Province. In the minority

Muslim provinces in the South, it had no base whatsoever. Jinnah now realised how narrow and precarious was his own and the party's base and so he began to evolve new tactics to win over the Muslim masses. But success eluded him. The Congress had economic programme which though not very radical, had appeal for the Indian masses. The League could not boast of any such programme. When Dr. Iqbal, the noted Urdu poet, wrote to Jinnah that priority must be given to the economic programme to remove poverty amongst Muslim masses, specially in Punjab, he dropped him from the presidentship of Punjab Muslim League. Jinnah, who now solicited support of powerful sections of Muslim society—jagirdars, taluqadars, and businessmen, avoided framing any radical economic programme, lest these sections may be sacred away. The Muslim League had extremely narrow social base among Muslims. It could never appeal to the poorer masses. Thus when the Pakistan resolution was passed on 23rd March, 1940 in Lahore, it hardly evoked any enthusiasm among the Muslims. On the other hand, thousands of Ansari Muslims (weavers) demonstrated against it in Delhi a couple of months later.

There was no universal franchise. According to the 1935 Constitution enforced by the British, even ten per cent of Indian population was not enfranchised. Only those who had certain educational qualification or held certain amount of property could vote. Thus popular will could not be ascertained at all. All crucial decisions were taken without ascertaining the popular opinion.

In Muslim majority areas the condition of the League was even worse. Ayesha Jalal throws light on this aspect. "The Punjab and Bengal", she writes, "were the provinces that mattered most to the A.I.M.L. Both had bare Muslim majorities, whose need to come to terms with other people cut against the grain of following a hard communal line. They were the two provinces where local opinion threatened to undermine Jinnah's uncertain mandate at the centre. But if these were the unmanageable sharks in Jinnah's waters, he also had to find ways of pulling in the lesser fish when he trawled for support: the newly created province of Sind and the N.W.F.P., the north western outsiders of the Punjab. In Sind and the N.W.F.P. the League had failed to make even a pretense of a respectable showing in the 1937 elections. In fact the Frontier, with its overwhelming Muslim population,

affiliated itself to the Congress while the Allah Bakhsh ministry in Sind, which shunted in and out of office, throughout depended on a measure of support from the Congress".⁴⁹

It is indeed very difficult to maintain the argument that all Indian Muslims were responsible for creation of Pakistan. In Muslim minority provinces like U.P. and Bihar, at least the educated elite, out of fear of losing their privileges, were eager to have Pakistan but in Muslim majority provinces even the educated elite were not anxious for any such move. In fact in Punjab, it was no easy task for Jinnah. The Unionist Party, a loose coalition of various opportunist elements, mostly feudal and cutting across religious lines, was in command. It was in the interest of the Unionist Party to keep the League ministry out. In May 1942 Sikandar Hayat Khan, began to probe the possibility of joining the Congress. But he died later that year. Thus a powerful obstacle from Jinnah's viewpoint was removed. It will be seen that Jinnah had a very difficult time paving his way in the Muslim majority states. They had no fear in these states of recalcitrant Hindu majority as the Hindus were part of coalition ministries in some of these provinces. Jinnah had to resort to various ways to induce Muslim politicians from these states to join Muslim League. He could succeed in doing so only after 1945 when the conditions changed faster and Jinnah could convince them that they may not have any fear at the provincial level but at the central level only he (Jinnah) could get them the necessary concessions.

Pakistan, it must be noted, was hardly thought to be a reality until 1945. The final resolution for achieving Pakistan was passed only as late as April 9, 1946. The resolution now demanded a single 'sovereign Independent State' instead of two (as in the Lahore resolution of 1940) and two separate constituent assemblies for the Muslim and Hindu provinces, with safeguards for the minorities in Pakistan and Hindustan.⁵⁰ There was a reasonable proposal in the form of Cabinet Mission Plan according full autonomy within Indian federal framework to the states. The Centre would have been entrusted only with three subjects—defence, communication and foreign policy. All other residuary powers would have been vested with the autonomous states with an option to opt out of the Union after 10 years. The suspicions were deep and any slip of tongue could prove disastrous and this is

what happened with the Cabinet Mission Plan also. What Jawaharlal said about the Cabinet Mission Plan came as a bomb shell to Jinnah. Maulana Azad describes it in one of his thirty¹ pages which were withheld and published in 1988 thus:

Now happened one of those unfortunate events which changed the course of history. On 10 July, Jawaharlal held a press conference in Bombay in which he made an astonishing statement. Some press representatives asked him whether, with the passing of the resolution by the AICC, the Congress had accepted the Plan in toto, including the composition of the interim Government.

Jawaharlal in reply stated that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly completely unaffected by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise.

Press representatives further asked if this meant that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be modified.

Jawaharlal replied emphatically that the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best.⁵¹

The Muslim League had accepted the Plan under duress. According to Azad “Jawaharlal’s statement came to him as a bombshell. He immediately issued a statement that this declaration by the Congress President demanded a review of the whole situation.” The Muslim League had accepted the Plan on assurance that the Congress had accepted it. Jawaharlal’s unfortunate statement implied that the plan could be modified by the Hindu majority and that the Muslim minority would be at the mercy of Hindu majority. In the Muslim League Council meeting held in Bombay on 27 July, 1946, Jinnah reiterated the demand for Pakistan “as the only course left open to the Muslim League”. After three days of discussion, the League Council rejected the Cabinet Mission Plan and it also decided to resort to direct action for the achievement of Pakistan. We all know what happened after this crucial decision.

Why Nehru made this kind of statement which changed the whole course of Indian history? Even Nehru when asked about it 12 years after the event could not clearly explain it. But what he said was significant on the ideological plane: “That was, I think—this overwhelming sensation that any kind of union, if it came about, would first of all not put an end to these inner pulls, secondly, it would leave

the Federal Government so weak—with the transfer of power to its various constituent units—the Central Federation would be so weak, that it would not be able to act properly or adopt any effective economic measures. These were the real reasons which ultimately induced us to agree (to partition). It was very difficult choice—you can well imagine—and it is frightfully difficult to say now what one could do if one had the same choice⁵² ...”

Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were in favour of strong centre and the choice before them was either weak centre and united India or strong centre and divided India. They threw their lot with the latter. It is obvious that the communal question could not be resolved satisfactorily between the elites of the two communities. The Hindu Mahasabha also contributed to the communal imbroglio. It too was of the view that the Hindus and Muslims are two nations and cannot co-exist harmoniously. They passed a resolution in 1937 to this effect, much before the Lahore resolution of the League in 1940. It did not demand partition but accepted the concept of two nations. Bhai Parmanand, Mahasabha leader, wrote in 1938, “Mr. Jinnah argues that there are two nations in the country ... If Mr. Jinnah is right and *I believe he is*, the Congress theory of building up a common nationality falls to the ground. The situation has got only two solutions. One is the *partition* of the country into two and the other to allow a Muslim State to grow within the State” (emphasis added).⁵³ Thus the communal forces, Muslim or Hindu, supported partition of India on religious grounds. The responsibility for vivisection of India has to be shared by all.

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Chapter 4

Re-Emergence of Communalism in Post-Independence India

The partition of the country has been one of the greatest tragedies of modern India. Those who launched the freedom-struggle had never visualised that freedom would be achieved at such a tremendous price. The partition riots cost more than a million human lives besides loss of properties worth hundreds of crores of rupees. It was, by any account, the greatest catastrophe of our times. Not only that, it generated bitterness which has not yet been forgotten. Far from solving the problem, it was further perpetrated communalism. It was thought natural for two brothers to quarrel and separate but they would come closer after separation and live peacefully. However, the analogy proved wrong. The vested interests prevented the two countries to come closer and live in peace and harmony. If any leader attempts to sincerely build bridges between the two countries, his opponents accuse him of undermining the interests of the country and thus set at naught all such efforts. The relationship between the two countries thus never improves and the tension is often given communal turn by the communalists. In India, the majority communal forces still question the loyalty of the Indian Muslims to the country and accuse them of being loyal to Pakistan. In many religio-political processions, slogans like "*Mussalman, jao Pakistan ya Qabrastan* (O Muslims, go to Pakistan or to cemetery) are still raised to arouse the passions of majority community. In the post-partition-period the Muslims in India were mainly held guilty for creation of Pakistan. Firstly, those Muslims who

were guilty of partitioning the country had migrated to Pakistan for greener pastures. Almost all of them were from elite classes. The poor Muslims who mostly remained behind in India had no voice in supporting or opposing Pakistan and hence, at best, they were mute spectators. A large number of them had even opposed the partition plan as explained earlier. The communal Hindus too had believed in the two-nation theory, if not exactly in partition. The Hindu Mahasabha in its Ahmedabad session of 1937 had endorsed the two-nation theory of Jinnah.

Even among the Congressmen, a section was supportive of partition plan in the last days of the British rule. Maulana Azad has this to say: "Among Congressmen, the greatest supporter of partition was Sardar Patel. Even he did not believe that partition was the best solution of the Indian problem. He threw his weight in favour of partition out of irritation and injured vanity. He found himself frustrated at every step by the veto put on his proposals by Liaqat Ali Khan as Finance Minister. In sheer anger he therefore decided that if there was no other alternative, let partition be accepted. He was also convinced that the new state of Pakistan was not viable and could not last. He thought that the acceptance of Pakistan would teach the Muslim League a bitter lesson ... Perhaps Sardar Patel hoped that they would be forced to return to India." He further observes, "I must also admit that he had developed such strong prejudices against the Muslim League that he would not have been sorry if the Muslims who followed the League suffered".¹ Maulana Azad also draws our attention to the fact that acceptance of partition plan by Congress did not mean its acceptance by the people of India. He says, "The real test of the people's attitude towards the partition of the country came on 14 August 1947 when independent Pakistan was formed. If the people of India had willingly accepted partition, surely the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab, the Frontier, Sind and Bengal could rejoice in the same way as the Muslims of these regions. Reports which we received from all these provinces showed how hollow was the claim that Congress acceptance of the partition meant acceptance of partition by Indian people".

Fourteenth August was, for the Muslims of Pakistan, a day of rejoicing. For the Hindus and Sikhs, it was a day of mourning. This was the feeling not only of most people but even of the important leaders of

the Congress. Acharya Kriplani was then President of the Congress. He is a man of Sind. On that day he issued a statement that it was a day of sorrow and destruction for India. This feeling was expressed openly by Hindus and Sikhs throughout Pakistan. It was surely a strange situation. Our national organisation had taken a decision in favour of partition but the entire people grieved over partition.²

Thus from what the Maulana states it is clear that the Congress and some of its important leaders were also responsible for creation of Pakistan. Secondly, the decision to partition the country was certainly not of the people of India; it was of the Muslim League and the Congress. It was certainly not a popular decision. In other words the Hindu and Muslim elite decided the fate of the country leaving the Hindu and Muslim masses in the lurch. Also, the partition plan, in no way, solved the communal problem. Both in India and Pakistan the fate of minorities remained precarious.

Many supporters of the Muslim League also did not properly understand the implications of formation of Pakistan. Again Maulana Azad throws some light on this malady:

After partition, the most ridiculous position was that of the Muslim League leaders who remained in India. Jinnah left for Karachi with a message to his followers that now the country was divided and they should be loyal citizens of India. This parting message created in them a strange sense of weakness and disillusion. Their plight was pathetic. Everyone of them said with deep regret and anger that Jinnah had deceived them and left them in the lurch.

I could not at first understand what they meant by saying that Jinnah had deceived them. He had openly demanded partition of the country on the basis of Muslim majority provinces. Partition was now a reality and both in the West and in the East, Muslim majority areas formed parts of Pakistan. Why should these spokesmen of the Muslim League say that they were deceived?

As I talked to them I realised that these men had formed a picture of partition which had no relevance to the real situation. They had failed to realise the real implications of Pakistan. If the Muslim majority provinces formed a separate State, it was clear that the provinces in which the Muslims were in minority would form part of India. Muslims of the U.P. and Bihar were a minority and would remain so even after partition. It is strange but the fact is that these Muslim Leaguers had thought wherever they came from, a majority or a minority province would be regarded as a

separate nation and would enjoy the right of determining their own future. Now when the Muslim majority provinces went out of India and even Bengal and Punjab were divided and Mr. Jinnah left for Karachi, these fools realised that they had gained nothing but in fact lost everything by the partition of India.³

Thus many Muslim League leaders of U.P. and Bihar had wrong impression about the implications of formation of Pakistan. They thought or they were made to believe by the propaganda machinery of the Muslim League that partition of the country on the basis of theory of two-nations would entitle them to certain rights and privileges as a separate 'Muslim nation'. But it was only after partition when Jinnah left them behind with a message to 'be loyal to their country' that they realised full implications of supporting the Pakistan movement. Not only would they not enjoy any special rights or privileges but they will continue to face the fate of minority, to escape which they had supported the Pakistan movement. But this realisation came to them too late when the whole game was up and the deed was done. Their repentance was of no use.

In fact the Muslims, especially those who were left behind after partition, were the greatest losers. The Maulana also had clearly warned the Indian Muslims in unambiguous words that if partition ever became a reality, they would one day wake up to find that after the majority of Muslims went away to Pakistan, they would remain in India a small and insignificant minority.⁴

Thus the partition plan was disastrous more for Muslims than for others. Those Muslims who remained in India had to face partition riots. The relatives of those Hindus who were killed and reduced to destitution on the other side of the border came to India full of anger and sought revenge by killing the Muslims in India. Secondly, as pointed out by Azad, they were reduced now to an insignificant minority unable to influence government decisions as much as prior to the partition. Also, before long the Pakistani Muslims also realised that it was utterly unrealistic to believe in viability of religious nationalism. Modern nation-states cannot be based on religion.

After all Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani was right in pointing out that one must distinguish between *umma* (religious community) and a nation (a territorial community bound by cultural and other multifarious

bonds). An *umma* is an idealised and an imagined community while a modern nation-state, with all its contradictions, tensions, pulls and pressures, is a concrete reality. *Umma* could only be a part of religious discourse, not of modern political discourse. Pakistani citizens have been in dilemma ever since. Do they constitute an *umma* or a nation-state? There are no clear cut answers. For if they are an *umma*, as many 'Ulama and also the Jama'at-e-Islami of Pakistan would like to believe, then as pointed out by the Baluch leader Akbar Bughti and others, the Pakistani Government should allow any Muslim from Indonesia to Morocco to come and settle in Pakistan. Obviously, it will not. It will not allow even Indian Muslims now to settle down in Pakistan. How can then it be construed to be an *umma*. And if Pakistan claims to be a nation-state its very *raison d'etre* will be in danger. It claims its origin on the basis of Islam and Islamic nationalism.

The question of identity also assumes great significance for Pakistanis in their political discourse. What is their real identity and where does it begin? What is their heritage? Is pre-Islamic heritage of that area part of their heritage? Or does their heritage begin only with the intrusion of Muhammad bin Qasim? These questions have never been categorically answered by theorists of Islamic nationalism. In fact even Saudi Arabia and Iran (after Islamic revolution) behave, despite their Islamic rhetorics, as nation-states. Nation-state may not be an eternal concept but it has not withered away since it emerged in Europe after reformation. It is yet a concrete reality and there is no escape from it at least in the near future. The nation-states have emerged unfortunately in the once colonial world on the basis of maps redrawn by the colonial masters. In the entire Islamic world it is national identities which have precedence over Islamic identities as far as international matters are concerned. The concept of *umma* takes a back seat. Everyone accepts this reality.

Moreover Pakistan within short period of its existence experienced a great ethnic turmoil and a cessationist movement. The Bengali identity asserted itself with great force and Pakistan broke up on ethnic question. Thus the very foundation of the concept of Islamic solidarity on which the idea of Pakistan was based, was deeply shaken. It was proved that religious solidarity works only when one is faced with the 'external other' i.e. belonging to other religion. But once external other

whithers away or is no more a force, the 'internal other' asserts itself seriously weakening religious solidarity. The ethnic differences in Pakistan are violently asserting themselves even today, after its disintegration in 1971. There was, therefore no viable basis for the theory of Islamic nationalism. The very idea of Pakistan was wrongly conceived. It had no religious justification either as pointed out both by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani as well as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

Thus Indian Muslims incurred great loss, both religious as well as political, by the vivisection of the country. It is unfortunate that though certain political decisions have very long term adverse consequences yet they are taken in the heat of the moment. The decision to partition the country was one such decision. No one gave a serious thought to its long term implications.

The Indian Muslims were stunned by the post-partition developments. The communal violence in UP and Bihar shocked them out of their wits. They were not even sure of their survival or a future role in India. Once again Maulana Abul Kalam Azad gave them a sense of confidence. He addressed the Muslims from the steps of Jama Masjid and told them that India is their country and they would live and die here. They are Indians and proud of their Indian heritage. Their forefathers are buried here and Taj Mahal and other historical monuments are part of their heritage. These words of Abul Kalam who was now the most towering Muslim leader in India had a healing effect on Muslims. They instilled a sense of confidence in them and made them resolve to build their future anew in India.

However, the partition riots were so cataclysmic in nature that it was difficult for Muslims to play the same role in politics as they were playing before partition. They maintained, for more than a decade, a low-key political existence after partition. They mainly looked to the Congress in general and to Nehru in particular for their safety and well-being. Also the propertied classes and educated middle class and professionals from U.P. and Bihar made a bee-line for Pakistan for greener pastures. However, there were many among these classes also who were against formation of Pakistan and they stayed back in India. It is very interesting to note that from southern states like Madras, Karnataka and Kerala hardly anyone from amongst the Muslims

migrated to Pakistan. Only some Muslims from Hyderabad which was part of the Nizam State chose to migrate to Pakistan. The ethnic and linguistic affinities thus played an important role. Also, hardly anyone from poorer sections of Muslims moved to Pakistan. They would hardly have gained anything by migrating. They stayed put in India. They formed the bulk of Muslim population in UP and Bihar. It is these poorer people who always pay a heavy price for the politics of vested interests.

Maulana Maududi, the founding chief of the Jamat-e-Islami, who had neither supported Jinnah (he was too secular for him as he refused to establish a theocratic state in Pakistan) nor did he participate in anti-British struggle as he equated imperialism and secular democracy as two 'false gods', was now creating confusion in the minds of Indian Muslims by advising them to stay away from secular democracy. He said: "As far as the Muslims are concerned I tell them clearly that the present secular and national democracy is totally against your faith and religion. If you bow your head before it you will turn your back to the Qur'an. If you work for its establishment and consolidation it would amount to rebellion against God and His Messenger and if you wave its flag you will have raised the flag of rebellion against God."⁵

However, the Jamat had very narrow base among few educated Muslims and hence Maududi's pronouncements did not have much impact on the Muslim mind in India. As discussions in the Urdu press of early fifties, however show, there were some misgivings about the concept of 'secularism'. It was, in those days, often translated as *ladiniyat* (i.e. anti-religious). This confused many Muslims. They thought that Indian government is anti-religious. However, before long, this confusion was removed and after a few years, the secular government was no longer referred to as *ladini hukumat* (anti-religious government) but simply as secular government. The word 'secular' became part of the Urdu vocabulary. This further reassured the Muslims of north India about the intentions of Indian Government. It must be said that promulgation of Indian Constitution on 26th January, 1950 making India a secular democratic republic was a great revolution. In a way Indian National Congress and its leaders stood up to its pre-independence assurances and made India a secular democracy. Not only this, it adopted universal franchise which again

was no less a revolutionary step. The entire Indian population irrespective of caste, creed and socio-economic status was enfranchised with a stroke of the pen. The Constitution also gave special protection to religious and linguistic minorities by incorporating Articles 25, 26, 29 and 30. These very significant constitutional measures were positive indicators of the fact that India was determined to shed its medieval legacy and conservative past. This was, in a way, quite reassuring for the religious minorities.

The RSS was also banned after Mahatma Gandhi's murder in 1948 by Nathuram Godse and his colleagues. The Government communique read as follows:

"... The Government have, however, noticed with regret that in practice members of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh have not adhered to their proposed ideals. Undesirable and even dangerous action has been carried on by members of the Sangh.

"It has been found that in several parts of the country individual members of the RSS have indulged in acts of violence involving arson, robbery, dacoity and murder and have collected illicit arms and ammunition. They have been found circulating leaflets exhorting people to resort to terrorist methods, to collect fire-arms, to create disaffection against the Government and suborn the police and military.

"These activities have been carried on under the cloak of secrecy, and the Government have considered from time to time how far these activities rendered it incumbent on them to deal with the Sangh in a corporate capacity ...

"In these circumstances, it is the bounden duty of the Government to take effective measures to curb the reappearance of violence in a virulent form and as a first step to this end, they have decided to declare the Sangh as an unlawful association.⁶

Jawaharlal Nehru kept on attacking communalism from time to time. For example addressing a meeting in Delhi on July 6, 1952, he strongly criticised the Jana Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Praja Parishad, who without understanding the problem of Kashmir, were trying to complicate matters by raising slogans and acting in a manner which might harm both Kashmir and India.⁷

Also, in his Independence Day speech on August 15, 1952, Nehru mentioned dangers facing the country: the cult of violence, communalism, and the selfishness ... He said that communal method

was only capable of further weakening the country and that the religious bigots and communal leaders had refused to learn any lesson from the past. "We have to be aware of these communal elements as well as of the selfish greedy people who, through fraud and falsehood ... harm the country. These are three ways which, if not checked, will destroy our country."⁸ Nehru similarly strongly criticised the role of newspapers in spreading communalism. He said that he was strongly of the view that newspapers spreading communal hatred should be checked. While he was in favour of freedom of opinion, he did not want newspapers, seeking to increase their circulation, to spread communal hatred. He wished the law to be amended or legislation introduced for action against such newspapers. "It has become absolutely intolerable that a newspaper should spread utter falsehoods and incite communal passions and make money in the bargain. Instead of this such a newspaper should be punished". He cited the example of the Muslim League which had spread poison in India. Yet some people in India wanted to imitate the League. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Jan Sangh, and the RSS had donned the same cloak and had the same mind and ways—to incite people in the name of religion.⁹

These pronouncements in the first decade after independence go to show that communalism had raised its ugly head in the post-independence India. Far from solving the communal problem, the partition had aggravated it as Mahatma Gandhi's murder evidenced. The Muslim League was at its aggressive best before independence and now after independence Hindu communalism had gained in strength. Several riots took place during the first decade after independence. In 1950 communal riots broke out in West Bengal in Gora Bazar, Dum Dum etc. In these riots 34 Muslims and 16 Hindus were killed and 146 Muslims and 110 Hindus were injured.¹⁰ These were no minor skirmishes, but seemed to be in retaliation of anti-Hindu violence in East Pakistan. Throughout the fifties communal violence kept occurring. In 1954, in all 54 riots occurred in which 34 persons were killed and 512 injured. In 1955, seventy-five riots took place in which 24 lives were lost and 457 were injured. In 1956, eighty-two riots were reported in which thirty-five persons were killed and 575 were injured. In 1957 fifty-eight riots were registered and the toll of human life came to 58 with injuries to 316. Thereafter in 1958, forty instances of

communal riots came to be reported in which seven human lives were snuffed and 369 got injured. In 1959, in all forty-two cases of communal violence occurred which claimed forty-one human lives with injuries to 1344 and in 1960 twenty-six such incidents took place with fourteen human lives lost and 262 injured.¹¹

These incidents show that no year was free of communal violence. India, despite its pledge to be secular could never free itself of the scourge of communalism and communal violence. However, the riot in Jabalpur in 1962 shook the whole nation. It was the first major communal riot in post-independence India. Jawaharlal Nehru was also so shaken by this riot that he decided to form National Integration Council. It also greatly disillusioned the Muslims who had developed faith by now in Indian secularism in general and Nehru in particular. Even a person like Syed Mahmood who was a prominent nationalist Muslim and was a minister in Nehru's cabinet, felt disillusioned and formed a separate Muslim platform called Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat i.e. (the consultative body of Muslims). All Muslim organisations and those Muslims belonging to other secular parties and organisations were for the first time brought together on this platform. The initiative for this was taken by Syed Mahmood and Faridi, a noted Muslim leader from U.P. The Muslim confidence in the Congress secularism was shaken. This riot was only the first of the series of major riots which followed. Most of these major riots took place during the mid-sixties in eastern parts of India like Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Durgapur etc. which were major industrial centres. There were instances of workers of one community throwing workers of another community in the steel furnace. These riots not only made Muslims despondent but also made them recede within their shell. As pointed out earlier, the Muslim middle class from U.P. and Bihar had migrated to Pakistan considerably weakening the influence of Muslims. The poorer masses tend to be greatly influenced by conservative religious leaders and this was always held against Muslims who were generally thought to be illiberal, aggressive, fanatical in religious matters and unwilling to change. Such propaganda helped the Hindu communalists. Though this is not entirely untrue, the allegations were highly exaggerated and there was propaganda further hardening the attitude of Hindus towards Muslims. Thus the alienation between the elites of the

two major communities grew day by day. The situation of pre-partition period began to repeat itself.

The Jan Sangh, the right wing Hindu communal party was also growing in strength. "The party's strength", say Anderson and Damle, "continued to be concentrated in the Hindi-speaking states, especially Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, the Union Territory of Delhi, and the Hindu-majority cities of Punjab—areas, in which the RSS had already established a firm base of support in 1940s. In Uttar Pradesh, the Jan Sangh's percentage of the parliamentary vote doubled from 7.29 per cent to 14.79 per cent between 1952 and 1957. It won two of the state's 86 parliamentary seats and 17 of the 430 assembly seats in 1957, and increased its parliamentary representation to 7 and its assembly representation to 49 in 1962. The party started out from an urban support base in Uttar Pradesh, as it did in most other states, but made a concerted effort to build up support in rural areas".¹²

Anderson & Damle further point out that the statistics show that "it succeeded in attracting considerable rural support. In addition, the 1959 municipal elections in Uttar Pradesh's five largest cities demonstrated that the party was able to mobilize significant urban support. The Jan Sangh won 56 of 296 seats in those municipal elections, emerging with the largest party representation in Lucknow, the state's capital, and with the second largest representation in the other four cities".¹³ Thus the Jan Sangh was adding to its strength in independent India by intensifying communal propaganda. Mainly its base was, upto then, among the petty traders in urban areas which happened to be quite conservative. The Muslims were seen to be rivals by this class for a number of reasons, one of which was competition in business.

The Jan Sangh also grew in popularity during the wars with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965 as it was seen to be more "patriotic" than the Congress. The Jan Sangh leaders were quite sure that its tough approach towards China and Pakistan will capture popular imagination. The heightened sense of patriotism, due to these two wars was encashed by the Jan Sangh leaders. The RSS which was banned after Mahatma Gandhi's murder was now seen as a respectable organisation and one sign of respectability was the invitation to the RSS to participate for the first time in the 1963 Republic Day parade in

New Delhi; more than 2,000 *swayamsevaks* in full uniform, as well as the RSS bagpipe and bugle unit, marched in the parade.¹⁴

The Jan Sangh further grew in strength and registered more victories in 1967. Balraj Madhok, very strident in promoting the Hindu ideology, was made president of Jan Sangh a year before the 1967 general elections. He immediately set out on the campaign trail to prepare the local units for the elections. As part of its pre-election strategy, the party units were instructed to significantly increase the party's enrolled membership. The general secretary reported in April 1966 that the party membership had increased from about 600,000 in 1956 to 1,300,000 in early 1966, and that it had party units in 268 districts.¹⁵

Madhok injected more militancy into the party. Also the general conditions in the country were deteriorating. The continued drought for few years during that time had very adverse effect on the economy. It was, in fact, a period of economic down-turn and industrial recession. The people were getting disillusioned with the Congress. The opposition parties worked out alliances and formed Samyukta Vidhayak Dal in 1967 elections with the result that in U.P. the Congress lost election and the Dal formed the Government under the leadership of Chaudhuri Charan Singh. At the Centre too, the Congress strength was reduced by 83 seats and retained majority by only 25 seats. The Jan Sangh, on the other hand, performed far better. Its parliamentary representation increased from 14 in 1962 to 35 in 1967, and its percentage of the parliamentary vote increased from 6.44 per cent to 9.41 per cent. Also the party won 261 assembly seats in 1967, double over the 119 it had won in 1962. Apart from the Hindi belt the Jan Sangh won assembly seats in West Bengal (1), Andhra Pradesh (3) and Karnataka (4) in 1967. In all it won 32 assembly and 2 parliamentary seats outside the Hindi belt.¹⁶

The industrial recession had hit Bombay very badly in the late, sixties and unemployment was shooting up. The Communist dominated trade unions were fighting hard against retrenchment, lock outs etc. Also, unemployment was at its highest among the Marathi youth. It was thus the right time for a regional chauvinist party like the Shiv Sena to be launched. It is alleged that some Congressmen were also behind the formation of the Shiv Sena in 1967. It was allegedly

financed by a noted non-Maharashtrian industrialist. Whatever the truth, the Sena began with a bang and launched an anti-south Indian tirade and shortly thereafter began its anti-Muslim propaganda. Bal Thackeray issued provocative statements during Kosa riots and his party played a prominent role in the Bhivandi and Jalgaon riots of 1970. Bal Thackeray's utterances in those days considerably added to communal temperature in Maharashtra. As a result of Shiv Sena's high pitched propaganda and taking out a Shiv Jyanti procession, Bhivandi and Jalgaon went up in flames in 1970.

However, before Bhivandi-Jalgaon riots, Ahmedabad and other places in Gujarat witnessed horrible communal violence. The reasons were not so much religious as political. If we want to understand high communal temperature of late sixties we will have to cast a glance on the political developments of that period.

As pointed out before, the late sixties was quite a critical period both in economic as well as political sense. The country was then undergoing economic down-turn on account of prolonged drought. Also, Mrs. Gandhi had become Prime Minister, after the death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966. The Congress bosses like Atulya Ghosh, Kamraj, Mo. arji Desai and others wanted to exercise real power and thought that Mrs. Indira Gandhi would prove pliable. However, she resisted all such attempts and wanted to rule in her own right. A power struggle started. In order to win popular support of the electorate and to get rid of the domination of the Congress bosses, Mrs. Gandhi nationalised the major Indian banks. She also instructed the nationalised banks to grant unsecured small loans to small traders and even to rickshaw and taxi drivers. This created tremendous popularity among the deprived sections of Indian population. She became the tallest Congress leader. Her electoral appeal increased tremendously. However, this measure had some other political fall out too. It was thought that she was inclined towards socialism and was walking into the socialist camp. All those who were opposed to socialism made an alliance against her. The Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party got together. Swatantra Party consisted mostly of former princes and rulers. They were angry with Mrs. Gandhi because she had stopped their privy purses. This alliance was also joined by the Congress (O) which split from the Congress led by Mrs. Gandhi. She was also trying to widen

her political base by appealing to both the S.Cs. and S.Ts. as also the minorities, specially the Muslims. This she could do by strengthening her secular appeal. As she projected her image of a socialist and a secularist, she also won the support from communists. Thus her political position became almost invincible.

Now the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party together tried to weaken her political position. The easiest thing to do for this purpose was to incite communal passion and weaken her secular appeal so that she was deprived of minority, S.C. and S.T. votes which was quite a powerful block. It was possible to do this in Gujarat. Gujarat had the Congress (O) government led by Shri Hitendra Desai and the Swatantra Party was quite strong in Gujarat besides Rajasthan. The Jan Sangh, though not so strong in Gujarat in those days, was seeking to improve its position there. And for Jan Sangh communal propaganda came quite handy to widen its political base in that state. Balraj Madhok visited Ahmedabad a week before the September, 1969 riots and addressed a number of meetings in Gujarat. He criticised Muslims for raising hue and cry over a mosque (Al-Aqsa) which was thousands of miles away from India. He is reported to have added that the same people did not utter a word when Pakistan attacked the Dwarka temple during the India-Pakistan war. "Do they think that Hindus have no feeling for their religion"?, Madhok asked.¹⁷

Many other factors also coincided such as the Jami'at-ul'Ulama Conference, the procession protesting against the attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque in Israel etc. The Ahmedabad riots also, like the Jabalpur riots of 1962, shook the entire country. Indians suddenly began to discuss the communal problem pushing aside the more important political and economic agenda. Mrs. Gandhi's position too began to appear vulnerable. The riots spread throughout Gujarat and the Hitendra Desai Government failed to check the spread of communal violence.

Jai Prakash Narayan felt highly disturbed and formed, along with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who was visiting India in connection with Mahatma Gandhi's birth centenary celebrations, an organisation called *Insani Biradari*. It was unfortunate that Gujarat was rocked with unprecedented communal violence during Mahatma Gandhi's birth centenary. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan too was surprised that communal feelings could be so vicious even years after India became independent.

He went on a tour to various places in India to campaign against communalism. In media too, a spate of articles appeared on the subject—some secular, some communally biased, whatever the stand of any paper or writer, the focus was on communal problem. Again, it was in this communally surcharged atmosphere that the Jan Sangh passed a resolution, in its Patna session of December 1969, on “Indianisation of Muslims”¹⁸ which further strengthened the general impression that the Muslims in India are not truly Indian and that their loyalty lay outside India.

The Ahmedabad and Gujarat riots of 1969 were followed, as pointed out earlier, by Bhivandi and Jalgaon riots of 1970. Here the Shiv Sena played a pivotal role aided and abetted by the RSS and Jan Sangh. In these riots, more than 200 lives were lost. Thus the late sixties saw the worst form of communal violence never before witnessed in the country. However, during early seventies there was some respite on the communal front. The Bangla Desh movement appears to have changed the priorities. In 1971 the Indian forces entered Dacca and defeated the Pakistani army and Bangla Desh was born. Mrs. Gandhi was at the height of her popularity for her role in splitting Pakistan and creating Bangla Desh. Even Bajpai, the noted Jan Sangh leader described her in Parliament as an “avtar of Goddess Durga”. Her political position then was as unassailable as in the late sixties when she had nationalised the banks. Though the Indian Muslims were generally not happy at the break up of Pakistan, they never expressed their displeasure publicly and communal situation remained peaceful. However, Mrs. Gandhi’s popularity did not last long as economic situation deteriorated due mainly to the impact of the war. Scarcity of essential goods, rising prices and rampant corruption in high places angered the people and Jai Prakash once again took the lead in organising people’s movement against the “Congress misrule”. Gujarat witnessed a prolonged agitation against Chimambhai Patel’s government. The law and order situation became precarious in many parts of the country. It was then that the Allhabad High Court delivered its judgement in 1975 unseating Mrs. Indira Gandhi in an election petition filed against her. Also, it was during that time that Jai Prakash Narayan gave a call to the police and the armed forces not to obey the Government if its orders were unconstitutional. Mrs. Gandhi declared

emergency and brought various amendments to the Constitution which further empowered her. However, we are more concerned with the communal rather than general political situation. It must be said that throughout the emergency period, the communal situation remained, by and large, under control. There were various reasons for it. Firstly, all the RSS, Jamat-e-Islami and Jan Sangh leaders were arrested. There was no one to incite communal passion. Secondly, the police were under strict order not to allow communal violence or any other form of public outburst of public violence. Thirdly, it was easier to control the law and order situation under authoritarian dispensation. It is rather strange but true that communal or sectarian conflicts, at least its law and order aspect, can better be dealt with under such dispensation especially if the rulers have no vested interest in it. Mrs. Gandhi wanted, at that time, to project her image as a secular leader in order to win Muslim support. But she and her son Sanjay Gandhi who was dubbed as 'extra-constitutional power' by the media soon alienated themselves from Muslims, firstly by forcibly imposing family planning on an unwilling community and secondly, by forcibly demolishing the Muslim houses near Turkman Gate in Delhi—an operation in which several persons were killed in police firing and some children crushed under bulldozers. As the press was not allowed to report such matters due to strict censorship laws, exaggerated accounts spread through rumours. This totally alienated the Muslims from Mrs. Gandhi and when elections were held in 1977 she lost completely in north India as, along with others, Muslims also voted massively against her.

However, another momentous, though temporary, development took place. The Jan Sangh merged with the Janata Party which was formed at the instance of Jai Prakash Narayan and its leaders took oath on the Gandhi Samadhi in Delhi to abide by secularism. This instilled some confidence in Muslims even though the Jan Sangh was part of it. The Muslims voted massively for the Janata Party which won comfortable majority in the Parliamentary elections of 1977. The suffocating feelings of people of India came out in this election. Muslims for the first time had voted massively for a non-Congress party after independence. It was a record of sorts. Even the Janata Party

had never expected such a massive support from Muslims. During the election campaign of 1977, Atal Behari Bajpai and the Shahi Imam addressed number of meetings together. They expressed solidarity with each other. Both together assured Muslims that the Janta Party would follow secular policies and would look after the Muslim interests.

Also, the RSS and the Jamat-e-Islami leaders and cadres spent time together in jails and claimed that now they knew each other better. The RSS leaders began saying that their misunderstandings about Islam and Muslims have been removed to a large extent. Of course, there was great deal of political opportunism in such claims than any principled understanding. One thing was certain, both the RSS and the Jamat had common communal outlook. Both were, and are, anti-secular in their political philosophy. The RSS swears by Hindu Rashtra and cultural nationalism whereas the Jamat-e-Islami talks of *iqamat-e-din* (i.e. establishment of Islam) in Indian context. It was certainly strange that the Jamat-e-Islami which rejects secular politics in toto (Maulana Maududi maintained while leaving India for Pakistan that participation in secular politics will amount to rebellion against Allah and His Prophet) extended its support readily to the Janata Party which was then swearing by secularism. Was it not sheer political opportunism? Could it be called a politics based on principles, as the Jamat never tires of claiming?

The Janata Party itself was full of contradictions. Mrs. Indira Gandhi denounced it as a *khichdi sarkar* (i.e. a hotch potch government). Though she had her own political motives in denouncing the Janta party Government, it was, nevertheless true. The Janta Party at last broke under the weight of its own contradictions. The Socialists and the Jan Sanghis fought on the question of what came to be called the 'dual membership' issue. The Socialist members of the Janta Party demanded that the Jan Sanghi members resign their membership from the RSS. The Jan Sanghis were not prepared for that. In fact it was quite unprincipled on the part of the Jan Sanghis to retain their RSS membership. The Janta Party was a secular party and no one holding membership of RSS could claim to be secular. Raj Narain of the Janata Party who was a Lohiaite socialist, raised this issue. Madhu Limaye,

Madhu Dandavate and others were also of the same opinion. The issue could not be ultimately resolved and the Janta Party broke and its government at the Centre collapsed in 1979.

However, the Janta period, on account of strong RSS influence on the Jan Sangh, saw increase in communalism and communal violence. The pledge taken on Mahatma Gandhi's *samadhi* by the Jan Sangh member was far from sincere; it was nothing more than a political ploy or something done under pressure of events. Or perhaps, it was the only way for the Jan Sangh to come to power as it had no chance to come to power on its own. The Janata period witnessed a number of major communal riots in Jamshedpur, Varanasi, Aligarh and other places in which several hundred innocent lives were lost. In all these riots the RSS had a direct hand. We will throw more light on these riots in a subsequently. These riots gave a political signal that the Jan Sangh cannot wrench itself free from the RSS stranglehold.

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Chapter 5

Communal Riots : The Causes

This author and others have carried out a number of field studies of various communal riots. It would be interesting to develop a comprehensive theory on the subject. However, it may not account for specificities of every riot as every riot has its own unique features in addition to the general features. We would try to throw light on some of these unique features.

All riots prior to the partition were blamed on the British policy of divide and rule. It is true that the British did try to divide Indians in order to consolidate their rule. But Indian elites both from amongst the Hindus as well Muslims can not escape their own responsibility also. And now in free India, we have to take note of many other factors which have emerged on the scene. The "British divide and rule theory" is no longer adequate explanation even as a legacy of the past, and is no more relevant at all. That theory should be buried now. It could be used for partial explanation of communal riots before partition.

In order to develop an adequate theory of communal violence for post-independence India it would be highly necessary to take into account the dynamics of economic and political developments and the accompanying social changes. Any theory which tends to ignore this cannot adequately explain the true nature of caste or communal violence in contemporary India. The changes which have occurred as a result of these developments also necessitate reappraisal of role of some political parties which claim to be secular. The Indian National Congress was founded as a secular party and it conducted the freedom struggle under the banner of secularism. However, it would

not be incorrect to maintain that the Congress has on several occasions compromised its secular ideology in order either to tide over some crisis or to get votes of one or the other community. Thus the pressure of events deflect political parties from their set ideological course. In order to develop a comprehensive theory of communal violence it would not do to blame some communal groups or parties such as the RSS or the Jan Sangh (which later changed its name to the Bharatiya Janata Party i.e. BJP). These parties have continued to play their role in provoking communalism and communal violence but other so called secular parties also have made their contribution in this respect.

Some new communal organisations have also emerged on the scene since early eighties. The VHP began to play aggressively communal role, specially after the conversion episode in the Meenakshipuram district in Tamil Nadu. Also, when the Ramjanambhoomi Babri masjid controversy emerged, new organisations like the Bajrang Dal also emerged on the political scene. Since the VHP and Bajrang Dal both are not the mainstream political parties like the BJP, they can be more aggressive and less sophisticated in their approach. Likewise the Shiv Sena which was primarily a Bombay based party, has also spread its network much wider. First it threw its political net to Marathwada, then to other parts of Maharashtra and now it has tried to establish its branches in several other parts of the country including the Hindi belt. In this connection it is important to note that these communal outfits i.e. the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and the Shiv Sena, have succeeded in attracting mainly the unemployed youth. Thus increasing unemployment also greatly contributes to spread of communalism. These organisations offer, not only an employment to these youth but also offers a cause to be identified with and a chance for leadership. A study of the Shiv Sena in Marathwada and Raipur district in M.P. clearly establishes this. The problem of communalism thus must also be seen as a structural problem. It cannot be seen in isolation. Also, study of many riots clearly establishes that the unemployed youth mainly participate in arson and looting. It gives them temporary reliefs from economic misery. It also fulfils their wish to possess consumer durables like the T.V., Video and Fridge. During the Bombay riots of December, 1992 and January, 1993 such items were generally looted by the rioters.

The Jamat-e-Islami has also mainly succeeded in attracting such youth from amongst the Muslims. The Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) has also drawn its cards from the rank of unemployed Muslim youth. The SIMI leaders make highly emotional speeches with reference to Islam. Thus both the Hindu and Muslim communalists try to sublimate, to use the Freudian terminology, the economic and social frustrations of their respective youth.

To build up a comprehensive theory of communal riots, it must be noted that in every riot there are micro as well as macro factors involved. The macro-factors are often of ideological nature and have nation-wide sweep. The micro factors may be non-ideological and of local nature. But both macro as well as micro factors are integrally connected with the process of socio-economic developments in the country. In other words the whole problem should be seen in the perspective of the dynamics of social change and development. A social scientist has to take serious note of the basic changes in order to grapple with the changes in the super-structure. It is a dialectical process. The changes taking place affect super-structure and changes in superstructure affect the base. However, it will be wrong to establish one to one relationship between base and superstructure in a mechanical sense as some social scientists try to do. The complexity of this relationship should be borne in mind in order to appreciate the problem in its totality.

To understand the nature of communal violence in modern India one has to understand the role of various classes, social organisations, political parties—communal as well as secular and the aspirations of the elites of the communities involved in the conflict. It should also be borne in mind that contrary to the impression carried by the people in general, religion is not the root cause of the communal conflict; it is rather a powerful instrument in the hands of those interests which seek to play their game through it. It is wrong to make it the *cause celebre* as it is often sought to be done by the vested interests, political as well as economic, who want to hide their real intentions from the masses. To hold religion as the main culprit would amount to adopting an unsociological approach to the problem. To put it differently, one must distinguish between religious and sectarian violence the reasons for which lie in the conflict over controlling political power and economic

resources between the elites of the two or several religious communities mainly in a pluralist society.

Thus communalism is mainly born out of secular issue like controlling political or economic power through exploitation of religious sentiments of one's own community. Communalism is not generally promoted by religious organisations or establishment but by secular leaders of political parties. Thus in the pre-partition period on the one side Muslim communalism was promoted by M.A. Jinnah, a highly westernised and modernised political leader. The chief ideologue of Hindu Mahasabha, on the other side, was Veer Savarkar who too had modern outlook and who stood for modern reform in the Hindu society. Neither the Muslim League nor the Hindu Mahasabha was led by a mulla or a shankaracharya. Thus communalism is all about secular issues without involving any religious or sectarian doctrine. So we can say that the fundamental cause of communalism is political and religion is only an instrumental cause. Communalism essentially belongs to the category of politics whereas religion belongs to the category of faith. A truly religious person—like Mahatma Gandhi or Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad—is incapable of being communal. Similarly, one who is communal, like M.A. Jinnah and Veer Savarkar, never developed an inner faith in religion. They only made it a powerful political instrument. One with a deep inner faith in something would never permit it to be used as an instrument for furthering one's ambition.

Macro Factors

Let us first deal with the macro factors involved in promoting communalism and communal violence. The most important aspect of macro-level theorising about communalism is the class nature of the society and the under-development of economy including scarcity of resources. The under-development often resulted in its uneven development of economy both community-wise as well as region-wise and this uneven development inevitably throws up the problem of communal or regional identity. This identity becomes a powerful factor for mobilization. And in a democratic set-up this mobilization becomes a crucial factor. Again in a democratic set-up it is elites belonging to the majority community who are more likely to monopolise the fruits

of uneven economic development. Similarly the elites also monopolise greater share of political power. Thus it was the upper-caste Hindu elite who monopolised both political as well as economic power in the independent India.

The community-wise uneven development leads to a situation where inter-communal cohesive class structure does not develop whether it be the development of capitalist class or proletarian class structure. Thus the upper classes of the less-developed community feel a strong sense of rivalry vis-a-vis their counterpart in the other community which has gained the upper hand. In order to win the support of the masses of ones community in such a situation, the grievances are formulated, not in terms of class but in terms of community. This can best be done by adding a few religio-cultural demands to the down to earth economic demands on the one hand, and, by mythologising the community's past on the other. Thus we see that the communalists among both the communities have often glorified their respective past and projected it as a golden period free of any inter-class or inter-ethnic conflict. Thus mythologising and romanticising ones community's past serves as a very powerful instrument for mobilising the masses for realising class aspirations. Such an instrument proves far more powerful in a socially backward society like India.

As a consequence in a backward and communally divided society it becomes very difficult to develop class solidarity across communal lines, especially in case of working class which, ironically, happens to be the main victim of communal violence. In their case the mythologised version of history as well as other powerful myths cleverly manipulated by the exploiting classes have far greater mobilizatory potentiality than their own class interests. It is particularly true of petty bourgeois urban classes.

This brings us to another important aspect of the theory of communalism. Communalism, all social scientists agree, is an urban phenomenon rooted among the petty bourgeoisie. In a backward society, it is among this class that traditional religion has greatest appeal. The real base both of the RSS and the Jamati-i-Islami is among the petty bourgeois urban classes. Their religious sentiments are successfully exploited for secular ends by the elites of the respective

communities. Thus the danger of communalism keeps on looming large on the socio-political horizon of India. Another important characteristic of petty bourgeois class is its tendency to submit to the authority. This tendency is taken advantage of by the communal parties and develop anti-democratic authoritarian structures. Both the RSS and Jamat lay emphasis on submission to the authority rather than free thinking and democratic functioning. This also leads to blind submission to the authority of God or holy scriptures as interpreted by the priests thus perpetuating utter conservatism in the society.

There is another problem at macro-level to be taken into account for developing the theory of communal conflict. It is integrally connected with the dynamics of social change in the country. Socio-economic changes, especially in a tradition-bound society, bring about deep sense of insecurity among those strata of society which are adversely affected by it. Working as well as petty bourgeois classes are usually the worst affected in such a situation. They are tradition-prone and the sense of insecurity accompanying socio-economic changes reinforces this tendency among them. Thus they provide fertile grounds for religious, revivalist, movements. It baffles many who take either very superficial or mechanical view of socio-economic development. They feel that such a development should lead to greater rationality in society. However, it is not true. On the contrary, the sense of insecurity generated by such socio-economic changes for a sizeable section of the society increases appeal of religion by providing solace and reducing psychological stresses involved. The recent rise of religious fundamentalism must be seen in this perspective. However, there are two categories of religious revivalism and fundamentalism as far as Indian socio-religious scene is concerned. Included in the first category of religious revivalism is proliferation of yogis, babas and other religious gurus, teachers and tricksters of all varieties who encash upon the growing sense of insecurity, urban tensions and other stresses generated by the modern industrial pattern of life. They also satisfy the urge for social recognition by the *neo rich* as well as important channels for flow of black money to the ruling politicians from smugglers, black marketeers, profiteers and similar other sources. Such religious frauds are fast multiplying in our society in urban areas strengthening and promoting irrationalism. The ruling classes even

otherwise encourage such trends as these irrational cults generate illusions and false consciousness among the masses, thus providing at least temporary stability to the crisis-ridden economic system. However, these cults and frauds do not directly lead to promotion of communal conflict in the society as they ostensibly keep out of political arena. They do not reflect the aspirations of the rising bourgeoisie but function as their havens and refuges.

In the second category i.e. religious fundamentalism are contained the movements like Vishwa Hindu Parishad and rise of Islamic fundamentalism. These movements have political ambitions and reflect the rising ambitions of petty bourgeois classes in the society. Here the religious revivalism has clearly directed political goals. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, seizing upon the opportunity provided by the conversion of a few Harijans to Islam, launched in a calculated way, the propaganda offensive thus intensifying communal conflict in the country. Many communal riots investigated by this writer for example in Ahmedabad in December 1983, in Pune, Solapur and Pandharpur thereafter, were direct result of intensive campaign by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. In Meerut riots too lasting from September to early October, 1982 the hand of VHP was not invisible. The VHP continues to publish millions of pamphlets in various languages and painting wall slogans in most of the towns and cities to promote militant Hinduism. It would not be wrong to say that VHP has provided new virulence to communal canker. Such virulence is needed by a section of the ruling classes to manage the crisis in the system.

There is yet another related factor at macro-level which has an important bearing on the theory of communal conflict. It is the question of militant assertion of regional and communal identity. Assertion of communal or regional identity is a direct result of conflict over the share in the limited economic resources. As the aspirations are rising faster and economic development is extremely sluggish, conflict is bound to result among different sections of society through the medium of either regional or religio-cultural identity. Recently we have seen its extreme manifestation in Assam and Punjab and now in Kashmir.

Conditions in Assam

Assam has long been a neglected area and has had not its due share

in economic development. Moreover, for long the Bengalis monopolised government jobs and cultural positions. This, coupled with immigration of poor peasantry from Bangla Desh, created a sharp conflict situation in the state which was expressed through the medium of regional and cultural identity. The Assamese nationality is asserting itself through the question of cultural identity of the people of Assam. This movement is being led by the middle-classes and petty bourgeoisie in Assam. These classes are asserting their regional identity vis-a-vis the Bengali identity in order to claim share in the economic development. Today the Marwaris control the urban economy in Assam. One day, there is bound to be conflict between the native Assamese bourgeoisie and the Marwaris and hence the attempt of the RSS there to give a communal twist to the regional problems. The Assamese question has thus become far more complex. Due to clever manipulations of the RSS the emphasis on regional identity has weakened and communal identity has assumed more malignant militancy. The massacre of Bengali Muslims in the Nelli area bears testimony to this shift in emphasis.

As important ingredient of the theory of communalism is the hypothesis that where the sense of regional and cultural identity is strong, the communal conflict tends to be weaker. This hypothesis had been valid so far in states like Kashmir, Assam, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, etc. However, in a changing situation it is falling through. We are now witnessing sharp communal conflict in all these states. Assam, Punjab, Kerala, Tamil Nadu are turning into hotbeds of communal conflict. It would be interesting to examine some of these factors.

Punjab Imbrolio

The Punjabis were the most assimilated cultural lot. The Sikhs and Hindus often intermarried and the cases of one of the sons of a Punjabi Hindu family converting to Sikhism are also not rare. There had never been historical animosity between the Sikhs and Hindus either. At the time of partition also the Sikhs and Hindus stood united. Despite all this history of harmony and coexistence a sharp communal conflict has developed between the Hindus and the Sikhs. What went wrong? Why this sudden eruption of communal conflict?

The Sikhs are asserting their separate identity today as they feel aggrieved in a number of ways. The Akalis and Sikh extremists are fighting not only for the religious demands. These demands have been accepted by the Central government anyway. The real question pertains to economic demands. Adequate share in river water, hydro-electric power, control over Chandigarh, and Abohar and Fazilka districts are some of the important demands put forward by the Akalis. The Akalis in other words, represent the aspirations of Sikh bourgeoisie in Punjab which has come in direct conflict with the Punjabi Hindu bourgeoisie. The Akalis and Sikh extremists, by putting forward religious demands were trying to mobilise the Sikh masses. Here again is the question of reassertion of Sikh fundamentalism to realise secular aspirations of the dominant classes among the Sikhs. The assertion of religious and communal identity was by those Sikhs who are more prosperous and lived mostly in the rural areas. The new-found prosperity of the Jat Sikhs led to breaking of traditional moral bounds and also has increased their secular aspirations for the ever-expanding share in economic development. The increasing alienation of Jat Sikhs from traditional religion alarmed the Akalis whose hold over them was loosening. Hence they were trying to 'stem the rot' by militant assertion of their communal identity on one hand, and by putting forward economic demands representing the aspirations of the Sikh Kulaks and bourgeoisie, on the other. The Anandpur Sahib resolution demanding complete autonomy for the State of Punjab should also be viewed in this perspective.

This militant assertion of religious identity, while increasing the Akali hold over the Jat Sikh peasantry, brought the Sikhs themselves in sharp conflict with the Punjabi Hindus and hence communal imbroglio developed in Punjab. It is also interesting to note that nearly all the militants were young, some of them students and others who had just finished their studies and were looking out for jobs. They joined militant movement more probably because they were frustrated owing to non-availability of suitable jobs. Unemployment is also a contributing factor in inducing the youth to join the militant movement. Moreover, they feel that if Khalistan is brought into existence, they will

not remain unemployed. Also, militancy gave them a sharp communal identity, a purpose and meaning to life, and not the least, a sense of power.

One should not ignore the role of ISI of Pakistan. It also strongly motivates the youth to break away from the 'Hindu India' and establish Khalistan. ISI also provides them with weapons and training. However, the Khalistan movement could not sustain itself because of a number of reasons. Firstly, due to excesses committed by the Sikh youth they lost support of the people. Secondly, the Khalistan movement had no real mass base. Though it was based on the Anandpur Sahib resolution, the resolution itself proved to be highly controversial and subject to radically different interpretations. The main Akali Dals also hesitated to take any stand on creation of Khalistan. At the later stages it was being supported mainly by Sikhs from Canada and USA. They probably thought once Khalistan is created they will have free hand in investing there and creating capitalist bastion which they found difficult to do in India. (Now India has drastically changed its economic policies and has adopted liberalisation allowing great scope for investments by the NRIs). Also, the ISI withdrew its support for political reasons and the Khalistan movement completely collapsed.

Situation in Kerala

Kerala was another state known for its communal harmony although three important communities Hindus, Muslims and Christians lived there for centuries. This state is also culturally and linguistically very well integrated and hence, according to our hypothesis, inter-communal tensions were far less, if not totally absent. However, the socio-economic situation is fast changing and new political developments and changing political alliances have introduced a strong element of communalism in Kerala politics. The Muslim League joined the alliances (which was formed by the then Congress party to dethrone the communists in 1956) on certain terms and conditions. More such alliances came into existence and the alliance partners competed with each other in conceding demands put forward by various communal groups. The Nairs, not to be outdone by others, encouraged the RSS to strengthen its base in Kerala. And soon with the advent of the RSS communal virus began to spread very fast in that state. Communal riots

were unknown earlier in Kerala but with the Tellichery riots in 1970 (in which the involvement of RSS was established by the commission of inquiry) Kerala also now has the dubious distinction of having its place on the map of communally sensitive places in India. After Hindu Muslim riots, Hindu-Christian tensions also arose on the question of a cross found at Nilikkam. In fact the Kerala Congress which is dominated by the Christians and which too, like the Muslim League, makes alliances with one or the other ruling parties causes inter-communal problems. However, comparatively speaking, Hindu-Christian problem is not as acute as Hindu-Muslim problem as the latter has an all India character. However, despite all this communal problem is peripheral in Kerala and Kerala remains communally more balanced than any other state.

J & K Scenario

Thus it would be seen that the ruling political parties both at the centre as well as state level encourage communal as well as castiest tendencies in order to ensure maximum number of votes. One can cite the example of election in Jammu and Kashmir in 1983. In order to capture few more seats for her party in the valley, Mrs. Indira Gandhi made speeches which clearly smacked of communalism. Moreover she would speak one thing in the valley and something else in Jammu. She tried to capitalise on the Hindu sentiments in Jammu and the RSS cadres worked for her party to ensure victory for the seats traditionally claimed by the BJP. Farooq Abdullah retaliated by entering into alliance with Mir Waiz who was traditionally opposed to the National Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah. The so-called secular parties thus openly and unabashedly promoted rank communalism to win a few more seats at the hustings.

Such opportunistic policies at last created situation for armed insurrection in Kashmir. The Kashmir was traditionally known for communal amity between Muslims and the Pandits. The economic and political grievances soon assumed religious overtones and the Muslims of Kashmir who had repeatedly spurned Pakistani moves to take over Valley now began to question integration of the state with India and the militant youth took up arms. It is true that here too ISI of Pakistan is playing role by supplying arms and giving training, but one cannot

deny existence of just grievances among the Kashmiri Muslims which were never resolved. Even sincere attempts were not made in that direction. Such grievances soon begin to be seen in terms of religious and ethnic discrimination leading to sharper sense of religious and ethnic identities. The extremists in the Kashmir valley have thrown out the Kashmiri Hindus with whom they had lived in complete peace and harmony and now want to create a "pure Islamic" society. Some extremists belonging to organizations like **Harakatul Ansar** want nothing short of accession with Pakistan. They are even enforcing Islamic norms and dress codes forcibly at the point of gun. As there have been serious violations of human rights at the hands of the security forces the sense of alienation among the people of Kashmir has grown deeper and deeper. At present there seems to be no easy solution to this problem. Also, it will be very difficult to bring the Pandits back into the valley. The Panun Kashmir, the organisation of the ousted Pandits is demanding a separate homeland. However, it is not a wise move. All efforts should be made to bring the Pandits back into the valley and recreate harmonious relationship between the two estranged communities. However, it is easier said than done in the present situation. The situation can improve only after some political solution is found.

Economic crisis is deepening faster than ever before in this country. This crisis is that of under-developed capitalism in the entire third world countries pursuing the path of capitalist development. The developed countries have a sort of vested interest in keeping these countries backward. They are rich source of raw materials and cheap labour. They also provide a profitable market for their goods. Also, the elite in these countries are thoroughly westernised and corrupt. Under pressure of the World Bank, the ruling elites are now going all out for opening their economies to the developed countries of the west under the rubric of liberalization. This liberalization again works for the benefit of the economic elites in the society. The masses are left high and dry any way. Liberalization is creating contradictory situation. It leads to creation of an highly westernized, consumerism oriented class of people almost indifferent to religious beliefs but cynically exploiting it for political ends. It also leads to, growth of religious conservatism, and even religious fundamentalism specially among the have nots. The

militant youth use religious fundamentalism to capture political power to “right the wrongs” and to remove moral corruption from the society. Some political parties also use religious fundamentalism in such circumstances to promote their political chances. Thus a modern, liberalised and westernised economy in a developing country also sows the seeds of fundamentalism, religious conservatism and communalism. The ruling elites then use such climate for their own political ends, thus strengthening the bases of fundamentalism and communalism. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad spread Hindu fundamentalism and strengthened the political base of the BJP. Not only the BJP but also other ruling parties like the Congress use conservatism or communalism for their political ends. Mrs. Gandhi very subtly used the conversion of dalits to Islam in Meenakshipuram for winning the Hindu votes. P.V. Narsimha Rao also displayed tendency towards soft communalism by deliberately remaining inactive when the Babri Masjid was being demolished and going back on his promise to construct it at the same site. He is now trying to win the four Shankracharyas for construction of Ram Mandir on the site of the demolished mosque. Thus the government, in order to meet the challenge of fundamentalism sponsors its own variety of fundamentalism. All these factors must be taken into account for developing a comprehensive theory of communal conflict in the contemporary Indian society.

Micro Factors

As pointed out at the beginning of the chapter it is necessary to take both macro as well as micro level factors into account in order to understand the real nature of communal conflict. Intensive field studies of communal riots throw light on the micro-level factors. Based on our field studies we shall now throw light on these micro-level factors.

More often than not, communal tension develops in a particular town on some local issue. Those who theorise often ignore the significance of these local issues which we call micro-factors. In many cases the local issues play a key role in causing irruption of communal violence. As in pre-independence days, the local issues are no longer confined to playing of music before the mosque or slaughter of a cow, although, even today, they have by no means lost their validity. But

many new factors in keeping with the changing socio-economic pattern have sprung up on the communal scene. Some of these factors are competition between rival traders or small manufacturers from the two communities, competition between two gangs of hoodlums dealing either in smuggling, illicit arms or liquor or similar other anti-social activities, scheming by local industrial magnates to weaken trade unions by raising some communal issues, elections to local bodies or contest over some assembly or parliamentary seats, etc.

For developing a theory of communal conflict it is also necessary to understand some local characteristics of a communal situation. Most of the riots tend to occur in medium sized towns (as in such towns petty bourgeois elements who are usually quite conservative and often tend to be communal predominate). Among these medium sized towns those with large proportion of Muslim population, say 20 to 50 per cent are more riot prone. The tendency to be riot-prone gets further intensified if there exists among Muslims in the town an entrepreneurial class competing with, and challenging the monopoly, of the Hindu businessmen. Further, the tendency of communal conflict gets far more intensified in such towns, if there also exists a previous history of communal riots there.

Keeping these characteristics in mind one can easily understand why towns like Moradabad, Aligarh, Meerut, Jamshedpur, Banaras, Bhivandi, Malegaon, old city of Hyderabad, etc. are communal hotbeds and frequent scenes of communal eruptions. However, it does not mean that big or cosmopolitan cities like Bombay are not riot prone. We all know what happened in Bombay and Calcutta after demolition of Babri Masjid. Bombay witnessed furious eruption of communal riots. As a matter of fact Bombay had witnessed riots in 1984 also. The emergence of the Shiv Sena has made Bombay highly riot-prone. Here, however, we would like to throw some light on micro factors which lead to eruption of communal violence mostly in medium-sized cities.

A large proportion of minority population in a town, in a ballot box oriented democracy, intensifies political rivalry between the elites of the two communities who try to mobilize the voters by appealing to their respective communal identity. In Meerut, there being around 40 per cent Muslim population, even the Congress-I was divided on communal lines as a Muslim candidate for assembly or parliamentary

election is rated to have much better chance of winning. The Hindu leadership of Congress-I felt frustrated and is alleged to have had clandestine understanding with the local BJP leadership. The Mandir-Mazar controversy in 1982 riots in Meerut was merely a symbolic expression of the political ambitions of the two communities. A siege mentality was sought to be created among the Hindus through systematic propaganda in order to win their support for electoral purposes.

Biharsharif Riot

In Biharsharif a powerful economic factor, rather than political one, was responsible for the communal carnage in 1981. This town in the Nalanda district of Bihar also has a large proportion of Muslim population—around 35 per cent. There are quite a few Muslim cemetery lands, many of them having fallen into disuse. Potato cultivation in this district was on the rise and quite profitable. Many cold-storage plants had also sprung up and as a consequence the land prices had been skyrocketing. The Yadavas, a cultivating caste, had their eyes on the cemetery lands and thus, conflict arose between the Muslims and the Yadavas soon erupting in communal violence. It is worth noting here that in these riots mainly the Yadavas were involved with the powerful backing of the RSS. The reason is obvious: the Yadavas had an economic interest vis-a-vis the Muslims. There was a subsidiary political factor as well. Biharsharif is also a centre of beedi manufacturing and mostly poor Muslims and the low-caste Hindus are engaged in making beedis. The beedi making labourers have been organised into trade union by the CPI. The CPI thus had a stronghold and at the time of eruption of communal violence, both the M.L.A and the M.P. belonged to the CPI. The riots, for the RSS had the advantage of changing class consciousness also. Even the poor Hindus and Muslims, forgetting their class interests began to identify themselves, after the riot, more vigorously with their respective communities and became prone to be manipulated by the elite of their communities.

Now of course the political situation has undergone sea-change after implementation of Mandal Commission in 1990. The Yadavas, a backward caste, have become allies of Muslims and now vigorously oppose communal politics of BJP.

Godhra Riot

In Godhra riot the conflict was mainly between Sindhis and Ganchi Muslims. The Ganchi Muslims, quite predominant and industrious, are rising economically and today have the monopoly in transport trade in the Panchmahal district. Sindhis and Ganchi Muslims compete with each other in petty business also. Both the communities also had an acute shortage of housing and, Sindhis being more advanced culturally and economically as compared to the Ganchi Muslims, had an eye on their properties. Also, there was often dispute over positioning of stalls along the station roads. Thus communal violence erupted often between the two specific communities from amongst the Hindus and Muslims. Gujarati Hindus and other non-Ganchi Muslims were been involved directly in communal violence although they were highly sympathetic to their respective Hindu and Muslim communities. But in later riots in Godhra entire Hindu and Muslim communities were embroiled with each other. But then the issue was of national character i.e. Babri masjid Ram Janambhoomi controversy.

Thus it would be seen from the above instances that the Hindu and Muslims should not be treated as homogeneous or unstratified communities. Often the specific castes or *biradaries* from amongst the Hindu and Muslims are involved in actual conflict although retaining the broad sympathy of their respective co-religionists. Even culturally and technically it is highly misleading to treat any religious community as homogeneous.

Economic competition often results in communal conflict. And specially so when the Muslims begin to acquire economic clout. Well, this has been an empirical fact observed at number of places. We have already cited two examples above i.e. from Biharsharif and Godhra. More examples can be cited from Aligarh and Moradabad. The competition in lock industry in Aligarh and brass industry in Moradabad has led to communal conflict. It is on this basis that some social scientists have begun to argue that the communal riots in modern India constitute structural violence. This is true provided one concedes other equally or more important causative factors outlined above. This need not lead one to a fatalistic conclusion that the Muslims will have to pay through their blood if they wish to inch ahead in the economic

field. This would be too extreme a view indeed. All it indicates is that in a backward capitalist economy and in a country like India with its multi-caste and multi-communal socio-economic formations, straight class conflict, is bound to be displaced by inter-communal and inter-caste conflicts sometimes class factor becoming predominant and at times caste or community factor becoming predominant. The European model of class conflict pure and simple cannot apply to a non-cohesive and highly stratified society with its own unique socio-economic formations like that of India. In addition to class conflict the complexities and uniqueness of Indian situation is also reflected through caste and communal conflict. In this respect we also have to take into account certain attempts for alliance between the *dalits*, backwards and Muslims to combat communal menace. In U.P., it was this combination which defeated the BJP and its communal politics. However, this alliance cannot be treated as a permanent remedy for communalism as it has its own serious contradictions.

Another important factor at micro-level to be taken note of in this connection is the role of anti-social elements organised in powerful gangs. These gangs operate in urban underworld and deal with either illicit liquor, smuggling of foreign goods or illicit arms. The proliferation of the underworld is the result of industrialisation and urbanisation on the one hand, and, green revolution on the other. Increase in the number of lowly paid workers and lumpen elements in the urban areas boosts demand for cheap illicit liquor and generation of black money leads to greater demand for smuggled goods and increased degree of agitations for better wages, both in urban and rural areas, leads to greater demand for illicit arms for suppressing these agitations.

The role of these underworld gangs is being increasingly noted in communal riots. Baroda riots are its classic instance. The rivalry between two illicit liquor gangs led respectively by a Hindu and a Muslim erupted in the form of communal riots there during September-October 1982. One of the gangs led by Shiva Kahar enjoyed the support of a section of the ruling Congress. This section of the ruling party was allegedly encouraging these elements. It should also be noted that the politicians today need both money as well as muscle power of the underworld to finance and win elections. They in turn provide them

with immunity against any action. The involvement of anti-social elements in Jamshedpur and Moradabad riots is also a known fact. If empirical data is any indication, this menace would continue to grow in future. What is worse, the underworld is fast acquiring greater and greater degree of autonomy. The politicians need them as much as the anti-socials need politicians. This has been described as politicisation of crime and criminalisation of politics. In many states even the chief ministers have been alleged to have criminal nexus. In Maharashtra too serious allegations were made against the chief minister having powerful underworld connections. In some cases the powerful elements of the underworld are themselves taking to politics. Needless to say this becomes a most menacing combination. The Seshan phenomenon has, however, had some impact. He has succeeded to some extent in properly implementing electoral code of conduct. But how long it will last is an open question. After Seshan the situation may perhaps, revert to square one. Clandestine nexus between money and politics continues inspite of Seshan.

It is thus clear that to develop a comprehensive theory of communal conflicts for the contemporary Indian society one will have to take macro as well as micro factors into account. Among the macro factors are country-wide socio-economic changes as a result of industrialisation and economic development and policies pursued by the ruling political parties both at the Centre as well as in the states, the alliances struck by the so-called secular parties, reckoning of caste and communal groups for ensuring victory at the hustings, deliberate attempt to encourage religious fundamentalism by the ruling classes for their power games. The worst example in this regard is cynical political exploitation of Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy by the BJP and the Congress. This controversy became the worst example of exploitation of religion for political ends in contemporary India. After partition never was religion exploited on such a scale for grabbing political power. Thus the ruling classes as a whole are responsible for encouraging caste and communal identities for political ends thereby aggravating communal conflict. It would not do to only blame the known communal parties and groups like the RSS, Jamat-e-Islami, etc.

At micro level one must take into account factors like the proportion of Muslim population, nature of economic competition

between the traders of two communities, history of communal riots in the area, election politics of local bodies, role of the anti-social elements, local political alliances, etc. In any riot situation both the macro and micro factors play important role, of course varying in degree from place to place. In certain extreme situations only macro or micro level factors can become the causative factors. For example in Godhra and Baroda riots only micro level factors were important, macro level being nearly absent. For the Ahmedabad riot of 1969 on the other hand, the macro factors were largely responsible. The split in the ruling Congress, nationalisation of banks with its implied ideological shift to the Left made the Rightist opposition parties like the Jan Sangh aggressively raise the bogey of Muslim aggressiveness and their refusal to merge with the 'national mainstream' and it went to the extent of adopting the resolution on 'Indianisation of Indian Muslim'. The Congress (O) at that time made an alliance with the Jan Sangha. Taking advantage of some trivial incidents near Jagannath temple, the Jan Sangh organised a large scale communal riot in Ahmedabad. The motive was to embarrass Indira Gandhi on the one hand, and to divert attention from the new Left-oriented economic policy to fortuitous communal issue, on the other. The Ramjanambhoomi Babri Masjid controversy was another macro factor which caused great deal of bloodshed on communal lines from late eighties to early nineties. The communal issue became the main topic of discussion in the country on both these occasions. All other important problems of the common people became secondary.

In conclusion it must be said with due emphasis that caste and communal identities are far more emotionally stronger in this country than the class identity and the ruling classes and most other politicians would fully exploit this fact. With the slow process of economic growth the conflict is bound to intensify and in India the ruling classes can easily convert economic problems like poverty, unemployment, price rise etc. into caste and communal problems. If we want to develop a scientific theory of communalism we better reckon with this reality sooner than later. In coming years too the problems of caste and communal identities are likely to dominate. A comprehensive theory of communalism and communal violence cannot ignore them.

Chapter 6

Communal Violence and Role of Police: Some Case Studies

The role of police in communal riots has always been a highly controversial issue. The riot victims keep on complaining that: The police (1) did not come to their rescue; (2) was itself instrumental in killing; (3) led the mob in looting and burning; (4) arrested innocent persons and tortured them inside the lock-up and framed false charges against the arrested persons; and (5) encouraged the culprits to do whatever they liked by preventing the members of one community to come out during the curfew but allowing the members of another community to do so with impunity. These and some other grave charges are made against the police after every communal riot. During the Bombay riots of December, 1992 and January, 1993, very serious allegations were made against the police officials both high and low. We will examine a few cases of major communal riots after independence and throw some light on the role of the police during these riots.

It should be borne in mind that the entire law and order machinery cannot be and should not be damned. By entire law and order machinery we mean all those who are involved in restoring peace which include the political leaders, bureaucracy and administrative machinery and various organs which actually restore order in the field i.e. the local police, the Border Security Force (BSF), CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force), and the army. The politicians, the administrative machinery, the police, the CRPF, the army etc. play different roles

either at the same time or in different phases. It is, therefore, more informative and useful to examine the role of entire law and order machinery in communal riots. We will try to throw light in some detail on various organs of law and order machinery during a riot. It should be borne in mind that the most damned of all these organs is the police as it comes in direct contact with the victims and is the most visible part of it as far as general public is concerned and hence it is the police which is condemned most by the people. Before we proceed with the discussion of the role of the law and order machinery in controlling a riot, it would be useful to discuss some general aspects of riot engineering.

A riot is generally supposed to be spontaneous outburst of violence between the two communities. However, it is rarely so. In pre-independence period some major riots were spontaneous. Most of the riots then and almost all the riots now are meticulously planned and executed. It is highly necessary to make this distinction as the role of law and order machinery very much depends on whether a riot is planned or a spontaneous outburst. If it is spontaneous outburst, it is easier to control but if it is a well-planned affair, it assumes different character and requires determination on the part of the police to control it.

Most of the riots today are pre-planned. This planning is done usually by some political party or the other or even by some anti-social elements either to serve their own interests or those of their political patrons. When a riot is pre-planned, an 'appropriate atmosphere' needs to be created and this is often done with a view to raise communal temperature by spreading some atrocious rumour. This greatly helps in spreading communal violence and also in justifying it. In other words, the violence acquires legitimacy in the eyes of the people of the community which is aggressing against the other. In such a situation it is much more difficult to control violence as it acquires legitimacy and has thus motivated the people. And this is much more so when the issue involved is religious or historically deeply embedded in the people's emotions. In such cases even those people get involved in violence who otherwise have no previous criminal record as violence appears quite justified to them vis-a-vis the other community. Thus a study of the Bhivandi riots of 1970 by a high police official

Suresh Khopade clearly shows that more than seventy percent people involved in committing violence were those who had no previous communal record. The apparent issue involved in these riots was the celebration of the birth day of Shivaji and the route of the procession which is highly emotive. It becomes more difficult to control the situation in such a case as it also creates political problems apart from the law and order one.

More often than not, the riots are planned to serve a political purpose and hence a political party is invariably involved. At times two political parties or one of the sections of (ruling) party in collusion with the other party engineer communal violence for their own political purposes. The role of the administration and the police in such cases becomes much more complex and even difficult. The police officials cannot normally ignore the instructions from their ruling political bosses. It is not always true that the police has a free hand to deal with a situation. It has to face several constraints if the political bosses themselves do not have clean hand. We would like here to cite the example of 1984 Bombay-Bhivandi riots. It is alleged that these riots started with a subtle understanding between the Shiv Sena Chief, Bal Thackeray, and the then Chief Minister, Vasant Dada Paul. Patil was facing a severe problem from the Congress dissidents and was finding it difficult to get his candidates elected to the Rajya Sabha without the help of the Shiv Sena MLAs. Bal Thackeray, on the other hand, was busy creating the Hindutva platform to revive his sinking fortunes. Thus the Vasant Dada Paul group and the Shiv Sena allegedly came together to serve their own respective political ends. The Sena created 'appropriate atmosphere' for the riots and the riot broke out in May, 1984 in Bhivandi and soon spread to various parts of Bombay. Police commissioner Ribeiro was known for his integrity and efficiency and yet the riots could not be controlled easily as his hands were not free. The Shiv Sainiks were roaming around freely wielding swords killing and threatening members of the minority community. The *Shakha Pramukhs* were not touched. But when the riots were likely to break out again, in the second phase on *Jumat-ul-wada* i.e. the last Friday of the holy month of *Ramazan* the situation became embarrassing for the chief minister and he allowed free hand to Ribeiro to handle it. Shri Ribeiro ordered immediate arrest of those *Shakha Pramukhs* in

whose jurisdiction communal violence was likely to break out and he also sent out a circular to all the police stations in Bombay city that the inspector in whose jurisdiction communal violence breaks out will be suspended. Nothing happened due to these stringent measures and the city remained quiet on that fateful day. The police can act much better if there is backing from political masters.

Thus politicians, administrators and the police all play their roles in the event of outbreak of communal violence. If the ruling politicians are determined to prevent violence, the administrative and the police machinery can act with much greater determination and efficiency. We can also give here the example of the West Bengal Government. The Left Front Government is least interested in having communal trouble. It has thus issued strict instructions to the police authorities not to allow the outbreak of communal violence and, in the event of its break out in exceptional circumstances, to control it with speed and determination. Any laxity will be severely punished. Not only this, the Left parties in West Bengal continue to work to counter communal propaganda and hold rallies to promote communal harmony if there is any danger of outbreak of communal violence. No wonder then that when Bombay was burning in December 1992, violence in Calcutta could be brought under control much more speedily. Chief Minister Jyoti Basu personally supervised the operations. Similarly when communal violence broke out in Sitamarhi in early 1992, Bihar Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav immediately reached the town and took command and brought the situation under control, though many lives were lost by then. Had the Chief Minister not taken control, much more damage would have been inflicted. But just contrast this with other similar situations in other places, the 1987 riot in Meerut, for example. Not only the police miserably failed in controlling the riots but the PAC pulled out 34 young Muslims from their houses in Hashimpura, put them on a truck, drove off to a canal, shot them dead and threw their bodies into it. The then Chief Minister of U.P. Bir Bahadur Singh came to Meerut and stayed there for two days but showed no determination to control the riots. On the other hand, the rioting intensified during those two fateful days and the Hashimpura incident occurred just one day after he left Meerut. Some people even alleged that it was done at the instance of the Chief Minister. However, no clear proof can be

given for such allegations. I was told by a high police official that the Chief Minister Mr. Singh came to know about the Hashimpura incident after it had happened.

Again the then Bihar Chief Minister Bindeshwari Dube showed no political will to control the riots in Bhagalpur which wrought absolute havoc. Around thousand lives were lost. The police openly colluded with the culprits. Similarly when Bombay was burning in December 1992-January 1993 Sudhakar Naik, the then Chief Minister gave an impression of total helplessness. The police shot down about 200 people and colluded with the Sena during the January phase. Many more such examples can be cited which clearly show that political will is as necessary to control communal violence as the administrative efficiency and the police determination. Without the political backing both the administrative machinery and the police will collapse and the riot would inflict much greater damage in terms of life and property. During these Bombay riots, had Sudhakar Rao Naik shown determination as Jyoti Basu of West Bengal did, the city would not have suffered such unprecedented agony.

Role of Law Enforcement Machinery

We have already discussed the role of political leadership, particularly of the ruling political leadership. We must also throw some light on the role of bureaucracy. The district magistrate (D.M.) can also play a very crucial role in controlling the riots. In fact team spirit is required between the D.M. and the Superintendent of Police (S.P.). But the D.M. certainly has an upper hand. While investigating various communal riots it has been observed that the D.M. plays a very crucial role but one rarely comes across a D.M. who shows courage and acts independently. More often than not, he looks upto his political bosses and acts according to their will rather than according to the well laid down rules and regulations for such situations or according to his constitutional duty. And even if he does, he is transferred in no time. It needs no elaboration that most of the bureaucrats look upto the Chief Ministers for their plum posting and no D.M. normally would like to displease the political boss. The D.M. of the Sitamarhi district was accused of laxity by many people in Sitamarhi. If he had reached the site of communal riot in time much damage could have been prevented.

But he remained indifferent to the apprehension of breaking out of communal violence. The S.P. was even accused of being patron of one of the *akharas* of Sitamarhi which played active role in provoking communal violence. Similarly the role of D.M. in the Meerut riots of 1987 was far from satisfactory. Most of the victims complained that he did not take effective steps to control the riots. There was, on the other hand, no such complaint against the District Magistrate of Bhagalpur when the riots broke out there in October, 1989. It has also been observed quite often that if the D.M. is honest and efficient and wants to control the riots effectively, the communal elements in the town put pressure on the Home Minister or the Chief Minister and get him transferred. Thus even a non-communal officer sometimes finds himself in deep water.

One must also take into account the role of the intelligence agencies. Often people have been heard saying during investigation of riots that the intelligence agencies did not gather their intelligence properly and hence proper action could not be taken in time. Intelligence agencies have a different tale to tell. Often they too complain that they had done their best and the information that trouble is likely to break out was passed on to the appropriate authorities. However, no action was taken in time. For example in case of the Bhagalpur riots, the intelligence agencies had played their role properly. However, the administration did not act on the information. It was so in case of the Sitamarhi riots also. The administration was found to be slack. This was found to be so in case of the Bhivandi riots of 1970 also. The Madan Commission Report has also commented on it.

Intelligence gathering is no easy job. Information is difficult to come by. The job requires highly efficient and motivated staff, but the intelligence department hardly has such a staff. In fact, it is well-known that the staff not required elsewhere is posted in the intelligence department. In other words it is considered punishment posting. It is often suggested that most competent persons be posted for intelligence gathering but no one takes such suggestions with the seriousness it deserves. There is another factor also which must be taken into account. Like the administrators, policemen and others, the intelligence people also have their own perceptions which affect intelligence gathering. As Muslims are often seen as aggressors, the intelligence people feel that it

is the Muslims who are preparing for the riots. Their defensive preparations are seen as aggressive and the majority community's aggressive preparations are seen as defensive. Here we are not suggesting that the minority community does not ever take aggressive postures. On many an occasion it does. We are only talking about the perceptions of the intelligence gatherers here. The intelligence officers need to be given proper reorientation training to make intelligence gathering a more reliable and professional operation.

The Role of the Police in Communal Riots

We would like to throw light on the role of the police in various major communal riots. Apart from the local police, we have PAC, SRP, CRPF, BSF and the Army. The local police and the Special Reserve Police and the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) in U.P. and the Bihar Military Police (BMP) in Bihar have acquired notoriety in the eyes of minorities. These forces have behaved very violently and even killed many innocent people in any riot they were called upon to handle. The case of Meerut riots of 1987 is most notorious. The PAC constables pulled out 34 young boys from Hashimpura and shot them dead by the side of a canal. Also they shot dead about 67 Muslims coming out of the mosque after the Friday prayer in a village called Malyana six kilometers from Meerut city. No one was punished for this heinous crime. Mr. Tripathi who commanded the operation was temporarily suspended but reinstated soon thereafter. No satisfactory answer has been found so far as to why he shot so many innocent people and yet got away with it. In Los Angeles one black man was beaten up by white policemen and there was hue and cry and Los Angeles was rocked with violence. The guilty police official was arrested and when the jury set him free there were protests and he was tried again and held guilty. Such a thing is unthinkable in India. Scores of people are killed in riots, most of whom happen to be innocent and yet no action is taken against the guilty officers. This is a grim tragedy. The PAC's role in 1982 Meerut riots was also far from desirable. In that riot too several innocent persons were shot dead by the PAC. One Dr. Shabbir's only son was shot dead before his eyes and again at gun point he was made to load his son's body on the police van. Later on his dispensary was ransacked completely and all bottles of medicine

were broken to pieces. The eminent Jurist Justice Krishna Iyer was so shocked by these brutal incidents that he wrote an angry letter to the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi denouncing these incidents and demanding strong action against the culprits. But nothing came out of that also. Similarly in the Moradabad riot of 1980 the PAC fired ruthlessly on the innocent people in the Idgah maidan and hundreds fell dead. No police officer was punished for these deadly crimes. Such a callous attitude naturally emboldens the PAC to act much more ruthlessly in future riots.

The record of BMP is equally notorious. In the Bhagalpur riots of 1989 its record was much more shameful than that of UP's PAC. It became a marauding force. In one case about a hundred people took refuge in a house in a village called Chanderi near Bhagalpur. The army gave them protection but as Major Wirk who had taken charge of the house had to go elsewhere, he asked the BMP men to take charge and protect the helpless people inside. The BMP, however, brought these people out on assurance of safe conduct to their homes and allowed them to be butchered by the goons. And all this was done with full backing of the police. All major newspapers had reported this incident. The whole incident would have gone unnoticed but for the alertness of Major Wirk. He saw a human leg jutting out of the lake. He pulled out the body to discover to his horror that it was of a woman who was assaulted and her body was thrown out into the lake thinking she was dead. Fortunately she was alive and she told the whole story. Similarly in Logain village the entire Muslim population of more than 100 souls was wiped out and buried in a field over which cabbages were grown. Again, but for the conscience of one villager this would have hardly been known. Around one thousand persons perished in Bhagalpur riots. In Bhagalpur town also the police was openly on the side of the miscreants.

In the Baroda riots of 1982 the role of the police was far from desirable. One of the police officials was allegedly being bribed by Shiva Kahar, one of the main culprits in those riots along with some Muslim bootleggers. He openly sided with Shiva Kahar in the riots and lot of innocent Muslims lost their lives and suffered loss of property. In all subsequent riots in Baroda the role of the police was no better. Even

the otherwise peaceful Muslim communities like the Bohras, Khojas and Memons also suffered greatly.

Ahmedabad has become the most sensitive place as far as communal violence is concerned. There are a number of reasons for this but we would not make a comment here. Our main purpose is to examine the role of law enforcement agencies. The largest and most catastrophic communal riot after independence was that of Ahmedabad in 1969. This riot had shaken the entire country. More than thousand persons had perished in this riot. The loss of properties was even more staggering. To the best of our knowledge it was for the first time that electoral rolls were systematically used in this riot to mark the Muslim houses and voters. Such staggering loss of lives and properties would not have been possible without the connivance of the police force. The then Government of Gujarat had appointed the Justice Jagmohan Reddy Commission to inquire into the causes of communal violence. While commenting on the police role the Report says: "We have already mentioned in another chapter suggestions made in cross-examinations against Hindu officers that because they were Hindus, they showed anti-Muslim attitude; to officers other than Hindus or Muslims the suggestions were that because they wanted to please the government, they showed anti-Muslim attitude. It is, in our view, not unnatural for the Muslim community which has suffered a great loss in life and property in the riots and felt helpless in most cases in not obtaining relief and protection in time, to view the matter with a sense of suspicion, grievance and frustration and feel that everything that could have been done had not been done because the officers and men, majority of whom were Hindus, were partial. Similarly it was suggested to Muslim officers, particularly to Ismail-A-Shaikh by the *Hullad Pidit Sahayta Samiti* that he was partial to Muslims by trying to cover up cases and in which Muslims were involved either by not disclosing that fact or by showing that Hindus were involved. To what extent there is justification in these allegations must be examined because if the feeling in the minority community is justified, the Government and the Police Force has failed in their most fundamental duty to afford protection to its citizens to whichever community they may belong as is expected from a civilized Government and a well disciplined force." Further, on the Report goes on to say, "If, however,

there is no justification for these allegations and suggestions, it is equally essential that it should be stated in no uncertain terms in order to assure the citizens at large particularly the minorities and give confidence to the police force". (*See The Reddy Commission Report*, pp. 191). The report also says, "We find it also necessary to advert to another allegation of the Muslim organisations that a great number of Muslim religious places which were near the Police Chowkeys and police stations were damaged by communal minded police officers and men. It is true that these places which were near the police stations and chowkeys were damaged as pointed out in Chapter XV on the "Toll of Disturbances". The explanation given by police officers was that at that time there may not be sufficient policemen at the chowkeys and police stations or they may be engaged elsewhere but there is no satisfactory explanation of this nor is there any evidence contrary that this was allowed to be done deliberately. We have, however, an impression that though the whole of the police force may not be communally involved, there may be some instances where the police were affected by the Jagannath temple incidence. We have elsewhere in the chapter on 'Communal Atmosphere' occasion to point out that the communal virus is such that it is likely to affect even policemen who are not apart from society which is so affected though in our view the training, the discipline and the traditions that they are protectors and preservers of public peace and tranquillity should keep them free from such inhibitions. It is therefore in the larger interest of the police force itself and the confidence that force must inspire in all sections of the community, that an inquiry by some competent officer of the rank of not less than a secretary to the Government should be held and the report published to inspire that confidence." (*ibid.*)

In subsequent riots in Ahmedabad also we hear many cases of either indifference on the part of the policemen or dereliction of duty on their part. There also have been instances of direct collusion. We were told during our investigation of Ahmedabad riots of 1985 that in one of the labour areas of Ahmedabad a section of which is almost exclusively a Muslim area, a police inspector gave petrol from his motorcycle to set afire Muslim houses there. The officer concerned of course denied the charge. But the way houses were burnt in that part of the city there is no doubt that the police was indifferent and inefficient

if not downright communal. During our investigation of these riots in Ahmedabad we heard from the victims number of stories in relation to the 'communal attitude' of the city police. However, there were no such complaints against the army.

Also there were bitter complaints against the police during the Bhivandi riots of 1970. The Madon Commission Report also passed severe strictures on the role of police in Bhivandi riots of that year. Referring to the arrests of innocent people the Report says, "None of the reasons advanced by Additional I.G.P., Modak and S.P. Bhavne can be fully accepted for none of them can fit in with the number of arrests made. The places where the acts of arson and rioting by Hindus took place and the fact that at most of these places there were police pickets or patrol parties shows that the true explanation is that the police practised discrimination in making arrests and concentrated upon Muslim rioters turning a blind eye to what Hindu rioters were doing." It further says, "It was alleged that innocent Muslims who had nothing to do with the disturbances were arrested from their houses, mosques and other places where they were taking shelter and charged either with committing cognizable offences or breach of curfew order." (*See The D.P. Madon Commission of Inquiry Report*, Volume III, Part III, pp. 13). However, the Commission dismisses the allegations that all Muslims arrests were innocent as Hindus were also killed and their properties also looted. But what it says is that "a number of Muslims were wrongly arrested, and that the order given by Additional I.G.P., Modak to enforce the curfew strictly, or in other words, as he himself described it, the order for mass arrests, was interpreted to be mass arrest of Muslims and not of Hindus and Muslims both". (*Ibid*, pp. 14). The commission even found that the police diaries were forged by the concerned police officers to involve one Ibrahim Maddu and others in the conspiracy to engineer riots. Maddu and others were later on exonerated by the court. It was also alleged by many Muslims that they were not only beaten up in police stations but also police constables urinated in their mouths when they asked for water. The Bhivandi riots in 1970 had spread to Jalgaon also. There the house of a Muslim lady, Hajrabi, was set on fire by the Hindu mob. Justice Madon observes in his Report, "In the course of the rioting at Khatik Alli the house of Hajrabi, widow of Abdul Samad ..., then about 32 years old,

was set on fire by the Hindu rioters and burnt down. Her mother, her two young sons and two young daughters all perished in the fire. This was one of the most tragic incidents of the disturbances.” Hajrabi alleged that Sub-Inspector Bhalerao was “amongst the mob of rioters and that spotting him she fell down at his feet and begged him to save her mother and children who were inside the burning house. He, however, put his revolver against her chest asking her to keep quiet or he would shoot her. She continued pleading with him. At last he dragged her and handed her over to the rioters and she heard him inciting them to set fire to other houses. Prior to the disturbances she had seen Bhalerao going about on his scooter but she did not know his name and heard it from the persons in the mob who were telling one another not to be afraid but to set fire to the houses as Bhalerao was with them. She went right upto Mrs. Indira Gandhi with her complaint. However, nothing much seems to have come out of it. In Bhivandi riots of 1984 also we heard number of complaints against the alleged indifference or collusion or the excesses committed by the police. There also has been a general allegation that whenever curfew is declared it is imposed in a one-sided manner i.e. it is strictly imposed in the Muslim areas whereas it is quite lax in the Hindu areas and often we have also heard the complaint during our investigations that the Hindu mobs are allowed to loot and commit arson during the curfew hours and when Muslims come out to put out fire, they are fired upon. Such allegations were made by a number of people during the Meerut riots of 1987. It was also alleged that the police in Meerut beat up ten persons to death in police custody. Any number of such examples can be given to show that there has been a general complaint against the behaviour of the police by the members of the minority communities. It should also be mentioned here that the dalits have also made such allegations against the police. We investigated the caste riots in Ahmedabad in 1981. Most of the dalit victims alleged that the Special Reserve Police (SRP) and the Gujrat police looted their houses and beat up their womenfolk. In 1985 too dalits were affected as for about a week the riots had caste character. Many dalit houses were also burnt.

Bombay Riots of December, 1992 and January 1993

These riots were a great disaster for the country. Muslims bitterly

complained about the police role. In the first phase i.e. in December, 1992 most of the Muslims were killed in police firing. In fact the post-mortem reports showed that out of about 250 deaths, 192 persons died in police firing and out of those more than 95 per cent people had sustained injuries above abdomen which shows that the police fired to kill, and not to maim or injure. During our investigations in Govandi many women told us that their sons or husbands were dragged out of the houses and shot dead. The police, it appeared, had gone berserk. There were serious allegations against one inspector who, a police source admitted, should have been dismissed. The concerned Deputy Commissioner of Police of that area transferred him after repeated complaints against him. However, it was too late and more than 50 lives had already been lost by then. There were also allegations that some people were shot dead in their houses even on the first or the second floors. For example, one young Muslim lady was hit on her neck near Underia Street off Maulana Shaukat Ali Road when she was in the balcony of her apartment on second floor. She died on the spot. Thus Justices H. Suresh and S.M. Daud observe in their report, *The People's Verdict*: "... The police are also guilty of being partisan in these riots. Many witnesses have stated before us that they were attacked in the presence of the police and the police did nothing. In many cases, the police openly supported the rioters and accompanied them in the attack. When the victims went to the police station they were driven away without recording their complaints. In some cases, the FIRs have been recorded but no further investigation has been undertaken. Several houses and shops were looted and the police could have prevented this or, in any case, have made efforts to recover the looted articles." The two retired judges of the Bombay High Court further observe, "What is regrettable is that in their frenzy to support a particular community, as against the other, the police had become indifferent to human misery. In particular, we would like to mention the cases of molestation of women and of rape and gang-rape ... Still worse is the case of Ms. F.S. ... from Sewri, where the police were themselves involved in gang-rape. The victim now has no faith in the police and in the administration of justice." (See *The People's Verdict*, pp. 103-105).

Both the justices also felt that the police did not prevent recurrence of riots after the December phase. It goes on to say, "After the 11st bout

of riots in December, the police ought to have seen that the riots did not erupt again. The police and the government should have taken care to see that no tension was allowed to be built up. Instead, the police and the government gave permission to the Shiv Sena and the BJP to perform *Maha Aratis*. The evidence clearly indicates that *Maha Aratis* were one of the main causes for building up of tension leading to a riot, as happened in January 1993. In our view, permitting such *Maha Aratis* in different parts of the city during the said interregnum and thereafter, was a gross dereliction of duty on the part of the police. Whosoever had taken the decision to grant such permission should be answerable to the people of Bombay". (See pp. 105). Even the **Amnesty International** in its memorandum to the Government of India on Bombay riots has seriously indicted the police. It says, Justice Shrikrishna is investigating 50 out of Bombay's 68 police stations that were seriously affected by the riots. The Commission has been hearing evidence about police failure to investigate complaints against their own personnel for alleged acts of omission and omissions during the riots. In one case this caused Justice Shrikrishna, on January 5, 1994, to make the critical comment: 'We will become the laughing stock in every civilized nation if no action is taken against a police constable who participated in looting a shop on D.B. Marg in January, 1993' ... The Commission heard complaints that police failed to file reports, as they are required to do, about incidents in which they fired on crowds in which people were killed. He has heard the evidence that six police officers at Agripada Police station had given unreliable testimonies, prompting the judge on January 9, 1994 to comment: 'unless we prosecute one or two officers and send them to jail, nothing is going to improve.' He has also heard the evidence of police interference with official records (in Nagpada police station fresh pages had reportedly been inserted in official documents such as the crime register). (See "Amnesty International India Memorandum to the Government of India arising from Amnesty International visit to India 5-15 January 1994", pp. 16) Shrikrishna Commission also heard the case of Hari masjid on Rafi Ahmad Qidwai Marg, Wadala on June 28, 1994 where the police Inspector Kapse had shot six Muslims dead inside the mosque some of whom were praying

and some of whom were performing ablution before prayer. (*See Inquilab*, Urdu Daily, Bombay, June 29, 1994)

The Role of Paramilitary Forces and the Army

The police role in Bombay riots during December-January was certainly not such as to glorify it. If anything, it was far from desirable. But it has been seen during investigation of riots that the role of paramilitary forces like the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force, (CRPF) etc., and the army was often quite good and the minorities pleaded for retention of these forces in order to better protect their lives. The riot affected people in the case of Bhivandi riots told us that but for army they would have suffered much greater losses in terms of life and property. Not only this, in Ahmedabad riots of 1985 too, many persons told us that the role of army was commendable. This clearly indicates that the victims and their relatives and friends do not approve of the role of the local police and the armed constabulary like the SRP, PAC and BMP. It is important to probe why is it so?

A police source maintained that the local police is often influenced by the local factors whereas the paramilitary forces are not involved in day-to-day affairs of the civil society. Moreover, the local police is also subject to various local pressures as it is in constant touch with the people of the local areas. They develop even intimate contacts with one section of the society or the other. The police is often found in league with criminal elements also and specially those who have been politicised. These criminal elements are often involved in these riots on one side or the other. For example in Bhagalpur riot, the criminal gangs openly participated in the riots and these gangs were divided on communal lines and also some criminal elements from amongst the Muslims had sought to reek revenge on some police officers taking advantage of the situation. The paramilitary forces, it is obvious, are not exposed to such local power equations. Thus they are able to behave more impartially. They take action only against the real offenders. As for the brutal behaviour of the PAC and SRP, our findings show that though they are an isolated lot (away, like the paramilitary forces from local influences), their very training is to brutally attack in order to restore law and order. Secondly, like other

police people, they do not get any chance to be appointed on lucrative posts and on such occasions they see an opportunity to make some money by participating in the loot. During Ahmedabad caste riots many Dalit women told us that the SRP forces snatched away their *mangalsutra* and other gold ornaments alongwith the cash. Similarly in Jabalpur riot of 1962 we heard similar complaint about SRP from the Muslim women. Their *mangalsutras* and gold ornaments were also snatched by the SRP men. This of course explains their brutality and greed but not their communal attitude. What could be the explanation for that? One reason could be that they function in riot situation in close co-ordination with the local police. But this seems to be a partial explanation. Lack of proper secular orientation in training also seems to be the other factor. The police constabulary also suffers from lack of such training.

The Police and Its Communal Behaviour

It would be unfair to condemn the whole of the police force as communal. The police does have communal elements within its fold but we also have secular elements among them though mostly at the upper echelons of the force. The top officers are often much more secular than the lower constabulary. Of course, one can find communal elements among top officers too, but it is not as rampant as among the lower ranks even though there may be secular elements in the constabulary too. In fact we find some very committed officers who tackle the communal situation very honestly and with a sense of integrity. It is a different thing that they may not have succeeded for host of other factors, one among them being political. Such officers are subjected to even frequent transfers for their secular orientation and sense of duty. Among them too there are two types: those who fight for their convictions and suffer and those who surrender to the whims of political bosses. It goes without saying that there are always very few people who are prepared to pay the price for their convictions.

The picture radically changes when it comes to lower officers and the constabulary. They are much more communalised. It should also be said that they behave harshly with all weaker sections of society including poor of the upper castes and, of course, *dalits*. There seems to be something fundamentally lacking in their training. The situation

partly reflects corrupt political atmosphere in the country. There is no value for human life and specially for weaker sections of society. And it is constabulary which actually matters in the field. Thus those who shot innocent people in Govandi during the December 1992 riots were of the level of inspector and below. But the Deputy Commissioner of Police Y.C. Pawar saved the situation. We should also acknowledge that some higher officers in Bhivandi showed great sense of commitment and maintained peace by forming mohalla committees and keeping undesirable elements in check. In fact all other police officials must learn a lot from them. It is, therefore, these lower officers who need greater discipline and reorientation training. But it is regrettable that various police training centres impart training to higher rather than these lower grade officers.

It is also important to understand some of the problems of the lower officers and constabulary. They are terribly overworked during communal disturbances. They are often required to perform round the clock duty on such occasions. They hardly have time to go home. Also, they perceive danger to their own lives. It is not easy to work in such conditions. Such tension makes them highly excitable and they tend to overreact to any situation. They take revenge on the innocent people. Also, they are deeply affected by communal propoganda like any other human being. Their perceptions about Muslims are formed by such political propoganda. They also think that all Muslims are aggressors, violent and fanatic and that they are mainly responsible for starting the riots. One or two selective incidents which come to their notice reinforce their perception. For example some Muslims (mostly anti-social elements) attacked policemen and even killed a few of them during December, 1992 riots in Bombay. Also some Muslim youth attacked government property and Hindu shops, temples etc. on the morning of 7th December. In Govandi area too, two police constables were done to death and two temples were damaged. This is bound to anger the policemen, specially at lower levels. Even the higher police officials felt that news of attack on police constables had angered all policemen. Despite this some top officials did not lose their cool. Though one constable was done to death on 7th December in Bhindi Bazar area and two temples were attacked, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Zende, did a good job of restoring order in Dongri area

and saving many Muslim lives. But for him, many more Muslims would have been killed. Thus some incidents do reinforce the police perception about the Muslims. In fact one of the causes of excessive firing during December riots by the police was their perception that Muslims are fanatics and aggressors and unless dealt with severely, they cannot be controlled. Such perceptions could be removed only through intensive training and reorientation of their attitudes towards minority communities.

One also has to take into account the role of the rumours even on the minds of the police. Many rumours deliberately spread by the miscreants to engineer riots, affect the police mind as well. Sometimes even high officials get affected by these rumours. During investigation of the Nelli riots in Assam, the district magistrate was questioned about the main cause of the riot and we were horrified to learn that even he was victim of the rumour that the Bengali Muslims cut off the breasts of some Hindu women and displayed them in the Hindu areas to show their prowess. This is unbelievable but true. One can thus imagine what havoc rumours can play in the riot situation. It is generally believed by policemen also that Pakistani weapons are coming to be used in the riots and that ISI is behind these disturbances. During the December riots in Bombay, a police source had claimed that near Minara masjid there was firing from AK-47 which was totally false. No proof was subsequently submitted for this claim. The rumours were so strong that even the then Governor of Maharashtra C. Subramaniam was carried away by it and he made a press statement that there was "foreign hand" behind these riots and that he would prove it. He never submitted any such proof.

We have to take into account the general political atmosphere at the time of the riots. In the last few years the communal forces have highly vitiated the whole atmosphere. The Ramjanambhoomi-Babri masjid controversy played havoc with the communal peace in the country. Even highly educated middle and upper class people were affected by the communal wave which has swept the country in the last five years. The policemen can hardly remain unaffected. They are as human beings as vulnerable to communal propaganda as any other human being. In such an atmosphere one requires highly motivated police officers to handle the situation objectively and dispassionately.

Even such high motivated officers would require full political backing. The ruling politicians had surrendered themselves to the communal forces and came to be termed by some journalists as 'soft communalists'. The role of the Prime Minister himself came under the shadow of doubt. He watched helplessly when the Babri masjid was being demolished. Such political behaviour certainly sends wrong signals to the police and other officers. Before Ahmedabad riots of 1969 too the whole political atmosphere was vitiated with communal virus. Very few police officials can maintain their poise in such communally surcharged atmosphere.

It would require extraordinary political will to fight this communal virus. But our country's unity and integrity very much depends on strengthening secularism and pluralism. This message has to go repeatedly to the police also. Every communal riot is a serious blow to our unity.

Chapter 7

Post-Babri Bombay Riots

Bombay achieved the dubious distinction of setting an all-India record of communal madness under the leadership of the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra who had lost will to govern. He reportedly told a deputation of eminent citizens of Bombay when they visited him with a request to control communal violence to go to Bal Thackeray and appeal to him. This was a clear admission of political bankruptcy of the rulers. The whole Bombay was on fire for more than a month from 7th December, 1992 to January, 1993 after demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya by the lumpen hordes. It took around two months for the city to return to normalcy. The riots in Bombay took place in two phases: first in December starting immediately after the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya and then in January 1993, after a brief lull. We will deal with the riots in these two phases.

The First Phase

The demolition of the Babri Masjid was no doubt a national shame. It deserves strongest condemnation by all those who have any respect for the constitution and the rule of law. Also, one can hardly exonerate the Central Government specially the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and the Home Minister S.B. Chavan. They knew that the Kalyan Singh Government of U.P. will not like to stop the Kar Sevaks in Ayodhya from demolishing the mosque, let alone fire upon them. The BJP-VHP had already announced that they will mobilise more than 200,000 kar sevaks. Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, had given assurance to the

highest court of the country that Babri Masjid will be protected. One wonders how could he protect the mosque when a mob of two hundred thousand highly motivated kar sevaks collected there on whom he was unwilling to fire. Who on earth could keep such a mob under control and how the Prime Minister was convinced? It was all the more difficult to use lathis and bullets as the BJP had mobilised its leaders including MLAs and MPs and some ministers for the *kar seva*. It was also alleged that the Central Government was warned by intelligence agencies of the impending demolition of the mosque. All preparations were made in advance.

Any way the inevitable happened on December 6, 1992. The BJP-VHP betrayed the country and mocked at the rule of law. And the Prime Minister by accepting the assurance of the Kalyan Singh Government betrayed the largest minority of the country. It was quite natural for Muslims to express their anger against such vandalism. What is worse the authorities even did not have political imagination to anticipate such trouble. No proper instructions were issued to the police whether in Bombay or any other place what preparations to make in the event of outbreak of violence in the wake of the trouble in Ayodhya. Such complacent attitude was most deplorable and it caused disaster. The police was left to its own devices to deal with the situation. Some Muslims in Bhindi Bazar and other areas of Bombay indulged in petty violence, attacking government and other properties. The police then began to put down this violence as harshly as it could.

A few words about Bombay exploding in such unprecedented manner would also be in place. Bombay has grown into a megalopolis with constant influx of people from various parts of India. More than half its population lives in slums, having mixed population of various religious and regional as well as caste communities. These slums are usually a maze of narrow lanes and by-lanes and at times so narrow that hardly one person can walk through them at a time. Thus it is very easy for the miscreants to hide and very difficult for law enforcing agencies to pursue them in such baffling maze of lanes and by-lanes.

These slums are controlled by different slums-lords who impose their own rule. More often than not, the government authorities have no existence whatsoever in these slums. The police can also hardly make its presence felt there. So either the police is in league with these

'lords' or it just looks the other way when they enforce their authority. Much of the trouble in Dharvavi and other slums can be ascribed to these slum-lords.

Also, there is ever rising curve of unemployment and rising prices which boost crime. The Bombay's underworld is ever-expanding. It leads to gang rivalries and it is worse if the gangs are divided along communal lines which is not rare. These gangsters have, more often than not, their own political connections and they may be connected with different warring factions of the ruling party. Of late there have been serious allegations of nexus between notorious under-world dons and the ruling politicians in Maharashtra. The other example of such nexus is Bihar, particularly Bhagalpur wherein too communal violence burst out on large scale in October, 1989. Bhagalpur is notorious for its criminal gangs. These gangs have alliances with various political parties and factions. These warring factions then settle their scores through these gangs. They even engineer communal violence with their help to defame their rival.

In Bombay too, it is being alleged, that some gangsters are aligned to the Sharad Pawar group which was at daggers drawn with the then Chief Minister Sudhakar Rao Naik group. Sharad Pawar group's rivalry with the Sudhakar Rao group is allegedly one of the contributing causes of perpetuation of communal violence, specially in the January phase. It was alleged in the editorial of the Indian Express of January 11, 1993 that the Chief Minister was reluctant to call the army as then the credit of stopping the riots will go to his rival Sharad Pawar. This may or may not be true but certainly it is the perception of many political analysts.

The Shiv Sena also played very active role in the conflagration. The reason is obvious. It has lost all its regional appeal, even in Bombay. Now it is the Hindutva platform which is being systematically exploited by it since 1984 Bombay-Bhivandi riots. But Dilip Padgaonkar, the former editor, *Times of India* feels that the Marathi people strongly resent outsiders. He writes in his article, titled *This is Not Bombay*, "I had long suspected that the city would be in flames one day. You know why? The Marathis have for many years resented us outsiders. They have envied our success, they have been brainwashed into believing that the outsiders—the Madrasis, the Muslims, the UP *bhaiyyas*—have deprived the locals of their livelihood. So as soon as

they got a chance they set out to teach the 'outsiders' a lesson. The thousands of people who fled Bombay after the riots were both Muslims and Hindus. But obviously the Muslims suffered the most. The Marathi police really went berserk against them, especially in the December riots". (See *When Bombay Burned*, Bombay, 1993, p. 5). However, the matter needs to be seen in other political perspective as well. Though the BJP is exploiting communal sentiments in a very crude and raw form today, the Shiv Sena is even cruder in this respect. If the Shiv Sena has to prove its 'worth' vis-a-vis the BJP, it must outdo it (the BJP) in promoting communalism and this is what precisely the Shiv Sena is doing. Otherwise it cannot compete with the BJP which also has considerable presence in Maharashtra. No wonder then that Bal Thackeray boasted that it is his Shiv Sainiks who demolished the Babri mosque though it was pointed out later that his men had never reached Ayodhya before the mosque was demolished. He also declared after the demolition that he was the happiest man after hearing that much awaited news.

It also has to be borne in mind that no Chief Minister in Maharashtra, however powerful, can touch Bal Thackeray. He, on the other hand, must be placated. Sudhakar Naik first tried to break it and weaned away an important Shiv Sena leader, Bhujbal alongwith some of his followers. But soon he was pitted against pro-Pawar dissidents and instead of breaking it further as Naik had planned, he made his peace with Bal Thackeray. Naik's position became so weak that when communal trouble broke out on December 7 and the Shiv Sena paper *Samna* began writing highly provocative editorials and articles, instead of taking any action against the paper, he appealed to Bal Thackeray not to write such articles in the interest of peace. Obviously it shows the pitiable position to which Naik administration was reduced. Also this sent wrong signals to the police force a section of which has covert, if not open, sympathies with the Sena. How can such an administration be at all relied upon for effective action against the miscreants.

After the Babri Masjid was razed to the ground by the vandals of BJP-VHP-RSS on December 6, the nation in general and the Muslims in particular were utterly shocked. Even liberal and progressive Muslims felt that as the two-nation theory lies buried under the debris of Bangla Desh, Indian secularism lies buried under the debris of Babri

Masjid. They were not pained as much by the vandalism of the BJP-VHP-RSS kar sevaks as by the inaction and indecision of the Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. They felt that this inaction was a great betrayal by the Central Government. History will never pardon them for that.

As soon as the news of the demolition of the mosque spread, Muslims in many areas of Bombay came out on the streets and expressed their anger by attacking houses, taxis, buses and other public properties. They even attacked some temples in certain areas and partially damaged them. Some of the anti-social elements among them looted the Hindu shops also. However, if the police had acted with tact and imagination, this violence could have been contained and the miscreants could have been arrested minimising the loss of life and property. However, in most of the cases the police fired indiscriminately and many innocent people were killed.

Bhendi Bazar-Null Bazar Area

After the BBC news bulletins repeatedly showed the debris of the Mosque the riots started on the 7th morning. In a country like India uncensored news at times can play havoc. Even selective reporting of names of those killed from one particular community causes lot of damage. It is, therefore, necessary to follow some norms for reporting. It is felt by many that but for repeatedly showing of demolition of Babri Masjid on BBC bulletins, the damage could have been minimised. A section of Muslims began stoning and looting some shops in Bhendi Bazar area. Near the J.J. Hospital they damaged signals, bus stops and also some buses. They looted six shops belonging to the Hindus on Ibrahim Rehmatullah Road. Also, they extensively damaged Suleman Police Chowkie on the corner of Maulana Shaukat Ali Road and Underia Street.

This went on for a couple of hours and then the police firing took place after 12 p.m. The way people were killed shows that the firing was less for disbursing the mob and more with the intention of killing. One woman Nasim Bano, aged 22, who was married just two years ago, was hit on her temple while taking the towel off the drying string on second floor of the building and the bullet passed through her head instantly killing her. It was at about 2-2.30 p.m. Similarly, a young boy,

Mukhtar Ahmad, aged 17, had come out of his house in search of his father in Teli Mohallah. The police fired from Maulana Shaukat Ali Road and he too was hit on his temple and the bullet shattered his brain. He died in the lap of his mother. Another boy whose name could not be ascertained was also hit. He was aged 22 and died after being admitted to the hospital. This happened around mid-day. All this happened after a Muslim mob attacked a police chowkie called Suleaiman chowkie, burned a police motor cycle and attacked two policemen who were saved by Muslim residents staying in the opposite building.

Another boy Zahid Husain Khan, aged 17 years and studying in 11th standard, living in Building No. 25, Khandia Street, was hit on his left shoulder. The bullet passed through his heart. He died on his way to hospital. Another man called Asghar, aged 32, was hit by a bullet while coming out of urinal on Maulana Azad cross lane No. 10 at about 11.30 a.m. He also died. His colleagues told us that the Hindus were throwing stones and bottles from Kamatipura side and Muslims were throwing similar missiles from the Maulana Azad Road side. There was a common complaint that the police was firing only on Muslims. In this area in all seven persons were killed in the police firing. The firing was so heavy that according to a doctor of the J.J. Hospital, a body a minute was being brought in. Even the 12 operation theatres in the hospital were not adequate to save the lives.

Nearby there are what are called BIT chawls. Battles were being fought out there too. There are seven buildings in all, four of which are inhabited by Muslims and the other three by the Hindus. A tailor, Muhammad Khalil Chowdhury, an eye witness, told us "At 10.30 a.m. an off duty policeman fired from building two into building six and that set off a six hour orgy of violence. The residents armed with soda water bottles and other missiles, attacked each other and the police came in after two hours of rioting and sided with their colleague who fired on Muslims. Not one bullet was fired on a Hindu building", Chowdhary told us.

A Muslim mob attacked temples near Kalabadevi. It began at 11 a.m. on December 7. Near Pydhonie, one Jain Temple was slightly damaged. The police fired in the air and dispersed the crowd. In Nagdevi Street two temples, Nagraj Temple and Hanuman Temple,

were attacked. The police fired in Nagdevi area and shot one person. Lakshmi Narayan Temple was also attacked near Dongri. Someshwar temple in the area was also attacked but only slightly damaged. One police constable was assaulted in Dongri area and his rifle snatched. Also, one Assistant Inspector of Police was shot and sustained three bullet injuries but survived. It happened near Bhendi Bazar Naka. Between Bhendi Bazar Naka and J.J. Hospital, two persons were killed in the police firing.

Near Char Null on S.V.P. Road, seven cars were burnt and 38 shops looted by the Muslims. Seven Muslims and one Hindu were killed in police firing in this area on that day. Similarly in Ghoghari Mohallah a police constable who had gone out during relaxation of curfew was fired upon and his body was riddled with 17 bullets, according to the Assistant Commissioner of Police Mr. Zende, who helped restore control over the situation with minimum use of force. According to him police stopped firing at about 4.30 p.m. and no disturbances had taken place since then.

Null Bazar Market

The Null Bazar Market near Gol Deval—an old Hindu temple—is a very busy market with mutton, vegetable stalls and other shops belonging to both Muslims and Hindus. The majority of shops of course belong to the Muslims. It is a huge market and has good business turn-over. In this market there are 512 shops, out of which 90 belong to Hindus and rest to the Muslims. This market was set ablaze after looting the shops at about 12 noon on December 7. The shopkeepers ran for their life. The entire market was reduced to ashes. All shops in Loban Gali were also completely gutted and the fire leapt across the lane and completely gutted a multistorey building, Hussaini Mansion, housing many Marwari families. It is a complete mystery who set fire to Null Bazar Market. We interviewed many people around the market but most of them showed their ignorance. Everyone said we were not there when the miscreants set it afire. Since there were both Hindu and Muslim shops together it is quite baffling as to who did it. Some Muslims said it was the handiwork of some Hindu miscreants who came from behind Gol Deval. Why Muslims themselves would set fire to the Market in which they had more than 400 shops? Moreover,

the Hindu shops were mostly of vegetable sellers whereas Muslim shops sold costlier and non-persishable goods. But no one could say for sure who are the culprits.

Behind Gol Deval there are mostly Hindu houses. The fact the police had to fire shows that the Hindus (read Shiv Sainiks) were on rampage. There were few Muslim shops behind Gol Deval also—a pan shop, a cassette shop, a radio and T.V. repairing shop, these were all looted and gutted. In all, 11 Muslim shops met this fate. The police fired on the miscreants in which, according to the V.P. Road Police Station, 10 persons were killed. This included deaths at the two Tank area also which is predominantly Muslim area. It appears all Hindus were killed in the police firing. A local Shiv Sena Board displayed the names of four people killed. On that day, according to the police sources, 4 policeman including one PSI Sheikh were injured. The nearby Mohammad Ali Road, another Muslim dominated area, was also in turmoil. The earliest incident here took place on the midnight of December 6. A police wireless van was attacked near Minara Masjid and the police opened fire.

But in the January, 1993 phase this area and nearby localities were badly hit. On January 6, two *mathadi* workers (those who carry headload) were murdered in Dongri area. No one knew who murdered them. It was thought to be a case of union rivalry. But rumours were rife that the Muslims murdered them. Again on that day a Muslim mob attacked a Hindu taxi driver at Shaukat Ali Road. The mob wanted him to take off his trousers to check whether he was a Muslim or a Hindu. And by that evening several taxi drivers in Duncan road area were stabbed. Some Muslims flung petrol bombs at the firemen's colony all of whom were Hindus. In retaliation the Hindus set fire to the Pahelvi Bakery at Dongri and several other shops were also set ablaze.

Govandi and Excessive Police Firing

Govandi, near Chembur (in Eastern suburbs), is one of the largest slum areas of Bombay with a considerable Muslim population. Generally very poor, the most marginalised in the society live here. Roughly 70 per cent of population here is Muslim. Our interviews with a large number of affected people clearly showed that the police went on rampage and made Muslims their special targets. The evidence for

this seems overwhelming. We interviewed those who had otherwise no axe to grind. They had hardly any political consciousness and spent all their time eking out miserable living. We spoke to a number of women who appeared quite truthful in their presentations. In our view there was nothing which they said could be doubted.

As in the Bhendi Bazar, it all started on December 7 in various areas of Govandi. In early morning Muslims of Govandi reacted to the demolition of Babri masjid by indulging in petty violence. It appears that they stoned and damaged some Hindu temples. The Hanuman temple at Kamalabai Jhopadapatti on Plot No. 19 in Shivaji Nagar came under attack at 6.30 a.m. The marble idol was chipped off from its base and removed. Other parts of the temple were also damaged. We interviewed number of Hindus in the area. But all of them denied any knowledge as to who did it. Most of them felt they were some outsiders but were not sure of their religion or personal identity. Muslims in the area also denied any knowledge, some even vigorously said it was not their work at all but circumstantial evidence makes us feel that some young Muslims aided by anti-social elements might have damaged the temple. Similarly two other temples were also damaged though not as much as the Hanuman temple. Two police constables were also killed and their bodies thrown into gutter from where they were recovered in highly decomposed state. This, it appears, made the police furious who wanted to seek revenge.

This was the beginning of the trouble in Govandi. Next it erupted near Masjid Nur-e-Ilahi in Sanjay Nagar, Bainganwadi. The Iman of the masjid Maulana Hannan Ashraf told us that Muslims were guarding the mosque when some Shiv Sainiks came from Plot No. 16 along with the police. When they came face to face with the Muslims, they went aside leaving Muslims to face the police. It was early morning on December 8 and the police started firing at the Muslims at about 7 a.m. One boy, Sibte Nabi was killed and many injured. Police stepped forward and shot another man, Rahimullah, aged 25, near Sanjay Nagar School No. 4. As it went berserk, the police shot three persons dead—Syed Kazim Ali, Shamim (aged 22) and Nasim, aged 18 years. Another person aged 25, was shot and injured around 9.30 a.m.

Then, according to the Imam the police entered the mosque and set fire to it. There were 4 persons inside the Masjid including the Imam. Six policemen had entered the mosque. They beat up the inmates with rifle butts and asked them to line up. They said they want to put out the fire first. The police said let the mosque burn. But when the inmates insisted on putting out the fire the police shot one Abdul Gaffar, a trustee, who died. He was shot in the chest. Another person Mohammed Yaqub was shot in the leg. The third person Hafiz Kafi was taken away by the police beating him on the way. He is reported to be dead. The Imam of the mosque was also beaten up with rifle butts. The mosque was damaged in fire and three shops around it were reduced to ashes.

Curfew was then imposed in the area at about 10 a.m. After the curfew the timber shop belonging to one Haji Baitullah was set on fire. The owner alleged that the SRP itself set fire to it. When the owner and some others tried to put out the fire, they began firing. Syed Kazim Hussain, aged 28 years, standing near his house in a nearby lane beside the timber mart was hit by the bullet. He was taken to the hospital where he died after three days.

The police arrived around 4.30 p.m. in Shivaji Nagar Plot 31, D line. Some people were in the chawl and some standing on the road. Apparently there was no trouble in the area. The police began firing and one Muslim who was crossing the road died. Two other persons, one of whom was Zafar aged 18 years, were in the toilet. The police broke the doors and allegedly shot both of them dead. Another person, a Hindu—who was looking out from the chawl was also shot dead. One lady told us that the police pulled her son Sheikh Islam out from their house, shot him and took him away. He was not been traceable since then.

A similar case was reported from Subhash Chandra Bose Nagar, on plot No. 40A, Baiganwadi. His mother told us that Aftab Alam, aged 30, was pulled out of the house and allegedly shot by the police. Aftab was hit on the hand and stomach. The policemen, six in number and led by inspector Nikkam, according to the lady, also fired on the walls of the house. The police set fire to a taxi parked outside the house. We saw the burnt remains of the taxi. In the same locality the police shot Nawab Ali, aged 30, living in house no. 115. He was shot

dead after being pulled out of his house. The police also pulled out another man Jalil, around 25 years, and shot him but fortunately he survived. The police set the house No. 3 afire which belonged to one Mansur Khan and reduced it to ashes. The nearby house of Bhika Raoji Bhalerao was also burnt.

One Mohd. Saghir, 18, too was pulled out of his house No. 8, taken to a little distance and shot dead. His body could not be traced out. Similarly Akbar Ali and Hamid were made to run and then shot but both survived. In the case of Farouque Sheikh, he was pulled out from his house, taken for some distance and then shot dead by the police. The police, according to the eye-witness account, was shouting 'Jay Shri Ram' while shooting him. Similarly Mohd. Mehboob Sheikh was also shot but he was only wounded.

In Chikkalwadi area of Bainganwadi, disturbances started at about 12 noon on December 7. Some miscreants who could not be identified came from outside and burnt the Mandir in the vicinity. The police reached on spot at about 12.15 p.m. The SRP broke open the doors of many houses and pulled out the people and beat them up. On plot No. 40, Room 6-7, nephew of Mohd. Umar, aged 27, was shot dead and one Mohd. Anwar was severely beaten up. Mohd. Umar was also beaten up. Another person living behind this house was also allegedly shot but could not be identified. A small garment factory was looted. Afsari Begum told us that her house was completely destroyed. We saw the remains of the hut ourselves.

One S.A. Rashid told us that police began firing at 10 a.m. on December 8, as a result of which 5 Muslims died. Six persons were injured. On Datta mandir plot No. 30 BEST Chawl, Muslim area was burnt along with some Hindu houses. The temple in the area was damaged by unknown people (presumably Muslim) after the firing began. Aslam Khan and Afsari Banu told us that their houses were burnt by the police at 11 a.m. after imposing curfew. Police also fired on the same day from Madrasa Jamia Qadariya on the nearby houses. The walls bear bullet marks.

In Bandra Plot, Bainganwadi disturbances broke out on December 7, itself. We were told that on plot No. 37-A Salim Usman was standing near his room No. E-8. Police fired at him at 2.30 and when he ran, the police ran after him and shot him twice. He died in hospital the

same day. Another person Salim, aged 40 was killed by the police bullet at 11 a.m. while returning home from his work. Similarly, one Mohd. Yunus, about 40, was hit by a bullet while doing work at about the same time.

Another calamity struck in what is known as Kamla Raman Nagar near dumping ground, Govandi. In this area there were 46 huts of which 44 belonged to Muslims and two to Hindus. On December 8, according to a resident there, the police came around 1 to 1.30 p.m. and first started firing and then set fire to huts without any provocation. When we visited the site not a single hut remained. According to Mohd. Hanif Ramzan Sheikh, a taxi driver whose hut was also burnt, five persons were injured in police firing of which two were still missing at the time of our visit. There were some Maharastrians also staying in the same locality but their huts were spared and no one was arrested from amongst them.

In Flat No. F-6, Shivaji Nagar, Plot No. 6, one Amir Bano, aged 35, told us that at about 2.30 p.m. some people came and broke the door. They were carrying swords, *guptis* and iron rods and were accompanied by two policemen. She was pulled out of her house and attacked in the presence of the policemen. She received deep wounds on her back which were sewed with 45 stitches after she was admitted to the hospital by her brother. Similarly, one Mohd. Arif, 20, was shot by the police Room No. 930 in Lotus Colony Plot No. 14, and then was taken away. Thereafter he has remained untraced.

According to the police sources, in all 58 persons died mainly in the police firing, 10 in Lotus Colony and 48 in Chikalwadi, Indira Nagar, Umerkhadi and Bandra plot etc. in Govandi area. However, according to the Govandi Relief Committee sources, 92 persons died in police firing and 210 were injured in lathi charge. 21 persons were missing, 5 vehicles were burnt or damaged and 45 pan beedi shops were looted or destroyed and one masjid was also burnt. One can very well see what role the police played in that area where poorest of the poor live. There was no respect for life, nor for the dead either. The most pathetic case was of an 11 month old child who died for want of medicine during the curfew. When Saira Begum, the child's mother, approached the police for permission for burial as there was curfew, the

police told her to throw it in the garbage. The child had to be buried then in the nearby dumping ground in the garbage, the bloated body of the child appeared on the surface and had to be pressed down again in the garbage.

According to Maulana Mohd. Qasim, member of the Jami'at al-Ulama, Sr. Inspector Bhagwat Rao Patil was the main person behind shooting down innocent people. However, DCPs Pawar and Tyagi helped restore order and reprimanded Patil severely who then feigned madness and was admitted to hospital for treatment.

A peoples' Inquiry Commission comprising of Justice Hospet Suresh and Justice S.M. Daud who extensively examined witnesses also observed the police excesses in Govandi, "The evidence indicates that there was a clear nexus between the Deonar police station and the Shiv Sena. In some areas, the police had attacked people and burnt their houses along with the Shiv Sena. In other cases the police themselves shouted slogans such as 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Jai Shivaji' while they were attacking the victims. According to one of the reports tendered before us, Arun Sakharkar, Sub-Inspector at Deonar police station is the son of the Shivaji Nagar Shiv Sena Shakha Pramukh, Dinkar Sakharkar".

Behram Baug, Jogeshwari (W)

Jogeshwari West and East are communally highly sensitive. Both Hindus and Muslims live cheek by jowl in many areas of this vast slum on the eastern side of Western High way. This area was badly affected during December 6-11, disturbances in the wake of demolition of Babri Masjid. Behraum Baug is in Jogeshwari West and has mixed population of Hindus and Muslims. Muslims constitute about 35 per cent of the population.

On December 8, Muslims started brickbatting at about 11 p.m. to express their anger against demolition of Babri Masjid. But there seemed to be no specific target to this brickbatting. Three-four vehicles parked along the Link Road nearby were also hit but not damaged. The brickbatting continued for sometime. The police arrived in two jeeps after about two hours. The police entered one of the houses which was a house-cum-carpentry. There were 6 carpenters in this house. They were fired upon by the police killing four and injuring two.

Mr. Mohd. Ashfaq Khan of Lorik Yadav Chawl told us that on that day the police also burnt some vehicles at about 1.45 a.m. and after that they took photographs of these vehicles. Curfew was imposed in these areas on December 9, at 2 a.m. In all 21 persons were arrested of which 19 were Muslim and two Hindus. However, Jogeshwari was very badly affected in the second phase of rioting.

In the Income Tax Colony several Muslim houses were looted and destroyed. Hindus from the Prem Nagar and Amina Nagar Colonies spoke of being harrassed by Muslims. In fact, they spoke of threats having been given as early as the Dassera of 1992. The threats, though vague or abusive, carried the implication that their victims were to leave the area. Some Hindu doors were mysteriously knocked upon at odd hours of the night in Sarvodaya Nagar. The frightened residents deserted their homes. On the return of peace they found that their homes were looted. The tension lasted for almost entire month of December 1992 with stray incidents recurring, thus preventing a return to full normalcy. (see *The People's Verdict*, *ibid.*, p. 48-49)

Malad East-Pathanwadi and Islampura

Pathanwadi has a majority of Muslims—about 80 per cent. Nearby there is M.H.B. Colony in which mainly Hindus reside. This area was quite tense after demolition of the Mosque...Here too some Muslim youth started brickbatting to express their anger on December, 8. The police came and resorted to lathi charge. But the Muslim youth threw stones at the police. The police then opened fire. Three Muslims were injured but no one was killed.

Islampura is also a part of Malad East but Muslims here are not more than 6 to 7 per cent. There is a mosque from where Islampura actually beings. On December 10, about 100 Hindu youth started pelting stones on the Masjid at about 11.30 a.m. The Muslim youth from Islampura defended themselves. However, some Hindus also joined the Muslim youth for defending the area. The Hindu youth began attacking from Ambe temple. Now they also threw soda water bottles and petrol bombs towards Islampura. But the Hindu-Muslim youth group from Islampura side did not retaliate as it would have damaged the temple. What was heartening was that both Hindus and Muslims had come together and saved the Islampura mosque. Shankar

Bhattacharya and Zuber Malik gave a lead to their respective communities in forging this unity.

However, the Hindu rioters now shifted to Laxman Nagar and damaged one mosque and stabbed one Chandmiyan who was a *bangi* (i.e. one who gives *azan*, call for Muslim prayer) of that mosque. According to Abdul Rashid police played an excellent role in that area and prevented outburst of violence.

Squatters Colony was also badly affected in Malad East area. It is situated near Chincholi Railway crossing. This area also has a mixed population, Muslims constituting one third of the population. Tension started building up from Decembr, 7. On the 8th some minor clashes took place but nothing serious occurred. On December 9 and 10 there were rumours among both the communities for imminent attacks from the other. But it was on the night of December, 11 that the Muslim youth started brickbating at about 11 p.m. They also threw petrol bulbs. The Hindus retaliated. On both sides there were about 400 people. The Hindus set fire to Al-Falah school and a mosque. At about 11.45 p.m. Muslims attacked Gajanan Temple and badly damaged it. Some Muslims were carrying choppers and swords. They stabbed Shyam Sunder, son of the Pujari Laxminarayan who was away at that time. The Muslim mob also threw acid on the cow belonging to the Pujari family. They also killed Prahlad Sindhe, aged 19, inside his house.

Sub-inspector Nadaf, a Muslim, lathi charged a Hindu mob to disperse it. Some 800 Hindus marched to police station demanding his transfer as he lathi-charged the Hindu mob. The morcha was led by the Shiv Sena leaders. At 7 p.m. curfew was imposed and an hour after, a Muslim boy Saiyed, aged 19, was burnt alive near Swan Bharati Co-Operative Housing Society.

It was alleged that some builders had a hand in the disturbances as Govind Nagar area belongs to Govindram Seksaria who wants to develop the plot. The builder was trying to build a wall there so that he could develop the plot subsequently. It is alleged that in a joint meeting of the two communities someone suggested to build the wall and the builder immediately agreed. The cost of the wall is estimated to be around is 10 lakhs. One can very well imagine the value of the land involved.

Bandra East, Bharat Nagar and Nirmal Nagar

In Bharat Nagar there are 70 per cent Muslims and 30 per cent Hindus. This constituency is represented by the Shiv Sena MLA, Madhukar Sarpotdar who is known for his communal outbursts and anti-Muslim positions. Here too the Muslims began stoning and brickbating on December, 7 from 9.30 a.m. They also threw soda water bottles and other missiles on the police. The police began firing at about 10.30 a.m. without first resorting to lathi charge or tear gas. The police firing intermittently continued for three days. The stoning from Muslims also continued on all three days. In the firing, 12 Muslims were killed. About 48 persons were injured of which four were Hindus. However, there were no instances of people being pulled out of their houses and killed. There were no complaints of police excesses in this locality.

There were two general stores in the locality, Hanuman General Store and Chamunda General Store. Their owners were of the view that there was no Hindu-Muslim conflict in this area at all. It was between the Muslims and the police. But in the Government Colony, Bandra East 10 to 12 Muslim shops were looted by the Shiv Sainiks. Also, near the police station about 10 trucks were parked of which one belonging to a Muslim was burnt by the Sena mob.

Behrampara is a big slum area in Bandra East where 85 per cent population is Muslim. Adjacent to Behrampara is Khernagar Housing Board Colony where only 10 per cent Muslims reside. There is semi-slum area Kherwadi road area having about 30 per cent Muslims. On the nearby road there is a temple of Lord Ganesh. This temple was allegedly damaged by the Muslims. Some Muslims maintained that they had not damaged it, pointing out that they could have easily damaged the Ganesh temple which is right inside Behrampara but that temple was quite safe.

As soon as the news about the temple damage spread, the Shiv Sena mob began collecting. The police tried to stop them, but the mob did not heed the police and started throwing stones. As the mob could not be dispersed by mere persuasion, the police started firing but strangely not at the crowd but into the Behrampara colony. Several boys died in the firing. Here again the police acted in a brutal manner

by entering the houses, beating up residents and arresting innocent victims, but the rioters were not apprehended. On the next day the police again attacked the area and several persons were beaten up and also fired at discriminately. The womenfold once again gathered and appealed to the police not to fire at children and innocent persons. One of the bullets struck Neelam, wife of Imtiaz, who was only appealing to the police not to fire. She died on the spot. The police excesses were testified by many people from Behrampara. It was also testified that on the night of December, 10 the police entered the *basti* and started combing operation. Newspapers reported that the police had recovered knives, choppers, chemicals, crude guns and petrol bombs. Significantly though, no such combing was done in the LIG and MIG colonies from where much of the attack on the *basti* was initiated. It is also alleged that the police were accompanied by the local Shiv Sena MLA Madhukar Sarpotdar, and Ashok Shinde, a Shakha Pramukh of that area. According to Flavia Agnes, a social activist of that area, no attack was made on the police on December 8 and there was no justification for firing on that day. However, according to some other witnesses on the Muslim side a mob began to collect but the Amir of Tablighi Jamat, Mohd. Ali Baba Bhai and F.A. Baba were trying to exhort them not to be restive as it will harm the cause of the Muslims. But their plea was only partially effective. The mobs from both sides began pelting stones. The rioting which occurred on December, 7 at 10 a.m. became very serious. The Muslim mob became restive and began stabbing Hindus which continued for three days killing 8 persons. Three bodies were later recovered from a nearby drain and five were discovered from a nulla. Among those killed was a police constable Afzal Ismail Sheikh (E.C. No. 270). It was perhaps a case of mistaken identity. The constable belonged to Nashik rural district police. One of the stabbing victims was a woman called Shewantabai.

On December, 8 one police inspector Kasbekar accompanied by three constables started firing at about 11.30 a.m. apparently without any reason. One woman named Neelam Mazhar Khan was killed though one Sharful Huda an SEM and member of Congress Seva Dal alleged that the police intended to kill him. In police firing in Behrampara six Muslims were killed and 15 other Muslims were injured.

Dharavi

Dharavi is considered to be the biggest slum in Asia. One finds here people of different castes and communities. There are also large number of Tamilians, both Hindus as well as Muslims, Tamil Muslims are mostly in leather business. Units of AIDMK and DMK units are also to be found here. Generally, the Tamil Hindus and Muslims were thought to be well assimilated both linguistically and culturally. In Tamil Nadu there has been no history of communal conflict between the two communities and it was thought that linguistic and cultural assimilation helped create harmony between the two. Similarly Malayali Hindus and Muslims were also well assimilated and not much communal conflict existed between them too. But increasing communalisation has pushed this assimilation to background and communal differences are becoming more and more pronounced both among Malayali and Tamil Hindus and Muslims. In Dharavi too relations between Tamil Muslims and Hindus were quite strained in those days.

Dharavi is also a den of criminals and slum lords. One finds here gambling dens and centres of illicit liquor. The notorious gangster Varad Rajan also had a large following in this area. Thus one can understand how explosive the situation can become in Dharavi once it gets out of hand. And it did get out of hand after demolition of Babri masjid. All sorts of contradictions surfaced.

On December 6, some Hindus took out a victory procession at about 6 p.m. One of the slogans shouted by the processionists was "*talwar lenge aur mandir banayenge*" (We will take swords in hand and construct the temple)". The procession was 500 strong and the police made no attempt to stop it. However, when Muslims took out a procession in protest, it was stoned from the direction of Kumbharwada, a locality which is predominantly Hindu. Chaos ensued as a result of stoning. Then the police started firing at the processionists and not in the direction of Kumbharwada. Homes and shops of Muslims were looted and burnt.

It was alleged by the Muslims that at about 2 p.m. a mob of 100 led by the local corporator Shinde belonging to the Republican Party attacked Muslim houses in the Khadda area. About 56 houses were

looted and burnt. Also, the Muslims were driven out from there. On December 8, both sides began pelting stones on each other. What was of interest to note was that there was complete polarisation between the Hindus and Muslims. All Hindus, Tamils, Maharashtrians, Gujaratis and others were on one side and all Muslims, whatever their regional origin, were on the other.

The police arrived at the scene at 11.30 on December 8, and began firing in which three Muslims were killed and 4 injured in Chamda Bazar. The Muslim youth, some of whom were pelting stones, tried to surrender to the police; but the firing was not stopped. 27 Muslims were arrested thereafter. A police officer is reported to have told one Wasim Ahmed to go to Pakistan if Muslims did not like to bear the excesses. The Hindus also looted the godown of a Muslim merchant which had leather goods worth Rs. 45,000.

In Social Nagar, Dharavi, Muslims are in majority. The victory procession passed through this area also. The processionists were shouting along "*Kamar pe lungi muhn men pan, bhago landiya Pakistan*" (wearing lungi on waist and betel leave in the mouth, go away you circumcised ones to Pakistan). On December, 9 a Hindu mob came and set fire to 50 huts, 46 of which belonged to the Muslims. All Muslims had to run away from there to nearby relief camps set up by Muslims. The huts were set ablaze at 9 p.m. and fire brigade came at about 2 a.m. to put out the fire. And when a police party came at about 2 a.m. it began to fire, in which 6 Muslims died and 18 were injured including a Hindu. Obviously here the police played anti-Muslim role. The police fired only on those whose huts were set ablaze by miscreants. In Social Nagar and its vicinity, two Hindu temples were damaged. Also the Muslims set ablaze about 50 houses of Hindus, while in different incidents 100 Muslim houses were reduced to cinder. The Muslims alleged that when they did anything the police fired on them but it did not fire when the Hindus indulged in mischief. That is why most of the casualties in the police firing in Dharavi was among the Muslims.

Similarly the Mukund Nagar Area (also known as Daman (Company area) where 90 per cent residents are Muslims was very badly affected. There was intermittent trouble and the police resorted to firing repeatedly in which five persons, all Muslims, were killed and

45 were badly injured and 150, of which three were Hindus, sustained minor injuries. Thirty-eight houses were looted and 38 more were burnt by the Hindu mobs yet there was no police action, the Muslims complained. But when about 80 Muslim women came to complain to the police, it fired on Muslim women in which one woman was badly injured. Not only this some Shiv Sainiks attacked these Muslim women in the presence of police, the Muslims alleged and yet the police did not fire on the Sainiks. But the Muslims of Mukund Nagar also said that since DCP Pande took charge they are satisfied with the police role.

Besides these incidents in Dharavi, a number of other incidents took place, mostly of arson and looting. It created a climate of terror throughout Dharavi. Slum lords and other criminals played no mean role in all this. Many of them put up their own locks on the houses from which people had fled so that those locks could be opened only on payment of money or increase in rent etc. In all, about 42 persons were killed in the first phase in December of which 40 died in police firing and 2 in mob violence. Of those killed in police firing, 30 were Muslims and 10 Hindus. The two who died in mob violence included one Christian and one Dalit. Also, at least 300 persons were injured in police firing. But according to the police sources in all 32 persons died of which 22 bodies were found (17 Muslims and 5 Hindus) and 10 were yet to be recovered. Also, according to the authorities, about 200 persons were injured. In all 489 houses were burnt and 91 shops were looted and burnt. Also, 35 garment factories and 60 business houses were looted.

Mahim and Dargah Makhdum Mohiuddin

There is large Muslim population in Mahim, particularly near Dargah Makhdum Mohiuddin. In some parts there are middle and upper middle class Muslims and in other parts Muslims live in Kutcha and semi-pucca huts and houses. Also, in these areas there are Hindus and Christians but fewer in numbers. Also, these areas include localities where Hindus are in majority and Muslims in minority. There is a big slum behind the BEST Depot in parts of which Muslims are in majority and in other parts there are Kohlis (fisher people) who are supporters of the Shiv Sena. There are few Christians too, in the area.

Mahim, it must be noted, is communally a very sensitive area. Communal troubles have occurred in this area a number of times. So this time again it erupted on December 7. Early on that day the Kohlis began stoning from their colony at Makhdum Nagar situated near the BEST depot. The youth from Makhdum Nagar threw stones at the Kohlis in retaliation. The stoning from above the terraces of Housing Board Buildings by the Kohlis was quite heavy. However, not much damage took place. Meanwhile in other areas of Mahim like Vanjawadi, Mahim Bazar, Dargah Street, disturbances started as the parents came out on the street to enquire about the safety of their school-going children. An ambulance was arranged for bringing the children. The police stopped the ambulance and rumours spread that untoward things have happened and people began stoning the police. The police then fired and in the stone-throwing and firing, 5 persons were killed. The toll would have been not so high if the police had not arrested Amin Khandwani, which intensified the stir with the police resorting to more firing.

On December, 10 suddenly rumour spread that Bal Thackarey of Shiv Sena had been arrested which was not true. It seems the rumour was deliberately spread to create trouble. As the rumour spread some miscreants from amongst the Kohlis began pelting petrol bulbs on Makhdum Nagar which completely reduced the place to ashes. More than 680 huts were gutted and about 1000 families displaced. They took refuge in various relief camps opened near the Dargah. Over 5000 shelter-less people could not retrieve anything.

Jogeshwari Area

Jogeshwari is another highly communally sensitive area and is often rocked by violence. It is another huge slum in the Western suburb of Bombay. Here Hindus and Muslims live cheek by jowl. The trouble started, like in other areas, on December, 7 near Pascal Colony and Shankarwadi the Muslim and Hindu dominated areas respectively. When mob collected from both sides, the women persuaded them to disperse and restrained their respective youths. The Police also played a persuasive role but the mobs gathered again and a Muslim garage was torched which heightened the tension. In the highly tense atmosphere persuasion did not work and violence erupted.

It is alleged that a Hindu pandit was burnt alive by the Muslims. Similarly a Muslim mob which was going to cemetery was attacked. The police also resorted to firing to disperse violent mobs and 7 persons were killed. Subsequently 2 persons, both Muslims, were stabbed to death. In all 9 persons died in Jogeshwari area in the first phase of the communal disturbances.

Kurla Halau Pul and Other Areas

Kurla is part of eastern suburbs of Bombay. Certain areas in Kurla are highly sensitive and have mixed Hindu and Muslim population. Here the Shiv Sena has its hold over Marathi speaking people. On December, 7 Muslims began stoning a Hindu temple in the Jugar Chawl area at about 2.30 p.m. The Hindus then replied next day by attacking a Mosque in Mahajanwadi and also one Muslim school (MES School) was attacked along with a madrasa. One Suleman Sheikh's sari factory was set ablaze. Then a ready-made cloth factory, a motor-bike and a tanker all were burnt. The local corporator Feroz Mantri's office was ransacked and burnt. The Muslims stabbed to death a 27 year old man called Manumanta Rama Arote. Also, one lady Mrs. Ishrat aged 35 died of a police bullet in the Halau Pul area. Three other persons were injured in the police firing. Besides this in Kurla numerous stabbing cases took place but it was difficult to get the details as people were afraid of speaking.

However, *The People's Verdict*, an inquiry committee report by Justice Hospet Suresh and Justice S.M. Daud gives a slightly different version of events in Kurla. According to this report the first bout of rioting took place as early as the morning of December, 6. A mob of Shiv Sainiks and Dalits trespassed into and set on fire one Yunus Seth's Chawl. The police stood by watching as burning was in progress.

The report then goes on to say that a big mob assembled at Tanaji Chowk on December, 7 shouting provocative slogans against Muslims. A bakery was looted and its workers beaten up. For over two hours the mob threw stones and looted Muslim houses. That night, around 9.30 p.m., two boys, Mohammad Salim and Irfan, were assaulted with swords and choppers as a result of which both died. Sonabai Chawl at Takiawadi was attacked by a Hindu mob armed with swords, *guptis* and choppers. On December 8, the Shiv Sena gave directions to

shopkeepers to down shutters. The frightened shopkeepers complied and taking advantage of the absence of the shopkeepers, mobs led by Shiv Sainiks broke into and looted the shops. Far from the police putting stop to this, on occasions they too joined in the looting. Names of the culprits were given to the police who made a show of arresting them but released them afterwards.

A mosque was raided by a Hindu mob on December 25. The police reaction was to go into Muslim houses, drag out able-bodied Muslims and arrest them on trumped up charges. The same day two Muslims were attacked and injured. On December 30, the Amirbakhsh Chawl was raided by the police. The inmates were beaten up with whatever instruments the police could lay their hands on. The frightened victims put up no resistance. A constable is said to have remarked that the non-resistance had deprived the police of target practice. Police inspector Wadge and Sabe were present when a constable jumped on a man's throat. Some seventy Muslims were rounded up and beaten up by constables. (*See People's Verdict, Ibid.*, p. 58-59)

Ghatkopar, Asalfa Village

Ghatkopar, Asalfa village and nearby areas were very badly affected. The entire area was burnt down presenting a ghastly scene. Most of the Muslims had fled from the area and those left behind were too terrified to speak. It was the worst affected area after Govandi with the difference that in Govandi it was mostly loss of life whereas in Asalfa it was mostly loss of property. It was simply terrifying to be there in that desolate place. One timber mart belonging to a Muslim was set afire and the trapped persons were roasted alive. A builder Damji Valji wanted to develop the site but the owner was not vacating. The timber mart is alleged to have been torched by the builder. In Khairani Road area there were a large number of scrap shops belonging to Muslims. Five hundred such shops were set ablaze. Some families lived behind these shops but fortunately none died. These shops were burnt down on December 9, allegedly by supporters of the Shiv Sena.

There were 60 shops belonging both to Hindus and Muslims in Subhash Nagar, Bharat Market, Ghatkoper which were also completely burnt down.

There were several other small incidents throughout Bombay. Total deaths admitted by the police sources were 202 of which 137 died in police firing. However, this is gross underestimation. The death mark seems to have crossed 400 and most of them died in police firing. Barring few places, it was police riot between Muslims and police rather than a Hindu-Muslim riot. The Bombay police obviously displayed anti-Muslim role. The Bombay police on the whole displayed pronouncedly anti-Muslim bias though there were some impartial officers also. But it was very different in the second phase.

The Second Phase

The riots in the second phase began on January 6, 1993. This phase far surpassed the earlier December 1992 phase in severity, in loss of life and property. The anti-Muslim role of police was even more pronounced now. The words of an investigator can hardly capture the terror that the second phase struck among the Muslims. Usually, the upper class Muslims do not suffer much in communal riots. However, the January riots belied this theory. All Muslims, rich and poor, suffered and were equally terrified. Careful preparations seem to have been made by the Shiv Sena and the Sangh *parivar* for this phase of rioting. There is, however, controversy as to what incidents sparked off the riots. There are different theories. Some say, it began because of murder of two mathadi workers in Dongri area inside a godown. It was alleged that the Muslims murdered them out of communal vengeance. It is also maintained that the mathadi workers were killed in union rivalry. The police also corroborated it but only after the damage was done.

It is also maintained that riots began in Bhandi Bazar, Null Bazar and Mohammed Ali Road areas on account of rumour that the Muslim Dargah in Mahim was demolished by the Hindus. It is true that few cases of stabbing were reported from these areas. And perhaps, this became the flash point for the riots. However, it would be utterly simplistic to say that the riots were started by the Muslims and that what happened thereafter was a 'spontaneous' response by the Sena and others.

In fact, the Shiv Sena was systematically preparing for the second phase on a large scale. It only waited for the flash point and the

incidents in Bhendi Bazar, Moharrnmad Ali Road areas provided one. The note prepared by the Government of Maharashtra for the MPs lists only those incidents between January 6 to 8 in which the members of the minority community attacked the Hindus. It is, to say the least, a highly biased view. Thus by implication, the Maharashtra Government has accepted the Shiv Sena view that the riots were started by the Muslims and that what happened thereafter was a 'spontaneous' response by the Sena and others.

However, close scrutiny of events would contradict the Government's claim. Apart from other things, the Maha Artis (Roadside Worshipping of the Hindu deities) had done lot of damage to communal tensions and these artis invariably ended with anti-Muslim propaganda that exacerbated communal tension and prepared the ground for eruption of communal violence. In many cases the Maha Artis were followed by attacks on Muslim properties and life. And the Government note maintains that there were 33 such Maha Artis between December 26 and January 5 i.e. before the events to which the Government ascribes the riots. Thus it will be seen that communal tension began to rise with the first Maha Arti which took place on December 26 itself, according to the Government's own admission.

The Police Commissioner also had admitted on January 8, that 113 such artis had already been organised. What was worse, these Maha Artis were allowed throughout the period of riots and 498 of them had taken place by February 5 of which 172 had attendance of over 1500, according to the Government. It also should be noted that rioting in fact had begun on January 2 in Dharavi, leading to the exodus of Muslim families as reported in *The Times of India* on January 3. This certainly cannot be ignored which the Government note does.

In fact, systematic preparations were made much before the second phase of riots began. Even surveys were carried out to identify houses, rickshaws, taxis and cars owned by Muslims. For example, in Pratiksha Nagar, near Sion-Koliwada, such a survey was carried out a week before the riots and after the riots began, those very houses—identified as Muslim houses—were demolished. Bal Thackeray of course blamed it on 'outside elements, anti-national elements'. He even identified the anti-national elements as 'Pakistanis', one crore of whom according to him, have entered the country and spread all over India. Besides these,

he also mentioned infiltration of 'Bangla Desh Muslims' into the country. And on being asked that the Shiv Sena has reportedly accepted having been involved in the riots, he said, "We have been forced to get involved because our job is to retaliate. If there would have been no Shiv Sena, the Hindus would have been slaughtered".

Earlier Pramod Navalkar, Shiv Sena's leader of opposition in the Upper House, had admitted in an interview to Rajdeep Sardesai of the *Times of India* that "Our boys were involved in the rioting" and added, "but for every five Shiv Sainiks on the street, there were also 20 anti-social elements involved". Mr. Manohar Joshi, the then senior Sena MLC and now the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, told Rajdeep that "I will not call them Shiv Sainiks. They were all anguished Hindus, who were spontaneously reacting to what happened in Jogeshwari" (Four Hindus were burnt alive in the Radhabai Chawl on January 8 in the Jogeshwari slum). Some grassroot Sena workers told Sardesai that there are approximately 220 "active" Shakhas (branches) in the city. On an average, each Shakha has around 200 committed members. This itself gives the Sena an army of 40,000 Sainiks against the police strength of just over 30,000.

According to Rajdeep, "The plan decided upon in the Shakhas was simple—spread the word that people's lives were threatened, that temples would be destroyed and that sophisticated arms were being brought into the city. The more active Sainiks began going through voters' lists and also finding out the names of buildings and shop owners in some areas. These lists were available with the Sena Shakha Pramukhs immediately after the December 6 riots."

All this clearly shows the involvement of the Sena in the January riots in a big way. The Sena had deliberately spread the rumour that the sophisticated weapons had come for use in the riots but what is surprising is that the then police Commissioner, Bapat, made a press statement that there was a sustained firing for an hour from a Mosque in Mohammed Ali Road area from AK-47 rifles. He even said that the "shells were found" though the gun itself was not traced. This was an unfortunate statement and the Commissioner had to admit later that no trace of AK-47 was found and that such a weapon might not have been used. But to give such a statement when the riots were raging was highly irresponsible.

What is more shocking is that the Governor of Maharashtra, C. Subramaniam, also gave a statement to the press before he resigned that “there was foreign hand” in organising these riots and he even promised to give details at a later date which he could not do at all. Even the Governor who is considered quite secular, had either lost his poise or was misinformed. It is common sense that in highly communalised atmosphere, at least people in such responsible positions should be very cautious before making any statements to the press.

Another theory floated about these riots in the second phase was that builders had organised these riots. Apart from the fact that the builders’ organisation denied their involvement through a press statement, no such evidence was found during our investigations except in Malad, where in the first phase a local builder was involved in all probability. However, to say that builders’ lobby was systematically involved in these riots is to fly in the face of fact. At least, we did not find any evidence to this effect. Anti-social elements were undoubtedly involved either on their own or used by the concerned vested interests.

It is also maintained that there was in-fighting within the two factions of the Congress, (i.e. one led by Sudhakar Rao Naik, the then Chief Minister and the other by Sharad Pawar, the then Central Defence Minister. According to this theory, the Sharad Pawar group was fueling the riots to destabilise Naik Ministry. It was also being said that since Naik had got Pappu Kalani and Bhai Thakur—both Congress MLAs belonging to the Sharad Pawar group—arrested and their unauthorised properties demolished the latter group organised riots in the second phase. However, it is very difficult to substantiate this theory.

Among the reasons given by Sudhakar Naik for the riots, it was stated that various lobbies and mafias with connection in high places, provoked the violence and specially because he had dared to take them on. Here, he may be hinting at those two controversial MLAs and their clout with Sharad Pawar. But he also mentioned the demolition activities undertaken by the Bombay Municipal Corporation in the minority-dominated areas and other such incidents. There may be some truth in the allegations that the riots were organised to destabilise Naik Ministry. There are such precedents in states like Andhra Pradesh and

Karnataka. The riots raged in Hyderabad and in Karnataka in 1990 until the respective Chief Ministers were removed.

However, one thing is quite certain that the Naik Ministry totally failed in controlling the situation. The situation became so grim that many from the city, including J.R.D. Tata and Nani Palkhiwala demanded partial emergency be declared and the city be handed over to the army. The city had never witnessed communal violence of such magnitude. Even the May 1984 riots paled into insignificance compared to what happened during the January 1993 riots. The whole city went up in flames and the people especially the Muslims, spent their days in sheer terror during the riots. Generally poor people are the soft targets who die, whose properties are looted or destroyed. But during these riots even the richest Muslims were not safe. Their flats were located in high-rise apartment buildings and they also received threats and many had to pay protection money. Even their cars parked in the courtyard of these buildings were found out and in many cases were set ablaze. Hundreds of bakeries belonging to U.P. Muslims were burnt to ashes resulting in serious shortage of bread for many days. For few days, bread was sold for about Rs. 10 a loaf against the normal price of Rs. 4. Even factories and industries were not spared. It appeared as if it was a systematic attempt to destroy Muslims economically. The shops belonging to the Bohras and Khojas, the two most peaceful Muslim communities, who hardly ever take part in any political controversy, were also not spared. Hundreds of Bohras and Khojas lost everything and many of them had to leave the city.

Also it was for the first time that people fled in large numbers from the city. Bombay never sends people back; it only attracts. It was only during these riots that the exodus began and it is said that more than 2,00,000 people both Hindus and Muslims left the city. Special trains had to be run for this purpose. One does not know how many returned to the city. No such survey was conducted later. Non-Maharashtrian Hindus also left for fear of being attacked by the Shiv Sena. And some left because they were attacked by the Muslims.

Despite all this, Sudhakar Rao Naik maintained that he had not failed in his duty. He said, "I have taken the maximum possible measures to bring the situation to normal. I have not failed in my responsibility and left no stone unturned to tackle this abnormal

situation. There was no lapse on the part of the State Administration. On the contrary, it worked round the clock". He also added that he did not resign owning moral responsibility for the violence, because, "as the head of the state, I must tackle the situation firmly, come what may and must not run away from the situation". How he tackled the situation is now a history. In fact, he failed and failed miserably. He was totally ineffective, perhaps helpless. To the impartial observers, it appeared as if the Sena Chief Bal Thackeray was in command. He was not able to get the Bombay police to put down the communal violence with determination. Some newspapers even linked him with Nero who was fiddling when Rome was burning.

The police, with a very few exceptions, was totally communalised. There was overwhelming evidence that the police was siding with the Sena. Policemen even used filthy language for the Muslims in their wireless messages which are always taped. In a recorded message a policeman on duty requested to make fire brigade available as the miscreants had set fire to some houses. An officer in police control room inquired about the community whose houses were set ablaze and on being told that they were Muslims, he said that let them die and anyone coming out alive should be shot. The committee for protection of Democratic Rights filed a suit, requesting the court to take possession of the cassettes on which the conversation had been recorded.

People from various areas, like Behrampada, Bandra, complained to us that "the Shiv Sena goondas set fire to our houses by throwing petrol bombs and when we came out to douse the fire, the police fired upon us." Some even alleged that the policemen were leading some miscreants. Though difficult to verify it was alleged that some policemen gave their uniform to Shiv Sainiks. This may be true or may not be so, but there is no doubt that the Bombay Police was totally biased against the Muslims. It did nothing to checkmate the riots. The then police commissioner never admitted failure on the part of his men. On the other hand, he kept on defending them. However, he paid for his negligence when he was removed from his post. But even this action came too late, as the miscreants had done what they wanted completely unchallenged. The army was totally dependent on the police and hence,

could not be as effective as it ought to have been. It can be exemplified by an incident at Behrampada.

The local Shiv Sena MLA, Sarpotdar was alleged to have played a vital role in attacks in Behrampada. He was found in possession of a revolver and a *gupti* and the army arrested him. But the police released him after Maharashtra women demonstrated outside the police station and Bal Thackeray said that the police had done the 'right thing'. This clearly shows that the police was taking very biased view of the activities of the Shiv Sainiks. Bal Thackeray was writing highly provocative editorials in *Samna*, the Sena mouthpiece and yet no action was taken by the Naik administration.

It is unfortunate that even the Bombay High Court took a lenient a view of writings of Bal Thackeray in *Samna* while disposing of a petition by J.B.D'Souza, the ex-Chief Secretary of Government of Maharashtra and Dilip Thakor, a journalist, to direct the Government of Maharashtra to prosecute Bal Thackeray for his provocative writings under sections 153-A and 153-B and 107 of the Indian Penal Code. According to Praful Bidwai, a noted journalist, "On September 26, 1994 the Bombay High Court dealt a severe blow to the causes of secularism and the rule of law when it dismissed a writ-petition filed by two citizens—including the former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra—asking to direct the state to prosecute Mr. Bal Thackeray for his role during communal outbreak of January, 1993. The petition filed by D'Souza and Thakore after months of inaction by the police, represented an exemplary effort by public spirited citizens to get a communally compromised government to perform its statutory duty and proceed against Mr. Thackeray ... The petition cited editorial after editorial from the Shiv Sena organ, *Samna* to show that they venomously maligned Muslims as 'anti-nationals' who have created a 'mini-Pakistan', and 'traitors' who should be 'shot' and made to meet the fate of 'the domes of Babri masjid'". He further says, "If there was one crystal clear instance of instigating violence this was it. Indeed Mr. Thackeray has repeatedly owned up his role. To the Maharashtra Government's eternal shame, it failed to arrest him. Now the High Court has condoned the government's inaction". (See *The Times of India*, Bombay, October 6, 1994). It is unfortunate that the petition was dismissed by the Bombay High Court saying that editorials should be

read in full and then only it will be seen that the editor of *Samna* is referring to 'anti-national' Muslims and not all the Muslims. The judgement also said that let by-gones be by-gones and forget about what happened two years ago. However, a careful reading of the editorials clearly indicate that Mr. Bal Thackeray is talking about all the Muslims and not merely anti-national Muslims.

The Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was equally ineffective. He did not stir out of Delhi when Bombay was burning. When some film artists who met him in Delhi and requested him to go to Bombay, he said he can do so only after Makar Sankranti on January 14. What could be expected of a Prime Minister, who gave more importance to his religious beliefs than to the bloodshed in Bombay? When he finally visited Bombay, riots were already over. He came not to stop the riots but only to pay a formal visit and merely passed through riot affected areas without as much as getting down from his car. The reason given by him for not coming out of his car was that the security officers did not allow him. Just contrast this with the conduct of Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1947 bloodbath. When Zakir Hussain, who was then the Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia and was surround alongwith his students by the miscreants, phoned him and requested him to send the police help, Nehru himself rushed in a car to Jamia, got down and chased away the mob.

The Prime Minister was content to send Sharad Pawar, the then Defence Minister. Sharad Pawar appeared on the TV and made an appeal for peace but it was hardly effective. Though the intensity of rioting decreased in city, it spread in other areas in suburbs. One cannot say whether Sharad Pawar tried really hard to stop riots or not. Many people made allegations that riots were engineered to throw out Mr. Naik and it is also true that when riots were raging in Bombay, controversy was raging in the Congress. Even Sunil Dutt, the noted film artist and an MP from Bombay, tendered his resignation from Parliament out of sheer disgust. In his statement to the press, after resigning, he said that many riot victims approached him but he found himself helpless. He heard their cries but could no do anything and so he resigned.

The internecine fight within the Congress in Maharashtra had assumed such serious proportions that *The Times of India* in the

editorial of January 15 titled "Tell more, Mr. Naik" said, "in the eyes of growing numbers of people, a suspicion is fast turning into an appalling certainty that the internecine warfare within the Congress is responsible to a large extent for the continuing trouble in Bombay. Some in fact go so far as to allege that the rivalry between the Defence Minister Mr. Sharad Pawar and the Chief Minister Mr. Sudhakar Rao Naik may be at the very root of those troubles. Mr. Naik himself appeared to hint as much when he all but threatened to expose elements that have engineered the disturbances. The Chief Minister argued that in substance various lobbies and mafias with connections in high places (read Mr. Sharad Pawar), had provoked the violence in Bombay because he had dared to take them on. If what Mr. Naik says is even partly true, then it is of the utmost importance that he should be asked to divulge forthwith the details of this diabolical act of vengeance against him".

The BJP leader, L.K. Advani too visited Bombay on January 16. His first halt was at Jogeshwari, where four members of a Hindu family were brunt alive by the Muslim miscreants. He too attributed the communal violence to "foreign hand", without of course substantiating it or mentioning which country had a hand in inciting the riots. He visited mostly the Hindu areas though he did talk to some Muslim victims also. He also maintained that the riots in Bombay were intensified only after the incident at Radhabai Chawl in Jogeshwari. However, he desisted from saying that the reaction was out of all proportions as more than 600 persons were killed in retaliation.

What was worrying most was the cruelty with which many people were killed in the riots. Most of the bodies were beyond recognition as they were highly mutilated. Many persons were chopped off into pieces; in certain instances even heads were severed from the body. In some cases, persons were stabbed and then while still alive set ablaze after sprinkling petrol to make death more painful and agonising. In KEM Hospital, a most shocking incident occurred. The miscreants stabbed in the hospital an injured person brought there in a critical condition. They thought he might survive if medical assistance was rendered. In fact, it was a case of mistaken identity as the person concerned was a Hindu and the miscreants thought he was a Muslim on account of his beard. Apart from the mystery as to how miscreants

could come right up to the operation theatre with arms, it shows the extent of dehumanisation of the killers and insensitivity of the Indians to such brutal killings. It was not only the question of killing the other, it is also the question of dehumanisation and desensitisation not only of the killers but also of the community to which they belong. Our survey also points out that there was, in general, acceptability of what was happening. There was no protest against it in any form. The middle class Maharashtrians have sympathy with the Shiv Sena. It is only very conscious and committed people who protested or took out peace marches. The trade unions could not intervene at all and this included Left Trade Unions too, as the workers were not with them. Thus the situation of the left trade unions was pathetic. They themselves would have liked to effectively intervene but their workers were not with them. Sharad Rao, President of the Municipal Mazdoor Union, had to explain to his workers about his condemnation of the Maha Artis and their adverse impact on the communal situation.

One must understand that in such a communally surcharged situation, the emotional appeal of religion is far more powerful than that of workers' unity etc. It is also partly the result of lack of efforts on the part of trade union leaders to politically educate their workers. Trade union activities have been confined, by and large, to economic demands for higher wages, dearness allowance, bonus etc. In some places Shiv Sena successfully tried to prevent the Muslim workers from rejoining their duties after the riots. It happened even in Mazgaon Docks which is owned by the Central Government.

In the 1984 riots too the Shiv Sainiks had tried to stop Muslim workers from resuming the work, but not on such a scale. Moreover, this time, it was not only restricted to the workers, they even tried to prevent Muslim children from going to schools. They threatened principals of schools not to let the Muslim children come to their schools. Even Lijjat Papads—purely a women's organisation—also tried to prevent their Muslim women from coming to work. It is this wide ranging communalisation which poses a great danger to our national integrity. The Hindu nationalism is having more appeal than the composite secular nationalism. So far, our dominant cultural ethos had been more pluralistic and respectful of other cultural traditions. Because of sustained propaganda for Ramjanambhoomi for more than 5

years now, Hindu intolerance has grown and pluralist tradition devalued. All Muslims are seen as children of Babar (*Babar ki santan*) and Islam as not only an alien religion but also as aggressive, intolerant and fanatical too. Composite nationalism is being replaced by the Hindu Rashtra. Due to powerful propaganda of the BJP-VHP-RSS, the consensus on composite culture appears to be breaking down. The Bhakti-Sufi syncretism is giving way to aggressive Hindutva. It is being assumed as if Hindu monolith is confronting the Islamic monolith though neither is really monolithic. The politicians can benefit immensely if such artificial monoliths are created and confrontationist attitude promoted. After all religions have great emotional impact which cannot be undermined.

The BJP propaganda had terrible impact on the minds of Hindus, particularly Maharashtrians. The Shiv Sena is much more cruder in its propaganda and is able to influence the lower class Hindus. And it is this class of people who mostly participate in arson, loot and murder. No wonder then that the riots in Bombay were very widespread indeed. Only the southern tip of Bombay was an exception.

Many shocking cases of police behaviour have come to light before the Shrikrishna Inquiry Commission. In a Wadala mosque the police fired on Muslims offering the noon prayer. An eye witness, while deposing before the Srikrishna Commission on June 27, said that on January 10, 1993 Inspector Kapse of Rafi Ahmad Qidwai Marg Police Station had shot dead 6 young persons in the Hari Masjid, Wadala during noon prayers. Seven other persons were injured by bullets. Harun Solkar, the advocate for the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind said that even today one can see the bullet marks on the mosque walls. He pleaded with the Commission to see the marks of the bullets on site. Justice Srikrishna agreed to inspect the mosque. (See *Inqilab* of June 29, 1994 an Urdu daily, Bombay)

Another woman Roshanbi Hasan, aged 65, said while deposing before the Commission that on January 10, 'my son Mohd. Adam had gone to offer noon prayer in Hari Masjid. When the police fired inside the mosque he ran out of it but Inspector Kapse caught him and asked him to put the dead bodies from the mosque into the police van and then arrested him. He was never traced thereafter until today.' (*Inqilab*, July 8, 1994, Bombay). Similarly, some witnesses deposed

before the Commission on July 27, 1994 that when the miscreants were looting and setting homes and shops on fire on January 8, in Abudhya Nagar, opposite Kalachowkie, the police was simply standing and watching and did not come to their rescue. (*Inquilab*, July 28, 1994). There were also cases in which the police remained indifferent when the offenders were from the minority community. Thus deposing before the Inquiry Commission, Ajit Prasnis, the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone I, told the Commission that no offence had been registered nor had any investigation been carried out to identify those who were exhorting members of one community to take up arms against those of another from loud speakers put up on masjids in the city. The witness agreed that issuing such calls constituted an offence under the law, particularly against the backdrops of the riots. (See *The Times of India*, June 11, 1994).

The case of debarring the Muslim workers from entering the Mazgaon Docks during the riots also came before the Commission. The Mazgaon Dock Union is controlled by the Shiv Sena. After the 1992-93 riots union representatives held a meeting with the Mazgaon Dock authorities demanding that since the docks are a high security area 'anti-nationals' should not be allowed to work there. The term 'anti-national' referred to the Muslims who had participated in the riots. Only five Muslim employees of Mazgaon Docks had been arrested for rioting but the union demanded that since Muslims as a community are unreliable all Muslim workers should be prevented from Mazgaon Dock area. This was revealed to the Srikrishna Commission by a senior inspector, of the Byculla Police Station. He was not asked whether Hindu rioters were also to be considered anti-national by the Sena. (See *Times of India*, May 16, 1994)

In Jogeshwari during the second phase the most horrible incident was of burning alive of four Hindus, one of whom was paralytic, in Bane Compound, Radha Bai Chawl. The Shiv Sena maintained that it was this incident which triggered off the January phase of rioting. It is suspected that the chawl was set afire by Muslims but the identity of the arsonists was a not conclusively proved. There were a number of theories. Many maintained that it was done at the instance of some builders, others said it was a case of personal revenge. The police was also unable to establish real motive of the criminals. Much later it

arrested a Muslim woman and her accomplices. However, retaliation by the Sena was beyond all proportions in Jogeshwari. The *details* of various incidents have been given in the *People's Verdict* by Justices Hospet Suresh and S.M. Daud.

Tulsiwadi in Central Bombay was also very badly affected during the second phase. It is unfortunate that a *dalit* Kathiawadi woman corporator led the attacks against the Muslims in this area. She was herself killed by a police bullet while leading the attack against the Muslims. The Muslims of Tulsiwadi were compelled to flee the area and suffered immense losses, in that nearly 250 to 275 Muslim huts along with their belongings were reduced to ashes. The Kathiawadi *dalits* also did not escape unscathed as 17 to 18 huts of these *dalits* were also burnt.

Behrampara in Bandra east also erupted during second phase again. The worst incident took place on January 15, when the police fired inside Behrampada. Justices Suresh and Daud narrate it as under:

"Another incident relates to the attacks on the *namazis*. Different newspapers have given different versions. The incident took place on 15.1.93. The police fired into Behrampada from all sides. There was firing from even at a distance of 500 feet from the Masjid which was the scene of the incident. At the time of firing only women and children were in the *basti* as the men had gone for *namaaz*. The women came out and appealed to the police not to fire but the police did not comply. Shaban, a 10 year old girl, received bullet injuries on her shoulder and thigh and Bablu, a 10 year old boy received an injury on his leg and is still in hospital with steel rod in his leg. A bullet pierced the abdomen of a 55 year old lady, Zeenatunnisa. Abida, who was breast feeding her 10 month old baby, received a bullet injury on her thigh. According to the police three persons died and 14 were injured. Among the dead was a 60 year old man who was shot while climbing the staircase to his house."

Pratiksha Nagar which was trouble-free in the first phase witnessed horrendous incidents in January, 1993. The Shiv Sainiks had well planned the incidents. They had surveyed all the Muslim houses and marked them for burning and looting. Hardly any Muslim house was left untouched. On January 8, there were rumours that weapons have been collected in the Shiv Sena office. Same day wife of Pramod Thakur (Shiv Sena leader) had gone round and collected protection money from Muslims at the rate of Rs. 500 per family. However, soon

thereafter, a number of Muslim-owned shops, taxis and bakeries were attacked. It created panic in the area. Quite a number of Muslims came out in the open and were appealing to the police to make arrangements for their protection or to take them out of the area. The police told the Muslims that the curfew time had begun and all the Muslims should go back into their homes. Thereafter the attacks began and lasted from January 9 to January 12. In addition to burning down taxis, rickshaws, shops etc. belonging to the Muslims, their houses were attacked and belongings looted and occupants beaten up. About 40 Shiv Sainiks attacked the masjid in the area with swords, daggers, choppers, sticks etc. The police stood by and watched the entire incident. Sub-Inspector Paul and the constables under him paid no heed to the protests and complaints from the victims. The Muslims had to spend three days in the open maidan under constant threats of attack but no police help was rendered. They went hungry and even water was denied to them. They were asked to drink their own urine. The police even charged from them Rs. 20 per family to allow them to leave but even then no arrangements were made. When some Muslims tried to escape in a tempo, its tyres were slashed with swords by the Shiv Sainiks. About 3000 Muslims had to be evacuated with the help of army after great agonising wait. Even then all possible obstructions were created and it was with strenuous efforts that these lives could be saved.

In these riots some journalist were also targetted. Those Hindi, Marathi and Urdu papers which wrote against the BJP-Shiv Sena faced the wrath of the Sainiks. Two journalists belonging to *Mahanagar* were manhandled in the paper's office and some Urdu journalists like Harun Rashid escaped in time from their houses. But their residences were razed to the ground and everything looted. It must, however, be said to the credit of these journalists that they stood their ground and never gave in to such terror tactics.

The death toll in the rioting in the second phase was quite high. The *Times of India* source places it at 557 on January 22, 1993. They added 99 to the official sources which put the death toll at 458 only as the hospital sources were yet to report 99 more deaths to the Coroner's Court from where the police compiles its figures. According to the Police Commissioner Shri Bapat, out of 458 killed, 288 were Muslims and 170 Hindus. Out of all those killed, 133 died in police firing

(75 Muslims and 50 Hindus, eight unknown), 259 in mob violence (186 Muslims, 73 Hindus) and 66 in arson (39 Hindus and 27 Muslims). It is difficult to say which community the later 99 belonged to but most probably majority of them were Muslims.

However, the figure of 557 is also certainly an underestimate. The death toll in all probability will exceed 600 as many bodies were discovered from various places like nullahs etc. later but were not accounted for. Also, field investigations show that many families reported their men missing and they were hoping against hope that they might be in jail or somewhere from where they will return one day. It is very difficult to find out whether anyone returned. If one goes by depositions before the Justice Srikrishna Inquiry Commission, most of the missing ones did not return and yet the police sources cannot technically count them among the dead.

Sources at the coroner's court said that the number of stabbing cases this time is far higher than what the figures show. Several victims were stabbed seriously and then burnt or thrown into gutters. Their postmortem examinations indicated that they died of asphyxiation or drowning, even though the stab injuries alone may have proved fatal. Interestingly the number of victims of police firing, 133, is almost the same as those killed in the December riots. According to the police, 132 people died when they opened fire in December, 1992. This does not bear out heavy criticism of its indiscriminate firing during the December riots. The fact that more Muslims were killed in police firing during the second phase too shows the partial behaviour of the police (as most of the mob attacks in January were led by the Shiv Sainiks).

The economic loss too was staggering this time. It was not only due to looting and burning of properties, which was only one aspect, but was also more due to stoppage of production and movements of goods. Nearly 10,000 houses were demolished or burnt and more than 1,00,000 people had to live in refugee camps for various periods of time. Many were forced to live in relief camps for more than two months after the events. The Government had sanctioned only Rs. 5,000 for those whose shops and homes were looted. It was just a pittance. In many cases this pittance also was not paid by the authorities in time. Many perhaps never received it. The values of homes lost range from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 10 lakhs. Amina Taj had a two storied

home and a rickshaw and both were burnt. One Jogeshwari family lost Rs. 12,000 worth of sarees alone. Many people were unable to return to get the “panchnamas” made, or just to survey their lost homes in time. They found their neighbours also uncooperative and uncommunicative. In some cases, walls were erected and boards put up saying, “Minorities not wanted.” Ms. Taj saw the leader of the attackers sipping tea with the police at the local police station.

Most of them wanted to sell their rooms and “live with members of their own community, if possible.” Even if it means, as Shahbuddin of Pratiksha Nagar said, “living in third-class surroundings compared with my A class area.” Shahbuddin was not alone in echoing his sentiments. He is representative of many others. There was distress sale of properties on both sides i.e. Muslims selling properties in the Hindu area and vice versa. If one wanted to go in the areas of one’s own community, one had to pay 15 to 20 per cent extra and people were willing to do so for their future safety and security. Thus in a way communal divide was complete.

Many left Bombay, finding no other alternative. The garment exports received serious set-back as most of the tailors are Muslims. Export worth crores of rupees had been affected as the Muslim tailors had fled to their native places and one was not sure whether they will return at all and if so when. Similarly many other industries specially the small scale ones and with export orders suffered very badly.

Also due to frequent curfew, workers could not report to duty and in many cases the industries and business establishments themselves were located in the curfew bound areas and there was tremendous loss of production. Also the goods did not move from one place to another as truckers were not prepared to take risk of being attacked. Though it is difficult to estimate total economic loss, a rough estimate puts it above Rs. 10,000 crores. This is not an insignificant figure. It was also feared that many foreign investors might feel shy and may not like to invest in India.

Tata Services drew up a tentative estimate of the total loss due to the January riots. According to this estimate, the loss of gross value of output of goods and services came to Rs. 1,250 crores; the loss of trading business Rs. 1,000 crores, the loss of exports Rs. 2,000 crores, the loss of tax revenue for the Government Rs. 150 crores and loss of

properties worth about Rs. 4,000 crores. Thus according to this estimate the total losses come nearly to Rs. 9,000 crores. Also, add to this the compensation etc. the Government had to pay to the riot victims and destruction of their properties. It would be a staggering sum.

Those who think that they are "teaching Muslims a lesson" are doing no less disservice to the Indian economy as a whole and hence their claim of being 'true patriots' is thoroughly baseless. In fact, their behaviour is anti-patriotic. No patriot will act against the interest of the county. Also, such prolonged lawlessness has brought disgrace to the fair name of the country. The interview which Bal Thackeray gave to the *Time* magazine "Kick out the Muslims" is not only rash but portrays India and its government in a very poor light. We have been justly proud of India being the largest viable democracy in the entire third world. What was allowed to happen was really disgraceful for democracy and our country. Both the Central and the State Governments were responsible for such sad state of affairs. They have given an impression to the world that the minorities are not safe in India and that its Constitutional provisions are no longer honoured.

The Central and State Governments cannot be said to have done enough to inspire confidence among the minorities. At best they are making run-of-the-mill statements. One can hardly be sure that such violence along communal lines will not be repeated in future. There are no plans to overhaul the police force and thoroughly reorient it in secular direction. Also, many key persons who bear direct responsibility for planning and organising the January riots have not been touched. And it is unlikely that they they will ever be prosecuted, let alone punished. Also, no steps are being contemplated to make communal propaganda a punishable offence. Whatever law exists, is hardly ever applied. The coming elections can once again prove disastrous if the BJP fights elections on the Ramjanambhoomi issue. It has been pointed out that a law is urgently needed to make communal or sectarian propaganda a serious offence and the offending candidate should automatically stand disqualified from contesting elections. The Bill brought by the Central Government on these lines was very defective and had to be abandoned in view of strong opposition to it from other political parties. Mr. T.N. Sheshan, Chief Election Commissioner, of course applied the provisions of The People's

Representation Act strictly during the assembly election in the four states toward the end of the year 1994 and beginning of 1995 and did not allow communal sectarian propoganda during the election campaign's. But one is not sure whether this trend will continue after Sheshan.

Also, in order to prevent occurrence of violence on such a scale it is for the secular forces to start the mass contact programme and intensify it wherever started as in West Bengal and Bihar. The BJP has been isolated among the political parties but not among the masses. On the other hand, it is hoping to get a majority in the parliament in the next elections. Thus it is highly necessary for the secular and democratic forces to start a massive mass contact programme.

The Muslims will also have to do serious rethinking about their behaviour. Secularism cannot be saved from the BJP-VHP onslaughts if Muslims too, do not reorient their behaviour. Their leaders have been simply reckless and have never acted with wisdom. Their aggressive movements on the Shah Bano Judgement and Babri Masjid controversy has only harmed the cause of minorities. Minority communalism is not the best way to flight majority communalism. Majority communalism can be challenged only by secular forces.

Chapter 8

Surat Shames the Nation

Surat has historically been an important port city of Gujarat. Both prior to and in Mughal period it was ruled by various Nawabs. Merchants and artisans thrived in the city along with shipping and commission agents. The city was well known for its wealth and glory. Control over Surat, then, meant control over not only cess and tax but also trade.

Surat was rocked by riots in the end of 18th century. There were riots between the bania community of traders and the Muslims because of traders' support to the British. However, when the British gained control over the city they gradually shifted trade activities to Bombay. While the Hindu merchants of the city entered into new relations with the British and adapted to the changing conditions, the Muslims, who identified with the nawabs, could not.

However, it is to be noted that before the British rule in India, relations between Hindus and Muslims were cordial in Surat because of their interdependence in economic activities. But the British administration brought about many changes which strengthened caste/communal bonds among the people. The British encouraged and welcomed delegations and representations on the basis of caste and community. Not surprisingly therefore, the opposition to the British policies by different elites also asserted itself in terms of their adverse impact on caste/community interests that the elites claimed to represent. This laid the foundation for inter-caste and inter-community rivalries.

Surat also witnessed riots in 1927 over a fight between two wrestlers. After the riots, Hindu leaders gave a call to boycott Muslims. At that time, Sardar Patel hired the famous Razak band, which was then boycotted by the Hindus. Sardar Patel led a *padyatra* in the city for communal harmony. Thus Surat has had a history of communal riots of sorts. However, before the post-Babri Masjid demolition riots, the new generation was not much aware of the history of the few riots which took place in Surat. There were, by an large, good relations between the two communities.

As in the past, Surat became in the post-independence period one of the fast industrialising cities in the country. Its rapid expansion has very few parallels in India. Several factors account for its growth. Oil exploration at Hazira and finding of natural gas a few kilometers away led to the establishment of big projects near Surat. The city is well connected by rail and road with other major cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Bombay and several other industrial and commercial centres. The state government also encouraged establishment of small sector units. The transport network and cheap labour further contributed to these developments. The industrial crisis in some industries, specially the textiles industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad also led to a shift to Surat. Large volume of industrial production is exported from Surat. Zari, power looms and diamonds are major industries in Surat. These have attracted a large number of workers from other parts of the country as well as from within the state.

The population of the city, therefore, increased phenomenally—growing from 8 lakhs to 1.8 million between 1981 and 1991. Surat's textile industry consumes 40 per cent of the entire production of synthetic yarn in the country and accounts for 40 per cent of the entire production of synthetic textile in India. It has more than 2.5 lakh powerlooms (about half of the country's powerlooms).

However, the economic growth of the city has been quite haphazard. There are any number of illegal and unregistered industrial units. Nobody is in a position to give a reliable estimate of such units. Labour laws are openly flouted and workers are exploited to the maximum. They are paid extremely low wages and there is no security of work. And this ruthless exploitation of workers forces them to live in abysmal conditions and makes them violence-prone. This factor also is

to be kept in mind to understand the communal violence unleashed in Surat in December, 1992.

Surat thrives on corruption and crime. Both legal and illegal industrial units avoid payment of excise, octroi and sales tax. It is so common that it hardly raises any eye brows. There are organized gangs with sufficient muscle power and powerful connections to help in evasion of octroi for a price. These gangs earn lakhs of rupees daily from octroi evasion alone. Not only this, theft of electricity is also very common. The illegal and unregulated units hardly ever get legal connections. Even the registered units bribe their way by going for direct connections by-passing the meter and the Surat Electricity Company suffers heavy revenue losses.

Another booming area of corruption and quick profiteering is land deals. Land prices in Surat are comparable to those of Bombay. Diamond and other industries and illegal activities have brought unparalleled affluence among a small section of people. While the working class lives in dingy, dirty and overcrowded slums, the number of high rise buildings in the affluent parts of city like Athwa Lines and Ghod Dod Road is fast increasing. There are expensive parlours, restaurants and shopping plazas for the rich. The builders' lobby has become extremely rich and powerful. This lobby has not only pushed up prices of land exorbitantly but has also encouraged land sharks with muscle power to grab land.

No wonder then that crime rate in Surat is extremely high. For some time the city had begun to attract attention of notorious underworld dons from Bombay and Ahmedabad. It is said that the Ahmedabad don Latif has established his liquor distribution network in Surat. Prohibition is thus a big farce and liquor flows freely in the city. Thefts and dacoity incidents occur frequently. The "Chaddi and Baniyandhari" gang of migrant labours from Orissa and U.P. are involved. This gang attacks almost one flat every day. One columnist of a Gujarati Daily *Sandesh*, Prof. Hakumat Desai wrote that almost 1/8th of residents of Surat are rapists. Workers, especially the Kathiawadis, staying away from their families for long, are sexually frustrated and frequently visit prostitutes. AIDS is making rapid inroads amongst them. Surat has also become notorious for extortions, blackmailing, thefts, rapes, eve-teasing, liquor trade and protection money rackets.

This has obviously led to criminalization of politics also. Some of these criminals have either joined parties like the Congress and BJP or through their money and muscle power influence their decisions. The old leadership in these parties, not dependent on these criminals, is being marginalised. They are being replaced by a new breed of politicians with direct and strong links with the criminals. The Congress MLA from Surat has a reputation of being a land shark with strong connections in the underworld. Similarly the BJP is trying hard to draw gangs wielding muscle power into its fold. Its influence over the state machinery and particularly the police attracts criminals to itself. Not surprisingly guns and arms are freely available in Surat. One BJP leader who was a candidate for the Surat Municipal Corporation elections before the December 1992 riots was accused by the police of possessing an unlicensed revolver and several cartridges. The Hindu anti-social elements were also found moving closer to the BJP. A few months before the riots the police also stumbled upon a racket issuing fake gun licenses in which several politicians, criminals and builders were involved.

All these factors have to be kept in mind in order to understand what happened in Surat. Until recently Surat was considered bastion of communal peace and harmony. There was no communal riot in Surat after 1927. In fact there were a number of theories as to why Surat was peaceful whereas Ahmedabad and Baroda, two other important industrial towns of South Gujarat erupted so often that communal violence there had become endemic.

In Surat there are quite a few Bohras, Khojas and Memons, all three are business communities among Gujarat Muslims. In fact these three communities are steeped in Gujarati culture and are very well-integrated with other non-Muslim communities. Members of these communities live in large numbers in Surat and have close interaction with other Hindu traders and are very well rooted and integrated in the city culture. These factors, it was thought, were responsible for exemplary communal harmony and peace in the city. Also, in view of rapid expansion in commerce and industry large number of workers had to be brought in from outside, especially from Andhra, Kathiawar (another part of Gujarat) and Orissa since the local population could not

meet the requirement. The population of city increased rapidly on account of such migrations.

Low level of unemployment was also considered as one of the causes of communal peace. When people are busy in their respective vocations, neither have they the time nor the inclination to indulge in violence. They are more busy earning their livelihood. The third factor which was thought to be helpful in maintaining cordial relations between various communities was the history of the city. The city had no history of communal violence (except those two referred to above) and hence no bitter memories of the past. In fact most of its people were proud of this heritage.

But the events of December 7 very well showed communal peace and harmony was being eroded slowly and gradually by the very factors which brought about rapid growth and development. It is a worldwide experience that economic growth and development brings in its wake certain adverse consequences also. Economic development often gives rise to violence (class, caste or communal) as it brings about changes in social set up (old privileged groups resist this change on account of loss of their privileges, often violently). It is also well known that urbanisation results in rising crimes graph. Also in backward countries like India development often results in increasing demand for illicit liquor (specially in those areas which are under prohibition), smuggled goods and other related activities.

Rapid urbanisation has other consequences as well. It brings about migration of workers on a large scale at times seriously upsetting old population balance. What is worse, the migrated workers are not rooted in the local culture and feel alienated. They come there to make money and consider the city as nothing more than a vast transit camp. They have no stakes in the city and neither any emotional attachment to it. Such people, with their feeling of alienation, (and also if economic frustration is added to it) generally become violence prone and can easily explode in a sensitive and tense situation.

Of late Surat has had all these ingredients thus pushing it to the precipice of violence. It was only a matter of time and conjunction of certain factors. The sustained campaign of hatred for last several years indulged in by the BJP-VHP-RSS, supplied the necessary fuel to the raging fire under the surface. Likewise the Babri Masjid Action

Committee and other reckless Muslim leaders too played with the emotions of Muslims. There was simmering discontent within the Muslim community also.

Here we would like to throw some light on the changing population pattern in Surat on account of rapid rate of migration of labour. The field study of Surat riots show that it is this alienated and frustrated mass of migrated labour which played greater role in the riots. This was further aggravated, as pointed out above, by the role played by the BJP and Muslim propaganda. It was direct excitement to them to participate in loot, arson and murder.

The main components of the migrant population in Surat are Maharashtrians, North Indians, Telugu workers, Oriya Malis and Kathiawadis. Most of them live under miserable conditions in overcrowded slums or dilapidated structures. There is no job security for them and their earnings are a pittance. Also, many of them, like Kathiawadis, live without families. Thus their natural sexual needs are also not met. This factor also, to some extent, played part as far as the rape cases are concerned.

Maharashtrians

They came to Surat earlier than workers from other regions. They come from Nandurbar, Dhulia, Jalgaon, Nashik, Aurangabad and other areas. Out of these, Khandeshis from Khandesh, on the border of Surat district, form the biggest group. Most of these migrants are small landholders and lack of adequate employment, droughts etc. are the major reasons for their migration. Among the migrants from Maharashtra are low caste Hindus like Shimpis, Chamars, Patils, Sonis, Muslims and Dalits. Leaving aside Dalits who are organized by the Republican Party and *Dalit Sena*, others from Maharashtra generally are supportive of the Congress or the Janata Dal. They work in powerlooms, tailoring and dyeing industries. The Muslims are petty traders, rickshaw pullers and some are involved in bootlegging. Around the time of riots there were six Maharashtrian Corporators elected on the Congress/Janta Dal tickets.

The Shiv Sena is now trying to establish its base among the Maharashtrian workers. It has formed Jai Bhavani Yuvak Mandal and Chatrapati Shivaji Mandal to extend its influence among

Maharashtrians in Surat. The Sena has utilised the recent riots to gather support among the Maharashtrians in particular and Hindus in general. It regularly holds meetings specially in the Pandesara locality of Surat to propagate its communal politics and actively participates in celebrating festivals like **Ganesh Utsav, Shiv Jayanti** etc.

North Indians

In Surat there are about 1.5 lakh migrant workers from U.P. They have come from Faizabad (lower castes, Harijans and Adivasis), Varanasi (Yadavas), Gorakhpur (Brahmins), Banda (Brahmins, Harijans, Adivasis, they have the reputation of being militant and are not very literate), Allahabad (Patel-Forward Caste) and some are from Bihar. About half the migrants from U.P., are without families. They are employed in powerloom and dyeing industry. The largest concentration of these workers is in Pandesara, one of the trouble prone areas. Pandesara is on the outskirts and is not well connected with the city. Their colony near Pandesara has come up over years but has no water or electricity connections nor any *pucca* road. The North Indians strongly resent their living conditions. However, they have to live here in such appalling conditions as back home they do not get any employment at all. About 40 per cent migrant workers from North India are landless labourers, another 40 per cent have very small land holding and only about 5 per cent have substantial landholding. It is interesting to note that these North Indian workers have no panchayat or caste organization in Surat. They do not adhere to any caste norms, freely mix and dine at each other's home. This is partly because away from home they need each other irrespective of their caste. The BJP tried to increase its influence among them by supporting their demand for Ganga-Tapti Railway line. These U.P. workers also tend to become militant in their struggles with their employers.

As Rama is very popular religious figure among North Indians, the BJP was able to attract a section of these workers. A few workers also went for *kar seva* on December 6, 1992 to Ayodhya. But generally they feel they have come to Surat to earn their livelihood and that they should not waste their time on the question of Ayodhya. However, the North Indian workers of Pandesara participated in the riots largely because they were agitated by the rumours deliberately spread that the

Muslims were coming in large numbers to attack their temple and that the Hindus should gather in strength to defend it. The mob gathered in thousands on account of feeling of insecurity, curfew and general tension. It was then incited to attack selected targets. The police also encouraged the mob to loot. It is significant to note that workers without families were specially in the forefront of rioting while those with families were more worried about their families' safety. Many of these workers after the riot repented that they believed the rumours and attacked Muslims. They also regretted loss of wages for two to three months due to riots. There were many Muslim workers also working in Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) in Pandesara and when they returned to their work after the riots there were no communal feelings against them.

Telugu Workers

There are about two lakh workers in Surat from Andhra Pradesh. They have been coming to Surat in search of employment since the last two decades. Most of these workers are from Telangana region of A.P., a backward region of that state spread over eight districts. Telangana has also been traditional stronghold of Communists. There are also people from coastal region and other areas of Andhra Pradesh. About 50 per cent of these migrant workers from A.P. belong to weaver caste called Padmashali. Upto 1983 only Padmashalis came to Surat but now even Brahmins, Vaisya, Chadali (dhobi), Mangali (barbers) and others also are migrating to this city.

Half the number of Telugu workers live with their families in Surat and others have left them behind. Almost entire Telugu community is employed in powerloom industry, most as workers while some have set up their own powerlooms. For these people language has proved to be a big barrier as very few of them can interact with non-Telugu people in Hindi or Gujarati. Thus they live in clusters with their own people. They constitute a mini-Andhra in Surat but they feel culturally completely alienated. They are hardly aware of the Surat outside their workplace and area of residence.

The caste associations, caste panchayat and their traditional god Markandeshwar have strong presence in Surat as well. Any dispute between two Telugu persons is hardly reported to the police. They are

usually resolved in their caste panchayat. They are more rigid about their traditions in Surat than in Andhra Pradesh. The Padmashalis in Surat became votaries of Ramjanambhoomi issue. They wondered why the Hindus could not build a Ram Temple in their own country. After the riots they got close to the BJP because they believe it to be the only party that can save them. In the *basti* they live in, the Muslims dominate in the day-today issues and hence the Telugus developed a sense of resentment against them and the BJP is trying to seek greater support among the Telugus by exploiting this situation.

Oriya Malis

These migrants from Orissa are more closely-knit, display more solidarity among themselves and are more militant than others. They mainly come from Ganjam, a backward district in hilly part of Orissa. Some also hail from Puri and other districts. There are more than three lakh Oriya workers in Surat. They too are mostly employed in powerloom industry. In Surat they are called Oriya mali as earlier they used to be employed as gardeners. Oriya workers are shy before strangers and staunchly defend their traditions and customs when questioned about them. A few instances illustrate this. Oriya workers do not join any trade union much less play an active part in it. However, when one Oriya worker in one unit was thrown out of job, all Oriya workers forcibly closed down the unit and began patrolling the area with lathis in their hands so that no one else takes their place. The owner called the police but they remained undeterred. The militancy of Oriya workers forced the owner to take the fired worker back. Nobody picks up any fight with Oriya workers as big group soon collects and retaliates. They also generally do not lodge complaints with the police and settle their disputes through *panchas*. They are also very scared of the police and even run away to their native place if there is any warrant of arrest against any Oriya worker. These Oriyas have no political support of any kind as they exclusively live for work and also there is no middle class section among them.

Very few Oriya workers bring their families to Surat and even fewer send their children to schools. There are hardly any Oriya schools in the city. So there are no Oriya teachers also. The display of militancy is the only way to protect themselves. The BJP of late has

been trying to win their support. Usually the Oriya workers have voted for the Congress. The Oriyas have been the least communal and hardly have anti-Muslim prejudices.

Kathiwadis

Kathiwadis migrated to Surat from Saurashtra region in Gujarat specially from Junagadh, Amreli, Bhavnagar and other places sometimes in the early 70s. Saurashtra is a backward region of Gujarat. Its inhabitants are mainly dependent on agriculture which has not developed much for lack of water resources. Also land, mostly deployed for growing cash crop groundnut, is concentrated in few hands.

Most migrants from Saurashtra belong to the Patel caste. In Saurashtra caste system and orthodox religious practices are rigidly followed. Backward castes and dalits are routinely oppressed by the upper castes. For instance, Vankars (a Scheduled Caste of Gujarat) are mercilessly beaten up and terrorised on the slightest sign of assertion and affluence like wearing better clothes, not bowing in the presence of the upper caste people etc.

As the Kathiwadis are very rigidly religious and worship saints, the BJP has been able to penetrate in Saurashtra as some saints preach BJP's viewpoint. Since the Jan Sangh days it has had foothold in Saurashtra. The BJP tried to win over the hearts of the Saurastrians by strongly campaigning for the Ram Mandi in Ayodhya and also by spreading prejudices and lies against the Muslims. This high pitched campaigning had great impact on the Kathiawadi mind. Thus the Kathiwadis of Surat also came under the influence of BJP.

In the 1989 assembly elections, 3 out of 4 assembly seats in Surat were won by the BJP. From the Varachha Road, a constituency dominated by the Kathiawadis, Manubhai Pithawadiwala won. He is known to have links with those involved in illegal activities, land grabbers as well as diamond factory owners. The Kathiawadis are traditional and hospitable but react militantly when traditional values and caste practices are under attack. Events and rumours after the demolition of Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 provided a spark to the communally charged atmosphere in the city created by the vicious anti-Muslim propaganda of the Sangh Parivar. Literally thousands of

Kathiawadis took to the streets during the riots in Surat and there was no one to restrain them, not even the police. For two full days, looting, rapes, killings and other brutalities were perpetrated by them on the Muslims in the name of religion. The Saurashtrian identity also works in other ways. During any agitation, the diamond factory owners close down their factories and mobilize their workers for the agitation, be it communal riots or anti-reservation agitation.

Kathiawadi diamond workers live in extreme poverty. About 60 per cent of them cannot afford to bring their families to Surat. They live in crowded rooms and share sleeping space. At times they even stay in the factory itself. These workers are mostly illiterate and entirely depend on the spoken word only. Thus Sadhus, employers and politicians inject communal propaganda into their minds. Though the Kathiawadis have their own middle class, it does not represent aspirations and interests of Kathiawadi workers but exploit them for either Kathiawadi issues or narrow communal politics which suit the interests of the elites.

The Kathiawadis have a strong sense of solidarity and community life which preserves their separate regional identity. This has, as in the case of other migrant communities, developed strong intra-regional bonds. It is this bond of which upper caste Kathiawadis, owners of diamond units, land grabbers and others take advantage of in the interest of their own communal politics. The Kathiawadis workers can be mobilized in thousands almost effortlessly by the vested interests in the name of their identity vis-a-vis the aliens in Surat city, be they Muslims or the police or anti-reservation issue. Their sense of insecurity and exploitation at the places of their work make them more sensitive to the question of their identity.

II

With its rapid expansion criminalisation touched new heights in Surat. It became virtually a den of criminals. Many hardened criminals took refuge in the city. Others who were interested only in making quick buck flocked to it. This city became notorious for minimum government. Tax laws were openly flouted. A city where all laws are openly and unabashedly flouted can not remain an abode of peace for

long. Also the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Chimanbhai Patel admitted highly dubious characters in the Janata Dal in order to establish his foothold in South Gujarat. It is also unfortunate that the city Congress leadership in Surat was appropriated by Muslims with unsavoury reputation. BJP was seen, in these circumstances, as a party which was different from the Congress, Janata Dal, etc. The Municipal elections in Surat were also due on December 27, 1993 and the BJP was carrying on high pitched propaganda projecting itself as the party of Ram Rajya as against the totally corrupt and dishonest Congress. It also propagated that the Congress raj was a goonda raj and thereby it meant that it was associated with Latif gang and other local Muslims involved in criminal activities. The Congress hardly did anything to counter the communal propaganda of the BJP and concentrated on other issues. Thus the BJP became more acceptable for the people and also its Hindu bias made it more popular in the communally surcharged atmosphere in the country. The riots in Surat city must be seen in socio-economic as well as political background.

A city which grew in population from 4.71 lakhs in 1971 to 15.71 lakhs in 1991—a breath taking growth by any account—could not have avoided violence, be it in communal or any other form, for long. It was only a matter of time, after all.

The major industries in the city are art silk, powerloom, textile and diamond cutting. Some large scale industries have also sprung up which are mainly capital intensive. Most of the workers are employed on piece rate basis and try to put in maximum number of hours to earn more. Diamond cutting industry is a very flourishing industry and it employs largely Kathiawari i.e. Saurashtrian workers. However, in art silk and powerloom industries one finds workers from Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, U.P., Bihar and Tamil Nadu. They are very large in number and live by and large, in hutment colonies which have sprung up in a number of places.

Development brings about change in socio-economic status of various caste and community groups. Over the years, the traditional upper caste Varnias and Brahmins have declined in influence and middle castes like Kunbis, Khatri, Ghanchi and Gola Ranas have emerged as dominant groups. The emergent groups are usually more dynamic but less value-oriented; they are more hard working but do not

enjoy high degree of inner peace and harmony. They are less religious but more communal. It appears to be inevitable in the process of modernization. In the tradition bound societies people tend to be more religious than communal. While traditional societies have had sectarian or religious conflict, modern societies have communal conflict. Also, the emergent groups, like middle caste (both among Hindus as well as Muslims) tend to be more communal. It was the emergent middle class among Muslims in pre-partition period which brought about division of the country by adopting irreconcilably communal attitude. It is the emergent middle classes and castes among Hindus who are becoming increasingly communal to assert their aggressive domination. The BJP has, as if, given them a proper ideology and articulation. This class feels today that the Hindus were taken for granted and that their privileges are being threatened due to emergence of militancy among the backward castes and *Dalits*, on one hand, and, militant assertion of their rights by Muslims and Sikhs, on the other.

A few words must be said about the difference in attitude of upper caste Hindus towards Muslims and that towards dalits and the backwards. They consider Muslims as invaders and enslavers of Hindus for a thousand year; who oppressed the Hindus and demolished their temples. Not only that they could never become part of Indian mainstream, Muslims maintained their separate identity and separatist attitude and ultimately divided India. So they have nothing but contempt and hostility for them. This hostility acquires much greater intensity when the perception of 'appeasement of Muslims' by the Congress is imparted to them by the BJP, although for political purposes. The intense hostility towards Muslims among the upper caste Hindus must be seen in this background.

As for *Dalits* and backwards, they were exploited and dominated by the upper castes themselves. They simply want them to remain in their place and not aspire for equal social and political status. However they can agree to throw some crumbs to them in the form of reservation, nothing more. They would not be as intensely hostile towards them as towards Muslims. Similarly the Sikhs are considered as part of Hindu society and ethos. There is close cultural interaction with them. They are also seen as protectors of Hindus from Mughals in the past. They also stood with the Hindus at the time of partition and

refused to play in the hands of Jinnah. Their militant assertion today is seen only as a temporary aberration and not a permanent alienation. Thus despite what is happening in Punjab the Hindus do not develop that kind of hostility towards Sikhs as they have developed towards Muslims. This, to some extent explains, why the upper caste Hindus have developed such hatred towards Muslims and do not feel guilty even after atrocities which were committed against them in Surat. "They deserve it", they maintain. "This is what they did with us Hindus in the medieval period", some Hindus said in Surat. (This should not be taken to mean that all Hindus are of this view. We are referring to communal Hindus and those influenced by them).

III

After this somewhat long introduction we want to refer now to actual events in Surat from December 6 onwards. It must be reiterated here that Surat has no history of recurring communal violence. The last riot which took place was in 1927. Surat remained free of communal violence even in 1969 when Gujarat was rocked with unprecedented communal violence. There were some skirmishes only in 1990 and 1992. But riots had never taken place on such a large scale and with such intensity. It is important to note some important features of the December 1992 riots in Surat. The first thing is that these riots were very well planned. However, it is doubtful that even the planners could have anticipated their success in mobilizing massive mobs for attacking Muslims (more than 90 per cent victims were Muslims). Second, these riots were concentrated at the outskirts outside the walled city. Third, and it is important to note, the mob of attackers on Muslims almost exclusively consisted of migrant labourers—Kathiawadis, Oriya Malis, Maharashtrians and North Indian workers, who by and large live in the outskirts of the city. The riots in the first phase took place in Varachha Road, Udhna, Rander, Limbayat, Dindoli and Neol—where the train incident took place. In all these incidents motivated rumours deliberately spread played absolute havoc. The forces of Hindutva had well developed network to spread the rumours systematically. Generally it would be rumoured that the Muslims were coming in strength to attack and fear would grip the people and they would come

out and attack Muslims. The mob attacking the Muslims would be invariably led by someone belonging to the Sangh parivar or their sympathisers. The Maharashtrians, the Telugus, the Oriyas, the North Indians and the kathiawadis, all alien to the city and living under tension and pressure of poverty and moreover having no stakes in the city, could be more easily exploited for this purpose. It would be better to give examples how the forces of Hindutva exploited fear, insecurity and sense of alienness of these outsiders to the city. In Maharana Pratap Nagar, for example, it was rumoured that two Oriya Malis had been brutally killed by the Muslims in Pandesara. This inflamed the entire Oriya community. They gathered in a mob and attacked about 15 houses of Muslims in Swami Vivekanand Nagar on December 10, at about 9 p.m. Similarly, on December 10, when Muslim passengers in a train were attacked, rumours played a major role. A large crowd of Maharashtrians from other areas came to Dindoli-Neol village. They were shouting slogans like “Jai Bhavani”, “Jai Shivaji” and were armed with *guptis* and swords. They had been instigated by the Shiv Sena activists who wanted to establish themselves politically in the city and contribute their share in riots to demonstrate their strength. They thus spread the rumour that they had ‘definite’ information that the Muslims with arms and weapons were coming to attack. They were taken near the railway tracks and there they were told that when they learnt about the preparation for ‘self-defence’ by Hindus they (i.e. the Muslims) took to their heels and were running away. Some Muslims were fleeing the city by train for fear of riots. They were caught and done to death and their women raped and burnt alive.

Also a common rumour that the temple in your area is the next target of Muslims was systematically spread by the BJP workers and this rumour brought hundreds of Hindus to the streets to ‘defend’ their temple and when they collected they were made to attack the Muslims.

As soon as the news of demolition of Babri Masjid came, like other towns, Surat also became tense. There was anger and resentment among the Muslims. It was sought to be capitalised by one Mahmood Pardewala who heads Bharatiya Minority Suraksha Sangh (BMSS) and is a man of dubious underworld connections. He gave a call for Surat Bandh. BMSS is a small organisation with little following among Muslim and Dalits. However, some men belonging to this organisation

tried to stop traffic and force bandh on unwilling people. They even stoned shops and damaged them. Near the Railway Station there was brickbattling from both the communities.

Four shops belonging to the majority community were set ablaze near Chowk Bazar. Shantinath Dyeing Mill was also damaged in arson by minority community miscreants. This invited well organised retaliation from the majority community at about 11.30 a.m. Pandesara Housing Colony was attacked after announcement being made to this effect from a nearby Kali temple. The announcement allegedly said 'destroy Muslims'. Before this attack the Hindus wrote 'Jai Sri Ram' on their houses to save them from being attacked. A mob of nearly 2,000 people came equipped with lathis, choppers etc. They first looted 50 houses belonging to the Muslims and then set them afire. They also killed some 15 Muslims and threw their bodies nearby as our investigations showed. Some Hindus like Mr. Tiwari and others tried to save lives of Muslims by giving them shelter in their houses and then showing them the way to escape. Many Muslim lives were thus saved. Some Muslims even tried to prevent the 2000 strong mob from entering the area but did not succeed.

The manner in which the large scale looting, burning and killings took place shows that they were pre-planned. The crowds which indulged in killing and looting carried weapons like lathis, swords, knives, iron rods, *guptis*, acid bulbs, bottles and stones. Several incidents of private firing were also reported. Though petrol pumps were closed petrol was freely available. It was used for setting shops and houses on fire. Some shops belonging to the Hindus were also burnt but their number was far less than that of the Muslim houses and shops. What is also to be noted is that destruction of minority lives and properties took place not only where they were in minority but also in those areas where they were either in substantial numbers or even in majority. Huge crowds from outside came and outnumbered them. In many cases they were assisted by the local Hindu neighbours too. In many localities initially Hindu neighbours succumbed under pressure or in some cases even turned hostile to the Muslims.

In several places like Vijayanagar, Pandesara, Hidayatnagar etc, people complained that the likely BJP candidates for the Municipal Corporation election collected information about Muslim families with

a promise to renew their ration cards. However, this information was used for indentifying the Muslim families and their houses for burning and looting. The same method was used by miscreants in January riots in Bombay too. According to the report prepared by Kalpana Shah, Smita Shah and Neha Shah, "... for each identification of Muslim houses or shops an informant was tipped Rs. 100 and in one locality where the riot was at its worst and the most barbaric and inhuman the Hindus wrote on their houses 'Shri Ram—this house belongs to a Hindu' or they had the tiles inscribed of Hindu Gods and Goddesses, reminding the story of *Alibaba Aur Chalis Chor*". According to the same report, "Even during the rampage utmost care was taken that not an inch of property belonging to a Hindu was damaged—to the extent that even a wooden partition dividing a Hindu home from a Muslim one would be left unscarred whereas the adjoining Muslim home would be totally charred".

According to Mohd. Yousuf and Sadiqbhai Rangoonwala, a mob of 500 Hindus entered Masjid Mohallah also known as Quatar Gaon at about 7 p.m. on December 7. First they set fire to three houses. Then they turned towards a dargah and a mosque, looted them and set them ablaze. Then another 45 houses were targetted, looted and burnt. Some houses and a mosque were razed to the ground. The attacking mob had even brought road roller from Municipality alongwith the driver to raze houses to the ground. The procurement of road roller from the Municipality is a matter of inquiry. In this locality too, persons like Amrutbhai, Dyabhai, Naginbhai and several others tried their best to save lives of Muslims by hiding them in their houses.

A mob of around 2000 persons attacked the huts of Muslims in Rajiv Nagar—Phatakwadi around 2.30 p.m. First they looted the huts and then set 116 of them on fire. There is a building called Mehul Chambers nearby. The miscreants threw burning cotton from this building onto the huts. The Makbara Masjid nearby also got damaged. They also tried to burn the mosque but did not succeed. The attacking mob consisted of Oriyas and Kathiawadis.

A Muslim mob of 200 to 300 attacked Shantinath Silk Mill at about 12 p.m. on December 7. First they asked its owner Harshadrai Brijlal Dakotia to close the mill which was complied with. After this the two communities clashed near the corner adjacent to the mill.

During this rioting the minority mob set the mill on fire. They also stabbed the watchmen at the gate before setting the mill on fire. The Hindus then took revenge by burning 8 houses of the minority community from Sagrampura—Golkiwad area.

The Rape Incident

The worst incident took place in Vijay Nagar No. 2. About 10 to 12 feet high walls of bamboos were erected to prevent the Muslims from escaping. Also floodlights were installed to watch the movements of the people in the area. The attack which was mounted on the night of December 7 lasted until December 9. A mob of 800, well-armed with choppers, iron bars and swords came in the night of December 7. Sometime before the attack the Muslims in the area tried to shift to a more secure place but their Hindu neighbours persuaded them not to leave and assured them of their safety but they could not save them. The mob set some 250 houses of Muslims on fire after looting them. They killed around 70 Muslim on the 8th night. Before mounting the attack the electric wires of the area were snapped, plunging the area into darkness.

The mob raped 13 to 16 women and it was said each woman was raped by 4 to 10 persons. After the rape these women were brought out and made to walk through floodlight. It is also alleged that a video film of rape incident was made. Probably this may not be true. Local Imams in Vijaynagar were humiliated and were forced to say “Jai Shri Ram”. They were then cut down into two or three pieces. In one case a person was thrown alive into fire. The heads of some children were struck on stone and then torn into two pieces. Old persons were also beaten and killed while some people were killed and burnt and others burnt alive. Some were thrown down from upper floors of the buildings. In some cases even heads were chopped. And, in order to wipe out the evidence many bodies were either burnt or thrown into nearby drains.

In one case the rioters killed the entire family of 6 staying in Sadurrehman Manzil, raped a 8 year old girl of the family and Yasmin, a 18 year old, who saw first her mother being fatally attacked and was stripped and raped by 8 to 10 persons. The Imam of the mosque was done to death before the eyes of his wife Anwari Begum Kutbuddin and then she was raped. After raping her they threw some

inflammable liquid on her to burn but she somehow survived and was in a private hospital during our investigations. In another pathetic case Jamila Bano, in her seven month of pregnancy, had the agony of witnessing her 3 children being hacked to death. She has become mentally unhinged and was in the hospital when we were investigating. One Gaddar, a Hindu, saved Yasmin's uncle Yunus. Similarly many Hindu families saved several Muslim families. Otherwise the toll would have been much higher. In this locality too everywhere one could see 'Jai Shri Ram, *Hindu no makan*' (i.e. Hindu's house) written on many houses. On inquiring we were told that this was the only way to save one's house from being looted and burnt. Majority of the looters were Kathiawadis.

Udhna Magdalla Road

A mob of nearly 800 came to burn the Choksi Mills belonging to Mohammad Hanif. The watchman resorted to air firing but could not stop a mob of 800 from entering the mill premises. The owner told us that they had come with cotton waste and petrol. In this mill 95 per cent workers and other staff are Hindu and yet it was not spared. Before burning the mill, goods were looted. They had brought one tempo also to cart away the looted goods. According to the owner perhaps this act of looting and burning was to avenge the burning of Shantinath Silk Mills at the hands of Muslims. The owner suffered a loss of Rs. 1.5 crore. Other mills and factories looted and burnt were: Wellknown Silk Mills, owner Kassambhai, loss Rs. 75 lakhs; Dada Silk Mills, owner Aarif Dada, loss Rs. 2.5 crores; Huzuri Cold Drink Factory, owner Mohsinbhai Huzuri, loss Rs. 25 lakhs. In Dada Silk Mill too, 95 per cent staff was Hindu. At Udhana Magadalla road, there is an industrial area where out of 400 units only one belonged to a Muslim and it was burnt. Also there were 800 shops along this road belonging to Muslims and all of them were burnt. All this happened on December 8.

Gulshan Nagar (Pandesar)

Mushtaq Ahmed from this colony told our investigators that the miscreants first looted the colony on December 8 at 8 p.m. and then 100 houses were set on fire. Same day at 5 p.m. the police had told the inmates to leave their houses and had assured them that their houses would be protected. But not a single house was saved.

Bahthena

It is a hutment colony and migrant workers were staying there. The Government had given them this land only a few months earlier and hence the residents were not registered on voters' list. About 500 people attacked the colony on December 8. Before the attack the police had picked up around 50 persons from here. About 261 huts were reduced to ashes. It was a mixed colony and people of different communities stayed here. Some people left in the colony told the investigators that no political leader has visited it so far. They bitterly complained against political leaders, police and the goondas. One Amrut Dattu told us poignantly that "*Gharib ke khande per bandook rakh kar hi gharib ko marte hain*" (they put gun on the shoulder of the poor to kill poor) and that "*Sab leaderon ke goli mardeni chahiyye*" (all leaders should be shot dead). On December 9, the violence went on from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and houses in different places were first looted and then burnt. All rioters involved in the incidents were outsiders i.e. either from Orissa or Kathiawar. Maganlal Bailal from Vishram Nagar said that there is unity between the Hindus and Muslims but it is outsiders who came and created communal trouble. Near Central Road, Udhna 37 shops belonging to Muslims were looted and burnt by the mob. The rioters were from Orissa and some parts of the North India. Similarly at Pandal Market a few shops belonging to the minority community were attacked, looted and burnt.

Another most tragic incident took place on December 10 near Udhna station. A train was stopped at about 7.30 a.m. about 3 to 4 km. away from Udhna. A mob of 500 equipped with lathis, choppers, iron bars fell on the train. They pulled out 50 Muslims and killed them. Some of them were women who were raped, killed and burnt. In the case of one woman, a rod was inserted in her front and back because of which she bled profusely. Then her clothes were torn and then she was thrown into fire alongwith her brother. Many other women were forced to undergo traumatic experience of witnessing killing of their husbands and children before their eyes...

In Nanpura Hijrawad area the Muslim mob attacked Hindu houses on December 10 and burnt five houses. A temple in the vicinity was also damaged.

It is very difficult to say how many persons were killed in these riots. A rough estimate puts the figure around 300, most of whom were Muslim (around 95 per cent) but official death toll is below 200. Around 30 women were raped during this frenzied period. In all about 20 industries were looted, burnt and destroyed of which 8 were big and 12 belonged to small scale category. Out of 8 big industries affected one belonged to a Hindu. Also, more than 1000 houses and shops were looted and burnt, more than 900 of which belonged to the Muslims.

As far as religious places were concerned 15 mosques and 2 temples were partially or wholly damaged.

Needless to say the police role was far from satisfactory. Mr. Datta, who is considered honest and efficient, was the police Commissioner. He had cracked down on the bootleggers and other anti-social elements which was resented by the policemen in general in Surat as it seriously affected their income from regular *haftas* (weekly bribe money). Mr. Datta could not control the riots as the policemen did not obey his orders because of resentment and secondly because in Surat too, as in other places, the police has been communalised. Looting, killing and burning went on openly and went unchallenged. No victim of violence could rely on the police for his/her safety and security. In fact there was so much resentment among the police against Mr. Datta that some people even thought that riots were engineered to remove Datta from Surat. Though Mr. Datta was transferred as a result of these riots, there is not much substance in this theory. Among other factors we have already discussed the riots were engineered and planned by the BJP.

The BJP campaign has highly communalised common people as well as the middle class intelligentsia. Not only violence against Muslims is legitimised but also rape of Muslim women is justified saying that they deserve it since they did it to the Hindus in medieval ages. Though shocking, it is true. It is not that all this was done in a state of emotional excitement. It is being justified even after the event which shows the extent of communalisation among the people and the degree of hostility generated.

As pointed out above the Bohras, Khojas and Memons are the business communities of Gujarat. They are generally peace-loving and mild and hardly ever take part in political movements. Also, they are

very well integrated with non-Muslims. Even these communities were not spared in Surat riots. The mobs went about with the list of their shops and in many cases phoned and told the owners in advance that their shops are going to be looted which shows how much confidence they had. Calling the police was, of course, of no help.

What was more shocking was that among the looters were not only the anti-socials and the poor and illiterate but also those belonging to educated middle classes and upper classes. Even women were not to be left behind. When jewellers' shops were forced open they were found frantically searching for proper sizes of gold bangles and sandals in shoe shops. Many of these women too belonged to middle and upper middle classes. It shows the extent of degeneration of moral values in the modern consumerist society. Those who raised the slogan of 'Jai Shri Ram' were not hesitant to do anything most barbaric—raping the women and burning them alive, cutting children to pieces in the presence of their mothers and stabbing and throwing wounded persons into the fire though they are well aware that Ram was a *Purushottam* i.e. morally the best model of humanity.

The BJP which aspires to come to power encouraged all this without realising that with this degenerated behaviour it would find very difficult to rule in an orderly way. One must remember that one who perpetrated violence would meet a violent end. But who cares for the future. Lust for power blinds a person as much as religious fanaticism and imagine what would happen when both combine.

Chapter 9

Bangalore Disturbances—Linguistic or Communal?

The recent language riots in Bangalore which began on October 7, 1994 make us sit and think deeply the way our country is going. The language riots in Bangalore were apparently caused by introduction of a 10-minute Urdu bulletin on Doordarshan at prime time slot i.e. immediately after the Kannada language newscast from 7.45 to 7.55 p.m. The disturbances were quite widespread and shook the whole city. An on-the-spot inquiry clearly establishes, these disturbances were not merely linguistic but had acquired communal overtones. It is important to note that the disturbances were mainly confined to the south Bangalore which has concentration of lower middle class and poor Muslim population. The loss of life and property was quite extensive.

It is important to understand the character of the city today in order to properly appreciate the causes of these widespread disturbances. All modern megacities have certain characteristics in common and hence have become violence-prone. These cities are overpopulated and are bursting at the seam. Violence breaks out in these cities at the flip of an eye. The violence may be communal or of any other nature. Bombay witnessed extensive communal violence in December 1992 and January, 1993 and later there was bomb explosion in March 1993 and in mid-September there was violence in western suburbs on account of delays in running of suburban trains.

The population growth in cities like Bombay, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Surat, Delhi and several others is really mind boggling. Due to rapid increase of population whatever planning is done (as such there is not much urban planning and there is lot of chaotic growth of these cities) it goes absolutely topsy turvy. For the Surat riots in December, 1992 many investigators and scholars had felt that one of the reasons was phenomenal growth of population during the last decade due to expansion of commerce and industry. The Bangalore population has also rapidly increased in last few years and today it is about 46 lakhs. Bangalore earlier was considered a city of pensioners and retired persons. Its peace and serene calm and moderate climate attracted many people. Today's Bangalore has lost its charm and serenity. It has witnessed fast industrial development in last few years and is considered one of the most polluted cities in India. Its hustle bustle and fast moving traffic is quite menacing. Also, huge slum colonies are coming up everywhere in Bangalore.

All big cities tend to be cosmopolitan in nature. People from different states migrate to these cities in search of livelihood. Thus it results in loss of ethnic identity for the city. All modern cities have mixed population which dilute their ethnic character. It also has certain consequences on the psychology of ethnic group of that state. Thus it will be seen that in Bombay, the capital of Maharashtra, the Maharashtrians constitute around 44 per cent of population; In Calcutta Bengalis are less than 50 per cent; in Surat lakhs of Oriyas, north Indians, Telugus, Kathiawaris and others have settled down reducing the Surtis to a minority. And in Bangalore the Kannadigas are around 45 per cent. Thus in such a situation, the local ethnic group becomes extra sensitive to matters pertaining to its own culture, language etc. In Bombay, the Shiv Sena acquired such militant character basically on account of fear of 'outsiders'. In Bangalore too, on account of rapid increase of outsiders the Kannadigas have become over-sensitive to linguistic and cultural matters and various Kannad organizations have sprung into existence. Some of these have acquired a militant character. For this and other reasons Bangalore too has become highly violence-prone. In December 1991 Bangalore had witnessed widespread riots between Kannadigas and Tamils on the question of distribution of

Cauvery waters. Large number of Tamils have settled in Bangalore and this is resented by the Kannadigas.

However, it does not mean that we should underplay the factor of religious or linguistic chauvinism. It is highly condemnable but we also have to take into account various contributory factors which make the situation basically explosive. In any violent situation, no single factor can explain everything. Here one more question arises. India is a multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-cultural nation, in other words a composite nation. Inter-state migrations in a fast developing country like India are quite natural. This is bound to upset the ethnic character of a state capital like Bombay or Bangalore. Can ethnic and linguistic intolerance strengthen the foundation of our composite nationalism. Is not ethnic fundamentalism as condemnable as religious fundamentalism? In Punjab, Assam, Kashmir and other places ethnic fundamentalism and ethnic intolerance has played havoc. One has to transcend narrow ethnic boundaries while retaining sensitivity to one's cultural and linguistic ethos, if one has to build a modern composite nation-state. Some people question the very concept of linguistic chauvinism. The state reorganisation should have been done, they argue, on administrative rather than linguistic considerations. But anyway the matter is not that simple as assumed. The linguistic reorganization of states had democratic motive but was riddled with certain dilemma too. In a democratic society people's linguistic and cultural aspirations cannot be ignored altogether. Most of the regions are characterised by language and culture. The earlier Bombay state during the British period comprised of various linguistic regions like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Sindh, Karnataka etc. However, the administrative unit like the Bombay state could not have worked smoothly in a democratic set up in the post-independence India. It had its own severe limitations. However, it is also true that some unscrupulous politicians, in order to garner votes incite religious or linguistic chauvinism or both. It works because there already exist high levels of unemployment, poverty and lack of all basic amenities of life. The existing tensions explode because of such incitements.

The Violent Incidents

Before we throw light on the violence that erupted in Bangalore on

the question of telecast of Urdu programme on Doordarshan, we would like to throw some light on communalisation of atmosphere in the state of Karnataka. What happened in Bangalore in early November is not a sudden development. The state of Karnataka has become, thanks to the BJP, one of the highly communally sensitive states. Among the southern states Karnataka is the only state where the BJP has been able to establish its foothold. It has steadily increased its percentage of votes in the state and parliamentary elections. It fared exceedingly well in Karnataka in 1991, securing 28.8 per cent votes—a huge jump from the 2.5 per cent it won in 1989. The BJP continued its forward march by performing satisfactorily in the Dharwad south, Hunsur and Yellahanka by-elections, although it did not win any of them. In Yellahanka, however, it doubled its vote to get 60,845 to the Congress's 61,357. The BJP thus is aiming now at making Karnataka the doorway to the south.

The BJP is doing everything possible to win the Hindu votes. Of all the southern states Karnataka was highly affected during the Ramjanambhoomi agitation. When the Advani Rath Yatra was being taken out, a series of riots broke out in Karnataka. The first of the Ayodhya-linked riots broke out in a number of major and minor towns in Karnataka, including Ramanagram, Channapatna, Kolar, Davangere, Tumkur and Mysore during October 1990. 'Ramjyoti' processions, timed to coincide with the Dassera festivities, were taken out. The processions attracted huge numbers of Hindus, and were deliberately routed through predominantly Muslim areas and in front of mosques. They became the flash points of tension and resulted in violence, the bestiality of which surpassed anything the state had seen. A majority of those injured and killed were Muslims.

The present disturbances in Bangalore were not merely linguistic in character. In no time the protest against the Urdu telecast on Doordarshan acquired communal overtones and the presence of the BJP on the scene of disturbances could not be missed. The Urdu telecast of news began from October 2. It created an explosive situation. In fact it remained a linguistic protest only for a short while. It has been alleged by the BJP and even Janata Dal that the Urdu telecast was introduced by the Congress Government at the Centre as well as in the State with an eye on coming state assembly elections. It was denied by Mr. Moily,

the then Chief Minister of Karnataka. Instead, he alleged that it was the BJP which communalised the issue. According to him, “They (i.e. the BJP) are desperate. They don’t have any other issues. So they want to communalise it, to gain votes. But the people of Karnataka won’t appreciate this sort of bloodthirsty, partisan communal politics”.

Only in August the BJP had tried to rouse the Hindu sentiments on the question of hoisting national flag on Idgah in Hubli. All the secular forces then had agreed that the BJP was doing it to garner the Hindu votes in the coming elections to the state assembly. It had absolutely no logic.

Mr. Moily referring to the Hubli incident said the BJP had wanted to organize a march of two lakh people. For what? Just to hoist the flag in a place that is disputed. It becomes a law and order problem, not a question of hoisting the national flag. They wanted to enact an Ayodhya type disaster here in Karnataka. My Government took firm action and averted a disaster”, Mr. Moily said.

Whatever the Chief Minister’s version, there is no doubt that in Hubli too the BJP game was not very different. It wanted to create an emotionally surcharged atmosphere to win the Hindu sympathy and project itself as a champion of the national cause. Similarly, from behind the scene the BJP wanted to exploit the telecast of Urdu news. There is no doubt that the Congress Government was hardly honest in introducing the telecast. The decision to telecast the news was made at a crucial juncture when the elections were at hand. Its explanation is that the Gujral Committee report requires it that wherever there is more than 10 per cent speakers of the language, Urdu news should be telecast. The Gujral Committee report was submitted more than a decade ago. What was Government doing so far? Why did it not implement all its recommendations right away? The Government at the centre was sitting pretty over it for all these years. Now in the election year it suddenly pulls it out of cold storage and implements it when it feels that the Muslim voters have been greatly alienated from the Congress on Ayodhya and other issues. The Congress plays election games with the Muslims as much as the BJP plays with the Hindus. The day after the Urdu bulletin began to be telecast, about 300 persons gathered near the Bangalore Doordarshan belonging to pro-Kannad organisations to protest. They were arrested and later released. The

same day some other pro-Kannada organisations like Mico Kannada Sangha, the Channakeshavapura Kannada Sangha and the SKF Sangha staged a *rasta roko* (block the road) agitation on Hosur road. The agitation got further momentum over the next two days. Protest marches and dharnas were staged in various parts of the city. The Kannada Shakti Kendra and the Kannada Sahitya Parishad also gave one week's ultimatum to the Karnataka Government to stop the telecast of Urdu news bulletin. It must be pointed out here that Dr. M. Chidananda Murthy, president of the Kannada Shakti Kendra did everything possible to incite linguistic chauvinism among the Kannada people. He gave misleading break up of the programmes telecast by the Bangalore Kendra and used highly emotional tone in his speeches. This added fuel to the fire. It should be noted that Dr. Murthy has taught Kannada in Bangalore and Mysore and also in Chicago. He is also reported to have said that in this country the moment you oppose anything Urdu or Muslim, you are branded BJP, RSS and communal. It is also to be noted that Kannada chauvinism has often manifested itself from time to time. When Karnataka state was formed in 1956 there were only 9 districts. Today there are 19 districts. Every year on the Rajotsava day (i.e. the day when Karnataka state was formed) people expect some trouble or the other from the Kannada enthusiasts.

On October 6, the situation further deteriorated and the involvement of the Hindutva forces became obvious. Members of the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP stoned and damaged the official cars of the Chief Justice of Karnataka G.T. Nanavati and Health Minister Maalakareddy, Bangalore Transport Services and other vehicles.

On October 7, the situation further worsened and took a definite communal turn. In the meanwhile Doordarshan Kendra Director K.M. Aneesul Haque said in a press release that the Urdu bulletin was introduced on the directions of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry to "disseminate information to the Urdu population of the state about the developmental activities of the State which would "help the minorities move with the mainstream of society. Through the news their ignorance about the State, the people, the art, culture ... could be removed". It was obviously a laboured explanation which will convince none. Most of the Muslims in Karnataka speak Kannada and followed

Kannada programmes and they are well integrated with the mainstream of the Karnataka life. Obviously the Government had lost the nerve to admit that an attempt was made to give Urdu its due, although for electoral gains.

The situation worsened and took a communal turn. The protest procession was deliberately routed through Muslim dominated areas of south Bangalore and provocative slogans were shouted before a Jami Masjid where Muslims were offering Friday prayers. It was also not by accident that Friday was chosen for the protest procession. The procession itself was being led by the ABVP—affiliated student organisations from the V.V. Puram College and made its way to the K.R. Market Circle where the biggest mosque in the city is located. The mosque can accommodate more than 6000 people for prayers. About a kilometer away from the mosque the processionists who had already turned unruly, started attacking a few Muslim autorickshaw drivers who fled and took shelter inside the mosque. However, the police managed to disperse the processionists but now those inside the mosque came out and started attacking buses. The attempt of the Deputy Commissioner of Police to restrain the mob failed which was now pelting stones indiscriminately. The police then opened fire and three persons were killed on the spot. Some policemen also sustained minor injuries and the DCP himself was hit with a broken bottle. The processionists succeeded in provoking the Muslims. This is a set pattern these days. The BJP dominated processions often try to provoke Muslims outside a mosque or a *madrassa* or some other Muslim building and the Muslims get easily provoked and start throwing stones and other missiles and this gives pretext to the BJPites to spread communal disturbances. Bangalore was no exception to this rule.

Now the mob fury and communal frenzy was let loose mostly in south Bangalore. The police issued shoot at sight orders and clamped curfew in nine police station areas—J.J. Nagar, Magadi Road, Chamrajpet, City Market, Kengeri Gate, Chickpet, Kalasipalaya, New Thargupet and Byatarayanpura. The last one was affected the worst. It was also alleged by some activists from Bangalore that the Marwaris in this city are strongly pro-VHP and BJP and they are its main financiers. They also enthusiastically supported the VHP sant yatra which was passing through Karnataka. These activists also alleged that

the Marwaris have business rivalry with Muslim businessmen and they took this opportunity to finance riots in south Bangalore to destroy Muslim business establishments. Though it is difficult to verify this charge but it is true that many business establishments of Muslims were sought to be destroyed in this area. Many of these business establishments were looted or set on fire. We saw 14 tourist luxury buses belonging to Sikandar of K.G.N. Tourist Service completely gutted and his house in the same compound in Byatarayanapura was also looted and damaged. This incident occurred on October 7 around noon when the owner had gone to pray in the mosque.

The police inspector of Byatarayanapura told us that this was the worst affected area. In this area in all 5 persons were killed of which four were Muslims and one Hindu. One died in police firing (a Hindu) and four were killed in stabbing cases. In all 17 persons were injured. The police inspector informed us that various factories and vehicles mostly belonging to Muslims were set ablaze. Three plastic and one raw silk factory and one timber mart, all belonging to the Muslims, were burnt in this police station area. In the Pipeline area of this police station a Government Primary Urdu school was completely gutted and everything inside looted. Fortunately, there was no loss of life as the school was closed. In this area mostly poor and lower middle class Muslims live. According to Imtiaz Khan, a social worker of the area, in all 63 Muslim houses were burnt and looted. A mosque in the area was also extensively damaged. According to Imtiaz Khan the followers and men of the area councillor who belonged to the Congress-I party also participated in the attacks.

The Sub-Inspector of Jagjivan Ram Nagar police station told us that in all 13 persons were killed in his jurisdiction of which 12 were killed in stabbing and one in police firing. Of 12 persons killed in stabbing 8 were Hindus and 3 Muslims and one unknown. And of those injured in police firing 18 were Hindus and 25 Muslims. The police had arrested 15 persons for murder all of whom were Muslims. On being asked as to why no Hindus were arrested, the SI said that investigations were going on in other murder cases. Complaints for property loss in this area numbered 404 from Muslims and 230 from Hindus. In all 70 persons were arrested under IPC of which 11 were Hindus and 59 were Muslims. The Muslim population in this particular area was 70 per cent

and Hindus 30 per cent. These figures of arrests clearly show that the police did not carry out arrests impartially. In Janta Colony mostly Kannadigas, Tamils and Maharashtrians live and they suffered most in this area. A number of houses belonging to the poor residents were attacked and damaged by the Muslims. Again in the Devraj Urs Nagar mainly Muslims suffered. In this area a factory belonging to one Feroz was completely gutted. A Ram Temple was attacked near Sri Ram Temple Chowk in Jagjivan Ram Nagar area but no damage to the temple was in evidence. Maybe the attackers did not succeed. In this area Hindus and Muslims attacked each others shops and houses.

In fact the violence continued even after Moily announced suspension of telecast of Urdu news bulletin from Doordarshan which again shows that violence was basically communal in nature. In fact the incidents of stabbing after announcement of suspension of telecast did not subside and in these cases people from the minority community were affected more. Seven more people were killed in stabbing after the announcement.

According to official figures, 25 persons were killed and 343 were injured. Number of riots related cases were 696 registered in Chamrajpet (157), Byatarayanapura (120), J.J. Nagar (326), K.R. Market (48), Kalasipalya (45). However, unofficial sources put the death toll to much more than 25, some put the figure at 40 while others say it was a 100. But these are all guess estimates and it is very difficult to verify actual figures. But there is no doubt that actual figure of those who died is certainly higher than 25.

Chapter 10

Impact of Communal Riots on Women

Demolition of Babri Masjid sparked off a series of communal clashes which shattered the secular ideals of our country. The worst hit in this communal frenzy was Bombay which was known for its cosmopolitan character. The mobocracy that unleashed the reign of terror made a mockery of democracy which the country was proud of. The democratically elected representatives were unable to check the mounting tension in the city and thus they miserably failed to prove that they were 'the chosen ones' to serve this city.

It was a calculated, preplanned attack on innocents to drive them out of their homes. Many places particularly slum colonies occupied by Muslims were set aflame. The riot took the deadly toll of human lives, left many crippled for life and many more shattered mentally. The life in the city remained suspended as the death toll increased and bodies lay unclaimed in city morgue. People were forced to flee with haunting memories.

"Riots are explosive moments in socio-political process." This explosive moment can cause irreparable damage to the social fabric and can create a lot of disturbance in the family and the social links in the society. India has a long heritage of stable family life and family structure even in the midst of great social, political and economic change. Women play an important role in maintaining this stability in the family and society especially in times of disturbances. The recent riot disrupted the peace and harmony, left many a home without its bread winner and destroyed the life time possessions of many families. Women had a tremendous task of bringing together the broken and

shattered minds of their family members and reknit the social fabric. As the caretaker of the emotions and social relationships of the family the women had to soothe deep wounds with tender care.

History bears testimony to the fact that women were instrumental in bringing changes in society in spite of the restrictions imposed on them. Women can be better negotiators when need arises. In some places after the riots women came forward to bring back normalcy in the relationship between the opposing communities. With greater awareness about the various social problems existing in the society, women can effectively contribute in finding solutions of these problems.

We conducted a survey of women in Bombay to understand the immediate impact of riot on them and also to know whether they were affected by the propaganda of communal parties regarding Ramjanabhoomi Babri Masjid issue.

A random sample of 250 women was identified for the study from various parts of Bombay city. This sample included only Hindu women residing in Bombay. The report is based on unequal sample with caste, education and income as its variables. The data was collected through a close-ended questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire appears at the end of the report.

Influence of caste, place of origin, education and income on the opinion of women about the riots is given in four separate sections.

Section-1

Influence of Caste

Tables 1.1 to 1.12 present the influence of caste on the opinion of women about causes of riots in Bombay.

As the table 1.1 shows 58 per cent of the total number of women from various castes felt that demolition of Babri Masjid was the prime cause of the riots. 61 per cent of the upper caste women and 61.2 per cent of the backward caste women considered demolition as the prime cause. 55.2 per cent and 53.2 per cent of schedule caste and middle caste respectively agree with this view. Negligible 2 per cent of the upper caste women felt that the builders engineered the riots. This shows that majority of women from the various castes were aware of the issues in the country.

Eighty per cent of women from various castes did not support the demolition of Babri Masjid. It is significant to note that 82.8 per cent of scheduled caste and 84.4 per cent of middle caste were against the demolition. 22.1 per cent of the upper caste supported the demolition. From the figures in the table 1.2 it is clear that the middle caste and the scheduled castes are comparatively less communal.

37.7 per cent of the upper caste and 38.8 per cent of the backward caste believe that the Masjid stood at birth place of Shri Ram. 39 per cent of the middle caste and 24.1 per cent of scheduled castes believe the same. More than 50 per cent of all castes either did not know or were not sure of the exact birth place of Ram. Though many women believed that Masjid stood at Ram's birth place they were against demolition.

As the table 1.4 shows 19.2 per cent of all the castes were directly affected. 26.8 per cent were indirectly affected and 54 per cent were not affected at all by the riots. 37.7 per cent of the upper caste and 51.7 per cent of the scheduled caste were indirectly affected.

The women are equally divided in their opinion about religion being responsible for the riots. Of the upper caste 49.4 per cent considered religion responsible for the riots but 48.1 per cent did not think so. Only a negligible 2.4 per cent were not sure of their opinion. This shows that women are sensitive to various issues.

61 per cent, 52.2 per cent and 51.7 per cent of upper, backward and scheduled caste respectively were not impressed by the action taken by government, police and elected representatives. 59.7 per cent of the middle caste were impressed by the action taken by the above mentioned agencies.

More than 60 per cent of the lower castes were against sending Muslims to Pakistan. More than 50 per cent of the middle and upper caste too were against sending Muslims to Pakistan. 42 per cent of the various castes feel that Muslims should be sent to Pakistan. This could be because they believe that religion is responsible for the riots and sending Muslims to Pakistan may solve the problem. This opinion need not be taken to be the result of any hatred for Muslims.

It is significant to note that more than 88 per cent of all the castes considered day to day problems of existence more important than

mandir-masjid dispute. Women were more practical in their outlook and were not carried away by propaganda.

More than 68 per cent of children from various castes were not affected at all by the riots. 32 per cent of the children were affected because they had to miss school and their movements outside the house were restricted. Some were emotionally troubled by either seeing or hearing about the communal frenzy that gripped Bombay.

79.2 per cent of all the castes were against women fighting communalism. They still probably considered fighting to be man's prerogative. Women have yet to realise their power in ushering in changes in the society.

72.4 per cent of women from various castes felt that the women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger. 79.2 per cent of the middle castes and 77.6 per cent of the backward castes were of the opinion that the communal issues will have precedence over women's causes. 13.2 per cent of the respondents did not have any opinion.

Table gives the opinion of various respondents influenced by their caste regarding the agents responsible for communalisation. 41.6 per cent of the respondents considered both the communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims responsible for communalisation. 30 per cent consider Muslims responsible and only 7.2 per cent considered Hindus responsible for communalisation. 13.2 per cent blame politics and only 2 per cent held the gundas as responsible for communalisation.

Section-2

Influence of Place of Origin

Tables 2.1 to 2.12 present the influence of place of origin on the opinion of women about causes of riots in Bombay.

The women respondents were from among Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, North Indians and South Indians residing in Bombay. The place of origin definitely had an influence in their opinion regarding the causes of the riots. It is significant to note that 61.5 per cent of South Indians and 65.5 per cent of North Indians considered demolition of Babri Masjid as the cause of the riots. 59.5 per cent of the Maharashtrians attribute demolition as the cause of the riots but

25.5 per cent considered it as politically pre-planned. Similarly 48.3 per cent of Gujaratis felt demolition as the cause of the riots but 37.9 per cent attributed it to political pre-planning. As low as 0.8 per cent of the respondents attributed the cause of the riot to builders. Women from the various regions seem to be politically conscious.

80.5 per cent of the women respondents were against demolition of Babri Masjid. 24.1 per cent of North Indians and 20.3 per cent of Maharashtrians supported the demolition whereas only 15.9 per cent and 6.9 per cent of South Indians and Gujaratis respectively supported demolition.

37.9 per cent Maharashtrians and 41.4 per cent north Indians believed that the Masjid stood at the birth place of Shri Ram. 35.95 per cent of south Indians and 27.6 per cent of Gujaratis believed that the birth place of Shri Ram was the same as where the Masjid stood. Even though a considerable number believed in the propaganda, they did not agree with the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

22.2 per cent of the Maharashtrians were directly affected and 29.4 per cent were indirectly affected by the riots. Among the respondents from other regions 13.8 per cent to 15.4 per cent only were directly affected while 25.6 per cent of south Indians were indirectly affected.

While 51.6 per cent of the respondents believed that religion is responsible for the riots, 46 per cent did not feel religion is responsible for the riots.

Around 51 per cent Gujaratis, North Indians and South Indians were not impressed by the action taken by the Government, Police or elected representatives. 49.7 per cent of the Maharashtrians were not impressed. 44.8 per cent of the respondents were impressed by the action taken.

Whereas 66.7 per cent of south Indians were against sending Muslims to Pakistan only 51.6 per cent of Maharashtrians were against it. It is significant to note that 46.4 per cent of Maharashtrians felt that Muslims should be sent to Pakistan and 30 to 37 per cent of other respondents agreed to this.

More than 88 per cent respondents from all regions did not consider religious issues more important than their day-to-day problems. Only 7.6 per cent of the respondents considered religious issues more important. The women respondents seemed realistic.

44.8 per cent of Gujarati children were affected by the riots. Majority of the children from the other regions were not affected.

79.2 per cent of the women respondents were not in favour of women fighting communalism. Similar opinion was shared by women belonging to various castes. This showed women from all regions and castes were still unaware of their power to fight any social problems.

72.4 per cent of the total respondents felt that women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger. Though they knew that communal forces can make their cause weaker, women still did not want to fight communalism. More awareness has to be created among women about the important role they can play in fighting communalism.

41.6 per cent of the total respondents blamed both the communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims for communalisation. 30 per cent blamed the Muslims and 13.2 per cent blame politics for communalisation. Majority of the women respondents seem to have a balanced view of issues around them.

Section-3

Influence of Education

Tables 3.1 to 3.12 present the influence of education on the opinion of women about causes of riots in Bombay.

66.7 per cent of the illiterates considered demolition as the prime cause of riots. From secondary school educated to the highly educated category of women considered political pre-planning too as the cause of the riots. With the increase in the level of education the percentage of women considering political pre-planning as the cause increases. At the secondary level 20.6 per cent considered political pre-planning as cause of the riots. At the higher secondary level it is 37.5 per cent and at the professional level it is 43.7 per cent. Education has definitely influenced the women in their opinion.

56.4 per cent of illiterates did not support demolition. About 84 per cent of the various levels of educated women were against demolition.

36.4 per cent of the total respondents believed that the Babri Masjid stood on Shri Ram's birth place. 34.4 per cent had no idea of Shri Ram's birth place.

More of the illiterates (i.e. 33.3 per cent) were directly affected by the riots. 47.9 per cent of graduates/post graduates/professional category was indirectly affected by the riots. This could be because this category understands the implications and after-effects of communal riots more than the illiterates and women with low levels of education.

51.6 per cent of the total respondents felt that religion is responsible for the riots. 46 per cent did not consider religion responsible for the riot.

48.7 per cent of the illiterates were impressed by the action of government, police or elected representative. Only 26.8 per cent of the highly educated were impressed by the action of the above agencies. From the lower to the higher levels of educated there was an increase in the percentage of women not impressed by the actions taken at the time of riots. This clearly indicates that the educated women seem to have a more balanced view.

More than 55 per cent of the illiterates and primary educated wanted the Muslims to be sent to Pakistan. 53.3 per cent of the secondary educated and more than 63.4 per cent of the higher educated were against sending Muslims to Pakistan. Illiterates and lower level educated are easily influenced by propaganda.

88 per cent of the total respondents did not consider religious issues more important than day-to-day problems. Irrespective of their illiteracy or various levels of literacy, women appeared to be more sensible in this respect. Their day-to-day problems are more important to them:

32 per cent of the children of the respondents were affected by the riots. But a majority of the children were not affected at all. Irrespective of the levels of literacy mothers tried to protect their children. They made sure that the children were least affected in any calamity.

79.2 per cent of the respondents were against women fighting communalism. This shows that it takes more than education to change the attitude of women in India. Even the highly educated women did not consider fighting communalism necessary for women. A drastic change in the attitude of women is very essential to combat communalism.

72.4 per cent women believed that the communal forces can weaken their causes. Even then women were not prepared to fight communalism.

41.6 per cent blamed both the communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims for communalisation. 38.5 per cent of the illiterates blamed the Muslims and only 13.2 per cent blame politics for communalisation.

Section-4

Influence of Income

Tables 4.1 to 4.12 present the influence of income on the opinion of women about the causes of the riots in Bombay.

63.7 per cent of the unemployed women believed demolition to be the chief cause of riots. In the higher income groups the opinions were divided between demolition and political pre-planning. A very negligible percentage (i.e. 8 per cent) considered builders to have been the cause of riots.

80 per cent of the various income groups did not support demolition. Unemployed or the low income groups were not influenced by propaganda of communal parties.

36.8 per cent of the various income groups believed that Babri Masjid stood at the birth place of Shri Ram. A considerable number from the various income groups had no idea about the birth place of Shri Ram.

More than 33.3 per cent of the women earning up to Rs. 1000 were directly affected by the riots while 67 per cent of all income groups were indirectly affected by the riots.

Irrespective of the levels of income 51.6 per cent considered religion to be responsible for riots.

52 per cent of the unemployed and 66.7 per cent of the very low level income group were impressed by the action of government, police or elected representatives. Women in the higher income groups were not impressed by the action taken by the government, police or elected representative.

Irrespective of the levels of income, 56.8 per cent of the women respondents were against sending Muslims to Pakistan. The

unemployed and the lower income group women were influenced by propaganda.

88 per cent of the respondents did not consider religious issues more important than the day to day problems. Only 7.6 per cent considered religious issues more important.

More than 50 per cent of the higher income group children were affected by the riots. They were affected by seeing or hearing about the communal violence. Their freedom of movement was curtailed during the riots. The higher income group had more access to information and the children were psychologically affected. The restricted movements too affected them in a bad way.

79.2 per cent of women irrespective of levels of income were against fighting communalism themselves.

72.4 per cent of women respondents were convinced that women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger. Yet they were not prepared to fight communalism.

Majority of women (41.6 per cent) blame both the communities i.e. Hindus and Muslims for communalisation. Only 13.2 per cent blame the politicians for communalisation.

Conclusions

This study has revealed that the women are not easily influenced by communal propaganda. Though many believe the birthplace of Shri Ram to be where Babri Masjid stood they did not support the demolition of Babri Masjid. Irrespective of various caste factors majority were against sending Muslims to Pakistan. Religion plays an important role in the life of women, still they were against religion being used as a political weapon. They were more concerned about their day to day problems than religious issues. Women are aware that if communal forces become stronger women's causes become weaker. In spite of this a large majority of women did not want to fight communalism. This is true irrespective of their place of origin, education, employment or caste. Fighting is still a man's prerogative. Women seem to be unaware of their potential power to change the society.

The study also shows that Maharashtrians and North Indians were more influenced by communal propaganda. Though over 27 per cent,

Gujaratis and South Indians believe that the Masjid stood at the place of the birth of Ram they were against its demolition. This shows that they are not communal in their outlook.

Education did influence the opinion of women. The educated women considered political pre-planning as a cause of the riots and were not impressed by the role played by the government, police or the elected representatives. Education has enabled access to information and thus a balanced view of the situation was taken by such women.

Majority of the women did not support any move to disrupt the peace and harmony of the society. Women respondents did not feel builders to have masterminded the riots or were responsible for the riots.

Vested interests with the connivance of anti social elements might have threatened the peace and tranquility of this city. But the women in the city were capable of overcoming the trauma created by the riots while taking a balanced view of what happened in December 1992 and January 1993. A lot more awareness among women about their power potential is needed. This is one force which can combat communalism.

Questionnaire

1. Name
2. Age
3. Religion and Caste
4. Marital Status : Married/Unmarried
5. Level of Education
6. Monthly Income
7. Maharashtrian/Gujarati/North Indian/South Indian
8. Duration of stay in Bombay: 1-5/5-10/10-15/15 years and above
9. Why the communal riot took place? Because of:
 - (1) Demolition of Babri Masjid
 - (2) Politically motivation
 - (3) Builders
 - (4) No idea

10. Do you support the demolition of Babri Masjid? Yes/No
11. Do you think that the Birth place of Shri Ram was the same where Babri Masjid stood? Yes/No/Don't Know/Can't say.
12. Whether you were affected by riots?
 - (1) Directly affected
 - (2) Indirectly affected
 - (3) Not affected at all.
15. Do you think that the Muslims should be sent to Pakistan?
Yes/No
16. Do you think that religious issues like Ramjanmabhcomi/Babri Masjid are more important than your day to day problems?
Yes/No
17. Do you think that this riot affected your children in any way?
Yes/No
18. Should women not fight communalism as they are great sufferers in communal violence? Yes/No
20. Who do you think is more responsible for communalisation?
Hindus/Muslims/Both/Politics/Gundas/No idea.

Table 1.1*
Cause of riots in Bombay

<i>Category</i>		<i>Demolition of Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Politically Preplanned</i>	<i>Builders</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	47	23	2	5	77	
	Col. % age	61	29.9	2.6	6.5	30.8	
Middle	No.	41	21	—	15	77	
	Col. % age	53.2	27.3	—	19.6	30.8	
Lower	Backward	No.	41	18	—	5	29
		Col. % age	61.2	26.9	—	11.9	26.8
	Scheduled Castes	No.	16	8	—	5	29
		Col. % age	55.2	27.6	—	17.2	11.6
Column Total		No.	145	70	2	33	250
		% age	58	28	.8	13.2	100

* Table Nos 1.1 ot 1.2 relate to Section 1 of Chapter 10.

Table 1.2
Support of Demolition of Babri Masjid

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Not Bothered</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	17	58	1	1	77	
	Row % age	22.1	75.3	1.3	1.3	30.8	
	Col. % age	37.0	29.0	33.3	100.0	—	
Middle	No.	12	65	—	—	67	
	Row % age	15.6	84.4	—	—	30.8	
	Col. % age	26.1	32.5	—	—	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	13	53	1	—	77
		Row % age	19.4	79.1	1.5	—	11.6
		Col. % age	8.7	12.0	33.3	—	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	4	24	1	—	67
		Row % age	19.4	79.1	1.5	—	11.6
		Col. % age	28.7	26.5	33.3	—	26.8
Column Total	No.	46	200	3	1	250	
	% age	18.4	80.0	1.2	.4	100.0	

Table 1.3
Birth place of Shri Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Can't Say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	29	9	21	18	77	
	Row % age	37.3	11.7	27.3	23.4	30.8	
	Col. % age	31.5	33.3	24.4	40.0	—	
Middle	No.	30	10	31	6	77	
	Row % age	39.0	13.0	40.3	7.8	30.8	
	Col. % age	32.6	37.0	36.0	13.3	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	26	3	27	11	77
		Row % age	38.80	4.5	40.3	17.5	26.8
		Col. % age	28.3	11.1	31.4	24.4	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	7	5	7	10	29
		Row % age	24.1	17.2	24.1	34.5	11.6
		Col. % age	7.6	18.5	8.1	22.2	—
Column Total	No.	92	27	86	45	250	
	% age	36.8	10.8	34.4	18.0	100.0	

Table 1.4
Affected by the riot

<i>Category</i>		<i>Directory Affected</i>	<i>Indirectly Affected</i>	<i>Not Affected</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	16	29	32	77	
	Row % age	20.8	37.7	41.6	30.8	
	Col. % age	33.3	43.3	23.7	—	
Middle	No.	10	11	56	77	
	Row % age	13.0	14.3	72.7	30.8	
	Col. % age	20.8	16.4	41.5	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	19	12	36	67
		Row % age	28.4	17.9	53.7	26.8
		Col. % age	39.6	17.9	26.6	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	3	15	11	29
		Row % age	10.3	51.7	37.9	11.6
		Col. % age	6.3	22.4	8.1	—
Column Total	No.	48	67	135	250	
	% age	19.2	26.8	54.0	100.0	

Table 1.5
Religion is responsible for the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	38	37	2	77	
	Row % age	49.4	48.1	2.6	30.8	
	Col. % age	29.5	32.2	33.3	—	
Middle	No.	46	28	3	77	
	Row % age	59.7	36.4	3.9	30.8	
	Col. % age	35.7	24.3	50.0	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	33	33	1	67
		Row % age	49.3	49.3	1.5	26.8
		Col. % age	25.6	28.7	16.7	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	12	17	—	29
		Row % age	41.4	58.6	—	11.6
		Col. % age	9.3	14.8	—	—
Column Total	No.	129	115	6	250	
	% age	51.6	46.0	2.4	100.0	

Table 1.6
Whether impressed by the action of Govt./Police/Elected representative

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	26	47	4	77	
	Row % age	33.8	61.0	5.2	30.8	
	Col. % age	23.2	37.3	33.3	—	
Middle	No.	46	29	2	77	
	Row % age	59.7	37.7	2.6	30.8	
	Col. % age	41.1	23.0	16.7	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	32	35	—	67
		Row % age	27.6	51.7	20.7	11.6
		Col. % age	7.1	11.9	50.0	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	8	15	6	29
		Row % age	27.6	51.7	20.7	11.6
		Col. % age	7.1	11.9	50.0	—
Column Total	No.	112	126	12	250	
	% age	44.8	50.4	4.8	100.0	

Table 1.7
Should Muslims be sent to Pakistan

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	32	41	4	77	
	Row % age	41.6	53.2	5.2	30.8	
	Col. % age	30.5	29.5	80.0	—	
Middle	No.	37	39	1	77	
	Row % age	48.1	50.6	1.3	30.8	
	Col. % age	35.2	27.9	20.0	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	26	41	—	67
		Row % age	38.8	61.2	—	26.8
		Col. % age	24.8	29.2	—	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	10	19	—	29
		Row % age	34.5	65.6	—	11.6
		Col. % age	9.5	13.6	—	—
Column Total	No.	105	140	5	250	
	% age	42.0	56.0	2.0	100.0	

Table 1.8
Religious issues more important than day to day problems

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Both Equal</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	3	70	—	4	77	
	Row % age	3.9	90.9	—	5.2	30.8	
	Col. % age	15.8	31.8	—	40.0	—	
Middle	No.	5	68	1	3	77	
	Row % age	6.5	88.3	1.3	3.9	30.8	
	Col. % age	26.5	30.9	—	30.0	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	11	53	—	3	67
		Row % age	16.4	79.1	—	4.5	26.8
		Col. % age	26.3	30.9	100.0	30.0	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	—	29	—	—	29
		Row % age	—	100.0	—	—	11.6
		Col. % age	—	13.2	—	—	—
Column Total	No.	19	220	1	10	250	
	% age	7.6	88.0	.4	4.0	100.0	

Table 1.9
How children are affected by the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not At All</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	23	26	28	77	
	Row % age	29.9	33.8	36.4	30.8	
	Col. % age	28.8	30.2	33.2	—	
Middle	No.	18	33	26	77	
	Row % age	23.4	42.9	33.8	30.8	
	Col. % age	32.5	29.1	19.0	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	26	25	16	67
		Row % age	38.8	37.3	23.9	26.8
		Col. % age	32.5	29.1	19.0	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	13	2	14	29
		Row % age	44.8	6.9	48.3	11.6
		Col. % age	16.3	2.3	16.7	—
Column Total	No.	80	86	84	250	
	% age	32.0	34.4	33.6	100.0	

Table 1.10
Should women fight communalism

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	13	61	3	77	
	Row % age	16.9	79.2	3.9	30.8	
	Col. % age	35.1	30.8	20.0	—	
Middle	No.	12	63	2	77	
	Row % age	15.6	81.8	2.6	30.8	
	Col. % age	32.4	31.8	13.3	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	8	57	2	67
		Row % age	11.9	8.5	3.0	26.8
		Col. % age	21.6	28.8	13.3	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	4	17	8	29
		Row % age	13.8	58.6	27.6	11.6
		Col. % age	10.8	8.6	53.3	—
Column Total	No.	37	198	15	250	
	Col. % age	14.8	79.2	6.0	100.0	

Table 1.11
Women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	53	14	10	77	
	Row % age	68.8	18.2	13.0	30.8	
	Col. % age	29.3	38.9	30.3	—	
Middle	No.	61	10	6	77	
	Row % age	79.2	13.0	7.8	30.8	
	Col. % age	33.7	27.8	18.2	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	52	8	7	67
		Row % age	77.6	11.9	10.4	26.8
		Col. % age	28.7	22.2	21.2	—
	Scheduled Castes	No.	15	4	10	29
		Row % age	51.7	13.8	34.5	11.6
		Col. % age	8.3	11.1	30.3	—
Column Total	No.	181	36	33	250	
	% age	72.4	14.4	13.2	100.0	

Table 1.12
Who is more responsible for communalisation

<i>Category</i>		<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Gundas</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>	
Upper	No.	5	27	25	11	—	9	77	
	Row % age	6.5	35.1	32.5	14.3	—	11.7	30.8	
	Col. % age	27.8	36.0	24.0	36.7	—	60.0	—	
Middle	No.	8	16	38	11	2	2	77	
	Row % age	10.4	20.8	49.4	14.3	2.6	2.6	30.8	
	Col. % age	44.4	21.3	36.5	36.7	40.0	13.3	—	
Lower	Backward	No.	3	24	27	6	3	4	67
		Row % age	4.8	35.8	40.6	9.0	4.5	6.0	26.8
		Col. % age	16.7	32.0	26.0	18.2	60.0	26.7	—
Scheduled Castes	No.	2	8	14	5	—	—	29	
	Row % age	51.7	13.8	34.5	11.6	—	—	11.6	
	Col. % age	11.1	10.7	13.5	15.2	—	—	—	
Column Total	No.	18	75	104	33	5	15	250	
	% age	7.2	30.0	41.6	13.2	2.0	6.0	100	

Table 2.1
Cause of riots in Bombay

<i>Category</i>		<i>Demolition of Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Politically Preplanned</i>	<i>Builders</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	91	39	1	22	153
	Row % age	59.5	25.5	0.7	14.4	61.2
	Col. % age	61.5	58.2	50.0	66.7	—
Gujarati	No.	14	11	1	3	29
	Row % age	48.3	37.9	3.4	10.3	11.6
	Col. % age	9.5	16.4	50.0	66.7	—
North Indian	No.	19	7	—	3	29
	Row % age	65.5	24.1	—	10.3	11.6
	Col. % age	12.8	10.4	—	9.1	—
South Indian	No.	24	10	—	5	39
	Row % age	61.5	25.6	—	12.8	15.6
	Col. % age	16.2	14.9	—	15.2	—
Column Total	No.	148	67	2	33	250
	Col. % age	59.2	26.8	0.8	13.2	100

Table 2.2*
Support of Demolition of Babri Masjid

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Not Bothered</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	31	120	2	—	153
	Row % age	20.3	78.4	1.3	—	61.2
	Col. % age	67.4	60.0	66.7	—	—
Gujarati	No.	2	27	—	—	29
	Row % age	6.9	93.1	—	—	11.6
	Col. % age	4.3	13.5	—	—	—
North Indian	No.	7	21	—	1	29
	Row % age	24.1	72.4	—	3.4	11.6
	Col. % age	15.2	10.5	—	100.0	—
South Indian	No.	6	32	1	—	39
	Row % age	15.4	82.1	2.6	—	15.6
	Col. % age	13.0	16.0	33.3	—	—
Column Total	No.	46	200	3	1	250
	% age	18.4	80.0	1.2	0.4	100.0

* Tables 2.1 to 2.12 relate to Section 2 of Chapter 10.

Table 2.3
Birth place of Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Can't Say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	58	18	53	24	153
	Row % age	37.9	11.8	34.6	15.7	61.2
	Col. % age	63.0	66.7	61.6	53.3	—
Gujarati	No.	8	3	10	8	29
	Row % age	27.6	10.3	34.5	27.6	11.6
	Col. % age	8.7	11.1	11.6	17.8	—
North Indian	No.	12	4	8	5	29
	Row % age	41.4	13.8	27.6	17.2	11.6
	Col. % age	13.0	14.8	9.3	11.1	—
South Indian	No.	14	2	15	8	39
	Row % age	35.9	5.1	38.5	20.5	15.6
	Col. % age	15.2	7.4	17.4	17.8	—
Column Total	No.	92	27	86	45	250
	% age	36.8	10.8	34.4	18.0	100.0

Table 2.4
Affected by the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Directly Affected</i>	<i>Indirectly Affected</i>	<i>Not Affected</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	34	45	74	153
	Row % age	22.2	29.4	48.4	61.2
	Col. % age	70.8	67.2	54.8	—
Gujarati	No.	4	7	18	29
	Row % age	13.8	24.1	62.1	11.6
	Col. % age	8.3	10.4	13.3	—
North Indian	No.	4	5	20	29
	Row % age	13.8	17.2	69.0	11.6
	Col. % age	8.3	7.5	14.8	—
South Indian	No.	6	10	23	39
	Row % age	15.4	25.6	59.0	15.6
	Col. % age	12.5	14.9	17.0	—
Column Total	No.	48	67	135	250
	% age	19.2	26.8	54.0	100.0

Table 2.5
Religion is responsible for the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	80	69	4	153
	Row % age	52.3	45.1	2.6	61.2
	Col. % age	62.0	60.0	66.7	—
Gujarati	No.	14	15	—	29
	Row % age	48.3	51.7	—	11.6
	Col. % age	10.9	13.0	—	—
North Indian	No.	16	12	1	29
	Row % age	55.2	41.4	3.4	11.6
	Col. % age	12.4	10.4	16.7	—
South Indian	No.	19	19	1	39
	Row % age	48.7	48.7	2.6	15.6
	Col. % age	14.7	16.5	16.7	—
Column Total	No.	129	115	6	250
	% age	51.6	46.0	2.4	100.0

Table 2.6
Whether impressed by the action of Govt./Police/Elected representative

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	69	76	8	153
	Row % age	45.1	49.7	5.2	61.2
	Col. % age	10.7	11.9	16.7	—
Gujarati	No.	12	15	2	29
	Row % age	41.4	51.7	6.9	11.6
	Col. % age	10.7	11.9	16.7	—
North Indian	No.	12	15	2	29
	Row % age	41.4	51.7	6.9	11.6
	Col. % age	10.7	11.9	16.7	—
South Indian	No.	19	20	—	39
	Row % age	48.7	51.3	—	15.6
	Col. % age	17.0	15.9	—	—
Column Total	No.	112	126	12	250
	% age	44.8	50.4	4.8	100.0

Table 2.7
Should Muslims be sent to Pakistan

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	71	79	3	153
	Row % age	46.4	51.6	2.0	61.2
	Col. % age	67.6	56.4	60.0	—
Gujarati	No.	11	17	1	29
	Row % age	37.9	58.6	3.4	11.6
	Col. % age	10.5	12.1	20.0	—
North Indian	No.	11	18	—	29
	Row % age	37.9	62.1	—	11.6
	Col. % age	10.5	12.9	—	—
South Indian	No.	12	26	1	39
	Row % age	30.8	66.7	2.6	15.6
	Col. % age	11.4	18.6	20.0	—
Column Total	No.	105	140	5	250
	% age	42.0	56.0	2.0	100.0

Table 2.8
Religious issues more important than day to day problems

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Not Bothered</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	13	133	1	6	153
	Row % age	8.5	86.9	0.7	3.9	61.2
	Col. % age	68.4	60.5	100.0	60.0	—
Gujarati	No.	1	28	—	—	29
	Row % age	3.4	96.6	—	—	11.6
	Col. % age	5.3	12.7	—	—	—
North Indian	No.	3	24	—	2	29
	Row % age	10.3	82.8	—	6.9	11.6
	Col. % age	15.8	10.9	—	20.0	—
South Indian	No.	2	35	—	2	39
	Row % age	5.1	89.7	—	5.1	15.6
	Col. % age	10.5	15.9	—	20.0	—
Column Total	No.	19	220	1	10	250
	% age	7.6	88.0	0.4	4.0	100.0

Table 2.9
How children are affected by the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not At all</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	50	48	55	153
	Row % age	32.7	31.4	35.9	61.2
	Col. % age	62.5	55.8	65.5	—
Gujarati	No.	13	9	7	29
	Row % age	44.8	31.0	24.1	11.6
	Col. % age	16.3	10.5	8.3	—
North Indian	No.	7	15	7	29
	Row % age	24.1	51.7	24.1	11.6
	Col. % age	8.8	17.4	8.3	—
South Indian	No.	10	14	15	39
	Row % age	25.6	35.9	38.5	15.6
	Col. % age	12.5	16.3	17.9	—
Column Total	No.	80	86	84	250
	% age	32.0	34.4	33.6	100.0

Table 2.10
Should women fight communalism

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	25	117	11	153
	Row % age	16.3	76.5	7.2	61.2
	Col. % age	67.6	59.1	73.3	—
Gujarati	No.	3	25	1	29
	Row % age	10.3	86.2	3.4	11.6
	Col. % age	8.1	12.6	6.7	—
North Indian	No.	1	25	3	29
	Row % age	3.4	86.2	10.3	11.6
	Col. % age	2.7	12.6	20.0	—
South Indian	No.	8	31	—	39
	Row % age	20.5	79.5	—	15.6
	Col. % age	21.6	15.7	—	—
Column Total	No.	37	198	15	250
	% age	14.8	79.2	6.00	100

Table 2.11
Women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	108	28	17	153
	Row % age	70.6	18.3	11.1	61.2
	Col. % age	59.7	77.8	51.5	—
Gujarati	No.	19	3	7	29
	Row % age	65.5	10.3	24.1	11.6
	Col. % age	10.5	8.3	21.2	—
North Indian	No.	24	—	5	29
	Row % age	82.8	—	17.2	11.6
	Col. % age	13.3	—	15.2	—
South Indian	No.	30	5	4	39
	Row % age	76.9	12.8	10.3	15.6
	Col. % age	16.6	13.9	12.1	—
Column Total	No.	181	36	33	250
	% age	72.4	14.4	13.2	100.0

Table 2.12
Who is more responsible for communalisation

<i>Category</i>		<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Gundas</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	8	55	67	16	2	5	153
	Row % age	5.2	35.9	43.7	10.5	1.3	3.3	61.2
	Col. % age	44.4	73.3	64.42	48.48	40.0	33.3	—
Gujarati	No.	2	8	11	6	—	2	29
	Row % age	6.9	27.6	37.9	20.7	—	6.9	11.6
	Col. % age	11.1	10.7	10.57	18.18	—	13.3	—
North Indian	No.	3	9	8	4	1	4	29
	Row % age	10.3	31.0	27.5	13.8	3.5	13.8	11.6
	Col. % age	16.7	12.0	7.69	12.12	20.0	26.7	—
South Indian	No.	5	3	18	7	2	4	39
	Row % age	12.8	7.7	46.2	18.0	5.2	10.3	15.6
	Col. % age	27.8	4.0	17.30	21.21	40.0	26.7	—
Column Total	No.	18	75	104	33	5	15	250
	% age	7.2	30.0	41.6	13.2	2.0	6.0	100.0

Table 3.1*
Causes of communal riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Demolition of Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Politically Preplanned</i>	<i>Builders</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	26	3	2	8	39
	Row % age	66.7	7.7	5.1	20.5	15.6
	Col. % age	17.3	4.6	50	25.8	—
I-IV	No.	8	—	—	1	9
	Row % age	88.9	—	—	11.1	3.6
	Col. % age	5.3	—	—	3.2	—
V-X	No.	67	22	1	17	107
	Row % age	62.6	20.6	0.9	15.9	42.8
	Col. % age	44.7	33.9	25	54.8	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	12	9	1	2	24
	Row % age	50	37.5	4.2	8.3	9.6
	Col. % age	8	13.8	25	6.5	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	37	31	—	3	71
	Row % age	52.6	43.6	—	4.2	28.4
	Col. % age	24.7	47.7	—	9.7	—
Column Total	No.	150	65	4	31	250
	% age	60	26	1.6	12.4	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
 Pro = Professionals

* Tables 3.1 to 3.12 relate to Section 3 of Chapter 10.

Table 3.2
Support of Demolition

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Not Bothered</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	16	22	1	—	39
	Row % age	41.0	56.4	2.6	—	15.6
	Col. % age	34.8	11.0	33.3	—	—
I-IV	No.	—	9	—	—	9
	Row % age	—	100.0	—	—	3.6
	Col. % age	—	4.5	—	—	—
V-X	No.	18	89	—	—	107
	Row % age	16.8	83.2	—	—	42.8
	Col. % age	39.1	44.5	—	—	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	3	20	1	—	24
	Row % age	12.5	83.3	4.2	—	9.6
	Col. % age	39.1	44.5	—	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	9	60	1	1	71
	Row % age	12.7	84.5	1.4	1.4	28.4
	Col. % age	19.6	30.0	33.3	100.0	—
Column Total	No.	46	200	3	1	250
	% age	18.4	80.0	1.2	0.4	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.3
Birth place of Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Can't Say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	15	3	16	5	39
	Row % age	38.5	7.7	41.0	12.8	15.6
	Col. % age	16.3	11.1	18.6	11.1	—
I-IV	No.	2	—	7	—	9
	Row % age	22.2	—	77.8	—	36
	Col. % age	2.2	—	8.1	—	—
V-X	No.	44	11	38	14	107
	Row % age	41.1	10.3	35.5	13.1	42.8
	Col. % age	47.8	40.7	44.2	31.1	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	11	1	10	2	24
	Row % age	45.8	4.2	41.7	8.3	9.6
	Col. % age	12.0	3.7	11.6	4.4	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	20	12	15	24	71
	Row % age	28.2	16.9	21.1	33.8	28.4
	Col. % age	21.7	44.4	17.4	53.3	—
Column Total	No.	92	27	86	45	250
	% age	36.8	10.8	34.4	18.0	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.4
Affected by the riot

Category		Directly Affected	Indirectly Affected	Not Affected	Row Total
Illiterate	No.	13	11	15	39
	Row % age	33.3	28.2	38.5	15.6
	Col. % age	27.1	16.4	11.1	—
I-IV	No.	1	—	8	9
	Row % age	11.1	—	88.9	3.6
	Col. % age	2.1	—	5.9	—
V-X	No.	19	16	72	107
	Row % age	17.8	15.0	67.3	42.8
	Col. % age	39.6	23.9	53.3	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	7	6	11	24
	Row % age	29.2	25.0	45.8	9.6
	Col. % age	14.6	9.0	8.1	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	8	34	29	71
	Row % age	11.3	47.9	40.8	28.4
	Col. % age	16.7	50.7	21.5	—
Column Total	No.	48	67	135	250
	% age	19.2	26.8	54.0	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.5
Religion is responsible for the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	17	20	2	39
	Row % age	43.6	51.3	5.1	15.6
	Col. % age	13.2	17.4	33.3	—
I-IV	No.	7	2	—	9
	Row % age	77.8	22.2	—	3.6
	Col. % age	5.4	37.4	—	—
V-X	No.	61	43	3	107
	Row % age	57.0	40.2	2.8	42.8
	Col. % age	47.3	37.4	50.0	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	10	14	—	24
	Row % age	41.7	58.3	—	9.6
	Col. % age	7.8	12.2	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	34	36	1	71
	Row % age	47.9	50.7	1.4	28.4
	Col. % age	26.4	31.3	16.7	—
Column Total	No.	129	115	6	250
	% age	51.6	46.0	2.4	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.6
Whether impressed by the action of Government Police or elected representatives

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	19	17	3	39
	Row % age	48.7	43.6	7.7	15.6
	Col. % age	17.0	13.5	25.0	—
I-IV	No.	6	3	—	9
	Row % age	66.7	33.3	—	3.6
	Col. % age	5.4	2.4	—	—
V-X	No.	58	46	3	107
	Row % age	54.2	43.0	2.8	42.8
	Col. % age	51.8	36.5	25.0	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	10	14	—	24
	Row % age	41.7	58.3	—	9.6
	Col. % age	8.9	11.1	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	19	46	6	71
	Row % age	26.8	64.8	8.5	28.4
	Col. % age	17.0	36.5	50.0	—
Column Total	No.	112	126	12	250
	% age	44.8	50.4	4.8	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;

Pro = Professionals

Table 3.7
Should Muslims be sent to Pakistan

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	22	17	—	39
	Row % age	56.4	43.6	—	15.6
	Col. % age	21.0	12.1	—	—
I-IV	No.	5	4	—	9
	Row % age	55.6	44.4	—	3.6
	Col. % age	4.8	2.9	—	—
V-X	No.	50	17	—	107
	Row % age	46.7	53.3	—	42.8
	Col. % age	47.6	40.7	—	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	7	17	—	24
	Row % age	29.6	63.4	—	28.4
	Col. % age	6.7	12.1	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	21	45	5	71
	Row % age	29.5	63.5	7.0	28.4
	Col. % age	20.0	32.1	100.0	—
Column Total	No.	105	140	5	250
	% age	42.0	56.0	2.0	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.8
Religious issues are more important than day to day problems

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Both Equal</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Illiterate	No.	2	34	—	3	39
	Row % age	5.1	87.2	—	7.7	15.6
	Col. % age	10.5	15.5	—	30.0	—
I-IV	No.	1	8	—	—	9
	Row % age	11.1	88.9	—	—	3.6
	Col. % age	5.3	3.6	—	—	—
V-X	No.	14	87	1	5	107
	Row % age	13.1	81.3	0.9	4.7	42.8
	Col. % age	73.7	39.5	100.0	50.0	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	—	24	—	—	24
	Row % age	—	100.0	—	—	9.6
	Col. % age	—	10.9	—	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	2	67	—	2	71
	Row % age	2.8	94.4	—	2.8	28.4
	Col. % age	10.5	30.5	—	20.0	—
Column Total	No.	19	220	1	10	250
	% age	7.6	88.0	0.4	4.0	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
 Pro = Professionals

Table 3.9
Are children affected by the riot

Category		Yes	No	Not At all	Row Total
Illiterate	No.	18	19	2	39
	Row % age	46.2	48.7	5.1	15.6
	Col. % age	22.5	22.1	2.4	—
I-IV	No.	5	3	1	9
	Row % age	55.6	33.3	11.1	3.6
	Col. % age	6.3	3.5	1.2	—
V-X	No.	24	44	39	107
	Row % age	22.4	4.1	36.4	42.8
	Col. % age	30.0	51.2	46.4	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	8	6	10	24
	Row % age	33.3	25.0	41.7	9.6
	Col. % age	10.0	7.0	11.9	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	25	14	32	71
	Row % age	35.2	19.7	45.1	28.4
	Col. % age	31.3	16.3	38.1	—
Column Total	No.	80	86	84	250
	% age	32.0	34.4	33.6	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.10
Should women fight communalism

Category		Yes	No	No Comments	Row Total
Illiterate	No.	5	31	3	39
	Row % age	12.8	79.5	7.7	15.6
	Col. % age	13.5	15.7	20.0	—
I-IV	No.	1	8	—	9
	Row % age	11.1	88.9	—	3.6
	Col. % age	2.7	4.0	—	3.6
V-X	No.	15	86	6	107
	Row % age	14.0	80.4	5.6	42.8
	Col. % age	40.5	43.5	40.0	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	8	6	10	24
	Row % age	33.3	25.0	41.7	9.6
	Col. % age	10.0	7.0	11.9	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	12	53	6	71
	Row % age	16.9	74.6	8.5	28.4
	Col. % age	32.4	26.8	40.0	—
Column Total	No.	37	198	15	250
	% age	14.87	9.2	6.0	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.11
Women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger

Category		Yes	No	No Comments	Row Total
Illiterate	No.	22	7	10	39
	Row % age	56.4	17.9	25.6	15.6
	Col. % age	12.2	19.4	30.3	—
I-IV	No.	8	1	—	9
	Row % age	88.9	11.1	—	3.6
	Col. % age	4.4	2.8	—	—
V-X	No.	84	12	11	107
	Row % age	78.5	11.2	10.3	42.8
	Col. % age	46.4	33.3	33.3	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	21	1	2	24
	Row % age	87.5	4.2	8.3	9.6
	Col. % age	11.6	2.8	6.1	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	46	15	10	71
	Row % age	64.8	21.1	14.1	28.4
	Col. % age	25.4	41.7	30.3	—
Column Total	No.	181	36	33	250
	% age	72.4	14.4	13.2	100.0

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 3.12
Who is more responsible for communalisation

Category		Hindu	Muslims	Both	Politics	Gundas	No Idea	Row Total
Illiterate	No.	5	15	12	1	—	6	39
	Row % age	2.8	38.5	30.7	2.6	—	15.4	15.6
	Col. % age	27.8	20.0	11.5	3.0	—	40.0	—
I-IV	No.	—	3	5	1	—	—	9
	Row % age	—	33.3	55.6	11.1	—	—	3.6
	Col. % age	—	4.0	4.8	3.0	—	—	—
V-X	No.	8	34	46	13	3	3	107
	Row % age	7.5	31.8	43	12.1	2.8	2.8	42.8
	Col. % age	44.4	45.3	44.2	39.4	60.0	20.0	—
XI-XII. Vocational	No.	1	7	10	4	2	—	24
	Row % age	4.2	29.2	41.7	16.7	8.4	—	9.6
	Col. % age	5.6	9.3	9.6	12.1	40.4	—	—
Graduate/PG/Pro	No.	4	16	31	14	—	6	71
	Row % age	5.6	22.5	43.7	19.7	—	8.5	28.4
	Col. % age	22.2	21.3	29.8	42.4	—	40.0	—
Column Total	No.	18	75	104	33	5	15	250
	% age	7.2	30.0	41.6	13.2	2.0	6.0	100

Note : PG = Post Graduate;
Pro = Professionals

Table 4.1*
Causes of communal riots

..... Category		<i>Demolition of Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Politically Preplanned</i>	<i>Builders</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	65	19	—	18	102
	Row % age	63.7	18.6	—	17.7	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	7	1	—	1	9
	Row % age	77.8	11.1	—	11.1	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	49	19	2	12	62
	Row % age	59.8	23.2	2.4	14.6	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	10	10	—	1	21
	Row % age	47.6	47.6	—	4.8	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	3	4	—	—	7
	Row % age	42.9	57.1	—	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	14	14	—	1	29
	Row % age	48.30	38.3	—	3.4	11.6
Column Total	No.	148	67	2	33	250
	% age	59.2	26.8	0.89	13.2	100.0

* Tables 4.1 to 4.12 relate to Section 4 of Chapter 10.

Table 4.2
Support of Demolition

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Not Bothered</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	15	87	—	—	102
	Row % age	14.7	85.3	—	—	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	3	6	—	—	9
	Row % age	33.3	66.7	—	—	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	21	59	2	—	82
	Row % age	25.6	72.0	—	—	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	1	20	—	—	21
	Row % age	25.6	72.0	2.4	—	32.8
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	2	5	—	—	7
	Row % age	28.6	71.4	—	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	4	23	1	1	29
	Row % age	13.8	79.3	3.4	3.4	11.6
Column Total	No.	46	200	3	1	250
	% age	18.4	80.0	1.2	0.4	100.0

Table 4.3
Birth place of Ram was the same place

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Can't Say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	39	6	42	15	102
	Row % age	38.2	5.9	41.2	14.7	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	3	—	4	2	9
	Row % age	33.3	—	44.4	22.2	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	35	8	26	13	82
	Row % age	42.7	9.8	31.7	15.9	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	4	4	7	6	21
	Row % age	19.0	19.0	33.3	28.6	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	—	2	4	1	7
	Row % age	—	28.6	57.1	14.3	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	11	7	3	8	29
	Row % age	37.9	24.1	10.3	27.6	11.6
Column Total	No.	92	27	86	45	250
	% age	36.8	10.8	34.4	18.0	100.0

Table 4.4
Affected by the riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Directly Affected</i>	<i>Indirectly Affected</i>	<i>Not Affected</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	7	14	81	102
	Row % age	6.9	13.7	79.4	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	3	—	6	9
	Row % age	33.3	—	66.7	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	29	21	32	82
	Row % age	35.4	25.6	39.0	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	2	14	5	21
	Row % age	9.5	66.7	23.8	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	1	5	1	7
	Row % age	14.3	71.4	14.3	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	6	13	10	29
	Row % age	20.7	44.8	34.5	11.6
Column Total	No.	48	67	135	250
	% age	19.2	26.8	54.0	100.0

Table 4.5
Religion is responsible for riots

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	55	44	3	102
	Row % age	53.9	43.1	2.9	20.9
Below Rs. 500	No.	5	3	1	9
	Row % age	55.6	33.3	11.1	3.9
Rs. 500-1000	No.	46	35	1	82
	Row % age	56.1	42.7	1.2	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	3	18	—	21
	Row % age	14.3	85.7	—	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	5	2	—	7
	Row % age	71.4	28.6	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	15	13	1	21
	Row % age	51.7	44.8	3.4	11.6
Column Total	No.	129	115	6	250
	% age	51.6	46.8	2.4	100.0

Table 4.6
Whether impressed by the action of Government Police or elected representatives

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	53	45	4	102
	Row % age	52.0	44.1	3.9	20.9
Below Rs. 500	No.	6	3	—	9
	Row % age	66.7	33.3	—	3.9
Rs. 500-1000	No.	39	40	3	82
	Row % age	47.6	48.8	3.7	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	4	14	3	21
	Row % age	19.0	66.7	14.3	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	3	4	—	7
	Row % age	42.9	57.1	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	7	20	2	29
	Row % age	24.1	60.0	6.9	11.6
Column Total	No.	112	126	12	250
	% age	44.8	50.4	4.8	100.0

Table 4.7
Should Muslims be sent to Pakistan

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	43	58	1	102
	Row % age	42.2	56.9	1.0	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	4	5	—	9
	Row % age	44.4	55.6	—	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	39	42	1	82
	Row % age	47.6	51.2	1.2	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	6	14	1	21
	Row % age	28.6	66.7	4.8	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	3	4	—	7
	Row % age	42.9	57.1	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	10	17	2	29
	Row % age	34.5	58.6	6.9	11.6
Column Total	No.	105	140	5	250
	% age	42.0	56.0	2.0	100.0

Table 4.8
Religious issues are more important than day to day problems

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Both Equal</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	10	90	—	2	102
	Row % age	9.8	88.2	—	2.0	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	1	8	—	—	9
	Row % age	11.1	88.9	—	—	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	6	68	1	7	82
	Row % age	7.3	82.9	1.2	8.5	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	2	18	—	1	21
	Row % age	9.5	85.7	—	4.8	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	—	7	—	—	7
	Row % age	—	100.0	—	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	—	29	—	—	29
	Row % age	—	100.0	—	—	11.6
Column Total	No.	19	220	1	10	250
	% age	7.6	88.0	0.4	4.0	100.0

Table 4.9
Are children affected by the riots?

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not At all</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	20	54	28	102
	Row % age	19.6	52.9	27.5	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	4	2	43	9
	Row % age	44.4	22.2	33.3	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	34	17	31	82
	Row % age	41.5	20.7	37.8	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	3	3	15	21
	Row % age	14.3	14.3	71.4	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	4	1	2	7
	Row % age	57.1	14.3	28.6	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	4	1	2	7
	Row % age	57.1	14.3	28.6	8.4
Column Total	No.	80	86	84	250
	% age	32.0	34.4	33.6	100.0

Table 4.10
Should women fight communalism?

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	21	75	6	102
	Row % age	20.6	73.5	5.9	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	2	7	—	9
	Row % age	22.2	77.8	—	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	6	72	4	82
	Row % age	7.3	87.8	4.9	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	2	16	3	21
	Row % age	9.5	76.2	14.3	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	1	6	—	7
	Row % age	14.3	85.7	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	1	6	—	7
	Row % age	17.2	75.9	6.9	11.6
Column Total	No.	37	198	15	250
	% age	14.8	79.2	6.0	100.0

Table 4.11
Women's causes become weaker if communal forces become stronger

<i>Category</i>		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No Comments</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	86	6	10	102
	Row % age	84.3	5.9	9.8	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	9	—	—	9
	Row % age	100.0	—	—	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	45	19	18	82
	Row % age	54.9	23.2	22.0	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	13	5	3	21
	Row % age	61.9	23.8	14.3	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	5	2	—	7
	Row % age	61.9	23.8	14.3	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	23	4	2	29
	Row % age	79.3	13.8	6.9	11.6
Column Total	No.	181	36	33	250
	% age	72.4	14.4	13.2	100.0

Table 4.12
Who is more responsible for communalisation

<i>Category</i>		<i>Hindu</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Both</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>Gundas</i>	<i>No Idea</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Not Working	No.	10	23	48	12	4	5	102
	Row % age	9.8	22.5	47	11.8	3.9	4.9	40.8
Below Rs. 500	No.	1	2	2	3	—	1	9
	Row % age	11.1	22.2	22.2	33.3	—	11.1	3.6
Rs. 500-1000	No.	3	34	30	11	—	4	82
	Row % age	3.7	41.5	36.6	13.2	—	4.9	32.8
Rs. 1001-2000	No.	1	6	10	2	1	1	21
	Row % age	4.8	28.6	47.7	9.5	4.8	4.8	8.4
Rs. 2001-2500	No.	—	2	4	1	—	—	7
	Row % age	—	28.6	57.1	14.3	—	—	2.8
Rs. 2501 and above	No.	3	8	10	4	—	4	29
	Row % age	10.3	27.6	34.5	13.8	—	13.8	11.6
Column Total	No.	18	75	104	33	5	15	250
	% age	7.2	30.0	41.5	13.2	2.0	6.0	100.0

Chapter 11

Communalism and Industrial Workers

The pre-planned demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 at Ayodhya by religious fanatics was not only an ugly blot on the nation's rich cultural heritage but, more significantly, also a massive blow to the country's age old secular ethos. The whole heinous event was preceded by weeks and months of propaganda campaigns that ultimately culminated into demolition of the monument. Just as Mohammed Ali Jinnah had whipped up communal frenzy leading eventually to the Partition, the Hindutavawadis today on whose behest the Sangh Parivar carried out the demolition have precipitated a major crisis that is taking the country virtually towards the edge of disintegration.

This crisis, however, is not a recent happening. It has been in the making right since the time of the British whose colonial policy of 'Divide and Rule' was pursued with active connivance of the Indian ruling class. One fall out of this was the systematic campaign in suppressing of the Muslim community that led willy-nilly to a divide between hitherto two fraternal communities.

Relationship between the two communities historically has, therefore, been one of regular conflicts. This conflict manifested itself in a much pronounced manner in the communal riots at Jabalpur in 1962, the first major communal conflagration in the post-Independence era. Subsequently communal riots erupted in Ahmedabad (1969), and

in Jalgaon and Kosa (between 1970-71). Ever since such conflicts and violence have become a regular feature. Its most gruesome manifestation, however, was the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

The whole Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy is really not a religious issue. Hindu revivalists over the years have exploited Hinduism as a political weapon and investment, to appease its adherents, with the ulterior motive of winning their votes during elections.

Communal groups and political parties like the RSS and the BJP, to defeat the Congress and capture power by any means, began a systematic campaign towards this goal by wooing Hindus for their votes. Appealing to their emotions, they called for the need for 'Hindu Unity' to establish 'Hindu Rashtra' or "Akhand Bharat'. They also raked up the Ramjanmabhoomi Babri Masjid controversy and campaigned vigorously on the issue during the 10th Lok Sabha elections which they won with considerably increased strength. The BJP today is working overtime to fulfil its single-minded goal of the Hindu Rashtra exploiting the Hindu vote bank, leaving no stone unturned in achieving it. Socio-economic, ethnic, religious and linguistic differences are further exploited on communal lines.

The demolition of the Babri Masjid has had a traumatic impact on the Muslim community as a whole. The government both at the states and central level miserably failed to take any preventive measures to stop demolition of the masjid despite having prior information in its possession about the plans to bring it down. As if to add insult to injury the government again failed in its constitutional responsibility to take a prompt and effective action against the offenders. This gross inaptitude and irresponsibility led to wild rumours getting inflamed with serious implications for the secular credentials of the Indian State and its survival as a unified nation.

An immediate result of this was the violence and mayhem that erupted all over the country. Muslims retaliated with vengeance in Bombay. The Shiv Sena on the other hand spread vitriolic hatred and vile propaganda, inciting communal passions even among ordinary Hindus who would never have earlier bothered to be swayed by such propaganda.

As a result of this communal flare up, men, women and children were killed rendering innumerable Hindus and Muslims forlorn and destitute. Some 1,50,000 people from Bombay migrated to other parts of the country. Muslims were the major victims in the riots. Moreover, in factories and industries, Muslim workers and employees were harassed and intimidated from attending duty. The Shiv Sena openly indulged in calumnies and slanders against the community. It even talked about the final solution.

The then Chief Minister, Sudhakar Naik, virtually fiddled while Bombay burned. Either out of impotency or design he failed miserably in checking the communal violence. The state media and the police force proved incapable of curbing the insanity and frenzy of the communal mobs. Moreover, there were significant number of incidents clearly indicating police connivance with anti-social elements and rioters; even indulging in anti-Muslim campaigns. Minorities especially the Muslims felt naturally most insecure and this insecurity continues to prevail despite normalcy having limped back.

Given the past and recent developments between the communities, it is only natural for any minority group, let alone Muslims, to be skeptical of brighter and safer future for themselves and their children. Little wonder, therefore, Muslims are beginning to migrate to Muslim-dominated areas. Of course, Hindu communalists would very much like, segregating the minorities into enclaves. Communalists would succeed in fine-tuning their evil design of rattling the Muslim community, economically and culturally, thus providing an Indian version of 'ethnic cleansing'.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Political campaigns on religious issues like the Ramjanmabhoomi have not only created a divide between people but has also communalised the mind of the people. The study of the impact of the riots on industrial workers was undertaken to ascertain whether in fact the Ramjanmabhoomi Babri Masjid issue has led to such a situation, i.e. the communalisation of the Hindu mind and, if so, to what extent.

The study is also aimed to assess the impact of BJP's propaganda on the industrial workers.

Section-1

Salient Features of the Study

- * To understand the communal trend among Hindus and the mode and extent to which they have been influenced by the communal propaganda of the BJP and the Shiv Sena.
- * To ascertain the impact of the riots on the industrial workers.
- * To find out the impact of the Mandal Commission.
- * To understand the attitudes of the industrial workers towards the political parties following the riots.
- * To find out the level and extent of religious sentiments and affiliations among the working class.

Hypothesis

The industrial workers are being communalised and swayed by the repeated campaigns of the BJP on religious issues.

Methodology

A random sample of 198 industrial workers was selected for the study. The sample is a highly stratified one in that the respondents are all males of the Hindu community and residents of Bombay city. As a random survey, the report is based on an uneven sample:

Among the 198 respondents, 149 (75.2 per cent) were from the upper caste, 24 (12.1 per cent) from the Other Backward Classes and 25 (12.6 per cent) from the Scheduled Castes category.

A close-ended questionnaire was the main tool used in data collection.

Industrial workers from all caste and regions, employed in various industries in Bombay were interviewed.

Content of the report

The data analysed is based on factors like caste, regional background and trade union affiliation.

Section 2 deals with workers opinion based on caste, with table 1.1 to 1.9. Similarly tables 2.1 to 2.9 provide statistical view of industrial workers from various regions but settled in Bombay.

Section 3 contains tables 3.1 to 3.9. It gives an insight into the opinion of workers belonging to trade union and non-trade-union categories. This data in combination with the variables mentioned above are used in drawing up a conclusion. The findings are found in the text of the report.

Section-2

Industrial Workers Opinion

The rapid rate of industrialisation in the metropolis of Bombay has led to large scale migration of people into the sub-urban areas, in search of their livelihood. Most of these migrants hail from the middle and lower income group and a few from the higher income brackets.

The questionnaire was designed to cover industrial workers on the basis of caste, region, and trade union.

The framework covered their views on the following aspects of the Ayodhya issue:

- (a) Support of the demolition of Babri Masjid
- (b) The birth place of Shri Ram in the context of the Babri Masjid
- (c) Support to the communal violence which followed the demolition of the Babri masjid
- (d) Going to the temple for pooja
- (e) Support to the Mandal Commission
- (f) Vote for communal or secular parties
- (g) Importance of religious issues vis-a-vis day-to-day problems like price rise, unemployment, poverty etc.
- (h) The solution of day-to-day problems like price rise, unemployment, poverty etc. by the BJP if elected
- (i) Opinion on prevention of Muslim industrial workers reporting to work.

Table 1.1
Caste-based Opinion on Demolition of the Babri Masjid

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Caste	No.	71	78	149
	Row % age	47.7	52.3	75.3
	Col. % age	78.0	72.9	—
Hindu OBC	No.	14	10	24
	Row % age	58.3	41.7	12.1
	Col. % age	15.4	9.3	—
Hindu SC	No.	6	19	25
	Row % age	24.0	76.0	12.6
	Col. % age	6.6	17.8	—
Column Total	No.	91	107	198
	% age	46.0	54.0	100.0

Notes : OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

A large majority of the workers opposed the demolition of the Babri Masjid. 58.3 per cent from the OBCs, however, supported the demolition. 47.7 per cent of the upper caste workers and 24 per cent of the SC workers. On the other hand 41.7 per cent of the OBCs opposed the demolition.

One reason for the majority of the upper caste and scheduled caste opposing the demolition emanates from their political consciousness.

The upper caste industrial workers resented the BJP's tactics of using the Hindu votes for attaining power by creating a divide among them on communal lines.

Being the lowest strata of the caste hierarchy, it was surprising that a wide section of the SC workers were politically conscious. They resented their all-round exploitation and oppression by higher castes and politicians. Hence the reason for 76 per cent of the SC respondents having opposed the demolition.

On the other hand, a majority of the OBC workers supported the demolition indicating their low level of political consciousness. Secondly, the sanskritisation process that has been going on among them has led them to identify themselves with the upper castes. Hence, their pro-demolition attitude, for maintaining the Hindu ethos.

Table 2.1
Region based opinion on Demolition of Babri Masjid

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	80	69	149
	Row % age	53.7	46.3	75.3
	Col. % age	87.9	64.5	—
Gujarati	No.	4	12	16
	Row % age	25.0	75.0	8.1
	Col. % age	4.4	11.2	—
North Indian	No.	5	12	17
	Row % age	29.4	70.6	8.6
	Col. % age	5.5	11.2	—
South Indian	No.	2	14	16
	Row % age	12.5	87.5	8.1
	Col.	2.2	13.1	—
Column Total	No.	91	107	198
	% age	46.0	54.0	100.0

The figures in the Table 2.1 clearly shows that 53.7 per cent of Maharashtrian workers supported the demolition where as 75 per cent of the Gujaratis, 70.6 per cent of the North Indian and 87.5 per cent of the South Indian Industrial workers opposed it. Only 46.3 per cent Maharashtrian workers in Bombay opposed the demolition.

Workers from the other regions supporting the demolition formed a lesser percentage to the workers from Maharashtra. This is largely the result of propaganda campaigns of the Shiv Sena (on the Ramjanmabhoomi Babri Masjid controversy). It campaigned furiously in support of Pro-Hindu cause leading a majority of the Maharashtrians to be pro-Shiv Sena.

Table 1.2 shows that a majority of the workers(i.e. 62.4 per cent of the upper caste and 62.5 of the OBCs strongly believed that the birthplace of Shri Ram was where the Babri Masjid was located. 8.1 per cent upper caste and 16.7 per cent OBC workers were not sure if Shri Ram was born on the site where the Babri Masjid once stood. A large number of SCs, that is 48 per cent opined that this was not the birthplace of Shri Ram.

8 per cent responded that they were not sure of the birth place of Shri Ram. 44 per cent believed that Shri Ram was born at the same spot where the Masjid stood.

The majority of the upper caste and OBC workers said that the birthplace of Shri Ram was where the mosque stood because of their religious belief that Shri Ram was born in Ayodhya. The fact, however, is that the common people generally do not refer to the particular spot where the Babri Masjid stood. On being questioned, they responded with a pre-conceived notion that Shri Ram was born somewhere in Ayodhya. This response could be due to their strong religious belief. History however does not provide any proof to confirm the fact that the site of the Babri Masjid was the birthplace of Shri Ram. The belief in Ayodhya being Shri Ram's birthplace is mainly due to the massive propaganda of the BJP.

The vast majority of the upper castes believed that the birthplace of Shri Ram was where the mosque stood. Table 1.1 shows that 52.3 per cent of the upper caste and 76 per cent of SC workers have also opposed the demolition.

This proves that a spirit of secularism and respect for the other religions prevailed among the upper caste and SC industrial workers.

Table 1.2
Caste Based Opinion on the Birth Place of Shri Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Where Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Not there</i>	<i>Dno't know</i>	<i>Can't say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Caste	No.	93	33	11	12	149
	Row % age	62.4	22.1	7.4	8.1	75.6
	Col. % age	78.2	71.7	64.7	75.0	—
Hindu OBC	No.	15	1	4	4	24
	Row % age	62.5	4.2	16.7	16.7	12.1
	Col. % age	12.6	2.2	23.5	25.0	—
Hindu SC	No.	11	12	2	—	25
	Row % age	44.0	48.0	8.0	—	12.6
	Col. % age	9.2	26.1	11.8	—	—
Column Total	No.	119	46	17	16	198
	% age	60.1	23.2	8.6	8.1	100.0

Notes : OBC = Other Backward Classes
 SC = Scheduled Castes

Table 2.2
Region Based Opinion on the Birth Place of Shri Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Where Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Not there</i>	<i>Dno't know</i>	<i>Can't say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	94	27	14	14	149
	Row % age	63.1	18.1	9.4	9.4	75.3
	Col. % age	79.0	58.7	82.5	87.5	—
Gujarati	No.	7	7	1	1	16
	Row % age	43.8	43.8	6.3	6.3	8.1
	Col. % age	5.9	15.2	5.9	6.3	—
North Indian	No.	12	4	—	1	17
	Row % age	70.6	23.5	—	5.9	8.6
	Col. % age	10.1	8.7	—	6.3	—
South Indian	No.	6	8	2	—	16
	Row % age	37.5	50.0	12.5	—	8.1
	Col. % age	5.0	17.4	11.8	—	—
Column Total	No.	119	46	17	16	198
	% age	60.1	23.2	8.6	8.1	100.0

The Table 2.2 shows that 63.1 per cent of Maharashtrais and 70.6 per cent of North Indians and 43.8 per cent of Gujarati workers in Bombay believe that Shri Ram was born at the same spot as the Babri Masjid. 8.1 per cent and 8.6 per cent of the total expressed that they could not say or know whether the birth place of Shri Ram was where the mosque stood. A vast majority of Maharashtraian workers have stated that Shri Ram was born at the same place where the Babri Masjid stood. Their response had nothing to do with their religious faith as 50.3 per cent of Maharashtrais do not visit the temple. Their responses were mainly due to the influences of the BJP and Shiv Sena communalising the issues. The responses of the majority of North Indian workers that Shri Ram was born at the same place as the Masjid could be attributed to their religious faith as 64.7 per cent of them visit the temple (see Table 2.4).

The rest i.e. the South Indian and Gujarati workers seem to be politically conscious because more than 50 per cent of them say that Shri Ram was not born at the same spot where the Babri Masjid was located.

Table 1.3
Caste-based Opinion on Communal Violence following the Demolition

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Cast	No.	16	122	149
	Row % age	10.7	89.3	75.3
	Col. % age	76.2	75.1	—
Hindu OBC	No.	3	21	24
	Row % age	12.5	87.5	12.1
	Col. % age	14.3	11.9	—
Hindu SC	No.	2	23	25
	Row % age	8.0	92.0	12.6
	Col. % age	9.5	13.0	—
Column Total	No.	21	177	198
	% age	10.6	89.4	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

Table 2.3
Region Based Opinion on Communal Violence following Demolition

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	20	129	149
	Row % age	13.4	86.6	75.3
	Col. % age	95.2	72.9	—
Gujarati	No.	—	16	16
	Row % age	—	100.0	8.1
	Col. % age	—	9.0	—
North Indian	No.	—	17	17
	Row % age	—	100.0	8.6
	Col. % age	—	9.6	—
South Indian	No.	1	15	16
	Row % age	6.3	93.8	8.1
	Col.	4.8	8.5	—
Column Total	No.	21	177	198
	% age	10.6	89.4	100.0

It is obvious from the caste-based opinion shown in Table 1.3 and region-based opinion in Table 2.3 that 89.4 per cent workers were against the communal riots. Yet only small percentage (10.6 per cent) belonging to the various castes and various regions favoured communal violence.

This could be due to their memories of Hindu/Muslim conflicts over the years since the 19th century. History of such conflicts may have shaped their attitudes. This is why it is seen that a small percentage of Hindu workers feel that a Hindu Rashtra can become a reality one day. The Shiv Sena strongly propagated communal violence.

Table 1.4
Caste-Based Opinion on Temple Visits

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Going</i>	<i>Not Going</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Cast	No.	78	71	149
	Row % age	52.3	47.7	75.3
	Col. % age	80.4	70.3	—
Hindu OBC	No.	16	8	24
	Row % age	66.7	33.3	12.1
	Col. % age	16.5	7.9	—
Hindu SC	No.	3	22	25
	Row % age	12.0	88.0	12.6
	Col. % age	3.1	21.8	—
Column Total	No.	97	101	198
	% age	49.0	51.0	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

The figures in Table 1.4 show that 52.3 per cent of the upper caste alongwith 66.7 per cent of the OBC workers visit the temple for puja.

It also shows that a minority 47.7 per cent workers of the upper caste and 33.3 per cent of OBC workers do not visit the temple.

These figures provide an insight into the religious faith of the workers. It enables one to point out whether the workers responded out of their religious belief or as a result of communalised mindset.

The vast majority of SC workers, 88 per cent of the SCs do not go to the temple.

Table 2.4
Region-Based Opinion on Temple Visits

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Going</i>	<i>Not Going</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	74	75	149
	Row % age	49.7	50.3	75.3
	Col. % age	76.3	74.3	—
Gujarati	No.	6	10	16
	Row % age	37.5	62.5	8.1
	Col. % age	6.2	9.9	—
North Indian	No.	11	6	17
	Row % age	64.7	35.3	8.6
	Col. % age	6.2	9.9	—
South Indian	No.	11	6	17
	Row % age	37.5	62.5	8.1
	Col.	11.3	5.9	—
Column Total	No.	97	101	198
	% age	49.0	51.0	100.0

A higher percentage of North Indian workers in Bombay (64.7 per cent) compared to Maharashtrian and South Indian industrial workers are found going to the temple.

Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.4 shows that a majority of Maharashtrian workers do not go to the temple but the majority of them support the demolition and said that Shri Ram born at the same spot where the Babri Masjid stood. It is clear that a majority of Maharashtrians, though not religious minded, have been communalised. A majority of the Gujaratis do not visit the temple but oppose the demolition. They were of the belief that Shri Ram was not born at the spot where the Babri Masjid stood. This shows a higher political consciousness among them and their respect for other religions.

The opinion of the majority of North Indian workers is that Shri Ram was born at the same spot but opposed the demolition though they were temple-going. This revealed their deep religious faith. Religious beliefs of the South Indian workers and their political consciousness had showed the same trend as the Gujarati workers who were politically conscious and seemed to be in favour of respecting other religions.

Table 1.5
Caste-Based Opinion on The Mandal Commission

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Do not Know</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Caste	No.	44	90	15	149
	Row % age	29.5	60.4	10.1	75.3
	Col. % age	58.7	90.0	65.2	—
Hindu OBC	No.	12	7	5	24
	Row % age	50.0	29.2	20.8	12.1
	Col. % age	16.0	7.0	21.7	—
Hindu SC	No.	19	3	3	25
	Row % age	76.0	12.0	12.0	12.6
	Col. % age	25.3	3.0	13.0	—
Column Total	No.	75	100	23	198
	% age	37.9	50.5	11.6	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

Table 1.5 shows that 60.4 per cent of the upper caste respondents opposed the issue of the implementation of the Mandal Commission. Only 29.5 per cent of them supported the issue. On the other hand 50 per cent of the OBCs and 76 per cent of the SC workers supported the implementation. It also appears that 10.1 per cent of the upper caste,

20.8 per cent of the OBCs, and 12 per cent from SC stated that they did not know whether they supported the Mandal Commission or not.

The former Prime Minister of India V.P. Singh attempted to implement the Mandal Commission Report and he projected this as an important step forward for the development of OBC and the SC. The Mandal Commission gave 27 per cent reservation for OBC. The Brahmins who make up 3 per cent of the Indian population and who control the nation's economic social, political and educational resources agitated against the implementation of the report by mobilising students. It is also alleged that V.P. Singh had an eye on the OBC and SC votes. Consequently, a majority of the OBC and SC industrial workers are in favour of the implementation of the report.

Table 2.5
Region-Based Opinion on the Mandal Commission

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Donot Know</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	59	75	15	149
	Row % age	36.6	50.3	10.1	75.3
	Col. % age	78.7	75.0	65.2	—
Gujarati	No.	3	9	4	16
	Row % age	18.8	56.3	25.0	8.1
	Col. % age	4.0	9.0	17.4	—
North Indian	No.	5	10	2	17
	Row % age	29.4	58.8	11.8	8.6
	Col. % age	6.7	10.0	8.7	—
South Indian	No.	8	6	1	16
	Row % age	50.0	37.5	12.5	8.1
	Col.	10.7	6.0	8.7	—
Column Total	No.	75	100	23	198
	% age	37.9	50.5	11.6	100.0

Table 2.5 shows that 50 per cent of the South Indian workers were in favour of the implementation of the report whereas above 50 per cent Maharashtra, Gujarati and North Indian workers were against its implementation.

A total of 23 respondents from all the four regions i.e. 11.6 per cent did not have any opinion. This response could be because either these workers did not know the issue or some did not know whether to support or oppose the implementation.

Table 1.6
Caste-Based Opinion on Religious Issues vs Every day Problems

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Both are Important</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Cast	No.	21	113	15	149
	Row % age	14.1	75.8	10.1	75.3
	Col. % age	84.0	73.4	78.9	—
Hindu OBC	No.	2	19	3	24
	Row % age	8.3	79.2	12.5	12.1
	Col. % age	8.0	12.3	15.8	—
Hindu SC	No.	2	22	1	25
	Row % age	8.0	88.0	4.0	12.6
	Col. % age	8.0	14.3	5.3	—
Column Total	No.	25	154	19	198
	% age	12.6	77.8	9.6	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

Table 2.6 confirms the general understanding that the religious issues like Ramjanmabhoomi Babri Masjid hardly had any importance for the common people especially for salaried workers who live purely on their wage earnings. 154 workers, i.e., 77.8 per cent respondents of the total, felt that their day to day problems were more important to

them compared to religious issues. About 9.6 per cent expressed that both issues were equally important. For 12.6 per cent respondents, religious issues were of prime importance, showing their strong religious faith.

During the riots most of the workers were unable to report to work as the industries remained closed when the communal passions had taken over the city. The workers' income decreased, lowering their purchasing power. Religious issues do not solve the day to day problems. The result of the demolition of the masjid affected these workers and the common people. The politicians who instigated them remained unaffected. Most of the industrial workers lead a hand to mouth existence. Religious issues therefore are secondary to their every day problems.

Table 2.6
Religion-Based Opinion on Religious Issues Vs Everyday Problems

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Both are Important</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	22	111	16	149
	Row % age	14.0	74.5	10.7	75.3
	Col. % age	88.0	72.1	4.2	—
Gujarati	No.	—	15	1	16
	Row % age	—	93.8	6.3	8.1
	Col. % age	—	9.7	5.3	—
North Indian	No.	1	14	2	17
	Row % age	5.9	82.4	11.8	8.6
	Col. % age	4.0	9.1	10.5	—
South Indian	No.	2	14	—	16
	Row % age	12.5	87.5	—	8.1
	Col. % age	8.0	9.1	—	—
Column Total	No.	25	154	19	198
	% age	12.6	77.8	9.6	100.0

It is seen from Table 2.6 that over 77.8 per cent of the workers from all the regions stated that their day to day problems were more important than religious issues. Not a single Gujarati was found to show any primary concern on the temple or masjid issue.

Table 1.7
Caste-Based Opinion on Voting Preference

<i>Categories</i>		<i>To Communal Party</i>	<i>To Secular Party</i>	<i>To no one</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Caste	No.	68	77	4	149
	Row % age	45.6	51.7	2.7	75.3
	Col. % age	81.0	70.6	80.0	—
Hindu OBC	No.	14	9	1	24
	Row % age	58.3	37.5	4.2	12.1
	Col. % age	8.0	12.3	20.0	—
Hindu SC	No.	2	23	—	25
	Row % age	8.0	92.0	—	12.6
	Col. % age	2.4	21.1	—	—
Column Total	No.	84	109	5	198
	% age	42.4	55.1	2.5	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes

SC = Scheduled Castes

It is significant to note that 77 respondents, i.e. 51.7 per cent of the total number of workers, were inclined to vote for secular parties. 58.3 per cent, i.e. 14 respondents, belonging to the OBC stated that they would vote for communal parties. The view contradicts the general understanding that the majority of the upper caste generally vote for communal parties and that the OBCs vote for parties with secular credentials. The 23 respondents, i.e. 92 per cent, of SCs stated that they would vote for secular parties. This confirms the fact that the SC workers were politically conscious.

Table 2.7
Region-Based Opinion on Voting Preference

<i>Categories</i>		<i>To Communal Party</i>	<i>To Secular Party</i>	<i>To no one</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	77	67	5	149
	Row % age	51.7	45.0	3.4	75.3
	Col. % age	91.7	61.5	100.0	—
Gujarati	No.	3	13	—	16
	Row % age	18.8	81.3	—	8.1
	Col. % age	3.6	11.9	—	—
North Indian	No.	2	15	—	17
	Row % age	11.8	88.2	—	8.6
	Col. % age	2.4	13.8	—	—
South Indian	No.	2	14	—	16
	Row % age	12.5	87.5	—	8.1
	Col. % age	2.4	12.8	—	—
Column Total	No.	84	109	5	198
	% age	42.4	55.1	2.5	100.0

It is found from Table 2.7 that 51.7 per cent of Maharashtra workers would like to vote for communal oriented parties and 45 per cent of them for secular/based parties. 3.4 per cent will not vote for any party. And 85 per cent of Gujarati, North Indian and South Indian workers desired to vote for secular parties.

The voting preference of the Maharashtra workers stems from the influence on them of the Shiv Sena and BJP and their call for a Hindu Rashtra. The Shiv Sena has also been propagating the cause of Maharashtra for Maharashtra. It had earlier protested against the migration of workers from other states and regions.

18.8 per cent Gujaratis, 11.8 per cent North Indians and 12.5 per cent South Indians are inclined to vote for communal parties, indicating that communalisation has taken a hold on the people of these regions. 3.4 per cent of Maharashtra workers stated that they would not vote for any party as they felt that democracy has failed in achieving its objectives. No party in power made any difference to them as no political party lived up to its election pledges.

Table 1.8
Caste-Based Opinion on Elections

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Partly Problems Solved</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Cast	No.	10	125	14	149
	Row % age	6.7	83.9	9.4	75.3
	Col. % age	76.9	74.0	87.5	—
Hindu OBC	No.	1	21	2	24
	Row % age	4.2	87.5	8.3	12.1
	Col. % age	7.7	12.4	12.5	—
Hindu SC	No.	2	23	—	25
	Row % age	8.0	92.0	—	12.6
	Col. % age	15.4	13.6	—	—
Column Total	No.	13	169	16	198
	% age	6.6	85.4	8.1	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes
SC = Scheduled Castes

On the possibility of the BJP coming to power at the Centre, on winning the elections 169 respondents, i.e. 85.4 per cent of total workers, felt their problems would not be solved. 13 respondents, i.e. 6.6 per cent believed that their problems would be solved.

16 respondents, i.e. 8.1 believed that their problems would only be partly solved.

The BJP propagated for Hindu unity to establish a Hindu Rashtra through the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue. The findings, however, show that the majority community is aware that the BJP would not be able to solve their problems if they won the forthcoming elections.

The reason for the majority not willing to vote for the BJP was that they were convinced that no party was interested in the overall welfare of the masses. For them political parties only had their own vested interest. They have witnessed this over the years.

Table 2.8
Region-Based Opinion on Elections

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Partly Problems Solved</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	12	124	13	149
	Row % age	8.1	83.2	8.7	75.3
	Col. % age	92.3	73.4	81.3	—
Gujarati	No.	—	15	1	16
	Row % age	—	93.8	6.3	8.1
	Col. % age	—	8.9	6.3	—
North Indian	No.	—	16	1	17
	Row % age	—	1.94	5.9	8.6
	Col. % age	—	8.3	6.3	—
South Indian	No.	1	14	1	16
	Row % age	6.3	87.5	6.3	8.1
	Col. % age	7.7	8.3	6.3	—
Column Total	No.	13	169	16	198
	% age	6.6	85.4	8.1	100.0

On the possibility of the BJP coming to power at the Centre on winning the Elections, 169 respondents i.e. 85.4 per cent workers believed that their problems would not be solved while 8.1 per cent Maharashtrian workers and 6.3 per cent South Indian workers in Bombay expressed that their problems would only be partly solved.

Table 1.9
Caste-Based Opinion on Work in Industries

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Right</i>	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Hindu Upper Caste	No.	20	129	149
	Row % age	13.4	86.6	75.3
	Col. % age	80.0	74.6	—
Hindu OBC	No.	3	21	24
	Row % age	12.5	87.5	12.1
	Col. % age	12.0	12.1	—
Hindu SC	No.	2	23	25
	Row % age	8.0	92.0	12.6
	Col. % age	8.0	13.3	—
Column Total	No.	25	173	198
	% age	12.6	87.4	100.0

Notes: OBC = Other Backward Classes

SC = Scheduled Castes

Table 1.9 indicates the impact of the communally tinged campaigns of the BJP and Shiv Sena. On prevention of Muslim workers from Reporting 173 of the 198 workers expressed that it was wrong to prevent Muslim workers from reporting to duty. A small number i.e. 12.6 per cent said that it was appropriate to prevent them from reporting to work. 13.4 per cent workers of the upper castes, 12.5 per cent from OBCs, and 8 per cent from SCs stated that Muslim workers should be prevented from reporting to work. This attitude stems from the fact that these workers were members of the Shiv Sena

which dominates most of the industries. Besides many of these Shiv Sena workers were actively involved in the riots.

Table 2.9
Region-Based Opinion on Work in Industries

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Right</i>	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Maharashtrian	No.	23	126	149
	Row % age	15.4	84.5	75.3
	Col. % age	92.0	72.8	—
Gujarati	No.	1	15	16
	Row % age	6.3	93.8	12.1
	Col. % age	4.0	8.7	—
North Indian	No.	—	17	17
	Row % age	—	100.0	8.6
	Col. % age	—	13.3	—
South Indian	No.	1	15	16
	Row % age	6.3	93.8	—
	Col. % age	4.0	8.7	—
Column Total	No.	25	173	198
	Col. % age	12.6	87.4	100.0

Table 2.9 indicates the impact of the communal tinged campaigns of the BJP and Shiv Sena. On prevention of Muslim workers from reporting 173 of workers condemned the prevention of Muslim workers from reporting to work in the factories.

17 per cent respondents of North India also condemned this. The workers are against the communal behaviour of the Management and were conscious of the aims of the politicians in trying to divide the workers on communal lines.

Section-3

Opinion Based on Trade Union Affiliation

Given the existing socio-political realities in the country today, the status and function of trade unions is an enigmatic one. Today TUs are often exploited and manipulated by their leaders for their narrow vested interest. TUs, are now affiliated to political parties like the BJP, Shiv Sena, the Congress etc. In Maharashtra the Shiv Sena has a majority hold in most of the industries. In this survey, 61 respondents of a total of 198 workers i.e. 30.8 per cent were members of the trade unions. However, 69.2 per cent did not identify themselves with any TUs.

Table 3.1
Demolition of the Babri Masjid

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	32	29	61
	Row % age	52.5	47.5	30.8
	Col. % age	53.2	27.1	—
Non Members	No.	59	78	137
	Row % age	43.1	56.9	69.2
	Col. % age	64.8	72.9	—
Column Total	No.	91	107	198
	% age	46.0	54.0	100.0

The above table clearly shows that 32 TU members, i.e. 52.5 per cent workers, supported the demolition, while 29 TU members, i.e. 47.5 per cent, opposed it. Those supporting the demolition belonged to Shiv Sena unions. Those opposing it were from non-Shiv Sena Unions. 59 non-TU members respondents, i.e. 43.1 per cent, supported the demolition, while 78 non-TU members, i.e. 56.9 per cent opposed it. This reveals that workers outside Trade Union membership were less biased. Workers being conscious of the BJP designs of trying to split them on communal lines opposed the demolition.

Table 3.2
The Birthplace of Shri Ram

<i>Category</i>		<i>Where Babri Masjid</i>	<i>Not there</i>	<i>Don't know</i>	<i>Can't say</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	34	5	4	8	61
	Row % age	55.7	24.6	6.6	13.1	30.8
	Col. % age	28.6	32.6	23.5	50.0	—
Non Members	No.	85	31	13	8	137
	Row % age	62.0	22.6	9.5	5.8	69.2
	Col. % age	71.4	67.4	76.5	50.0	—
Column Total	No. .	119	46	17	16	198
	Col. % age	60.1	23.2	8.6	8.1	100.0

Table 3.2 confirms that 119 workers were convinced that the birthplace of Shri Ram was where the Babri Masjid was located. They were mostly Maharashtrians and North Indians who were of the upper caste and middle caste.

16 respondents, i.e. 8.1 per cent opined that they could not say where Shri Ram was born; 8.6 per cent did not know the birthplace of Shri Ram and 23.3 per cent were convinced that Ram was not born at the same spot where the Babri Masjid stood. Regardless of their TU status, the majority of the workers seemed motivated.

Table 3.3
Communal Violence as Result of Demolition

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	6	55	61
	Row % age	9.8	90.2	30.8
	Col. % age	28.6	31.1	—
Non Members	No.	15	122	137
	Row % age	10.9	89.1	69.2
	Col. % age	71.4	68.9	—
Column Total	No.	21	177	198
	% age	10.6	89.4	100.0

The majority of the workers numbering 177, i.e. 89.4 per cent both TU and non-TU workers, did not support the communal violence; 90.2 per cent TU workers and 89.1 per cent non-TU workers did not support the violence. A small percentage, 10.6 per cent of the total workers supported the violence which seems to be due to the fact that the history of conflicts between the two communities has shaped their attitudes.

Table 3.4
Puja performance in the Mandir

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Going</i>	<i>Not Going</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	36	25	61
	Row % age	59.0	41.0	30.8
	Col. % age	37.1	24.8	—
Non Members	No.	61	76	137
	Row % age	44.5	55.5	69.2
	Col. % age	62.9	75.2	—
Column Total	No.	97	101	198
	% age	49.0	51.0	100.0

It is found that 36 TU members, i.e. 59 per cent visited the Mandir whereas 25 out of 61 members did not. Only 44.5 per cent workers, who were non-TU members, visited mandir and 55.5 per cent did not visit the temple.

Table 3.5
Mandal Commission

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Support</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Donot Know</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	26	32	3	61
	Row % age	42.5	52.5	4.9	30.8
	Col. % age	76.9	74.0	87.5	—
Non Members	No.	49	68	20	137
	Row % age	35.8	49.2	14.6	69.2
	Col. % age	65.3	68.0	87.0	—
Column Total	No.	75	100	20	198
	% age	37.9	50.5	11.6	100.0

Table 3.5 shows that 50.5 per cent members and non-members of the TUs opposed the issue of the Mandal Commission, 4.9 per cent of the workers from TUs and 14.6 per cent workers of non-trade union workers said that they did not know whether they support the Report. There could be two reasons for this. Either they did not know what the issue was all about or they wanted to be non-committal. A majority of the workers from the OBCs and SCs however were Pro-Mandal Commission.

Table 3.6
Importance of Religious Issues Vs Everyday Problems

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Important</i>	<i>Not Important</i>	<i>Both are Important</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	11	44	6	61
	Row % age	18.0	72.1	9.8	30.8
	Col. % age	44.0	28.6	31.6	—
Non Members	No.	14	110	13	137
	Row % age	10.2	80.3	9.5	69.2
	Col. % age	56.0	71.4	68.4	—
Column Total	No.	25	154	19	198
	% age	12.6	77.8	9.6	100.0

The figures in Table 3.6 confirmed that the trend of the opinion was similar to one based on castes and religions. The majority of the workers' main concern was their day to day problems i.e. to earn their livelihood. They hardly bothered about religion and religious issues. 9.6 per cent worker's opined that both issues religious and day-to-day problems were equally important. They come from all the three castes and were not members of any trade unions. The responses show that a small percentage of workers were motivated.

Table 3.7
Voting Pattern

<i>Categories</i>		<i>To Communal Party</i>	<i>To Secular Party</i>	<i>To no one</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	30	29	2	61
	Row % age	49.2	47.5	3.3	30.8
	Col. % age	35.7	26.6	40.0	—
Non Members	No.	54	80	3	137
	Row % age	39.4	58.4	2.2	69.2
	Col. % age	64.3	73.4	60.0	—
Column Total	No.	84	109	5	198
	% age	42.4	55.1	2.5	100.0

Majority of the TU members seem to vote for communal parties. At the same time, majority of non-TU members, i.e. 58.4 per cent, cast their votes for secular parties. Voting for communal parties stems from the fact that many of the TU members were affiliated to the Shiv Sena unions. However, 109 out of the 198 still remain secular whereas 42.4 per cent remain communal. When they are not prevented from campaigning on communal issues the secular trend could gradually change into one of the communal. This is because religious issues easily arouse communal passions.

It is note worthy that 85.4 per cent of workers feel that their problems will not be solved if the BJP came to power after elections. Among them 83.6 per cent are members of TUs and 86.1 per cent were not members of any TUs. The opinion of 6 per cent workers was that if the BJP wins the forthcoming elections it would solve their problems. This small number seems to have been swayed by the propaganda of the BJP on the Ramjanmabhoom-babri Masjid issue.

Table 3.8
Election

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Problems will be Solved</i>	<i>Partly Problems Solved</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	4	51	6	61
	Row % age	6.6	83.6	9.8	30.8
	Col. % age	30.8	30.2	37.5	—
Non Members	No.	9	118	10	137
	Row % age	6.6	86.1	7.3	69.2
	Col. % age	69.2	69.8	62.5	—
Column Total	No.	13	169	16	198
	% age	6.6	85.4	8.1	100.0

Table 3.9
Prevention of Muslim Workers from Reporting to Industry

<i>Categories</i>		<i>Right</i>	<i>Wrong</i>	<i>Row Total</i>
Members of TUs	No.	9	52	61
	Row % age	14.8	85.2	30.8
	Col. % age	36.5	30.1	—
Non Members	No.	16	121	137
	Row % age	11.7	88.9	69.2
	Col. % age	64.2	69.9	—
Column Total	No.	25	173	198
	% age	12.6	87.4	100.0

173 workers, i.e. 87.4 per cent condemned the prevention of Muslim workers from entering the industries. In spite of all the violence and death from the riots, 12.6 per cent workers expressed the view that

it was right to prevent Muslim workers from entering the industries. The reason could be the influence of communal propoganda by political parties.

Conclusion

It was assumed that the communal issues like Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy had communalised the people's minds. It was with this assumption that we had undertaken a study to assess the impact of the communal riots on the industrial workers. It is a healthy sign, as our findings indicate that the minds of the majority of Hindu workers were not communalised to the extent imagined.

A vast majority of the industrial workers believed that Shri Ram was born exactly where the Babri Masjid stood. This belief is attributed to their religious faith as they visited the temples in their areas regularly. Only a small number appears to be prejudiced. The majority of the workers, inspite of their belief that Shri Ram was born at the same spot where the Babri Masjid stood, had respect for other religions. This is evident from the fact that a large number of workers opposed the demolition and were against the communal violence. The majority of the industrial workers from different castes and religions did not support communal violence. They were against the prevention of Muslim workers from reporting to work irrespective of whether they did belong or did not belong to trade unions. The workers in general were not bothered about religious issues like the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid. Their main concern was their day-to-day problem.

The findings also showed that a majority felt that their problems would not be solved if the BJP won the next elections. These results were found to be true with the workers regardless of whether or not they belonged to any trade union.

It is not surprising to note that a majority of SCs supported the implementation of the Mandal Commission report. The report was for the benefit of the OBCs as it projects 27 per cent reservations for them. 20 per cent of OBC respondents opposed the Mandal report. This showed that they were not aware of the benefits of the report.

The inference drawn from this survey was that political consciousness was prevalent among the majority of the industrial workers. The trend identified from majority of respondents was that the political campaigns by politicians through communal issues had not been effective to create communalisation among the workers.

The politicians used communal issues to incite communal passions among the masses. Therefore the suggestion is that every politician should be legally prevented from campaigning on communal issues. In the meantime it is also essential to provide political education to the masses in order to prevent them from falling victims to further communalisation

Causalties in communal riots in India during 1950-1994

Year	No. of Incidents	Killed					Killed in					Injured					Injured in					Arrested				Total
		H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	O	T			
1950	1	16	34	—	1	51	—	—	—	—	110	146	—	—	256	—	—	—	—	1339	166	154	1659	1966		
1961	1	—	—	—	—	55	—	—	14	14	—	—	—	—	158	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1003	1230		
1962	1	—	14	—	—	14	—	—	14	14	—	—	—	—	64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	92		
1964	2	—	—	—	7	638	56	—	—	56	—	53	5	4	463	11	—	—	11	1	—	—	1	1169		
1967	4	1	2	—	—	176	3	—	—	3	20	—	142	—	422	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1000	1601		
1968	7	—	—	—	—	62	3	3	—	6	—	—	—	—	92	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1133	1293		
1969	3	—	—	—	—	431	26	—	—	26	11	—	—	—	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2381	2849		
1970	5	—	19	—	—	145	1	—	19	20	—	—	—	—	7	7	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	179		
1972	2	—	—	—	—	23	5	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	28		
1973	1	—	—	—	—	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	600	649		
1974	1	—	—	—	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	300	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	310		
1978	5	—	11	—	—	43	10	3	3	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	59		

Contd/-

Year	No. of Incidents	Killed					Killed in					Injured					Injured in					Arrested				Total							
		H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	O	T										
1979	5	—	—	—	—	—	192	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	531	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1215	1938
1980	11	—	2	3	—	172	7	—	19	26	—	—	—	—	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	206
1981	2	—	—	—	—	75	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	782	957
1982	20	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	600	602
1984	26	11	—	4	107	3341	32	—	127	32	—	—	—	—	11	—	—	11	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3395	
1985	1	—	6	—	—	43	6	—	8	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	57	
1986	8	14	—	—	—	121	—	—	13	13	—	—	97	—	200	—	—	97	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	334	
1987	4	72	110	—	—	372	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	572	
1989	1	—	—	—	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	
1990	6	35	—	—	—	1301	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4001	9302
1991	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7500	—	—	—	—	—	7500	7500
1992	13	—	800	—	—	1215	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3000	—	—	—	—	—	8000	14,215

Contd/-

Year	No. of Incidents	Killed					Killed in					Injured					Injured in					Arrested				Total		
		H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	P	O	T	PF	S	OM	T	H	M	O	T					
1993	3	—	—	—	—	315	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3700	4015
1994	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
1994	7	11	12	6	—	40	10	18	—	28	48	25	23	430	—	55	2	—	57	11	59	—	—	—	—	420	975	
	134	149	998	7115	8906	150	6	218	247	141	199	244	4	11,662	18	0	108	29	11,840	366	154	—	—	—	—	33,776	54,620	

- Sources: 1. Keesing's Contemporary Archivist Keesing's Publication, London WIM 5 RN 1948-50, 1961-64, 1967-72, 1974-75, 1978-75, 1978-82, 1984-90, 1993-94.
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Notes: H = Hindus M = Muslim P = Police O = Others T = Total PF = Police Firing S = Stabbing OM = Other Methods

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