

## Rising Incidence of Communal Violence in Modern India-A Matter of Concern

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### **Abstract:**

There are mainly two forms of violence; Passive and Physical. The practice of passive violence is a daily affair, consciously and unconsciously. Again, the fuel ignites the fire of physical violence. Violence word has been derived from its Sanskrit root, “*himsa*”, meaning injury. In the midst of hyperactive violence, the one who possess nonviolence is blessed. Blessed is the man who can perceive the law of *ahimsa* (*nonviolence*) in the midst of the raging fire of *himsa* all around him. To achieve communal unity, it is emphatically stressed upon by various social reformers that ethical teachings in school curriculum, as the fundamentals of ethics are common to all religions. The conflict of the creeds and religious discriminations, must be stopped. It should be preached that we must eradicate from our midst the secret pride that our religion is truer than the other religions. In modern India, if problems related to communal violence are looked upon without any biasness in a national spirit and the solutions to the communal violence are followed and implemented with a cooperative and brotherhood spirit as suggested by various social reformers from time to time, then this problem of communal violence can be curtailed down to a great extent in future.

**Keywords:** Communal, Himsa, Hindu, Mankind, Muslim, Riots, Unity, Violence, Vision.

### **Introduction:**

It was believed that in the post partition period, people in India would be able to live without facing the ill effects of communal violence. But the multiplicity of factors leading to rising incidence of communal riots proved that it was the false hope and people of India couldn't live without it except the decade of fifty. Various micro the macro factors integrated together to create non ideological and ideological differences among different communities and thus resulted in communal riots. There are mainly two forms of violence; Passive and Physical. The practice of passive violence is a daily affair, consciously and unconsciously. Again, the fuel ignites the fire of physical violence. Violence word has been derived from its Sanskrit root, “*himsa*”, meaning injury. Various social reformers from time to time have objected to violence because it perpetuates hatred. A true nonviolence activist accepts violence on himself without inflicting it on

another. Perpetrators of violence are the products of social disintegration. Actually violence is not a natural tendency of humans, it is a learned experience caused due to chain of actions and counter-actions. Saxena (1991) pointed out that Indian Muslims developed the psychology of being the deprived group. The internal division promoted communal violence and social tension at the mass level. Such an incident led to a chain reaction ending in violence.

Singh (2004) laid down the point that rise of modern politics and social classes occurred in the same period and the crisis of colonial economy began to be largely felt by different classes and communities of India. Colonial Economy, under development and economic stagnation produced conditions conducive to the growth of internal divisions and Antagonism within the society.

### **Objectives of current paper:**

1. To show the incidence of communal violence in Modern India
2. To discuss the causes of the communal violence
3. To suggest solutions for eradicating communal violence

### **Section 1**

#### **Scenario in Modern India-totally defeating the concept of Communal Unity:**

Large-scale communal violence and riots have periodically occurred in India since its independence from British colonial rule. The aftermath of the Partition of India in 1947 saw huge bloodshed throughout the nation. Since then, India has witnessed sporadic large-scale violence sparked by underlying tensions between sections of the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities. These conflicts also stem from the extreme ideologies prevalent in certain sections of the population. Since independence, India has always maintained a constitutional commitment to secularism; still various cases of communal violence have been witnessed in the country.

The major amongst them are:

- **Gujarat communal riots (1969)**
- **Anti-Sikh Riots (1984)**
- **Anti-Hindu violence**
  - 1998 Chamba massacre
  - 2002 Fidayeen attacks on Raghunath temple
  - 2002 Akshardham Temple attack
  - 2006 Varanasi bombings
- **Anti-Muslim violence**

- 2002 Gujarat riots
- **Anti-Christian violence**
  - 2000 Acts of religious violence against Christians
  - 2007 Orissa attacks on Christians in Kandhamal and other districts
  - 2008 Violence against the Christian community in Karnataka
- **Ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus**
- **Violence in North-East India Militancy**

### **Statistics:**

Over 2005 to 2009 period, an average of 130 people died every year from communal riots, and 2,200 were injured. In pre-partitioned India, over the 1920–1940 periods, numerous communal violence incidents were recorded, an average of 381 people died per year during religious violence, and thousands were injured.

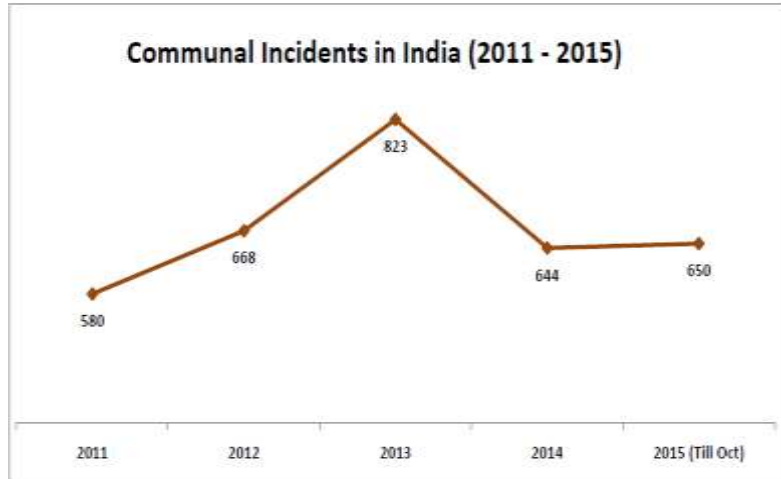
According to PRS India, 24 out of 35 states and union territories of India reported instances of religious riots over the 5 year 2005–2009 periods. However, most religious riots resulted in property damage but no injuries or fatalities. The highest incidences of communal violence in the 5-year period were reported from Maharashtra (700). The other three states with high counts of communal violence over the same 5-year period were Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. Together, these four states accounted for 64% of all deaths from communal violence. Adjusted for widely different population per state, the highest rate of communal violence fatalities were reported by Madhya Pradesh, at 0.14 death per 100,000 people over 5 years, or 0.03 deaths per 100,000 people per year. There was a wide regional variation in rate of death caused by communal violence per 100,000 people. The India-wide average communal violence fatality rate per year was 0.01 person per 100,000 people per year. The world's average annual death rate from intentional violence, in recent years, has been 7.9 per 100,000 people.

For 2012, there were 93 deaths in India from many incidences of communal violence (or 0.007 fatalities per 100,000 people). Of these, 48 were Muslims, 44 Hindus and one police official. The riots also injured 2,067 people, of which 1,010 were Hindus, 787 Muslims, 222 police officials and 48 others. Over 2013, 107 people were killed during religious riots (or 0.008 total fatalities per 100,000 people), of which 66 were Muslims, 41 were Hindus. The various riots in 2013 also injured 1,647 people including 794 Hindus, 703 Muslims and 200 policemen.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, a total of 3365 communal incidents occurred in the country from 2011 to October, 2015. This is an average of 58 incidents a month. Eight states Bihar, Gujarat,

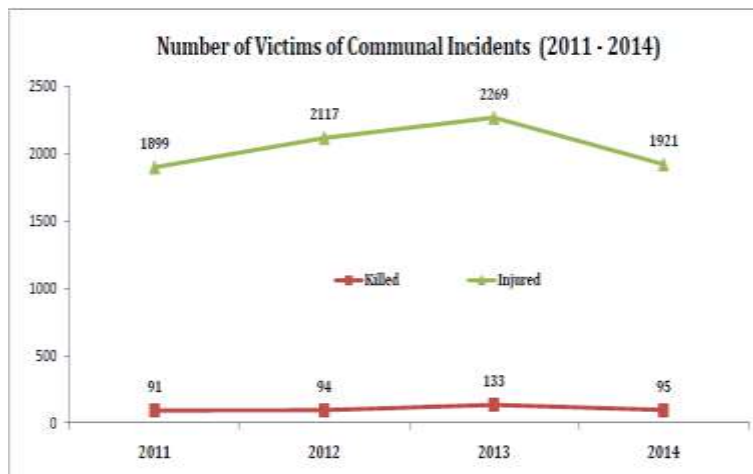
Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh account for 85% of all the incidents. A glance at following diagrams makes the situation clear.

**Diagram 1:**



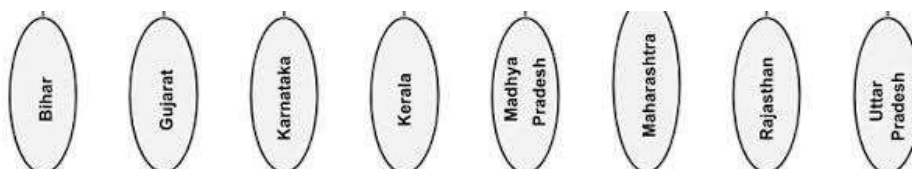
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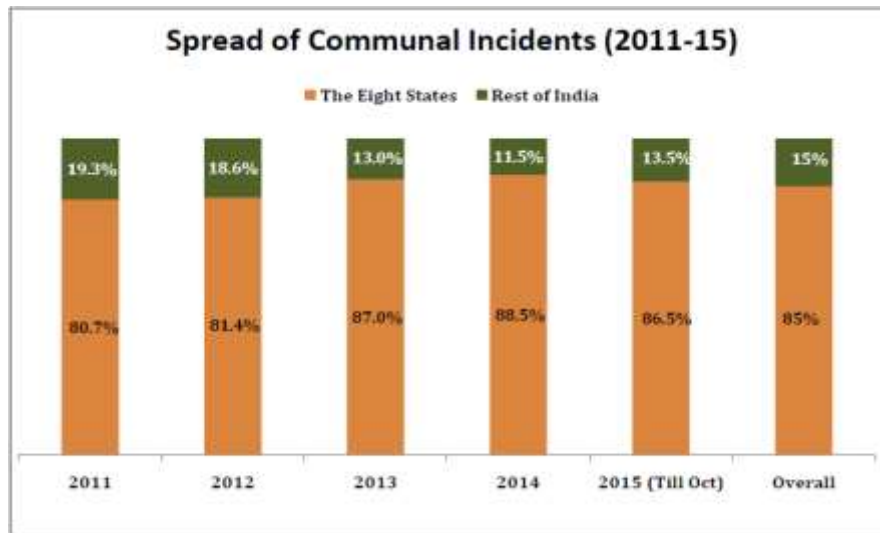
**Diagram 2:**



Source: [www.factly.in](http://www.factly.in)

**Diagram 3:**





Source: [www.factly.in](http://www.factly.in)

## Section 2

### Reasons for Communal Violence:

There are a number of causes, which are responsible for the prevalence of communalism. Some of two important causes of communalism are discussed below.

- **Tendency of the Minorities:**

The Muslims fail to be intermingled in the national mainstream. Most of them do not participate in the secular nationalistic politics and insist on maintaining for separate identity. The elite among the Muslims have failed to generate the appropriate national ethos.

- **Orthodox Ideology:**

The orthodox ideology of fundamentalists propagate that they have a distinct entity with their own cultural pattern, personal laws and thought. There are strong elements of conservatism and such feeling has prevented them from accepting the concept of secularism and religious tolerance.

- **Design of the Leaders:**

Communalism has flourished in India because the communalist leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities desire to flourish it in the interest of their communities. The British rule which produced the divide and rule policy, separate electorate on the basis of religion, strengthened the basis of communalism in India.

- **Weak Economic Status:**

Many people from minorities in India have failed to adopt the scientific and technological education. Due to their educational backwardness, they have not been represented sufficiently in the public service, industry and trade etc. This causes the feeling of relative deprivation and such feelings contain the seeds of communalism.

- **Geographical Causes:**

The territorial settlement of different religious groups especially Hindus, Muslims and Christians causes in them wide variation in the mode of life, social standards and belief system. Most of these patterns are contradictory and this may cause communal tension.

- **Social Causes:**

Cultural similarity is a powerful factor in fostering amicable relations between any different social groups. But, the social institutions, customs and practices of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are so divergent that they think themselves to be distinct communities.

- **Negative Impact of Mass Media:**

The messages relating to communal tension or riot in any part of the country spread through the mass media. This results in further tension and riots between two rival religious groups. Communalism was rooted in modern economic, political and social institutions where new identities were emerging in a haphazard manner even as the old, pre-modern identities had not diminished. A clash of this fundamental dichotomy gave rise to a communal ideology.

### **Section 3**

#### **Solutions:**

Communal violence is a dangerous, frightful phenomenon, and a curse for our society. Not only does a communal violence end up in loss of lives and property, it divides and polarizes the society and gives rise to vicious political debates. Following are some solutions by which this problem of communal violence can be curbed down:

- **True information should be provided by the newspapers:**

The cause of a communal violence should be seen and understood direct from the news items in the newspaper. Understanding and reconstructing the chain of event from political commentators and inquiry commissions will reduce the truth element. The newspaper report can also be politically motivated and biased but the likelihood of ideology contaminating the truth is much less in case of news items as compared to reports of inquiry commissions and political commentators. One can always refer to multiple newspapers

and reasonably filter out the truth. Second, the news of communal violence should be studied and analyzed at the time of its occurrence itself. Analyzing such an event after lapse of time makes it more difficult to sift facts from ideologically motive fiction.

- **Change in pattern of education:**

There should be a total change in syllabus, especially of medieval history and modern history pertaining to freedom struggled and division of the country in 1947. It is regrettable that even after 64 years of our freedom our approach to medieval history has not changed. We still use utterly simplistic versions of medieval history resulting in controversy of demolition of temples. There is little mention of our composite culture and efforts made by Sufi saints, writers, poets and musicians to build bridges between different communities. Sufis like Baba Nanak, Farid, Miyan Meer etc. besides musicians, architects, poets and others, contributed a lot to fuse two cultures together and bring two communities together.

- **Focus on Value-Education:**

Today the entire focus of our education is promoting career rather than character. In our education system, for lack of values, career has become most important and character building has been completely marginalized. In addition, our education system produces conforming mind rather than thinking mind. An education system, which fails to produce thinking and critical mind, is worth nothing. Our education system produces only career oriented mind. Not only that our education system creates prejudiced mind, prejudiced against minorities, tribal and dalits. It is anything but healthy mind. Thus by overhauling education system we will do great service to the cause of our nation. It would respect rights of poor, weaker sections and would be more inclusive. Today education system is part of the problem, let us make it part of the solution.

- **Reforming the Police System:**

Our police are product of the same education system and it also is influenced by uncritical stories in media about minorities and other weaker sections of society and hence has been horribly communalized. We cannot eliminate riots from India or we cannot handle riots properly without comprehensive police reforms. It is horribly prejudiced. In riot after riot after riot we hear stories of how police promotes, rather prevents communal riots. Thus there should be secular orientation from time to time through refresher courses, apart from secular orientation along with professional graining before joining the service is highly necessary, such orientation influences police attitude a lot.

- **Enactment of Communal Violence and Targeted Bill.**

This law, if passed, will go a long way in curbing communal violence as it fixes responsibility on concerned officers. This Bill has been drafted very carefully by responsible secular activists and gave to then govt. to get it enacted. It should be immediately revived, if necessary by some amendments and enacted.

- **Mixed and Cosmopolitan Living:**

With every riot, different communities begin to leave mixed areas and get polarized religion wise. It greatly harms the cause of integration. In such events, communal propaganda and rumors become far more effective. Government should not register any society unless it has members of all communities in it i.e. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Sikhs as well as Buddhists and Jains. In our country, caste and religion wise societies are quite common.

- **Abolishment of communities:**

This is very tough, given the system of reservation in India and how there is special treatment awarded to certain communities. However, if the politicians can stop exploiting public for their votes and if public can get behind the idea of collective development, this ideal can be achieved with the help of judiciary.

- **No Privileged Class:**

No privileges should be given to anyone in the new India. It is the poor, neglected and downtrodden and weak that should be our special care and attention. A Brahman should not grudge if more money is spent on the uplift of the Harijans. At the same time, a Brahman may not be done down simply because he is a Brahman. It is the duty of every citizen to treat the lowliest on a par with the others.

### **Conclusion:**

If the above-mentioned problems are looked upon without any biasness in a national spirit and the solutions to the communal violence are followed and implemented with a cooperative and brotherhood spirit as suggested by various social reformers from time to time, then this problem of communal violence can be curtailed down to a great extent in future. There is need for a perfect weapon to combat violence and one of them is nonviolence. Non-Violence implies more than just avoidance of physical violence. It is mightier than any weapon of mass destruction. It is a living force of power and no one has been or will ever be able to measure its limits or its extend. Need of the time is to realize the power of Non-Violence.

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