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Historical Analysis of Communal Relations in India After 1947

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Abstract

Pakistan and India came in to being on 14th and 15th of august 1947 respectively. Sir Sirel Radcliff was Chairman of Boundary Commission and he intentionally created unsolvable issues between Pakistan and India. Large number of Muslims migrated from India to Pakistan, however huge quantity of Muslims decided to live in India after Partition. But after 1947 there have been several instances of religious violence against Muslims occurred in secular India. Near about 6,933 instances of communal violence between Muslims and Hindus during 1954 and 1982 reported. The causes of these violence's are assorted. It was resentment toward the Islamic conquest of India during Middle Ages some says. Many scholars believe that incidents of anti-Muslim violence are politically motivated and a part of the electoral strategy of mainstream political parties in India who were associated with Hindu nationalism like BJP and RSS etc. Other scholars believe that the violence in India were the result of local socio-political and religious conditions. However Muslim Hindu Communal clashes have badly hurt the secular state concept of India.

Keywords: Muslims, Partition, Communal Violence, Hindu-Muslim Relations, Secularism, India.

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Background

India is a land of mountains plains and rivers. There were many civilizations in it, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam. Jainism and Buddhism merged in Indian Hinduism with the passage of time. Islam was the only religion which resisted Hinduism in India and it is still working with all its traditions. Islam is considered a second most popular religion in India, with about 15% of the population believing in, Allah, and following a holy book called the Qur'an. People who follow Islam are called Muslims. Muslims have complete code of life. They believed that Hazrat Muhammad Peace be upon Him is the true prophet of God. On the other side the main religion in India is Hinduism with approximately 80% of people in India practicing it. This is also called the oldest religion in the world; it began about 4000 years ago. Unlike most religions there is no founder of Hinduism, instead Hindu's believe in the God. They believe that god is found in everything and has many reincarnations. The four main reincarnations of Brahman are Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, and Shiva although they have over 1000 reincarnations.

Both Muslims and Hindus lived almost one thousand years in India, Muslims were the rulers while the Hindus were the masses. Muslim during their era always tried to satisfy its non-Muslim classes. After 1857 when Britain got the control of Indian government Hindus of India started their revivalist movement in India. They started to obtain modern education in India to get more advantages under British government. Hindus attended All India National Congress meetings and they prepared themselves for the political rivalry against the Muslims. On the other side Muslims were very backward at that time and they considered the modern

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education as a sin. At that time Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established MAO College and provided an Islamic atmosphere for the Muslim Students in Aligarh. Sir Syed was against the political activities of the Muslims at that time because in his view education was most impotent for the Muslims of India. According to Sir Syed after getting modern education, Muslims will be more efficient against Hindus and British. {Ahmed-2009}

Socially politically and religiously Muslims of India were for behind of Hindus of India because English Government was not also in favour of Muslim progress. They closed the government services for Muslims and ruined the total social structure of the Muslim Society.

In 1906 Muslim founded Muslim League and started their political struggle in India. Hindu Muslim relation were although not good at that time over the issue of Urdu, separate electorate and due to the division of Bengal when in Kanpur the issue of mosque arose and English government did firing on peaceful procession of Muslims who were protesting against the demolition of Mosque . Muslims although signed a pact with Hindus in 1916 at Lakhnow but this unity soon came to end when Gandhi announced the end of Khilafat Movement. [Ali- 1979]

At that time Hindu Mahasabha, Arya Samaj, RSS, and many other organizations were came in to existence to teach lesson to the Muslims of India for their diversion of religion. Politically Muslims were awarded Nehru Report which was totally against the will of Muslims. Simon commission and round table conferences also could not sort out the solution of the political problems of India. The ministries of 1936 of Congress revealed the agenda of Ram Raj in India to

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crush the Muslims. So in 1940 at Lahore Pakistan resolution was passed and after the struggle of 7 years Muslims founded their home land which is called Pakistan. After the partition it was impossible for whole Muslims to migrate from India to Pakistan so thousands of Muslim families decided to remain in India as India citizens.[Akbar-1991]

Indian Muslims after Independence

Near about Thirty five million Muslims remained in India after partition. The Muslim Population is mostly settled in Northern part of the country in the Ganga river basin, which consists of the states of Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. About half of the country's Muslims are in these three states alone. No doubt nearly every part of India has a significant Muslim minority. Out of thirty million people, only Punjab and Orissa have less than 5% Muslim Population

Hinduism was "institutionalized" inequalities and hierarchies. There were thousands of castes and sub castes (jatis) in India, together with their own status whose major criteria was colour, blood purity, and traditional occupation. Endogamy was thus a strict rule. The origin of this institution is still subject to serious debate in this context but, as we have seen earlier, it seems that the model was of Indo-Aryan origin and the tri partition system as founded by the corporatist (Bidwai-1996).

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The priests (Brahmins) and the warriors (Kshatriyas) were at the top in Indian society, followed by those who were economic actors (Vishay's), we found Shudras, beneath these high castes, the main part of the Indian population. They were not, however, society's "lowest of the low": the "infamous" people who should not be approached because of their alleged "impurity" were the Untouchables, today they are called Dalats, Hence everybody needs their services, In administrative terms, they were classified as the Scheduled Castes (SC), while the Adivasis (indigenous people) had been termed the Scheduled Tribes (ST) - both categories benefited from quotas recognized in the Constitution of India, the proud child of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar , himself was a Dalat.[Brass-2003]

Partition of India was to prove a disaster in some ways, especially for the large Muslim population who could not or would not move eastwards or westwards to a nascent Pakistan. These millions of people are still "paying the cost" of their lives, honour and status in India. From the very beginning, communal violence and the many massacres that occurred between 1 The sectarian violence in the province of Punjab once again burst on when the Boundary Commission released his report on 16th August 1947. Radcliffe was not fully aware of the geography of India, in fact he had found it almost impossible to get hold of large maps on which to draw them. In spite of this Radcliffe had forced to work with insufficient and inadequate data, the problem was not only in Punjab but also in Bengal. In Punjab the British had built up a well standard, vast and complicated irrigation system was based

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upon the famous five rivers the Satluj the Chenab the Jhelum the Ravi and the Bias which gave the Punjab its name. Due to these canals and barrages the Punjab became the garden of India. The irrigation system must be disrupted by the partition since the rivers that fed the canals that watered the fields were the Eastern part of the area which was going to India instead of Pakistan. Radcliffe suggested that before the announcement of his award there should be some agreements that two countries should be signed. Radcliff applied his award and the district of Gurdaspur went to India. A new political conflict started between the two states because the Gurdaspur was the only link between Kashmir and India. Pakistan assumed that it had been given to India by Radcliffe deliberately to facilitate communications with the state, on this the famous newspaper dawn wrote

“Even if the government accepts the territorial murder of Pakistan the people will not such kind of statements inflamed the situation which was serious already”

On 16th August the Joint Defense Councils of both countries met to see the condition in Punjab at Ambala. Nehru, Liaqat ali khan, the Governors and the Ministers of two Punjab attended the meeting at the end of the session, the meeting issued a joint statement for peace. The Joint Defense Council met again on 29 August to look the matter. The boundary force were completely helpless before well organized Sikh opposition and their commanders. After

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the meeting Nehru with Liaquat Ali and Baldev Singh with Sardar Nishtar visited the troubled areas (Griffith-1957).

The vast number of refugees were coming from their homes to get protection of their coreligionists in India and Pakistan. At first both the governments of India and Pakistan tried to stay the minorities, where they were but it was not occurred. To make the situation worst the monsoon broke out and torrential rain added fuel to fire for refugees. Sikh leader Master Tara Singh continued to thunder his denunciations. In Dehli by 5 September about 2 lakhs of refugees arrived and the recital of their sufferings was stirring up feeling against those Muslims who stayed remain in the city of Delhi. In the streets of old Delhi, the pattern of stabbing rape and hacking began to fall. Sikhs and Hindus attacked Muslims who were traveling alone on road to the airport in the hope of escape to Pakistan. Other Muslims were attacked on the railway stations. The bodied of the Muslims blood littered the tracks of railway (Ali-1979).

Muslims shops, women, children and everything were looted by Sikhs with in a sight. Police, Sikhs and Hindus looked the other way and occasionally helped the rioters. But soon with special order of Nehru five thousand British and Gurkha troops with no communal sympathies, they were ordered to patrol day and night and shoot the rioters. Nehru was particularly shocked at the bloodshed in Delhi. The relation between the India and Pakistan further inflamed by the three princely states Junagarh, Hyderabad and

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Kashmir. From 1947 to 1950 India hurt the feeling of the Muslims in India.
[Burk-1973]

In the beginning of the 1950s, several developments in domestic politics in India and in external affairs had lightened the so - called communal relations between Muslims and Hindus. Nehru–Liaqat Ali Khan pact eventually improved Indo–Pakistani relations, Secondly; the death of Sardar Patel balanced of power politics within the Congress, and also weakened the so-called Hindu dominance in the Party, along with the slogan of "Socialism" in the country. Now the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru was in position, to impose his views without encountering any real opposition from either outside or inside in the Congress party. Generally, during this period, Muslims were if not entirely convinced - gradually reassured by Nehru's personal stance, by the presence around him of a number of "nationalist" Muslim leaders, really popular in Congress and were respected by the Indians, They were Maulana Azad and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.

About the communal relations the Article 25 of the 1950 Constitution of India wrote that all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion, in three general elections, Congress sweep of the Muslim-minority vote.

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First Major Riot

The first major-scale riot between Hindus and Muslims in post-Partition India occurred in the state of Madhya Pradesh in Jabalpur city in 1961. According to the Justice Shiv Dayal Shri Vestavia Commission of Inquiry report, the suicide of a young Hindu girl after her rape by two Muslims youths on February 3 geared up communal tensions. With the support of the ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi), All India Students Forum, a Hindu nationalist student union), conducted a procession on February 4 to condemn the rape. Trouble started when many of them stopped near the Anjuman Islamia School and forced Muslim students to join the procession. Stones were thrown on Muslim houses and violence erupted. As the procession was mainly Hindu and the students of the school were predominantly Muslim, the incident obtained a communal feeling. [Chatterji-1995]

The army was called in on February 5 to control the situation in Jabalpur. But when it went back on February 7, Hindu activists and rabble attacked and looted Muslim properties (while carefully sparing Hindu houses). According to official reports Fifty-five people died, but unofficial accounts put the death toll at more than 200. Communal Violence propagated to nearby villages causing six deaths in Sagar on 8th February and 9th February 1961, and two deaths in Narsimhapur on February 8th. Just before the 1962 general elections, further violence flared up in Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh) after the Jabalpur riots, which badly shook the reputation of Indian leadership and the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru also. The city was famous for the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), whose

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students were predominantly Muslim and which had claimed minority status for years. During the student-union elections of October 1961 in the University, not a single Hindu student was elected as student union member. Muslims held a victory procession, provoking counter-demonstrations by activists from the BJS (Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Indian People's Alliance) and the ABVP students in the University. A clash ultimately broke out between Muslim and Hindu students in a university hostel. A rumor that a Hindu student had been killed in campus sparked off violence in the city of Aligarh on 3rd October 1961. The Muslims were looted in Aligarh and the riot claimed 14 lives, mostly were Muslim. [Das-1990]

In Uttar Pradesh there were 61% Hindus and 96 % Muslims. The chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh was CB Gupta of Congress. During October 5 to 8 1961 Communal Troubles also erupted in Meerut city of Uttar Pradesh state, after one Hindu student, a native of the town, was severely beaten by Muslim boys during clashes at the Aligarh Muslim University. When he came back in his home town and with the support of his father, a police officer, he led a procession of 150 supporters who targeted an old Muslim college and some Muslim-owned shops. Prominent members of the administration of the state were present in the crowd and they did nothing to intervene. The next day, an even larger Hindu procession gathered, threatening to enter a Muslim locality. Thus Muslim residents rushed out of their houses, armed with batons ready to defend their community and locality. In spite of dispersing both the crowds, the police charged into the Muslim crowd. As a result, rioting broke out in several parts of the city.

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Violence lasted several days, 17 lives were gone in these riots. (Brass- 2006)

Communal violence engulfed the cities of Rourkela (Orissa), Calcutta (West Bengal), and Jamshedpur (Bihar), these riots were part of a cross-national chain of events: the theft of a relic hair of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) from the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar (Kashmir) on December 27, 196. Protest marches and violence against the Hindu minorities took place in the cities of Khulna and Jessore (East Pakistan) on January 2 and 3, 1964. This led to retaliation against Muslims in Calcutta and in West Bengal, which in turn kindled events in Dacca and Naryangunj (East Pakistan), where minority communities (of Hindus, Christians, and Buddhists) were heavily targeted (although, ultimately, the holy relic was returned on January 4). According to the 1965 Report of the Indian Commission of Jurists on Recurrent Exodus of Minorities from East Pakistan and Disturbances in India thousands of Hindu families left East Pakistan and sought refuge in India after 5th January. The Indian government arranged for special trains to deliver them to the states of Bihar, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh where they were to be received. As these trains crossed through Indian towns, the narrative of the atrocities that Hindus had suffered in East Pakistan spread, triggering anti-Muslim riots. Jamshedpur (Bihar) and Rourkela (Orissa) were particularly affected by the riots. [Hassan -2006]

In the city of Calcutta, troubles started on January 10, 1965. The army was called to control the situation. The Jurists' Commission reported 104 casualties, of which 39 had been killed in shooting by state police. A day before on March 16 a

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strike organized by the "Save Pakistan Minorities Committee" one-hundred Muslim textile workers was smacked in which thirteen of them lost their lives. Likewise in Jamshedpur which is one of the first planned cities of India and most populous urban agglomeration in the Indian state of Jharkhand , violence flared up on March 19. The army had to be called in on March 21 to control the situation. The official number of deaths was 51 but the actual figure was much higher than this.[Saksena-1990]

A rumor spread that Muslims were attempting to poison Hindu refugees in Rourkela town. Riots began when a Hindu vomited after having eaten bread allegedly offered by a Muslim baker on railway station. Violence propagated from the railway station to various slums in the town and to adjacent vicinities. Hindu fundamentalists joined local mob in killing of Muslims. Official reports put the death figure at 53 while the Jurists' Commission in India reported 70 deaths in Rourkela , but according to S. K. Gosh, who was then Orissa's Additional Inspector General of Police, the killing of Muslims lasted for 15 days, and almost two thousand (mostly - Muslims) lives gone . Other unofficial resources, wrote five thousand deaths [.Mujeeb-1967]

(Bihar) Ranchi 1967; August 22–29

Ranchi is the capital of the Indian state of Jharkhand now a days it was the part of Bihar after partition. The 1965 conflict between Pakistan and India created mistrust among Indian Muslims and Hindus. Although in 1964 the situation

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between Hindus and Muslims became worst on the issue of the future of Urdu language in the state. Again During March 1967 general elections, the situation became bad to worse because over the Urdu language issue. Government of Bihar made a proposal to declare Urdu the second official language of Bihar which weakened the ruling coalition in state and led to state-wide, anti-Urdu agitation on the part of the BJS, the RSS, and an organization called the Bihar Hindi Sahitiya Sammelan. Trouble started in Ranchi on August 22, 1967 after the brick-battling of an anti-Urdu student procession near Muslim Azad High School Ranchi. The school was attacked by anti Urdu activists and one Hindu was killed. In retaliation 184 among them 164 were Muslims and nineteen were Hindus deaths reported by Raghubar Dayal Commission of Inquiry. Violence spread, leading to arson, stabbings, looting pyromania and large-scale rioting not only in the city but in nearby industrial towns also, particularly Hatia town, where 26 persons died in which 25 were Muslims and one Hindu.[Rajehwari-2004]

Assam: Karimganj 1968; March:

In the district of Karimganj Violence flared up after an argument erupted between Hindu and Muslim teenagers, merely over a cow. An existing local rivalry between Hindu and Muslim smugglers constituted the underlying cause of the riots and they added fuel to fire .The violence claimed 41 Hindu lives and 41 Muslim lives according to some sources.

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Gujarat Ahmedabad 1969; September

Anti-Pakistan feelings rapidly transformed into anti-Muslim resentment after Indo-Pak war of 1965. In June 1968, the Muslim organization in India, Jamiat-Ulema-i-Hind organized a conference of Gujarati Muslims. This was followed by an RSS mass rally held the 27–29 December 1968. In January, an All Gujarat RSS Camp was held in Ahmedabad about two thousand volunteers participated. On March 10 1969, Muslim protests took place in Ahmedabad in which several policemen were injured. A Hindu policeman purportedly insulted the Quran during an quarrel with a Muslim rickshaw-driver. On August 21, 1969 Muslims demonstrated against the arson attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. On September 4, a Muslim policeman was blamed to have kicked the Hindu holy book of Ramayana. A Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti (HDRS, Committee to Defend Hindu Religion) was formed in Gujarat. On September 15, a victory procession was organized by the BJS to celebrate the punishment of the Muslim police officer who insulted the Hindus holy book. In this tense atmosphere, violence was sparked by the "Jagannath Temple incident" on September 18. Thousands of Muslims had gathered for a yearly pilgrimage to a shrine adjacent to the Jagannath Hindu temple, in the Old City of Ahmedabad. Clashes occurred between Muslims and Hindus on a minor reason. During the clash thirteen injured and the glass facade of the temple was damaged. Further troubles erupted in the city after a series of pamphlets and inflammatory speeches spread rumors about the incident.

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The local media played a fatal role in the events. On the night of September 18, large Hindu crowds looted and set fire to Muslim properties and religious places, while the police refused to intervene. The situation worsened on September 19. A Muslim young boy was burned to death for refusing to chant "Jai Jagannath!" Large numbers of Muslim women were raped, and even children were not spared the violence. One hundred Muslims were murdered in Amraiwadi. On the night of September 20, four trains were stopped and 17 Muslim passengers trying to leave the city were killed. On September 23, when the government imprudently lifted the curfew for a few hours, forty persons were murdered. Violence spread to nearby districts as well between September 20 and 30. In the nearby city of Baroda, around ten persons were killed, and six thousand families lost their properties; the army defused the situation, but incidents of stabbing continued intermittently for almost a month. The Reddy Commission blamed the police and the Congress-led state administration for their incompetence and delay in imposing curfews. It also denounced the RSS and the BJS for their active involvement in the riots. [Shani-2007]

In all, according to that report, violence claimed 660 lives, including those of 430 Muslims and 24 Hindus. The Ahmedabad tragedy had international repercussions: during the Islamic Conference held in Rabat (Morocco) on 24–27 of September 1969. The Indian delegation sent by Indira Gandhi's government was asked about the brutal murder of innocent Muslims in India.

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Maharashtra Bhiwandi 1970

Communal disputes arose over the Shiv Jayanti procession. The Maratha warrior king Shivaji. Shiv Jayanti procession was first celebrated on a large scale in 1964 by the Shiv Jayanti Utsav Samiti (Committee for the Festival of Shiv Jayanti). In 1970, the RUM (Rashtriya Utsav Mandal, Hindu communal organization close to the BJS) launched a campaign for the Shiv Jayanti procession to pass through the Muslim area of Nizampura. Muslim leaders, protested against the campaign but local administration allowed the procession to follow the controversial route. On May 7, 1970 the procession travelled through the area with shouting anti-Muslim slogans. Resultantly communal tension started in the town of Jalgaon on May 8 1970. The violence resulted in 164 deaths, of whom 142 were Muslims and 20 were Hindus according to the Justice D. P. Madon Commission of Inquiry In Bhiwandi alone and in the adjacent villages of Khoni and Nagaon, the commission said that 78 persons died in which 17 were Hindus and 50 were Muslims.[Wilkinson-2004]

Conclusion

The British rulers created communal consciousness among the Indian people. It slowly seeped through Indian civil society. Thus, the society of India have inherited from the Colonial past was a communalized society and no conscious effort was made in post-Independent India to get rid of this communal legacy, so we saw different communal riots in different times in India . Communal

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forces in India like RSS etc. aggressively exploit religion for their political ends and use communal sentiments in spreading communal violence for their social and economic benefits. They use simple orthodox masses for their material interests and create political and religious disturbances in the country.

Recommendations

- 1 Communalism and communal violence is the result of extensive communal propaganda, and law taking no serious notice against these communal propagandas. There should be tight control of Government over media and publications.
- 2 Communal violence must be crushed before it forces secular citizens to think communally and join forces with the communalists.
- 3 Through media Government should condemn the communal bifurcations. Severe punishments must be legislated for the opportunists and communalists.
- 4 Ignorance is a fertile ground for the growth of communalism. The media should exercise their freedom within the ambit of Indian ethos and values.
- 5 To override communalism and communal violence in the country, honest political leadership and determination is required.
- 6 To put an end to communalism and communal violence, it is necessary that people of India realize such values as tolerance and mutual respect.

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- 7 The communal violence would be minimize if it is made clear to all that the government is both strong and impartial and determined to put down at any cost communal violence or any talk of communal violence.
- 8 The government should also give confidence to the people and put fear in the hearts and minds of the potential perpetrators and organizers of communal violence.

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