

ALL INDIAN POLITICAL PARTIES MEET
BACKGROUND GUIDE



AIPPM

AGENDA - CAUSES, IMPACT AND
REMEDIES FOR THE ERUPTION OF
COMMUNAL VIOLENCE WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIS TO MANIPUR CONFLICT.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Prospective Members,

At the outset on behalf of the Executive Board, we extend a warm welcome to all of you and congratulate you on being part of ST. XAVIERS MUN 2023

The committee being simulated, would unlike most other simulations you must have heard of or been a part of; focus on political intellect and analytical application of thoughts and strategic application of thoughts in resolving impending politically sensitive bilateral issues.

Kindly note, we are not looking for existing solutions, or statements that would be a copy paste of what the leader you are representing have already stated; instead, we seek an out of the box solution from you, while knowing and understanding your impending political and ideological limitations.

This Introductory guide would be as abstract as possible, and would just give you a basic perspective on what you can expect from the committee and areas wherein which your research should be focused at this given point in time. Given, the extremely political and volatile nature of this committee, your presence of mind and politico-analytical aptitude is something which we at the executive board would be looking to test.

That being said, kindly do not limit your research to the areas highlighted further but ensure that you logically deduce and push your research to areas associated with the issues mentioned.

Kindly note, that unlike most conventional/unconventional committees you have attended, this committee shall have "substantive" intervention by the Executive Board.

Wishing you all a very warm good luck and hoping to see you all at this conference discussing imperative issues of national trust.

Warm Regards,

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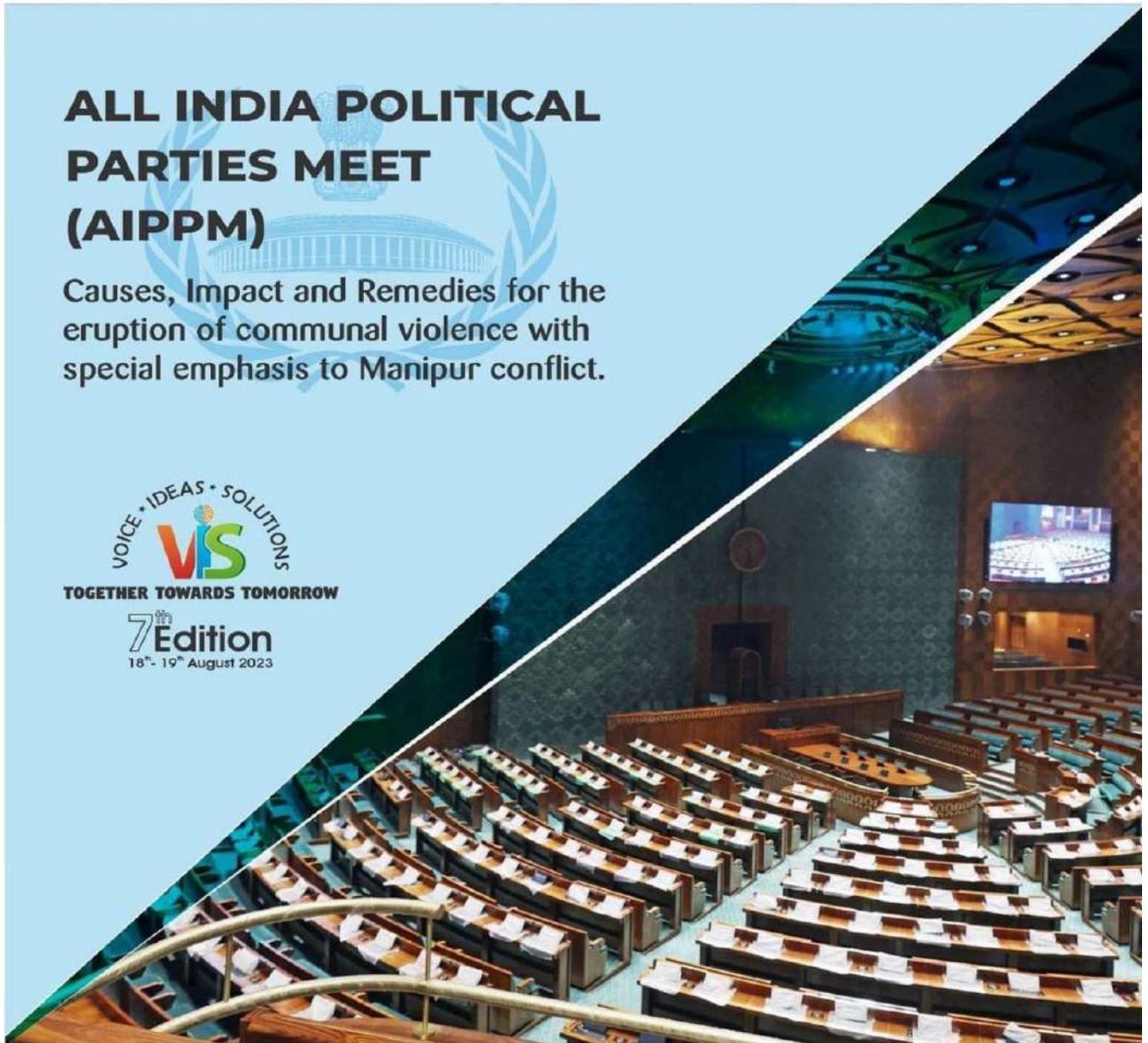
INTRODUCTION OF THE COMMITTEE

All India Political Party Meet is a non-technical but powerful committee. It is a meeting between all the political parties of the nation. Typically called before the session of the Parliament or before the introduction of a bill, this committee aims to arrive at a consensus before the sessions begin.

It is a supplementary body to the Parliament without any legislative provisions. The purpose of the meetings was initially to be a forum for unbounded political debate which may not be allowed in the Parliament due to time constraints, but these bodies now aid in providing a better insight into national issues. They help provide a diverse viewpoint before the actual legislative process.

ALL INDIA POLITICAL PARTIES MEET (AIPPM)

**Causes, Impact and Remedies for the
eruption of communal violence with
special emphasis to Manipur conflict.**



PROOFS/EVIDENCE IN COMMITTEE:

1. Government Reports (Each ministry publishes its own reports including External Affairs Ministry)
2. Government Websites
3. Government run News channels i.e., RSTV, LSTV, DD News
4. Standing Committee Reports
5. RTI Proofs

NOTE: Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org/>) or newspapers like Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. be accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE.

They can be used for better understanding of any issue or even be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a government.

NOTE: Please note that nothing mentioned in this background may be used as an established fact in committee without the presentation of a credible source and substance mentioned henceforth may act only as a source for your basic understanding of the agenda.

Reiterating, kindly do not limit your research only to these points and feel free to broaden your horizons of the research. This is just a list of topics you should cover and is a reflection of the direction in which we intend to see the flow of debate in the committee.

For any further queries, kindly feel free to mail the moderator directly at the email ID given above.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

India is a country that embarks on the principle of unity in diversity and it being a culturally plural country, communalism remains the most intractable problem. Communalism refers to a politics that seeks to unify one community around a religious identity in hostile opposition to another community. It seeks to define this community identity as fundamental and fixed and attempts to consolidate this identity and present it as natural – as if people were born into the identity, as if the identities do not evolve through history over time. In order to unify the community, communalism suppresses distinctions within the community and emphasizes the essential unity of the community against other communities. It's the adversity of our country that ever after An Open Access Journal from The Law Brigade (Publishing) Group 201 JOURNAL OF LEGAL STUDIES AND RESEARCH Volume 6 Issue 1 – ISSN 2455 2437 February 2020, www.thelawbrigade.com, and even after 70 years of Independence, India is not free from the curse of communalism.

Other religious and linguistic minorities have also suffered tremendously during the last decades. Atrocities against Christians came in sharp focus in burning alive of Stein and his two minor sons in a car. Although this incident shocked the nation and the world but Christian homes and churches continued to be torched in Gujarat and several other parts of the country. Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and U.P. gave a serious jolt to the unity of the country and Sikhs continued to suffer in Punjab and other places. The Kashmiri Pundits were systematically alienated and forced to become refugees in their own country. Similar crimes by militants of different hues made life miserable for North Indians in Mumbai and North East. Sometimes also called inter communal violence refers to a situation where violence is perpetrated across ethnic lines, and victims are chosen based upon their belonging to that particular ethnic group. This term is commonly used in South Asia to describe those incidents where conflict between ethnic communities result in massacres.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

❖ Disruptive Effect of Social Media:

- Social Media played a critical role in circulating fake news at break-neck speed, as the copious audio-visual documentation of violence, hate messages are delivered to the masses almost immediately.
- However, these graphic depictions of inhumanity have not elicited remorse or changed minds; rather, they have deepened biases and hardened stances.

❖ Role of Mainstream Media:

- Instead of adhering to media ethics and neutrality, most of the media houses show an inclination towards particular political ideology, which in turn widens the societal cleavage.

❖ **Lack of Value-Based Education:**

- People are not equipped to think for themselves and this leads them to blindly follow the 'trends' instead of being able to differentiate the good from the bad themselves.

❖ **Majoritarian Hegemony and Minority Insecurities:**

- A group in majority often believes that it has the sole say in the progress of the country. This leads to acts of violence when smaller groups oppose the majoritarian ideas of progress.
- On the contrary, minority groups often find themselves blamed for being 'anti-national' whenever they try to protect their way of life from transgression. This often creates violence in society.

IMPACT OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

❖ **Violation of Human Rights:**

- During the communal violence, the innocent ordinary people get caught into the circumstances beyond their control. This leads to the violation of human rights.

❖ **Economic Loss:**

- Communal violence leads to loss of life and public property. It leads to exploitation by way of plundering and indulgence in activities only for personal gains.

❖ **Social Dissonance:**

- Communal Violence strengthens vote banks of ideologically aligned political parties and further disrupts the cohesiveness in society.
- It causes serious damage to communal harmony for a long period.
- It also tarnishes the country's image as a pluralistic society in front of the world.

❖ **Erosion of Constitutional Values:**

- Communal violence dampens constitutional values like secularism and fraternity.

CAUSES OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

→ **General Causes:** Communal violence takes place because of various factors. The process of communal violence is very complex one. The reason for the break out of communal violence, its continuance, ineffective policing and other efforts and delay in restoring normalcy are varied and interrelated. Therefore, it is necessary, to know the general causes behind the problem of communal violence. The general causes responsible for the problem of communal violence in India may be discussed under the following heads:

Divide and Rule Policy: The history of Hindu-Muslim antagonism is the result of 'divide and rule' policy adopted by the British rulers, which left a wide impact on Hindu-Muslim relations. This policy had sown seeds of discord between the communities, who indulged in serious skirmishes posing threat to the security and very existence of the nation. This is evident in history of India through a number of incidents. Such as:

- After the revolt of 1857, the British rulers started to divide different communities on communal lines.
- The Census exercises during Colonial rule instilled a geographical and demographic consciousness among the religious communities.
- The division of Bengal in 1905, which was based on religion.
- Communal perception was again perpetrated through the political instrument of separate electorates.
- Partition of the country also created a great deal of bitterness and communalized political processes in post-independent India. Before partition, all were Indians, but after partition Muslims became a minority in India while Hindus and Sikhs became minority in Pakistan.

Political Factors:

- In most cases the communal violence is politically motivated. There is a growing tendency to maximize political gains by adopting short cuts in terms of usage of ancient identities, money and muscle power, communal slogans, doctrinaire issue, etc.
- There is a violent political competition among the leaders of both the communities to obtain favor of one community against another for political gain. Thus, Politicians have no interest in bridging the gap between communities, but have, in fact, a positive stake in ensuring that it remains as wide as possible.

Socio-Political Issues: It has been established that in Indian society disputes among various trends within Hinduism or Islam did take place. Often socio-political issues also engineered communal violence. The principal aspect that came to the surface was 'cow protection' and 'Urdu-Devanagari' controversy. For example, In

1967, the attempt to make 'Urdu', the second official language in Bihar, was the cause behind communal violence in Ranchi and in 1994, the introduction of a short 'Urdu News Bulletin' from the Bangalore Doordarshan (DD) had sparked off communal violence in Bangalore.

Administrative Failures: Weak law and order is one of the causes of communal violence. There was failure of the police and administrative officers in gauging the intensity of the communal situation in advance. There is a violent political competition among the leaders of both the communities to obtain favor of one community against another for political gain. Thus, Politicians have no interest in bridging the gap between communities, but have, in fact, a positive stake in ensuring that it remains as wide as possible. The Report of the Sri Krishna Commission on Mumbai riots (1992-93), points out that the failure of state administration was primarily responsible for the extraordinary situations. The report indicts that "four precious days were lost for the Chief Minister to consider and issue the orders as to effective use of army for controlling the riots."

Insecurity and Fear: Communal violence takes place, as members of one community perceive the threat, harassment, fear and danger from the members of the other community. The response to the threat is either fight or departure. The latter generates fear and terror and the former cause's hatred and anger phobia. There is a lack of inter-personal trust and mutual understanding resulting in subsequent fear and worry among the communities.

→ **Religious Causes:** Religion acts more as an agent determining the attitude of its followers than the motivation or mainspring of communal violence. Let us now examine some causes in order to understand the problem of communal violence from the religious aspect and the religious causes responsible for communal violence may be discussed under the following heads:

Conversion: Conversion is a source of communal conflict and communal violence. Frequent conversions caused a great resentment among people. Assimilation is peaceful co-existence in a heterogeneous system, which presupposed passivity on the part of the assimilated. During the continuous phases of communal violence in Bengal from 1905 to 1947, and pre-partition communal riots in several parts of the country, conversion was one of the main causes of communal violence. After partition, the fundamentalist also did not give up the idea of conversion. In the last decade, communal violence against the Christian community in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttrakhand and particularly in Orissa in 2008 was due to the conversion of Adivasis to Christianity.

Religious Conflicts: Religious conflicts are the expressions of beliefs on the ground of superiority. The man is influenced by instinctive impulse and remains on

the brute plane and due to ignorance, fear and fancy, deceit becomes dominant with cruelty, jealousy and violence. The tremendous faith in one's religious beliefs and a feeling that nonbelievers in these are misguided people who should be told regarding the correct path, lead to conflicts, which may be termed as religious conflicts.

Religious Rituals: Seeds of distrust are planted by exploiting deep religious traditions of both communities, difference in their different religious practices and rituals are highlighted and often, it is shown that one is out to destroy the other. Religiosity imparts passion and intensity to communalism. The extent of religiosity is very high. Even minor variations in the public performance of religious rituals evoke violent reactions. These reactions are the outcome of the constant reinforcement of religious group's identities through the propagation of communal ideology.

Hurting Religious Sentiments: Very often, provocation due to hurting of religious sentiments results in the communal violence. For instance, communal violence in Srinagar in 1967 broke out when some torn pieces of the Holy Quran were found in college latrine. Both politicians and priests of their religion succeed in stoking the flames of communal hatred, bias and prejudice and in triggering communal clashes whenever convenient to them.

INTRODUCTION

To understand the gravity of the situation and the fundamental aspect that served as a root cause for recent instances of communal violence in Manipur. An insight into the historical perspectives and the chain of events is essential.

UNDERSTANDING THE INSURGENCY

Merger of Manipur with the Union of India: The merger of Manipur with India took place through a process that was marked by negotiations, agreements, and ultimately, the signing of the Merger Agreement.

Before 1947: Manipur was a princely state under British colonial rule. The Maharaja of Manipur, Bodhachandra Singh, was the ruler of the state.

1947: India gained independence from British colonial rule. The British withdrew from India, and the various princely states were given the choice to join either India or Pakistan or remain independent.

August, 1947: The Maharaja of Manipur signed the Instrument of Accession, agreeing to accede to the Indian Union.

June, 1948: The state of Manipur held an election based on universal adult franchise, and a constitutional monarchy was established.

September, 1949: The Government of India pressured the Maharaja of Manipur into signing the Merger Agreement, which effectively merged Manipur with the Indian Union.

21st January, 1972: Manipur, along with Meghalaya and Tripura, became a full-fledged state under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

ETHNICITY OF MANIPUR: The Meiteis are the largest community in Manipur. There are 34 recognized tribes, which are broadly classified as 'Any Kuki Tribes' and 'Any Naga Tribes'.

The central valley in the state accounts for about 10% of the landmass of Manipur, and is home primarily to the Meitei and Meitei Pangals who constitute roughly 64.6% of the state's population. The remaining 90% of the state's geographical area comprises hills surrounding the valley, which are home to the recognized tribes, making up about 35.4% of the state's population.

Manipuri was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in 1992.

Recent Plea: There was a recent plea before the Manipur High Court by the Meitei (Meitei) Tribe Union, seeking directions to the Manipur government to submit a recommendation to the Union Ministry for Tribal Affairs for the inclusion of the community in the list of Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Constitution, as a “tribe among tribes in Manipur”.

RECENT EVENTS: There have been violent communal clashes in Manipur due to the Manipur High Court (HC) directing the State to pursue a 10-year-old recommendation to **grant Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the non-tribal Meitei community**. The violence escalated after the All-Tribal Student Union Manipur (ATSUM) organized a “tribal solidarity rally” against the alleged **move to include the Meiteis on the ST list**.

What is Manipur’s ethnic composition?

- ★ The State is like a football stadium with the Imphal Valley representing the playfield at the centre and the surrounding hills the galleries. **The valley, which comprises about 10% of Manipur’s landmass, is dominated by the non-tribal Meitei who account for more than 64% of the population of the State** and yields 40 of the State’s 60 MLAs.
- ★ **The hills comprising 90% of the geographical area is inhabited by more than 35% recognized tribes but send only 20 MLAs to the Assembly.**
- ★ **While a majority of the Meiteis are Hindus followed by Muslims, the 33 recognized tribes, broadly classified into ‘Any Naga tribes’ and ‘Any Kuki tribes’ are largely Christians.**

What is the Meitei argument to support demand of ST status?

- ❖ The Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee of Manipur (STDCM) began demanding ST status for the Meiteis in 2012.
 - **The Meiteis were recognised as a tribe before the merger of the State with the Union of India in 1949.** The ST status is needed to “preserve” the community and “save the ancestral land, tradition, culture, and language” of the Meiteis.
 - In 1972, the union territory of **Manipur became 19th state of India.**
 - **The Meiteis need constitutional safeguards against outsiders**, stating that the **community has been kept away from the hills** while the **tribal people can buy land in the “shrinking” Imphal Valley** (Apprehension of Meities that creation of **Greater Nagalim** would lead to shrinking of Manipur’s geographical area).
- ❖ The **Meitein/Meitei have been gradually marginalized in their ancestral land.**
 - Their population was **59% of the total population** of Manipur in 1951 and has now been reduced to 44% as per 2011 Census data.

- ❖ The **Naga and Kuki movements fuelled Meitei nationalism**. Concerns over demographic change and shrinking of traditional Meitei areas started to surface in the 1970s.
- ❖ During the period **2006-12 came the demand for an Inner Line Permit (ILP) in Manipur**, to bar outsiders. **The free movement of the Kuki-Zomi across Manipur's porous border with Myanmar fanned fears of demographic change.**
 - The growth rate of **Manipur's population had jumped from 12.8% in the 1941-51** period to 35.04% during 1951-61 and to 37.56% in 1961-71 after the permit system was abolished.
- ❖ In Manipur, the **government is the largest employer** and the reservation for STs in jobs amounts to an unfair advantage.
 - **Infrastructure development** (like railways that would open Manipur further) **has made insecurities worse.**

Why are tribal groups against ST status for Meiteis?

- ★ The Meiteis have a demographic and political advantage and are also more academically advanced.
- ★ ST status to the Meiteis would **lead to loss of job opportunities** and allow them to acquire land in the hills and push the tribals out.
- ★ The **language of the Meitei people** is included in the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution** and many of them have access to benefits associated with the SC, OBC or EWS status.
- ★ Kukis and Nagas point out that tribal areas are 90% of state's geographical area, but the bulk of its **budget and development work is focused on the Meitei-dominated Imphal valley.**

THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION IN THE ST LIST:

- State governments start recommendation for inclusion of the tribes in the list of ST.
- After the recommendation of the state govt. Tribal Affairs Ministry reviews and sends them to the Registrar General of India, Under the Home Ministry for approval.
- After approval, it is sent to the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and then sent to the Cabinet for a final decision.
- Once the cabinet finalizes it, then it introduces a bill in the parliament to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, and the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.
- After the amendment bill is passed by both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, the President's office takes the final decision under Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution.

What led to the recent Unrest?

- ❖ **While the forest eviction and demand for ST status for Meiteis have been the most prominent recent triggers**, the divide between the Meiteis and tribals on several issues has widened over the past decade.
- ❖ **Issues in Delimitation Process: In 2020, as the Centre began the first delimitation process** in the state since 1973, the Meitei community alleged that the Census figures used in the exercise did not accurately reflect the population break-up.
 - **Tribal groups (Kuki and Nagas)** on the other hand said they had grown to 40% of the state's population and were **underrepresented in the Assembly**.
- ❖ **Intrusion of Migrants from Neighbour Area: The February 2021 coup in Myanmar** has led to a refugee crisis in India's northeast. Meitei leaders have alleged that there has been a **sudden mushrooming of villages in Churachandpur district**.
- ❖ **The Drugs Problem:** Some tribal groups with vested interests are trying to scuttle govt's crusade against drugs.
 - The anti-drug drive was started by destroying poppy fields. **"Illegal settlers" related to the Kuki-Zomi of Manipur, growing drugs on cleared lands**.
- ❖ **Recent Unrest:** The first violent protest erupted over the eviction of the residents of a Kuki village.
 - **38 villages in the Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest area (in Churachandpur and Noney districts) are "illegal settlements"** and its residents are "encroachers (encroaching reserved and protected forests and wildlife sanctuaries for poppy plantation and drugs business)".
 - **Kuki groups have claimed that the survey and eviction is a violation of Article 371C**, as kukis are residents of Hill Area.
 - **Article 371C provides for the creation of a committee of the Manipur Legislative Assembly consisting** of the members elected from the Hill Areas of the state and Governor shall have responsibility for proper functioning of that committee.
 - **At the State level there is Hill Area Committee constituted under the Manipur Legislative Assembly (Hill Areas Committee) order, 1972.** The Hill areas Committee comprises of all MLAs elected from the hill areas of the State as its members.
- ❖ **The state government withdrew from the suspension of operations agreements** with two Kuki extremist groups accused of inciting the protesters.
 - Another major reason for the **discontent has been the state government's notices claiming that 38 villages in the Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest area** (in Churachandpur and Noney

districts) are “illegal settlements” and that its residents are “encroachers”.

- Following this, the **government set out on an eviction drive claiming that the people living there “were encroaching reserved forests, protected forests and wildlife sanctuaries for poppy plantation and drugs business”** which resulted in clashes.
- **Kuki groups have claimed that the eviction is a violation of Article 371C**, which confers some administrative autonomy to the tribal-dominated hill areas of Manipur.

How did the violent clashes start?

- ❖ Violence erupted in the Kuki-dominated Churachandpur district, where members of the Kuki tribe were protesting against the Meitei community’s demands to be designated as a “Scheduled Tribe”.
- ❖ The tribes believe granting ST status to the Meiteis would be an infringement of their rights as they claim to be the marginalised part of the population.

GEOGRAPHY OF MANIPUR AND HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR

CHEQUERED HISTORY



NSCN-IM
Integration of Naga-inhabited areas of Northeast is the core demand of NSCN-IM which has been holding peace parleys with the Centre. There was violent protest in Manipur in 2001 when the cease fire agreement signed between the Government of India and NSCN IM was extended.

Manipur, which has over 35 communities inhabiting the valleys and hills of the state, has a chequered history of violent and deadly clashes.

Naga-Kuki Fight
The Kukis are hill tribes spread across the Northeast besides Myanmar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. On September 13, 1993, militants of National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak Muivah) massacred around 115 Kuki civilians in the hills of Manipur. However, NSCN-IM refuted the allegation.

The rivalry between Nagas and Kuki started in the colonial era. In 1990 there were clashes over land. Kukis often claimed 350 of their villages were uprooted, over 1,000 killed and 10,000 were people displaced. Chins are called Kukis on the Indian side.

Meitei Pangal and Meiteis

In 1993 there were clashes between Meitei Pangal (Muslim) and Meitei. A bus carrying Muslim passengers was set on fire. Over 100 people were killed.

Insurgency
Manipur had scores of militant outfits and violence was largely triggered by insurgents.

The NSCN-IM entered a ceasefire agreement with the Government of India in 1997.

Valley-based militant outfits (Meitei groups) such as the UNLF, PLA, KYKL etc. are yet to come to the negotiating table.

The Kuki outfits under two umbrella groups, the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF), also signed the tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) pacts with the Centre and Manipur on August 22, 2008.

Hill and Valley

The current conflict between Meiteis and Kukis is the extension of hills versus plains conflict. Meiteis account for 53% of the population, while tribal communities account for around 40% of the population. Naga tribes make up for (24%) and Kuki/Zomi tribes (16%).

- ❖ There are 16 districts in Manipur, but the state is commonly thought of as divided into ‘valley’ and ‘hill’ districts. **Today’s valley districts of Imphal East,**

Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, and Kakching were part of the erstwhile kingdom of Kangleipak, ruled by the Ningthouja dynasty.

- ❖ **The Manipur valley is encircled by skirts of low hills** (hill areas comprise the bulk of Manipur's geographical area), live 15 Naga tribes and the Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi group, which includes the Kuki, Thadou, Hmar, Paite, Vaiphei and Zou peoples.
- ❖ **The Kangleipak kingdom**, then a British protectorate, was repeatedly **raided by Naga tribes who came down from the northern hills**. The British political agent in Manipur brought the **Kuki-Zomi** from the Kuki-Chin hills **of Burma to protect the valley from plunder by acting as a buffer between the Meiteis and the Nagas**.
 - The Kukis, like the Nagas, were fierce headhunting warriors — and the Maharaja gave them land along the ridges, where they could act as a shield for the Imphal valley below.
- ❖ **Kuki-Meitei divide: The hill communities (Naga & Kuki) and the Meiteis have had ethnic tensions since the kingdom era**. The Naga movement for independence in the 1950s triggered insurgencies among the Meiteis and Kuki-Zomi. The Kuki-Zomi groups militarised in the 1990s to demand a state within India called '**Kukiland**' (a state within India). This alienated them from the Meiteis, whom they had earlier defended.
 - In 1993, **Hindu Meiteis** clashed with Pangals (Muslims), and also there was horrific violence between the **tribal Nagas and Kukis**, which saw more than a **hundred Kukis massacred in a single day by Nagas**, and thousands driven from their homes.
- ❖ **District of Churachandpur**: Kuki-Zomi-dominated Churachandpur (a Myanmar bordered District) has mostly Christian population. It is the country's poorest district (as per the Panchayati Raj Ministry in 2006) and it remains abjectly poor.
 - **In 2015, as the Meiteis of the valley protested demanding ILP** in Imphal city, equally intense **protests were seen in Churachandpur countering the demand** and protesting the introduction of laws.

GOVERNMENT REACTION:

- ◆ The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1958 was enacted and extended to the entire state.
- ◆ In the 1980s, Manipur was declared a disturbed area.
- ◆ A tripartite Suspension of Operation (SoO) agreement between the Centre, the state and the Kuki-Zomi groups was signed in 2008.
- ◆ As the law-and-order situation gradually improved, AFSPA has been repealed in several areas.
- ◆ However, the Valley insurgent groups (like the UNLF, which is considered the mother of all Meitei insurgent groups) have never entered an agreement with the Centre.

INSURGENT GROUPS IN SOCIETY AND POLITICS:

- ♣ The insurgent groups are intricately woven into daily life in Manipur.
- ♣ They conduct strikes, and impose moral codes such as a ban on Hindi movies and music, etc.
- ♣ The groups also levy 'taxes' on the public.
- ♣ The groups are most visible today in the political life of the state. Candidates, cutting across party lines, stand for elections with insurgent backing, and the groups dictate to the voters who should win.
- ♣ The demand for ST status for the Meitei community has been opposed by the other tribal groups of the state.
- ♣ These tribal groups opine that the individuals of the Meitei community already have a demographic as well as a political advantage.
- ♣ They further argue that the Meitei community is more advanced than the tribal groups academically and in other aspects.
- ♣ According to the various tribal organizations, granting ST status to the Meiteis would result in the loss of employment opportunities and would also allow Meiteis to acquire land in the hills which would ultimately push the tribes out.
- ♣ Additionally, groups like the All Tribal Students' Union of Manipur also argue that the Manipuri language of the Meiteis is included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and that various sections of the community are already enjoying various benefits associated with the Scheduled Castes (SC) or Other Backward Classes (OBC) status.

SUPREME COURT'S VIEWS: The Supreme Court has regarded the Manipur crisis as a "humanitarian problem" and expressed concerns about the loss of life and property. The apex court had further noted that it is the President who has the power to designate a community as Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe and not the High Court. The Chief Justice of India (CJI) has urged the Centre and the Manipur government to undertake efforts to protect the people.

CENTRE'S STAND: The Union Home Minister said that the order passed by the Manipur High Court will be studied and discussed with all stakeholders and appropriate decisions will be taken after consultation. The Indian Army has deployed Heron Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and helicopters to increase surveillance on the situation in Manipur and along the Indo-Myanmar Border.

GUJARAT RIOTS

GUJARAT RIOTS, 2002; BUILDUP: On the morning of February 27, 2002, a coach of the Sabarmati Express — Coach S6 was set ablaze and 59 passengers traveling in that coach were charred to death.

Sabarmati Express was returning from – Ram Janmabhoomi. The train had arrived at Godhra station in Gujarat just then. The victims included 27 women and 10 children. Injuries were suffered by another 48 passengers on the train. Reports indicate that the coach was set ablaze near Godhra railway station by a mob consisting of individuals from the Muslim community.

Regrettably, this horrific act resulted in the unfortunate death of 59 Hindu devotees, including children, in the train attack. Following this incident, riots broke out on the evening of February 2 and continued for 2-3 months across the state.

In 2005, the Indian government provided information to the Rajya Sabha stating that the communal riots resulted in the loss of lives for 254 individuals from the Hindu community and 790 individuals from the Muslim community. Additionally, there were reports of 223 people missing. The riots also left tens of thousands of individuals displaced from their homes.

GUJARAT RIOTS: 2002; DATA AND FACTS: According to official records, the Gujarat riots resulted in the loss of lives for a total of 262 Hindus and 863 Muslims. These numbers also take into account the casualties resulting from police firing. However, it is important to note that the actual number of casualties may be significantly higher, indicating that individuals from both religious communities were affected by the violence.

GUJARAT RIOTS 2002: INQUIRY AND COMMISSIONS

- ❖ **Nanavati Commission:** The Gujarat government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Narendra Modi, established the Nanavati Commission as a Commission of Inquiry. In its final report submitted in 2008, the commission described the train burning incident as a conspiracy.
- ❖ **Banerjee Commission:** The UPA government formed a separate inquiry commission led by Justice UC Banerjee. In the commission's report submitted in 2006, the incident was classified as an accident. However, the Supreme Court later deemed the report unconstitutional and invalid.
- ❖ **Special Investigation Team (SIT):** The Supreme Court constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) that supported the prosecution's charges that the incident was not an unplanned mob outrage but rather involved a conspiracy.

WHAT LEAD TO GUJARAT RIOTS IN 2002?

There are various reasons and factors associated with the occurrence of riots. There are a few general causes that lead to massacres at this level. Here are a few factors that lead to Gujarat Riots:

- ◆ **Communalism**: Mass mobilization in the name of religion and using sentiments for inciting violence.
- ◆ **Loss of human values and dehumanization**: Riots are caused due to dehumanization and disregard for human life.
- ◆ **Lack of emotional intelligence**: Inability to control emotions and conscious attempts by few to negatively influence leads to violence at this scale.
- ◆ **Failure of Governance**: Riots are inherently law and order issues. Various committees have questioned the conduct of police officials.

GUJARAT RIOTS 2002 AND COURT PROCEEDINGS

The trials for the case began more than eight years after the incident, specifically on June 1, 2009. On March 1, 2011, a special SIT court delivered its verdict, convicting 31 individuals. Among them, 11 were sentenced to death, while 20 received life imprisonment. Additionally, the court acquitted 63 people involved in the case. The SIT court agreed with the prosecution's charges, stating that the incident was not a spontaneous act of mob violence but rather a result of a premeditated conspiracy. The 31 convicts were found guilty under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those pertaining to criminal conspiracy, murder, and attempted.

RAM MANDIR-BABRI MASJID ISSUE

(March 22, 2017)

WHAT'S THE DISPUTE?

- ◆ It is about **a plot measuring 2.77 acres in Ayodhya that houses the Babri mosque and Ram Janmabhoomi**. This particular piece of land is considered sacred among Hindus as it is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Ram.
- ◆ **Muslims argue that the land houses Babri Mosque**, where they had offered prayers for years before the dispute erupted.
- ◆ The controversy is over whether the **Babri Mosque was built on top of a Ram temple** after demolishing or modifying it in the 16th century.
- ◆ Muslims, on the other hand, say the **mosque was built by Mir Baqi in 1528 and that Hindus took control over it in 1949**, when some people placed idols of Lord Ram inside the mosque.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPORTANT INCIDENTS THAT HAPPENED?

- ❖ In 1853, the **first recorded incident of violence** over the holy site takes place during the reign of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh. Nirmohis, a Hindu sect, claim that a Hindu temple had been destroyed during Babur's times to build the mosque.
- ❖ In 1984, Hindu groups form a committee to spearhead the construction of the Ram temple at the Janmabhoomi site.
- ❖ In 1990, Volunteers of the VHP **partially damage the mosque**. The then PM intervenes and tries to resolve the issue through negotiations, but these fail.
- ❖ **On 6 December 1992**, a large crowd of Hindu karsevaks (volunteers) demolished the 16th-century Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodhya. The demolition occurred after a political rally at the site turned violent.
- ❖ This leads to some of the most deadliest riots across the country, leading to the deaths of more than 2,000 people. The central government, headed by P. V. Narasimha Rao, sets up a commission of enquiry under Justice M S Liberhan on December 16. In February 2002, in an attack on a train from Godhra in Gujarat, believed to be carrying karsevaks to Ayodhya, at least 58 people are killed.
- ❖ Riots erupt across the state and over 1,000 people are said to have been killed during the riots.
- ❖ The High Court orders the Archaeological Survey of India (**ASI**) to **excavate the site** to determine if it was earlier a temple. The ASI begins the survey to determine whether a temple existed on the site. It finds evidence of the presence of a temple under the mosque. Muslim organizations dispute the findings.

- ❖ In 2010, the Allahabad High Court pronounces its judgment on the four title suits relating to the dispute and said that the disputed land be divided into three parts equally.

Let us travel back to nearly 70 years from today, to 1949, and introduce ourselves to the city of Ayodhya, a very beautiful city as rightly described by Poet Tulsidas, administered by the Faizabad District, in the United Provinces (present day Uttar Pradesh). This city inhabits both Hindus (who claim it to be the birth place of Lord Ram), and Muslims (who see it as a city which locates the Babri Masjid, built by the first Mughal Ruler Babur in 1528). The dispute took its initial stage when the Hindus alleged that the Masjid was constructed after ruining a temple dedicated to Lord Ram, while the Muslims disagreed with it. Earlier, it was only a matter of conflicting views, until in 1949 when an idol of infant Ram, Ram Lalla, was placed inside the mosque, claiming to have emerged itself. This intensified the religious belief among the Hindus and large number of people across the country started visiting Ayodhya to worship the deity.

According to the Hindu belief, Lord Ram is considered one of the Incarnations of Lord Vishnu, who was born in Ayodhya about 10,000 years ago, a time period unknown to man. We can find its relevance through the Puranas. So, people now wanted to put Ram back to the place where he is believed to have been born and brought up. The matter then came before the first Prime Minister of Independent India, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a man of intellectual nature who felt that such agitations would be a threat to secularism. Soon came the partition which gave way to Hindu Domination. According to the census report, partition reduced the number of Muslims in India to less than half the population before partition. However, the proportion of Hindu-Muslim population in Ayodhya had little effect. The place was soon modified by devotees and they also started installing more idols, whereas the Muslims were determinant in their opposition. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and the state authorities provided for the removal of the idol but the City and District Magistrates showed no interest in removing it. Muslims were also restricted and prohibited from entering the gateway. This created further tension in the area. The legal battle over Ayodhya began in 1950 when a petition was filed, for the first time, by Gopal Singh Visharad, who was denied entry to the place. He was the Ayodhya Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, a organization formed to oppose Congress party's secular principle. The Court dragged on the issue for almost a decade and in 1959, the Nirmohi Akhara filed another suit which claimed the area should be in their possession. In response to the above suits, the Sunni Central Board of Waqfs filed a counter petition in 1961. The Board was established by the Indian Law to protect and preserve Muslim religious and cultural sites.

This went on and on over decades and the judges kept on postponing the case hearings. The 1981 Meenakshipuram (in Tamilnadu) incident, where around 400 families of low caste Hindu converted into Islam, made this local issue a national one and people started fearing threat to their religious identity. A meeting headed

by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) gathered in Delhi to discuss the issue. In January 1986, Umesh Chandra Pandey filed a petition to open the lock to the temple and on 1st February 1986, the judge ordered for the same, much to the shock of the Muslim representatives and in response, they petitioned the High Court in Lucknow, two days after the order, to prevent anything happening further. The claim was accepted. The matter took a new turn when the Babri Masjid was demolished by the Hindu activists on 6th December 1992 that shook the entire nation. President's Rule was imposed in the city. An investigation followed and subsequently cases were filed against 19 people including the leader, Mr. L. K. Advani. The demolition turned a mere disharmony into unrest much that people came to blows. The tragedies such as the 1993 Mumbai Riots and blasts, 2002 Godhra Train blasts and the 2008 Mumbai Terrorist Attack, added fuel to the fire.

A new law was enacted and the area including the disputed site was acquired by the Indian Government. The new law also set aside all the suits but allowed Hindus for worship. This frustrated the Muslims as well as the Nirmohi Akhara and they challenged the new law. By 1995, there were total four suits before the Lucknow bench. One on the Muslim side, i. e. Sunni Central Board of Waqfs, and three on the Hindu side, i. e. by Gopal Singh Visharad (1950), by Nirmohi Akhara (1959) and by Deoki Nandan Agarwal (1989). The forth suit was the most recent to be filed and the retired Judge, Mr. Agarwal, made Lord Ram himself, the plaintiff. The Indian Law treats God as a Legal Person for the purpose of Law. In 2003, the Allahabad High Court called the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to carry out survey on the disputed land to find empirical evidence. Post the survey, the ASI asked for excavation. The ASI submitted the report which affirmed traces of northern style temple to have been found under the site. In 2010, the Allahabad High Court declared the decree that the area be trifurcated among Lord Ram, the Muslims and the Nirmohi Akhara. However, none of the parties accepted the verdict. They soon appealed to the Supreme Court. The Apex Court stayed the High Court's Order. Since then, the suit moved on tediously only till when BJP Senior Member Subramanian Swamy filed a plea to consider this case as a Special Leave Petition. The plea was accepted and the hearing began on 6th August 2019. The judges reserved their verdict on 16th October 2019.

09th November, 2019: The day arrived grabbing the attention of millions across the country. The state of U. P. was under full protection and section 144 of the Cr. P. C. was imposed on several cities in India.

And finally, after a month long hearing, the Apex Court, headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, ruled the following:

- ◆ The disputed land of 2.77 acres to be given for the Construction of Ram Temple through a government trustee.
- ◆ An alternative 5-acre land to be found for mosque in Ayodhya.
- ◆ The Apex Court dismissed all the other suits.

SIKH RIOTS

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE 1984 RIOTS?

The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, also known as the 1984 Sikh Massacre, was a series of organized pogroms against Sikhs in India in response to the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. Independent sources estimate the number of deaths at about 8,000 – 17,000 whilst government estimates project that about 2,800 Sikhs were killed in Delhi.

WHY DID HER BODYGUARDS ATTACK HER?

- ★ Violence continued in the early 1980s due to the armed Sikh separatist Khalistan movement which sought independence from India. In July 1982, the Sikh political party Akali Dal's President Harchand Singh Longowal had invited Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to take up residence in Golden Temple Complex to evade arrest. Bhindranwale later on made the sacred temple complex an armoury and headquarters.
- ★ In the violent events leading up to the Operation Blue Star since the inception of Akali Dharm Yudh Morcha, the militants had killed 165 Hindus and Nirankaris, even 39 Sikhs opposed to Bhindranwale were killed. The total number of deaths was 410 in violent incidents and riots while 1,180 people were injured.

OPERATION BLUE STAR

- ★ Operation Blue Star was an Indian military operation carried out between 1 and 8 June 1984, ordered by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to remove militant religious leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his armed militants from the buildings of the Harmandir Sahib complex in Amritsar, Punjab.
- ★ Bhindranwale died and militants were removed from the temple complex. The military action in the temple complex was criticized by Sikhs worldwide who had interpreted it as an assault on Sikh religion. Four months after the operation, on 31 October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in vengeance by her two Sikh bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh.

INVESTIGATIONS

- ★ Ten commissions or committees had been formed to investigate the riots, the most recent being headed by Justice G. T. Nanavati. The investigation only picked up in 2005 after it was handed over to the CBI on the recommendation of the Justice Nanavati Commission.
- ★ After 34 years and numerous commissions of inquiry, one of the key players in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi has been sentenced to life imprisonment. Sajjan Kumar's jail term will bring some measure of bleak comfort to the families of

the riot victims whose doggedness reminds us that while memory is a sense of loss, it also sustains us through unbearable agony.

- ★ The landmark 203-page high court ruling affirms what has been common knowledge for years. The bench accepted the testimony of complainant Jagdish Kaur, who had witnessed Kumar (then the Outer Delhi MP) instigating rioters.

WHAT IS THE LEARNING HERE?

The Sajjan Kumar judgment should be a learning moment. It tells us that mass crimes like 1984 are not spontaneous, nor are they committed in the spur of the moment, in a rush of passions blinding people and turning them into mobs. There is a mind, individual or collective, that plans, organises and gets the crime executed.

The judgment reads: "*The riots in early November 1984 — in which in Delhi alone 2,733 Sikhs and nearly 3,350 all over the country were brutally murdered [official figures], was neither the first instance of a mass crime nor, tragically, the last [...] there has been a familiar pattern of mass killings in Mumbai in 1993, in Gujarat in 2002, in Kandhamal, Odisha in 2008, in Muzaffarnagar in UP in 2013 to name a few. Common to these mass crimes were the targeting of minorities and the attacks spearheaded by the dominant political actors being facilitated by the law enforcement agencies.*" Nellie, Bhagalpur etc. can be added to this list.

THE TERM – GENOCIDE: The court has used the term, genocide, carefully — there cannot be any hierarchies while comparing genocides. According to the UN convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group: Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and, forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

It is neither the method used in killing nor the number which makes a crime genocide, but the intent. When the law holds a person who himself has not committed murders or lootings responsible for what others did, it underlines a simple fact that scholars of genocide like Daniel Jonah Goldhagen have repeatedly asserted — genocidal violence is not spontaneous, there is no inevitability about it and that it is a matter of choice. The choice is made by three kinds of people at three levels: The political leaders who plan and organize, the actors who participate in the violence, and those who watch and not come forward to stop it.

LACUNAE IN ADMINISTRATION

As the Delhi High Court points out, there were multiple failures in the administration of justice after the 1984 violence –

- ◆ Repeated failure to file FIRs;
- ◆ Abetment of the crimes committed by the mobs;
- ◆ Failure to prosecute or gather material evidence;
- ◆ Lack of a credible witness protection programme in India, which hampers the willingness of witnesses to come forward or to maintain consistency.

CONCLUSION:

The 1984 riots changed Delhi — where its impact was the largest — as it applied a blow-torch to the most delicate of adhesives that bind people in our cities: Trust, neighbourliness and an acceptance of social diversity. It also produced a lost generation whose life chances were affected through the inability to access education and other sources of social and economic mobility. They were consumed by the after-effects of the trauma they had experienced.

Riots and violence only divide people and never unite them. It is politicians who capitalize on these fissures. Members of every political party have to share the blame for this. Political hatred isn't spread only along communal, caste and regional lines. It unwittingly spreads to engulf ordinary people.

NEED TO URGENTLY PAY HEED TO THE SUGGESTIONS BY THE HIGH COURT:

- ❖ Amending the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 and the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to entrust such bodies with the responsibility of taking note of cognizable offences committed in communal riots, investigate through special investigating teams (SITs) under their control and oversee prosecution through Special Public Prosecutor(s) engaged by them.
- ❖ On law on the subject of communal riots: It cannot be a complete answer to the challenge unless it also establishes special courts with suitable amendments to the general criminal law procedure as indeed the rules of evidence
- ❖ Both print and electronic — were the fourth pillar of democracy, press reports supported by photographic material and video footage may be utilised as evidence in trials of criminal cases arising out of communal riots.

MUZZAFARNAGAR RIOTS

- ♣ The clashes between the and Muslim communities in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, India in August–September 2013, resulted in at least 62 deaths including 42 Muslims and 20 Hindus and injured 93 and left more than 50,000 people displaced. By date 17 September, the curfew was lifted from all riot affected areas and the army was also withdrawn.
- ♣ The riot has been described as "the worst violence in Uttar Pradesh in recent history", with the army, as a result, being deployed in the state for the first time in last 20 years. The Supreme Court of India, while hearing petitions in relation to the riots, held the Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party prima facie guilty of negligence in preventing the violence and ordered it to immediately arrest all those accused irrespective of their political affiliation. The Court also blamed the Central government for its failure to provide intelligence inputs to the Samajwadi Party-governed state government in time to help sound alerts.
- ♣ In 2021, a local court allowed the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government to withdraw a case of inciting violence against 12 BJP leaders involved in the riots. In 2022, BJP MLA Vikram Singh Saini along with 11 others were sentenced to two years imprisonment by a special court which convicted them of rioting and other offences.

INITIAL CLASHES

- ◆ On 21 August 2013, communal clashes were reported from Muzaffarnagar and police registered cases against 150 people and 14 persons were taken into custody. Clashes between two communities, Hindus and Muslims, in Shamli and Muzaffarnagar grew on 27 August 2013. The original cause of the rioting is disputed according to bipartisan claims largely concerning the affected communities. In this case, the cause of this rioting alternates between a traffic accident and an eve-teasing incident. According to the first version, the cause was a minor traffic accident involving some youths which then spiralled out of control when it eventually took on religious overtones. In the second version, a girl from the Hindu Jat community was allegedly harassed in an eve-teasing incident by one Muslim youth in Kawal village. In retaliation, Hindu relatives of the girl in question, Sachin Singh and Gaurav Singh killed the youth named Shahnawaz Qureshi. The two brothers were lynched by a Muslim mob when they tried to escape. The police arrested eleven members of the girl's family for killing the Muslim youth. According to Zee News report some locals, the police did not act against the killers of the Hindu brothers.
- ◆ According to police records, Gaurav and Sachin picked a fight with Shahnawaz over a motorcycle accident. While it has been widely reported that the fight was sparked off when Shahnawaz harassed Gaurav and

Sachin's cousin sister, the FIR in the murder makes no mention of sexual harassment or molestation. According to the other version the girl who was allegedly harassed by Shahnawaz commented that she had not gone to Kawal or known anybody by name of Shahnawaz. In the FIR registered for Shahnawaz's death, five people along with Sachin and Gaurav were named as responsible for his death. The reports mentions that the seven men entered Shahnawaz's home, took him out and killed him with swords and knives; he died on the way to the hospital. In the FIR registers for Sachin and Gaurav's death, seven other men were reported to be responsible; that episode was sparked by an altercation after Mujassim and Gaurav were involved in a bike accident.

- ◆ After news of the killings spread, the members of both communities attacked each other. The police took possession of the three dead bodies, and temporarily brought the situation under control. The authorities also deployed Provincial Armed Constabulary personnel to Kawal.
- ◆ In September 2013, fresh riots sparked off and around 11 people including TV journalist Rajesh Verma were killed and more than 34 were injured after which indefinite curfew was clamped and the army deployed to help maintain law and order.

GATHERING OF THE MASSES

The killing of the three youths in Kawal village started echoing across the district. On 30 August, two days after the incident, despite ban on assembly of crowd, Muslim religious leaders gathered after Friday prayers and local Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Congress leaders had hijacked the Muslim meeting demanding justice for the Kawal incident and made inflammatory speeches. Also, local Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders allegedly gave an incendiary speech instigating the Hindu farmers on 31 August. A First Information Report (FIR) has been lodged against all the leaders. After the meeting, the farmers were attacked and killed on their way home by mob with assault rifles and weapons.

JAULI CANAL INCIDENT

- ❖ Clashes between the two communities occurred at low frequencies for the next two weeks. The Beti Bachao Mahapanchayat, attended by lakhs of people, proved to be inflammatory as it was allowed to be held by the district administration, despite imposition of 144 CRPC in the area, around 2,000 Hindus returning from Panchayat were ambushed by Muslim mob armed with assault rifles and other sophisticated weapons near Jauli Canal on 7 September. The mobs had set fire on 18 tractor trollies and 3 motorbikes.
- ❖ According to an eyewitness account, the bodies were dumped into the canal. Although six bodies were recovered, it was rumoured that hundreds were missing. Bodies of three Jats were found at the site of violence and three Hindus bodies were fished out from Jauli Canal. The District Magistrate agreed that many people were missing, but doubted whether

they had been killed or had migrated earlier from the village. Survivors of the Jauli Canal incident added that the policemen who were watching the assault did not help the victims, as they had said that 'they do not have orders to act'. This Jauli Canal incident aroused Jats to go on a rampage against Muslims with the claim that the latter were responsible for the killings. This led to the riots, which killed around 42 Muslim people and 20 Hindus (including a news reporter and a photographer). The casualties occurred before the Army was deployed and a curfew was imposed in Muzaffarnagar and its surrounding Shamli district.

- ❖ Even with the curfew and use of army the clashes continued for the next three days, with casualties increasing to 43 by 12 September 2013. A state home department official said that 38 people died in Muzaffarnagar, 3 in Baghpat, and one each in Saharanpur and Meerut.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The first case of gang-rape was registered in the aftermath of the riots from the village of Fugana in Jogiya Kheda. Later two more cases of rape were registered in October. It was reported on 15 November 2013 that a total of 13 rape and sexual harassment cases were registered over the past two months of rioting and the report named 111 people in the incidents but no arrests had been made until then.

AFTERMATH

Mahapanchayat in Sardhana: A Mahapanchayat (grand council) of 40 villages was held in Khera, Sardhana on 29 September 2013 to protest against the Uttar Pradesh government charging the local BJP MLA Sangeet Singh Som under the National Security Act. The crowd became violent when the police began to brandish sticks. The situation turned tense when a rumour spread that a youth injured in police action had died. Crowd set fire police jeeps and other vehicles.

REPERCUSSIONS

On 30th October, 3 people were killed and 1 injured after a clash between two communities in Mohammadpur Raisingh village of Muzaffarnagar district. Police forces were deployed and an alert was sounded in the entire district. The incident is widely seen as repercussion of the violence in September. On 4 July 2014, a local court has recorded the statement of a witness and deferred until 16 July the hearing in the Kawal killing case here.

ACTION

- ❖ Approximately 1,000 army troops were deployed and curfew was imposed in the violence-hit areas. 10,000 Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel, 1,300 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) troopers and 1,200 Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel were deployed to control the situation.

- ❖ Around 10,000 to 12,000 preventive arrests were made by the police as of 11 September 2013. They cancelled 2,300 arms licenses, seized 2,000 arms, and filed seven cases under the National Security Act.
- ❖ Approximately 50,000 people have been displaced. Some of them took shelter at ten state-run relief camps.
- ❖ By 31st August, 2013, five FIRs were registered in connection with the case and eleven people have so far been arrested and booked under various charges, including that of rioting and murder. Police arrested several Bhartiya Janta Party leaders for inciting communal violence including Sangeet Som, Rashtriya Lok Dal leader Dharamvir Baliyan, party's district president Ajit Rathi and ten other political activists when they tried to visit communal violence hit Kawal village of Muzaffarnagar district.

INVESTIGATION

Seventeen FIRs have been lodged against leaders including one for the Mahapanchayat (great council) which organised by the Bharatiya Kisan Union leaders. The Uttar Pradesh Government announced a one-member judicial commission composed of Justice Vishnu Sahay, a retired Allahabad High Court judge on 9 September 2013. The commission has been asked to submit a report about the violence within two months. The UP government also removed five senior officials of the police and the administration from Muzaffarnagar for their poor handling of the situation.

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Chief Judicial Magistrate issued non-bailable warrants against 16 politicians. On 20th August, 2013, BSP MP Kadir Rana was booked for his alleged hate speech in Khalapar area of the city. He was absconding but surrendered on 17 December, 2013 and was sent to judicial custody. BJP MLA Sangeet Som was arrested for allegedly uploading a fake video that shows a Muslim mob brutally murdering a Hindu youth and delivering provocative speeches.

STING OPERATION

A sting operation done by Headlines Today revealed that UP Cabinet Minister Azam Khan ordered police officers to release Muslims and not take action against them. However, Azam Khan has denied the charges.

CONVICTIONS

In 2022, BJP MLA Vikram Singh Saini along with 11 others were sentenced to two years imprisonment by a special court which convicted them of rioting and other offences. On 9 May, 2023, two men were convicted for gang rape of a Muslim woman by a trial court in Muzaffarnagar receiving 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and ₹10,000 fine.

RESPONSE

- ♣ Political parties such as Bahujan Samaj Party,^[52] Bharatiya Janata Party, Rashtriya Lok Dal and Muslim organizations including Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind demanded the dismissal of ruling Samajwadi Party government and imposition of President's rule in the state.
- ♣ The failure of UP government to take prompt action is usually attributed to Akhilesh Yadav's indecision. According to a report in The Caravan, one reason for the hesitation may have been the response to a law and order directive weeks before the riots. Despite a ban on the activities of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, many of the organisations activists' managed to reach Ayodhya for a campaign. Akhilesh's government may have feared a similar undermining of their authority if they tried to ban the meeting of Mahapanchayat.
- ♣ Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde informed the press that he had already warned the Uttar Pradesh government about the escalating communal tensions there, for which Akhilesh Yadav had promised preventive measures.
- ♣ Senior Samajwadi Party leader and Minority Welfare Minister Azam Khan was absent from Party's national executive meeting which was held at Agra. He is reportedly unhappy with the manner in which the district administration handled the situation in Muzaffarnagar.
- ♣ Sompal Shastri, who was a candidate of Samajwadi Party from Baghpat, refused to contest 2014 Lok Sabha polls.
- ♣ In a Public Interest Litigation filed by a victim of the violence, Mohammed Haroon and others in the Supreme Court, the number of deaths was claimed to be over 200.

IMMEDIATE MEASURES SUGGESTED

To make it clear the background guide is just the start of your research and only gives you briefings about certain aspects of the situation that are crucial to be aware of. You all are expected to go beyond the background guide and upon understanding the subjectivity of the agenda, conduct research on your own. Bearing in mind the following pointers,

- ★ Formation of Peace-Committees;
- ★ Sensible and responsible coverage by the media at the time of a communal conflict;
- ★ Necessary actions by the government to control the spread of canards and rumours at the time of communal clash by effectively monitoring the media;
- ★ Proper counseling to be provided to the victims and convicts.

LONG TERM MEASURES SUGGESTED

Delegates are expected to ponder upon visionary solutions with an ideology of curbing the communal violence in the long run; keeping in mind the following:

- ◆ How can de-communalization of lower and middle strata of society help?
- ◆ Are restrictions on political parties, having communal identities, essential?
- ◆ What makes educational institutions a decisive factor?
- ◆ How does extension of the work of trained non-violent peace brigades act as a preventive measure?
- ◆ Will the study of various religious scriptures contribute in eradicating religious misunderstandings?

MEASURES TO COUNTER COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

The executive board expects the delegates to think in a holistic manner when it comes to the measures of controlling communal violence while bearing in mind:

- How impartial administration and police can make a change?
- What may help media houses win people's hearts and minds?
- How significant is the holistic development of minority communities?
- What makes capacity building of the police and implementation of police reforms crucial?
- How will the prevention of community-based Ghettos in Urban areas & formulation of counter radicalization and de-radicalization policies help?

(Delegates are instructed not to state these points as it is, without substantiating them with their own research.)

These measures can be classified under five broad categories:

- Preventive measures;
- Measures when an outbreak of violence is anticipated;
- Measures during the violence;
- Technology measures during the violence and after the violence; and
- Post violence measures.

(Delegates can pursue their creative abilities when thinking about the solutions while bearing in mind these pointers. They are expected and very much encouraged to come up with innovative ideas, roadmaps and models.)

Looking forward to an enlightening, explorative & innovative researching!

