

## BRIEF: COMMUNAL RIOTS

India has a long history of communal strife between various communities. Before Independence, the country had witnessed worst communal violence. One of the first major communal riots took place in August 1893 in Mumbai in which about a hundred people were killed and 800 injured. The period between 1921 and 1940 marked a particularly difficult phase.

Independent India witnessed its worst communal riots in 1948 after the partition. Post-Partition the scale of communal violence had come down considerably in the first decade. But during the 1960s, the politics of vote bank and of appeasement changed this relative calm into a more violent phase. A long-term study of communal violence in independent India would show that they became a permanent phenomenon after the 1960s. The graph remained high since the Jabalpur Riots, 1961. **In 1964, there were 1,070 incidents — in 1960 there were only 26.**

In 1980s, under Rajiv Gandhi, the Union Government had embarked on identifying communally sensitive districts in the country and ended up identifying mostly those districts that have sizable Muslims population. Some of these communally sensitive spots in the country include Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Meerut, Delhi, Kolkata among others.

### Riot After Riot

- About 58 major communal riots in 47 places since 1967.
- Ten in South India, 12 in East, 16 in West, 20 in North India
- Ahmedabad has seen five major riots; Hyderabad, four; Calcutta, none since '64\*
- The 1990s saw the most riots in the last five decades: 23
- The 1970s saw seven riots, the 1980s, 14; the 2000s have seen 13
- Total toll: 12,828 (South 597, West 3,426, East 3,581, North 5,224).

\* In '64, a wave of rioting in Calcutta, Jamshedpur and Rourkela killed 2,500.

Note: Only riots with a toll of five or more included; deaths due to bomb blasts not included

Data: Alka Gupta, Outlook (March 5, 2012)

Riots & Politics:

Who ruled the state when more than 100 people died in riots -1967 onwards

| S. No. | Year | Place         | Lives Lost | Ruling Party      | Who was Chief Minister / Prime Minister |
|--------|------|---------------|------------|-------------------|---|
| 1      | 1967 | Hatia Ranchi  | 183        | Jana Kranti Dal   | MP Sinha                                |
| 2      | 1969 | Ahmedabad     | 512        | Congress          | Hitendra K Desai                        |
| 3      | 1970 | Jalgaon       | 100        | Congress          | Vasant Rao Naik                         |
| 4      | 1979 | Jamshedpur    | 120        | Janata Party      | Karpoori Thakur                         |
| 5      | 1980 | Moradabad     | 1500       | Congress          | VP Singh                                |
| 6      | 1983 | Nellie, Assam | 1819       | President's Rule  | -                                       |
| 7      | 1984 | Bhiwandi      | 146        | Congress          | Vasantdada Patil                        |
| 8      | 1984 | Delhi         | 2733       | Congress (UT)     | Rajiv Gandhi                            |
| 9      | 1985 | Ahmedabad     | 300        | Congress          | MS Solanki                              |
| 10     | 1989 | Bhagalpur     | 1161       | Congress          | SN Singh                                |
| 11     | 1990 | Delhi         | 100        | Union Territory   | VP Singh                                |
| 12     | 1990 | Hyderabad     | 365        | Congress          | Chenna Reddy                            |
| 13     | 1990 | Aligarh       | 150        | Janata Dal        | Mulayam Singh Yadav                     |
| 14     | 1992 | Surat         | 152        | Congress+JD(G)+JD | Chimanbhai Patel                        |
| 15     | 1992 | Kanpur        | 254        | President's Rule  | -                                       |
| 16     | 1992 | Bhopal        | 143        | President's Rule  | -                                       |
| 17     | 1993 | Mumbai        | 872        | Congress          | Sudhakar Rao Naik                       |
| 18     | 2002 | Gujarat       | 1267       | BJP               | Narendra Modi                           |

- Of the 18 riots mentioned,
  - 10 took place under Congress/Allies rule
  - 3 under President's Rule,
  - 4 under other parties and
  - 1 under BJP rule.

President's rule includes Kanpur and Bhopal, after BJP ruled Uttar Pradesh & Madhya Pradesh state governments were dismissed aftermath of the events of 6 December 1992.

- During JL Nehru's rule (From 1950 to 1964) - **243 communal violence incidences were documented in 16 states.** (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)

- During Indira Gandhi's rule (1966-77 & 1980-84) - **337 communal violence incidences were documented in 15 states**, including the Nielli Massacre of 1983. (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)
- Indira by far takes the shield for being the worst administrator of India when it comes to domestic security of its citizens
- During Rajiv Gandhi's rule (1984-89) - **291 communal violence incidences documented in 16 states**, including the barbaric Sikh Pogrom of 1984. (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)
- **There were 1,194 communal violence incidences documented in India from 1950-1995. Out of these 871 or 72.95% were during Nehru, Indira & Rajiv's PM-ship!** (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)

#### **Gujarat:**

- **Gujarat reported 244 communal violence incidences since 1950 till 1995** with a casualty of 1601. (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)
- **The city of Ahmedabad, reported 71 Communal Violence incidence with a total casualty of 1071** since 1950 till 1995. (Varshney-Wilkinson Dataset on Hindu-Muslim Violence in India, 1950-1995, Version 2)
- Some of Major Riots:
  - **Sept-Oct 1969 Ahmedabad** - More than 512 Killed in the city. 3000 to 15000 range in the entire state, Riots for 6 months, Ruling party happened to be Congress
  - **April 1985 Ahmedabad** - At least 300 Killed, Ruling party Congress
  - **July 1986 Ahmedabad** - 59 Killed, Ruling party Congress
  - **Dec 1992 Surat** - At least 175 killed, Ruling party Congress.
- The first incidents of retaliatory mob violence were reported on February 28. They continued in full intensity on 1st and 2nd March. By 3rd March situation was brought under control firmly.
- The entire police force of 6000 is deployed in sensitive areas of Gujarat on the very first day, Feb 27, 2002.
- Army is called and the first aircraft carrying army personnel lands at Ahmedabad by midnight of 28th February. 13 Columns of Army deployed to assist the State Civil administration.
- Curfew was imposed in Godhra and other potential trouble spots from Feb 27, 2012. Shoot- at- Sight order was issued on 1st March, that is, within a day after the riots broke out on 28th February.
- The Defence Minister personally supervised the deployment of the army which commenced on the morning of 1st.
- During the riots, police fired 103,559 rounds of bullets. More than half fired in the first 72 hours;
- Through the period of disturbances, in all 66,268 Hindus and 10,861 Muslims were taken into custody under preventive detention laws.



### Statements by Shri Narendra Modi

- **Feb 27, 2002:** ...This government will not allow anyone involved to go scot-free and is taking fool-proof steps... The Government will not be lacking in discharging duty...No efforts will be spared in ensuring law and order.
- **Feb 28, 2002:** ...Come, let us serve Gujarat through peace and self-control, and let us strengthen the arms of law ... It is our responsibility that the lives of innocent are not put at stake...*Ver verthi shamtu nathi* (Hatred is never won over by hatred)...
- **Mar 1, 2002:** *Kriya pratikriya ki chain chal rahi hai. Hum chhahate hain ki na kriya ho aur na pratikriya* (A chain of action-reaction has set in. We wish to see an end to both action and reaction) (Zee TV Interview with Sudhir Chowdhary , Gandhinagar. SIT Investigation established that Zee TV deleted the last line to give the impression that Modi was justifying “reaction” by way of mob violence to avenge the killings of Godhra.)
- **Mar 2, 2002:** State Government is committed to pacify the wide spread anger amongst the people and restore law and order with strong political will.
- **Mar 3, 2002:** Government cannot shy away from its moral duty of maintaining law and order in the state...all sections of the society too have a role to play in restoring peace quickly... I appeal to people to cooperate with the security staff in order to maintain law and order and in performance of their duties...



**Some of the Major Communal Riots**

| S. No | Year       | Place            | Death Toll |
|-------|------------|------------------|------------|
| 1     | Aug '67    | Hatia, Ranchi    | 183        |
| 2     | Mar '68    | Karimganj, Assam | 82         |
| 3     | Sep '69    | Ahmedabad        | 512        |
| 4     | May '70    | Bhiwandi, Mah.   | 76         |
| 5     | May '70    | Jalgaon, Mah.    | 100        |
| 6     | Oct '77    | Varanasi         | 5          |
| 7     | Mar '78    | Sambhal, UP      | 25         |
| 8     | Sep '78    | Hyderabad        | 20         |
| 9     | Oct '78    | Aligarh          | 30         |
| 10    | April '79  | Jamshedpur       | 120        |
| 11    | Aug '80    | Moradabad        | 1,500      |
| 12    | Apr '81    | Biharsharif      | 80         |
| 13    | Sep '82    | Meerut           | 12         |
| 14    | Dec '82    | Baroda           | 17         |
| 15    | Feb '83    | Nellie, Assam    | 1,819      |
| 16    | Sep '83    | Hyderabad        | 45         |
| 17    | May '84    | Bhiwandi, Mah    | 146        |
| 18    | Oct '84    | Delhi            | 2,733      |
| 19    | Apr '85    | Ahmedabad        | 300        |
| 20    | Jul '86    | Ahmedabad        | 59         |
| 21    | Apr/May'87 | Meerut           | 70         |
| 22    | Mar '89    | Bhadrak, Orissa  | 17         |
| 23    | Oct '89    | Indore           | 27         |
| 24    | Oct '89    | Bhagalpur        | 1,161      |
| 25    | Oct '90    | Ahmedabad        | 41         |



|    |                 |                        |       |
|----|-----------------|------------------------|-------|
| 26 | Oct '90         | Jaipur                 | 52    |
| 27 | Oct '90         | Jodhpur                | 20    |
| 28 | Oct '90         | Lucknow                | 33    |
| 29 | Oct '90         | Chandni Chowk, Delhi   | 100   |
| 30 | Oct '90         | Hailakandi, Assam      | 37    |
| 31 | Oct '90         | Patna                  | 18    |
| 32 | Oct '90         | Hyderabad              | 165   |
| 33 | Nov '90         | Agra                   | 31    |
| 34 | Dec '90         | Hassan, Mandya, Mysore | 60    |
| 35 | Dec '90         | Hyderabad              | 200   |
| 36 | Dec '90         | Aligarh                | 150   |
| 37 | May '91         | Baroda                 | 28    |
| 38 | May '91         | Meerut                 | 40    |
| 39 | Oct '92         | Sitamarhi, Bihar       | 44    |
| 40 | Dec '92         | Surat                  | 152   |
| 41 | Dec '92         | Malpura, Andhra        | 24    |
| 42 | Dec '92         | Kanpur                 | 254   |
| 43 | Dec '92         | Bhopal                 | 143   |
| 44 | Dec '92/Jan '93 | Mumbai                 | 872   |
| 45 | Nov/Dec '97     | Coimbatore             | 20    |
| 46 | Feb '98         | Coimbatore             | 60    |
| 47 | Dec '98         | Surathkal, Karnataka   | 12    |
| 48 | Mar-01          | Nalanda, Bihar         | 8     |
| 49 | Mar '01         | Kanpur                 | 14    |
| 50 | Oct '01         | Malegaon               | 13    |
| 51 | Feb-May '02     | Gujarat                | 1,267 |
| 52 | May '02         | Marad, Kerala          | 9     |



|    |         |                    |    |
|----|---------|--------------------|----|
| 53 | Apr '06 | Aligarh            | 6  |
| 54 | May '06 | Baroda             | 6  |
| 55 | Dec '07 | Kandhamal          | 12 |
| 56 | Oct '08 | Bhainsa, Andhra    | 6  |
| 57 | Sep '09 | Miraj, Maharashtra | 5  |
| 58 | Sep '11 | Bharatpur          | 10 |

Source: Outlook (March 5, 2012)

#### Communal incidents during UPA rule

| Serial No | Year | Number of communal incidents | Number of deaths | Number of injured persons |
|-----------|------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 1         | 2012 | 668                          | 94               | 3317                      |
| 2         | 2011 | 580                          | 91               | 1899                      |
| 3         | 2010 | 701                          | 116              | 2138                      |
| 4         | 2009 | 791                          | 119              | 2342                      |
| 5         | 2008 | 943                          | 167              | 2354                      |
| 6         | 2007 | 761                          | 99               | 2227                      |
| 7         | 2006 | 698                          | 133              | 2170                      |
| 8         | 2005 | 779                          | 124              | 2066                      |

(Source: Annual Reports, Ministry of Home Affairs)



**2002 Riot & Others**

|                                    | Neillie Massacre 1983   | Delhi Pogrom 1984   | Ahmedabad - 1969   | Gujarat Riots 2002   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>When</b>                        | Feb 18, 2983 (9 AM to 3 PM - Just 6 Hours)  | Oct 31, 1984 to Nov 3, 1984   | Sept - Oct 1969  | Feb 27, 2002 to March 3, 2002  |
| <b>Why</b>                         | May be Anti-Bangladeshi sentiments  | Killing of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh security guards   | Tensions were on rise during 1960s. Some local incident was the immediate reasons for 1969 violence. | 58 Hindu Pilgrims were burned alive in a train by Muslim mob at Godhra Staoin                      |
| <b>Violence Affected Districts</b> | 1 District, 14 Villages near the river Kopili. Unclear the immediate reasons  | Mostly Delhi, Some parts of North India   | Ahmedabad City   | 151 towns and 993 villages in 16 districts out of the 25 districts of the state.                   |
| <b>No of Dead</b>                  | 1819 people. ALL Muslims. A case of suspected planned genocide  | 2733. Mostly Sikh. A case of Pogrom   | 512. Out of which 430 were Muslims   | 790 Muslims & 254 Hindus. 223 more people were reported missing.                                   |
| <b>Ruling Party</b>                | Congress - President's rule   | Congress  | Congress both at State and Centre  | BJP at State and NDA at the Centre   |
| <b>Administration in charge</b>    | Gyani Zail Singh (President) and Indira Gandhi (PM). Asom was under President's rule  | Rajiv Gandhi (PM)   | Indira Gandhi (PM) and Hitendra Desai (CM)   | Atal Bihari Vajpayee (PM) and Narendra Modi (CM)   |
| <b>Conviction</b>                  | Not ONE rioter or killer convicted till date. Police Filed 688 criminal cases, of which 378 cases were closed due to 'lack of evidence'. 310 cases were chargesheeted, but Rajiv Gandhi dropped cases against ALL in 1985 | Many of the primary accused were acquitted or never charge-sheeted. Recently, Sajjan Kumar is also acquitted. |  | 249 conviction till now in 19 cases. 184 Hindus, 65 Muslims (31 for Godhra and 34 for post-Godhra) |





|                        | Neillie Massacre 1983  | Delhi Pogrom 1984   | Ahmedabad - 1969   | Gujarat Riots 2002  |
|------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Commissions and Probes | 600 Page official Tiwari Commission report - Only 3 copies exist today. Asom's Congress CM Hiteswar Saikia decided not to make them public | Ten commissions and committees have so far enquired into the riots from Marwah Commission (1984) to Nanavati Commission (2005)  | The Justice Jaganmohan Reddy Commission of Enquiry was set up by the Government of Gujarat's Home Department. It published a report in 1971, questioning the police's role in the riots. | Shah-Nanavati Commission, NHRC, Banergee Committee, Concerned Citizen Tribunal, SC monitored SIT and Media Trials                                   |
| Blame-Game             | Indira Gandhi was never probed. No SITs, No Supreme Court, No Media trials and No Civil Society Activism.                                  | Rajiv Gandhi commented that time "When a giant tree falls, the earth below shakes". Congress apoligised after 25 years, but still protecting Jagdish Tytler, Sajjan Kumar |  | Atal Bihari Vajpayee (PM) and Narendra Modi (CM) being blamed for 11 years. 249 people were convicted including former State Minister Maya Kodnani. |