CHAPTER-2

THE HISTORY OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW
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2.1. Introduction
Communalism and Communal Violence are commonly used terms which mean different things to different people. They are loosely used in ways to appear as simple notions easily understandable. But, in reality they are very complex phenomenon, demands exploration to understand and analyse them in detail. In this chapter these two terms are examined to have their working definition for the purpose of this study.

Communalism is a term which is commonly used in everyday language to refer to many situations and conditions. It refers to the ‘political line’ or theoretical doctrine of a person or party. It is generally seen as a theory of a society that is divided into several small independent communes which see state as a confederation of self-governing communes. It puts the interests of the community above the interests of the individual. This is usually done on the ground that the community exists for the benefit of the individuals who participate in it and therefore the best way to serve the interests of the individual is through the interests of the community. It advocates communal living while emphasising the loyalty to the interests of one’s own communal grouping rather than to society as a whole. However it begins to take a negative meaning where people start promoting the interests of one community over another. Communalism believes that the people of different religions have different interests in political and economic matters, regardless of whether they belong to the same nation or province or society. It takes different shapes and colours. Repercussions of it are multiple. Communal Violence is one of its physical appearances. In itself therefore, the term communalism does not carry a negative meaning.

Communalism is an ‘ideology.’ It is used to represent ideologies centred on particular communities, especially religious communities. In colonial India it was recognised to mean the idea that shared religious beliefs among groups of people automatically convert into shared political interests. The Colonial society in India was organized under a variety of structures, such as caste, kinship or village society; and Indian people possessed many different affiliations apart from religion, including those of region and
language. Religion-based communalism was an ideal and a goal to be attained rather than a reality. Indian communalism therefore, referred to political ideals that sought unity based on religious identity. The British Raj attempted to placate separate communal interests. The Hindu Mahasabha (HM) and the All-India Muslim League Party (AIMLP) represented such communal interests, whereas Indian National Congress (INC) represented an overarching nationalist vision.\(^1\) In the run up to independence in 1947, communalism and nationalism came to be competing ideologies and led to the division of British India into the Republics of India and Pakistan. Communalism is basically an ideology on which communal politics is organised to suite to the designs of followers of this ideology. This led to the bloody partition of the sub-continent. Communal Violence is a conjectural consequence of communal ideology. Pre and post-Independent India has often faced conflicts among different religious communities, especially Hindus and Muslims, sometimes leading to serious inter-communal violence. We try to understand and put it to its proper perspective.

### 2.2. Definition of Communal Violence

Communal Violence in India has been a continuing feature of communal politics for the last few hundred years especially of British and post partition period. Religious differences were exploited to suite to the politics of the time. This phenomenon has been explained by different scholars differently.

Before starting to analyse the Communal Violence and its historical background, it is necessary to understand the actual meaning of communalism and the phenomenon of it. The word ‘communal’ means, of, by, or belonging to the people of a community shared or participated in by the public and ‘ism’ means a distinct doctrine or practice.\(^2\) Therefore, the complete word of communalism means the loyalty and commitment to the interest of your own ethnics or religious group rather than the whole society. On the other hand the term “‘violence’ is a greasy concept – nonlinear, productive, destructive, and reproductive. Violence, which can never be understood exclusively in terms of its physicality of force and violence, or the infliction of pain-alone, because it also includes


assailing on the personhood, dignity and the sense the value of victim.”

V. Kannupilai tries to define the term Violence saying that it may be grouped into two broad categories: firstly, individual violence and secondly, social violence including religiously motivated/exploited violence affecting public peace and tranquillity commonly recognised as “Sampradayik dange-fsad” are Communal Violence.

According to Asghar Ali Engineer Communal Violence, “is a politico-economic phenomenon has assumed a serious image in the last decade and a half in the South Asia regions (Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) and it becomes aggravated more aggravated whenever a structural shift takes place, as one group or community in the process....loses or gains.”

He also points out that it should be kept in mind that both “communalism and Communal Violence are two distinct stages,” firstly Communalism may not necessarily lead to Communal Violence though it does when some extremely irritating factors appear on the scene.

At the stage of Communal Violence, where the victims targeted are innocents because they belong to a specific religious community or sect in such violence in India is commonly referred as ‘Communal Violence’ generating a competitive an inter-communal commutative confrontations atmosphere exclusively politically to each other. Communal Violence has acquired a status of a permanent feature of communal politics in India.

Communalism in Indian society manifests itself in different shapes and forms which sometime exploring in the form of Communal Violence. Paul Brass argues that “while

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incidence and timing of Hindu-Muslim riots vary from region to region and city to city, it is no incorrect to consider India as a whole a country in which Hindu-Muslim riots persist and are endemic.”

The diversity in India provides a fertile ground for sowing the seeds of antagonism against other religions and communities sometimes leading to Communal Violence. The consideration of some of the definitions of Communal Violence given by different scholars will help its meaning frame it out understanding the meaning and concept of communal violence more to frame it out into a proper perspective. Bipin Chandra that the Communal Violence consists of three elements and each is succeeding to other. The first step consists of an exclusive religious community based on common political, economic, social and culture interests. The second step consists of articulating irreconcilability of the interest of two exclusive communities. The third step arrives of when the exclusive and irreconcilable interests of two communities become mutually hostile. This often leads to Communal Violence.

Jawaharlal Nehru describes “it as a narrow group mentality basing itself on a religious community but in reality concerned with political power and patronage for an interested group.” Historian Romila Thapar explains that “Communalism in Indian sense is a consciousness which draws on a supposed religious identity and uses this as the basis for an ideology. It then demands political allegiance to a religious community and supports a programme of political action designed to further the interest of that religious community.” According to Harsh Kapoor points out that “the term Communalism is widely used across South Asia to describe the systematic misuse of religion for political purposes. It represents the processes of political construction of Communal identities along religious lines. Communal politics represents one’s own religious community in an

antagonistic relationship with the other religious community. Socially engineered prejudice, tension and conflict between religious communities constitute Communalism.”  

Communalism becomes a strategy/mechanism for achieving politico-religious agendas of communal politics. Communal Violence is the most violent tactics from of this mechanism.

An event is identified, in general sense, as Communal Violence if it has two important features: (a) there is violence and conflict, and; (b) two or more communally identified members of these groups conflict participate in that conflict against each other. B. Rajeshwari has further argues that “whenever the two or more conflicting groups belonging from different religious communities clashed to other, it explodes into a violent communal form.”

On the basis of these definitions it could be says that Communalisation is a socio-political, religious and economic based means used by different communities to achieve their respective interests and objectives whether they are political, economic or religious. Communal Violence is its violent manifestations. For this study Communal Violence is conceptualise as a mechanism/ means/ tactics for achieving the different purposes in simple terms it becomes a means for consciously chosen way of achieving something. It could also be used to consolidate and capitalize the ongoing processes of communalisation of Indian society which is happing across the nation.

2.3. Causes responsible for the Communal Violence

Communalisation in Indian society is a project having roots in History. Its causes are many. Likewise Communal Violence is manifolds overlapping and very complex. In the proceeding part in this chapter the causes of communal violence are examined to understand how they began. Justice D.P. Mandon, in his enquiry report of Bhiwandi-Jalgaon riots of 1970, gives an interpretation of theories about how a riot starts. He

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17Rajeshwari, Communal Riots in India,’ 1.
says, “If we were to take a surface view of the bare facts of any riot, it would appear that the riot was caused by incidents so insignificant, that we would be amused about how such a trifling matter could have led to so much arson, looting and murder. It however, does not require any deep insight to know that this incident was not the real cause of the riot but was merely the result of something else, which correctly expressed itself in the riots.”

V. N. Rai also argues that “the preparation for such kind of large scale of Communal Violence starts much earlier than its actual occurrence. The tension flowing through many stages of conflict comes to a flash point where a stray brickbat or rumour is enough to trigger violence” which Paul Brass also believes after his Aligarh-Meerut riots research.

Brass believes that ‘Communal Violence episodes typically play out in three distinct stages: rehearsal or preparation; enactment or activation; and interpretation or explanation. He further says that newspapers play a key role in the first phase by spreading ‘news’ that originates in “the Institutionalised Riot System Network.” In the second phase, newspapers become complicit in the enactment of riot production through the attention they pay to statements of the producers of riots and by failing to make a distinction between the precipitating incident and the proximate cause. In the third phase, they become involved in controlling the explanation or interpretation of the causes of the violence in a manner that fails to isolate effectively the factors and persons most responsible for the production of violence, and instead contribute to diffusing blame widely, blurring the responsibility and thereby, as he puts, “contributing to the perpetuation of violent productions in future, as well as the order that sustains them”.'

Whenever this kind of violence takes the shape of higher number deaths, more terrible atrocities continue for longer duration, which Brass calls it a ‘pogrom.’ He further explains that the majority community (the Hindus) having a two predetermined beliefs towards riots: it is believed that the Hindus by nature are liberal, spiritual, tolerant and non-violent and as opposed to this Muslims are by nature cruel, violent, faithless and fanatic community and these two myths or formulations have become a permanent part

19Rai, Combating Communal Conflict, 69.
20Brass, The Production of Hindu.

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of the Hindu psychology, and on this basis they become successful in creating a rumour by the help of newspapers which result in the form of communal.23

Other scholars also attempt to explain the causes. Asghar Ali Engineer has divided the causes of Communal Violence into two categories that are Micro and Macro. He asserted that the macro level causes are ideologically oriented. The developmental problems insist of secular interpretations or religiously defined, explained and coloured in the form of religious revivalism simultaneously propagating stereotypic attitudes towards the minorities. On the other hand the local issues such as playing of music while procession is passing by a mosque or inter religious love affairs etc are the example of micro level causes.24 Also, Association of Religion Data Archives of the U.S. State Departments in International Religious Freedom Reports says that “the political and social factors that serve to motivate religious violence.”25 There are social, political, economic, cultural and religious factors broadly accepted as the main causes for Communalism and Communal Violence in India. All these factors are interrelated and supplementing to each other. (Figure: 2.1). There is a need to discuss these elements step by step to understand its importance in the light of Communal Violence.

Interconnections of Religion, Politics and Economic Causes

2.3.1. Religious Causes

The religion has the capacity to fuel social action in the society. It serves as both the opiate and amphetamine of social change.26 Therefore Karl Marx is best known for the opiate argument: “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless

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23 Rai, Combating Communal Conflict, 66.
26 Finke and Harris, “Wars and Rumors of Wars,” 2.
world...It is the opium of the people.” The Communal Violence has become frighteningly distributing phenomenon in the region of the South Asia. It takes the coat of religion like Hinduism in India, Islam in Bangladesh and Pakistan, Buddhism in Mayanmar and Sri Lanka. The term Communalism widely used, accordingly Harsh Kapoor, across the South Asia particularly in India and Pakistan to describe basically the systematic misuse of religion for political objectives. It represents the processes of political construction of community identities along the communal lines. This way one religious community is represented in a hostile and inimical relationship with other religious communities. This gives birth to the spirit of communalism often causing Communal Violence.

In the Indian context, religion serves as an important cause for Communal Violence especially in the terms of Hindu and Muslim communities. The Indian constitution mixes the India a secular state. However the Indian society essentially remains in practice a religious society. The politicians in India and other communal organisations play with the fire of religious sensitivities of the people. This is more often done during the times of elections, for political purposes which sometimes results into violent forms. Justice V. S. Deve point out in his enquiry report, “religion is being used as short cut tool in the electoral politics.” Sumit Ganguly also argues that “Religion is a part and parcel of Indian political life.” The various others Communal Violence reports also suggest that, by exploitative use of religion communal politicians just want to polarise the votes of the victims on the communal line. The major examples of these kind of Communal Violence are the partition of India-1947, Bhagalpur riots in 1989, Babri Masjid riots-1992, Gujarat riots-2002 and Muzaffarnagar riots-2013.

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27 John C. Raines, *Marx on Religion* (Temple University Press, 2002), 248, https://books.google.co.in/books?redir_esc=y&id=QxWptakXMu0C&q=religion+is+the+sigh+of+the+oppressed+creature%2C+the+heart+of+a+heartless+world%E2%80%A6It+is+the+opium+of+the+people#v=snapshot&q=religion%20is%20the%20sigh%20of%20a%20heartless%20world%E2%80%A6It%20is%20the+opium%20of+the+people&f=false (Retrieved February 14, 2016).
29 Kapoor, *Resources against*, 5.
2.3.2. Political Causes

Communal Politics is one of the determining features of Indian society. They are linked with each other in different ways and context. Number of scholars refers to the political causes of Communal Violence. Noted among them are Wilkinson, Rabushka and Shepsle, Horowitz, Elster, Offe and Preuss analyses the how political competition influence the society.\(^{32}\) In Indian context, the prominent personalities like Paul Brass, Wilkinson and Engineer attempts to define the role of politics in Communal Violence. Paul Brass studying the **Meerut and Aligarh riots 1982-83**, in Uttar Pradesh points out that the Communal Violence in India is the result of ‘**Institutional Riots System (IRS)**’.\(^{33}\) The Political parties and communal forces use the Institutionalised Riot System (IRS) for their political gains. On the other hand Wilkinson says that “**a democratic state protects minorities when it is in their government’s electoral interest to do so.**”\(^{34}\) He argues this theory on two major points, saying: a) “When minorities are an important part for their party’s current political interest, on the support base, or the support base of one of their coalition partners in a coalition government.”\(^{35}\) b). “When the overall electoral system in a state is so competitive …that there is therefore a high probability that the governing party will have to negotiate or form a coalition with minority supported parties in the future, despite its own preferences and liking.”\(^{36}\)

Wilkinson establishes direct linkages of with the politics and Communal Violence, by arguing that if there is a high competition among the political parties, there should be a low level of communal riots, and if there is a low level of party competition then there should be a high level of communal riots. Higher the competition lowers the chances of Communal Violence. Lower the competition higher the chances of Communal Violence. Politics plays an important role in Communal Violence.

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\(^{35}\)Ibid, 6.

\(^{36}\)Ibid, 7.
2.3.3 Economic Causes
Besides the religious and political factors responsible for Communal Violence, economic factors also contribute to the process of Communal Violence. Anirban Mitra and Debraj Ray analyse the role of economic causes in Communal Violence. They point out that “it is prima facie reasonable that there is an economic factor in Hindu-Muslim riots.” 37 Along with other factors the economic progress of a hostile community may intensify the resentment and malice that the other community may feel about the hostile community. In this scenario, “there could be the systematic use of violence for economic gain, for the control—via appropriation or systematic exclusion—of property, occupations, business activity, and resources. This economic perspective is no contradiction to the use of noneconomic factors in conflicts.” 38

The role of economic factor is historically observable. During the British period recognise dull and sluggish economy of India was became an important factor for the rise of communalism. It was intensely rooted in and was an appearance of the interests and desire of the middle classes in a social set up in which chance for them was inadequate. 39 The communalism has emerged in India as a weapon of politically and economically reactionary social classes and political forces, because communal leaders and parties were in general allied with these classes and forces. But the vested interests deliberately encouraged communal atmosphere because of its capacity to distort and divert popular struggle, to avert the masses from understanding the real cause.40

The economic growth and decline might influence the propensity of communal groups to engage in violence. Analysing the effect of economic condition on violence Gurr and Duval propound an “inverse relationship between the economic growth and violence, basing their arguments on the belief that the periods of short term decline in economic growth may causes for more violence and conflict.” 41 In contrast Olzak argues that “the

40 “Factors Responsible for the Growth.”
period of economic growth could increase violence.”\textsuperscript{42} Wilkinson argues that the other causes the economic cause can especially be applied to explain the Hindu-Muslim Communal Violence. In the 1992-93 riots in Bombay, Calcutta and the 2002 Ahmadabad violence, he finds that Communal Violence was used as a strategy by slum boards and real-estate developers to displace people from the valuable land, which can be developed or sold for a high price. The second theory for leading economic explanation for riots he links it to the result of growing economic competition in ethnically divided markets citing various Communal Violence in economic cities like Moradabad (Brass Industries), Aligarh (Lock Industries), Varanasi (Silk Textile) etcetera \textsuperscript{43} Zoya Hasan claims that the Communal Violence “occurred in those areas where economic competition between Hindus-Muslims were very strong.” By citing the example of Uttar Pradesh, she argued that “Muslims occupy relatively influential position in the economic-political life of the region and was more prone to violence since it apparently threatened the hegemony of existing Hindu commercial groups.” \textsuperscript{44} Engineer also keeps these cities in the hit list of most riots prone urban areas of Uttar Pradesh and also collected the data which showed the death toll in Communal Violence from the period of 1960-2002 in most riot prone urban areas of Uttar Pradesh is very high.\textsuperscript{45} V. Kannupilai points out that the present inflation and deteriorating economic condition is responsible for Communal Violence as people are restless and frustrated because of these economic hardship\textsuperscript{46} and the communal forces find it easier to exploit discontented and unemployed youths for violence. A related argument is that politicians often stir up communal tensions to channelize their irritations in toward Hindu-Muslim Communal Violence.\textsuperscript{47}
2.3.4 Other Causes

(i). Media

In the world of today the role of media in the life of individual, groups and states is very influential and determining. It affects all of them in number of ways. In democratic nation media plays a very dominating role in every sector of the society. Media here means print, electronic and social media. Media has the capability to play a very effective role both in promoting and Communal Violence and as well as maintaining the Communal harmony in the society, it can serves as a double edge sword.

In Indian context Kuldip Nayer in his view religious programme are aired by Doordarshan and All India Radio (AIR) like Mahabharat, Ramayan etcetera.48 Engineer and Srimanjari asserts that media is slowly and gradually lacking its main objectivity, being value laden, biased, unethical and prone to false reporting. There are clear identifications that on communal lines some of the reports and editorials regularly appear in different newspapers such as Amar Ujala, Danik Jagran, Jansatta, Navbharat Times, Al-Jamiat, Madinah, Aza’im, Nida-e-Millat, Burhan, Jamiat Times, and Sidq-e-Jadid etcetera.49 These kinds of media houses are owned, financed and controlled by big business groups. They often report the news in a fragmented and communal manner. Other than this, communal groups and organisations have their own newspapers and their circulation sometimes is higher than that of major dailies or secular ones like as the Shiv Sena’s Saamna. Some sections of the national press also aggravate the communal situation.50

In the world of today the social media like ‘WhatsApp,’ ‘Facebook,’ and ‘Twitter’ etcetera has acquired all penetrating role in the lives of the people. At the times of communal tension they can serves as tools of anger and violence. The use of this media is continuously increasing as it a cheap and easily available mode of communication to circulate the massages among friends, groups and the society. They play a very effecting

role in spreading information irrespective of the validity, authenticity and actuality. They serve as efficient channels of mobilization any social/group activity disturbing the social fabric of the society. For example, Muzaffarnagar Communal Violence-2013\(^\text{51}\) and more than 600 communal riots in the context of by-election-2014, of Uttar Pradesh;\(^\text{52}\) in which WhatsApp video and messaging played a very violence provocative role.\(^\text{53}\) The media in general and social media in these days particular have become the source of mobilization not only for negative purposes but also for positive purposes which are essential for democratic societies.

(ii). Rumours and Propagandas

Rumours are just the handy work of ‘communalists’ and ‘anti-elements.’ They know that rumour, even a small rumour, can change a minor clash into the major Communal Violence. It can disturb the peace of the society. “Noted psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar writes that rumours are crucial to the building of the feeling that one’s communal identity is under threat, which usually marks violent community responses in situations of riots.”\(^\text{54}\) It observed that before and after the riots the role of rumours has been horrendous – because rumours are spread just by the words of mouth, they also find space in local newspaper and magazines. Rumours played a crucial role in Aurangabad riots-1968,\(^\text{55}\) West Bengal–1950, Jabalpur riots-1961, Bhagalpur riots-1989, Gujarat riots-2002, Muzaffarnagar riots – 2013. Recently on December 09, 2014 News of Karnataka reported that “rumours were spread stating that, a section of pro-Muslim activists in Ulaibettu challenged the Hindu activists to come to Ulaibettu wearing saffron clothes which triggered tension which erupted in Communal Violence in Mangaluru. Moreover, the social networking sites and social media apps are bombarded with images and messages related to the Communal Violence, further damaging the fragile peace in


\(^{53}\) The Paul Brass also identifies the central role of media in Communal Violence.

\(^{54}\) Philipose, “Violence Just a Click.”

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The History of Communal Violence in India: An Overview

Therefore, it could be said that “rumour shaped drunken brawl into Communal Violence.” After analysing the broad causes of Communal Violence it is pertinent here to investigate the problem of communalism in Indian History.

2.4 Genesis of Communal Violence

Romila Thapar, in this regard points out that “the problem of communalism in India has its roots in the history of India therefore historians in comparison to the economists, socialists in social science field are so much concerned about the communal ideology because communal theme always uses history principle as a tool for its foundation.”

British historian James Mill was the first man who penned the Indian history by the name of A History of British India in early 19th century and in this book he has classified the Indian history into three broad stages firstly Hindu civilization, secondly Muslim civilization and the last British colonial period and many scholars believed that the last stage of Indian history was actually the beginning of communalism in India. For the purpose of this study a brief account of an Indian history is required here to create a historical sense of the period. It is beyond the scope of this research to investigate the Indian history at length as various studies relating to the issue has been carried out by various scholars.

2.4.1 Communal Conflicts in Ancient and Medieval India

India is that country where people belonging to the different religions and cultures where people have been living peacefully throughout the broadness of India from thousands of years. Historical records are scattered and absent. Historians have written about the ancient history of India grounding their views and conclusions upon using not very well documented sources. The Max Weber writes “it’s an unchallengeable fact that in India the religious and philosophical thinkers were able to enjoy a perfect or nearly absolute,
liberty form a long period.” Manabendu Benerjee has noted that the “Gupta kings made little efforts to enforce their personnel religious preference Vaishnavism, on the court, explaining: ‘their followers could belong to any sects or religions.’ The Gupta king’s valued religious toleration, and did what they could to butler the amity and peace that usually prevailed among heterogeneous religious sects. The Arthshastra also recommends that ‘the ruler or the king of the state should build temples to Lord Shiva and various other deities in his capital also’.” The references to religious wars and persecutions are conspicuously absent from the historical records of ancient India. The larger view holds that the spirit of tolerance among different communities in ancient India was a determining characteristic.

However some scholars believe that there is evidence of localised disagreement, conflict and persecution. For example, Wendy Doniger O’ Flaherty categories the “Gupta period as one in which partisan Brahmans and their supporters began to vent bitter hostility towards the various non-Brahmanical groups of the society, especially the Buddhist and Jain religious groups. The evidence regarding such hostilities is found in the archaeological record of the Buddhist sites such as Nagarjunakonda on the Krishna River. The building at Nagarjunakonda was also destroyed when the great Hindu thinker and teacher Sankaracharya came to Nagarjunakonda with his followers.” Doniger transcribes that “Heresy was so widespread and so abhorred that Siva himself was said to have become incarnate as the philospher Sankara, in order to explain the Vedas, destroy the temples and books of the Jains, and massacre all who opposed him, particularly the Jains.” There are some instances of persecution/violence reported of the ancient Indian history. However in general there evidences are scattered and fragmentary.

The pre-modern India was largely free from inter-Communal Violence. It had cultural unity in diversity which precluded communal conflict. The period of the fall of Gupta rule up to the rise of the Mughals in the sixteen century is labelled as the medieval period of Indian history. It featured some new developments like arrival of Muslims, their attack

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and establishment of their rule and dynasties. Several Muslim kingdoms were established in the course of gradual Muslim consequent in Indian sub continent. This process culminated in the Mughal Empire which ruled in India to mid 16th to mid 19th century. During the period the social fabric of the Indian society was not disturb much. Rather the pattern of ancient cultural and political devolution continued. This period of history signifies different kings/dynasties administration followed the political-compromise policy which involved the recognition and the protection of the non-Muslim liberties, recognition of their religious practices and appointment of non-Muslims to various high positions.

This history of peaceful co-existence communally represented differently to paint conflict in the inter-communal relations of the Indian communities. The Sir Hennery Elliot argues that “Hindus were disputed with Muslims, for the prohibition against (Hindus) processions, worship, forcible conversion and the razing of temples etcetera.” He also propagates that “the attacks by the Muslim emperors were not random acts of religious zeal but calculated acts of humiliation, inflicted in the interest of advancing the cause of conquest of their political power.” As Hindu rulers has also done a similar thing, presumably for the sake of political purposes. However if more broadly analysed the evidence of an ample rich resources, pre-colonial India such as the “Mauryan emperor Ashoka’s edicts about Buddhism; the Arthashstra attributed to Kautilya; inscriptions on stone and copper recording royal grants of lands, temples; Mughal imperial farmans” all reveal that the medieval India was in the process of forging a ‘composite’ culture in which religious differences was accepted and respected rather than condemned/exploit.

C. A. Bayly in his essay ‘Pre-history of Communalism’ argues that “the pre-modern conflicts are the reflections of various local economic changes which confounded with ceremonial or religious conflicts such as Surat riots, Ahmdabad riots-1713 and Calcutta riots-1789.” He also stresses that “religious differences were more likely to become basis for communal conflicts when they coincided with shift in political and economic power.” By citing these riots Bayly concludes that all the eighteenth century religious conflict were likely to assume a communal form “when local system of bargaining and

64 Copland, Mabbett, Roy, Brittlebank, & Bowles, A History of State, 76-77.
65 Ibid, 98.
67 Ibid, 9.
68 Ibid,124.
compromise over festivals and the like, came under stress, as tended to occur during
times of rapid social changes.” In short it could be said that the medieval and pre
modern India was not completely free from religious conflicts. However the fact remains
that these conflicts prior to the 19th century was “infrequent, localised and short lived
because people of India were having the nature to avoid such kind of conflicts by all
possible means.” The politics of the time was not communalised. Inter-communal
relations were not seen through the paradigm time of religious constructions.

2.4.2 Communal Conflicts in Colonial India

The British colonialist arrived in India in the beginning of 16th century. From then to
their war with Siraj-ud-Dhauila in 1757 AD they become successfully establish their rule.
With the advent of British colonial rule, the localized conflicts enlarged and new areas of
contestation emerged and therefore many scholars argue that the nature and forms of
religious strife changed immensely during and after the colonial period. Imtiyaz
Ahmad emphasizes that “until the second half of the nineteenth century ‘Islam’ and
‘Hinduism’ no doubt remained as religious tradition but their adherents had not come to
constitute as closed communities.” Needham and Rajan argue that “colonialism was the
major force in producing religion-inflected nationalism in India as a form of anti-colonial
resistance.” Francis Robinson also writes as, “The British deliberately created division
in Indian society for their own imperial purpose.” Because of which Indian society
faced certain big disturbance in the form of communal conflicts. Some of Communal
Violence incidents like as Banaras riots-1809-15; Koil-1820, Moradabad, Sambhal,
Kashipur-1833, Shahajahanpur -1837, Bareilly, Kanpur and Allahabad-1837-52 etcetera
are occurred. Bipin Chandra marks that the policy of divide and rule and communal
factor became easily successful for the British colonisers, not because that it served the

69 C. A. Bayly, Bayly, ‘The Pre- history of “communalism”? Religious Conflicts in India, 1700-1860’,
Modern Asian Studies,178-214, cited in Copland, Mabbett, Roy, Brittlebank, & Bowles, A History of
State,125-127.
70 Copland, Mabbett, Roy, Brittlebank, & Bowles, A History of State, 130.
71 Murtahin Billah Jasir Fazlie, Hindu Chauvinism and Muslims in India (Abul-Qasim Publication House,
1995), 16.
72 Imtiaz Ahmad, “Perspectives on the Communal Problem,” in Communal riots in Post-Independence
73 Anuradha Dingwaney Needam and Rajeshwari Sunder Rajan, The Crisis of Secularism in India
45.
74 Francis Robinson, Separatism among Indian Muslims, cited in Chandra, Communalism in Modern, 238.
political needs of colonialism but the reason is that “it also met the social needs of some sections of India society.” The British colonisers were very well aware about the differences among the different sects in the society and their requirement; therefore they started to adopt such policies with the tool of divide and rule, to curb the nationalism and spirit of Independence. In short, with the policy of divide and rule, the British colonisers sustain and prolong their strong hold over India. Some major events have had happened during the colonial period which helped to ignite and inflame the emotional fever and situations of communalism in Indian society, which are given as follows:

i) The Revolt of 1857.
ii) Partition of Bengal 1905.
iv) Two Nations Theory.

(i) The Revolt of 1857

The ‘Revolt of 1857,’ commonly known as the ‘Sepoy Revolt’, was the major action in which Hindu-Muslim collectively participated under the Mughal king against the British rule in India. This is also recognised as the first step towards national Independence. It was seen as the high point of the manifold grievances that Indians had against the East India Company’s rule. It was to a great extent a most popular revolt which led by almost all exiled kings or rulers and displaced landlords. The revolt was largely narrow from the North and the central India. In this context one official British opined that “the outbreak of 1857 had merely been a revolt of the Sepoys, infuriated because of the outrage of their religious beliefs (grease cartridge), which was joined in by the discontented feudal elements and the ‘goondah sections’ of the civil population.” Dr. Surendra Nath Sen argues that “the diverse factors operated in the growth of this feeling of national unity, such as feudal loyalty, religious feeling etcetera” However, the religious cause was the immediate cause for the revolt of 1857. When the British

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76 Chandra, Communalism in Modern, 238.
colonisers had introduced the new gun powder cartridges covered with greased paper, the end of which had to be first bitten off before the cartridge was loaded into the rifle. It was the belief among both the communities: Hindus and Muslims were made of beef and pig fat and which enraged both the communities because for both the communities it was against their religious belief to eat beef (for Hindus) and pig (for Muslims). Both the communities also believed that it was another tool being use by the British after their missionary movement (conversion into Christianity) to play with religious sentiments of the people. The revolt failed because of absence of unity factor among the different local rulers regarding the strategy of revolt. Despite the failure the revolt is largely/commonly recognise as collective efforts of the people of India. The British coloniser however defined and blamed only Muslims were responsible for the revolt. They became conscious about the Hindu-Muslim unity seen in the revolt and therefore they followed the policy of divide and rule suppressing the Muslims and encouraging and supporting the Hindus in receiving education and appointment in the government jobs.\(^{80}\) This sowed the seeds of divisiveness in the Indian society among: the Hindu and Muslim.

(ii) Partition of Bengal-1905

The other big event which enlarged the atmosphere of divisions among the two communities was the partition of Bengal in 1905.” Communalism played a key role in the Hindu-Muslim riots in the case of partition of Bengal in 1906 and 1907, the making of Muslim League Party (MLP) in December 30, 1906 and ultimately in the partition of India in 1947.”\(^{81}\) Lord Curzon visualising the strong unity among the people of Bengal (Hindu Bengali’s and Muslim Bengali’s) and Bengal being centre of emerging nationalism in India the only way to consolidate their regime was to neap the bud of nationalism curbing the sense of solidarity among Bengali peoples. They accordingly planned their policies. Curzon believed that in East Bengal, the backward Muslim majority would pose no threat to the British rule if the new benefits are granted to them that would make them faithful towards the British government and Hindu Bengalis after partitions would cease to be a majority. At the Dhaka address Curzon in February 1904, stated that Dhaka was only “a shadow of its former self” and that the partition “would invest Mohamadans in Eastern Bengal with a unity which they have not enjoyed since

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\(^{81}\)“Partition of Bengal,” (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin), 2, [http://www.basus.in/chaiti/portable/Partition%20of%20Bengal.pdf](http://www.basus.in/chaiti/portable/Partition%20of%20Bengal.pdf) (Retrieved March 5, 2016).
the days of the old Mussalman Viceroyos and Kings.....”

By doing this the British government desires to create the hate among the Hindus and the Muslims, to weaken the sentiments of nationalism of Bengal and elsewhere in India.

With the partition, the result was the steep rise in the Hindu-Muslim conflicts along the communal lines because Bengali Hindus thought that their position would be weakened and the position of Muslims, from socio economic point of view, would become strong. This event gradually created hatred towards the Muslims and Bengali Muslims vice versa. The creation of All-Indian Muslim League Party (AIMLP) in December 30, 1906 led the foundation of some significant changes in the arena of Indian politics. The partition of Bengal and the associated developments caused the disturbances differences and divineness between the two communities which never seen before. This all led to the number of Communal Violence polarising the two communities along the communal lines serving the British colonial interest.

The partition of Bengal was not by chance but rather the very purposeful British policy of Divide and Rule. It was British main agenda that divert the Muslims from the Congress party by promise them political power which will be different from the Congress power that would enable the non Congress Muslims to organise themselves under British guidance. This generated a message that the Muslims were being granted for their support to the partition of Bengal and the Hindus were being penalize for their opposition of the same. This was the policy which was earlier used by British coloniser in against of the Muslims for their role in revolt of 1857. However when mass protest, both passive and peaceful as well active and violent, became strong the Bengals were reunited in 1911.

(iii) Government Act of 1909
It is popularly known as the “Morley Minto Reforms Act” and the purpose of this Act for which it was passed by the parliament of United Kingdom (UK) was to increase the seats of the membership of Indian in the governance of British India and to give the separate

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82 “Partition of Bengal,” 3-5.
84 “Partition of Bengal,” 6-7.
85 Ibid, 7-8.
86 Ibid, 10-11.
electorate gift especially to the Muslim community. The demand for separate electorate for Muslims was put forward by the Muslim League in 1908 identifying and magnifying religious-cultural differences between the Hindus and Muslims. This demand for separate electorate was finally admitted by the British Government by this Act of 1909.\(^\text{87}\)

The history of communal representation goes back to the year in 1888 when the Dufferin Reform Committee held that steps should be taken to secure the representation of various classes and interest. Later on Lord Kimberley further added in the Indian Council Bill of 1892 that some provisions should be made to secure the representation of minorities.\(^\text{88}\)

Similar sentiments were also expressed by Sir Bamfylde Fuller, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province of eastern Bengal and Assam when he said that British government “had two wives”, one is ‘Hindu’ and other one is ‘Muslim’ and that the Muslim was his favourite.\(^\text{89}\)

This British policy of defining India along communal lines gradually took the form of a 1909 Act. From this Act, British fuelled the intra-communal sentiments of Indian communities creating dissensions especially among Hindus and Muslims which openly started surfacing on the Indian Political landscape.

(iv). Two Nation Theory

The “Two Nation Theory” was the basis for the partition of India in 1947. This theory supported the proposal that Hindus and Muslims should be two separate nations identifying their nationality along religious/communal lines. This was the culmination of seeds of communalism which British deliberately have ploughed in Indian society. Brass identifies that communal sentiments began to be percolated in India especially in the later part of 19th century. He points out that the Muslim leaders in North India in the late of nineteenth century did not recognize a same platform in almost all areas such as religion, social and political with the Hindu community because they saw themselves in threat of losing their privileges as a dominant community and therefore, they chose to stress upon a special sense of history incompatible with Hindu aspirations and a myth of Muslim decline into backwardness. This spirit of Muslim separatism was used by the Muslim elite groups to compete with Hindu elite groups in matters of economy and

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\(^{89}\) Khan, *The Communalism of India*, 20-21.
politics. Use of symbols in political discourses further added to the communal environment. With this growth of the Hindu-Muslim communal nationalism, the ‘Two Nations Theory’ emerged and persisted throughout the period. Sumit Sarkar explains that the time period from 1905 to 1917 saw both Hindu revivalism and Pan-Islamism oscillate between anti-imperialism on one hand, and on the other, the expression of class discontent and communal conflict over issues like cow protection, the playing of music near mosques and Urdu language. The Muslim League and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)/Hindu Mahasabha (HM) served as the harbinger these communal sentiments. The India National Movement (INM) gradually began to suffer because of emerging and quantifying communalism enlarging the level of communal clashes including the conflict of interest/dialogues between the two main personalities of Indian Politics, that is, M. A. Jinnah (Muslim League) and M. K. Gandhi (Congress). Nehru in his autobiography recalls that, “I used to be troubled at the growth of this religious element in our politics....I did not like it much at all...even some of Gandhiji’s phrases sometimes jarred upon me.” Suresh Chandra also shares the sentiments of Nehru when he says that “I am afraid’ and continued, that ‘Congress must take a lot of blame for the growth of communalism.” The British government continued to use this fire of communal hatred for the sustenance their government in India.

These kinds of policies and activities carried out by both Hindu and Muslims increased the level of communalism resulting into number of Communal Violence in the country such as the 1931 riots in Kanpur resulted in the killing of 294 persons and injuring of 2,529, if take only the major riots between 1924 and 1940, the total number of persons killed was 1,175 and injured 7,615. Another major riot of 1932 took placed in

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Bombay, which cost 217 lives and led to nearly 3,000 people being treated for injuries.\cite{Copland2016} In the 1940s the major riots were part of the movement for the partition and the scale of violence was enormous. By then Communal riots had became an instrument of politics.\cite{Krishna2017} Communal Violence as a political strategy used to be instigated by the political leaders usually at the times of elections to influence their results by contributing to the formation of communal identities and the consequent consolidation of Hindu and Muslim votes. The Calcutta killing of August 1946 was an immediate result of Jinnah’s call for Direct Action Day (DAD)\cite{Brass2016} for the achievement of the dream of the Pakistan nation. The British India was finally partitioned leading to large scale of Communal Violence. A large number of persons were killed as the consequence of Communal Violence making it one of the great tragedies of the 20th century. The partition of British India laid the foundations of communalism for the future politics of India and the subcontinent.

2.5. Communal Violence in Post Colonial India

After the partition of India in 1947 the ghost of communalism remained alive. Rather the Act of Partition was used by the communalist in the future political discourses of the subcontinent to exploit and emotionalise the people. In post-Independent constitutionally secular India it not only remained alive and flourished but became institutionalised. The pre-independence communal forces continued to pursue their communal agendas organising themselves in different forms of social, political and other activities. This aspect of communalism will be separately covered in the next parts of this study. In this part the focus is on the analysis of Communal Violence that happened after independence. In order to analyse Communal Violence in post-Independent India the instances of growing communalism may be referred for the purpose. Christophe Jaffrelot states that “after the Independence and the riots related to partition the Communal Violence became a marginal phenomenon and on average there were fewer than 100 riots a year between 1954 and 1964.”\cite{Jaffrelot2005}
Shivam Vij shows that the rate of rioting in India (per 100,000 populations from the 1953-2011 periods) has fallen continuously since 1992, but reaching again a plateau around 2003 and remaining pretty much constant since then.\textsuperscript{100} (Figure: 2.2).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{rioting_incidents_per_100_000_population_1953-2011.png}
\caption{Rioting incidents per 100,000 population, 1953-2011}
\end{figure}

\textit{Figure: 2.2. Source: “Manmohan Years Still Most,” Chunauti.}

The figures of Home Ministry Report stated that since 2011 up to 2014 a total of 2715 communal incidents have occurred in the country thereby meaning that about 680 incidents occurred on an average per year. The lowest number of incidents occurred in 2011 (580) and the highest in 2013 (823). The number of incidents reported in 2012 and 2014 are 668 and 644 respectively. The people killed in these incidents were more or less proportional to the number of incidents with the highest number of people getting killed in 2013 and the lowest in 2011.\textsuperscript{101} (Figure: 2.3).


\textsuperscript{101} Rakesh Dubbudu, “India Had 57 Communal Incidents per Month in Last Four Years and 85 per cent of these Occurred in Eight States,” Counterview.org, May 11, 2015, \url{http://counterview.org/2015/05/11/india-had-57-communal-incidents-per-month-in-last-four-years-and-85-per-cent-of-these-occurred-in-eight-states/} (Retrieved March 02, 2016).
The given data shows that communalism in post-independent India is/has been continuously on rise because the roots of communalism further deepened and strengthened in contemporary political-economic structures of Indian society. During the first decade after Independence, there was no large scale inter-community violence possibly because of the after effects of the partition, migration of Muslim leaders and the dormant communalist activities of Hindu communalists. The inter-community tensions between communities began to resurface in the beginning of the 1960s.\(^{102}\)

Omprakash in his book *Riots after Riots* postulates argue that “from 1960 onwards the incidents of Communal Violence increased substantially. According to the data compiled by the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights 343 communal riots took place during the normal years of 1960-63 in which 181 people had lost their lives. However, the election year 1963-64 witnessed as many as 1,125 incidents of Communal Violence claiming 1,733 lives. Whereas the non-election years of 1965-67, 326 Communal Violence incidents in which 92 people were dead, the figure for the elections year of 1968-69 were 484 Communal Violence and 290 deaths. Normal year 1968-71 witnessed, 1050 riots and 869 deaths but the election year 1971-72 had 512 riots and 600 deaths. During the normal years of 1980-83 in 1,597 Communal Violence incidents 936 people were killed. The election year 1984 saw the worst communal riots in India since the partition: there were 600 riots and over 3,400 riots and 1,600 deaths during the normal years 1985-

Ravinder Kaur cites that the Home Ministry calculated the total number of Communal Violence incidents between 1954-1982 as 6,933, and from 1968 to 1980 there has been 3,949 Communal Violence incidents in which 530 Hindus, 1,598 Muslims and 159 other persons and police personal were killed. Kannupillai examine that Communal Violence incident since 1987 to 1992 has been continually increasing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Incident</th>
<th>Person killed</th>
<th>Person injured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>3860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>3449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>5638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>1421</td>
<td>1246</td>
<td>6426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1122</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>3913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1206</td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>8422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 2.1. Source: V. Kannupillai, Communal Violence, 62.

The 1990s witnessed the most riots in the last five decades. Paul Brass argues that “Rioting and killing in the years between 1990 and 1993 reached peaks not seen since 1947.” In 1992, the year of Demolition of Babri Masjid, the 1,206 incidents were reported in which 1,641 persons were killed and 8,422 persons injured. Asghar Ali Engineer empirically analysed that the total of 11,855 lives lost in Communal Violence in India from 1950-2002. In the year of 2000, 24 Communal Violence incidents occurred in which 91 people were killed and 165 injured, in next year 2001, 27 riots erupted in which 56 were killed and 158 injured and in 2002, 28 communal riots were recorded (including the Gujarat genocide) in which 1,173 persons died and 2,272 were recorded injured. Unofficial data report says that in Gujarat alone more than 2,000 Muslims and 159 other persons and police personal were killed.

References:
- Brass, The Production of Hindu-Muslim, 6.
- Kannupillai, Communal Violence, 61.
people were killed.\textsuperscript{108} The United Nation Human Development Report (UNHDR) \textbf{2004} reported that “36.2 percent of all causalities in Indian Communal Violence since 1954 have occurred between 1990 and 2002.”\textsuperscript{109} The year of 2003 was also not free from the Communal Violence incidents, in this year 67 riots took place in which 58 people lost their life and 611 were injured.\textsuperscript{110} The Report of PRS Legislative Research 2011 introduced the vital stats on Communal Violence in India. (Figure: 2.4). It examines that during 2005-09, 648 people were killed and 11, 278 injured in 4,030 incidents of Communal Violence. It also analyzes that on average 130 people died and 2,200 were injured in each year. The incidents are reported from 24 of the 35 States and Union Territories. The maximum number of incidents occurred in Maharashtra (700), followed by Madhya Pradesh (666) and Uttar Pradesh (645).\textsuperscript{111}

![Communal Violence Incidents, Killed and Injured-2005-09](image)

\textbf{Figure: 2.4. Source: Kumar, “Vital Stats.”}

The data presented in this study though is not uniform however it shows that the level of Communal Violence has been continuously increasing. From the 1980s to 1990s, the Hindu-Muslim hostility and collective violence began to take political centre stage. Growing forces like as the Hindu nationalism focusing particularly on the Babri Masjid-


\textsuperscript{109} Kannupillai, \textit{Communal Violence}, 18.

\textsuperscript{110} Engineer, “Can India ‘Shine.’”

Ram Janmabhoomi issue, demand for the abolition of Muslim Personal Law (MPL) and Article 370 on Jammu and Kashmir, Hindu Rashtra etcetera are the interconnected issues around which communalism have developed. Violence is/was preceded or sustained by vicious propaganda communicated through public speeches, audio and videotapes, pamphlets, leaf lets and graffiti.\(^\text{112}\) The other activities which also helped to sustain and develop it after the Independence are examined in short below here:

### 2.5.1. Communal Organisations and Political Parties

India is a territorial nation in which multiculturalism prevails. Heterogeneity is its very defining feature. Its people are very possessive about their religion, beliefs and traditions. Unity in diversity is the core nationalism. Constitution defines it a secular state. It provides for it to govern democratically. The constitution of Indian under the Article of 19 (1) (c) provides for the freedom “to form an associations or unions.” Political leaders and other activist use this freedom to form various organisations and political groups from national to local level especially to grab the political power. Various cultural and political organisations have been created for achieving their agendas. India being heterogeneous in all respect provide suitable environment for exploiting this freedom to exploit the religious, cultural and other differences for political gains. To gain political power and pursue their respective cultural agendas these organisations indulge into activities sometimes in open disregard to what Indian Constitution postulates and stands for. This exploitation serves as the source of communal politics. In this part we briefly try to examine the communal role of the political and other parties.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) claiming to be a cultural organisation founded in 1925 wishes to transform India into a ‘Hindu Rashtra.’ The Majilis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen (MIM) founded in 1927 propagated the idea of an ‘Islamic polity’ in the wake of the frightening prospect of a Hindu upheaval and majority rule.\(^\text{113}\) This kind of politics communalises and polarises the social-political environment of the heterogeneous Indian society. This also lays down the seeds of divisiveness among different communities relegating them to their only communal identities/communal nationalism than what constitution is desirous of Indian society and people to become.

\(^{112}\) Upadhyay & Robinson, “Revisiting Communalism,” 54.

\(^{113}\) Ibid, 42.
Analysing the Aligarh and Meerut riots (1961), Brass points out that the chief minister and the home minister of Uttar Pradesh declared that these Communal Violence had been organised by the political parties and unnamed communal organisations. Prem Bhatia, a columnist in the Times of India, argues that the riots would cause “considerable political damage” to the Congress in the forthcoming elections and that “the Hindu-Muslim communal parties would gain from these riots.”

Before the Lok Sabha elections, N. L. Gupta analysed the Meerut political background and asserted that the politics of Meerut moved on the communal lines. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Hindu Mahasbha (HM) and the Jan Sangh (JS) became popular and active organisations in the Meerut politics.

Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), political wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), formed in 1951 became the most aggressively vocal Hindu nationalist party attempting to win power by constitutional means. K. R. Malkani, the editor of ‘the Organiser’ writes about the formation of the Jan Sangh (JS) that the “good government of Bharat” depending directly and fully on the formation of a nation-wide party which will be as much revivalist of ancient values as will be futurist in its targets. He also writes that the remedy for our current ills lies in Hindutva. Similarly Islamic groups also asserted their cultural purity appealing to the people to go “Back to Islam,” the original Islam as followed by the Prophet in Mecca. Various organisations, not necessarily political parties, like Jama’at-e-Islami and Tablighi Jama’at and other banned terrorist outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen try to invoke different religious interpretations that may or may not have direct political aims. Organisations like Muslim League, Akali Dal, Shive Sena (SS), etcetera; are also the strong players in the game of communal politics. The emergence of these parties and organizations into the politico-civic domain of Indian society utilize the communal atmosphere in their favour. Pran Wantoo points out that “as political parties have talked of equal respect to all religions, but in practice have fostered communal vote banks of different religions, deepening and expanding communal tension in the society.”

114 Brass, Forms of Collective, 80.
117 Ibid, 197.
Chapter 2

The History of Communal Violence in India: An Overview

Communal parties define their nationalism with communalism. This is not limited to any specific organisation. Communalism has integrated itself with secular politics of India. At the time of elections communal politics take different shapes and colours. The politics of communalism is considered dividend producing activity when it comes to achieving their respective objectives. Mukul Kesavan in this regards points out that “the Congress, by a kind of historical default, is a pluralist party that is opportunistically communal while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is an ideologically communal party that is opportunistically secular.”

Engineer points out that “Congress is a ‘B’ party of Hindutva or soft Hindutva.” Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stands for Hard Hindutva. These groups of Hindu-Muslims communities play a dominant role in Indian politics directly or indirectly infusing communalism and causing Communal Violence in India. All play politics to gain maximum political dividends.

2.5.2. History textbooks, Communal Consciousness and Stereotypes

Many historians believe that from the British colonial times languages and textbooks particularly history books have been communalised. The first step in this regard was taken by the J. S. Mill who divided the Indian history into three categories (Same reference as given earlier). From this division of History the level of Communalism is continuously on rise involving different communities fighting with each other over their representation in government or the interest on the basis of religion, language, culture and text books. Communalisation through ‘Text Books’ became a serious issue more dangerous than communal violence. There is also deliberate attempt at various levels to do the branding of Muslims in different colours and shades to denigrate them representing as outsiders, invaders etcetera. This aspect in detail is dealt in chapter second of study.

122 Mridula Mukherjee and Aditya Mukherjee, “Communalisation of Education the History Textbook Controversy: An Overview,” (This is a revised version of an article in Mainstream no. 22 December 2001.), http://www.sacw.net/HateEducation/MridulaAditya122001.html (Retrieved February 5, 2018), Upadhyay, Robinson, ―Revisiting Communalism,” 48.
123 “Communalism and History.”
Communalism is like a disease infecting the Indian society by way of distortion of Indian history, philosophy and its culture. By writing history communally the forces communalism wish to create a feeling of communal divisive consciousness which rejects interconnecting links and brotherhood in between different communities pushing forward and strengthening narrow communitarian bonds seriously endangering the integrative forces in heterogeneous Indian society.

Education, foods and even cloths are targets of communalisation. Communalising education produces communal self-identity through school socialisation and bred communalism. Asghar Ali Engineer argues that “the education system has been much more communalized and communalism is rampant among educated middle classes today. It is difficult to find out a graduate with human moral and secular values.” Through the historical text revisionism being done by organising conferences and seminars at nation and international level, a deliberate attempt is being made to find out and rearrange the facts and events to try to show that the Hindus as the true inheritors of the land and all others communities as foreigners/invaders. The agenda is to build a narrative of a glorious Hindu Rashtra that negates the contributions of the Mughals, Buddhists, Christians and everybody else. Ekal Vidya layas and Shishu Vihars schools which are run by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) where history of India is taught in most communal manner means demonising the Muslim and Christian communities. It is due to this that educated middle class people who avail of communal text books much more communal than the poor illiterate masses. This makes them communal and injects communal ideas into their minds. In short the purpose of this project of history textbook rewriting is to ‘Saffronise’ the history of India. Romila Thapar argues that “when it comes to religious identities and their politics, we witness hate campaigns based an absurd fantasies about specific religious and we no longer conflict we no longer confront them frontally. Such kind of questioning means being the critical of organisations and institutions that claim a religious intention but use their authority for non-religious

125 Engineer, Communalism in Secular, 17.
127 Engineer, Communalism in Secular, 158.
purposes.” The deliberate creation of divisive consciousness among the different communities most often becomes the cause for Communal Violence in the society.

### 2.5.3. Communal Electoral Campaigning

The Election Commission of India provides for a model Code of Conduct for guidance and regulation of political parties and candidates. In this regard some legal provisions are laid down: general conduct (1) points out that No party or candidate shall include in any activity which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic; in part (3) it says that “there shall be no appeal to cast or communal feeling for securing votes. Mosques, Churches, Temple or other places of worship shall not be used as platform for election propaganda.”

Fearon argues that ethno-religious themes have played a substantial role in the design of election campaigns; developing countries in particular - where there exist higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity, and where the allocation of patronage and public goods is more discretionery, and therefore dependents on political outcomes- are attractive setting for the mobilisation of ethno- religious identities for political interest- are attractive settings for the mobilization of ethno-religious identities for political gain. Voter behaviour is highly responsive to the messages disseminated through political campaigns and media framing. Voters are more likely to participate in elections after being visited by party representatives or campaign workers. In Indian context especially since 1970s the caste and religious politics became a main tool and tactic for politicians brainwashing the innocent persons in the name of caste and religion for the sake of political power sometimes causing Communal Violence.

The major event in the history of India after the Independence took placed when politico-religious campaign started from the Ram Rath Yatra in late 1990. It was the movement

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to build a temple for the Lord Ram at his birth place in Ayodhya (Uttar Pradesh). This political movement was started by the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) party leaders (under the shadow of Sangh Parivar) to unite the fractured Hindu vote bank. This hate campaigns caused 64 Hindu-Muslim riots which took place between the period of 1989 to 1991 elections, 35 occurred during the 6 weeks surrounding the Yatra, 11 of which were placed in the electoral constituencies and remaining riots during to this period were caused due to the activities of the sympathy Yatras being took placed in other parts of the country. It was one of the political strategies of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the form of Rath Yatra, from 1989 to 1991 which had opened the path for political solidarity and emerged as the Congress party’s principle rival for the national power. It became able to increase it seats strength from the 2 to 89 in Lok Sabha elections from 1984 to 1989.

After the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) communal politics game certain other regional political parties also tried to play the same political game such as N.T. Rama Rao a Telugu film star, during his election campaign, showcased images from his films in his Avatar as the Lord Krishna. He was a famous actor in Telugu films performing the role of mythological Hindu God who cleverly used the cinema character in political interest. Another political leader J. Jayalalithaa, is hailed as ‘Amma’ or mother in Chennai. Her images are presented like a divine lady such as Mother Marry and Goddess Durga while in elections campaign. Recently in the Lok Sabha elections-2014 the warble like ‘Har Har Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi’ was used for election campaign of Prime Ministerial candidate Narendar Modi. This slogan was the modified form of ‘Har Har Mahadev’, a religious chant that calls upon Lord Shiva to take away pain and suffering from peoples life. The purpose of this warble was to give relief to the pain given by the Congress. This way of communalisation affects the electorates besides encrypting the communal seeds in the minds of Indian people. This turns up into a great

133 Ibid, 5.
135 Copland, Mabbett, Roy, Brittlebank, & Bowles, A History of State, 233.
threat for the nation and the secular democratic order which the Indian Constitution desires to create.

2.6. Conclusions
The communalism and its various shapes is not a new phenomenon for India. India is basically a multi-cultural society from thousands of years. The feature of clash or conflict is the common thing in this kind of society. In Indian context this has become a perpetuating phenomenon which has integrated itself with the body politics, impregnating the whole society and its institutions with communal diseases. Communal organisations operate in different disguise to achieve their respective agendas. Politics became a most apparent mechanism for achieving the said purpose. The political leaders and political parties mobilise the people more at the time of the elections in the name of religion, caste etcetera. This feature in independent India has become one of the defining features. Communalism is on increase – playing a role in organising, influencing and manipulating elections.