

**CO-EXISTENCE AND DISHARMONY: A STUDY OF
COMMUNAL DISTURBANCE IN ALIGARH**

STUDY REPORT

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LUCKNOW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The study is basically a mix of exploratory, diagnostic and utilitarian in nature. Broadly, the overall purpose of the study is two fold:

- i)- To understand the genesis of, and various mix of the problems of communal disturbances;
- ii)- The second purpose is utilitarian and of application of the study findings in developing a functional approach for promoting harmonious environment / relations between the two major communities i.e. the Hindus and the Muslims.

With these broad objectives, specific objectives of the study are :

- i)- To better understand and explain the contextual pretext for the occurrence of communal disharmony in Aligarh.
- ii)- To assess and analyze the various causal factors / reasons responsible for collective communal violence; also to explore various stages of communal riots.
- iii)- To understand in depth how people of both major communities i.e. the Hindus and the Muslims, view communal riots, dynamics of conflict and measures to control recurrence of it.
- iv)- To understand the official as well as community support systems both during normal peace time, during and after the break down of the conflict; and
- v)- To explore the present avenues of inter-group contact between the Hindus and the Muslims in Aligarh.

METHODOLOGY:

Study Coverage

This study's coverage area was entire Aligarh city. But subject of study was communal riots, therefore, those *mohallas* were specifically selected which were riot prone. Care was taken to identify *mohallas* where Hindu and Muslim population was dominant.

Step First : Nine municipal wards and different *mohallas* were identified on the basis of following criteria;

- a)- Incidence of communal conflict.
- b)- Concentration of Hindu-Muslim population in each ward as well as *mohallas*.
- c)- Economic status of people.

Step Second : These *mohallas* were further identified on the basis of concentration of Hindu and Muslim population.

Step Third : Nine *mohallas* were selected randomly.

Step Fourth: Out of nine *mohallas*, four *mohallas* each, of the Hindus and the Muslims were selected and one *mohalla* having almost equal population was selected. With the help of voter list, 100 Hindu and 100 Muslim households were randomly selected.

Selected sample of households:

Sample <i>mohallas</i>	Muslim		Hindu	=	Total sample
Delhi Gate	22	+	08	=	30
Jai Ganj	01	+	22	=	23
Bhujpura	29	+	20	=	49
Kanwari Ganj	01	+	14	=	15
Sasnigate	13	+	--	=	13
Dahiwali Gali	06	+	10	=	16
Manak Chowk	04	+	08	=	12
Sarai Sultani	04	+	05	=	09
Upper Kot	07	+	--	=	07
	<u>87</u>		<u>87</u>		<u>174</u>

Focused Group Discussion: As a qualitative method, this technique covering 67 persons was used to get views of intellectuals, social workers, professionals, religious leaders and politicians on the issue of communal riots and ways to bring harmony amongst the people. Research team interacted with 67 persons. This technique helped in assessing opinions, attitudes, behaviour and practices of various groups within the complex rational social realities.

Data Collection:

Data collection work started from early July 2006. Though we had selected 100 households each of Hindus and Muslims but had to restrict with 87 households, because 13 selected households could not be approached either they were missing or no family member was surviving or the family had left the place. Since time was very less, therefore, we had to restrict the sample to 87 Hindu households and 87 Muslim households.

Major Findings:

Major Findings of the study are presented under five broad heads:

1. CONTEXTUAL PRETEXT FOR RECURRENCE OF COMMUNAL DISHARMONY

- Study reveals that Communal Disharmony is the result of rapid urbanization which has uprooted individuals from their previous occupations and communities, and placed them in competitions for new livelihoods. Sometimes this stiff competition gives rise to tension and conflict because of the fact that deprivation encountered by other community is responsible for such conflict.
- Both the communities have preconceived notion that each one's existence is threatened, therefore, on a very small pretext riots take place.
- Study also reveals that riots take place around election time and political parties in order to mobilize voters, create problems on the pretext of looking after the interest of a particular community.

2. CASUAL FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTIVE COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

- Business Community, most of the time create situation for riots because of business rivalry and desire to remove the competitors from their premises and acquire the establishment. This causes conflict amongst group of business community.
- Hatred amongst both the communities leads to conflict because tolerance levels stoop down to such a level that each one suspects the other.

3. HOW PEOPLE OF BOTH COMMUNITIES VIEW COMMUNAL RIOTS AND MEASURES TO CONTROL RECURRENCE OF IT :

- Both the communities in general do not like riots because of the fact that it does not solve the issue but results into loss of human life, loss of property and bring misery to whole city. Because of curfew, living becomes difficult. In fact people were so fed up with problems they have to face that they wanted to leave the place and go somewhere else.
- Both the communities felt the need of peace committees and other civic organizations to control the riots and bring peace.

- Study revealed that effective administration is the only solution to control recurrence of violence.

4. OFFICIAL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEM BOTH DURING NORMAL PEACE TIME AND DURING AND AFTER THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CONFLICT :

- Study revealed that people were supportive of the idea that a group at city level be formed and member of all community should be included in it, their job would be to interact with community and play a role of watchdog during normal peace time and during and after the breakdown of conflict.
- District Administration, Police, Peace Committee members, intellectuals, social workers, members of Vyapar mandals, should work as team and exchange information about unlawful assembly of people and their activities.

5. AVENUES OF INTERGROUP CONTACT BETWEEN HINDUS AND MUSLIMS OF ALIGARH :

- In Aligarh, the Hindus and the Muslims, generally do not interact in the riot prone *mohallas*, because they do not like each other, therefore, in such type of *mohallas* group activities need to be organized so that people interact more.
- Study revealed that right thinking people do want to mix up but sometime group pressure does not allow them to do this. Therefore, there is the need to have more civic institutions in the area to create an atmosphere where each community develops faith in others.