



Recurring Communal Violence

This editorial is based on [Clashes will exact a stiff economic cost](#) which was published in The Hindustan Times on 07/08/2023. It talks about growing communalism in India.

For Prelims: [Moplah rebellion of 1921](#), [Partition riots of 1947](#), [Democracy](#), [Secularism](#), [Human Rights](#)

For Mains: [Hate Speech](#), Causes of Communal Violence in India

Communal violence is a **form of collective violence that involves clashes between groups** belonging to different religious, ethnic, linguistic, or regional identities.

In India, communal violence is **often associated with Hindu-Muslim conflicts**, but it can also involve other groups such as **Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Dalits, and tribals**.

The Indian Penal Code (IPC) **defines communal violence as any act that promotes enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc.**, and does acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony.

Communal violence has **a long history in India**, dating back to the pre-colonial and colonial periods. Communal violence has continued to plague India in the post-independence era. Some of the major incidents which had communal overtones include the [Moplah rebellion of 1921](#), the Noakhali riots of 1946, the [Partition riots of 1947](#), the [Babri Masjid demolition of 1992](#), and most recently [Manipur violence](#) and Nuh violence .

Communal violence is often triggered by political, social, economic, or cultural factors, such as elections, religious festivals, cow protection, conversions, inter-faith marriages, land disputes, migration, media propaganda, hate speech, etc.

Communal violence has serious implications for India's [democracy](#), [secularism](#), [human rights](#), social harmony, **national security, and development**.

What are the Causes of Communal Violence in India?

▪ Political Causes:

- The role of political parties and leaders in mobilizing **communal sentiments for electoral gains** or ideological agendas.
- The use of communal polarization **as a strategy to divide and rule**.
- The failure of political institutions and mechanisms to prevent or resolve communal conflicts. The **lack of accountability and impunity for perpetrators** of communal violence.

- **Social Causes:**
 - The existence of **deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes against different communities.**
 - The **lack of inter-community dialogue and trust.**
 - The **influence of extremist groups and organizations** that propagate communal hatred and violence.
 - The **manipulation of religious symbols and sentiments** for communal purposes.
- **Economic Causes:**
 - The **competition for scarce resources and opportunities** among different communities.
 - The perception of **relative deprivation or discrimination among marginalized groups.**
 - The **impact of globalization and modernization** on traditional livelihoods and identities.
 - The exploitation of communal grievances for economic benefits.
- **Cultural Factors:**
 - The **clash of values and lifestyles** between different communities. The erosion of cultural diversity and pluralism.
 - The **challenge posed by secularism and liberalism to religious orthodoxy** and conservatism. The **appropriation or desecration of cultural heritage** and sacred sites.
- **Lack of Education and Awareness:**
 - Misinformation can spread easily, deepening mistrust and misunderstanding, and eventually contributing to the eruption of communal violence.

What are Impacts of Communal Violence in India?

- **Loss of Human Lives:**
 - One of the most devastating consequences of communal violence is the **loss of human lives. Individuals, families, and entire communities** are torn apart by the tragedy of lives cut short, leaving scars that last for generations.
- **Destruction of Property:**
 - Communal violence leads to the **destruction of homes, businesses, and places of worship.**
 - The economic losses resulting from this destruction can be substantial, affecting the livelihoods of individuals and communities.
- **Social Disintegration:**
 - The breakdown or **weakening of social cohesion, tolerance, solidarity,** etc., among different communities.
 - The fabric of trust and unity that binds a society together is often torn apart by communal violence.
 - Communities that once lived in harmony can find themselves **divided along religious lines, eroding the bonds** that have held them together.
- **Economic Setbacks:**
 - Communal violence can have significant economic ramifications. The **diversion or wastage of resources and funds.**
 - Investors may be hesitant to invest in areas prone to violence, economic activities can be disrupted, and developmental projects can be derailed, slowing down progress and growth.
- **Psychological Impact:**
 - The trauma inflicted by communal violence **extends beyond physical harm.**
 - Survivors often experience psychological **distress, anxiety, and depression,** affecting their overall well-being and ability to lead fulfilling lives.
- **Political Impact:**
 - The erosion or **subversion of democracy, secularism, rule of law, justice, etc.,** in India. The loss of legitimacy and credibility of political institutions and actors.
 - The **increase in corruption, nepotism, patronage, violence,** etc., in political processes. The rise or **resurgence of authoritarianism, populism, nationalism, communalism,** etc.
- **Impact on Security:**
 - The threat or challenge to national, regional, and international security.

- The involvement or interference of external actors or forces in communal conflicts.
- The spillover or escalation of communal violence **across borders**.
 - The linkages or nexus between communal violence and other forms of violence, such as **terrorism, insurgency, militancy, etc.** The proliferation or misuse of weapons or explosives.

What are Potential Solutions for Curbing Communal Violence?

▪ **Strong Legal Framework:**

- The enactment or implementation of **laws and policies that protect the rights** and interests of different communities.
- The prevention or **prohibition of hate speech, hate crimes, communal riots, etc.** The prosecution or punishment of perpetrators or instigators of communal violence.
- The provision or compensation of justice or relief to victims or survivors of communal violence.

▪ **Strengthening Institutional Mechanism:**

- The strengthening or reforming of political institutions and mechanisms that deal with communal issues.
- The establishment or empowerment of **independent or impartial bodies or agencies that monitor or investigate** communal violence.
- The promotion or enhancement of transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and inclusiveness in governance.

▪ **Educational Reforms:**

- The development or revision of curricula and textbooks that **foster a culture of peace, tolerance, respect,** and diversity among different communities.
- The training or sensitization of **teachers, students, parents, media,** etc., on communal harmony and coexistence. The creation or expansion of opportunities for inter-community dialogue and exchange.

▪ **Social Reform:**

- The building or rebuilding of **social capital and trust among different communities.** The mobilization or involvement of civil society actors, such as NGOs, religious leaders, women groups, youth groups, etc., in promoting communal harmony and coexistence.
- The recognition or celebration of the contributions and achievements of different communities to India's society and culture.

▪ **Economic:**

- The improvement or redistribution of economic conditions and opportunities among different communities.
- The alleviation or elimination of poverty, inequality, discrimination, etc., among marginalized groups.
- The facilitation or integration of economic cooperation and collaboration among different communities.

▪ **Cultural:**

- The preservation or **restoration of cultural diversity and pluralism** in India. The **protection or promotion of cultural heritage and sacred sites** of different communities.
- The encouragement or appreciation of cultural exchange and innovation among different communities.

▪ **Community Engagement:**

- Local community leaders, religious figures, and civil society organizations can play a pivotal role in promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding.
- Grassroots efforts can foster connections that transcend religious differences.

▪ **Media Responsibility:**

- Media outlets bear a responsibility to **report objectively and responsibly,** avoiding sensationalism and biased coverage that can fan the flames of communal tensions.

What Should be the Way Forward?

▪ **Promoting Social Cohesion:**

- Efforts should be directed toward building a **strong national identity that transcends**

religious affiliations.

- Celebrating cultural diversity and promoting a sense of unity can help bridge communal divides.

▪ **Economic Empowerment:**

- Addressing economic disparities through policies that ensure equal access to opportunities can **reduce feelings of marginalization and create a more inclusive society.**

▪ **Youth Engagement:**

- Empowering the youth with the tools to champion peace, tolerance, and unity is essential for nurturing a generation that upholds these values.

Drishti Mains Question:

Communal violence in India is a recurring event. Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Mains:

Q. Is diversity and pluralism in India under threat due to globalization? Justify your answer. **(2020)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/recurring-communal-violence>

