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COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE IN INDIA: FACTORS LEADING TO ITS ESCALATION

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I. ABSTRACT

This research paper aims to investigate the factors causing escalation or de-escalation of collective violence in India. Collective violence as the coordinated use of force by groups for political, economic or social objectives, it outlines major forms like communal riots, caste conflicts, terrorist attacks and mob violence. Through case studies and theories of violence causation, the proposal analyzes drivers like inequality, identity politics, governance failures and misinformation. This paper explores the multifaceted factors contributing to the escalation of collective violence in India.. With better understanding of enablers of collective violence, the study intends to inform evidence-based policy to strengthen non-violent conflict resolution, uphold rights and facilitate peace-building among communities. Key outcomes include validating known violence hypotheses and providing recommendations tailored to the Indian context for authorities to employ early warning systems and rapid response mechanisms that de-escalate tensions.

II. KEYWORDS:

Collective violence, Hate speech, Riots, ethnic conflicts.

III. INTRODUCTION

India has a history of long struggle and violence brought about by the violent clashes of partition. Thus, it is no stranger to the effect of violence and the misery and sufferings it brings along with it. It is true that the magnitude and cruelty of the partition has not yet repeated itself in India, but the country has been facing an increased number of violence: both individual and collective as it struggles to achieve its identity as the biggest democracy carrying the strength and turmoil of hundred

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and thirty crores' Indians while simultaneously maintaining their cultural and religious identities.

One of the major causes of conflict in India is the socio-political diversity of the country leading to violent clashes between different members of: different caste of Hindus, Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, Hindus and Sikhs, Muslims and the police, Marxists and Maoists etc.²

“Collective violence may be defined as: the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group – whether this group is transitory or has a more permanent identity – against another group or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic or social objectives.”³ Violence is not irrational. Instead, violence is a set of behaviours that social beings engage in under specific historical circumstances for specific purposes, whether they be verbal or physical, institutional or personal. As a result, violence is not meaningless. Additionally, it is not just something that occurs; rather, it is something that is done and is "never done to something or someone in general, even if the target was not the one intended". Violence also takes in a variety of shapes, starting with the physical and interpersonal and progressing to the communal and collective, structural, and symbolic.⁴

Collective violence often arises from shared motivations, grievances, or ideologies and can manifest in various forms, including riots, ethnic conflicts, civil wars, genocides, and acts of terrorism. The key distinguishing feature of collective violence is that it involves the participation of multiple individuals or entities acting in concert to achieve their goals through violent means. There are various types of collective violence that includes wars including terrorism and other forms of collective violence such as those occurring between or within states. There are state perpetrated violence

²Bryjak, G. J. (1986). Collective violence in India. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 13(2), 35–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.1986.10553665>

³https://centrodocumentacion.psicosocial.net/wp-content/uploads/2004/01/who_collective_violence.pdf

⁴“Understanding Collective Violence : The Communicative and Performative Qualities of Violence in Acts of BelongingCORE”https://core.ac.uk/display/132198958?utm_source=pdf&utm_medium=banner&utm_campaign=pdf-decoration-v1

such as genocide torture and other form of violence leading to violation of human rights. There are also organised collective violence like gang warfare.⁵

Addressing the root causes of collective violence in India requires comprehensive measures, including promoting inter-community dialogue and reconciliation, addressing socio-economic disparities, strengthening institutions, ensuring accountability for perpetrators, and fostering inclusive governance and social cohesion. Additionally, efforts to promote education, economic opportunities, and inter-group understanding are crucial for fostering long-term peace and stability in the country.

The present paper therefore aims to investigate the factors or causes that lead to the escalation of collective violence in a particular group or society in India, what are the effects of collective violence and how can we mitigate such factors to bring peace.

IV. TYPES OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

A complex and varied phenomenon, collective violence is frequently fuelled by a confluence of social, political, economic, cultural, and psychological variables. It is an important topic for research and is of significance to policymakers and scholars since it can have substantial effects on people, communities, and countries.

Collective violence in India takes various forms, each with distinct characteristics and drivers. *Riots*, for instance, are often spontaneous or premeditated acts of public violence perpetrated by groups or crowds, typically arising from perceived injustices or social unrest, resulting in injuries, property damage, and fatalities. *Ethnic and communal violence*, on the other hand, involves conflicts between racial, ethnic, or religious groups, ranging from intergroup tensions to major riots and confrontations. *Civil wars* represent protracted armed confrontations within a nation, driven by political, ideological, or ethnic differences, causing significant mortality, displacement, and infrastructure destruction. *Genocide* constitutes the systematic eradication of entire ethnic, religious, or national groups through mass murder, forced relocation, and other atrocities. *Terrorism*, characterized by acts of violence or

⁵https://centrodocumentacion.psicosocial.net/wpcontent/uploads/2004/01/who_collective_violence.pdf

intimidation for political, ideological, or religious purposes, targets civilians to spread fear and advance specific agendas. *Mob violence*, often impulsive and emotional, involves groups engaging in violent acts like lynching, vigilantism, or attacking perceived threats. Gang violence stems from organized gangs engaging in criminal activities, territorial disputes, and drug-related violence. *Armed paramilitary or militant groups* pursue political, ideological, or territorial goals through violence, operating independently or against established governments. Lastly, revolutions and uprisings seek significant political changes or toppling of governments, varying in size and intensity. Understanding these various forms of collective violence is crucial for developing effective strategies to address and prevent them.

V. CAUSES OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

The causes of collective violence are multifaceted and complex, often involving a combination of social, political, economic, cultural, and psychological factors. It's important to recognize that collective violence rarely has a single cause; instead, it typically results from the interplay of various factors. Here are some of the main causes and contributing factors to collective violence:

1. **Social Inequality:** Differences in resources, opportunities, and money can cause social instability and violence. Anger and resentment that could lead to mass violence can be stoked when groups feel disadvantaged or unfairly treated.
2. **Social Identity and Group Dynamics:** Collective aggression is influenced by group psychology. Due to peer pressure and a desire to fit in, people may follow the rules and practices of their group, even if they involve violence.
3. **Political Aspects:** Corruption, authoritarian rule, political unrest, and a lack of political representation can all foster a climate that is favorable to mass violence. People may resort to violence as a means of achieving their objectives if they believe that their issues cannot be resolved through peaceful means.
4. **Disparities in Ethnicity, Religion, Language, or Culture:** Disparities in Ethnicity, Religion, Language, or Culture can lead to tension and conflict. Leaders or extremist groups may utilize or take advantage of these distinctions

to stoke support for mass violence.

5. Historical grudges: Old grudges from tyranny, colonization, or other historical wrongs can feed a cycle of violence. Groups may seek retribution or justice for previous wrongs, resulting in centuries of conflict.
6. Ideological Extremism: Violent ideologies can be justified by extreme political, religious, or cultural beliefs. Radicalized people or groups may use violence to further their ideologies or political objectives.
7. Media and Propaganda: Misinformation, hate speech, and propaganda can incite conflict and encourage group violence when they are disseminated through media outlets. Additionally, it can be applied to dehumanize the supposed "enemy" group.
8. Economic Disparities: Severe poverty, high unemployment rates, and unstable economies can make people feel frustrated and hopeless, which might encourage some people to resort to violence as a way to show their resentment.

VI. FACTORS LEADING TO ESCALATION OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

A. THEORIES OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

According to David Bayley, who is also a specialist on crime and Indian Criminal Justice System, has given three categories of collective violence. They are:

1. Violence of remonstrance
2. Violence of confrontation, and
3. Violence of frustration. It has the following dimensions: (1) occasion; (2) target; (3) catalytic agent; (4) organization; (5) duration of growth; (6) participants; and (7) location.⁶

VII. VIOLENCE OF REMONSTRANCE:

⁶Bryjak, G. J. (1986). Collective violence in India. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 13(2), 35-55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.1986.10553665>

This type of violence originates through the efforts of a group of people who are organised and has a certain set of experienced grievances which is generally against the government or its officials. The members of this group are skilled and have resources to bring the group together in order to make its demand heard by the government. It is generally rural oriented protests occurring in an area with rising literacy and upcoming political parties. It does not occur suddenly and is the result of prolonged periods of demonstration.

In these cases since the violence is against government officials it is tackled by the police often leading to peaceful protests getting violent when demonstrators get rowdy and impatient. The police push back by arresting the group leaders leading isolated clashes which turns into a full blown violent confrontation.

CASE STUDY 1: JAT RIOT OF HARYANA

The state of Haryana was placed under lockdown in February 2016 as members of the Jat community demanded political and economic accommodations from the government. Over 30 individuals were killed in clashes between demonstrators and security forces in various sections of the state. The problem first surfaced in the 1990s. According to reports, the Mandal commission report from 1991 is where the Jat quota controversy began. They refused to being added to the National Commission on Backward Classes(NCBC) Central OBC list. They again demanded the quota in the year 2008.⁷

The organization in charge of the agitation and demand is the All India Jat Arakshan Sangharsh Samiti (AIJASS). It is led by real estate entrepreneur Yashpal Malik, who operates in Ghaziabad and Noida.

In accordance with the commission's instructions, a survey of the Jats economic and social situation was carried out in six states in 2012. The survey also covered states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The poll that was performed in Haryana contrasted the Jats with higher castes. Jats were discovered to have a social rank comparable to upper

⁷Shah, K. M. (2017, June 9). Dealing with violent civil protests in India. ORF.
<https://www.orfonline.org/research/dealing-with-violent-civil-protests-in-india/>

castes in Haryana. Jats were a part of the Central OBC list in 2014. March The Supreme Court annulled the notification in 2015.⁸

The terrified Haryana administration requested the deployment of both the CAPF and the Indian Army during the Jat quota demonstrations in February 2016. Over 30 people lost their lives in the ensuing violence related to the quota demand, which also significantly damaged both public and private property. A clear example of police failure at all levels was given by the state of Haryana's actions during the movement. The police failed to respond to the situation appropriately, either by acting with complicity in some instances or with indifference. This triggered the escalation of violence. Jat protesting groups were able to utilize earthmovers and other heavy machinery to dig as the Haryana Police turned a blind eye.⁹

The factors that contributed to the escalation of violence in this case was

1. The jat community in Haryana had long standing grievances regarding reservation in education and government job which remain unheard by the government leading to frustration and resentment against the government culminating into a full blown violence.
2. Political factors such as support by certain political parties gave momentum to the protests. Also, the several decades of feeling of discrimination by the jat community also played a crucial role.
3. Arbitrary use of force by the authorities and the incessant and indiscriminated firings by the police accelerated the process as in these sensitive issues it is necessary to calm down the crowd instead of instigating it further by use of force.
4. Social media played a role in spreading information, both accurate and inaccurate, about the protests. False rumors and inflammatory content

⁸India Today. (2016, February 25). Jat Agitation: Everything you need to know. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/jat-agitation-310332-2016-02-25>

⁹Shah, K. M. (2017, June 9). Dealing with violent civil protests in India. ORF. <https://www.orfonline.org/research/dealing-with-violent-civil-protests-in-india/>

contributed to the escalation of violence.

VIII. VIOLENCE OF CONFRONTATION:

It results from conflict between two groups of private citizens which is not the result of spontaneous factor but is long culminated before exploding. Here the anger is not directed towards the government and neither the police are the catalyst. It is between members of two groups of family, neighbours, religious or ethnic groups.

It is a both rural and urban phenomenon. But it occurs more in urban areas where there is more diversity of different people belonging to different communities.

CASE STUDY 2:KHAIRLANJI VIOLENCE

On September 29, 2006, four members of the family of BhaiyyalalBhotmange, all Dalits, were attacked by a gang of peasants, predominantly Kunbis, who see themselves as the equivalent of the Marathas in western Maharashtra but are categorized as other backward classes (OBC). The four victims were hacked to death after being paraded through the village naked, with the ladies having been sexually assaulted.¹⁰

Factors for escalation of violence:

1. Caste-Based Discrimination: Caste discrimination was a major contributing factor in Indian society. Being Dalits, the Bhotmange family was at the bottom of the caste system. The murderers had biases towards the Dalit family and belonged to a higher caste.
2. Disparities in social and economic standing: The tensions increased as the socioeconomic gaps between the two caste groups grew wider. The Dalit population frequently experiences economic and social marginalization, which can engender anger and enmity from members of the ruling caste.
3. Insufficient law enforcement: The criminals were able to behave without consequence due to ineffective law enforcement and inadequate legal

¹⁰Maitra, P. (2021, September 15). Khairlanji episode: Caste divide cemented by brutality from 15 years ago. Hindustan Times. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/khairlanji-episode-caste-divide-cemented-by-brutality-from-15-years-ago-101631727662814.html>

protections for underprivileged populations. The escalation was also aided by the justice system's and the police's delayed action.

4. *Failure of Authorities*: The local authorities, including law enforcement and political leaders, were accused of being biased and unresponsive to the plight of the Dalit family. This perceived injustice further exacerbated the situation.

IX. VIOLENCE OF FRUSTRATION

The described form of collective violence arises from frustration when people find their situation unbearable. It can be triggered by an impersonal event and often occurs in urban areas where living conditions are poor and frustrating. In this type of violence, crowds engage in aggressive actions opportunistically, often causing random destruction. The participants are typically not organized, but some may emerge as leaders from within the crowd. They may not necessarily know each other but are brought together by a common event or interest that turns violent, sometimes due to perceived injustices or disadvantages. Police actions can sometimes contribute to the escalation of this type of violence.

CASE STUDY 3: MUZAFFARNAGAR RIOTS

The Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 were a series of violent incidents between Hindu and Muslim populations that took place in the Muzaffarnagar area of Uttar Pradesh, India. The riots caused significant property damage, numerous injuries, and numerous fatalities. The conflict reportedly began last month after a young Jat woman was accosted by a Muslim guy in the village of Kawaal. The woman's two brothers are accused of killing the stalker on August 27. The brothers were also killed a few hours later. Numerous more people were killed in the ensuing violence, which also drove 40,000 people – mostly Muslims – from their homes.

According to reports, the rioting got worse after a video clip showing two teenagers being mercilessly murdered by a mob surfaced. The damage was done, even though the administration eventually emphasized that the video was shot in Pakistan a few

years ago. There are still copies of the video floating around in Muzaffarnagar, and not everyone here accepts the official account.¹¹

Factors leading to escalation of violence:

1. **Political Manipulation:** Local politicians, including some from prominent political parties, were accused of exploiting these tensions for their electoral gains. They allegedly organized meetings and rallies that exacerbated communal sentiments.
2. **Ineffective Law Enforcement:** Critics argued that the local administration and law enforcement failed to respond promptly and effectively to contain the violence, which allowed it to escalate.
3. **Rumors and Misinformation:** False rumors and misinformation spread through social media and word of mouth, creating fear and paranoia among communities.

Therefore, to summarise the following can be said to be important factors that lead to escalation of any collective violence:

1. The role of political ideology and agenda of the place:

Most of the times the ideologies of the political party of the place of violence acts as a catalyst to the violence and often than not it is also the originating factor. An example of collective violence in India that can be attributed to political ideologies is the Godhra train burning and the subsequent Gujarat riots in 2002. This tragic incident was marked by violence, primarily along religious and political lines.

2. The failure of authorities to control the riot:

In the cases of collective violence, it is of utmost important that an effective plan of action is formulated at the very beginning to control the escalation of violence at its initiating point. It is seen in most of the cases that delay of the authorities in taking

¹¹BBC News. (2013, September 25). Muzaffarnagar: Tales of death and despair in India's riot-hit town. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-24172537>

swift action leads to escalation of violence which could have been eliminated with proper management.

An example of collective violence in India that can be attributed to the failure of authorities is the 1984 anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Following the assassination, there was a significant failure on the part of authorities to control the situation and prevent violence. This failure is often attributed to the lack of swift and effective action.

3. Media and rumours as a catalyst:

False rumors and misinformation spreads through social media and word of mouth, creating fear and paranoia among communities. Media plays a role of catalyst spreading and provoking people to retaliate back without giving credible information. One example of collective violence influenced by social media is the 2020 Delhi riots which occurred on the backdrop of citizenship amendment Act in India. While various factors contributed to the violence, social media played a significant role in both escalating tensions and mobilizing groups.

4. Communal and caste violence:

In India, caste and communal violence is very frequent as a result of large number of diverse population residing together. For centuries, the rift between upper class and lower class and between Hindu and Muslim is continuing and it is seen that it is the most common cause of violence in India.

5. Arbitrary Action by the police

During the communal riots in Mumbai (1992-93), there were allegations that some police officers either stood by without intervening or actively participated in the violence against minority communities. This has been documented in various reports and investigations. Sometimes, the violence is escalated by the police in retaliation to the mob such as in Ahmadabad protest the police were stoned by protesters and locals for more than a week during the anti-reservation protests.¹² The cops charged into a

¹²Desk, O. W. (1970, January 1). History of communal violence in Gujarat. <https://www.outlookindia.com/.https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/history-of-communal-violence-in-gujarat/217988>

crowd of individuals in apparent reprisal and attacked them indiscriminately. It is often reported that when Hindus are the instigators of or are in control of communal violence, the Hindu-dominated police are sometimes accused of promoting intergroup violence by standing silent.¹³

4. CASE STUDY: MANIPUR

HISTORY OF CONFLICTS IN THE STATE:

The history of collective violence in Manipur, a state in northeastern India, is deeply intertwined with its complex socio-political landscape and ethno-cultural diversity. Throughout history, Manipur has experienced various forms of collective violence, including ethnic conflicts, insurgencies, and state repression.

One significant aspect of collective violence in Manipur revolves around ethnic tensions and conflicts between different communities within the state. Manipur is home to numerous ethnic groups, including the Meiteis, Nagas, Kukis, and Pangals (Manipuri Muslims), each with its own distinct identity, language, and culture. Tensions between these communities have often erupted into violent clashes, fueled by historical grievances, competition over resources, and political aspirations. The Meitei-Naga and Meitei-Kuki conflicts, in particular, have been major sources of collective violence in the region, leading to loss of lives, displacement, and social unrest. Another factor contributing to collective violence in Manipur is the presence of insurgent groups and their armed struggle against the Indian state. The state has witnessed several insurgencies led by groups seeking greater autonomy or independence, such as the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Kuki National Organisation (KNO). These insurgent movements have engaged in acts of violence, including attacks on security forces, bombings, and extortion, leading to a cycle of violence and counter-violence.

The response of the state authorities to these insurgencies has also been marked by instances of state repression and human rights abuses, further exacerbating tensions

¹³Bryjak, G. J. (1986). Collective violence in India. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*, 13(2), 35-55.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00927678.1986.10553665>

and contributing to the cycle of violence. The imposition of draconian laws like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been a contentious issue in Manipur, leading to allegations of extrajudicial killings, disappearances, and torture by security forces.

The cause and impact of ethnic violence in Manipur

Background:

Manipur is a northeast Indian state bordering Myanmar and is on the east of Bangladesh. Half the population of Manipur consist of Meiteis, which is a predominantly Hindu community while 43% are Kukis(Christian) and Nagas. Meiteis have occupied the valley region whereas Kukis occupy the hilly region.

The point of contention began after the demand of Meiteis for official tribal status which is feared by the Kukis that it will further strengthen their hold in government. Meiteis already occupy 40 of the 60 region seats in the state government. The Kukis fear that giving such status to Meitesis would give them power to buy land and settle in the area occupied by the Kukis. The issue of illegal migrants entering the area from Myanmar, the problem of unemployed youth, land disputes lead to years of contention finally explode.¹⁴

How it began?

The violence escalated after circulation of a video that metei women has been raped by the Kuki Militia. This lead to widespread contention in the area and in retaliation two kuki women were raped and paraded naked in the streets by the mobs. The video is the latest example of rape and sexual assault being used as instruments of violence in conflict, which can often worsen into a spiral of revenge attacks.

Impact:

Since the violence erupted in Manipur on May 3, at least 125 people have died and more than 40,000 have fled their homes. In addition to thousands of guns being taken

¹⁴Baker, B. G. (2023, July 20). Manipur violence: What is happening and why. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66260730>

from government arsenals, hundreds of homes, churches, and automobiles have been vandalized. Attacks such as arson and others go on without stopping. All available information refers to the widespread use of sexual violence as part of the ethnic struggle, since there have been numerous major incidences of sexual violence committed by Meitei men, militias, and militants against Kuki women.¹⁵

Even though it has taken extreme measures, the administration has been unable to control the situation. The state administration disabled internet access, enacted a curfew, and gave district magistrates the authority to enforce "shoot-on-sight" orders in "extreme cases."

The federal government sent out some 50,000 security personnel, the majority of whom were from other areas. A unified command was also established for the numerous security units stationed throughout the state.¹⁶

Reasons for escalation of Violence

1. **Social media and fake Rumours:** the violence escalated with circulation of a fake video of a Meitei women being raped by kuki men. This led to reprisal and incessant attack and violence from both sides of the community.
2. **Failure of the State Government:** The situation spiraled out of hand when the administration neglected to send out the appropriate forces on May 3, the day of the tribal unity march. The state police, who, like the majority of the local government, are Meitei, are accused of having permitted the crowds to flee with weapons including assault rifles, long-range rifles, and even 51mm mortars.
3. **Arms:** Across the state, an estimated 4,000 weapons and 500,000 rounds were stolen. Due to the availability of weapons to both populations, the conflict's intensity has increased significantly.
4. **Failure of police forces to control the violence:** subsequently from the next day onwards central government started deploying forces from other states to

¹⁵What's Behind the Manipur Violence and Why Stopping It Poses a Test For Modi. (n.d.). The Wire. <https://thewire.in/security/manipur-violence-reasons-failure-and-solution-q-and-a>

control the insurgency but it was again a failure as these forces were under the state government command and the Meiteis made the situation worse by blocking the forces or digging up roads to stop them.

5. **Lack of response from the central government:** the central government and the PM has mostly remained silent on the issue and the only attempt to mitigate the violence was the deposition of central security forces in the area and no effort was made to dampen the unrest by actively communicating with the grievances of the people. The formation of the peace committee came after a month of the violence which was a failure in itself.

X. PREVENTIVE MEASURES: WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN DONE

1. By deploying forces and establishing a dialogue with the state government, the central government should have assumed control as soon as the violence began, putting political differences to one side.
2. To ensure peace and calm in the region, the situation in Manipur could only be improved with neutral management.
3. Regardless of whether it chooses to impose president's rule, the central government should include measures to address the pervasive sexual assault among its top priorities. Along with measures to hold offenders accountable, they should also focus on survivors' mental support as well as sexual and reproductive health.
4. It will be crucial to take action to attempt and reestablish some level of amity amongst the opposing communities. Because the Kuki cannot access Meitei-dominated districts and vice versa, dead bodies are still unclaimed and unidentified in morgues four months after the violence started.
5. In order to avoid failure like its first attempt to create a peace committee in June, Centre should conduct in-depth consultations with both groups before to deciding on the composition of a discussion panel. It should make an effort to include moderates from both communities, including

women, and is best if they are academics or civil society figures who have not taken stances that have polarized the public during the violence. It should also make sure that none of the members are connected to extremists or influential politicians on either side.

XI. MEASURES TO PREVENT COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

In order to avoid and deal with collective violence, such as riots, mob violence, and communal confrontations, India has many laws and legal provisions in place. These laws seek to uphold law and order, safeguard citizens, and hold people or organizations responsible for their deeds. The following are some important Indian laws and legal guidelines for averting mass violence:

LEGISLATION

Indian Penal Code (IPC):¹⁷

- **Sections 141-160:** These parts deal with transgressions such as rioting, fostering hostility between various groups on the basis of race, religion, place of birth, residency, language, etc.

Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC):¹⁸

- **Section 129:** Gives police personnel the authority to disperse illegal gatherings and, if necessary, use physical force to avert violence or disturbances of the peace.
- **Section 130:** Allows for the employment of armed troops to support civil authority in times of unrest.

XII. Public order legislation

The National Security Act (NSA): Permits the preventative detention of people to stop them from acting in a way that would be detrimental to maintaining public order. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA): Grants special authority to the armed forces in areas designated as "disturbed" in order to uphold law and

¹⁷ Indian Penal Code, 1860

¹⁸ The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

order. In India, certain states have enacted particular legislation to address communal strife and mass violence. To combat organized crime, for instance, the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act (MCOCA) can be used to deal with organized crime and violence.

- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act:** Provides legal safeguards for members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and includes provisions to prevent and punish violence against them.
- **The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)¹⁹:** Focuses on those people and groups who carry out illegal activities, such as those that endanger India's sovereignty and integrity.
- **The police acts:** The police force in each state in India is governed by its own set of police laws. These laws set down the authority and duties of the police in upholding law and order.
- **Indian Election Commission Guidelines:** In order to prohibit the use of hate speech and racial tensions for political benefit, the Indian Election Commission issues rules to political parties and candidates during elections.
- **Cyberlaws:** To stop the transmission of hate speech and false information that can inspire violence, laws pertaining to cybercrimes and hate speech on the internet can be applied.

It's crucial to remember that while these laws exist to stop and remedy collective violence, the success of their application and enforcement depends on how well they are done. The application of these laws must also respect fundamental rights and guarantee due process in order to uphold the rule of law and safeguard individual rights.

XIII. PREVENTIVE ACTIONS

¹⁹THE UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) ACT, 1967. ACT NO. 37 OF 1967

Given its diverse population and intricate social, cultural, and political dynamics, India presents a huge challenge in terms of preventing collective violence. Here are some steps India can take to avoid mass violence:

- **Community Policing and Trust-Building:**

In 2013, there were riots in Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh. Later initiatives concentrated on community policing and fostering trust between various populations to prevent further violence. Police officers engaged with local leaders and residents to ease tensions.

- **Rapid Response and Early Warning Systems:**

The riots in Gujarat in 2002 brought home the importance of strong early warning systems. Since then, some governments have created mechanisms, like Assam's Community-Based Conflict Early Warning System (CBCEWS), to promptly identify and address possible outbreaks of violence.

- **Fostering Interfaith and Intercommunity Dialogue:**

Following the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition and ensuing riots, a number of interfaith programs and talks were started to foster peace amongst religious groups. The "Mushawarat" platform, which brings together leaders from diverse religious groups, is one such initiative.

- **Land Reforms and Accountability:**

The anti-Sikh riots in Delhi in 1984 brought attention to the need for legal reforms and accountability. Numerous instances were reopened, and efforts were made to hold the guilty accountable, though with varying degrees of success.

- **Sensitization and Media Responsibility:**

The effect of media coverage on public perception was made clear by the 2008 Mumbai terrorist strikes. Since then, media outlets have been urged to follow ethical reporting guidelines and steer clear of sensationalism that can instigate violence.

- **Economic inclusion and development:**

In Kerala, the "Kudumbashree" initiative empowers women through self-help organizations and revenue-generating ventures. It lessens the likelihood of violence resulting from economic imbalances by encouraging economic participation.

- **Political Representation and Inclusivity:**

There have been ethnic conflicts in Assam's Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), founded via discussions, gives the Bodo population political representation and has assisted in reducing violence.²⁰

- **International Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution:**

Violence has frequently occurred from the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir. International diplomatic efforts to establish peaceful solutions have been mediated by nations like the United States and the United Nations. When properly implemented, these strategies can aid in preventing and reducing collective violence in India, however due to the diverse and dynamic structure of the nation, continual efforts and flexibility to handle new issues as they develop are required.

XIV. CONCLUSION

Violence was and still is an indispensable component of social and political life, despite the fact that it is viewed as abhorrent. Despite successfully monopolizing its control and rendering it almost invisible, modern regimes have not completely eliminated violent behavior.²¹ It seen through above discussion and case study that a set pattern of factors are responsible for the escalation of collective violence in India although the initiating factors may differ in their form such as ethnic violence, religious violence, riots, mob lynching etc. in almost cases of collective violence it is possible to nip the violence in its bud by swift and effective remedy. In any case of collective violence, it not only endangers the life and commodity of the area but also hampers its development and has psychological impact on its population for generations. Later, the political parties in lieu of their zeal to earn a seat, use these incidents as for their

²⁰Desk, E. (2019, November 26). Explained: What is the Bodoland dispute, and who are the NDFB? The Indian Express. <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-the-bodoland-dispute-and-who-are-the-ndfb-6136083/>

²¹Malešević, S. (2013). Collective violence and power. In SAGE Publications Ltd eBooks (pp. 274–290). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857021014.n15>

political propaganda by exacerbating the pain of the victims by reminding them of the history of the place. This political strategy only further increases the possible risk of resurrection of the violence.

In the modern times, social media plays the role of catalyst as fake news and videos are circulated to instigate the mob to retaliate. Before the authorities becomes vigilant and tries to make public aware the damage, more often, had already been done. News channels also sensitises any piece of information thereby inciting hatred and violence in the community. Proper regulation of media and news channel is very crucial to contain any form of collective violence.

To effectively address collective violence in India, several executive actions are necessary to ensure accountability and prevent future occurrences. These actions include:

1. ***Establishment of Special Investigative Units***: Implementing specialized investigative units tasked with promptly and thoroughly investigating incidents of collective violence.
2. ***Enhanced Law Enforcement***: This includes improving training, resources, and coordination among police forces to prevent escalation and protect communities at risk.
3. ***Community Engagement and Conflict Resolution***: Encouraging dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation processes can help mitigate conflicts and prevent violence before it erupts.
4. ***Accountability for Public Officials***: Holding public officials accountable for their actions or inaction in preventing or responding to collective violence. This includes investigating allegations of complicity, negligence, or abuse of power and imposing disciplinary or legal consequences as appropriate.
5. ***Victim Support and Rehabilitation***: Providing adequate support and rehabilitation services to victims of collective violence, including medical care, psychosocial support, and assistance with rebuilding

livelihoods and communities affected by violence.

By implementing these executive actions, the Indian government can demonstrate its commitment to upholding the rule of law, protecting human rights, and promoting peace and stability in the country. With modernisation, the country faces and will continue to face more internal disturbances as the rural, migrant and the depressed class moves towards better literacy and awareness, they would not settle for their misery over the luxuries of the affluent class therefore leading to more violence.

It is important therefore to move towards developing a rapid response mechanisms and early warning systems help authorities detect potential hotspots of violence and take preventive measures, thereby averting the escalation of conflicts as it is rightly observed that prevention is always better than cure.

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