

**INITIATIVES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN COMMUNAL  
HARMONY BUILDING AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN  
INDIA**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
IN  
POLITICAL SCIENCE  
BY  
SINJINI BHATTACHARYA**



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD  
HYDERABAD-500 046  
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HARMONY BUILDING AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN  
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A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Hyderabad in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Award of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**IN**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**BY**

**SINJINI BHATTACHARYA**



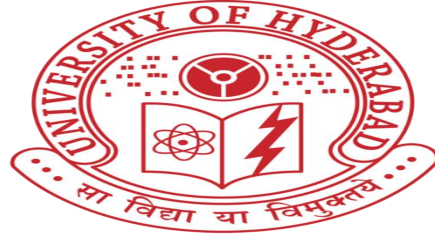
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**JUNE 2017**



**DECLARATION**  
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I hereby declare that the research embodied in the present dissertation entitled '**Initiatives of Civil Society Organizations In Communal Harmony Building and Religious Conflict Resolution in India**' is carried out under the supervision of **Prof. Manjari Katju**, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, is an original work of mine and to the best of my knowledge no part of this dissertation has been submitted for the award of any research degree or diploma at any University. I also declare that this is a bonafide research work which is free from plagiarism. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodhganga/INFLIBNET.

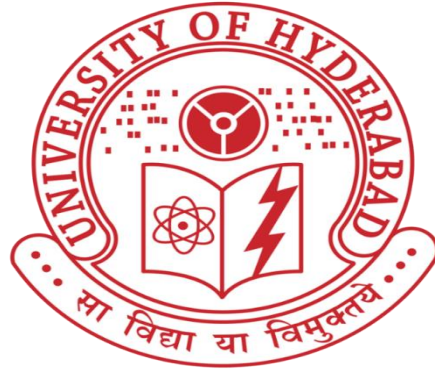
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This is to certify that **SINJINI BHATTACHARYA** (Reg. no. 12SPPH03) has carried out the research work in the present dissertation entitled '**Initiatives of Civil Society Organizations In Communal Harmony Building and Religious Conflict Resolution in India**' in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Political Science, under the supervision of **Prof Manjari Katju**. This dissertation is an independent work and does not constitute part of any material submitted for any research degree here or elsewhere.

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis “**Initiatives of Civil Society Organizations In Communal Harmony Building and Religious Conflict Resolution in India**” submitted by **Sinjini Bhattacharya**, bearing registration number **12SPPH03** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for award of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Sciences is a bonafide work carried out by her under my supervision and guidance.

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Part of this thesis have been:

A. Published in the following publications.

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1. "Civil Society Organizations and Community Level Initiatives for Communal Harmony Building in India: An Analysis of Organizations in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad" in New Zealand Asian Studies Society International Conference, 2015, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand

2. Conflict Research Society Annual Conference, 2016, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland

Further, the student has passed the following courses towards fulfillment of coursework requirement for Ph.D./was exempted from doing coursework (recommended by Doctoral Committee) on the basis of the following courses passed during her M.Phil program and the M.Phil degree was awarded.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

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## The Idea of Peace

Like "violence", "peace" is also a multifaceted concept and the approach taken to peace building is informed by the understanding that underlines this idea of peace. A clear distinction needs to be made between "Positive" and "Negative" aspects of peace. Johan Galtung first came up with this distinction in relation to peace research in a 1964 editorial article for the Journal for Peace Research (Galtung,1964,p.2).Galtung suggests that negative peace is the "absence of personal violence" where as positive peace is the "absence of structural violence" (1964b,p.Ibid). Galtung suggests that absence of personal violence<sup>1</sup> does not necessarily translate into peaceful circumstances. Hence he names this as negative peace. Absence of structural violence<sup>2</sup> could be interpreted as "social justice" and this he defines as positive peace (Ibid). In further explaining the concept of peace, Charles Webel suggests that positive peace could be defined as the ideal state of affairs where "harmony"; "justice" and "equity" are all present simultaneously in society (Webel and Galtung,2007,p.6). Webel puts forward what he calls the "Spectral Theory of Peace" where he points out that peace is more often than not recognized "by its absence" and that the presence or absence of peace can be best measured by a "continuum or spectrum" (Ibid, p.11).

Before venturing into the focus of this research let us take a look at the literature on peace and peace-building to gain a better understanding of the processes involved. Webel uses the spectrum to describe four distinct conditions which could be utilized to understand the concept of peace which he equates to "light"; that which is "intangible" but is best understood by its absence or by its sudden sporadic appearance (2007,p.11). The four conditions which the spectrum measures are – "*External Internal Peace; Internal Internal Peace; External External Peace; and Internal External Peace*" (Ibid, p.11-12). The spectrum of measuring peace in a society or nation-state, according to Webel, ranges between "Strong or Durable Peace" and "Weak or Fragile Peace" (Webel and Galtung, 2007, p.11). Webel calls this the "*External*

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<sup>1</sup> Personal Violence is defined as the actual physical violence inflicted with the help of tools and weapons which can bodily or mentally hurt another person. This sort of violence can be inflicted by any individual or organization. Galtung suggest that the "typology" of this sort of violence should not be "systemic", rather open to "open to record new developments" (1964b,p.174).

<sup>2</sup> Structural violence can be interpreted as "inequality" in the "distribution of power" (Ibid,p.175).

*Internal Peace*” (Ibid). A society with “Strong or Durable Peace” is marked by social harmony, absence of violence, justice and equality. While a “Weak or Fragile” society might not have any overt signs of violence but is characteristically wrought with “injustice; inequity and personal discord and dissatisfaction” (Ibid). Most societies or nation-states in the world fail to qualify in the “Strong Peace” category while the majority tends to lean towards the “Weak Peace” end of the spectrum (Ibid). The *Internal Internal Peace* sorts to understand the individual’s response to violence. This spectrum ranges between “Weak Harmony” which Webel describes as a situation of extreme conflict to “Strong Harmony” which is a conflict free atmosphere (Ibid). This *Internal Internal Peace* is informed by an individual’s instinct for survival. Webel suggests that national security and the survival of a culture often becomes an extended part of this individual’s instinct for survival.

The “inter-cultural or international behaviour” of societies and cultures, according to Webel, could range between “very violent or warlike” to “very non-violent or warfree” (Ibid,p. 12). This, Webel calls the measure of *External External Peace*. Similarly individuals exhibit a range of behaviours while interacting with other individuals which could range between “very conflicted to very unconflicted” and the measure of this, Webel calls, the *Internal External Peace* (Ibid). What Webel sought to explain with the help of this spectral understanding peace is that peace is a multi-layered phenomenon and cannot be explained in absolutist terms. Total and absolute peace might not be an achievable goal. What instead is desirable is “Strong Peace” which is a combination of both negative and positive peace (Ibid, p. 12). Webel calls this “Strong or Imperfect” peace as the one which leans more towards the peaceful or nonviolent end of the spectrum (Ibid, p.12). Galtung suggests that in pursuit of peace, it is by "promoting" both positive and negative that one can make any meaningful contribution to peace research (1964,p.188). This understanding of peace becomes important to us when we try to understand the various processes of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

### **Peacemaking, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding**

Peacekeeping as a concept first emerged in the writings of Johan Galtung. Thania Paffenholz(2011) suggests that Galtung’s understanding of the concepts of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding were informed by his ideas of negative and positive peace.

Paffenholz suggests that absence of violence or negative peace is achieved through “peace keeping” while “peace making and peace building” are informed by a positive understanding of peace, addressing “structural violence” (2011, p.45). While peacekeeping can be viewed as a coercive measure to end conflict, peacemaking and peacebuilding approaches try to understand the root cause of violence in order to end it. Peacemaking aims at “addressing causes of violence” in its efforts towards conflict resolution between two conflicting parties (Ibid). Whereas peace building aims at building “structures and institutions of peace based on justice, equity and cooperation” (Ibid) in an effort to end structural violence. A shift from an idea of peacekeeping to peacemaking and peacebuilding has led to increased involvement of civil society in conflict resolution and transformation exercises.

But before one delves into the role of civil society in conflict resolution, it is important to have a clear understanding of the evolution of the peacebuilding process. This evolution, as Paffenholz points out, is closely related to an understanding of the idea of peace. A shift from a negative or “short or medium term” understanding of peace to a positive or “wide” understanding of peace has led to a change in the approaches to achieve peace (Ibid, p.49). Thus, there is on the one hand “liberal peacebuilding” which is a statist approach to peacebuilding with main emphasis on “statebuilding” with a “quick establishment of security, democratic political structures and economic reforms” (Ibid, p.47). This approach to peacebuilding aims at reestablishing order immediately after an armed conflict and its goal is achieved when a minimum level of security is reached, and democratic structures such as the electoral system, start functioning in a country.

The other is the “sustainable peacebuilding” approach (Ibid). This approach has led to an increase in the scope and duration of peacebuilding interventions. In the 1990s, peacebuilding became a part of development discourse because of the development efforts being made in many post-conflict societies. The “development-conflict-peace nexus” was explored for various policy and operational framework models in order to forge an integration of peacebuilding into the development approach (Ibid, p.48). Paffenholz points out that this led to three major shifts in the development-peace discourse,

First, many peacebuilding approaches and tools, such as conflict analysis frameworks, were imported into the development field. Second, development actors started to fund or implement interventions that were directly aimed at peacebuilding. This contributed to an increase in peacebuilding activities and the involvement of new actors, mainly NGOs, which also led to professionalization and commercialization of peace work. Third, the definition of peacebuilding have been stretched in scope and duration (2011 p.48).

### **Conflict Management to Conflict Transformation and Beyond**

With the changing notion of peace and peacebuilding, approaches towards conflict has also undergone change. The shift from conflict management to conflict resolution and conflict transformation has been a result of a shift in the understanding of peace which simply meant the end of violence to a more nuanced understanding of peace which attempts to understand the root cause of violence in order to develop specific tools to tackle the problem. Both Thania Paffenholz (2011) and Oliver P. Richmond (2001) talk about this evolutionary process. The conflict management school propagated state centric approaches. Inter-state conflict was the main concern of traditional diplomacy, and the U.N. played a major role in brokering of peace between two warring states. The traditional approach of conflict management attempts to resolve conflicts at the state level by using tools such as “mediation, negotiation and tactical bargaining or coercive third party intervention” while using peacekeeping forces to maintain equilibrium (Richmond, 2001 p.1). The aim of this approach is to identify influential leaders from both parties and to bring them together to start a negotiation process. Paffenholz calls this the “short-term management of armed conflict” (Paffenholz, 2011, p.51). However, this approach has also been criticized because of its single point agenda of targeting the top leadership of conflicting parties, thereby completely neglecting other internal and external actors who might be stakeholders in any conflict and can have major contributions “before, during and after negotiations” (Ibid). The conflict management approach has also been criticized for not being “neutral in internal conflicts and overlook deeper causes, thus being unable to guarantee the long-term stability of any peace agreement” (Ibid).

In the post-cold war era, concentration shifted from “international wars to internal conflicts” (Miall et al., 2003, p.30). Oliver P. Richmond emphasizes that in the present context

conflict is no longer only a crisis of the state. Other issues such as identity politics, issues of ethnicity, development and human security issues have come to play very important roles in conflict. Increasingly, therefore, ways of conflict mediation which involve “traditional diplomacy” are inadequate (Richmond, 2003b, p.3). In this changed context a multidimensional approach to conflict resolution was considered more useful. The conflict resolution school aimed at understanding the root cause of violence; “relationship-building” and “long-term resolution oriented approaches” to conflict (Paffenholz, 2011, p.52). Broadening the scope of conflict resolution approaches meant "multitrack" intervention which could include "both elites and the grassroots" (Miall et.al, 2003, p. 33).

Dorothea Hilhorst and Mathijs van Leeuwen suggest that peace is no longer defined in term of just the absence of war. Hilhorst and Leeuwen state that “Sustainable peace has become a twin concept to sustainable development, and entails that peace must include conditions for the prevention of future conflict” (2005,p.538). Second generation approaches aim at multi-dimensional conflict resolution. As opposed to traditional diplomacy approaches (which resulted in ‘zero sum’ or the gain of one person was the loss of another), second generation approaches aim towards a “positive sum” where in neither party to a conflict end up on the losing side. Conflict is viewed as a “socio-biological problem” (Richmond, 2003, p.6). Instead of coercion, the third party encourages the two sides involved to “define and identify their conflict before solving it” (Ibid). Projects aiming at dialogue creation between conflicting groups, “peace education”; training for actors of various groups in order to enhance their “peacebuilding capacity” and “conflict resolution workshops” are some of the major tools used in this approach (Paffenholz, 2011, p.52). The aim here is to utilize grassroots resources and key civil society actors to build peace from bottom up which can then be replicated in the rest of the conflict zone. As Paffenholz points out the main contribution of this approach has been in “identifying human needs” and in the process make unofficial and ordinary voices count (Ibid). Miall and others add that NGO intervention in conflict situations are moving towards providing conflict resolution training to people in conflict zones and "combining these with indigenous traditions" to establish more meaningful peace (Miall et. al., 2003, p.32).

However this approach has also been criticized and summing these criticisms up, Paffenholz suggests that the major criticisms are in fact from a conflict management perspective.

The relationship building approach of conflict resolution has been criticized as being inadequate in forging successful negotiations and ending war. At the same time the approach has been criticized for assuming that civil society and grassroots approaches to conflict resolution does not “automatically spillover to the national level” (Ibid). The approach has also been criticized for ignoring “cultural or other societal differences” as well as not showing sensitivity towards issues of “structural violence” (Ibid, p.52).

Next in the evolutionary process came what Paffenholz calls the “complementary school” (Ibid). This was an attempt to bring together both conflict management and conflict resolution schools and focus on their similarities to develop a balanced approach to ending conflict. The implication here is that peacebuilding as a process is “needed both from the top and below” (Ibid, p.53). The logical conclusion then was to combine the top-down and bottom-up approaches which are promoted by the conflict management and conflict resolution schools respectively. The idea that these two Track I (conflict management) and Track II (conflict resolution) approaches are complementary implies that there are “two distinct levels of the international system: that of the state and society of states, and that of individual/civil society” (Richmond,2001,p.1). Various models tried to overcome the dichotomy between conflict management and conflict resolution schools. The “de-escalation” model suggests that in the early stages of conflict, conflict resolution techniques should be used to deescalate violence. However once conflict has escalated, conflict managements methods like “official mediation” need to be employed (Paffenholz,2011,p.53). Immediately after peace negotiations have concluded however, resolution oriented approaches will have to be employed. The main criticism of this approach arises from the fact that in the era of multi-track diplomacy several methods of intervention can be applied at the same time.

*Conflict Transformation* aims at sustainable peacebuilding and acknowledges the fact that conflict reconciliation in the present times has become “long-term commitment” which requires the building of an infrastructure “across the levels of society”, including various actors and activities which will then be able to achieve and sustain peace in society (Lederach, 1997, p.xvi). John Paul Lederach provides a model for the conflict transformation approach and in doing so tries to solve problems of the two existing models. Lederach divides the society into three levels of leadership and with each corresponding level of leadership, a different approach to

peacebuilding. Level one is the top leadership. They are the top level military and political figures who are involved in any conflict situation representing governments and warring parties. These leaders are always visible in the public and are representative of a certain set of “perspectives and issues” (Ibid, p.42). The leadership is under tremendous pressure to always stick to a set of ideas. Any deviation might be seen as a “weakness or loss of face” (Ibid). These could actually be constraining factors for the top leaders. Although the top leaders are at the apex of hierarchy and often considered as the repository of power, this hierarchy might not always be maintained in conflict situations.

Consequently the peace-building approach at this level is more of an attempt to attain “cease-fire” even before other negotiations can take place (Lederach, 1997, p.44). These leaders have a top-down approach to peace building. Negotiations at the top level to bring conflicting parties to the “bargaining table” is the main goal here (Ibid). The assumption here is that once peace is achieved at the higher levels it will eventually “trickle-down” to the masses. A step by step process to attaining peace is initiated where the first step is cease-fire. Establishment of a democratic electoral structure at the national level will then help to include “more sections of the society” and in turn establish peace (Ibid, p.45).

Lederach enumerates four approaches to identify the “Middle-Range” leadership. It could encompass “highly respected” individuals who are in positions of power in the education, business, health and agricultural sectors (Ibid, p.42). These leaders could also be identified among people who are prominent within “primary networks of groups and institutions” (Ibid). These leaders could range from being the head of a prominent NGO or a prominent priest of a region. The idea is that these leaders are prominent within a certain geographical limit which is within the conflict zone. The third approach is to identify middle range leaders from within the “identity groups in conflict” (Ibid). These middle level leaders could be leaders from a minority community or who hold prominence in a certain geographical region and are well known outside it also. Finally, the leaders could also be individuals from within the conflict region who is well respected everywhere. Lederach gives the example of a “Nobel Laureate” as such a person (Ibid). Middle range leaders are thus people who are “connected to both the top and grassroots levels” (Ibid, p.43). In other words, they are important enough to be well connected with people in positions of power but at the same time are rooted in the context and well connected with the

masses. They are not driven by political and power motivations. These middle level leaders usually have connections with their counterparts on the other side of conflict situations by virtue of their work connections. They are not constantly in the public eye and hence enjoy a “greater flexibility of movement and action” (Ibid, p.43). This well-connectedness makes the middle level leaders great assets in conflict situations.

The middle-range approaches to peacebuilding can be roughly put into three categories: “problem-solving workshops; conflict resolution training; and the development of peace commissions” (Ibid, p.46). Variously called as “interactive problem-solving or third-party consultation” the problem solving workshop approach aims at getting representatives from both sides of conflict together for a “collaborative analysis” of the problems (Ibid). The participants in the process are individuals, who are part of the conflict situation; are in close proximity to “key decision makers” and at the same time are able to influence public opinion (Ibid, p.47). The workshops also provide spaces for interaction between parties who would otherwise never have got a chance to interact. The aim is to provide “politically safe space for floating and testing ideas, which may or may not prove useful back in real-life settings” (Ibid). The third part involvement provides a buffer between the conflicting parties which helps facilitate the interaction process. The conflict training approach is aimed at building awareness about conflict and to train people to deal with conflict. Training workshops are “internally rather than externally oriented” (Ibid). The aim is to develop the skill of participants to deal with conflict. The middle level actors are again best suited for such training exercises because of their already existing knowledge of the situation and their close proximity to decision makers and the masses. The setting up of peace commissions within conflict setting is the third peacebuilding approach of middle level actors.

The third level of leadership is at the grassroots. The grassroots represent the masses. In a conflict situation the masses are the most affected and have to engage in a daily struggle for survival. The leadership at this “level operates on a day-to-day basis” (Ibid, p.43). They are people who belong to the immediate community or NGOs which work at the grassroots level. The major work which happens at this level is mostly immediate relief oriented work. The bottom-up approaches to building peace has been aimed at bringing together “contiguous and interdependent” groups together in order to initiate a dialogue between them.

Paffenholz suggests that Lederach helped in resolving the dilemma between “short-term conflict management and long term relationship building, as well as the resolution of the underlying causes of conflict through this multi-level approach to peacebuilding” (2011, p.54). The conflict transformation school thus brings to focus the local actors. Through the conflict transformation school, civil society and local actors take center stage in peacebuilding for the first time.

In recent times an *alternative approach* to peacebuilding has also emerged. This school advocates “discourse analysis” as a method to peacebuilding. The alternative approach school believes that peacebuilding has become “self-referential” and the process of peacebuilding has become a project to status-quo maintain (Paffenholz,2011,p.55). This school of thought proposes to “focus on ordinary people, oppressed voices, the analysis of power structures and an assessment based on realities instead of normative assumptions” (Ibid, p.56).

The above discussion makes it clear that with the changing notions of peacebuilding the approaches to it have also undergone changes. The focus has shifted from bringing an end to violence and subsequently setting up of democratic institutions to a more sustained process of peacebuilding. With this change, approaches to peacebuilding have also shifted from conflict management to conflict transformation and a focus on the discourses of conflict. Understanding the root causes of violence rather than establishing peace through coercion have become the focus of peacebuilding. With this change in approaches to peacebuilding increasingly civil society and civil society organizations have become an important part of the peacebuilding process. Bottom-up methods of peacebuilding and focus on middle-range actors have led to an increased emphasis on understanding the role of civil society in peacebuilding. This next section tries to understand some of the issues involved in civil society’s engagement in the peace processes.

### **Civil Society and Conflict Amelioration**

In the second half of the twentieth century following political upheavals in many third world states and Eastern European countries concepts of security and peace building underwent a sea change. Security was no longer military-centric. Concepts such as identity politics, environmental security and human security made way into the discourse of conflict and conflict

resolution. Peace building was no longer about coercion but about conflict resolution. States were no longer the only stake holders in conflict and hence conflict resolution became multidimensional involving various actors at various levels. Bottom-up attempts of conflict resolution gained importance as grass-root level mobilization was considered effective in conflict resolution. In this context civil society as a domain for self-expression and to express one's opinion about the state gained importance. Civil society actors became an integral part of the process of peace-building in various parts of the world.

The origins of the concept of civil society can be traced back to western political theory of "liberalism" and especially to the works of John Locke and Montesquieu (Elliott, 2003, p.5)<sup>3</sup>. Two different conceptions of civil society emerge from the works of these two philosophers based on the idea that there was a need to "limit the potential for despotism of an absolute state" (Ibid). John Locke while conceptualizing the social contract, imagines the state of nature to be one where human beings live in harmony respecting the rights of others. The need for law and common government is felt to protect this peaceful existence "against trouble makers jeopardizing life and property" (Ibid). The government thus formed is to remain accountable to the people it serves and can also be overthrown depending on the collective will of the people. Carolyn Elliott suggests that it is from this conceptualization of the government that idea of a "self-directing society, a limited state and civil society as a source of resistance to the state" emerges (Ibid).The other line of thought emerges from the writings of Montesquieu and Tocqueville who suggest that in order to keep the state in check what was needed was "a constitution defined in law and protected by a counterbalancing force of independent bodies" (Ibid). For Tocqueville, this would mean voluntary citizen's associations which would serve the dual purpose of "life in society outside the political structure" as well as "dispersing power and providing a basis for representation of social diversity" thus making these organizations an important part of the political system (Ibid, p.6). Elliott suggests that the ideas of a "self-regulating" civil society which can also keep the powers of the state under check are present in both these formulations, albeit in varying degrees (Ibid).

Significant additions were made to this understanding the works of Hegel, Habermas. Marx and Gramsci. Hegel sought to broaden the scope of civil society to include "social

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Taylor called this the L and M-streams of concepts of civil society and states that Hegel combined the two in his formulation of the concept of civil society (1990,107-114)

practices distinct from economic life" (Ibid). In Hegel's conceptualization, civil society becomes a domain where people pursue their individual interests and hence civil society could very well become fragmented. To prevent this, Hegel suggests the presence of "organizations, law and an overarching state" (Ibid). The state would ensure that the individuals are able to come together as a community while also ensuring the individual's freedom to pursue individualist goals. Marx and Gramsci were both skeptical of the overarching state. In Marx's understanding the domination of the state together with that of the ruling class would form an "unholy alliance" by protecting the domination of the bourgeois (Ibid). Furthermore, for Marx the civil society was the domain in which production relations as well as social relations were being played out. This he called the base. The superstructure was the political society. Since capitalism was linked to civil society and the superstructure was based on the relations being played out in the civil society, the state then became a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie, incapable of upholding neutral values. Gramsci extended the case of hegemonic domination to include cultural and intellectual organizations which created "non-violent modes of hegemony" (Ibid). However, for Gramsci civil society could also be a domain for "rising social groups" to challenge the domination of the state and the ruling classes (Ibid). Habermas on the other had tries to point out the importance of "communication" in the process of building a community (Ibid, p.7). Hence, he conceptualizes civil society as the platform where individuals come together and are able to debate and discuss issues. Through this process of debate and discussion then, these individuals can formulate "common goals" and also keep checks on the state. Habermas, thus describes the process of public opinion formulation in civil society which he believes can be achieved only through 'reasoned arguments" (Ibid).

‘Civil Society’ as a concept gained prominence in the 1980s in Eastern Europe in the context of the despotic state and dissatisfaction of the people with the state. Neera Chandhoke writes that the intellectual community in Eastern Europe was frustrated by the lack of political and civil liberties, state monopoly over “economic and social transactions”, a state and bureaucratic mechanism which was “obdurate” and “imperious” and left no space for citizen participation or representation (2007,p.609). The only escape was the creation of a “free zone” where ideas could be expressed and networks built without any fear (Ibid). Chandhoke suggests that “Eastern Europeans called this free zone, peopled by social associations, self-help and self-management organizations, and characterized by mutual solidarity, 'civil society'” (Ibid, p.610).

Elliott suggests that soon the "language of civil society was picked up by western intellectuals of various political persuasions" as a means to express their growing unease with "modern society and government" (Elliott,2003,p.2). In different contexts civil society has been used as a means to varied ends. There were free marketers using civil society to argue for the "downsizing of government"; as an opposition to "neo-corporatist arrangements" in Western Europe; as a driving force behind people's movements upholding ideas of "equity, participation and public fairness"; and for the articulation of democratic values and civil rights (Ibid,p.2-3). These various articulations have rendered civil society as stature of "mythic proportions" and there is a need to unpack all this baggage in order to take a critical look at what civil society can and cannot stand for (Ibid). Civil society as a concept cannot be treated as outside the state. The concept originally emerged as a niche within the state structure to express one's political and social views without inhibitions but soon developed into political movements which led to the collapse of many powerful Eastern European states. Chandhoke goes on to say that in the context of Eastern Europe, civil society became the instrument for agitation against a state which denied its people civil liberties and by 1980s had "replaced revolution as the prime locus of passions and imaginations" (Chandhoke,2007, p.611).

Civil society according to Varshney is that which exists between the family and the state. It is "non-state" but not "non-political" (2002, p.4). What Varshney wants to convey is that civil society is relatively free of the influence of the state. However, this civil society engages in politics and political acts. According to Varshney, book clubs, sports clubs, NGOs as well as trade unions and political parties are all part of civil society. This form of association which cuts across boundaries of gender, caste and class has been the most prominent conceptualization of civil society in the present discourse. David Gellner suggests that the concept of civil society is closely associated with the concept of the 'third sector' even though the later term has very different origins. Gellner tells us that the concept of third sector was separately formulated by Amitai Etzioni and Theodore Levitt in the late 1960s. However it is in the 1980s that both terms gained widespread recognition. Gellner suggests that the civil society consists of that which is "in between" (2009, p.4). It is neither part of the state, nor of the market and neither of the private family and kin ship sphere. Civil society, Gellner says includes everything from clubs, movements, non-profit organizations to pressure groups. Because of the specific nature of civil society and its' non-profit character, it is also called the 'Third Sector' (Ibid).

Gellner links the “rediscovery of civil society” and the “conceptualization of third sector” to the “rise of neoliberalism” and the “role back of the welfare state” (Ibid, p.2). Gellner writes that more and more government services were being delegated to non-governmental agencies in the global North. In the global south however these non-governmental agencies were being used to spread “good governance” (Ibid). The non-governmental agencies were expected to deliver better aid and development services. Civil society and NGOs quickly caught the imagination of the world as it was viewed as an efficient way of disseminating services as opposed to the state which was riddled with corruption and was inefficient. Gellner concludes:

The rise of the ‘civil society’ concept was thus over-determine. Civil society was ‘civil’ as opposed to ‘military’ in the Americas (as well as in Bangladesh and Pakistan); it was of the people, not the one-party state, in eastern Europe; it was independent of party bias of office-seeking in Asia; everywhere it was ‘civilized’ in the sense that it stood for public and democratic negotiation of disagreement and rule of law (Gellner, 2009, p.3)

Partha Chatterjee's distinction between "civil" and "political society" adds another layer of complexity to the concept of civil society. Chatterjee formulates civil society as those "institutions of modern associational life" which are based on the principles of "equality, autonomy, freedom of entry and exit, contract, deliberative procedures of decision making, recognized rights and duties of members" and such other important principles (2002, p.172). For him then political society is something which lies between this modern conceptualization of civil society and the state structure. For Chatterjee, civil society is a modern conceptualization, which includes such institutions of "modern associational life" which were established by the nationalist elite in their struggle to achieve freedom from the colonial powers (Ibid, p.174). Civil society for Chatterjee is the incomplete project of Western modernity which was created by the nationalist elite in their efforts to "replicate in its own society the forms as well as substance of Western modernity" (Ibid). Chatterjee believes that the replication process was not unadulterated as the modernization process also went through cultural appropriation. However, civil society was not the only site of "mediation between the population and the state" (Ibid, p.175). This Chatterjee conceptualizes as the "political society" (Ibid, p.176). In the post-colonial period, the state concentrated on welfare activities to reach large sections of the

population. Chatterjee terms the process of channelizing the demands of the population towards the welfare state as "democracy" (Ibid). Chatterjee believes it is the political society which will be able to champion demands of the new social groups and provide a bridge between state and the population rather than the civil society.

However, "civil society" had managed to capture the imagination of scholars and intellectuals. The concept was immediately appropriated in other contexts, especially in third world countries, where governments and bureaucracies were riddled with corruption and accused of turning a blind eye towards its citizens. What was needed then was an alternative to the state – the civil society. Thus, a concept which was to establish a free zone for self expression was converted to a political phenomenon and was pitted against the state. However, Chandhoke proposes that the essential conditions which govern civil society like rule of law are legitimized by the state itself (Chandhoke, 2007, p.609). Hence, to sum up, Chandhoke says that “civil society can give us an alternative both to the state and to the market is Utopian at best and dangerous at worst, for it simply messes up our comprehension of what the sphere is about” (Ibid). However, civil society in itself is of immense importance as it provides a platform for different groups to engage with each other and continue to make the state accountable for its actions.

Oliver P. Richmond suggests that in the present era of “international society and global civil society” the international system has developed from “Westphalia state-system” (states were considered as self-sufficient in handling their security concerns) to “post Westphalian model” (Richmond,2003, p.1). Richmond suggests that in the post-Westphalia system, human security and international conflict have come to involve both private and public actors. In this new system issues of “identity, representation and human security” have become of central importance “displacing” and not “replacing” state hegemony (Ibid). The post-Westphalian model has brought about a change in the concept of state sovereignty and also in the understanding of conflict itself. Increasingly the tendency has been to identify the multiple layers of a conflict and the various actors and factors involved in a conflict. This has in turn resulted in a “multidimensional approach” to conflict resolution (Richmond,2003b, p.1). Indeed, Richmond suggests, in this post-Westphalian context discourses on conflict have shifted their focus from

state sovereignty to human security. It is in this post-Westphalian context that civil society actors and NGOs become important actors in mitigating violence.

Camilla Orjuela, speaking in the context of Sri Lanka suggests that in the era of “multi-track diplomacy” and “bottom-up peace building” civil society participation in the peace process has become indispensable (Orjuela,2008, p.10). The intention is to involve actors at various levels in the peace process so that even though individual effort is not sufficient to achieve peace, “there is a greater chance for the success of the peace process” (Ibid). Orjuela suggests that civil society actors are considered better suited for peace work because of their ability to build grassroots networks; initiate dialogue with different communities at the same time without losing credibility. These actors are “less visible”; “less expensive”; and much more “flexible” and hence are more effective in the peace building process (Ibid).

Grassroots level mobilization of peace has become important in the present context because increasingly it has been felt that peace is not something which can be imposed on a society. The initiative for peace must come from within. Grassroots level mobilization work as a support system for the top level peace initiatives. Orjuela, gives the example of guerrilla groups in Sri Lanka. These groups depended on the local communities for their sustenance. If the local community was not involved in the peace process then their grievances would not be heard and they would keep helping the guerrilla groups. Thus, Orjuela suggests that for “sustainable peace” grassroots involvement in the peace process is very important (Ibid, p.25).

Ifat Moaz while talking in the context of Israel-Palestine peace building efforts in the post- Oslo peace accord period talks about the importance of “transformative dialogue” (2004, p.565). Transformative dialogue is a very effective tool for grassroots mobilization where people from both sides are made to listen to the other side and attempt to understand and empathize with their “emotions, experiences, views and values” (Ibid) in order to understand each other better. Moaz gives the example of “Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information Dialogue Workshop” which brought together youth from both sides in order to help them understand each other better (Ibid). Although the dialogue helped change the attitude of these youths but in the long run could not prevent future violence. However peacebuilding is a continuous process which should be undertaken at various levels and while one individual might not bring about desirable results but put together can help in building sustainable peace. In a similar manner

Cecile Mouly (2013) talks about the peace commissions set up in Nicaragua which helped in a bottom-up peace building process. Grassroots level peace building was also affectively used in other conflict zones such as Colombia, Sri Lanka and Karamojong cluster in the Horn of Africa. In Columbia, grassroots "peace communities" came together for a non-violent resistance to violence by refusing to carry arms (Alther, 2006, p.280). These peace communities were helped by various international and local NGOs as well as religious groups. In the Karamojong cluster, low intensity protracted violence was sought to be combated through engaging local communities in a "participatory" model of peace building similar to that used in the development programs (Frank, 2002, p.69). Peacebuilding workshops and camps in Sri Lanka focused towards bringing together children and young adults of warring communities together in order to evoke a sense of "empathy" (Malhotra and Liyanage, 2005, p.909)

Apart from grassroots mobilization civil society can fulfill other functions in a conflict zone. Orjuela points out that civil society actors can work towards prevention of conflict. Orjuela suggests that civil society actors can prevent violent confrontations by promoting dialogue between communities, raising voices against gross human rights violations, creating public opinion to raise voices against state atrocities. Also another important instrument in the hands of civil society is to reach out to the outside world in the event of human rights violation and state repression. In times of conflict, peace actors are involved in humanitarian aid providing relief work. At the same time civil society actors make effort to create lines of communication between "civilians of different groups as well as between civilians and armed groups" (Orjuela,2008, p.35). Orjuela points out that at the same time civil society actors also work towards "non-violent conflict resolution" (Ibid, p.36). Spread of information and creating pressure on political and military leaders to resolve conflict can be achieved by the civil society. Orjuela talks of the "boomerang effect" where in civil society actors can use international contacts to "influence other states and international organizations, which in turn can put pressure on the national actors" (Ibid, p.37).

Civil society organizations can also be part of the "disarmament and demobilization" process making sure that cease fire is maintained (Barnes,1998, p.315). In the case of Mozambique, NGOs were involved in the process of "collection, storage and destruction" of weapons and "resettlement of demobilized soldiers" (Ibid). The NGOs here were also involved in

mine clearance. NGOs here partnered with UN peace keeping mission in order to aid humanitarian efforts. However, the nature of the conflict made meaningful intervention often difficult to achieve. In the post-war phase the work becomes difficult because now the task is to prevent violence and rebuild the relations which have been devastated by conflict. This is a very difficult task as the mutual distrust and trauma as a result of the conflict does not disappear even after the conflict. The process of rebuilding these relations is long drawn and slow. Civil society actors help in this process by creating “space for mourning and remembrance in order to hinder the distress of individuals and groups from being used as a destructive political force” (Ibid, p.41).

Civil society participation then becomes very important in sustaining peace processes. Not only are civil society actors instrumental in network building at the grass root level they also bring together various sections of the society to ensure that no group is marginalized. This in turn ensures long lasting peace. If everyone’s voice is heard and grievances addressed peace will be more sustainable. Moaz suggests that in the Israel-Palestine context peace efforts lasted even after the break down of the Oslo peace process because the organizations and projects which survived had a equal Israeli Jewish-Palestinian representation in them. The “high degree of equality and symmetry” (2004,p.569) is also manifested in the organizational structure of these organizations, the geographical location of the peace processes and the language of interaction which all contribute to the sustenance of the peace building efforts.

Civil society comes with its own set of problems of which negotiating identities is the most crucial one. The tendency to homogenize in order to create a collective identity is very strong in peace building attempts. However, the creation of collective identities can also lead to consolidation of the self/other identities and this could lead to fresh sets of marginalization and domination. What is important is that peace processes should be accommodative of multiple strands of identity which will not lead to the recreation structures of dominance in another context. The “plural nature” nature of civil society also makes it vulnerable to evils within it. Not all organizations and associations within civil society can be expected to democratic. Chandhoke suggests that civil society hence has to be “janus-faced” – not only monitoring the state but all keeping a watchful eye over its own members (Chandhoke, 2009, p.100). Chandhoke suggests that undemocratic organizations which exist with the civil society need to be “engaged with,

countered, and even neutralized by groups committed to democracy” (Ibid). Civil society will be able to realize its own goals when it is able to engage with such undemocratic elements; can be prudent enough to use tolerance and intolerance as and when necessary; be able to engage politically; interact with others and is strong enough to battle both “undemocratic states, and undemocratic groups within the sphere (Ibid). Elliott (2003) concludes civil society organizations which concern themselves with various aspects of civil and political liberties can effectively monitor the fair functioning of the government in this respect. Civil society also provides a platform to its citizens to "solve problems locally, explore and change identities, and adapt to contingencies" (Elliott, 2003, p.39). Finally, civil society can become a space for informed debate and discussions and formation of a public opinion pertaining to the "values and goals of governance" (Ibid).

Notwithstanding the criticisms leveled against civil society’s work in peacebuilding what becomes amply clear from the above discussion is that civil society’s involvement in peace work becomes important because of its ability to bridge gaps between antagonistic parties and help resolve conflicts peacefully. Important factor here is to note the civil society’s ability to create spaces for inter-community dialogue. When the civil society, with all its preconditions, can perform its functions to the fullest it can play an active role in maintain peace and contribute to the process of peacebuilding. It will therefore be interesting to understand the role civil society could possibly play in a country like India, where violence is intermittent and antagonism between Hindus and Muslims comes up every now and then. An overview of the communal situation in India will help in this understanding.

### **The Indian Context**

In India communal violence had been plaguing the societal structure since before independence. In the post independence era rise of communal politics and increased incidents of communal violence in the 1980s, has been associated with the slow decline in the power of the Congress party and the BJP's bid to fill the vacuum created by this failure in the Congress structure. Asghar Ali Engineer defines communal violence as the "political struggle for power between the elites of two communities" in India (2003,p.336). David Ludden sees the rise of India’s “new communalism” as a “struggle to reconstruct India politically” (1996, p.18). The

demise of the hegemonic Congress party and the void left by it led to the rise of new contestations. Newer forms of struggle also emerged as a result of this crumbling political order. Ludden concludes that the “collapsing political order has created disorderly politics” (Ibid). India's Hindu-Muslim conflict has had deep polarizing effects on the society and has often led to vicious rioting. The “episodic nature” of communal conflict and “Hindu predominance in the country as a whole, has prevented this cleavage from dominating the country’s politics to the point that the vast country of India could be described as a deeply divided society in its own right” (Guelke,2012, p.18). However, a lot scholarship has been dedicated understanding the why, how and who of this particular problem.

Ward Berenschot (2011) identifies six approaches to understanding the underlying causes of communal violence in India. The six approaches are- Primordialist; Ideological; Instrumental; Social-Constructivist; Social-Psychological and Relational Approach. The Primordialist approach suggests that the ethnic identities play a very important role in shaping our views of the world. People sharing common “cultural background (‘us’)” will tend to form a stronger association and would be antagonistic towards those from “different cultural background (‘them’)” (Berenschot,2011, p.22). This approach tends to understand present violence on the basis of past differences and “ancient hatreds” (Ibid, p.23). Berenschot suggests that this approach is flawed because of its over emphasis on “cultural identities”. This overemphasis leads to a complete side-tracking of the fact that identities could also be shaped by “politics or societal structure” (Ibid). The Ideological approach seeks to explain riots as the result of the proliferation of the communal ideology. Communal ideologies have been used to create divisions in society, spread prejudices against minorities and spreading wide spread violence. However what remains unexplained according to Berenschot is the unprecedented “popularity of communalist ideologies” and also how communal differences get translated into the “widespread acceptance of the use of violence” (Ibid, p.26).

The instrumentalist approach suggests that religion is often used by political parties to instigate violence. Both Paul Brass (2003) and Steven Wilkinson (2004) use the instrumentalist approach to explain violence. Paul Brass says that it is not “why” but the “how” of Hindu-Muslim violence which is the more important question in today’s times (Brass,2003, p.16). Brass enumerates three phases in which the production of Hindu-Muslim riots take place –

“Preparation/Rehearsal, Activation/ Enactment, and Explanation /Interpretation” (Ibid). Brass suggests that in places of endemic Hindu-Muslim violence, the "preparation and rehearsal" are "continuous activities" (Ibid). In most cases there is a political cause that the root of the activation of violence. Religion has proved as a very important tool in the antagonizing and polarization process. Mobilizing the masses around the fear of the "other" has thus far proved very effective. In the third phase when an explanation is sought after the incidence of violence, the larger community gets involved. A need to “control the explanation or interpretation of the causes of the violence” (Ibid) is then felt. This stage also involves a lot of “blame displacement” (Ibid). The blame is not only targeted at the people who are actually responsible for the riots but is dispersed among a wider group of people. Even the social scientist or the journalist looking for an explanation of the violence is not spared. The diffusion of blame, according to Brass does not help reach the root cause of violence and in the process helps fostering future incidents of violence (Ibid).

Like Engineer (2003) and Brass (2003), Steven Wilkinson (2004) also believes that it is the political elite who foment violence. Wilkinson analyzes of the role of political competition in the creation of riots in order to reinforce this argument. Both Brass and Wilkinson believe that far from being a spontaneous reaction, riots are generally meticulously planned affairs. Thus, Wilkinson states “far from being relatively spontaneous eruptions of anger” ethnic riots are “often planned by politicians for a clear electoral purpose” (2004,p.1). Wilkinson points out examples from African or East European countries where, in the 1990s, electoral competition often led to ethnic conflicts. In most of these cases the political elite would incite violence for their own political gains. However, Wilkinson (2004) also believed that this was only a partial understanding of a complex situation and insisted that there was to the involvement of the political elite in inciting or stopping from violence from occurring. The simplistic "elite theories of ethnic violence" failed to answer for the variations in the levels of violence within a specific region (Ibid). There might be towns or areas within a state where violence does not breakout while the rest of the state might be broken apart by violent activities. This town-level and state-level variation prompted Wilkinson to launch further investigation into the matter.

Wilkinson proposes that “town-level electoral incentives” and "state-level electoral incentives" are the root cause for the Hindu-Muslim violence in most cases (Ibid, p.4).The

creation of animosity as well as the police and administration's response to any incident of violence will be dependent on the level of electoral incentives at play. In most cases an “anti-minority” stance is taken up by political parties in order to consolidate the majority identity (Ibid, p.4). The resultant, often violent, “counter-mobilization” by the minority community, leads to the polarization of the population into two distinct halves- “the majority ethnic group behind the political party that has the strongest anti-minority identity” and the “counter-mobilized” minority population (Ibid). In a situation like this, when two ethnic groups confront each other violence is the logical outcome.

Wilkinson suggests, that in a situation like this, the more important factor is the strength, capacity and more importantly willingness of the government (which controls the forces of law and order) to bring a swift end to violence or to prolong it leading to more violence and killing (Ibid, p.5). In most cases the violence can be immediately brought under check if the army or the police have been ordered to do so with immediate effect. Wilkinson finds the major reason for different levels of responses to riots in different state in the "level of democratic competition" in the states (Ibid, p.7). He propounds that the more the state government is dependent on minority votes to remain in power, the greater will be the protection given to them in times of violence. If the minorities form an important part of the coalition and can control the formation of governments then also the government will protect the minorities (Ibid). As the number of parties contesting for power increases in a state, the chances of formation of a coalition government also increases. The prospect of minority parties playing a role in the formation of the coalition would also help in securing minorities during incidents of violence. This process of “vote-pooling” determines the attitude of political parties towards minority communities (Ibid).

Wilkinson propounds the concept of the Effective Number of Parties (votes) or ENPV as a measure of party competition in states which helps explain the difference in attitude of governments towards minorities in different states (Ibid, p.7). ENPV puts states into two categories – A with an ENPV of 3.5+ and B with an ENPV of 2-3.5 (Ibid). Again he subdivides Category B into B1 and B2. In the case of B1 the state has a bipolar system but the state government is still highly dependent on the minorities for electoral support. B2 is the worst case scenario where the state has a bipolar system which indicates low levels of party competition and at the same time the government is independent of minority votes in the elections (2004, p.8).

Most India states fall in category A which more than 3 effective number of parties, with the capability to influence electoral outcomes. Wilkinson's theory posits that these states will be more effective in preventing violence against minorities than states where there are lower number of ENPs (Ibid,p.7). Based on this categorization, Wilkinson concludes, in the year 2002, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat were states in category B with a bipolar party system (Ibid). While, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan had governments which were heavily dependent on minority votes, Gujarat (which he puts in category B2) represented the worst case scenario (Ibid,p.8). The state government did little to prevent the riots or to protect the minorities, proving that high levels of electoral competition with the necessary support from minorities do prevent the incidence of violence (Ibid).

The social-constructivist model views social identities as not “unchangeable” (Ibid, p.29). The meaning of what it means to be a Hindu or Muslim can change according to “historical and political development” (Ibid). The idea that religious identities are “social constructs” then can help explain how political speeches are able to help mould ideas about the “other” which can then be used to spread violence (Ibid, p.29-30). The social-psychological approach suggests that it is the need to gratify “various psychological needs” that leads to riots. The urge to establish one’s superiority or to protect the pride of one’s community can be often lead to violence against the other community. The relational approach suggests that the changing pattern of relations between communities is the reason behind Hindu-Muslim violence in India.

Berenschot is of the opinion that the one question which all these approaches fail to answer is why the “followers follow”? To suggest that the masses are “docile followers” who get “easily swayed” by power hungry politicians is not enough of an explanation (2009, p.415). That there is an institutionalized system of riots at work is not a matter of contestation. Even though power hungry politicians use communal hatred to instigate masses for their own political gain what remains unexplained is why the masses react to the instigations. This despite that fact they do not get a share in any of the “incentive” which the politicians gain out of violence (Ibid). Berenschot suggests that it is important to understand “how political leaders can tap into existing fears, hopes and drives of those who actually perpetrate violence” (Ibid). There is a connection between the elite and mass concerns and it is important to understand this connection.

Berenschot suggests that the answer to this question can be found in the working of everyday local political networks which he suggests work like “patronage networks” (Ibid, p.416). Berenschot’s argument is simple: political leaders are able to wield so much of influence over masses because of their ability to provide easy access to state services and resources. Politicians are able to “mediate between state institutions and citizens” (Ibid, p.415). These patronage networks help explain the nexus between political leaders, “*goondas*”, members of Hindu nationalist organizations, police and the masses and these network of connections are brought into action ever so often during heights of communal tension to instigate violence (Ibid).

Berenschot undertook an ethnographic study of localities in Gujarat in order to understand the working of the local political networks and support his argument. Although his is a study which is confined to Gujarat, his findings are not. That, patronage systems can be used to connect with masses and used to build a base which then can be used to perpetrate violence holds true for not only Gujarat but also other places and organizations – Dipankar Gupta’s account of the Shiv Sena’s *shakha* networks or the operation of Shiv Sena women’s wing are examples of patronage networks and their use for violence.

Berenschot suggests that to understand the true nature of these networks it is important to understand their functioning during times of peace. A “relational approach” that is an understanding of the relations between the various actors of this network and how these relations provide “incentive and perceptions” to indulge in violence furthers the understanding of these networks (Ibid,p.421). Firstly, it is the shared motive of making the distribution of state resources a profitable business rather than an irresistible desire to indulge in violence is more often than not the real motivation for indulging in violence. Berenschot concludes that these “networks are in fact versatile patronage networks that provide a livelihood for their members by mediating the interactions between state institutions and citizens”(Ibid). Berenschot points out three very important factors which link everyday networks of state resource negotiation and outburst of communal violence are-

- (1) The networks engaged in the instigation and perpetration of violence are indistinguishable from the networks of actors who cooperate on a daily basis to develop a lucrative access to state resources;
- (2) the authority and influence of local leaders during riots is a product of their capacity to access state resources; and
- (3) the interdependencies

between these different intermediaries creates incentives to contribute to the violence (2009, p.421-22).

The first is the actual creation of the patronage networks which can then be later used to spread violence. The second is the credibility which is established as a result of these patronage networks. While the third is benefits one reaps for participating in violence. Let's start with the first. The nexus between political leaders, local strongmen, party workers and police is dependent on the ability of the political leadership to wield its influence on the bureaucracy. The difficulty of citizens to negotiate the state institutions gives these local networks a chance to thrive. The local political leader "receive a steady stream of local residents" who have come to sought help for anything from water shortage in the area to issuing of a death certificate (Ibid, p.422). This again leads to the proliferation of what Berenschot calls "local intermediaries" who derive their standing in this setup simply because of having access to an important political figure or bureaucrat (Ibid, p.423). The "favours" done in the past give these local intermediaries a bargaining power vis-à-vis the political leadership which help them to "get things done" (Ibid, p.423). These local intermediaries become the link between the citizens and political power in a system which is wrought with corruption and malpractice. The local intermediaries eventually become "neighborhood leaders" who make a living by exploiting the citizens and their inability to negotiate the state institutions (Ibid).

The link between the political leadership, *goondas*, and the police also proliferate out of everyday networks of interaction and a desire to make these everyday interactions profitable for all parties involved. The local strong men and political leaders share kind of a symbiotic relationship. The local strong men need to maintain a close relationship with the politicians in order to carry on their illegal businesses without any hindrance. The political leaders who have some amount of influence over the police can help the *goondas* run their illegal gambling or liquor business without police intervention. The *goondas* in turn can provide financial help needed to run election campaigns along with providing muscle power whenever the occasion calls for it. In a similar fashion political leaders and police officers maintain close relations which are mutually beneficial. Politicians wield influence over the police because of their ability to engineer the transfer of police officials at their will. This threat often dictates police action. The other very important reason for the nexus between politician and police officers is as

Berenschot puts it “good relations pay, literally” (2009, p.424). Various kinds of illegal rent seeking are carried on and the profits stand divided.

The Hindu nationalist organizations like RSS and VHP are a very integral part of the patronage networks. These organizations are an important stepping stone in launching a political career. Many an important political leaders have had the beginnings of their political careers as *pracharaks* for these Hindu nationalist organizations. Here again the same give and take relation is operational where in the membership of these organizations help establish “beneficial connections” with government officials and politicians which can then work as a “career boost” (Ibid, p.426). At the same time these local Hindu nationalist organization members provide the support base for political leaders during election campaigns.

The second aspect of the patronage network system was the credibility aspect. The networks created by means of patronage systems create an image of credibility for the local actors which make it easy to “spread rumors, create tension and instigate violence” (Ibid). To instigate violence it is not only important to spread rumors but have a robust network of volunteers who hold enough credibility in the eyes of masses to believe in the rumors or a certain version of a story. Patronage networks help create that credibility by creating a base out of the people who become dependent on these networks for getting access to state institutions. These dependent masses are more likely to spread rumors and participate in violence when instigated through discussion and speeches. Berenschot suggests that the deep seated animosity against another community easily surfaces when a person in “position of authority seem to condone or legitimize the violence...” (Ibid, p.427).

Thirdly and most importantly each actor has different “motivations” for participating in violence. The motivation of the police force in aiding and abetting violence is quite clear. The police work in close connection with the political leaders in solving local issues on a daily basis. At the same time the politicians hold the power to transfer police officers to what are known as “punishment posting” (Ibid, p.428). Berenschot concludes that the “need of police officers to maintain good relations with elected politicians seriously hampers the capacity of the police to prevent or stop communal violence (Ibid, p.429). The local political workers and members of Hindu nationalist organizations use the times of riots to gain visibility. A reciprocal relationship is maintained with these low level workers by guaranteeing an easy access to state institutions and resources in exchange for their active contribution in creation and execution of riots.

Similarly the cooperation between political leaders and local goons can equally be beneficial for both parties. Participation in violence can be used to improve their “local authority” which helps them strengthen their hold over local bureaucrats and police (Ibid, p.430). Riots are an opportunity to “inspire fear and awe” in the local community which can lead to establishing a position of authority and in the absence of an active police presence can prove quite profitable (Ibid). This network of patronage system and its linkage with the riot system helps render a complete picture of the elaborate mechanism of creation of riots. This analysis of the patronage network also helps in understanding not only *how* the institutionalized riot system functions and the electoral motivations behind the political orchestration of violence but also *why* the followers follow.

Although violence has ebbed since then with sporadic incidents occurring now and then, a study of the communal situation reveals that the Hindu-Muslim relations have been altered by this long history of communal violence. Lack of active violence is not an indicator of communal unity or harmony. Historically deep seated mistrust and anger of Hindus and Muslims have been utilized from time to time by political forces for their own gains. The 1992 and 2002 incidents of violence were turning points in the political and social history of the country. The level of violence and the viciousness with which Muslims, Muslim business and Muslim shops were attacked was unprecedented. Communal violence which was used as a tool of electoral politics resulted in the deepening of cleavages in society. Cities were divided into Hindu and Muslim areas and till date the division persists. Fear of the Muslim "other" and ideas of India being a Hindu *Rashtra* has been given a new life with the coming to power of the BJP government in 2014. Sometimes antagonisms become difficult to contain and this results in sporadic incidents of violence – an example being the recent incidents of violence over the *Bhagyalakshmi* temple in Hyderabad and the Muzaffarnagar violence in Uttar Pradesh. Such antagonism is also the cause of hate speeches and heightened communal tension. In this context an enquiry into the role civil society plays or could play in harmony building becomes important.

### **Civil Society in India**

Civil society is a much debated and criticized concept in the Indian context. D.N. Dhanagare suggests that it is in the “backdrop of declining institutions of democracy and erosion of the legitimacy of the state, the nature of civil society in India has been debated for quite some

time” (2005, p.61). One view of the civil society is one which is “founded on primordial ties if caste, ethnicity, Kinship...” (Ibid) and the civil society gets so caught up in these particularistic ties that they are not able to fulfill its purpose which is to provide a space for “contestations and dialogues” (Ibid). Neera Chandhoke suggests that this imagination of civil society leads to a sort of identity crisis. The failure to “distinguish between counter-civil society movements such as religious fundamentalism” from the more voluntary kind of associations leads to a “collapse” of society into civil society (1995, p.28). Yet other view looks at civil society from the point of view of the “new social movements” which sees civil society as a “non-state or even anti-state” (Ibid) space which gives voices to the concerns of citizens and “create a public sphere for dialogue and consensus which are the hallmarks of civil society” (Dhanagare,2005,p.61).

Civil Society activism in India gained prominence in the light of the increasing “disenchantment” with the government (Mahajan, 1999, p.1193). This “crisis of governability” led to the emergence of “new demand groups” which acted like pressure groups against the government (Chandhoke, 1995, p.28). The emergence of the new social movements in the 1980s to champion the cause of the marginalized, weak and downtrodden came to be seen as the sight of assertion of the “non-state” against the crumbling state power (Ibid, p.29). Civil Society in this sense emerged as a domain of “protest and challenge” against the Indian state and its failure to deliver on its promises. The disillusionment with the state led to a desire to go beyond the state and as a result the civil society emerged as “arena where the marginalized protest and struggle for their essential human and democratic rights” (Mahajan,1999 p.1193).

Gurpreet Mahajan is concerned with the vast array of organizations which came to be considered as part of civil society because of its characteristics of “people centric institutions” fighting against the “elitist state” to “empower the common man” (Ibid). Following this argument of several scholars then, Mahajan suggests, “panchayats, even caste panchayats, voluntary associations and NGOs of all hues and colours are regarded as agencies of civil society that strengthen democracy” (Ibid). This poses a unique problem in the Indian context where “ascriptive identities” and community membership leads to social discrimination. There is a chance that the associational understanding of civil society might lead to the strengthening of such discrimination and “justifies a communitarian ethic that leaves the structures of intra-group ethic intact” (Ibid, p.1194). What is then needed are “open and secular” institutions mediating

between the state and society. These institutions are autonomous form both the state and religious dictates at the same time “open to all categories of citizens” (Ibid, p.1195).

Mihir Shah proposes a typology of civil society action based on the kind of work they concentrate on. Shah comes up with four distinct typologies – Type A- Compassion and Charity; Type B- Developmental NGOs; Type C- Rights based Activism; and Type D- Engaging the state and leveraging the market (2014, p.40). Type A is concerned with the immediate relief measures and does not go into the root causes of suffering or try to address these issues. Type B was born out of the inability of the government to provide for its citizens. By the 1990s the civil society organization activism had made a huge shift from social service oriented work to increasing concentration on “development, governance and accountability” (Chandhoke, 2012, p.43). Development became a huge concern and increasingly foreign funded NGOs started taking up developmental issues. The idea was to hold the state accountable while providing for the citizens. Type C NGOs aim at making the people aware of their constitutional rights. These are the more fundamental in their actions and less tolerant of the state or any compromise with it.

Type D are organizations which believe that “deep engagement with the state in a constructive manner” can bring about change (Shah, 2014,p.40). These NGOs are ready to “partner the state” in “delivery of social goods” (Chandhoke, 2012,p.43). The seventh five year plan (1985-1990) gave official recognition to this partnership. Although Shah is very optimistic about this partnership of State and civil society groups, Chandhoke concludes that this increasing involvement in the service delivery and advocacy led to the “professionalization of civil society agents” (Ibid).The professionalization led to shift in the way civil society functioned in India. The crucial task of civil society to mobilize the masses and create public opinion was increasingly side-lined in this mad run for development. The methods of civil society operation also underwent changes. Increasingly “campaigns rather than social movements, lobbying government officials rather than politicizing citizens, reliance on networks rather than civic activism and a high degree of dependence on the judiciary rather than direct action” became the way civil society functioned in India (Chandhoke, 2012,p.43).

Chandhoke suggests that civil society initiatives are “self-limiting” as none of these initiatives call for a radical restructuring of power relations in the country (2014, p.46). Keeping in mind the experiences of the struggle for Right to Food and Right to Education which

subsequently lead to the MNREGA, the National Food Security Act and the Right to Education Act, Chandhoke suggests that civil society can ensure the enactment of legislation, “they can monitor the administration of these laws, but there is little they can do about deep-rooted flaws in the system” (Ibid, p.45). The implication here is that civil society activism and judicial activism might have led to the creation of legislations but whether these legislations did any actual good to the people is debatable. Not only are there flaws in the implementation procedure, also no attempt is made to review the legislations or create any accountability. The civil society which works within the state mechanism is also ineffective in this regard because addressing these issues requires questioning of the system itself. Chandhoke suggests that the frequent judicial intervention which has been necessary to reach some of the goals set by civil society could lead to its “taming down” (2012, p.44). There is always the risk then that the civil society will fail to question the system and will remain confined to what is “politically permissible” (Ibid). A second problem that comes with the excessive concentration on delivery of services is the civil society organization’s lapse in its primary functions—“creating, fostering, nurturing and reproducing an informed public opinion” which can then be utilized in monitoring the policy making and implementation procedure” (Ibid: 45). The professionalized NGOs with their single minded concentration on service delivery and their partnership with various government agencies in the endeavour to provide better service delivery have moved away from being a space for contesting ideas and ideologies and have rendered the civil society “depoliticized” (Ibid, p.45).

Javeed Alam suggests that “Civil Society as a necessary facilitative presence for the working of democracy has in India either become indifferent to its actual processes or has in certain ways ranged itself against them” (2005, p.358). According to Alam it is only in a small section of “critical intelligentsia active in academics, social movements and other radical activities” that values of civil society survive (Ibid). Alam talks about the “unity of purpose” which informed activities in the public sphere during the freedom struggle (2005, p.359). This helped overcome the differences between the world view of elites and ordinary people. But in the present times this unity of purpose is lost. The elite and the masses are at odds with each other. At the same time the stress on “particularities” is so much that individual communities are pitted against each other which rupture the social fabric further (Ibid).

The “particularities” which Alam talks about has also helped in rise of Hindu nationalism in the recent years. The “politics of inclusion” practiced by the rightist parties have helped them further the majoritarian cause and increase the social divide between Hindus and Muslims(Ibid). Indian society is no stranger to the plague of communal violence. Violence between Hindus and Muslims has been in occurrence since the 1800s with the violence peaking right after partition of India. In independent India also violence between Hindus and Muslims persisted. Communal violence started escalating form the late 1980s and peaked in 2001 with the Godhara riots. India has been identified by various databases mapping conflict as a “Low-Intensity Conflict zone” (Jongman,2003,p.19). The 2001 survey showed that of the Low Intensity Conflicts in Central and South Asia, majority were located in India.<sup>4</sup>

In democratic setups like India, civil society is considered the caretaker of democratic values. Failure to prevent violence – in magnitude and severity that it occurred in Gujarat post-Godhara - is considered indicative of not just a failure of civil society but of “necessary pre-conditions to civil society”. Chandhoke suggests that three necessary conditions are:

First, the consequences of exclusionary identity producing and reproducing processes should have been mediated through processes and transactions outside the borders of civil society. Second, the state should possess rigorous control over the means and deployment of violence. Third, one ethnic identity should not become a state making project, or take over the state (Chandhoke, 2009, p.99).

What Chandhoke seeks to establish is that the differences of identity need to be negotiated through other channels of everyday interaction. If individuals are not able to establish other kinds of “shared identities” beyond their religious affiliations then goal of civil society fails (Chandhoke, 2009, p.101). These channels of interactions could be formed through the work place or shared political struggle. This is what Varshney calls the “associational” forms of civic engagement (2002, p.3). The second precondition suggests that any violence if it is every employed should be done by the state for which the state should have a concrete and viable explanation. The civil society on the other hand can engage in “collective action” through

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<sup>4</sup> The Survey conducted by PIOOM (Interdisciplinary Research Project into the Root Causes of Gross Human Rights Violations, Leiden, the Netherlands) identified Kashmir as a High Intensity Conflict Zone. 7 other states of India were identified as LICs. (Jongman,2003, p.25).

protests and *dharnas* but should not indulge in violence in any form (Chandhoke, 2009, p.102). The third precondition suggests that the state should not discriminate among its citizens based on religious identities. Chandhoke suggests that only when these preconditions are met that civil society can actively prevent violence (Ibid). Civil society can build on already existing relations in society. A state which is actively taking a non-partisan stance also provides a conducive atmosphere for an active civil society.

Varshney suggests that the level of “inter-communal engagement” holds the key to understanding of varying degrees of communal violence among regions (2002, p.3).<sup>5</sup> In other words Varshney suggests that the answer to the very puzzling question of why certain regions are prone to communal violence as opposed to others which are more peaceful, lies in an understanding of the ties of “civic engagement” (Ibid). Varshney makes a distinction between “associational” (book clubs, film clubs, trade unions etc.) and “everyday” (day to day interactions between Hindus and Muslims, participating in each other’s festivals etc.) forms of civic engagement (Ibid). According to Varshney, where such forms of associations are “robust” harmony prevails in society (Ibid). Between the two again it is the associational kind of networks which is able to withstand shocking national level incidents like partition or demolition of the Babri Masjid. The “civic networks” which are formed on the basis of pre-existing relations are able to keep open the channels of communication between the two religious communities (Varshney, 2001, p.375). Civic networks are often temporary and established during times of tension. Varshney observes that these neighborhood level networks consisting of individuals from both communities “policed neighborhoods, killed rumors, provided information to the local administration, and facilitated communication between communities in times of tension” (Ibid). The everyday forms of interaction makes it easier to for the association ties but the associational ties between communities take the interaction between communities beyond the everyday interaction. These associational forms of interaction become even more important in cities where “village like intimacy” is no longer possible (Ibid, p.376).

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<sup>5</sup> A similar study in the context of Nigeria explores the variation in levels of violence within a riot prone area. Jane Krause in her study conducted in the Nigerian city of Jos investigates why certain parts of the city are free of violence even when the rest of the city is highly riot prone. Krause concludes that in socio-economically mixed neighborhoods, the presence of strong civilian leadership, along with a control over the youth of the area and refusal to collaborate with any external armed groups helped in the prevention of violence. Here civilians were actively involved in forming peace networks in times of violence (Krause, 2016, p.7).

Civil Society is thus an important part of the harmony building and maintaining process in India. Civil society organizations have been working in India for a long time towards building communal harmony. The extensive work done by these organizations can be broadly divided into two categories – awareness building and direct intervention. Awareness building involves activities like workshops on peace; training for peace volunteers; talks in schools and colleges; internet campaigns, blogs, newsletters, and pamphlets with materials which are directed at enlightening the people of the communal project at play as well as spreading the message of communal harmony. Direct intervention involves creation of neighborhood peace committees; investigating the causes of violence in places where violence has broken out; providing relief in riot hit areas; fact-finding reports; reports on communal harmony projects; and even taking on the state directly through court battles. What remains to be seen is whether the grassroots initiatives have been able to create any difference as has been the case with many international efforts. Also it is important to understand the shortcomings of the civil society organizations in realizing their goals.

### **Focus of research**

From the above discussion it becomes amply clear that civil society is a highly debated concept. Over the years though, civil society has come to stand for a domain where public opinion can be shaped through informed discussion and a domain which can keep a check on the powers of the state. Civil society can be conceptualized as a domain which is largely autonomous from the state, however not in any way outside the state and for the most part political. Civil society has also been described as site where people "associate across ties of kinship aside from the market, and independent of the state" (Elliott, 2003, p.8). This associational kind of civil society becomes more prominent in the emerging developmental discourse where it is thought that civil society can provide voice to the people and work towards getting people together in solving common problems. Although civil society as a concept has been problematized and criticized, it has emerged as an important component in the peace building process in many war torn areas of the world. In these contexts, where the state machinery has broken down and the people are left with no access to basic facilities, civil society organizations have been able to fulfill certain essential functions which in the long run are able to contribute towards sustainable

peace. In India the society is not deeply divided and neither is the state machinery completely absent. here too, civil society can play a crucial role in fortifying inter-community relations.

Our understanding of the phenomenon of communal violence makes it clear that communal tension between the two largest communities - Hindus and Muslims - are kept alive by various vested interests. Although communal violence has become fewer and farther apart, communal skirmishes keep the communal fire burning. In a lot of communally sensitive cities there are distinct Hindu and Muslim areas. The coming to power of the right wing BJP government at the center in 2014, has lend a new voice to the communal debate. Issues of "love *jihad*", "*ghar wapsi*", "beef ban" have lent to violence and a deep distrust among Hindus and Muslims. Unlike other war situations, here the violence is sporadic in nature, spatially distributed and there still remains a functional state at all times. In this context it becomes interesting to investigate the role of civil society organizations in harmony building in India and how it is different from that of the experiences of such initiatives in other war torn areas of the world. Hence, this thesis enquires into civil society organizations role in grassroots level harmony building in a changed context like India where the state machinery has not broken down and at the same time communal violence and communalism continues threatening to disrupt the social fabric of the country ever so often.

### **Objectives of Research**

Keeping these questions in mind, the research objectives of this thesis are then directed towards understanding the kinds of activities and initiatives civil society organizations take towards harmony building in India. Next we attempt to understand how are these initiatives similar or different from the international examples. How does the context change the scope of the civil society intervention into harmony building. Can bottom-up community based initiatives open up spaces of dialogue which other kinds of initiatives might not be able to. An analysis of the success and short comings of civil society organizations will help us understand the impact civil society organizations can have on harmony building. Finally an attempt will be made to establish a critique of the state from the point of view of civil society organizations in order to map a road ahead. The present study is an attempt to look into the state and civil society initiatives to build communal harmony in India. However the study is not an attempt to gauge the success or failure of the various efforts of fostering communal harmony. Instead this is an

attempt to understand whether civil society and state engagements with communal harmony have been able to create a space for exchange of dialogue between communities. The study also will attempt to understand whether such communal harmony building efforts have been able to contribute in any way to the discourse of religious politics and create a public opinion which would lead to communal harmony.

## Methodology

Keeping these objectives in mind an attempt has been made to understand the functioning of organizations in various communally sensitive areas of the country. The first criterion for choosing the context was a long history of communal violence. Hence, the four cities chosen were Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi. All these four cities have been witness to large scale violence in the past. Over the years as the nature of communal violence has changed these cities have continued to witness smaller incidents of communal flare ups. The political, social and economic histories of these cities make them very interesting case studies as well. The rise of *Hindutva* politics<sup>6</sup> had led to large scale rioting all of the country through the late 80s and early 90s, culminating in the demolition of Babri Masjid in December, 1992. The *Ramjanmabhoomi*<sup>7</sup> movement and the demolition of Babri Masjid led to vicious rioting and left

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<sup>6</sup> *Hindutva* is an extreme form of Hindu Nationalism which sought to create a "*Hindu Rashtra*". Vinayak Damodar Savarkar is credited for "politicizing religion" and pioneering an "extreme, uncompromising and rhetorical form of Hindu nationalism Indian political discourse" (Sharma, 2015, p.147). Savarkar in his seminal work "*Hindutva*" defines what it means to be a "Hindu" and coins the term "*Hindutva*" or "Hinduness" (Ibid, p.185). "Hinduism" on the other hand was a "derivative" of *Hindutva* (Ibid). The ideas of Savarkar became the foundation for the *Hindutva* ideology which right wing forces such as the RSS and its political wing the BJP, have evoked time and again for communal polarization and realizing the goal of a *Hindu Rashtra* - a nation for the Hindus.

<sup>7</sup> The *Ramjanmabhoomi* Movement was a political movement directed towards communal mobilization. The movement was orchestrated by the BJP, the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, during the 1980s which culminated in the destruction of the *Babri Masjid* in December, 1992. The movement sought to bring Hindus together based on the claim that *Babri Masjid*, a sixteenth century mosque, was built at the birthplace of the Hindu god *Rama* and the reclaiming of this would be equal to restoration of Hindu pride. In the run up to the destruction of the mosque, BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani, embarked on a *Rath Yatra* from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh via central India. The *Rath Yatra* was aimed at educating the people about the movement and garner support. Advani's *yatra* led to large scale rioting in many places across the country. This *yatra* was cut short when Advani was arrested in Samasthipur, Bihar. The *kar sevaks* who reached Ayodhya were successful in planting a saffron flag atop the mosque. The entire *yatra* led to severe unrest and police firing on *kar sevaks* in Ayodhya. Although unsuccessful in getting the desired results, the *yatra* brought in great electoral dividends for the BJP. India Today reports that the BJP vote bank increased from 85 in 1989 to 120 in the 1991 general elections (Sahagal,1990-L.K. Advani's rath yatra: Chariot of fire, 2009). In December 1992 a joint rally of the VHP and BJP in Ayodhya, led to the destruction of the Mosque. This resulted in large scale rioting across the country and changed the course of the political history of the country. The politics surrounding the building of the *Mandir* at the sight of the mosque is still one of the talking points of the BJP politics.

communities divided in its wake. However, in each of these cities, the trajectory of these developments were different and informed by local class, caste and party politics. There are regional parties such as Shiv Sena and Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen which were vying for power and in some places the Left and Congress were losing their footing. There are large Hindu and Muslim sections which live in close proximity to each other in each of these cities. There are also distinct Hindu and Muslim pockets which were created after each incidence of violence. Although the concentration here is on the politics of the cities since 1980s, all these cities have a distinct historical past which helped shape their present. Hence, each of these cities provide for the perfect context for the investigation into the role of civil society organizations in communal harmony building. Since context becomes a very important criterion for the questioning here, a substantial amount of secondary literature was also reviewed in establishing the context. Establishing the context through examining the political developments in the four cities was the first step in the investigative process. An understanding of the political situation helped gain a better perspective on the changing nature of the communal situation in the cities. This then helped set the context of investigating the role of civil society organizations in communal harmony building.

Civil society organizations have been working in various capacity in these four cities since before the 1980s. These cities have a long history of civil society activism through trade union movements and in the case of Gujarat the anti-corruption movement. However, as has been pointed out by the 1980s, the stress had shifted to development oriented activities. None of the cities had organizations which were expressly involved in harmony building. With the growing incidents of communal violence and the viciousness of the riots increasing, civil society organizations started concentrating on the need to work on harmony building. While some of the organizations were pre-existing and already working on various developmental issues, some were formed as a response to growing incidents of violence. The eight organizations chosen for the current study are - *Janvikas*, Center for Development (Ahmedabad); Center for the Study of Society and Secularism and All India Secular Forum (Mumbai); Confederation of Voluntary Association and *Apna Watan* (Hyderabad); and *Aman Biradari*, Act Now for Democracy and Harmony (Delhi). Although there are other organizations working in each of the cities these eight were chosen for specific reasons. Each of the eight organizations have been working in the given context for a substantial number of years. Most of these organizations were formed as

response to the violence in 1992 - post the demolition of Babri Masjid, and 2002- post the communal violence in Gujarat. It is only after the 1992 and 2002 incidents of mass violence that these organizations started working towards harmony building. Hence, all these organizations have had sufficient time to devise ways to tackle issues concerning communal violence and harmony building. Some of these have been established as resource organizations, other are community based organizations working with grassroots communities, to devise strategies of harmony building from the grassroots level. There are organizations which were established by a charismatic social activist or a group of social activists who dedicated to the case of harmony building. This charismatic leadership is probably the driving force behind this organization. In other cases experiencing violence themselves have prompted people to work towards harmony building. In some cases the organization is oriented towards harmony building through developmental activities and in others they are oriented towards research and resource building. Hence, these eight organizations cover a wide variety of approaches and orientations towards civil society peacebuilding functions. A comparative analysis of the activities, initiatives and functions would help us achieve a more rounded understanding of civil society intervention in harmony building in India.

In order to get a clear understanding of the functioning of the civil society organizations a detailed look into the various activities and initiatives was necessary. Hence, the first investigation into the organizations was based on the various kinds of activities they take up as part of harmony building efforts. In the second stage, open ended, unstructured interviews with organizational heads, heads of the harmony building programs, volunteers and field activists were undertaken which shed some light into the thought which had gone into the structuring of these programs. The interviews also help shed light on the question of motivating forces behind harmony building work for the organizations as well as individuals. Participant observation through attending training for trainers sessions, public lectures and meetings helped in understanding the social composition, target of the programs and uncover some of the short comings of the organizations. The organizations in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad had employed different strategies than those in Mumbai and Delhi. The organizations in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad were more involved in community based activities. Hence talking to community leaders, attending community programs and trainings were more helpful in forming an understanding of the functions. In Delhi and Mumbai the work was oriented towards context

specific incidents of violence, resource generation and shaping of public opinion. Here, taking into account of the personal experiences of violence, conversations with the heads of organizations and looking through the vast amounts of research and resources developed by these organizations were more helpful in understanding the functioning of organizations here. Various documents collected from the offices of the organizations, their websites and annual reports also help shed light to the varied approaches to the problem of communal violence. Other kinds of materials used were leaflets, pamphlets, books, magazines, articles, press releases, reports, fact findings and training materials published by all these organizations were also studied to get a sense of the work being done. Through the interviews also an attempt was made towards a critique of state action from the point of view of civil society organizations.

## **Chapter Scheme**

The thesis has been divided into 5 chapters apart from the introduction and conclusion. As has been already been discussed, based on the political and communal history and the level of civil society engagement in harmony building, four cities were selected for the current study. The second, third and fourth chapters are dedicated to these four cities. Each chapter has two parts. In the first part we look into the political-social history of the cities mainly stressing on the time period between 1980 to the present.

In Chapter 2, we look into the case of Hyderabad - rise of Majlis and other right wing forces to counter-balance the effects of Majlis. We then try to understand the slow process of communalization of politics in the city and the role various parties and factors played in it. Finally we look at the communal violence in the city and its changing nature. In the second part we look at civil society engagement in communal harmony building in the city. For the purpose of understanding the kinds of activities undertaken by organizations in their efforts towards harmony building, their work has been divided into three phases. Thania Paffenholz, in her analysis of the effectiveness of civil society intervention into peacebuilding, also makes a similar kind of distinction. Paffenholz comes up with two phases - "during armed conflict and after large scale violence comes to an end" in order to understand the effectiveness of civil society peace building (Paffenholz, 2011,p.381). However, keeping in mind the specific context of India where violence is period and spatially distributed, civil society harmony building work has been divided into three phases - times of heightened tension, aftermath of communal violence and times of

relative peace. The activities during each of these phases differ based on the stress point in each of these phases. In times of heightened tension the stress is to get the situation under control and to ensure violence does not breakout. While in the aftermath of violence civil society organizations engage in relief and rehabilitation work. Finally, in times of relative peace, civil society organizations work on awareness building. Each phase therefore involves different set of activities based on these stress areas. Decoding the activities and initiatives phase wise helps form a better understanding of civil society harmony building work.

Chapter three deals with the city of Ahmedabad. Here again the chapter is divided into two parts. The first half talks about the political-social history of the state. The *Nav Nirman* movement, the rise of BJP in the political situation and finally the 2002 riots which changed the city forever are discussed in the first part. This helps us understand the need for civil society harmony building interventions in the city. In the second half again civil society action is sought to be categorized into the three phases. Here civil society became actively involved in harmony building efforts only post 2002. Hence in the initial period after the conflict organizations formed collectives to help the victims of violence. In the first phase therefore, there were two collectives - the Gujarat Harmony Project and *Aman Samudhaya* - which were at the forefront of all relief activities. The two organizations dealt with in this chapter were a part of the collective and later went on to involve themselves deeply in the harmony building efforts in the city.

Chapter four deals with the cities of Mumbai and Delhi. These two metropolises have a host of organizations who work in the field of harmony building. The two cities were chosen to demonstrate the importance of context and how the strategies differ when the organizations have no local grassroots presence. Since the work of the organizations here are context specific, a brief overview is given of specific incidents of violence which led to civil society intervention and involvement in harmony building. Methods of civil society intervention into harmony building also changes with changed context. Since there is not grassroots level presence, organizations rarely can get involved in preventive measures. Most activities take place in the aftermath of violence. Once the initial relief and rehabilitation is taken care of these organizations get involved in rebuilding communities usually with the help of local organizations. Hence, here civil society action can only be divided into two phases - aftermath of violent conflict and times of relative peace.

Chapter five and six are both comparative chapters which try to make sense of civil society action by comparing them to other international experiences as well as with the other organizations being examined here. Thania Paffenholz in her work on civil society peacebuilding comes up with a seven point functional approach to civil society peacebuilding. This categorization is the first systemic effort to understand civil society peacebuilding efforts. The functional approach takes into account the actors involved, the activities involved and the functions these actors perform through those activities. The fifth chapter looks into three international experiences - Nepal, Guatemala and Sri Lanka to establish the importance of context in the performance of the seven functions. Then the chapter looks into the work of civil society organizations in the Indian context. The chapter discusses the varying context of civil society work in India, compares the work with international experiences as well as among each other.

Chapter six attempts to compare the effectiveness of civil society action based on the categorization formulated by Paffenholz again. Here again, Paffenholz's comparison is based on the seven functions of civil society. The categorization attempts to explain how civil society peacebuilding work changes with the changing nature and phases of conflict. The same categorization can be applied to civil society harmony building efforts in India. Here, the chapter will discuss the effectiveness of civil society work in India and how the functions get modified due to the specific nature of violence in India. The chapter also tries to understand the involvement of state, political parties and administration in each function and how that affects civil society intervention in harmony building.

Harmony building is a complex process involving various actors and situational dynamics. The current work attempts to take a closer look at the actors and situations involved, the importance of context and the shortcomings of the work currently being done by civil society organizations, in order to arrive at a systemic understanding of civil society intervention in communal harmony building in India.

# Chapter Two: Hyderabad

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## Introduction

The city of Hyderabad has had a unique history spanning more than 400 years and the political map of the city is reflective of this complex past. Once the Nizam's state, it became victim to vicious rioting in the 1980s and 90s. In the years following that the city has not been witness to any large scale rioting but small skirmishes have taken place every now and then. Ratna Naidu (1990) in her work on the city has suggested that the establishment of "institutionalized communal politics" took place in phases in the city.<sup>8</sup> Many contributing factors led to shaping the politics of the city in a way which opened up a space for communal elements to thrive.

The demise of communist party, Congress's vote bank politics, Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (MIM/Majlis) and its bid to awaken the political consciousness of the Muslims and the attempt of BJP and TDP to establish their roots in the city can all be considered as contributing factors. This chapter will first discuss political and social history of the state to establish the role political parties and social history of the city had to play in the establishment of a riot system. In order to do this an analysis of all the major stake holders becomes important. The Majlis which is predominantly a Muslim party has been traditionally fairing well in the Muslim majority areas. In the 2014 Telangana legislative assembly election also MIM was able to hold on to all the seven seats (in Muslim majority areas) it has been traditionally winning.<sup>9</sup> The other seats were equally distributed among the BJP and TDP. The close quarters at which the Hindus and Muslims have been interacting in the city for generations; the rise of the Razakars and the subsequent police action; the migration of the Muslim elite; the rise of the Hindu middle class; the Gulf migration have all been contributing factors in the complex communal politics of Hyderabad.

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Brass introduces the concept of Institutionalized System of Riots by which he means that the "production" of any communal violence takes places in "phases" and riots in most cases are not as spontaneous as they seem to be (Brass,2003, p.15). He demarcates three phases in the production process- preparation/rehearsal, activation/enactment and explanation/interpretation as has been talked about in the introductory chapter (Ibid).

<sup>9</sup> The MIM was able to win in Malakpet, Nampally, Karwan, Charminar, Chandrayangutta, Yakutpura and Bahadurpura constituencies

Hyderabad was at a point of time witness to frequent rioting. The "walled city" was often under curfew for several days at a time. What is commonly referred to as the "old city" or walled city, has a predominantly Muslim population. These are the underdeveloped parts of the city where people live in "narrow crowded alleys with pockets of Hindus in a few localities" (Ghosh, 1987, p.119). There are pockets where Muslims and certain OBC groups (Lodha, Kapu) and Valmiki (Dalit) community live in close proximity. There is also a substantial presence of "Bhoi, Gowli and Pardi" communities which made this area "prone to violence" at the point of time (Alam,2008,p.201). Javeed Alam also suggests that these communities coexist without any meaningful interaction - "they live a barricaded social existence" (Ibid). Ratna Naidu in her book "Old Cities, New Predicaments" delves into frequent incidence of violence in old city in great details and believes that an "institutionalized communal politics" was responsible for this (Naidu, 1990, p.117).

However, it is imperative here to take a look at the history of the State prior to the police action and figure out if there are contributing factors even in the history of the state. Varshney believes that the communal nature of the city was something it had inherited from its past (1997, p.5). During the rule of the last Nizam, most of the State jobs were held by Muslims although they made up only 10% of the population. Varshney suggests that "State employment was based not on competition but on patronage" (Ibid). The economy was controlled by Muslims and the Hindus were insignificant in the greater scheme of things. The communalization of the city started with the setting up of two rival religious organization, both trying to invoke a sense of unity among its respective religious groups. The Arya Samaj worked towards reviving a sense of pride in the Hindus and reminding them of a lost heritage. The Majlis-e-Ittehad-Ul-Musilimeen was established in 1920s with the purpose of uniting the "various Islamic sects for the preservation of Islam (Ibid). Varshney states that the "proselytization" efforts by both these organizations led to considerable animosity between the Hindu and Muslims, especially the middle class and poorer sections, which led to the first riot in the city in April, 1938 (Ibid). This was followed by several other instances of rioting in the city. In the following years the Hyderabad Congress and Arya Samaj both fought for democratic governance and civil liberties respectively through civil disobedience. The Nizam who wanted to hold on to his power did not take this well. This resulted in a ban on both these organizations. The MIM which was not banned increasingly grew in power and also established a radical wing called the Razakars. The

Nizam had to finally give up his powers with the police action in 1948 and Hyderabad became a part of India. This history of animosity between the communities created a background in which the communalized politics of the city was played out in later years.

According to Naidu in the independent state of Hyderabad, communalization of politics took place in phases. In the first phase the Congress party in order to consolidate their position in the state, used various tactics to woo the minority votes. The Congress was desperate to cut into the vote bank of “hitherto well established Left parties” (Naidu, 1990,p.118). In the years following the dismantling of the Nizam’s government and the inclusion of Hyderabad into the Indian state, the Muslims would vote for the Left parties (Ibid). The Majlis which was banned after the police action lay dormant during this time. The Congress however was desperate and in order to cut into the vote bank of Left parties and played an instrumental role in reviving the Majlis. The government released the Majlis head Kasim Razvi from jail. He was allowed to give speeches freely in Hyderabad which ultimately led to the revival of the Majlis in 1957 (Ibid). In subsequent years the Majlis also benefited from the infighting in Congress. The Congress split into two factions and each of these two factions engaged in “rendering covert support” (Ibid, p.119) to the Majlis in hopes of wooing Muslim votes. In the process the Majlis was able to consolidate its position in the old city. Thus, in the process of wooing the Muslim votes the Congress communalized the nature of politics in the city.

### **Emergence of Jan Sangh and the Consolidation of the Communalization Process**

In the next phase the emergence of the ‘Hindu’ party Jan Sangh as a counter to the Majlis led to further communalization of the politics in the city. Ironically, it is in response to the growing influence of Majlis that the Jan Sangh entered into the political scene of the old city. Naidu suggests that:

the Majlis’ attempts to consolidate the Muslim communal base also laid the foundation for the arousal of the Hindu communal psyche (Naidu, 1990, p.119).

It is in the old city area that the Jan Sangh first fielded one of its candidates. Naidu puts forward that the old city area was a very tactically beneficial ground for the newcomer Jan Sangh (Ibid, p.120). The existence of a Muslim communal Party made sure that consolidating the Hindu votes of the area in favour of a Hindu communal party became easier. The delimitation of

electoral constituencies in 1966 furthered the process of communal polarization. The redrawing of boundaries “gave a more significant role to the Hindus in the electoral politics of the old city” (Ibid). In the 1967 General Elections the Congress, Majlis and Jan Sangh entered into a three way battle. What is interesting to note is that there was a clear division of Hindu and Muslim votes – in areas where Hindu voters were more, Jan Sangh fared well and if the number of Muslim voters were more, the Majlis fared well. The Jan Sangh was able to attract Caste Hindu as well as the traditionally trading castes’ (Vaishya) votes and in places where these populations were high coincided with places where the Jan Sangh fared well in elections. Although the Majlis was able to retain its seat it was the Congress which incurred losses. As a result in both the 1967 and 1972 elections the Jan Sangh managed to secure more votes than the Congress in the old city constituencies (Ibid).

Another important factor which led to further communal polarization of the population in the old city area is the gulf migration of the Muslims. The "oil boom" of the 1970s led to large scale migration to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia (Manger, 2007,p.428). The migration to the Gulf brought about economic prosperity and at the same time exposed migrants to “deeper nuances of Islamic culture” (Naidu, 1990, p.126). On the one hand this led to deeper involvement in cultural activities by Muslims marked by their renovation of mosques and other cultural institutions. At the same time this lure of a better life in a place where the Muslim culture is prospering attracted more and more Muslim migrants from nearby districts. By 1990 there were about 17 hutment colonies which were housing these Muslim migrants (Ibid). All these developments heightened the insecurity among the Hindu population of the neighboring areas.

The growing communal gap is also very visible in the economic structure of the city. Varshney suggests that over the years Hindus and Muslims have engaged in professions very diverse from each other and their “clienteles tend to form along communal lines” (2002, p.180). Both Hindus and Muslims in the city are engaged in the informal sector with the Muslims accounting for about 65-70% of the workforce here (Ibid). The kinds of informal jobs they engage in prevent them from having "stable and significant trader-customer relationships" (Ibid). The clientele and traders associations formed over time is also formed along "communal lines" (Ibid). Hence, Varshney suggest that the everyday interactions get limited within communal lines. Varshney concludes that this lack of economic and social codependence in everyday

relations has increased the divide between these two communities, further communalizing the city (Ibid).

### **Majlis-E-Ittehad-Ul-Muslimeen and Communalization of Politics in Hyderabad**

The Majlis as an organization emerged in 1929 with the sole purpose of uniting the various sects of the Muslim community. Precursor to the Majlis was the Tameer-e-Milat - a cultural organization working towards the unification of Muslim sects as well bringing about reforms in them (Moid, 2008). Moid says that the Majlis was formed to fill the "gap in politics" and give the Muslims in Hyderabad a political voice (Ibid). Scholars like Rasheeduddin Khan and G. Ram Reddy trace four distinct phases in the Majlis's history. The period between 1929 and 1938 was dedicated towards forging a unity among the Muslims of Hyderabad. Reddy suggests that during this time the Majlis's "accent was on religion" (Taylor and Yapp, 1979, p.117). The apolitical nature of the Majlis could be attributed to the precise nature of the feudal social structure of the existing Hyderabad society. Khan points out that till this point the middle and upper caste Muslims enjoying the privileges of the feudal societal order felt no need for a mass political organization (Khan, 1971, p.786). Moreover in the feudal set-up any kind of mass political party would be considered "anti-social and uncultured" (Ibid). Any political activity was considered as "organized blackmail" and went against the hierarchical structure of the feudal societal order (Ibid, p.787). Thereafter the Majlis became a political organization. After the riots of 1938 in which two members of the organization were killed the need was felt "for an organization of their own" (Taylor and Yapp, 1979, p. 118). By 1938 the Majlis had been able to garner support from Muslims belonging to varied social strata. Khan writes:

By 1938, the Majlis had not only attracted (with the exception of the Shias), almost all the smaller Muslim sects like the Mehdavis, the Ahmadia, the Dindars and the Wahabis, and the coherent Muslim business communities of the Maimons, the Bohras and the Khojas, but also members from other professional and social strata of the community — the feudal sections of Jagirdars and Mansabdars, the commercial elite, traders and shopkeepers, the middle-class professionals, lawyers, doctors, academics and practically a representative cross-section of the community. This was reflected in the composition of the 25-Member Action Committee, comprising 8 Ulemas, 3 chiefs of sects, 3 academics, 5 businessmen, 4 lawyers and 2 Government employees (1971, p.787).

This phase lasted right up till 1944 when the para-military wing of the organization was constituted. Known as the “Razakars (literally volunteers, people’s militia)” (Taylor and Yapp, 1979, p.120), this para-military outfit ruled Hyderabad with its tactic of terror and violence. The Razakar's turn towards violence can itself be attributed to the Nizam's bid to suppress the Communists trying to gain grounds in the state (Manger, 2007, p.420). The indiscriminate violence perpetrated by the Razakar's on Hindus who were "suspected to participate in communist terrorist activities, working as informants for the communists, or simply for supporting them" further strained Hindu-Muslim relations in the city (Ibid). This phase ended with the military action in 1948. The Majlis was banned for the next nine years only to be revived in 1957. An understanding of the “reincarnation” of the Majlis in 1957 is important to understand the political scenario of Hyderabad (Alam,1993, p.155). The Majlis was able to prove its “sizeable hold on the Muslim masses” as early as 1960 (Khan, 1971, p.789). In the municipal elections of 1960 the Majlis was able to defeat 17 of the Congress’ 19 Muslim candidates and capturing 19 seats in total (Ibid). The Majlis won the Hyderabad parliamentary seat for the first time in 1984. Although the party had contested in elections from this seat from 1962 onwards, it won for the first time in 1984<sup>10</sup>. However it is interesting to note that the Majlis was able to steadily increase its vote share in all the five elections between 1962 and 1980, with the vote share doubling between 1980 and 1984 (Alam, 1993, p.155). The votes were doubled in favour of the Majlis between the 1984 and 1989 elections with the winning margin changed from 38,000 in 1984 to 139,000 in 1989 (Alam, 1996, p.231). Over the years the Majlis emerged as the sole representative of Muslim interest and became the “focal point of Muslim communal polarization” in the city (Khan, 1971, p.790).

It is interesting to note that the Majlis was revived in the year 1957 by the “ruling class” (Congress government) only to counter the rising influence of the Communist Party of India (Alam, 1993, p.156). The Majlis came to power for the first time in the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation with the help of the Telegu Desam party. Interestingly this period also coincided with a period of relative calm in the communal situation of the city. Asghar Ali Engineer points out that the Majlis was “sought after” by any party which was ruling at the point (1991, p.271).

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<sup>10</sup> The Majlis first entered the Assembly elections in 1962 and won in one of the three seats it contested in. In the 1967 general elections it contested in six seats from the city and won three. In the 1972 elections it won three seats from the twin cities. In the 1978 assembly elections the Majlis contested in five and won three seats all in its strong hold area (Taylor and Yapp 1979, p.128).

The Majlis at this time was slowly building its base among the poor and backward Muslim sections in the old city area. These were mostly migrant Muslims from Karnataka and Maharashtra. Engineer suggests that it is the “feeling in need for security in the new place” which attracts these migrants towards the Majlis (Engineer,1991,p.271). Migrant Telugu speaking population from neighboring villages (mostly Scheduled Caste construction workers from Warangal and Nalgonda districts) started making their way into the old city and disrupting the Majlis’s “vote bank” project (Ibid). At the same time the BJP entered the old city area to consolidate its place among the migrant Telugu-speaking Hindu population. This led to direct confrontation between the Majlis and BJP and heightened tension in the old city area.

### **Politics in the 1970s and 80s: Majlis’ Electoral Success; Changes in its Mobilization Process and Consolidation of the Minority Vote Bank**

It is in the aftermath of the 1979 riots that Majlis was able to consolidate its position among Muslims of Hyderabad. An appeal to the masses by the Majlis for contribution toward relief funds received overwhelming response. The money collected was used to rebuild houses and businesses and even help people start up their own businesses. At a time when the government could do very little to help these riot affected people the Majlis came around and provided the people the necessary sense of belonging. Alam suggests that this step by the Majlis which was politically motivated was “soon to become an important means of political mobilization” (1993, p.157).

The changes which Majlis brought about in its political mobilization during this time were very effective in consolidating its base among the Muslims. One very important strategy was the stress on education. In the 1970s the Majlis won a legal battle and was able to gain back its erstwhile headquarters – Dar-us-Salaam. This property consisting of buildings at the heart of the old city “helped the Majlis to adopt the slogan of competition through knowledge” (Alam, 1996, p. 235). The rent from this place was used to start the Industrial Training Institute in 1976. The Muslim youth who completed their course here were then help travel to outside the country to places like West Asia. Subsequently the Majlis started the Deccan Engineering College (1983) and the Deccan Medical College (1984). These provided the much needed moral boost to the Muslim youth. Alam points out that most of the students in these institutes were from the lower rungs of the community but were able to do amazingly well in these places of education. In the

process the Majlis was able to achieve two things – first, it was able to break the myth that Muslims were “not educationally motivated”(Alam,1996,p.236). Secondly and more importantly a “strong rapport” was developed between the masses and the Majlis leadership (Ibid). The Majlis became a source of confidence for the Muslim masses that had lost all faith in the secular leadership.

Another important step taken by the Majlis to broaden its base was to reach out to the Harijan community. The Harijans in the past have been used by the BJP as foot soldiers in riots. The Majlis sought to change this by “material help and promises of a share in power” to the Harijans (Alam 1993, p.159). In the 1985 election to the Municipal Corporation eight of Majlis’s winning candidates were Harijans. Harijan support to the Majlis led to a significant loss for the BJP and its share in seats. Interestingly, the message which was sought to be delivered to the Harijans was that the “not even the State with its policy of reservations, can give as much to them as the Majlis can, and that the Majlis will never use its strength against the ‘oppressed’” (Ibid).

Scholars like Rasheeduddin Khan and G Ram Reddy have been very dismissive of the Majlis. Writing in the late 1970s, Reddy suggests that the Majlis has a very narrow political base which “is confined to the municipal level” (Taylor and Yapp, 1979, p.133). Reddy is of the opinion that the Majlis thrives in economically backward areas of the old city where it has been able to appeal to the “exclusivist or the fear psychology of the Muslims” (Taylor and Yapp, 1979, p.131). To state that the masses followed the Majlis because it could manipulate the masses by playing on their emotions and passions is too simplistic an understanding and one which Alam is not satisfied with. He believes such a “manipulative hypothesis about politics” gives very little credit to the masses and takes it for granted that any political leadership can “play upon the passions of people, incite them and herd them like sheep into any direction that the leaders wish to take” (1993, p.161). Alam is of the opinion that the Majlis was able to fill a “vacuum” left by the “withdrawal of the State from its expected role as protector and benefactor..” which helped it gain its ground among the masses irrespective of class and community boundaries (Ibid). Alam explains that with the end of the Nizam’s rule and the abolition of the *jagirdari* system, a large portion of the Muslim population were rendered

unemployed<sup>11</sup>. The societal structure of the city of Hyderabad underwent a major change with the police action and the abolition of the *jagirdari* system. Ratna Naidu writes that in the aftermath of these two events a large section of the Muslim elite migrated to Pakistan “in search of newer privileges” (Naidu,1990,p.65). Those who were left behind were dependent on this elite section for their livelihood. The people who were earlier employed with the Nizam’s government now found themselves unemployed and out of sorts in the new structure. Those who were serving the elites and were part of the Nizam's army were left without any employment. In the new democratic structure, those who were formerly employed under the feudal structure "faced the problem of their increasing irrelevance in a modernizing society" (Ibid).

The recently unemployed also were faced with language problem. With Telugu becoming the official language of the state of Andhra Pradesh, the majorly Urdu speaking population found themselves at a complete loss. Urdu, the official language in Nizam’s Hyderabad, was the medium of instruction in higher education. Khan describes Urdu as:

In the lifetime of a generation that has seen the effervescence of Urdu as a glorious vehicle of philosophical thought, of extraordinary imaginative poetry, powerful political literature and religious disputations, and as a consummate medium of higher education in practically all branches of learning, and as a language of law and administration.. (1971,p.885)

With the integration of Hyderabad into India and the creation of the state of Andhra Pradesh, Urdu lost all its prominence. The Government of India chose to ignore Urdu completely. Although Urdu was recognized as one of the national languages it was not given the status of a second regional language. Even in areas with sizeable Muslim population recognizing it as their mother language, Urdu had no official status. This neglect of the language also raised concerns about future employment opportunities among Muslims who were trained in the Urdu language. Khan also suggests that this became a cause of concern for the Muslim population in India as well as in Hyderabad who associated this neglect of the language with “fear of cultural

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<sup>11</sup> Alam cites a survey of street beggars in the city conducted by the Indian Institute of Economy in 1956. The survey suggested that 48% of beggars in the city were Muslims. It also reported that most of these Muslims were previously employed in the “private establishments of the gentry” or were part of the “irregular forces” which were maintained by private landowners. 98% of the employees and peasants on the *sarf-e-khas* (direct estates of the Nizam) were Muslims who were rendered without employment once the *jagirs* were merged with the *diwani* (predominantly Hindu ownership) system (Alam, 1996, p.238).

assimilation” (Ibid). The State’s attitude towards Urdu was interpreted as elaborate scheme of the majority community to attack important cultural foundations of the minority community. Thus the already uncertain Muslims were further pushed to believe in the majority community’s communal ill-will. It is therefore no surprise that the Hindu-Muslim relations kept on deteriorating in the city of Hyderabad.

Naidu suggests that another phenomenon which simultaneously occurred was that poorer Muslims migrated to the area surrounding the Charminar because to them this “represented the only lasting symbol of Muslim culture” (1990,p.66). The inner city (area surrounding Charminar) was thus populated by the poor and economically backward in search of a sense of belonging. The population was mostly unskilled labourers with very less job security. The Indian state did precious little to “rehabilitate the Muslims who were being ruthlessly evicted from the feudal estates, *sarf-e-khas*, the Nizam’s army, and so on..” (Alam, 1996,p.246). Alam suggests that the Majlis’s success in Hyderabad could be attributed to its ability to assume the role of provider and stabilizer for the Muslim masses.

The Hyderabad parliamentary constituency, a Congress stronghold till 1983, was for the first time captured by MIM in the year 1984. It was also the year that Congress lost its control over Andhra Pradesh which was long considered an impregnable Congress citadel. The sudden and unexpected rise of the Telugu Desam Party under the leadership of NT Rama Rao had far reaching effects on the politics in the state of Andhra Pradesh as well as the city of Hyderabad. Since 1984 the Hyderabad parliamentary seat has been defended first by Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi and then by his son Asaduddin Owaisi. Out of the seven parliamentary segments, four (Charminar, Yakutpura, Bahadurpura and Chandrayangutta) are Muslim majority areas. Malakpet and Karwan also have a sizeable Muslim voting population. Goshamahal is the only Hindu majority area (Hyderabad: Owaisi family-led Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party pocket borough since 1984, DNA, April 2014). Up until Salahuddin Owaisi contested in parliamentary election, Hyderabad was a Congress stronghold. The Congress won the elections in 1952, 1957, 1962 and 1971<sup>12</sup>. The decisive moment was when the senior Owaisi contested in the

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<sup>12</sup> In 1952, Ahmed Mohiuddin of Congress bagged the seat defeating Makhdoom Mohiudddin of Progressive Democratic Front. Vinayak Rao of Congress got elected in 1957. GS Melkote of Congress got elected in 1962 defeating Independent candidate V Ramachandra Rao. Melkote again won the seat in 1971 election too. (Hyderabad, Hindustan Time, April 04, 2004).

parliamentary election for the first time in 1984 and defeated the independent candidate K Prabhakar Reddy by 222, 000 votes. Since then Owaisi was constantly challenged by the BJP, TDP and the others. Owaisi however was able to guard his strong hold defeating heavyweights like BJP's Badam Bala Reddy and M Venkaiah Naidu. Owaisi defeated Bala Reddy thrice and Naidu once in 1996 by a margin of 73,273 votes.<sup>13</sup> Jaya Kamalakar suggests that the MIM's success can be attributed to the "ethnic homogenization of municipal election constituencies" (1988, p.946). Even though MIM was able to capture seats in Muslim majority areas, in several other urban pockets the Majlis won when the votes were divided between the Congress (I) and TDP (Khalidi,1993, p.47). Khalidi suggests that the MIM win in 1984 and 1989 could be attributed to well thought out electoral strategies. MIM was able to figure out from the electoral rolls that Muslim electorate comprised approximately 35% of the total votes (Ibid). With the possibility of votes being split between Congress and TDP and the Muslim electorate voting for MIM the chances of their win would be higher. However, there was a need to convince the Muslim voters that their votes would not go waste. The Congress and TDP's inability to field candidates who could appeal to Muslim votes made matters easier for MIM in both 1984 and 1989 (Ibid).

Owaisi was able to create a stable base among the Muslims which was able to hold ground even against the strongest of oppositions. One such opposition can form within the ranks of Majlis itself. Amanullah Khan, a Majlis stalwart from the 1960s posed one of the most vocal oppositions against the leadership of Owaisi. Khan, who had been contesting and winning elections since 1978, broke away from the Majlis in 1993. Khan formed the *Majlis Bachao Tehreek* (MBT) in opposition to the lack of democracy and transparency within the Majlis itself. The MBT contested in elections ever since in opposition to the Majlis but was hardly able to create a dent in Majlis's winning streak. The closest MBT ever came to pose any serious threat to the power of the Majlis was in the 1994 state assembly elections when it was able to cut down Majlis' strength to just one. However in the 1996 general elections the MBT got completely shot down and ever since has not been much of a threat to the Majlis.

Although the Majlis was able to hold its ground in the Old city area, elsewhere in the city other parties were gaining ground. The formation of the Telugu Desam Party in 1983 proved

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<sup>13</sup> All figures are from Hindustan Times article, April 04, 2004.

profitable for the Majlis. The competition now became “four-cornered” (Varshney 1999: 207). While the TDP was able to cut into the Hindu vote share it could not put a dent into the Muslim vote bank. With this division of Hindu votes winning elections became easier for the Majlis. However BJP was gaining ground in other places in the city and won its first assembly seat in 1983. Khalidi observes that the consolidation of Muslim votes could have also led to "counter mobilization and consolidation of Hindu voters" (Khalidi,1993,p.49). However, the BJP's inability to make inroads into the old city during the 1980s elections proves that such a "Hindu backlash" had not taken place in Hyderabad (Ibid). The BJP eventually increased its tally up to two to three seats in assembly elections. It was also able to secure one seat in parliamentary elections between 1991 and 1998. These changes in the political scenario were also indicative of the greater communal polarization of the Hyderabad city – especially the old city area.

### **Change in Leadership and further Consolidation of Majlis' Position in the Old City**

By 2003 the party had managed to have one Member of Parliament, four members in the Andhra assembly, 36 corporators in Hyderabad and more than 75 representatives elected to various municipal bodies in Andhra Pradesh. The Hindu in a 2003 article calls the AIMIM the “foremost representatives of the city’s Muslims” (Holding them Captive, The Hindu, April 27, 2003). The MIM is one such party which has been able to hold its position and consolidate its position with time.

The Majlis' has been able to prove its hold on the electorate through its exceptional electoral performances over the year. Even in the year 2009 when a four party grand alliance (*Mahakutami*) between TRS-TDP-CPI-CPM launched a fierce campaign the Majlis was able to hold its ground. The delimitation of Hyderabad in 2009 helped MIM gain more electoral dividend in the election that followed. The Hyderabad parliamentary segment became an urban constituency after the delimitation exercise. With the heavy concentration of the minority population in urban pockets the MIM was bound to gain from this delimitation exercise. In Hyderabad Asaduddin Owaisi faced stiff competition from Zahid Ali Khan, the TDP candidate and editor of Siasat newspaper. Khan's election campaign sought to bare the flaws in the rule of MIM and was full of promises for "education and development" (Elliott,2012, p.357). Khan who polled 1, 94,196 gave a “spirited fight” but was not able to come close to the 3, 08,061 that Owaisi polled (J.S.Ifthekhar, Assaduddin Owaisi Sitting Pretty, The Hindu, March 20, 2014).

Caroline Elliott suggests that Khan's promises could not hold ground against the "local servicing and muscle power of MIM's grassroots cadres in the urban slums" (Elliott,2012,p.357). The BJP was a distant fourth in the 2009 elections. The Majlis was able to win all the seven Assembly seats in the city from which it had contested elections. The Majlis was also a big winner in the 2009 municipal corporation election. Winning 43 seats, mostly in the old city area, the MIM was able to share power with the Congress which had won 52 seats (Koride Mahesh, Delimitation of GHMC wards may upset political equations, TOI, October 29, 2014).

### **Communal Violence in the City of Hyderabad**

The peculiar nature in which the Majlis gathered speed in the city of Hyderabad (especially in the old city) led to the communalization of political situation in the city. The Hindu party (initially Jan Sangh and later BJP) came up in the city in response to the growing influence of the Majlis. This led to a highly communalized nature of politics in which each party pumped up the communal spirits of the respective communities in order to gain electoral dividends. It should then come as no surprise that communal violence in the city, throughout the 80s, were political in nature. The first instances of communal violence in the city can be traced to 1938. The period between 1938 and 1948 the city witnessed some of the most violent rioting between Hindu and Muslims. The formation of the Majlis' para-military wing – Razakars- led to some grave atrocities on the Hindus. With the Police action of 1948 and the banning of Majlis a period of relative calm was established which was again disturbed in the 1960s. However it is from 1978 that the riots in the city became exceptionally violent.

Ashutosh Varshney suggests that since 1978 an "institutionalized riot system – concerning politicians, criminals, parts of the local administration, and the press - has come to exist" in the city (Varshney,2002,p.173). One of the most prominent example of this institutionalized riot system was the "wrestling schools in that had been turned into institutions of communal violence" (Varshney,1997,p.10). The wrestlers were viewed as "warriors" by the local people and were the protectors and avengers of the people of the neighborhood (Ibid). These wrestlers were also politically connected and often immune to police action. During riots they would stop killing "only when it was clear that they had killed more people than the wrestlers of the other community" (Ibid). The frequency with which riots were occurring in Hyderabad increased since 1978. The most trivial of incidents were enough to spark a communal

conflagration. Varshney (2002) suggests that with the increasing communal turmoil in the city the vote bank of both MIM and BJP got consolidated. The long history of communal violence in the city has been reflective of its troubled history. A complex mix of social, economic, historical and political factors have been able to communalize the city and the political parties have been able to utilize these in a bid to capture the vote bank.

The growing economic affluence of the Muslims in Hyderabad is often cited as one of the most important reasons for growing tensions in the city. Economic competition along communal lines often got translated into communal riots which plagued the city starting from 1979 onward. Alam points out that “open passport policy” adopted by the Janata government after coming to power in 1977 led to the mass migration of Muslims from the city to various West Asian countries (Alam,1993, p.156). This led to a steady inflow of cash and economic affluence of Muslims who had lost everything in aftermath of the incidents of 1948. These “nouveau riche” Muslims sought to assert their new found economic affluence by attempting to take control from the primarily Hindu traders from the Subzi Mandi area. As a result by the 1980s Muslims had gained a strong footing in the Subzi Mandi area with “eight or nine commission agents”; about a “100 cloth shops” and “150 out of 800” other shops (Ibid). This growing affluence among the Muslims led to a heightened tension among the local Hindu business establishments.

However the economic affluence of the Muslims has only been very limited. Engineer suggests that Muslims engaged in trade have been able to achieve some degree of economic prosperity. However the majority of Muslim population has remained confined to the lower income strata. There has been a steady inflow of cash from gulf migration. However, Engineer suggests that the Muslims living in the shadow of the feudal past spend these earnings mostly on “conspicuous consumption” instead of saving or investing (Engineer,1991,p.290).<sup>14</sup> The Muslims have also not been able to pose any serious competition to Hindu trade or industry. Hence, Engineer believes that in the city of Hyderabad communal disturbances have to more to do with political rather than economic factors. Political parties have often been held responsible for communal violence and have also been the most benefited from communal disturbances. Rise

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<sup>14</sup> The 2016 Enquiry Commission Report on the socio-economic and educational standards of Muslims in Telangana, find that although Muslims feel much safer in the state, they remain economically insecure in the State. Muslims in the state engage mostly in casual labour and in the informal sector. 50% of Muslim households still live for under 10,000 rupees a month. The Muslims in the state are at a greater risk of falling back into poverty. (Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Socio-Economic and Educational Conditions of Muslims, 2016, p.104)

of Majlis in the old city area prompted the entry of Janta Dal and then BJP into the election foray. The competition between the two parties has always been fierce in the old city area with the BJP trying to gain in elections by creating communal disturbance and the Majlis retaliating. With the emergence of TDP the electoral contest became even more aggressive. Migrant Hindu and Muslim populations have been used by political parties “as vote banks” and “create communal tensions” (Engineer,1991: 274)

### ***Ganesh Utsav and the Politics of Processions***

A very interesting feature of the attempt at communal polarization is the use of the religious procession to stir religious fervor among the people. The three main religious processions are *Bonalu*, *Ganesh Utsav* and *Muharram*. Although the *Ganesh* rallies were being held in the city for a long time it was turned into a mass specter for political gains. Before 1978 there were only three major *Ganesh* processions in the old city which were confined to particular localities. It is in the year 1978 that the *Ganesh Utsav* started to be played out on a mass scale under the guidance of the then Chief Minister who incidentally was the leader of the Congress party at the time. Engineer remarks that communal riots became “almost an annual feature in Hyderabad” right after the developments surrounding *Ganesh Utsav* (1991,p.271). By 1980 the “*Ganesh Utsav Samiti*” was formed (Naidu,1990,p.129). This committee had participants from the VHP, *Hindu Raksha Samiti* as well as the RSS along with local Hindu business owners. Naidu points out two events which ultimately led to the creation of this *Samiti*. Riots broke out in the city in 1979 when Majlis conducted a “demonstration of strength” to mark their “sympathy and solidarity” against the forcible capture of ‘Kaaba’ in Saudi Arabia (Ibid). The BJP had also won in the parliamentary elections of 1980. These two events put together provided the necessary impetus for the creation of this committee. The *Ganesh Utsav* Committee brought together all the processions under “a single monolithic procession” (Naidu,1990,p.129).Barring 1983 when Telugu Desam Party was in power, ever other Chief Minister addressed the *Ganesh* procession.

Naidu (1991) notes some of the changes which have taken place over the years in the public celebration religious events. The most important change is in the sheer number of *Ganesh* festivals which has spread to every locality. This number has kept on increasing over the years and has been a cause of concern for the administration as well. The festival goes on for ten days

during which time *pandals* with huge idols of *Ganesh* are installed. The *pandal* becomes the center of all festivities. Loud speakers installed in all *pandals* have often become “a convenient instrument for antagonizing the other communities”(Naidu,1991,p.130). The use of loudspeakers by both Hindus and Muslims has been the cause of clashes and disturbances which led to the local administration’s rule of licensing loud speakers. In spite of this, Naidu writes, 300 loudspeakers were confiscated during the 1984 *Ganesh* festival.<sup>15</sup>

The festivities surrounding *Ganesh* immersion had attained massive proportions and the *Bonalu* processions in the city had also started changing, taking a cue from the later. In the years following the consolidation of the *Ganesh* procession *Bonalu* celebrations also became very public. Both *Bonalu* and *Ganesh* immersion processions which were earlier confined to “Hindu” areas now had started moving through Muslim majority areas. The “loud and noisy” processions were problematic because of the anti-Muslim sloganeering which was involved (Ibid). In 1981 a *Bonalu* procession passing through Muslim majority area was disturbed and the following clashes left 30 dead and about 90 injured. By 1983, communal disturbances had become a regular feature during the festival.<sup>16</sup> In September of 1984 the anti-Muslim sentiments of the *Ganesh* procession reached new low when Muslim shops and restaurant were attacked by processionists. An eyewitness in his/her letter to the Economic and Political Weekly while recounting the horror of the *Ganesh* processions states that miscreants pulled out knives from under *Ganesh* idols and stabbed people at random. The account suggests that miscreants came armed with “iron bar fitted with hooks” which were used to force open shop shutters. These shops were then looted or set on fire (Letters to Editor, EPW, October 6, 1984, p.1721-1722). In earlier occasions also *Ganesh* immersion has been used as an excuse to spread violence. Engineer writes that during the immersion procession of 1983 the trucks followed a prescribed route. But after the immersion, the trucks moved away from this route and entered Muslims localities. It was alleged that the trucks carried weapons and *lathis* “hidden under saffron cloths”

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<sup>15</sup> Over the years as the number of festivals increased so has the use of loudspeakers (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Garbage-noise-pollution-to-scale-up-too/articleshow/48994225.cms>). Newspaper reports suggests that the police have come up with various measures to deal with this problem. In 2015, the police guideline for festival organizers stated that only box speakers would be allowed instead of loudspeakers and the operation hours and decibel were also to be kept under the stipulated limit. (<http://indtoday.com/ganesh-festival-in-hyderabad-from-sept-17-police-issue-guidlines-indtoday-com/>)

<sup>16</sup> <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/communal-riots-dampen-ganesh-chaturthi-festival-in-hyderabad-43-people-killed/1/372054.html>

which were then used to attack Muslim houses (Engineer, 1983, p.1690). A certain organized nature of these attacks becomes quite apparent. Numerous such clashes have taken place over the years and there have been instances of Muslim retaliation. Naidu points out that the Majlis came up with the “*Pankha Julus*” in retaliation to the *Ganesh* immersion processions (Ibid). This *Pankha* procession, a little known festival, is conducted three days before the *Ganesh* immersion. Miscreants take advantage of intersection of these religious processions and the already charged up communal temperament to cause disturbance and spark violence. Ghosh finds that during this time the irresponsible reporting by some vernacular newspapers such as “*Rahnumai Dakan, Munsif (Urdu), Milap*” also heightened communal tension as these newspapers published the names and pictures of the victims (Ghosh,1987:124). This kind of irresponsible reporting, Ghosh says incites communal feelings and in this case led to vicious rioting which engulfed the city for days. These processions and the violence surrounding them is, according to Varshney, another indicator of the existence of an institutionalized system of riots in the city (1997,p.10).

### **Changing Nature of Riots in the City**

Although the most vicious riot in the city was the one in 1990, some consider the year 1978 as the turning point in the history of the city. The rape and murder of Rameeza Bi at the hands of the police sparked of a series of protests which then turned into communal rioting. While riots have been part of the history of the Hyderabad state some new trends had emerged by 1990. Alam comments that “revenge, stabbing, small-scale rioting were common place, culminating in the inferno of the winter of 1990” (2008,p.201). Involvement of “land grabbers” “*goondas*” and “rowdies” was very big feature of the 1990 riots (Engineer,1991,p.271). Hyderabad *Ekta* (a voluntary organization) wrote in a letter to the *Economic and Political Weekly* that the land grabbers, many of whom were part of the “parliamentary politics” themselves, thought communal violence was an easy way to evict poor people from their lands (1991,p.2) Engineer writes that the riots of 1990 started because of tension between two competing gangs of land grabbers. A member of the Muslim land grabber’s gang was murdered by Hindus and in retaliation a noted Muslim killer threw a bomb at the people responsible for killing the Muslim gang member in the first place. This was followed by minor incidents of scuffles and tension throughout the year. The killing of a Hindu boy on December 7<sup>th</sup> was the final blow. No sooner than this happened a Hindu mob descended on the area of the boy’s death

and went on a “stabbing spree” and left fifty injured and twenty dead (Engineer,1991,p.272). Since most of those who were attacked happened to be Muslims the “Majlis *Goondas*” retaliated by attacking “poor migrant seasonal construction workers” (Engineer,1991,p.272). The killing and counter killing continued in spite of a curfew being imposed.

Javeed Alam observes that the “score board” nature of riots was giving way to a much more vicious and bloody rioting (1996). In the earlier instances of rioting one could observe small scale killings which stopped once “matching numbers” of the opposite group were killed<sup>17</sup>. In the 1990 riots this was completely changed. Some of the worst affected areas were that of poor Muslim and Hindu settlements where the attack was large scale and left many dead. The damage to Muslim “productive property” was also massive (Ibid). Alam suggests that the systemic manner in which attempts were made to destroy “sources of production of social wealth of Muslim” was a phenomenon unique to the riot of 1990 (Ibid). The third and most alarming new feature of the riot of 1990 was that violence was spreading to newer parts of the city which on earlier occasions had never been affected by rioting.

The violence that followed after the *kar seva* and hoisting of saffron flag at Babri Masjid was also different in the sense that it was not a "spontaneous reaction or outburst as used to be on earlier occasions" (Rao,2000,p.242). A. Prabhakar Rao observes that the *kar seva* at Babri Masjid was widely publicized in the press with photos of the saffron flag on top of the mosque running in several newspapers. This led to the Ram devotees desecrating places of worship in an around the city. What is interesting to note here is that the "killing and stabbing technique" had undergone a change and now two wheelers were being used in such jobs (Ibid). The precession of the killings were also indicative of the involvement of "professional gangs of criminals" which makes one reach the conclusion that the violence were premeditated with help coming in from outside the state (Ibid,p.243). The then government's reluctance to take a strong stand against the violence led to more killings which grew more vicious and violent, something the city had not witnessed in the past.

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<sup>17</sup> The events of 1990 started with tension between two opposing gangs of land grabbers. A group of Muslim land grabbers with alleged ties to the MIM and Congress and Hindu land grabbers were fighting with each other. This resulted in the death of one Salman. Sardar a notorious criminal, then absconding, was captured and killed by police. But before the police did so he threw a bomb at the people responsible for Salman’s murder and two Yadavs were killed. In retaliation then the Yadavs killed four Muslims. In this manner communal tension kept on rising in the city with an eye for an eye kind of communal killings (Engineer, 1991,p.272).

A very interesting change in the past years has been the increasing public specter of Muslim religious celebrations. An editorial in the journal *Economic and Political Weekly* calls this “newfound public assertion of Muslim identity under the cover of religious celebrations” (Editorial, EPW, April 10 2010). Troubled brewed once again in the city in February of 2010; this time over the celebration of *Milad-Un-Nabi*. *Milad-Un-Nabi* which always has been a very private celebration of Muslims was celebrated quite publically and with great fervor in February. This led to disturbances within the old city. Green banners and poster were put up covering “every inch of space” (Ibid). The Hindu organizations saw this as a direct attack and immediately decided to answer this show of force by the Majlis backed Muslim. *Hanuman Jayanti* was celebrated quite publically in March. In the wake of these celebrations the green flags were brought down and replaced with saffron ones. This was followed by some “avoidable tension, battle of words, scuffle and blood-letting” (Correspondent, EPW). The score board tactics was used here also and the both communities engaged in attacking property of the other. While on earlier occasions violence began in the old city and remained confined mostly there, increasingly violence has spread to other areas of the city. In 2010 also the disturbances which started in old city’s Musa Bowli quickly spread to Secunderabad. Hindustan Times Report dating back to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2010, states that mobs had attacked shops and business establishments in Secunderabad while an uneasy calm settled over the old city.

The Congress government’s promise to create the Telangana state further complicated matters for Andhra Pradesh as well as Hyderabad. Incidents of violence in 2010, 2011 and 2012 have been attributed to the regional movement’s desperation to polarize population in order to keep alive the ongoing demand for a separate state. Seemingly petty issues sparked off violence. A closer analysis suggests that uncertainties pertaining to the creation of the Telangana state were at the root of all such incidents of violence. The Congress government’s hesitation to create Telangana as a separate state was a cause of anxiety for the Telangana Rashtriya Samity. The TRS’s political future was dependent on the creation of the new state. Many viewed the riots of 2010 as a way to attract the center’s attention to the Telangana situation. The increasing use of mobile phones to spread fear and panic has been one other added feature of the new age violence. Multiple reports on the 2010 violence have described how cell phones were used by “outsiders” to spread violence. Newspaper reports suggests “outsiders” in masks carrying cell phones were seen during this time. Eye witness account quoted by Times of India and Hindustan

Times suggests that the attackers used cell phones to coordinate attacks<sup>18</sup><sup>19</sup>. The series of violence which broke out were politically motivated and hence it was alleged that political hoodlums orchestrated the attacks.

Multiple fact finding reports have attributed the continuing violence in Hyderabad (between 2010 and 2012) on the politics surrounding the creation of the Telangana state. With the impending general elections in 2014, political parties were scrambling to benefit in whatever ways they could by spreading “disaffection” between Hindus and Muslims (Report of Joint Fact Finding Committee of Civil Society Organizations on the events of 2012)<sup>20</sup>. Reports suggest that the BJP, which was trying to utilize the Telangana movement to gain some ground in the impending elections, activated networks of Hindu organizations which carried on the ground work it. In all three years there were multiple reports on incidents of the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Hindu-*Vahini* activists inciting violence. In April of 2012 violence erupted in Kurmaguda over the painting of a section of a temple wall green (a colour associated with Islam) and the discovery of cow parts on temple premises. In the violence that followed Muslim property and businesses were targeted and burnt down. The police investigation into the matter strangely revealed that the actual miscreants were Hindus. Newspaper reports suggested that the police thought that these miscreants were “mere pawns in the bigger political game” (TOI, April 14, 2012)<sup>21</sup>. Similar incidents had also taken place earlier in 2010 and 2011. Increasingly communal disturbances in the city had become synonymous with political conspiracy where foot soldiers of political parties orchestrated events which ultimately resulted in violent outbursts in the city.

Over the years a rather disturbing development of riots in Hyderabad has been the targeted killing of male Muslim children. Atreyee Sen in her analysis of the rise of child vigilantes in the riot torn old city area of Hyderabad, concurs with Tanika Sarkar and suggests that “around Muslim sexual virility, multiple marriage practices and subsequent Hindu anxieties about the quick reproduction of Muslim male children” have led to this targeted and often

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<sup>18</sup> <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Intel-clueless-on-who-engineered-clashes/articleshow/5740939.cms>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/communal-riots-spread-from-old-hyderabad-to-new/article1-525273.aspx>

<sup>20</sup> <http://kafila.org/2012/04/21/hyderabad-riots/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/Saffron-extremists-desecrated-temple-to-trigger-riots-Cops/articleshow/12657326.cms>

barbaric killing of young Muslim male children (Sen,2012,p.75). These killings were an effort to obliterate a community as a whole. This targeted attack of male children gave rise to an equally scary phenomenon – child vigilantism. After the 2003 riots children in the slum areas of old city formed squads and became more and more criminal in their retaliation against the targeted killings. The children became moral polices who would keep a strict check on Muslim women who were involved with Hindu men. Sen (2012) narrates the accounts of a woman who was stoned and abused by the children squad for having relations with a Hindu man. The children who carried various weapons and arms resorted to violence as means of retribution. Sen (2012) suggests that “multiple experience of alienation” – poverty; lack of upward mobility in an area devoid of economic growth; fears of violence against the self; loss of family members, security and community pride – pushed these children towards an “aggressive child identity politics” which then led to the creation of “micro-cultures of urban violence” (2012,p.72-73). The growing aggressive vigilantism of these child squads made the local administration and police to take notice of them and resulted in the disbandment of the squads.

### **Rise of Hindutva Terrorism: Bomb Blasts in the City; Police and Administration’s Response and Actions**

Hyderabad has been witness to incidents of bomb blasts in the last decade with the most recent one being in 2013. In process of investigation followed by the intelligence agencies there appears to emerge a pattern. An analysis of these investigations reveals almost a scripted routine which is followed after every blast in the city. Shabir Ali in a detailed analysis of the blasts points out that the routine followed every time since 2002 blasts in the city has been the same – right from a Muslim terrorist outfit being blamed for the blasts to rounding up of Muslim youth from the same localities each time; their illegal detention, torture and forced confessions – the patterns are repeated again and again. The usual suspects have been *Laskar-e-Taiba*, Inter Services Intelligence, *Harkat-Ul-Jihad-Al-Islami* and Indian *Mujaheedin*. In all the cases Police has been known to round up young Muslim men from Saidabad, Nizamabad, Yakutpura, Moosarambagh areas which are also incidentally Muslim majority areas. Those taken into custody have been illegally detained for days and their bodies showed tell tale signs of torture. Fact finding committees investigating the 2007 Mecca Masjid blast have all suggested that electric shocks, cigarette burns, bruises and other signs of torture on the bodies of men, rounding

up of men late in the night from their homes and detaining them for two three days have been the common experience of most of the accused. Ali sums up that:

All the people who were rounded up were put through torture for several days. Out of the more than 200 people, most of whom were young men in their mid-20s, a quarter would be freed after 2-3 days, another batch of 60 was freed after 4-5 days, some were detained for 5-7 days, while some for 15 days. Thirty-nine people were finally legally arrested and charge sheets were filed against them (Ali, 2013, p.38).

While the Police had been proactive in their handling of violent riots and defusing situation quickly, their investigation into riots has always been biased. Fact finding reports of 2012 riots in the city indicate this same picture. The Police quickly brought the situation under control during the rioting in 2012. However the Police's inability to capture the miscreants and the prejudiced nature of police action towards Muslims garnered a lot of criticism. The Joint Fact Finding Committee report on the Kurmaguda incident suggests that although the maximum damage was induced to Muslim households most of those arrested were Muslim youth. Cases filed against the Muslim youth in relation to the 2007 blast were based on "confession" and mostly circumstantial evidence which were of questionable authenticity. However most of these cases fell apart in trial because of insufficient evidence. A point to be noted here is the role media had played during this time. Media houses on a daily basis came out with conspiracy theories and alleged location of blast masterminds. Ali writes that "these reports, which were leaked by the police, formed the context in which the combing operations were carried out" (Ali 2013,p.42). The residents of Saidabad, Moosarambag and other such Muslim pockets which have served as hunting ground for the Police combing operations have time and again accused the Police of "communal excesses" (Ibid).

Swami Assemananda's confessions changed the entire scenario. *Hindutva* terror networks now were exposed and terrorism no longer remained exclusively Islamic. Asemanad in his confession accepted responsibility for blasts in Malegaon, Ajmer, *Samjhauta* Express and the Mecca Masjid. *Abhinav Bharati*, an extremist rightist outfit, was also involved in the terror networks. Assemananda's confessions brought relief to the Muslim youth who were still in jail in connection to the blast. Chief Minister Kiran Kumar Reddy, who was facing a vote of confidence in the assembly, declared an unconditional apology and compensation to those who were

affected. However, the investigations to the 2007 blast were educative for more than one reason. For one it exposed the biased nature of police investigation and media reporting. The systemic arrest and torture of Muslim youth exposed a biased administration which linked acts of terrorism to only Islamic outfits. More importantly the incidents that followed exposed the rising networks of Hindutva terrorism in the country.

### **Civil Society involvement in Communal Harmony Building**

Civil Society Organizations working on communal harmony building came up as a response to the growing communalization of the country. Most organizations came up in the aftermath of the riots of 1990 and the Gujarat violence in 2002. In Hyderabad civil society organizations have been working for communal harmony building for a very long time. One of the first organizations to come up in the city was Hyderabad *Ekta*. Hyderabad *Ekta* was formed in the 1980s by a section of academicians and professionals. It worked for preserving social harmony in the city. Since then a number of organizations have been working for peace and harmony in the city. Various organizations such as *Aman Vedika*, Forum for a Better Hyderabad, Help Hyderabad and Human Rights Law Network has been working towards promoting communal harmony. Most of these organizations work on multiple issues and preserving plural values is one of them. For example, *Aman Vedika* is a rights based NGO which works on the Right to Education. *Aman Vedika* believes in a pluralistic society which can be achieved only if justice, peace, equality, secularism and democracy prevail in society. Hence even though their activities do not directly address the issue of social harmony they have participated in various peace initiatives in the city. *Aman Vedika* was in fact one of the core organizers of the multi-organization *Ganesh Utsav* peace initiative in the city. COVA and *Apna Watan* stand out among all these other organizations because of their more direct approach towards communal harmony building and their long engagement with the issues surround social harmony.

The Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) and *Apna Watan* both came up as a response to growing communal tension in the city as well as in the rest of the country. COVA – Confederation of Voluntary Associations – used to previously work out of an office right next to Charminar and have recently shifted to Bandlaguda. Deccan Development Society (DDS) along - predecessor of COVA- became involved in the relief work along with some other NGOs during the riots of 1990-91 in what is known as the old city area of Hyderabad. As has

already been pointed out, the old or walled city area is predominantly Muslim area with a few pockets of Hindu and Dalit settlements. The major work during this time was limited to providing aid and relief to riot victims. As the DDS's involvement with the old city area increased a need to do more than just relief work was felt. Many areas already had local organizations, friendship groups which existed in various localities ultimately got divided along religious or political lines. These local committees lacked resources and had organizational flaws. But their importance lay in the fact that these organizations had the trust of local people and hence were easy access point. COVA was established as an umbrella organization to help these organizations bring about peace and harmony in the old city area. COVA uses local contacts to spread its message of peace and harmony. These local contacts or contact persons are all people who are well known in their localities and have a say in local matters. Some people run organizations which cater to the needs of local people like KARE (Kurmaguda Academy for Relief and Education) in Kurmaguda. Some others got involved in communal harmony because of personal experiences of riots and communal violence. These community based initiatives of harmony building are more concrete as these individuals are aware of the local context and life experiences which they utilize to put forth their point. Most of COVA's work is concentrated towards Muslims living in impoverished conditions. The people working with and for COVA are in most cases Muslim or Valmiki community leaders who themselves are part of these communities. Community leaders could be people who run a mosque in the area, or running a women's self-help group, a women's rights organizations or even a minority rights organization.

Established in the year 2002, *Apna Watan* has been working with the school children and college students. *Apna Watan* is far removed from COVA in terms of functioning. This organization which started as a response to the Gujarat riots, believes that the key to a peaceful and harmonious future lies in molding of young minds. The organization, mostly consisting of senior citizens, works with children from schools all over the city. Debates, talks in other educational institutions and encouraging children to participate in singing and drama competitions are also part of their activity. Their objective is “to bring about perceptual changes among the younger generations, particularly school and college students, and encourage them to live together in a multicultural and multilingual society that is India” (*Apna Watan* pamphlet)

## Community-Based Initiatives

Writing in the context of war torn Sri Lanka, Camilla Orjuela says that there is a "struggle over the definitions and strategies to achieve peace in Sri Lankan society in general as well as in the peace movement" (Orjuela, 2008,p.124). Orjuela suggests that an inclusive definition of peace is important while developing peace strategies as this makes sure that a wide range of ideas and opinions find representation. One of the "often used message" during the Sri Lankan peace movement was "we must live together in peace" (Ibid). Orjuela says that the vagueness of such messages make them inclusive and not offensive for anyone. Although there can be no comparison in the situation in Sri Lanka (a country which was torn by war and where the state machinery had completely broken down) and India (not a deeply divided society where state machinery is still functioning but where the problem of communal violence threatens the social fabric from time to time), one can still draw some parallels between civil society action in these two scenarios. These parallels might not be reflective of similar contexts but help in understanding civil society functioning in the Indian context and perhaps create a broader framework for civil society action in India. Peace work in Sri Lanka had come to include varied activities ranging from "promotion of breast-feeding, prevention of drunkenness and provision of food to orphans, to environmental work and the *bodhi pooja* (offering) to bless Sinhalese soldiers" (Ibid,p.125).

However two broad goals of the peace work could be pinned as a "just and sustainable" end to war and promotion of "inter-ethnic harmony" (Ibid). Similarly in the context of India and in this instance specifically the city of Hyderabad, harmony building work has come to include a wide range of activities. Joint celebration of festivals, theater performances, posters and cultural performances, to providing employment opportunities for youth and campaigns to activate *area sabhas* have all become part of harmony building work in the city. However the underlying theme of all such initiatives is to promote communal harmony in the city and to create spaces for dialogue exchange between Hindus and Muslims of the city. Since a lot of the work being done is concentrated in the lower income localities in Hyderabad, organizations turn to service delivery and development work as entry point into harmony building. Addressing the everyday needs and providing solutions to problems can be an important means of gaining credibility and can be used to work towards harmony building at a later stage. The approach is lightly altered

when the audience of the harmony building activities become different. Seminars, lectures, film screenings, debates, discussions become the mode of spreading awareness and harmony building when the audience is middle class. For the convenience of understanding civil society harmony building work peace initiatives can be broadly divided into three phases. These three phases are determined by the communal situation and the specific need of the hour. These three phases are:

- **Times of Relative Peace** - Activities during this time are aimed at awareness building. The activities undertaken are part of a continuous process which is aimed at changing mindsets and targeting communal behaviour and building peace. Some of the key features include understanding the "other"; identification of the specific needs or problems of target population; stress on developmental issues; and stress on Community building exercises which provide platforms for dialogue creation between communities.
- **Heightened Tension** - Short term initiatives targeted towards controlling violence. Most activities and initiatives during this phase are precautionary measures. The main aim is to dissolve a situation as efficiently and fast as possible so that a communal violence can be prevented. A lot of the work during this phase is advocacy work.
- **Aftermath of a violent outburst** - Initiatives are targeted towards bringing immediate relief to those effected in violence. In the later stages understanding the causes of violence and ensuring the administration's unbiased handling of investigation becomes a priority.

### **Phase 1: Heightened Communal Tension**

The activities and initiatives undertaken at this phase is mostly precautionary in nature. Times of heightened communal tension call for more vigilant communities who can prevent the escalation of violence. The main focus of activities and initiatives is dissolving a situation as efficiently and fast as possible so that a communal violence can be prevented. Orjuela talks about "informal diplomacy and cross-ethnic contacts" in the context of Sri Lanka. Civic peace groups in Sri Lanka had tried brokering peace by "fostering of contacts" between the "main conflict parties" (Orjuela, 2008,p.129). Orjuela calls this "Informal Diplomacy". Just as cross-ethnic contacts became important tools for building peace in Sri Lanka, inter-religious dialogue creation

through informal ties could become an important tool for civil society organizations working towards communal harmony building in India.

### **Initiatives Taken up During Times of Heightened Communal Tension**

The Inter-Faith Forum of COVA takes up joint patrolling of sensitive areas during times of heightened tension. There is a joint patrolling committee which includes relatively well known and influential people from both Hindu and Muslim communities. Joint patrolling is most effective in areas where Hindu and Muslim localities are situated side by side. During times of heightened communal tension these areas become more precarious because miscreants can easily pass from one area to another, all the while fostering trouble between the communities. Joint patrolling ensures that troublemakers are contained and further trouble does not brew. For example, in an interview, Mohammad Ashfaq (a COVA key person) states that his family history makes him influential in his area. The local mosque has been in Mohammad Ashfaq's family for generation and this makes him and his family well respected members of the local community. Mohammad Ashfaq is from the Nasheman Nagar which is adjacent to Sultan Shahi area of old city where Muslims and Valmiki live in close quarters- an area which has been sight of frequent trouble in the past. COVA helped Mohammad Ashfaq get in touch with others like Shyamlal Taank (APVPS) from the neighboring Valmiki community. Ashfaq states that in recent years with COVA's intervention influential people from the two neighboring communities have started keeping joint watch at the borders of the two areas during times of festivities, especially *Bakhri Id* and *Ganesh Chaturthi* when tensions run high (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, April,2013). These people assist the police and help counsel the local youth and deter them from indulging in violence during times of heightened tension. A newspaper report in April 2013 narrates the incidents which took place in the adjacent areas of Sultan Shahi and Nasheman Nagar<sup>22</sup>. The report suggests that two petty incidents took place consecutively in these two adjacent areas which in the past would have flared up and led to a major communal disturbance. However due to the timely intervention of responsible people of both communities these incidents were quickly brought under control and a communal flare up was prevented. The members of these

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/community-elders-play-peacemakers/article3309589.ece>

two communities patrolled neighborhoods in the night and assisted the police in getting the situation under control.

Involving religious leaders in the process of harmony building is another often used method in war torn regions. Religious leaders of communities have a kind of respect among the members of the community which can be effectively utilized to spread the message of peace. During the peace movement in Sri Lanka, in a bid to establish contact between two warring groups two Catholic Bishops were able to convey messages between the LTTE and the government. In the past religious leaders in Hyderabad have also got together to spread the message of peace and tolerance. Immediately after the 2012 riots, COVA brought together religious leaders from various faiths and believes. This group visited three temples and three mosques in the city and interacted with the local population there. The Hindu reports that the group interacted with local people and "congratulated them for preventing a major law and order problem". Members of the group also spoke to the local population about the need to form "peace committees" so that in future "miscreants" would not be able to spread violence in the name of religion (The Hindu, Religious Leaders Appeal for Peace, April 15, 2012)<sup>23</sup>. The report also highlights the efforts of local religious leaders in controlling violence. Religious leaders have the advantage of appealing to the religious sensibilities of people. The chances of people positively responding to their appeals also become higher when one factors in the belief that religious leaders have a greater understanding of religion and religious texts.

Another important phenomenon in the city over the last couple of years has been an effort towards joint celebration of festivals. In the past the city has been witness to vicious riots during some of the most important festivals of the two major communities of the city. Violence has erupted during *Ganesh* emersion processions, *Bonalu* procession and *Milad-Un-Nabi* processions. Some of the most bloody riots have always started surrounding the *Ganesh* emersion processions and the city has always been a site of heightened communal tension during this time of the year. Keeping this in mind COVA, APNA WATAN and several other organizations of the city came together right before the *Ganesh Utsav* in 2013 to strategize and work together with police and administration to help conduct a peaceful celebration of the *Ganesh Utsav*. Fourteen organizations came together about two weeks before *Ganesh Utsav* to

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/religious-leaders-appeal-for-peace/article3317329.ece>

draw up a plan to ensure peaceful celebration of *Ganesh Utsav*. In their very first meeting, participating organizations discussed various issues surrounding the celebration of the *Utsav* (Meeting attended in August, 2013). The very public celebration of *Ganesh Utsav* is identified as a key contributing factor for the communalization of the city and the steady increase of the number of such celebrations has been a cause of concern for many. The participating organization's action plan involved a series of steps towards achieving their goal of peaceful celebration of *Ganesh Utsav*. The first order of business was a joint representation submitted to the commissioner of police seeking permission for conducting peace programs during *Ganesh Utsav*. A list of communally sensitive areas were drawn out, these were the specific areas where sensitization programs were carried on. Pamphlets were distributed at various *pandals* which addressed a range of issues like the need to celebrate festivals in an eco-friendly manner, appeal to participate in festivities irrespective of religious differences and abide by law and order.

COVA's theater group *KOSHISH* performed plays with messages of social harmony and integration at various venues. *KOSHISH* uses these venues to put up plays like "*Kachre wale Ka Tax: Kal Yug ki Kahani*" and "National Integration" which use humor and mime to address grave issues which threaten communal harmony (COVA website). The play was followed by discussion on the importance of communal harmony. The local residents were also made aware of the importance of their active participation in the local area development. COVA reports that 200 peace volunteers assisted the police in their efforts to conduct a peaceful emersion procession. The event was a great success not only because *Ganesh Utsav* managed to remain peaceful in the city but also because the effort resulted in the joining of hands of varied organizations of the city, even if only for a brief period of time. The same initiative was repeated in 2014 as well.

## **Phase 2: Aftermath of a violent outburst**

When violence does break out the foremost concern remains to bring the violence under control swiftly. Organizations working at the community level often attempt to broker peace by initiating dialogues between elders of opposing communities. Organizations also perform the role of a watchdog to make sure innocent people do not face harassment at the hands of the police.

## **Initiatives Undertaken in the aftermath of a Communal Disturbance**

Orjuela suggests that wars create a serious and immediate need for human right relief. In Sri Lanka human rights organizations provided legal aid to people in jail and also "monitored human rights abuses and engaged in education projects about human rights targeted to the military and police" (Orjuela,2008,p.131). Although even during communal disturbance state machinery does not break down completely, civil society organizations have often played the role of a watchdog safeguarding people against state and administration's excesses. There cannot be any comparison between scale of the human rights violation in Sri Lanka and during any communal disturbance in the city. However police and administration's overreach has many a times led to the illegal detentions and tortures. Perhaps the most infamous of such incidents is the Mecca Masjid blast case. Civil society organizations came together and their efforts to uncover the truth led to the freeing of innocent Muslim youth illegally detained and tortured in the wake of the Mecca Masjid blast. The Andhra Pradesh Minority Commission (APMC) has set up an investigation into the wrongful detention of Muslim youth which was headed by advocate L Ravichander. A parallel fact finding committee was set up by *Apna Watan*, *Aman Vedika* and PUCAR-COVA who accompanied Ravichander during the investigation procedure. The civil society organization fact finding committee came out with a report independently. The report was published in the *Apna Watan Vani*. Advocate L Ravichander in an interview said that the report submitted to the APMC was largely ignored (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, August, 2013). Civil society organizations then came together appealed to the National Minority Commission. Ravichander further suggests that it is incessant noise making by civil society groups which forced the NMC to finally take up the recommendations of the report albeit with modifications (Ibid). Although the Muslim youth were freed the police were never held accountable for their excesses. Fact-Finding reports can be important in understanding the causes of violence and uncovering the truth. For example civil society organizations came together and formed a fact finding committee right after the communal disturbance in 2012. Here again civil society organizations came together to conduct an independent enquiry into the violence in 2012 (Ibid). The report had a reconstruction of events along with the role of police and media and recommendations of the fact finding committee. Such reports are not only important to have a detailed understanding of communal disturbances but also can be used to spread awareness about the role of police, administration and media.

### **Phase 3: Times of Relative Peace**

Awareness building which is the main focus of all initiatives during this time. The need to make local communities understand the "other", communal violence and its adverse effects and the need to effectively participate in local governance all form parts of awareness building process. In the context of India where scholars have identified communal violence as an institutionalized system for ever in the making awareness building exercises have to also be continuous to have any long lasting effect.

#### **Initiatives taken during times of relative peace**

Camilla Orjuela while writing about the peace movement in war torn Sri Lanka points out that one essential component of awareness building is also the understand of the other. She documents activities in the "peace activities" which are aimed specifically towards understanding "grievances of the 'other', conflict resolution methods, experiences of peace making in other conflicts and generally about the culture, religion, language of the ethnic 'other'" (Orjuela, 2008p.128). Much of the awareness building activities of civil society organizations working in the India context is also directed towards this understanding the 'other'. For example one of the network organizations of COVA, a small NGO called KARE (Kurmaguda Academy for Relief and Education) is one organization which works by this principle. The KARE foundation, established in 1999, runs an English medium school located close to the Chanchalguda prison. This school caters to both the Hindu and Muslim children of the area. KARE also has a free medical clinic and a vocational training centre. These facilities are availed by both Hindu and Muslim underprivileged population of surrounding areas. Wahid Ansari, one of the founding members of KARE, suggests in a personal interview that the constant contact which was created through the platforms which KARE provided helped bring down the number of communal flare ups in the area (Personal interview, Hyderabad, May,2013). In this low income area mostly populated by uneducated or less educated auto-rikshaw drivers, a school imparting English education and catering to the needs of children was highly valued. The school started with 30 students and by 2013 had a strength of 600. In the initial days KARE organized meetings with children's parents and talked to them about the importance of education and of living together in harmony. The other platforms provided by the free clinic and vocational training center also

provided platforms of interaction between communities which helped overcome the fear of the "other" in the area. Ansari suggests that slowly the surrounding population started understanding the disruptive role of violence and sometimes themselves play active role in pacifying an emerging violent situation (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, May 2013). In 2012, when a communal flare up was attempted by a Hindu political party in the area by throwing cow legs in a temple in the Kurmaguda area, the ensuing communal violence was quickly brought under control by police and local intervention. The difference between this incident and several others in the past is that the violence was quickly contained and never spread to neighboring areas.

In a bid to generate public opinion in favor of peace it is not only important to understand one's own immediate context but also to be able to empathize with other experiences of violence. Organizations in the city have often come forward and condemned violence committed elsewhere in India as well as other parts of the world. Organizations in the city have actively shown their solidarity to victims of terrorist attacks and violence in other parts of the world such as Pakistan, Palestine, Iraq and Syria. COVA along with other organizations in the city organized a "cultural protest" against the genocide in Gaza in August 2014. Posters, cartoons and drawings showing solidarity with the people of Gaza; performances by children and prominent folk artists; speeches were all part of the program which was used to mark anguish and register their support for people in Gaza. COVA was also part of a series of protests organized by a Palestine Solidarity group in Andhra Pradesh. The forum came out with public statements; organized talks to raise awareness about Israel-Palestine issues and action plans to register their protest. COVA's Inter-Faith Forum has also organized protests in the city to condemn attacks on minority communities in Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2013; express solidarity with victims of militant attacks by ISIS and more recently against the terrorist attacks in Pakistan's army school (COVA website). *Apna Watan* initiated a protest meet against state action against two noted journalists and human rights activists in the country. These various interventions by civil society groups are all directed towards the creation of an informed public opinion which is conducive to peace. An understanding of the "grievances" of the other helps create an atmosphere of solidarity which then could contribute a great deal to the peace movement as a whole (Orjuela, 2008,p.128).

Dissemination of information is an important part of awareness building and various forms of print electronic media are used by organizations to spread the word of harmony. Press statements issued by organizations help spread their point of view as well as create a public

opinion conducive to social harmony. For example COVA frequently gives out press statements which are published in local newspapers. Mazhar Hussain, COVA executive director, also frequently writes on communal issues which are published in many leading journals and newspapers. Both COVA and APNA WATAN use mass communication devices, especially email and text messages, to spread word about anything from their upcoming events to awareness about *area sabhas* and violence in the west-Asia. COVA has used pamphlets to spread messages of harmony and awareness about the functioning of COVA. COVA also undertook a large scale campaigning to mobilize the *area sabhas* through pamphlet distribution. The pamphlets sought to educate people about the workings of *area sabhas*. Questions such as "Who constitutes *area sabhas*", "How is a representative chosen", "What is the function of an *area sabha*" and "What are the powers of *area sabhas* and ward committees" was sought to be answered in the pamphlet (Pamphlet on *Area Sabhas*, COVA).

COVA's Peace Alliance Partners program has come out with a series of booklets with varied themes pertaining to communal harmony. *APNA WATAN's* magazine *APNA WATAN VANI* carried reports on the activities of the organization as well as articles on current issues pertaining to communal harmony. Various events and activities organized by these organizations are also regularly covered by local and national newspapers. Research materials are also an important component of opinion creation. One of COVA's most important research has been one in collaboration with *Aman* Trust (A Delhi based Organization) which is a detailed report on the communal violence in the city. The report also provides a history of civil society action for communal harmony building in the city. The comprehensive research proposes possible civil society action to prevent communal violence in the city.

A third component of awareness building is "peace education". Public talks, theater, art and music can all be used to educate people about peace and foster communal integration. COVA and *APNA WATAN* have both organized lectures and public addresses by eminent public figures, social scientists and social activists. *APNA WATAN* had organized talks and lectures and debates themed on communal harmony and national integration in various colleges and other public venues. For example the first "Nirmala Gopalakrishnan Memorial Lecture on Communal Violence: New Faces" organized in 2011 by *APNA WATAN* was held at the Administrative Staff College of India and addressed by Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer<sup>24</sup>. COVA's children's theater group

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<sup>24</sup> Apna Watan News Letter

*KOSHISH* has been performing plays on communal harmony and national integration at various places in the city and most importantly during *Ganesh* festival. *APNA WATAN* also organizes Drama competition once every year for school children from all over the city. Apart from this *APNA WATAN* also holds a poetry and poster competition for school children. The winning posters are then converted into greeting cards and distributed by *APNA WATAN*. Themes for these competitions vary from "Let the people of various religions and regions work together to build peace (2010)" to "Violence is a Dead End, it is a sign of neither courage nor power (2009)".

COVA's Peace Alliance Partners program also conducted "Training for Trainers" (ToT) workshops. These ToT workshops are designed to equip community leaders with tools of spreading awareness. ToT volunteers attend a series of training workshops and then go back to their colonies to spread awareness using the same methods they are taught with, in these workshops. The workshop is divided into several parts. The tools range from tolerance assessment questionnaires to role play and group discussions. The first part of this workshop consists of two questionnaires which are called "Tolerance Barometer - General" and "Tolerance Barometer-Self Assessment".<sup>25</sup> The first Tolerance Barometer presents scenarios ranging from extreme communal bias to situations depicting tolerance for the volunteer to rate from 0 to 100 - 0 being the least tolerant and 100 being the most. An assessment of all the answers to all the scenarios will then reveal a pattern. For example, one such scenario in the questionnaire is:

**Assessment Sheet**

**When shopping:**

- i) A takes cognizance of the community/ caste of the shop owners and prefers to buy from members of his/ her own community/ caste.
- ii) B is generally unconcerned about the community/ caste of the shop owner. But has at times thought of or preferred to make purchase from a shop owned by a member of his / her own community/ caste.
- iii) C never thinks about the community / caste of the shop owner
- iv) D recognises the community/ caste of the shop owner and prefers to buy from the shop of another community member to promote better relations and harmony.

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<sup>25</sup> See Annexure I

The self assessment barometer is directed towards understanding one's own inner biases. The scenarios here are again framed from being extremely communally biased to being tolerant. Here the volunteer is required to choose the situation which depicts their point of view the best. For example:

<b>Self Assessment Sheet</b>		
<b>I. When shopping:</b>		
i)	I take cognizance of the community/ caste of the shop owners and prefer to buy from members of my own community/ caste.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii)	I am generally unconcerned about the community/ caste of the shop owner. But have some times thought of or preferred to make purchase from a shop owned by a member of my own community/ caste.	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii)	I never think about the community/ caste of the shop owner.	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv)	I recognise the community/ caste of the shop owner and prefer to buy from the shop of another community member to promote better relations and harmony.	<input type="checkbox"/>

The next part of the training focuses on educating volunteers on the adult learning tools, the concept of communal violence and a detailed analysis of communal violence and its causes. The adult learning tools is directed towards helping volunteers in their work in the field. Volunteers get to know about the importance of interactive education using tools of role play, group discussions, films and documentaries while educating adults. The adult learning tools help spreading the message easier because of the interactive nature of the methods used which makes it easier to comprehend. Detailed power point presentations help explain the concept of communal violence, types of riots, reasons and factors behind the occurrences of communal conflicts.

Group discussions and role play are the next part of the training process. Both these activities are directed towards creating a better understanding of violence itself. People sharing among themselves their lived experiences of violence can help forge feeling of belonging as well as create empathy among people who have not faced communal violence themselves. Role play also helps understand the point of view of the other. A deconstruction of group discussions and role play helps understand the issues surrounding communal violence and the varied points of view of the participants. The volunteers will be required to hold group discussions and role plays in the communities they choose to work in.

Training for Trainers program equips volunteers with a well rounded understanding of communal violence and arms them with tools which can be used for a more grassroots level approach to harmony building. The ToT volunteers are expected to go into slums and villages and interact with the local communities with the help of the tools provided by the training. The ultimate goal is to create an atmosphere where every individual is equipped enough with these tools to carry the message forward.

### **Development and Democracy work as a means of building communal harmony**

Orjuela suggests that increasingly "development work" has also been recognized as "peace work" (Orjuela, 2008, p.131). Writing in the context of Sri Lanka, Orjuela suggests that the need for a more inclusive nature of development and relief work had been impressed on development workers. This resulted varied efforts at peace building including efforts to "improve the poor conditions in the tea estates"(Ibid,p.32). Harmony building work in Hyderabad also emphasizes on development work. Violence in India has largely been an urban phenomenon and has been known to effect economically backward sections more. Hence it is but natural that a large part of resources are directed towards this section of the society. Civil society organizations believe that unemployment and lack of education are two important factors which make this section of the population more susceptible to acts of violence during communal disturbances. Civil society organizations have been therefore trying to tackle this problem through various kinds of activities and initiatives. While development and democracy work bring stability to society which then brings about social harmony.

COVA's Youth TRAC program is one such initiative. Through this program COVA intends to provide "career counseling and livelihood linkages to youth in collaboration with other NGOs, corporate sector and government institutions" (COVA website and pamphlet). The program helps youth by organizing vocational training, educational funding, diploma courses and such other opportunities. COVA works as an information platform for employment opportunities for the youth of the city. COVA's financial assistance program is directed towards helping petty businessmen and shopkeepers find easy financing for their enterprises. In November 2014, COVA conducted workshops with youth trying to open up their own business. This workshop provided business guidelines and bank loan guidelines to small manufacturing/production and service business owners. COVA under its "Financial Inclusion

Program" for the poor partnered up with two banks to provide micro-financing facilities for petty businessmen (COVA website). By helping small business owners to receive loans at nominal interest rates COVA is encouraging these kinds of business ventures. In the long run this could become the key to addressing unemployment issues and in the process also bringing stability in society (COVA website). COVA also keeps sending out career assistance notifications about various vocational training and free workshops for employment of the youth. Network organizations such as KARE and key persons Shyamlal Taank of the AP Valimiki *Samaj Pragati Sangh* and B. Madhavi who runs the Savitri Bai Phule Women's Welfare Association has also dedicated all their resources towards bringing about development of their local communities. Both KARE and Madhavi run self-help groups for local women. While KARE provides various vocational training for women Madhavi runs a tailoring shop from her home which among other things also makes school uniforms for the local schools. Shyamlal Taank who is a community leader of the Valmikis in Sultan Shahi. Taank uses his influence to spread awareness among the local population and often development, precisely the lack of it becomes the talking point of awareness building (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, May 2013). Making sure the local population knows their rights to basic needs and equipping them with tools of assertion also become very important tools of awareness building.

COVA has also worked towards the financial empowerment of the poor. To this end COVA had been working since 2013 to come up with recommendations which would ensure the genuine financial inclusion of the poor. The pilot project for financial inclusion made presentations to various concerned Government agencies such as Union Ministers, Members of Parliament, bureaucrats, political leaders and policy makers. As a result, COVA came up with a 12 point recommendation out of which 8 were accepted by the Government of India. The plan seeks to help small and petty business owners to get easy access to credit. COVA collaborated with the State Bank of Hyderabad and Syndicate Bank to provide loans to over 500 small and petty business owners between July 2014 and September 2015. The small interest rate and the excellent recovery rate encourage both borrower and lender in the process. This initiative of COVA saw it collaborate with various government agencies as well as other organizations in order to come up with a plan for sustained development and long term benefit of the poor.

Democratic functioning of the state machinery ensures a just and fair government. Certain initiative of civil society organizations have been directed towards ensuring a democratic functioning of the state machinery. COVA has taken keen interest in the activation of area *sabhas* and ward committees. COVA undertook a two month long massive pamphlet campaign to spread awareness about area *sabhas* and ward committees. The pamphlet which were both in English and Telugu explained in details what area *sabhas*<sup>26</sup> and "Ward Committees" meant and the importance of these bodies. The pamphlet also made a list of suggestions for better functioning of the area *sabhas* and ward committees based on a survey conducted by COVA and PUCCAR. COVA also submitted a writ petition in the Andhra Pradesh High Court which resulted in the activation of area *sabha* and ward committee meetings in some areas. The encouragement from COVA also resulted in citizens from other wards submitting petitions to GHMC commissioner demanding activation of area *sabhas* and ward committees in their areas. Area *sabha* and ward committee can play a very big role in improving and democratizing the local grassroots administration. This ultimately gives the citizen a stake in the local government. COVA believes that one important benefit of this kind of citizen assertion will also lead to social harmony. The pamphlet states among other benefits:

Bringing in social harmony across society by creating common platforms for people from diverse religions, castes and linguistic groups etc residing in every locality to come together as citizens to collectively plan and address issues facing them all (COVA Pamphlet).

Apart from this COVA has also undertaken citizen assertion campaigns before GHMC elections. Ahead of the 2016 GHMC elections, COVA got together with some other civil society organizations to campaign for the participation of the citizens in the governance process through their participation in the area *sabhas* and ward committees. The idea behind this was to make the citizens aware that they can be a part of the governance process and empower the people so that they can know and demand their rights. The civil society organizations also approached political parties to ensure that they help fulfill the constitutional mandate and help in the functioning of the area *sabhas*.

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<sup>26</sup> See Annexure II

COVA's active participation in maintaining the democratic process helps it create networks among communities and also ensures that citizens benefit from the smooth functioning of democratic government. Making the people aware of functioning of governments is also a key component of this effort. COVA recently brought out a detailed report on the functioning of the present NDA government.

## **Observations**

Civil Society Organizations like COVA and *Apna Watan* have, for a very long time, been engaging with the problem of communal violence. Since communal violence is a multilayered problem any efforts to combat it also has to be multilayered. The end goal of creating platforms for engagement within communities can only be achieved through a series of targeted programs and a mass movement for peace - which at this stage is at best a distant dream. Since violence is more rampant in economically backward areas of the city a lot of the energy has been invested in addressing this population. Understanding the specific developmental issues of these areas, the organizations have been trying to build a political opinion which will be conducive to social harmony and peace. However to bring about any meaningful communal harmony and social integration these organizations have to aim at changing the mindset of people. This is easier said than done. Mobilizing enough people to participate in harmony building activities is in itself a challenge. The attendance to various meetings and gatherings organized by COVA and *Apna Watan* have been moderate to low. *Apna Watan* member Fatimah Ali Khan in an interview says that mobilizing youth in college campuses is difficult (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, January 2013).

The politicized nature of the youth in colleges make the mobilization process even more complicated. Past events in colleges have had very low attendance which led *Apna Watan* to concentrate their activities in schools. Orjuela suggests that participation in peace activities is heavily influenced by the belief that participation "will make a difference and/or that they will gain something from it" (Orjuela,2008,p.133). The gain could be material or emotional. However without such motivation mobilizing people becomes difficult. Mobilization for activities of COVA usually happens through other local organizations. These smaller organizations are able to mobilize based on their links with the community. Since a lot of these smaller organizations are involved in the daily lives of their communities, it is easier for them to mobilize people.

However the scope of political mobilization is far greater than that of any CSOs mobilizing for peace. Political rallies in the city have been able to mobilize far greater numbers than any civil society organization working for communal harmony. Orjuela suggests that "structures of political patronage" help party mobilization. In most cases people identify with a political party and its agenda because of "strong party identity" and loyalty towards a cause (Orjuela, 2008:135). For example people attending the rallies for a separate state of Telangana were motivated by a strong sense of identity and hopes of a separate state. Such kind of responses for any initiative for harmony building will be difficult to manufacture. Ward Berenschot's concept of "patronage networks" helps explain why political parties hold such influence over the masses. The Majlis in the old city have been able to consolidate their position by catering to the daily needs of the people. Voting patterns in the city are a clear indication of the communalization of the city. The old city has become the citadel of the Owaisi family and Majlis. The party has been able to consolidate the Muslim votes to the extent that the only way a Hindu candidate can get elected in the old city is if it contests elections on an MIM ticket. The local Majlis corporator and municipality board member will be in a much better position to solve everyday problems of the people rather than any organization. The allegiance of the local population is thus much stronger towards a political party. Civil Society Organizations are up against this kind of political indoctrination.

Although Civil Society Organizations have been able to make inroads into communities and establish ties the state has failed to do, a lot is yet to be achieved. An analysis of the work these organizations do bring out some of the lacunae in their work. The organizational structures of CSOs are often not representative in itself. Orjuela suggests that most central figures in the peace movement in Sri Lanka were "part of an elite". These English speaking and educated people had contacts with the powerful which at times made them less representative and removed from their goals of providing voice to the voiceless. The crisis in a war situation is more complex than what a society like India deals with. The representations of people's voices are multiple and more organized. It is true that political parties and pressure groups often tend to lend a voice to the issues of the marginalized. However civil society organizations working at the grass roots to build communal harmony have to be also representative in order to fulfill their goals. Both COVA and *Apna Watan* to an extent fall short in this respect. The members of *Apna Watan* are affluent and belong to what could be called an elite class. They operate from one of

the most affluent areas in the entire city and hence physically far removed from areas which are considered communally sensitive. One could argue that the aims and goals of the organization make these factors non-issue. However the lack of visibility of the organization brings into question the effectiveness with which it can work towards harmony building. On the other hand COVA has been often accused of being an organization which caters to only the needs of Muslims in the city. With the location of the organization being in Charminar- a Muslim majority area- COVA's works for a long time has been directed towards the welfare of the people in the area adjacent to Charminar. This has often been interpreted as COVA's willingness to work only for the Muslims. Such allegations would obviously hamper COVA's goals of being a representative of the voices of the masses. In recent years COVA has taken conscious steps towards defending themselves against such allegations. COVA members and network organizations are constantly reminded to be more inclusive in their activities. E-Mails sent out by COVA often contain a cautionary note making sure the organizations are more inclusive and representative. *Apna Watan* on the other hand functions with limited manpower and resources. Members are conflicted on the issue of inducting new members to the group. Some old members fear that induction of new members will lead to a change in the nature of the organization itself. Current general secretary Amina Kishore feels that the "young with the attitude of go-getting" may cause problems for the organization. This hampers the visibility of the organization (Personal Interview, Hyderabad, April, 2013).

Efforts at bringing organizations under one umbrella body has failed. The lack of coordination between organizations limit their reach. A systematic institutionalization of their efforts is lacking. One such effort was the Hyderabad *Aman Manch*. The Hyderabad *Aman Manch* was to be a citizen's forum which was an effort to bring organizations in the city together to work towards harmony building. However most organizations were not comfortable with this idea. The fear was that ideological clashes will lead to the subversion of their organization's agendas. Although organizations have come together from time to time but these have been issue based work. The multi-organization meet in 2013 to celebrate *Ganesh* festival in a peaceful manner is one such example. The initial meetings of volunteers constituted of a session in which members of various organizations could place forward their points of view and suggestions. This process helped make the coming together of organizations more democratic. However similar efforts a year later were met with lukewarm responses. Multiple organizations with various

methods of harmony building coming together and together working towards harmony would in the end benefit the cause. However, methodological differences and a fear of subversion of the organizational structures prevent organizations from coming together.

Often the reach of these organizations is limited. Programs conducted by the organizations fail to reach the intended subject. COVA's "Training for trainers" is such an example. Although essential and important the program was a failure. Volunteers who turned up for one training session did not turn up for the next. Ultimately the program fizzled out. Also the *Apna Watan Vani* which was the newsletter of *Apna Watan* had a limited reach being printed in English and with limited distribution. The news letter was discontinued and current secretary Amina Kishore has been trying to revive it once again. A more concerning aspect of the harmony building work is the fear that most of the participants in various programs are people who already understand the importance of social harmony and integration. Ram Puniyani in an interview suggests that this is like "preaching to the converted" (Personal Interview, Mumbai, February, 2014). Changing the mindset of people and creating a political opinion which is not communal in nature are long term processes which require intense effort. Lack of consistency and continuity in the efforts of the organizations make this target even more difficult to achieve. A key area in which the limited reach of these organizations becomes prominent is policy making. Smaller organizations like *Apna Watan* simply do not have the reach or man power to contribute meaningfully to policy making on their own. Organizations as big as COVA have the necessary resources to contribute meaningfully to policy making. COVA had submitted a representation for the creation of GO-NGO Coordination Committees in Minority Welfare Departments. These Committees were to be constituted out of government officials and representatives of civil society groups and religious groups. This Government-NGO partnership was to ensure greater participation of Civil society organizations in conceptualizing and implementation of policy. The order was passed in 2012. This was the only significant policy intervention towards social harmony building by any civil society group in the city. The gap between the efforts of civil society organizations and policy making is huge and needs to be addressed seriously.

Civil society organization's harmony building efforts become important in the context of India only because State efforts at communal harmony building has been sparse and too little too

late. Communal violence in India is a very complex phenomenon and most incidents have more than one factor at play. State has often fallen short at preventing violence and controlling it. Sometimes the State and administration itself has been perpetrators of violence. Police and administration have also been accused of being biased against minorities during riots. Examples of police brutality or compliancy with violence towards minorities is endless. Hyderabad is no stranger to such incidents of course. The very public *Ganesh* processions which became the focal point of many a communal incidents over the years was in fact made into a public specter for political gain. Chief Minister Chenna Reddy flagged off one of the first *Ganesh* processions in 1978. Since then the growing number of processions in the city every year has been a cause of much concern. As had been cited above during the Mecca Masjid blasts police picked up Muslim youth from the old city, illegally detained and tortured them for days. It is only with the intervention of civil society groups that the youth were later freed. The lukewarm response of the Andhra Pradesh Minority Rights Commission towards the one man fact finding committee report did nothing much to instill confidence among the people. The APMRC's reluctance to act upon the report let to the presentation of the report to the National Minority Rights Commission who then decided to act upon the recommendations of the report with generous modifications of course. State efforts at communal harmony building thus have often fallen flat because of the general distrust towards police and administration. The case of *Mayetreyee* Committees is a classic example of this. *Mayetreyee* Committees are citizens groups attached to each police station in the city which was established with the sole purpose of being links between the state and communities. The members of the committee are supposed to alert the police about any possible communal disturbances in their areas. The police would then work with these local people to pacify a situation and prevent violence. However the members of these committees are completely distrusted by the communities they belong to. Interviews with several people associated with communal harmony building has made it clear that *Mayetreyee* members are completely distrusted in their own communities. Some of these members say that they are marked as police informants or snitches by their communities. Curiously similar kinds of efforts by COVA have had greater success. "key persons" from specific areas with close ties within the community have been identified by COVA. These key persons are trusted by their community and work as links between COVA and the communities they belong to. Shyamlal Taank,

Mohammad Ansari, Mohammad Ashfaq are all contact persons for COVA. These community leaders are engaged by COVA in preserving peace during times of heightened tension.

## **Conclusion**

It is undeniable that Civil Society Organizations like COVA and *Apna Watan* have able to make inroads into communities where the State has failed miserably. Community level initiatives are helping turn neighborhoods into sights of resistance against communal violence. These efforts also have their own short comings and the civil society organizations have fallen short of their goals in several respects. However, one cannot discount the role civil society organizations can play in bringing about social integration and communal harmony.

# Chapter Three: Ahmedabad

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## Ahmedabad: The "Shock City"

Ahmedabad, once called the "Manchester of the East" has had a chequered political history. Once a vibrant mill town, Ahmedabad was also known for its powerful trade unions. The mills closed down eventually and the trade unions collapsed. Politics came to be centered around caste issues and slowly the caste politics was replaced by religious politics. The BJP's rise to power in the state has been phenomenal and often Gujarat has been called the laboratory of *Hindutva*. Ahmedabad and the state of Gujarat has also been the sight of some of the bloodiest acts of communal violence in India. Once known for Gandhian ideals, the state of Gujarat has become infamous for the communal pogrom of 2002. The segregated structure of the city indicates deep distrust and fear among the two largest communities of the city. The city is divided into the east and west Ahmedabad by the river Sabarmati which Mahadevia calls the "Berlin wall" (2002, p.4851). The economic disparity between the two parts is stark as so is the spatial demarcation between Hindu and Muslim ghettos. Hence it becomes very important to understand the role civil society organizations can play in building communal harmony in a state where the state machinery had failed to effectively stop the onslaught on the Muslim minorities, has done little for those reeling from the violence even after 13 years and the violence has led to segregation of the city into Hindu and Muslim areas. Howard Spodek calls Ahmedabad "A Shock City for Twentieth Century India" and enumerates a list of factors which makes Ahmedabad so (2011,p.5). This chapter explores these various factors and the rise and consolidation of *Hindutva* politics in the state. The second half of the chapter then explores the role of civil society in the Ahmedabad by taking a closer look into the activities and initiatives of two city based CSOs - *Janvikas* and Centre for Development.

Spodek quotes British Historian Asa Briggs who in his book *Victorian Cities* coined the term "Shock Cities". By definition a shock city "was a centre of problem, particularly ethnic and social problems, and it provoked sharply differing reactions from visitors" (Ibid). Briggs goes on

to explain that while Manchester was a shock city of the 1840s, Chicago and Los Angeles were shock cities of the 1930s and 1940s. He propounds that "Every age has its shock city" (Ibid).

### **Gandhi's shaping of the "Shock City"**

Even before independence Gandhi with his involvement in the nationalist struggle and by addressing some of the problems plaguing the society at that point had managed to turn Ahmedabad into a shock city. Spodek identifies four distinct events which shaped the future of the city in later years and helped turn it into a shock city. Spodek suggests that by choosing Ahmedabad, Gandhi:

Chose to live in a new urban-industrial age, and for all his concerns for village India, he responded by making his adoptive hometown a shock city in cultural, social concerns, labor-management relations and nationalist mobilization (Ibid,p.9)

A defining moment in the nationalist movement was the salt march which Gandhi started from his ashram in Ahmedabad. Gandhi also shaped some of the most influential leaders of the nationalist struggle like Vallabhbhai Patel and Ganesh Vasudev Mavalankar and brought leading industrialists of city together to lend their support to the movement. Spodek suggests that "together, they demonstrated how a city could mobilize effectively for political protests" (Ibid,p.7). Gandhi's influence on labour-management relations in the city is undeniable. Spodek calls Gandhi a "catalyst" in ending the deadlock between labour and management and helping create the Textile Labour Association (TLA) (Ibid). In the years that followed the TLA always followed Gandhian principals and pushed for "negotiations and compulsory arbitration" which then became the stand for non-communist labour movement in India (Ibid,p.8). Gandhi's engagement with social causes and his efforts to end untouchability prompts Spodek to identify Ahmedabad as a shock city. Gandhi invited untouchables into his Ashram and integrated them into the labour union. Spodek suggests that this made Ahmedabad a shock city because it became a city where "the conditions of untouchables was improving as a result of nongovernmental policies consciously chosen, defended and implemented" (Ibid).

A final factor was Gandhi's influence on the cultural scene of the city. Gandhi "reoriented the concerns of literature and education" which were till now dominated the by elite and educated (Ibid). Gandhi brought the literary culture closer to the common man thereby

transforming the culture of the city itself. Gandhi's efforts to make Khadi the clothing of the masses and his insistence on "spinning, weaving and wearing Khadi" gave the city a "new fashion statement" (Ibid:9).

### **The Riot of 1969**

The riot of 1969 was the first major riot to hit the city of Ahmedabad after its formation in 1960. The riot led to large scale destruction of minority property and exposed the biased nature of the police and city administration. Spodek writes that this completely "shattered Ahmedabad's mystique as a centre of Gandhian nonviolence" (Ibid,p.172). Although smaller riots had been taking place in Ahmedabad since independence what set the 1969 riot apart was the scale of the riot and its spread. Changing socio-cultural scene in Gujarat, fringe elements among both Hindus and Muslims vying for power, political ambition of the RSS and the dream of a Hindu Rashtra, rumors and a biased police and administrative system all had a role to play in the riots of 1969.

Ghanshyam Shah, in his analysis, takes a closer look at the events leading up to the riots of 1969. The growing political rift between the Hindus and Muslims emerges as one of the most important precursors to the 1969 riots. Shah suggests that the death of the then Chief Minister of the state Balwantraji Mehta in 1965 due to his plane being shot down by Pakistan became one of the early reasons for division among the Hindus and Muslims of the state. Shah writes that "the anti-Pakistan feelings" due to this incident often found "anti- Muslim expressions" (1970,p.188). A rift between the Hindu and Muslim leadership of the Congress due to the seemingly anti-Muslim actions of the Congress government during the war with Pakistan did not help the case either. The Muslim leaders in Congress leaned towards the *Majlis-e-Mushawart* and decided to lend their support to the Swatantra party. Shah suggests that this move of the Muslims was initially successful in getting desired results but soon the Hindu-Muslim conflict reemerged (Ibid,p.189). The Muslims who joined the Swatantra Party felt alienated soon after the elections in 1967 in a party comprising chiefly of *Patidars* and *Kshatriyas* who were inherently anti-Muslim in their stance. By June 1968, both *Jamat-e-Ullemas* and RSS took turns at churning communal feelings at this point.

Small incidents of communal flare-ups continued all through 1968 and early 1969. Two major incidents took place in the run up to the riots in September 1969 which solidified the communal polarization. One was a protest march by Muslims in the city against the destruction of a mosque in Israel-held Jerusalem followed by an inflammatory, anti-Muslim speech by an RSS leader (Shah,1970, Spodek,2011). The RSS leader in question, Balraj Madhok in a public meeting called for the "*Bharatiyakaran* (Indianization)" of the Muslims (Sud, 2008,p.1257). The other was the formation of the "*Hindu Dharma Raksha* Committee" by some religious leaders and Jan Sangh supporters. The final blow came on the 18th of September, 1969. An incident of minor skirmish outside the *Jagannath* Temple was blown out of proportion when the *Sadhus* of the temple sat on a fast to protest against an "attack on the temple" (Shah,1970,p.193) . The incident was given a communal colour and rumor mongering by local news papers added fuel to the already simmering fire. Shah in his analysis of the incident narrates how by next morning anonymous pamphlets were distributed which "gave exaggerated accounts of the *Jagananth* Temple incident from the point of view of Hindus" (Ibid). Rumors about cow being killed, head priest being injured and Muslims entering the temple to desecrate idols also did the rounds (Spodek, 2011,p.173). The situation steadily deteriorated by the evening of the 19th. In a meeting of the *Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti* "anti-Muslim slogans were chanted" and resolutions of fast unto death were taken up to pressurize the government into forming an inquiry committee to look into the temple attack incident (Shah,1970,p.193). Immediately after the meeting a shop was set ablaze. Although the police was able to control this situation, "mob fury had been sparked of and there was no stopping to looting and large-scale rioting in various parts of the city" (Ibid). In the riots that followed Muslims were systematically targeted and Muslim property destroyed. The riots were brought under control only after the Army was deployed after three days and an order of shoot at sight was issued(Spodek, 2011,p.177).

The Reddy Commission which was set up to investigate into the riots found the riots to be preplanned and the Congress Government to blame for doing a poor job at controlling the riots. The Reddy Commission in its reports writes that members of Jan Sangh and RSS were active participants in the riots. The systematic way in which Muslim households, businesses and individuals were targeted indicated preplanned nature of the riots (Ibid,p.176). However at the same time Shah notes that almost all sections of the Hindu community in Gujarat participated in riots in some or the other form. Some "were actual participants, some were observers providing

facilities for the rioters if needed, and some were sympathizers and morale-boosters" (Ibid,p.194-195). Shah suggests that the maximum participation came from "textile workers, manual workers and scavengers" (Ibid,p.195). Shah suggests that apart from the religious animosity and political power play certain socio-economic factor was also at play in the riots. Closing down of several mills had left a sizeable amount of textile workers jobless. At the same there were Muslim textile workers who had permanent positions in the mills. Shah suggests that this created a situation where "unemployed Hindu workers might have thought that Muslim workers stood between them and new jobs" (Ibid,p.197). Shah draws attention to another aspect of the organization of textile workers in Ahmedabad. A strict caste or community based division of work was followed in the textile industry. The spinners would be from Harijan class while weavers and winders would most often be Muslims. These labourers would also live in particular areas in communities solely comprising of their kinsmen and in the process "reinforcing community patterns" (Ibid). Shah concludes that this kind of strict segregation prevented the labourers to form a common "urban working class" identity and fractured their unity which was easily manipulated at times of heightened communal tension (Ibid).

The Reddy Commission's report on the riots clearly indicated that the failure on part of the government and police to do their part in controlling the riots more effectively. Shah suggests that in most cases government efforts to control the situation was "slow and patchy" and "half-hearted in using force" (Ibid,p.198). Delay in imposing curfew aided the rioters to reign havoc for a longer duration of time. Shah also suggests that the curfew was strictly implemented only when army took control. The reluctance to use force has been attributed to the Congress's reluctance to alienate Hindu voters who's sentiments were hurt because of the *Jagannath* temple incident (Ibid).

Nexus between Police and criminal bootleggers was also responsible for police inaction in a lot of cases (Varshney, 2002 and Spodek, 2011). On the subject of bootleggers, Varshney writes that over time many bootleggers had themselves become politicians. Organizations floated by these bootleggers had a "mercenary character" (Varshney, 2002,p.274). These organizations would had no ideology and worked only to "raise the acceptability of bootleggers as politicians" (Ibid) The policemen who were "already in the take" with bootleggers could not take actions against local *goondas* and miscreants employed by bootleggers to create the communal

disturbances (Spodek, 2011:178). Nikita Sud in her analysis of the Gujarat state suggests that in spite of the staggering evidence of a preplanned attack and state inability to bring matters under control swiftly, the Gujarat State at this point could not be accused of being "unsecular" (2008,p.1259) Sud indicates that the "softness of the Gujarati State" was indicative of a situation where the authorities "may frame policies or declare norms that must govern the state" but are "reluctant to place the obligations of these frameworks on the people of the nation" (Ibid,p.1257).

The riot of 1969 brought some significant factors to the foreground. It exposed the biased nature of administration and police officials who had refused to acknowledge the role of RSS and Jan Sangh in instigating violence. It also brought to the fore the insecurities of organizations such as Jan Sangh and RSS who believed that "their religion was in danger and must be defended aggressively and even violently against others" (Spodek, 2011,p.179). The inability of the government to control the violence led to an erosion of trust in the government. But perhaps the most significant change that the riot brought about was the "fear" which entered the public space and led to a social segregation of Hindus and Muslims which subsequent riots solidified. Thus, Spodek writes:

Walls were constructed between neighborhoods. Gates to the *pols* in the old city, which had been unattended for decades, were restored to use. Some people living in pockets of minority residence-Hindus among Muslims, Muslims among Hindus- abandoned their homes and relocated (Ibid).

### **The *Nav Nirman* Movement (1974)**

The *Nav Nirman* Movement was a "middle class movement against corruption and patronage in the state government" (Ibid,p.180). The movement brought together three pertinent issues of the time:

middle class opposition to patronage and corruption in politics; professional opposition to commercialization and politicization of the expanding system of higher education; and the urban opposition to high food prices, including apparent price gouging by rural agricultural producers in collusion with the state government (Ibid).

Although none of these problems were exclusive to the city but the "dramatic" and "spontaneous" nature of this movement brought it to the national limelight (Ibid). Jaya Prakash Narayan lend support to the movement and the rest of India hoped that this would "provide a national model for political rebirth.." (Ibid). The movement spread like "firestorm throughout urban Gujarat" in January of 1974 and only subsided after "the leaders secured some key political objectives" (Jones and Jones, 1976,p.1012). Foremost among these was the stepping down of then Chief Minister Chimanbahi Patel and the dissolution of the Gujarat government. Although the movement was spearheaded by disgruntled students, teachers associations of schools and colleges are identified by Jones and Jones as the main organizers and coordinators of the movement. Jones and Jones suggests that the underlying issue was indeed a power struggle between the "teachers and private institutional management" (Ibid,p.1013).

The *Nav Nirman* movement's main target, Chief Minister of the state Chimanbhai Patel had "crafted a politics of patronage in Gujarat, increasing his own power by bringing new constituencies, loyal to him into public life" (Spodek, 2011,p.180). Jones and Jones suggest Chimanbahi who was the "political agent of the private college management" became the target of the movement in 1973 when he became the Chief Minister of the state (Jones and Jones, 1976,p.1013). Ghanshyam Shah suggests that the Chimanbhai brand of politics was reflective of the "manipulative politics" which the political parties had started to indulge in since the split in Gujarat Congress (O) in 1969 (Shah, 1974,p.1437). Chimanbhai who had defected from the Congress (O) the previous year helped the Congress win the 1972 elections. The overwhelming support of the Patidar (affluent farmers) caste helped Congress win 140 of the 168 seats in the state assembly. However, local intra- party rivalry resulted the Delhi headquarters of the party choosing Ghanshyam Oza, a senior party person and Member of Parliament at the time, as the Chief Minister. The Congress split between "loyalists" (Oza-Adani-Darji group) and "dissidents" (Chimanbhai-Ghiya group) (Jones and Jones, 1974,p.1015). Jones and Jones remark that these factions were "basically marriages of convenience" while the only "interest based" rivalry was that between the recently appointed party chief Jhinabhai Darji and Chimanbhai Patel at that point minister of Industries and Planning (Ibid,p.1014). Patel and Ghiya led a campaign against Oza claiming that he was "imposed by the centre" (Ibid,p.1015) and was not elected by the party itself. Jones and Jones suggest that Patel and Ghiya were able to bring 70 MLAs together through promises of ministerships and money. These 70 MLAs voted no confidence against Oza

and he resigned in June, 1973. This according to Jones and Jones "left an indelible public impression upon which Chimanbhai's opponents capitalized in the *Nav Nirman* agitation (Ibid).

Chimanbhai who started his career as a teacher rose to heights of political power by exploiting the growth in the education industry in Gujarat. Patel entered the publishing business and then later in 1960 opened up the Sardar Vallabbahi Trust. The trust established colleges throughout Gujarat the first of which was the Sardar Vallabbahi Arts and Commerce College in Ahmedabad. Patel also helped others in "gaining authorization and grant assistance for the government; procuring loans; securing affiliations to Gujarat University" (Spodek, 2011p.183). Increase in the number of colleges led to commercialization of education. Although more number of people could go to college, especially in arts and humanities, this also created the problem of the "educated unemployed (Ibid,p.184)

The new education system was cutting corners for profits and the teachers were as dissatisfied as the students. The Gujarat University Area Teacher's Association (GUATA) had two main grievances: "unsatisfactory pay and benefits, and unstable tenure and service conditions (Ibid: 185). Things heated up when in 1966 the central government recommended a higher pay scale and the colleges administrations "passively dragged their feet" and "actively resisted" the said pay hike (Ibid:186). Hence when the students erupted in protest over hiked prices in college canteens, "hundreds of faculty were eager to encourage and support them, and to turn their anger against Chimanbhai" (Ibid)

Apart from this widespread corruption in the education system the other factor which served as a precursor to the *Nav Nirman* movement is the increase in food and oil prices. Jones and Jones draw a direct connection between this and the "commitments" Patel negotiated with the centre (Jones and Jones, 1976,p.1016). Patel was very keen on solving the Narmada river dispute because in his mind this could have lead to great industrial and agricultural development in Gujarat. The case at this point was stuck in a tribunal and Patel needed the centre's intervention in moving the case along. In order to do so Chimanbhai struck a deal with the center where by the Gujarat Congress would help finance the Congress party campaign in Uttar Pradesh. Jones and Jones remark that "Chimanbhai's technique for raising so large a sum was one cause of his undoing" (Ibid,p.1017). Chimanbhai struck a deal with oil farmers and sellers wherein he withdrew all government sanctions on ground nut oil and let the prices rise. Patel also

facilitated "free export of oil products" from Gujarat (Ibid). While the oil farmers and merchants enjoyed huge profits, a portion of which went to the campaign fund, this also resulted in increased ground nut oil prices. In a state which had seen a bumper harvest in 1973 and where the staple cooking oil in middle class households was the ground nut oil the increased prices did not sit right with the general public. A second related problem was that of the rise of food grain prices. Jones and Jones write that in order for Congress to win in Uttar Pradesh it was of utmost importance that the food prices remain low (Ibid). In a drought hit Uttar Pradesh this was an impossible feat. However, the centre started funneling all existing stocks into the fair-price distribution network in Uttar Pradesh. This in turn cut into the grain share of a food-deficit state like Gujarat where the prices of food grains sky rocketed.

Shah comments that the "scarcities and soaring prices nearly broke the common man's back" (Shah, 1974,p.235). This resulted in widespread tension and urban rioting the biggest of which was in July 1973. The Jan Sangh which had not seen any political success at this point tried capitalizing on the anti-government feeling. This led to its winning in the by-elections to civic bodies in two constituencies. The already unstable political situation in the state became more confusing with the establishments of the two separate organizations by the youth and teachers. The *Lokshahi Suraksha Sangh* and the *Madhyastha Nagarik Samiti* were both formed in July and held a series of protests and strikes against the government. Shah observes that political activities in Ahmedabad "reached a feverish pitch" on 13-14 July when the Congress observers came to "resolve leadership issues" (Ibid,p.237). On the 13th of July, three separate meetings were organized around Khadiya by CPM, *Nagarik Samiti* and the *Vidyarthi Madhyastha Samiti*. Soon after the meeting of the *Vidyarthi Samiti* ended students threw stones at buses and the police *lathi*-charged and fired tear gas shells in order to control the crowd. The next day the two *samitis* called for Ahmedabad *bandh* to "focus attention on dirty politics and to assert student's demands" (Ibid,p.239). An unsuccessful *bandh* led to minor stone pelting which soon progressed into rioting. The rioting soon took a communal colour with targeted looting and raiding.

The riots continued for three days and caused a lot of property damage. However what is noteworthy here is that the police were very prompt in taking action and this ultimately checked the scale of rioting as well as damages. In the ultimate analysis what becomes clear is that the

general political situation had already become very unstable because of factionalism within Congress. The charges of corruption and rise of oil and grain prices had resulted in the general public turning against the government. These became the precursors to the *Nav Nirman* movement of 1974 which became the culmination point of collective disgruntlement of the people of Gujarat. The movement sought to remove Patel from the Chief Minister's office and the Congress from the state assembly

Trouble started brewing in late December 1973 when students in an engineering college in Saurashtra started protesting the high food prices in college canteen. A few days later a similar incident at a college in Ahmedabad resulted in the deployment of the State Reserve Police who brutalized the students. The brutality of police action and the arrest of students met with a lot of criticism and triggered even larger protests against the government and its actions. AUGCOM (August 14th Committee), an umbrella organization of about 80 trade unions in the city of Ahmedabad, also joined in the protests by calling for a "Ahmedabad bundh" (Jones and Jones, 1976,p.1024). This step by the AUGCOM became indicative of the fact that the middle classes were also sympathetic towards the cause of the students movement. The students in a meeting on the 9th of January pledged to return to their classrooms after "essential commodities reappeared in adequate supply in the markets." (Ibid). This step helped the students link their demands to larger economic issues plaguing the state and helped find greater resonance among the general public. The GUTA also lent their support to the student protests.

Violence was escalating in the city of Ahmedabad and the first police firing occurred on the 9th of January. The Army was deployed by the end of January. Unable to pacify the GUTA and GSFUCTS, Patel continued in office with the support from the Centre. However, a visit from the Union Law Minister H.R. Gokhale changed it all. Representatives of GUTA were able to meet Gokhale and explain to him the real situation. Gokhale returned to Delhi the following day and the Centre finally intervened. Chimanbhai Patel stepped down as the Chief Minister of Gujarat on February 9th, 1974. The assembly was suspended and President's rule declared in the state. With this the *Nav Nirman* movement achieved its first objective.

The second major objective was the dissolution of the assembly. This was of course a difficult task. However, as agitations continued and violence escalated once again, 85 MLAs resigned from the assembly on 14th of March. The assembly was dissolved on the 15th of

March. The *Nav Nirman* agitations were not carried on any one single group or party. The agitations began because of economic hardships of the middle classes. As the movement picked pace other issues of corruption, resignation of Patel and dissolution of the assembly, police atrocities also got included. Shah suggests that the movement had "diffused objectives varying from group to group (Shah,1974,p.1451). However, the movement fell apart as soon as the assembly got dissolved. Although not unique in most respects, the *Nav Nirman* movement stands apart because of the nature in which it brought together people across caste, class and religious line.

## **The 1980s: Caste Politics, Communal Violence and the Shutting Down of the Mills in Ahmedabad**

### **Caste Politics**

The 1980s marked a new phase in the political map of the state. Spodek calls this the end of the "Gandhian era". For the first time caste politics played a huge role in the elections of the state (Spodek, 2011,p.207). The Congress government had set up the Baxi commission way back in 1972 to identify "socially and economically backward communities that would qualify for preferential treatment" as was the case with scheduled castes and tribes (Shani,2005,p.866). The recommendations of the committee were implemented by the Janata Government which came to power in 1978. The Congress government during its next term in the government again set up another committee to look into communities and castes which had been excluded by the Baxi commission. The Rane commission submitted its report in 1983 and recommended 18% reservation for backward communities. The Congress government under Madhavsinh Solanki tried implementing these recommendations on the eve of assembly elections in 1985. This sparked off an anti-reservation agitation which quickly snow balled into communal riots. Shani suggests that the communal violence at this time was in fact "expression of growing tensions among Hindus" (Ibid,p.862). In order to understand the situation in 1985 one has to go back to the election of 1980 when for the first time Madhavsinh Solanki was able to create the KHAM coalition and able to win the elections based on the strength if this coalition.

Solanki himself an OBC was able to create a coalition between Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims- together KHAM- and win the 1980 election with clear majority. For the

first time there was an OBC cabinet minister, more than half of KHAM background and not a single Patidar. Spodek suggests that Amarsinh Chaudhury, a tribal made the irrigation minister, "posed a potential threat to the Patidar cash-cropping farmers of Gujarat" (Spodek, 2011,p.209). A struggle ensued between those in power and those suddenly powerless. The backlash of this was soon felt when violence broke out in Ahmedabad in 1981.

Reservation in medical colleges and the resultant denial of admission to a upper caste student, fulfilling all other requirements, sparked off protests in 1981. Soon students from engineering colleges joined in the protests and businessmen and other professionals lent their support to the cause of these students. Spodek comments that the "battle lines were drawn" (Spodek, 2011,p.210). Spodek suggests that the medical college being located adjacent to the textile mills and Dalit mill workers' *chawls* did not help matters. This was one area where the upper caste Hindus and Dalits lived in close physical proximity. Hence, a small skirmish in the medical college soon spread to the neighboring areas and riots broke in the city of Ahmedabad. The riots continued for a month and soon spread to other cities. Spodek points out that Dalits were the most adversely affected during these riots (Ibid). The police was often mute by standers and did not do much to protect Dalits. The situation came under control only after military was brought in.

Violence again erupted in 1982. Engineer explains in his analysis of the riots that the slowly caster riots were taking a communal colour. The VHP had opened up several branches in Ahmedabad and distributed leaflets condemning the conversion of Harijans to Islam (1982,p. 100). The gradual communalization of the city had already started and by 1980s the process had become even pronounced. Solanki was able to overcome the reservation hurdle and was reelected again in the 1985 elections. Explaining the election results, Spodek writes, that Solanki had not taken any major steps to anger the capitalist class and either were the defections significant enough to hurt him (Spodek, 2011,p.212). Solanki very ably balanced welfare schemes and goals of economic growth and for the first time Gujarat became one of the most industrialized states in India. At the same time midday meals in primary schools, free education for girls and women and free supply of food grains to families with less than rupees 5000 annual income, made sure that Solanki was able to prove is commitment towards the disadvantaged (Ibid). Hence, in the 1985 elections Solanki was able to win with an even greater margin. Solanki

feel into trouble when, two months prior to elections, his government announced the implementation of the recommendations of the Rane commission. This would increase OBC reservations to 18% making the overall reservation standing at 49%. The violence that ensued suddenly took a communal turn and continued for months. It only ended with the resignation of Solanki (Ibid,p.213).

Agitation over the fresh plans to increase reservation reached a new high and the government had to announce that the implementation would take place only in a year. Just when the situation was coming back under control violence broke out in a neighborhood in the old city which quickly spread across the Sabarmati. Hindus attacked Muslims and the violence escalated from here leaving many injured and huge losses in property damages. Spodek suggests that the Hindu-Muslim riots were in fact more than just communal clashes and number of theories were put forwards. Spodek lists four such theories:

Some charged that Congress (I) politicians had encouraged communal rioting in order to divert attention from the caste riots and to unite the Hindu population. Others saw the BJP as fostering communalism as a strategy for removing Solanki from power. Still another explanation saw Hindu-Muslim violence as a plan by land speculators and developers to take advantage of this time of public turmoil to push people out of their homes, which could then be seized for use by the locally dominant group or for commercial sale. A fourth view saw bootleggers as encouraging the riots (2011,p.214).

Whatever might be the actual reason from here on bootleggers, smugglers and other criminal elements found a prominent place in the political map of the state. Spodek writes that bootleggers now began to be used by politician to incite violence. Riots in Ahmedabad after this "appeared to be an array of planned, orchestrated, professional campaigns" (Ibid,p.215). The anti-reservation agitations were long forgotten and were replaced by this communal stir.

Police personal had a major role to play in the riots during this time. Police atrocities had reached such levels that by April a metropolitan court had prohibited the entry of the commandant of the state reserve police and local superintendent of police into certain sensitive areas. Army had once again been called in to patrol areas. The murder of an on duty police constable invited more violence. The police indiscriminately beat up men and women. Spodek

suggests that the city was engulfed in "an orgy of violence" which started in the walled city but soon spread to other parts of the city and suburbs (Ibid,p.216). The death of two Hindu police men amidst the ongoing violence led to further brutalization of Muslims. Police personnel were often guilty of aiding and abetting violence. Even the press was not spared. The police attacked and destroyed the printing presses of *Gujarat Samachar* and *Western Times*. Other dailies like *Indian Express* and *Jan Satta* were placed under Army protection (Ibid).

Although the government had withdrawn plans for the implementation of reservations the agitations went on for the removal of the government itself. The BJP, Janata Party and Lok Dal came together in the struggle against the Congress government. By June the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce had also joined in the struggle. A five day *bandh* was declared. Solanki suggests since "previous *bandh* had been accompanied by further outbreaks of violence, this call suggested the willingness of the business community to risk violence in exchange of Solanki's dismissal" (Spodek, 2011,p.217). The situation deteriorated as state government employees went on a strike demanding the cancellation of the roster system. At the same time the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation employees joined in the strike. The parallel strikes were accompanied by outbursts of communal violence. Spodek suggests that the KHAM was not mobilized enough to provide any significant support to the government. This, Spodek suggests was the sign of Solanki's "demagoguery" - he had brought the KHAM together but had failed to organize them in a way that they would unite in fight for their political interests (Ibid).

Fresh violence broke out when the annual *rath yatra* passed through Muslim neighborhoods. The violence continued for days. Finally the central government intervened. Amid internal party struggles, Solanki resigned from office on the 6th of July, 1985. Amarsingh Chaudhary assumed office as the new Chief Minister and the first tribal man to do so. Many changes took place in Gujarat's political and social scene. The new cabinet included Patels and Vaniyas while dropping five kshatriya members. A new director-general of police was appointed and the Army finally withdrew from the city. The withdrawal of the army was marked by fresh incidents of violence. However the situation improved when the chief minister announced that police officers in whose jurisdiction these incidents of violence occurred would be held responsible. Spodek concludes that "the link between police, politicians and illegal business activity was snapped, at least temporarily" (Ibid,p.218).

## **Closing Down of the Textile Mills and Collapse of Textile Labour Association in Ahmedabad**

A second and equally important phenomenon unfolding in the 1980s was the closing down of the textile mills. The textile mills had become the back bone of economic and social structure of the city. However through the 1980s these mills went on a steady decline. Spodek suggests that not overseas competition but "indigenous Indian small-scale power loom production" was the reason for the shutting down of the mills (Spodek, 2011,p.195). A combination government policies and advancement in power loom technology resulted in the slow demise of the mills in Ahmedabad. Power looms were usually categorized with hand looms and shared all the benefits which came with this categorization. Government policy put severe restrictions on the expansion of weaving capacity composite mills as well as the kind of products the mills could produce. Composite mills also had greater burden of taxes on them. Spodek suggests that due to the restrictions put on the variety of products, the composite mills were not able to produce synthetic fabrics and hence the "new area of greatest growth was reserved for the decentralized sector" (Ibid,p.196).

The decentralized power mills were also able to evade taxes and pay less to the non-unionized labour force. The technological advancements were also more in favour of these small units rather than big composite mills. The mills in Ahmedabad failed in several respects to keep up with the changing times. Mill owners became complacent and were also moving out of textile industries and investing in more profitable industries like housing and chemical industry. mill owners were also trading their composite mills for smaller more profitable power looms. Explaining the attitude of mill owners, Spodek writes:

They did not replace obsolescent and worn out machinery; they did not increase productivity; they did not professionalize management; they did not rationalize their labour force; they did not plow profits back into reinvestments but rather paid them out in high dividends, dissipating the resources of the industry (Spodek, 2011,p.196).

Two additional factor which contributed to the woes of the labourers at the mills was severe drought for three consecutive years and the Government's policy to legally allow mills running

under loss to close down. Cotton prices increased and the droughts made sure the purchasing power of people were low. At the same time mills owners shut down mills to cut losses. hence between 1983 and 1986 half of the workers had lost their jobs in textile mills.

The Textile Labour Association was able to do very less for the labourers who were suddenly out of job. Studies on the condition of workers revealed that these workers were engaged in "casual labour" in less paying jobs without the benefit of the previous job (Spodek, 2011,p.200). The few wage paying jobs were without any medical benefits of provident funds. The wages received were also much lower than the jobs at the composite mills. Spodek quotes a study of the Ahmedabad Textile Industry Research Association which showed that "a workers in the weaving section of the mills was earning Rs. 50 per day, while those in the power loom section were earning from Rs. 10 for workers in the preparatory process to Rs 25 for weavers" (Ibid). A larger portion of the workers were also "self-employed" which meant that they were not engaged in any steady salaried job.

Cracks in the TLA had started to show as early as 1981 when the caste riots caused divisions in the TLA. In February of 1981 the Dalits in the mills of Ahmedabad went on a two day strike followed by upper-caste labourers for the next two days. Mill owners also kept the mills closed for two days to keep situation under check. The TLA during this time did not side with the Dalits. Among the Dalits, those who were most involved in the reservation movement were the castes which were upwardly mobile. Other backward classes such as the Muslims and tribals mostly remained uninvolved. Among the kshatriyas again those in the lowest levels lent their support to the Dalits. The TLA was thus divided along caste lines. Spodek concluded that the TLA "which had formerly helped to contain violence in Ahmedabad, were now paralyzed by internal divisions" (Spodek, 2011,p.212)

The TLA was unable to do much for the work force it represented and, the situation kept on getting worse as more and more workers were laid off. The fight for getting relief to laid off work force was only halfhearted. The "top-down" nature of leadership and the increasing gap between the leadership and its members led to further disillusionment with the organization (Spodek, 2011,p.200). The growing frustration of these workers were captured in interviews conducted with them. The workers had started accusing the Union of being "dumb and deaf" and not being able to stand up for the rights of workers" (Spodek, 2011,p.201). Some were also

accused of being in cohorts with the mill owners, taking money from them and throwing the mill workers under the bus. Most of the mill workers did not receive the severance packages which were promised. The closing down and lack of alternate sources of income also resulted in large scale migration out of Ahmedabad. At the same time growing caste and communal discord in the industrial neighborhoods resulted in internal migrations. The TLA was now a "spent force" which could not help improve the condition of the labourers who were now left as "lumpen proletariat, tensely competing with other groups for inferior jobs... and with little sense of a better future" (Spodek, 2011,p.202).

### **Rise of BJP as a Political Force**

The electoral fortunes of BJP in Gujarat started improving only in the 1980s and the since then has been on a steady incline. In the 1987 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections BJP was able to come to power in part because of anti-Congress feelings and in part because of its identity as a "militarily Hindu party that expressed substantial animosity towards the Muslims of India" (Spodek, 2011,p.221). Shah observes that although initially the party had its base in urban areas, by the 10th Lok Sabha election in 1990 it had spread its base to the rural areas as well (Shah, 1991,p.2921). The rise of BJP as a political force in the state was a gradual process which the BJP and its allied forces had achieved through meticulous planning. BJP and its allied organizations started out by devising ways of uniting the urban middle class Hindus under the Hindutva banner. Shah points out that the use of religion as a way to propagate political ideologies was something BJP had been able to perfect over the years.

The changing nature of religious discourse in the State was quite evident (Ibid). The use of media and new technologies to propagate religious preaches had also increased slowly over the years. Shah further points out that apart from increase in the number of pamphlets and booklets with religious messages, there were also regional newspapers who on a weekly basis ran columns on religious activities. The goal was simple - "All Hindus should unite against the *Vidharmis*" - even if meant setting aside caste differences (Ibid,p.2922). Just before the 1991 elections Morari Bapu, a very popular religious saint, addressed meetings and urged the public to vote for those supporting matters of national importance such as "(1) Construction of *Ramjanmabhoomi*, (2) deletion of article 370 which separates Kashmir from the rest of India,

and (3) ban on cow slaughter" (Ibid,p.2923). Shah points out that such "political overtones equating religion with nationalism became sharp before and during the elections" (Ibid)

A second set of strategies deployed by the BJP in the 1980s was directed towards capturing the rural imagination. Shah writes that in the thirty years between 1950s and 1980s the BJP (then Jan Sangh) had changed its mobilization strategies from being based on "caste pride, Hinduism and Hindu Nationalism" to setting up of Harijan and Adivasi cells and recruiting them within the party organization into important positions (Ibid). During the drought years of 1985-86 the BJP took out the "*nyaya yatra*" which toured around the state providing relief to the drought affected (Ibid). The relief camps set up by BJP and other religious organizations helped people in both rural and urban areas and the government also sometimes took help from these organizations to help the drought affected. However these camps also were places where Muslims were often ill treated. The BJP also set up the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) in 1985. The BKS initiated a farmer's agitation in 1986 and set up a 311 point demand document which was to "mobilize various sections of the agrarian community and included something for everyone" (Ibid). The BKS was very successful in addressing the farmer's issues which ranged from cheaper inputs to highly mechanized rain water harvesting systems. The BKS's success is evident when one considers the fact that between 1985 and 1991 its membership increased from 4000 to two lakh (Ibid).

A third mechanism for mobilization used by the BJP was communal polarization through inciting violence. Although communal violence was not an unknown phenomenon in Gujarat, the BJP made it a tool for its electoral success. In the run up to the 1991 elections BJP heavily depended on its *Ramjanmabhoomi* campaign to aid in the polarization of votes. Shah suggests that *Ramjanmabhoomi* was portrayed as "a question of Indian unity and culture, national pride, nationalism and patriotism" (Ibid,p.2924). Bricks were collected from villages to be used in the building of the *Ram mandir*. People were also asked to contribute towards the temple construction. Volunteers were recruited to do "*Kar Seva*" that is voluntary building of the temple at Ayodhya. Then in September 1990, L.K. Advani started his *Rath Yatra* from Somnath Temple which was to travel to Ayodhya. In the wake of this *Rath Yatra* the country in itself was engulfed in the riots. Gujarat also was not an exception. Summing up the entire situation, Shah write:

L K Advan began his dramatic *Rath Yatra* from Somnath in Gujarat in September 1990, and several mini *Rath Yatras* were organized by the BJP to spread the message of Ayodhya. *Trishuls*, saffron flags and caps, and slogans swearing by *Rama* that the temple would be constructed at the same place appeared in the cities and towns and captured the public imagination for Hindu unity and nationalism. Communal riots took place at 26 places killing 99 persons between September 1 and November 20, 1990. This set a base for the BJP for the 1991 Lok Sabha elections (Ibid).

The party won the 1991 election with 51% of the vote share and 20 of the 25 seats (Shah, 1996, p.165). The Congress's vote share had been on a steady decline and even after entering into an alliance with the JD for min-term Lok Sabha polls its performance was dismal. In 1995 elections to the state assembly the BJP came to power without any alliance and has since then been in power in the state. Shah suggests that BJP had successfully run a campaign where they were able to give the impression that they were about to win (Shah, 1996, p.170). The party sought the support from all sections of the society including minorities and excluding the Muslims. After this election BJP kept on cementing its position in the state. The hopes that the party will "remove the reign of fear, crime, violence, hunger and corruption from public life in the state" made sure that BJP won both state and panchayat elections with resounding majority (Patel, 1999, p.2426). Berenschot suggests that the importance of "religion and caste in local politics" arises from the voter's need to "access state institutions and its resources" (2011, p.10). Politicians are able to utilize this to invoke group identity and garner more votes. The same can be seen in the case of Gujarat. The people's disillusionment with the Congress and the BJP's ability to provide the promise of a better managed state swayed the grassroots voters in favour of them. Gujarat in the 1990s emerged as a two party system with stiff competition between BJP and Congress. The BJP was able to win all the elections in the 1990s to both Lok Sabha and state assembly. The BJP rule however has been "quite checkered" and factionalism within BJP has threatened to weaken the BJP dominion (Patel, 2004, p.5474). However, between 1998 and 2002 BJP intensified its anti-Muslim and anti-Christian propaganda to create a greater division in the vote bank and to secure its base. Priyavardan Patel sums these years of the BJP rule as thus:

This phase of its rule in the state was marked by the dominance of hardline Hindutva as the BJP achieved a complete communal divide [Yadav 2002; Yadav and Patel 2002]. on

the Akshardham temple at Gandhinagar, dissolution of the assembly for an early election, winning more than two-thirds VS seats in December 2002 elections, the autocratic and arrogant rule of Modi and the continued decline of the Congress in the state. The BJP's rule under Narendra Modi was marked by the Godhra carnage, the post-Godhra retaliatory violence, the terrorist attack (2004,p.5474).

The landmark incident in this tenure was the Gujarat carnage of 2002. On 28th February coaches of the Sabarmati express were set on fire in Godhra leading to the death of 58 passengers. The violence that followed went on for days and left thousands dead and many displaced. Although Gujarat was no stranger to communal violence what set the 2002 massacre apart from the others is the scale of violence and the level of government complicity with the riots and rioters. Many scholars have viewed the Gujarat violence as a pogrom. The stories of violence which came out of Gujarat were shocking to say the least<sup>27</sup>. Violence against women were of the most brutal nature. Police bias was clearly visible in the stories which were being heard. Wilkinson writes on the response of Gujarat government to the ongoing killings as "at best weak and at worst outright biased" (Wilkinson, 2002, p.1579). Breman notes that the nature of "communal violence" itself had undergone a change in the state. In the early 1980s riots were sparked by the anti-reservation agitation. Breman observes that the riots at this point were "fictions between top and bottom of the caste hierarchy" (2002, p.1488). It is the propagators of the Hindutva ideology who called for the unity of all Hindu, "high and low" against the Muslim other (Ibid).

Engineer in his analysis of the 2002 riots drew some interesting conclusions. He says that the sheer level of violence unleashed upon the Muslims in 2002 was unprecedented and so was the complicity of the Police. The analysis also brought to the fore the role of political leaders and government. He says that in all his years of riots reporting he had never witnessed "ministers being accused of leading the mob" (Engineer,2002,p.5053). Writing on the government's role he notes that "though we have witnessed government inaction or indifference such as in Mumbai and other riots we have never seen governmental machinery involved in executing the riots and the chief minister justifying it instead of controlling it" (Engineer, 2002,p.5053). Wilkinson (2004) in his analysis of communal violence had come to the conclusion that the greater the party

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<sup>27</sup> Apart from the usual looting and burning of Muslim shops and establishments, acid, crude bombs, gas cylinders were all used in the violence. One of the most brutal incident was the Gulmarg society incident, where 43 people were burnt alive including Congress MP Ahsan Jafri (Yagnik and Sheth, 2002,p1009).

competition in a state the greater the protection minorities receive in the face of violence. The two party system with BJP being the stronger party which emerged in the state from the 1990s onward made the minorities more vulnerable in the state. Tanika Sarkar writes that the events of Gujarat in 2002 was also indicative of the "strength of the Sangh parivar, its firmness of resolve, its ideological consistency" (2002, p.2873). Chandoke adds that unlike earlier riots which remained confined to "old Ahmedabad, particularly the walled city or industrial areas", the 2002 riots spread to other parts of the city as well (2009,p.100). Field et.al argue that the level of violence was higher in "integrated" (industrial area) colonies because of the rent controlled *chawls* set up adjacent to the mills. The mills closed down but the people kept on living in these *chawls* (2008,p.506). External developments resulted in growing "dislike and fear" which led to heightened incidents of violence in these integrated neighborhoods in 2002 (Ibid).

Gujarat, 2002 was also set apart from the other incidents of violence because of the nature of violence perpetrated on women and children. Survivor stories of rape, molestation and grave physical abuse have been written and rewritten. In many cases the women were killed but when they survived they sought help from the police which was denied to most. On the role of police Sarkar writes, "The police, however, do not admit FIRs on rape, a senior officer claims that mobs have no time for raping, and that Hindus, moreover, do not rape" (2002, p.2875). Sarkar concludes that a pattern emerges from these various incidents of violence against women. Women's bodies became sites of "inexhaustible violence" with various forms of torture. Secondly, sexual and reproductive organs of the women were savagely mutilated. Thirdly, a different form of violence perpetrated on these women was by killing their children in front of them (Sarkar, 2002, p.2875). Sarkar suggests that the large scale violence on women can be traced back to the myth of "Muslim fertility" and to check the growth rate of Muslim population (Ibid).

Ipshita Chatterjee in her analysis of the communal violence, suggests that the closing down of mills has led to the "informalization" of labour which then led to an "individualization of a class of industrial workers (both Hindus and Muslims)..." (2009, p.150). Chatterjee, suggests that this breakdown of the working relations among the workers has also led to the disintegration of the social and personal relationships. The people who worked together were now competitors in the informal sector as they competed for "similar jobs like vending, selling used clothes and driving auto-rikshaws" (Ibid). Taking a cue for Varshney's (2002) analysis of social relations and

their effect on communal situation in the a city space, Chatterjee suggests that the growing social gap between the Hindu and Muslim communities have also resulted in "erosion of public spaces interaction" and "promoted individualization and inter-community separation" (Ibid,p.151). The riots of 2002 further consolidated this process as many Hindus would not employ Muslims and displaced Muslims found it difficult to go work in the city. The spaces of interaction thus shrunk further. The segregation of the city into Hindu and Muslim areas is so deeply entrenched that, the displaced people of the "Sabarmati Riverfront Development Project" appealed to the government to be sent back to their "own" areas (Editorial, Economic and Political Weekly, 2009,p.10). The displaced people who were allotted houses in suburban Ahmedabad, kept appealing to the government to be allowed to live in areas they felt secure in. The Hindus wanted to live in "Hindu Ahmedabad" and the Muslims in "Muslim Ahmedabad" (Ibid). The ghettoization process has been the result of the many communal disturbances in the city but the process was consolidated with the communal violence of 2002. Inter-communal ghettoization has led to "pockets of particular communities and castes" in the city (Vithayathil and Singh,2012,p.64). The BJP was also able to exploit electoral success in the aftermath of the violence, doing significantly better in the riot affected parts of the state.<sup>28</sup>

The riots in Gujarat left a large number of people homeless and living in refugee colonies all over Ahmedabad city and Gujarat. Most of the internally displaced people belonged to the minority community and settled in minority community predominant areas. The 2002 riots led to the complete separation of the city into Hindu areas and Muslim areas, a process which had started long back. The refugee colonies were wound up quickly and the refugees were handed very less in terms of compensation. Islamic Religious Committee helped build colonies for the Muslim refugees in the outskirts of the city which had very poor living condition (Chandhoke et. al., 2007). The Islamic Religious Committee often had their "own set of conditionalities" on refugees who wanted to live in these colonies (Ibid).

### **Civil Society Action**

Ahmedabad has had a rich history of civil society action. By the 1990s many important NGOs were functioning in Ahmedabad and engaging with various aspects of the society. NGOs

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<sup>28</sup> In Ahmedabad, BJP won 17 seats, 4 more than the 1998 elections and a vote share of 60.1% (Kumar, 2003, p.271).

like CHETNA, SAATH, AWAG, St. Xavier's Social Service Society, SEWA had been working with all sections of society and dealing with a wide range of issues. However communal harmony building or as such dealing with communal violence itself had never been on the agenda of any of these NGOs. In the past when various other incidents of violence took place in the city it was the minority religious organizations which had come forward for relief work. However that all changed with the Gujarat carnage of 2002. The incidents of 2002 received widespread media coverage and the response of civil society to the incidents was also unprecedented. Civil society organizations and NGOs from Gujarat and the rest of the country joined hands in relief and rehabilitation efforts in 2002. It is also after 2002 that communal harmony building efforts became an important part of the discourse and programs of various organizations. Organizations like *Sabrang*, *Safar*, *Darshan* have all made important contributions to the discourse on communal violence and harmony building. *Sabrang* has actively taken part in legal cases coming out of the 2002 violence. *Darshan*, a cultural organization, has been trying to spread the message of communal harmony through various plays, film festivals and written material. *Safar* has been involved with Muslim women and work for their empowerment. *Safar* also runs training programs in secular education. The two organizations which have been selected for the present study are *Janvikas* and Centre for Development. Both these organizations have been functioning in Ahmedabad for long time. Although communal harmony building did not feature as their initial agenda both the organizations became involved at the community level in harmony building after 2002.

*Janvikas*, was set up in 1987 as primarily a "national resource and support organization, primarily for setting up, supporting, incubating and nurturing strategic development interventions in response to emerging socio-economic-political realities" (*Janvikas* website). *Janvikas* has been working with various marginalized sections from the very beginning. Hence most of *Janvikas'* programs are centered around the welfare and upliftment of vulnerable sections of society. Dalits, Muslims, Children, Women, Internally Displaced People and youth are the target of most of the programs of *Janvikas*. The programs are centered around capacity and perspective building. The programs are designed to create grassroots leaders among the communities who can then take up the cause of their own communities.

Centre for Development was established in 1996 in order to address the issue of child labour in the poorer sections of Ahmedabad. In the process of dealing with this problem CFD can to understand that communal violence, unemployment, displacement and evection of the urban poor were all contributing factors to child labour. One could not tackle the problem of child labour without addressing the issues of the urban poor. Thus, CFD stated working with the vulnerable sections of the society especially children, women and youth. Child's right has still remained an important focus point but CFD has also worked towards providing trainings to youth to increase employability and with women on issues of domestic violence. Post 2002, CFD has been able to integrate their work with goals of communal harmony building. Community advocacy and creation of community based organizations has been the focus of CFD.

Both *Janvikas* and CFD have been working in Ahmedabad for a long time and have had to evolve and reinvent in accordance with the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the city. The organizations have been able to gain a certain kind of trust among the vulnerable communities because of their long association. These two organizations have been able to focus on the creation of community based organizations and community advocacy to spread the message of diversity and communal harmony. Hence these two organizations are perfect specimens for the present study. These organizations focus on the marginalized, working with the internally displaced, women, youth and children. A number of people working in harmony building efforts have also themselves witnessed violence first hand. They have worked in the various relief camps set up in Gujarat in the immediate aftermath of 2002. Their initiation into harmony building work has been because of their involvement with the victims' relief and rehabilitation. This has helped them when in the later years reconciliation was attempted in the various communally disturbed areas of Ahmedabad. First hand experiences of violence have also shaped their own approach to the question of harmony building. Immediately after the riots, however, most of the relief and rehabilitation work was carried on by conglomerates of organizations instead of any one organization. Unlike elsewhere already existing organization had to come together in response to the crisis at hand. Hence it is important to explore the relief and rehabilitation work which took place at this time.

### **Times of Heightened Communal Tension**

Gujarat experienced one of its worst incidents of communal violence in 2002. State inaction and continued rioting left many dead and the after effects of which are being felt till date. Although Gujarat had been witness to vicious communal violence in 1969 and all through the 1980s, role of civil society was minimal during and after the rioting. Prior to 2002, it was the Muslim religious organizations which came forward to help riot affected Muslims. However the 2002 Gujarat massacre invoked a kind of response from the civil society which the state had not seen prior to the 2001 Bhuj earthquake. A process which had started with the Bhuj earthquake gathered momentum in the days following the initial rioting in late February. Civil society organizations from within and outside the state came together in relief and rehabilitation efforts during and in the days immediately after the rioting. Two very unique and interesting efforts were the Gujarat Harmony Project (funded by Care) and the *Aman Samudaya* (funded by Action Aid). In the absence of state initiatives towards rehabilitation both these initiatives brought together multiple organizations and volunteers who started a process of relief and rehabilitation among those affected by riots. Both Gujarat Harmony Project (GHP) and *Aman Samudaya* (AS) had short term and long term goals and functioned till at least four-five years after the riots. These two experiments also helped create a new generation of civil society activists in Gujarat and specifically Ahmedabad. Young individuals who had lived through the horrors of 2002 and received training under the GHP or AS later on utilized these skills to set up new organizations or work on communal harmony building from within already existing organizations. It therefore becomes very pertinent to take a closer look at these two initiatives.

## **GUJARAT HARMONY PROJECT**

Care's vision in Gujarat was that of a "collaborative civil-society partnership which works to mitigate the impact of conflict and facilitate reconciliation" and the result was the creation of the GHP (Ahmed, 2004,p.95). The GHP brought together ten diverse organizations which worked towards providing immediate relief and rehabilitation for those displaced. Eight NGOS, one trust fund and a feminist organization came together and with financial help from Royal Netherlands Embassy started relief work in the various camps of the internally displaced in Ahmedabad and three other districts of Gujarat. However, for the purpose of the present study only the activities in Ahmedabad will be taken into consideration. T.K.Oommen writes that the broad framework of the project at this point was "immediate relief, livelihood restoration or

rehabilitation and social reconciliation" (2008,p.76). Oommen suggests that the GHP was an attempt at conflict transformation and achieving sustainable peace. What made GHP stand apart from all other efforts at this time was that "relief and rehabilitation was viewed as a stepping stone to reconciliation" (Ibid). An advisory board helped maintain a clear direction towards achieving the goals of GHP. The board consisted of members from diverse walks of life including academician, health care personnel and government servants.

Sara Ahmed in her evaluation of the GHP in 2004 enumerates the strategies used to achieve the specific goals of relief, rehabilitation and reconciliation. The strategies focused on education and livelihood production, creation of cultural platforms, promotion of institutional network building, addressing the mental health issues arising from the trauma of the violence, institutional capacity building of GHP partners and the creation of strong leadership (Ahmed, 2004,p.97). Ahmed suggests that the theory underlying the GHP's social change objective is that of "retributive justice" (Ibid). Retributive justice helps people understand the violence and acknowledge wrong doings of the perpetrators in order to reconcile with the present and help create a society where the victims and perpetrators live in peace. Ahmed summarizes:

Restorative justice helps a society to live with a violent past, not by forgetting it, but rather by understanding the reasons for transgression, admitting the brutal loss of humanity, and projecting new meaning into the present (Carnegie Council 1999). While retributive justice is offender-specific and (as we have seen in the recent riots in Gujarat) subject to all sorts of legal and political manoeuvres, restorative justice involves rebuilding relations between perpetrators and victims, through processes of reconciliation aimed at transforming society. In this vision, justice is seen as a set of dynamic and 'participatory processes through which we develop the desire and ability to live peacefully and productively in our community with those who have harmed us, and/or those we have harmed' (Forget 2003: 3) (2004,p.97).

In his detailed narrative of the GHP, Oommen points out that the project had both strategic and operational partners. While the strategic partners provided the knowledge and skill set, the operational partners were in charge of execution of the programme through "training and handholding" (Oommen, 2008,p.106). The two strategic partners were *Unnati* and NIMHANS. *Unnati*, an Ahmedabad based NGO was well known and had the required skill set. It provided

logistical help such as office space as well as helped in monitoring the implementation of projects and drafting reports (Ibid,107). The National Institute for Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) based in Bengaluru was the other strategic partner. NIMHANS provided techniques to deal with trauma and trained volunteers in such techniques. At the same time NIMHANS also "monitored the normalization activities of NGO partners" (Ibid).

The other NGOs who were part of the implementation process were also varied and diverse. Development oriented NGOs like *Sachetana*, *Sath*, *Samarth*, Centre for Development (CFD) and St. Xavier's Social Service Society (XSSS) got together with feminist organizations such as Ahmedabad Women's Action Group (AWAG) and *Olakh. Kamdar Swasthya Suraksha Mandal* (KSSM), an organization working for the welfare of the Textile workers also became part of the project. Two trust funds - Tribhuvandas Foundation and Gujarat *Sarvajanik* Welfare Trust (GSWT) were also among the partners. Most of these organization were already functioning even before the 2002 communal violence. While AWAG was the only group which had any direct programmes related to communal harmony building, most other organizations were engaging with various kinds of developmental issues and working with the urban poor. Centre for development, formed in the year 1992 was one of the new organizations along with GSWT which was part of the Gujarat *Sarvajanik* Relief Committee for earthquake relief work. GSWT was primarily a Muslim organization established by Muslim business men.

In the initial days major resource concentration was on relief work and the beneficiaries were mostly Muslim individuals and families living in various camp sites in the city. The rehabilitation and reconciliation work involved both Hindus and Muslims. Oommen writes that most of the beneficiaries were low income group casual workers and daily wage earners (Oommen, 2008,p.90).

In order to understand the work which GHP did in Gujarat and specifically Ahmedabad we also need to have an idea about the principles and strategies which were being employed. The key strategies employed by CARE and enumerated by Oommen (2008,p.90-95) are:

1. Do-no-harm- A "harms-benefits analysis" is essential to understand the impact for CARE projects. This analysis in turn uses tools like "Capacities and Vulnerabilities" and "Dividers and Connecters". Capacities and vulnerabilities tools are used to identify the specific characteristic of

a community. It helps identify the specific physical, mental and social capacities which help overcome obstacles and pursue a certain goal. Vulnerabilities are those factors which are external and mostly out of human control but affects human capabilities greatly. The Dividers and Connectors are tools which can help in identifying the specific objectives of the organization. The dividers will help realize what could divide people and be detrimental to society. Likewise connectors help figuring out what could work for a community to come together and connect.

2. Restorative Justice- This has already been identified as the principle on which GHP functioned.

3. Coordination between all key players- The GHP was able to establish a kind of relation between all its partner NGOs and NGOs working within relief camps to provide support to the riot effected. Oommen suggests that GHP followed a principle of "moving in a coordinated manner" (2008,p.92). This according to Oommen helped in creating a better process of communication among the GHP staff and partner organizations. At the same time GHP was able to create a platform for individuals and organizations.

4. Flexible Approach- This GHP understood the needs of the target population and acted in accordance with these needs.

5. Social Management Process- Since the GHP was continuously evolving project responding to the needs as they arose, the SMP emerges as an important tool. The SMP evolved as "a process-guiding tool to continuously monitor and steer the projects towards the realization of its social objectives" (2008,p.93). To this end GHP held regular meetings with its partners and conducted field visits regularly to assess the situation and take actions in accordance to the situation.

6. Sustainability- Any work for rehabilitation had to be a long term effort and should have had to continue even after the aid organizations had departed. The main idea was to not provide short term fixes. Instead effort was made to understand root causes of violence and to provide long term livelihood creation options.

7. Inclusiveness- Oommen suggests that an effort was made to bring "within its ambit as many social groups as possible" (2008,p.94). This bringing together of various sections was considered as a start of the reconciliation process.

8. Community Participation - A final strategy was to involve the community in the reconciliation process. When the community is made a stakeholder the peace process is expected to run smoother.

Relief work which lasted for about three months concentrated on providing basic amenities to families living in relief camps. Relief work involved providing sheltering materials in relief camps; access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities; food; and medical care. In these camps children were also helped with coping with the horrors of the communal clashes. In the next phase rehabilitation and reconciliation work was taken up. Partner organizations helped in reconstructing, repairing and building houses for those left homeless after the communal violence. At the same time vocational trainings were conducted to help in the process of livelihood creation. Trainings were also given out for "skill-upgrading" (Oommen, 2008:98).

In the reconciliation phase GHP and partner NGOs took step towards bringing communities together. To this extent partner NGOs conducted a series of programmes in the worst affected areas. For example, "*Aman Bhoj*" was organized in Naroda Patiya where Indus were invited (Oommen, 2008,p.103). Elsewhere, joint *Iftar* parties and joint celebration of other Hindu festivals were organized. Sports was also used as a tool to bring communities together. The main aim at this stage was to bring two communities together on a common platform and at the same time involve communities in the peace process itself. To this extent local peace committees were formed which became "focal points for disseminating the message of peace and communal harmony" (Ibid). Initiatives like *Nagar Ekta Manch* and local youth groups helped spread to message of harmony and prevent rumors from spreading. Another key component was to address the psychological issues related to the riots and the trauma. Models and methods created by NIMHANS was used to train partner NGOs who in turn were able to help those deeply affected by violence.

Ahmed suggests that women played a very important role in this reconciliation process. She suggests that women in lower economic strata - both urban and rural - were one of the most riot affected sections of the society (Ahmed, 2004,p.98). Most NGOs also had previous experience with working with these women. Hence when it came to reconciliation work the partner NGOs sought out these existing connections. AWAG held "social reconciliation workshops" which focused on myth busting (Ibid). Through this process AWAG was able to

identify interested and responsible women who were given leadership training and who then formed mixed women's peace committees in the *challis* of Ahmedabad. *Samarth*, another partner NGO, created separate self help groups for Hindu women and Muslim women and then brought them together to celebrate festivals together. *Saath* brought together Hindu women leaders from *Sakhi Mahila Sangathan* and Youth Leaders who then entered riot affected areas and helped in the relief work. Later on these leaders were able to create community based organizations in these areas. Despite initial distrust, the efforts of the leaders brought about changes in the mind set of community.

### ***AMAN SAMUDAYA***

A 2002 pamphlet of *Aman Samudaya* suggests that it "is an attempt of civil society, concerned individuals and social organizations to build the atmosphere of care and protection for the victims of violence to rebuild their lives". Immediately after violence broke out in Gujarat, a Citizen's Initiative was formed which was a collective of twenty three NGOs and concerned citizens. The Citizen's Initiative worked in various relief camps in the city of Ahmedabad with funding provided by Action Aid India. At the very beginning Citizen's Initiative (CI) along with Action Aid India (AAI) worked towards meeting the basic necessities of people living in relief camps. Medical support, food support and, providing clean water were the initial objectives. Then when the state government failed to make any proper shelter arrangements for the people in relief camps, CI and AAI stepped in. CI and AAI got together and along with all partner NGOS and volunteers were able to build shelters with plastic canvas and bamboo scaffoldings.

*Aman Samudaya's* intervention into the communities immediately after the riots had far reaching affects. *Aman Samudaya* created a carder of peace volunteers called *Aman Pathiks* who received capacity building trainings and supported by designated mentors. They received trainings in legal aid, psychosocial counseling and approached to rehabilitation and reconciliation. These *Aman Pathiks* have emerged as a new generation of civil society activists and continuously engage with problems of development and communal harmony even till date. A conversation with any of these *Aman Pathiks* reveal that the training received at this point stayed on with them long after the discontinuation of the *Aman Samudaya* programme. Two such *Aman Pathiks* were Hosefa and Shenaz. Both on the verge of completing high school when riots affected their surroundings became *Aman Pathiks* and were associated with Aman Samudaya till

the very end. Hosefa works specifically on communal harmony in Ahmedabad with *Janvikas* where he is the coordinator of the communal harmony building programme. Shenaz has moved on to development oriented work now working with the XSSS. Hosefa and Shenaz both confide that the training and experience gathered while working with *Aman Samudaya* filled them with a kind of passion to bring about changes in their immediate society (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July, 2015).

*Aman Samudaya* had a three tier managerial structure consisting of the Advisory Committee, Programme Coordination Committee and programme support team. The Advisory Committee was the policy creating body which consisted of concerned citizens and representatives from various organization. The Programme Coordination Committee was to provide support in the execution of the programmes. The Program Support team was to mentor the *Aman Pathiks*. The programme support team consisted of members who specialized in various aspect of the relief work. Various sub teams within the Programme Support team provided necessary training to the *Aman Pathiks* according to the needs of job at hand. So, for example there were separate teams for community capacity building, legal aid and psycho-social counseling.

About 200 *Aman Pathiks* constantly engaged with the communities for about six months. Through these interactions in every locality responsible and interested people got connected the process of harmony building as *Aman Sathis*. A year later when the number of *Aman Paathiks* came down to 60, they continued their work in communities with the help and support of these *Aman Sathis*. Action Aid along with *Aman Samudaya* worked to reach relief to about 20,000 families in urban Ahmedabad and 5000 people in rural Gujarat. Most of the early efforts went into filling the gaps which were left due to state inaction. After initial efforts of relief work Action Aid also followed similar strategies as GHP. Efforts were made towards providing housing and livelihood support; psychosocial counseling; providing legal aid; and community based rehabilitation efforts.

In the rehabilitation process *Aman Samudaya* identified individuals and families and depending on their situation decided the kind of help they needed. Families who had lost their house and livelihood because of the violence and was yet to receive any compensation from or very meager compensation from the government; single women; women who had faced sexual

violence; orphaned children; families where children were having to work to support the family; family who were ousted from their rental homes; families having to stay in relief camps either because of fear of returning or because of having no home left to go back to, were all identified as vulnerable. 2000 such families were identified and were provided with housing, livelihood ,medical and educational support. Families were provided an asset and some start up funds to help in the process of livelihood creation. The annual report talks of a man who had lost his arm and was provided with capital to start his own *pan* shop.

In its first year, *Aman Samudaya* was able to achieve some important landmarks. Soon after relief and rehabilitation *Aman Samudaya* had a two point agenda: 1. To spread information about state excesses and crimes of communal forces and to bring national and international attention to this. 2. To bring about changes in the communally charged atmosphere in the state through peace initiatives and various cultural interventions. To meet these goals *Aman Samudaya* came up with a host of activities including participating in citizens tribunals and peace festivals. *Aman Samudaya* took active part in the Citizen's tribunal by facilitating the deposition of the victims in front of the tribunal. The tribunal heard testimonies from relief camp organizers and concerned groups and citizens as well. The findings of the tribunal was published in the form of a report which clearly stated that the State government was in full collusion with the perpetrators of violence and had active role to play in the incidents of February-March 2002. A very important initiative taken by *Aman Samudaya* at this time was the "International initiative for Justice". *Aman Samudaya* along with other women's groups held a hearing by a women's panel focusing specially on women victims. *Aman Samudaya* facilitated the collection of testimonials of women victims of sexual violence during the riots.

### **Aftermath of the Communal Outburst**

Most of the effort immediately after a communal outburst is directed towards relief and rehabilitation work. In case of Gujarat most civil society organizations got involved in the relief and rehabilitation work right after the 2002 carnage. The next stage involves getting legal relief, fact finding repots and documentation of violence. Gujarat had attracted a lot of media attention and is one of the most documented incidents. Fact finding committees were constituted and reports were published by various different sources. Organizations also tried getting legal aid to the survivors. *Aman Pathiks* who had undergone legal aid training also helped people claim their

rehabilitation packages from the government. *Aman Pathiks* helped victims lodge FIRs and collect physical evidence in support of claims to compensation for burn and other such grave injuries. The annual report mentions that in the first one year *Aman Samudaya* had helped 30 families to successfully claim their compensation money. Sometimes due to error on part of the government families received lesser money than they deserved. *Aman Samudaya* took this up with the collectors office and sent several delegations to argue for increase in the meager housing compensation. The *Aman Pathiks* also helped 200 women avail their widow pension. *Janvikas* and CFD part of these efforts and later on continued on their own to tackle some of these issues arising out of the communal violence.

### **Justice for Human Rights Violation, Advocacy and Legal Aid**

The Center for Social Justice was set up as a unit of *Janvikas* in 1994. The CSJ has been instrumental in working towards advocating for human rights and working towards strengthening the legal system. The CJS has now emerged into a separate organization but its goals have remained the same. As a unit of *Janvikas*, CJS conducted various trainings for government institutions like the Sardar Patel Institute of Public Administration; community radio reporters; students of social work; teachers in district schools; and various NGOs and CBOs. The topics of these trainings ranged from women and law; land rights; judicial advocacy; RTI; Domestic Violence act etc. The CSJ also conducted training with teachers in order to prepare a curriculum which was sensitive towards diversity, peace and rights to citizenship. The CSJ published reading materials in the form of a comic book which sought to create a better understanding about diversity, stories of conflict, negotiation and discrimination. Posters indicating the fundamental duties were are created. Various other reading materials regarding right to food, right to educations, right to health and livelihood were also prepared. The CSJ held legal awareness camps in order to spread a general awareness about equality and justice. In the aftermath of the Gujarat carnage in 2002, large numbers of people were left homeless or unable to return to their homes. These were the Internally Displaced People (IDP) of Gujarat. The CSJ from the very beginning dedicated a lot of effort into getting justice for the IDPs. The CJS along with another NGO ANHAD in 2007 published the report titled "The Uprooted: Caught Between Existence and Denial, a Document on the State of the Internally Displaced in Gujarat" which shed some light on the plight of the internally displaced. The CSJ was instrumental working

together with the National Minority Commission to rehabilitate the internally displaced. The CSJ was also involved in bringing to light the plight of women in the rehabilitation colonies. CSJ worked in closely with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in order to bring to light the poor condition of women in these colonies. The CSJ was also involved in making sure the IDPs were given the necessary relief packages. Even after CSJ became a separate entity outside *Janvikas* it has kept on working for the IDPS. *Janvikas* on the other hand has continued its work with the IDPs and released a survey report in 2012 to shed some light into the condition of the IDPs 10 years after riots.

The 2012 status report was prepared to get a clear understanding of the kind living conditions of the IDPs all over Gujarat. The report gave detailed statistical account of housing, sanitation, water supply, health, education and income employment status of the internally displaced. The survey data showed a clear picture of the condition of these IDPs and the government involvement in their rehabilitation. The survey found out that a lot of facilities were being provided by private organizations and government involvement was lacking in a lot of areas. For example in the Ahmedabad district IDP colonies toilets were built by private organizations and the electricity was self-financed or private organization funded. At the same time government provided water supply to 8 of the 15 colonies, whereas the rest were taken care of by private organizations<sup>29</sup>. Wherever there were approach and internal roads they were built by local government bodies however most colonies did not have any approach road or internal roads. Health facilities were poor with only two colonies having health centers within two kilometers of the colony and none of the colonies having access to health insurance cards. Government had also not made any effort help the IDPs get back to their native places or recover property lost in native places. Efforts towards the economic rehabilitation of IDPs were also absent. The *Janvikas* report analyzed this data in comparison to the data collected from other districts and came to the conclusion that more had been done for the IDPs than in any other districts. However there was more to be done yet. The need for the government to take some concrete steps to make sure that the internally displaced don't suffer any more was felt more and more.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://www.janvikas.in/download/status-rep.pdf>; <http://www.janvikas.in/download/annrep12-13.pdf>

In a 2013 report *Janvikas* suggests that nearly 2 lakh people were internally displaced within 2 years following the 2002 riots. After 13 years, nearly 16087 people still live in temporary shelters built by religious organizations (Status report on Internally Displaced, p.4).<sup>30</sup> These temporary shelters lack very basic living amenities and the lack of initiative on part of the government has led to further woes for the internally displaced of Gujarat. *Janvikas* has been working with the internally displaced of Gujarat for a while. Their objectives are enumerated as thus:

Access to basic amenities and housing rights; Access to socio-economic rights; Community organization and leadership promotion at colony level; Addressing issues of violence against women and strengthening their organization and leadership (*Mahila Samajik Nyay Manch*).

The biggest problem in front of the internally displaced is that of housing. Difficulties in gaining access to basic facilities, lack of proper habitation facilities, lack of knowledge about government schemes and the inability to access them along with threat of eviction and discrepancies in government records add to the woe of these internally displaced. *Janvikas* has been working with the IDPs to resolve some of their issues. Regular meetings at three levels - state, community and district- help to create a clear channel of communication between the IDPs, government organizations and *Janvikas*. *Janvikas* has been trying to resolve the housing issues of the internally displaced by securing permanent housing for them under the "Regularization of the Irregular Construction Bill". The meetings help *Janvikas* to educate people of their rights and government procedures to be availed in order to receive housing. *Janvikas* also meet government officials on a regular basis in order to solve any issues rising out of the transfer process. The biggest hurdle in the way however has been the trustees of the land themselves who refuse to transfer ownership. In the 2014-15 report *Janvikas* points out that more families were added to the applicants lists for the internally displaced however the non objection certificates prove to be the biggest nightmare<sup>31</sup>. Apart from housing facilities, *Janvikas* also looks into the implementation of right to education and Prime Minister's 15 point goals for minorities. Even after 13 years *Janvikas* constantly strives towards achieving these goals.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.janvikas.in/download/status-rep.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> *Janvikas* annual report (2014-15), <http://www.janvikas.in/download/Annual%20Report%202014-15.pdf>

## **Times of Relative Peace**

During times of relative peace the main objective of civil society organizations is to work towards creating spaces of free dialogue exchange between communities. Civil society organizations usually stress on issues which are common to both communities and try to figure out a common ground on which two communities can come together. The CSOs also identify vulnerable sections who are more susceptible to the communal propaganda and work with them towards strengthening them against the communal onslaught. During this time most of the energies and resources of CSOs are directed towards developmental activities and awareness building and public opinion formation activities. Developmental activities often serve the dual purpose of getting people together on a common platform based on common issues of everyday existence and also strengthening the vulnerable sections economically. Awareness building activities often help understand the other open up spaces for dialogue between communities.

## **Developmental Activities**

Development oriented activities are often a big part of the process of harmony building. Often the majority participants in violence and worst affected by the violence are those living in economically backward areas of the city. Lack of proper education and the inaccessibility to a steady source of income are identified as cause which make these vulnerable sections even more vulnerable. Hence a major part of civil society initiatives in harmony building is also directed towards specific problems of these economically backward sections. Keeping this in mind both *Janvikas* and Centre for Development have been constantly engaging with the most vulnerable sections of the society. The main thrust of their work is to equip the vulnerable sections with tools which can be used by these sections for their own economic betterment.

*Kadam* Education Initiative emerged out of a need to provide much needed educational support to children in the colonies of the internally displaced and those displaced due to developmental ventures of the government. The CFD has been involved in child rights activism in the city since 1996. Bombay hotel area and Piplaj are two areas where CFD has been very involved at the community level. Bombay Hotel area near Lal Darwaja is mostly inhabited by victims of the 2002 Gujarat carnage. A 2011-2012 report of CFD suggest that the area had become a Muslim Ghetto with about 20,000 families living with no civic amenities (Annual

Report, 20011-12, p.5).<sup>32</sup> Piplaj, close to the Ahmedabad- Vadodra highway, is another area which the CDF has been working in. Most families settled in Piplaj have been subjected to forced evection due to various developmental projects undertaken by the government. The Piplaj area is a "transit colony" where people after getting evicted are sent to live in various makeshift arrangements (Ibid). Most of these places do not have many of the basic amenities like public health centers, schools and *anganwadis*. The education centers were opened up in these areas with the purpose of preventing child labour. These education centers serve as transient arrangements for the children before government run schools open up in these colonies. The Kadam education centers later emerged out of various interventions by CFD in these colonies to address child labour issues. The teachers or "*Bal Dosts*" are trained to interact keeping in mind the motto of the learning centers which is to provide "joyful learning pedagogy" (CFD Annual Report, 2014-15). The teachers are also involved in the communities and build awareness around child rights issues in these communities. The ECs strive towards providing the children with a safe environment which can cater towards the all round development of the child. The ECs work towards integrating the children into mainstream educational institutions. The ECs have grown in numbers and in 2007 *Kadam* Education Trust emerged as an autonomous initiative under CFD.

The ECs simultaneously impart peace education as part of their curriculum. in the aftermath of the 2002 riots the internally displaced people settle in colonies in various places and CFD became involved in these colonies looking into the welfare of the children. The children were encouraged to participate in celebrating national days festivals together. Joint celebration of festivals is an important tool to nurture respect towards each other's religious and cultural practices. The CFD reports admit that there was initial hesitation on part of parents to allow inter-communal integration which the ECs were attempting. For example, the resistance to children of various communities -Hindus, Muslims, Dalits- sitting together in the same class was especially very strong. However the *Bal Dosts* and their community level advocacy work helped CFD cross this hurdle (Annual Report, 2011-12,p.5-6).

Often youth become the main perpetrators of violence in times of heightened communal tension. Unemployment and lack of proper education make youth a vulnerable category. *Janvikas* has a clear understanding of this fact and has been thus working towards empowering

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<sup>32</sup> [http://www.cfdngo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/002\\_CFD\\_Activity\\_Report\\_2011\\_2012.pdf](http://www.cfdngo.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/002_CFD_Activity_Report_2011_2012.pdf)

the youth from backward section. The "Youth Development" and "Conflict Transformation" program was initiated in the year 2004 with the purpose of "empowering youth from marginalized community as well as promoting a culture of conflict transformation among youth from diverse backgrounds" (Annual Report,2014-2015). To rectify the unemployment problem among the marginalized youth of the city *Janvikas* had been working towards increasing the employability of the youth. The program was later converted into a separate cell within *Janvikas* and named "U-Live". The program sought to bring youth from various vulnerable sections together on a common platform to give them an opportunity to interact and relate to each other, understand the reasons of conflict and ways to resolve it. Vocational training and job placements were the main focus while trying to increase the employability of the youth.

In the initials stages of the program fellows and trainers went from door to door to counsel and motivate youth to work towards gaining employment. Interested youth were given information of various job opportunities. Community meeting, leaflets, posters and even street plays were used for promotional purposes. Group meetings to discuss job trends and the necessary requirements of the job were held regularly. Modules were created following generic modules and modified to include values and perspective building. Training for trainers to ensure proper implementation of modules were also part of the process.

In their effort to bring the marginalized youth into the mainstream, *Janvikas* also promoted leadership development skills in among the youth. The leadership development kills are also directed towards creating a sense of active citizenship among the youth. In 2014-2015 the focus was on helping youth organize local level activities as well as raise funds for the Youth Development Centers. Leadership camps directed towards perspective building and enhancing sustainability of YDCs were held through the year. The youth leaders are constantly encouraged to take up activities at the local level and to get engaged with community advocacy work. The vision is to develop YDCs into "self-sustained youth spaces" which are managed and funded by the youth themselves. Perspective building workshops addressed issues of communalism and gender. Workshops on conflict transformation and leadership building were also organized. A "filmography" event was organized to shed some light on issues of gender, dalit ideology, communalism and development (Annual Report, 2014-15).

Mushtaq, a young member of *Janvikas*, also runs an organization of his own. The National Peace Group was established in 2007 and works out of Gomtipur. Most of the other members of the CBO are also young, educated, residents of Gomtipur who joined the organization out a need to do something for their community. Mushtaq himself has been associated with NGOs for a while and admits it is the love for theater which led him down this path. *Janvikas* trainings have helped shape the understanding of society and communal harmony for Mushtaq and other members of his group. Fehmida<sup>33</sup>, a fresh masters in commerce, lives in Gomtipur and has been associated with NPG for about four years. In 2012, she also attended a training camp organized by *Janvikas*. The training brought together people from various organizations from various parts of Gujarat and focused on the setting up of NGOs. Raising funds for events and setting up of budgets were the primary focus. Jignesh<sup>34</sup>, another young volunteer, has attended a different training program which focused on religion and communal harmony. He admits that the five day training helped him gain some fresh perspective of religion and how it is played out on a daily basis. The understanding gained from these trainings helped these young activists to achieve a certain kind of understanding about communities and society which in turn helped nuance the functions of their CBO. The NPG performs street plays on contemporary social issues, runs summer camps for children of the locality and various interactive activities among the kids to bring children from various backgrounds together and at the same time take up community advocacy work. The training received from *Janvikas* help CBOs sharpen their focus and streamline their activities.

Providing vocational training to women and the youth has been on the agenda for both *Janvikas* and CFD. The displacement of people that occurred right after 2002 left a lot of people without any livelihood. People living in various camp sites and refugee colonies had left their source of income at places where they no longer could go back to. Hence once of the main focus of civil society groups was to generate new modes of livelihood for these people which in turn required some form of vocational training. CFD's vocational training concentrated on adolescent and youth, particularly women. In 2011-12, CFD got together with BOSH Indian foundation and Functional Vocational Training and Research Society to provide vocational training for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs (CFD, Annual Report, 2011-12, p.11). Training was provided in computers,

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<sup>33</sup> Personal Interview conducted in Ahmedabad, July 26th 2015

<sup>34</sup> Personal Interview conducted in Ahmedabad, July 26th 2015

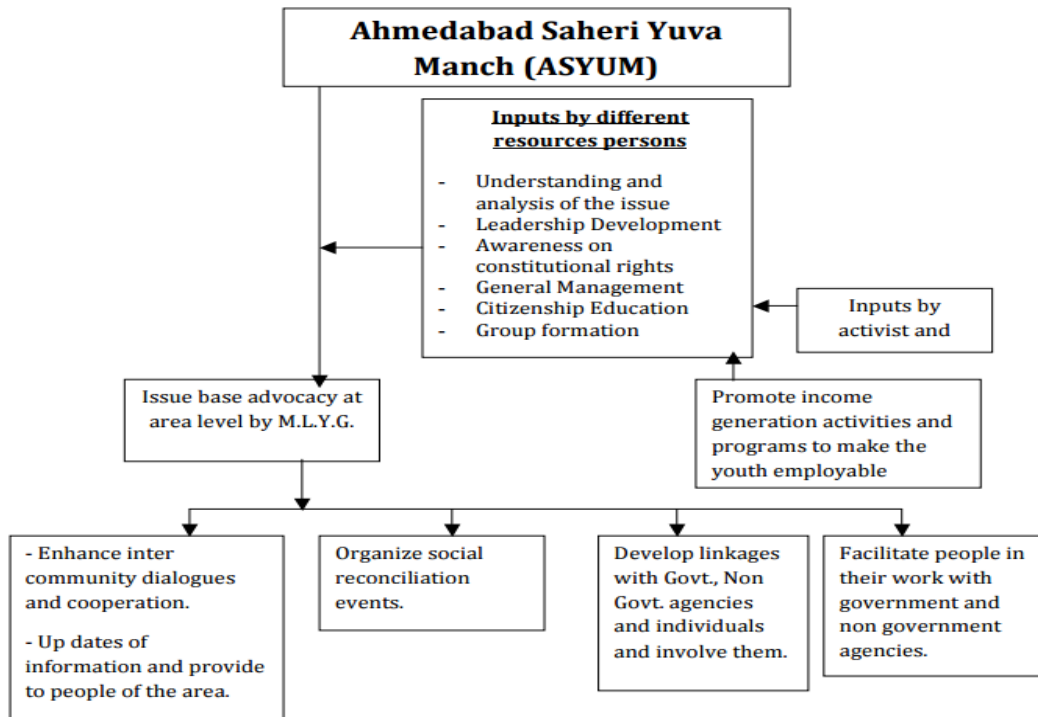
various kinds of repair jobs, various kinds of beautician jobs and the like. The training was provided keeping in mind the demand for employees in the particular sectors and the distinction between urban and rural job markets.

*Janvikas* through its Human and institutional Development Resource Centre works towards leadership building and capacity building among various community based organizations working among marginalized communities. Over the years *Janvikas* has helped many community based organizations to set up their organization. *Janvikas* primarily functions as a support system for these organizations and provides inputs on managing, organizing, funding etc of new community based organizations.

### **Awareness Building and Creation of a Public Opinion**

The CFD's Ahmedabad *Saheri Yuva Manch* and *Ekta Nari Sangathan* were both directed towards awareness building among the youth and marginalized sections (CFD website). Formation of the ASYM was aimed towards providing common platforms for interaction between communities. The CFD in its effort to foster community level advocacy work started Micro Level Youth Groups (MLYG) in various localities of Ahmedabad. By 2011 the MLYGs were running in 12 localities and together they created the ASYM which had about 2254 members (Activities Report, CFD, 2008-2011). These micro level groups were established to promote inter-community dialogues through various activities. The youth were trained in socio-political issues, citizen's rights based advocacy and various awareness building programs. The MLYG provide a platform for the youth in various localities to come together and try to solve the problems of their neighborhood. The MLYG also concentrates on cultural exchange as a way to create common platforms of dialogue exchange. Experiments such as Muslim youth putting up stalls in Hindu areas on the occasion of *rath yatra* have great symbolic value and help bridges gaps between communities. Training for trainers on peace and conflict resolution is also an important tool for knowledge dissemination. The youth leaders are also given legal training which make them aware of citizen's rights and help these youth leaders register their demands with government authorities. These youth leaders also become the link between the citizens of their areas and the various government departments and officials. The relationship between ASYM and MLYG is that of mutual codependence. The ASYM takes inputs from various sources including the MLYG in order to come up with strategies. The MLYG works at the

community level and acts as the link between the community and ASYM. The flowchart below will help explain the relationship better.



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The most interesting and successful activity of the ASYM is however the Knowledge Building Centers. Knowledge Building Centers (KBC) were set up in 10 places within the city with the vision to turn them into meeting places for the area youth. The KBCs were set up to provide employment information to the local youth. The KBCs also function as study circles where the local youth from all communities come together and discuss various contemporary issues to reach a common understanding. The Rafi Malik in a personal interview narrates how these KBCs have become the centre points of knowledge building and perspective building among the youth in the community (Ahmedabad, July,2015). He informs that not all the KBCs have a proper room from where they function. Sometimes the area "chauraha" is where magazine and newspaper stands are set up and the youth meet here on a daily basis. In some other places local people have given up rooms voluntarily to be utilized for the functioning of

<sup>35</sup> Annual Report, CFD, 2008-2011

KBCs. The enthusiasm to run the place is such that most of the functioning cost of KBCs are also borne by the members of the local youth committees.

The ENS was organized at the community level in order to provide women of marginalized sections with information about domestic violence laws and help defend the women against violence. The ENS along with the *Nari Adalat* are together responsible to disseminate knowledge about domestic violence and violence against women. The *Nari Adalat* is a core group of 11 women who are especially trained in the domestic violence act and help women through their cases (CFD website).<sup>36</sup> The ENS has a total of about 800 members. Through regular training and workshops women leaders have emerged from these members who now have the ability to fight for their rights and entitlements and talk about other issues affecting women (CFD Activities Report, 2011-12, p.10-11). In order to provide women better access to the legal system a support cell attached to the Karanj women's police station was also established. The main idea is to encourage community led advocacy. The women's organization created through the ENS has been able to register their demand for basic amenities and rehabilitation for violence affected women (Ibid). The youth and women leadership from the ASYUM and ENS have been provided training programs on advocacy, leadership development and local institution building. Armed with this knowledge both ASYUM and ENS have been able to develop leadership skills and practice community advocacy skills.

## **Observations**

In 2002, Gujarat had experienced a complete collapse of the governmental support system. The riots were aided and abetted by several key members of the government and the police were compliant by-standers. In a situation like this civil society organizations and actors from within Ahmedabad and all over India stepped in to provide support to those devastated by the violence. Civil society organizations were responsible for providing the people in refugee camps with relief of all kinds. Volunteers worked round the clock to provide refugees medical, psychological, financial and legal support. Several organizations came together to and joined hands in the relief efforts. Many young volunteers got involved in the relief process and some of

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.cfdngo.org/community-led-advocacy/>

the rehabilitation process continued for the next five years. These volunteers later went on to take active part in the developmental efforts made by civil society organizations in Ahmedabad.

Ahmedabad's civil society took notice of the communal situation of the state only in the aftermath of the incidents of 2002. However, by then the fragmentation of the social fabric had reached its culmination point. A complete geographical division of the city into Muslim Ghettos and exclusively Hindu areas had taken place. Although the process had started long back by 2002 Muslims were confined to specific mostly impoverished pockets in the city. The ghettoization of the city is a constant theme which comes up in any conversation on violence. Every conversation on communal situation of the city is marked by lived experiences of social segregation. For example, Sophia Khan in a personal interview narrates that a previous office of her organization Safar was in a Hindu dominant part of the city. When the time came for rent renewal the land lord refused to renew the rent because the organization was run by her, a Muslim lady and for the right of Muslim women (Ahmedabad, July,2015). Efforts to find other places to rent in the same area was unsuccessful. Left with no choice she shifted her office to Juhapura which is also know in Ahmedabad as mini-Pakistan. As a result her entire female Hindu staff had to quit because family members did not want them to travel to "mini-Pakistan" everyday. This of course is one of many such experiences.

Civil society organizations have achieved a lot in terms of long term rehabilitation of the internally displaces. Both *Janvikas* and CFD run programs in the communally sensitive parts of the city. Some serious steps have been taken to open up spaces of dialogue creation between communities. Symbolic acts of joint celebration of religious festivals and national days figure in a big way in the list of activities of the organizations. In terms of fighting for the rights of the internally displaced also the involvement of civil society is remarkable. However even after 13 years more has been left to be done. The lack of political initiative has however made the process more difficult. Internally displaced families still continue to live in terrible conditions. Civil society organizations have also not been able to address the issue of extreme geographical division of the city along religious lines. Most of the efforts of the organizations remain confined to a particular area. Organizations blame the lack of political will for the ghettoization of the city. However there a need to generate a public opinion in the larger social fabric. Since both *Janvikas* and CFD are organizations who decidedly work for and among the marginalized their programs

are not directed towards the middle class population of the city. Thus, there remains a need to generate a public discourse on the sharp segregation in the landscape of the city.

Both *Janvikas* and CFD depend on external funding for their operations. This leaves the organizations with a kind of obligation to oblige by the demands of the funding agencies. The Alliance for Peace and Justice is such an example. Although organizations have never hesitated to come together based on issues, long term collaborations have mostly not been taken up. In this regard the Alliance for Peace and Justice is a unique example. The CFD and four other Ahmedabad based organizations - *Darshan*, *Safar*, *Utthan* and St. Xavier's Special Service Society- along with one Mumbai based organization (Centre for Special Service Society) came together in 2012 to form the Alliance for Peace and Justice. The objective of the alliance as stated in their brochure is straight forward : To strengthen and work for a pluralistic society by creating awareness, sensitizing, networking with people and organizations with respect to equality, justice and peace. Rafi of CFD narrates in a personal interview that it took about two years of constant planning to get the organizations together under a common platform (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July2015). The organizations met on a regular basis to discuss their own work and establish an understanding of the functioning of each organization. Hiren Gandhi of *Darshan* warns at the very outset that the beginnings of the alliance are not as organic as it sounds (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July,2015). The common donor agency brought together the alliance of these organizations through with they are now trying to navigate. Although the initial years were mostly consumed in getting into a rhythm and conducting seminars, more serious work started happening when a project on minority status in Gujarat was handed over to the alliance. The reports emerging from the surveys have prompted the alliance to take up grassroots level activities in various districts of Gujarat. Concentrating on minority rights the Alliance is moving forward at this stage. Although it is very early to predict whether such an alliance can work or not but the seer fact that a bunch of different organizations with completely different areas of functioning came together on the basis of issues and forged an alliance makes the alliance a unique example.

## **Conclusion**

Both *Janvikas* and CFD have been very successful in their goals of promoting inter-community dialouge through advocacy . Through their leadership building and capacity building

trainings they have been able to nurture a whole new generation of community leaders who are equipped with all the necessary skills to fight for the rights of their communities. However, communalism is deep rooted in the everyday life of the city of Ahmedabad. Civil society organizations, thus far, have not been able to contribute in a meaningful way to address this deep seated mistrust. Any meaningful contribution in this regard can only come through constant and long term engagement with communities through collaborative efforts of various organizations.

# Chapter Four: Mumbai and Delhi

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## Introduction

Civil society's involvement in de-escalation of violence is often contextual and triggered by specific instances of violence. In India, various NGOs and civil society bodies have been involved in relief and rehabilitation efforts in areas where there have been recent incidents of violence, such as Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh). In other cases, civil society organizations came up as response to incidents of violence, and have continued to work there and elsewhere long after. Many NGOs concerning themselves with harmony building came up in the aftermath of the 1992 Mumbai violence and 2002 Gujarat violence. These NGOs have gone on to establish themselves as resource centers for other organizations. These organizations work at a pan-Indian level and don't have much of a grassroots presence. Yet others have taken up research and projects in areas which have been affected by communal violence in the past.

Once such example is *Aman Biradari* and its project in Bhagalpur, Bihar. This chapter gives a brief overview of the work of NGOs which are more pan-Indian in their approach to harmony building, and establish the importance of context specificity. The organizations in focus, are based in Delhi and Mumbai, but work in various parts of India in response to emergent violent situations or have taken up harmony building as a pan-Indian project. Since these organizations came up or work in specific contexts, it is important to give a brief overview of these instances of violence. The next section discusses the incidents of violence in Bhagalpur, Mumbai, Gujarat and Muzaffarnagar as the NGOs discussed here came up in the aftermath of either 1992, or the 2002 violence, and are working now in these four places, which have witnessed violence in the past, and where the society has been left divided in the aftermath. The second half of the chapter goes on to talk about four civil society organizations which are based out of Delhi and Mumbai. The four organizations are ANHAD, *Aman Biradari*, CSSS and AISF. The discussion will try to analyze their activities initiatives in order to establish the fact that these actor-driven organizations are pan-Indian in their outlook, and hence their approach to peace building is different from community based organizations.

## Context

### Bhagalpur, 1984

Bhagalpur has had a long history of communal violence. However the worst instance of communal violence took place in the wake of the *Ramjanmabhoomi* movement and the *shilanyas* program in 1989. Like most parts of India, Bhagalpur also experienced violence in the wake of the *rath yatra* which was the most vicious in nature and since then is identified as one of the most violent riots in India. Over a 1000 people were killed in a course of three months, many more were injured and left homeless. The enquiry commission set up during the time, was marred by controversy, and came up with a report five years later which by and large had no significant effect.

Writing in 1990, Engineer observes that Bhagalpur was notorious for its many criminal gangs which "cut across communal lines" (1990,p.305). There was also a sizeable Muslim population in Bhagalpur town and the areas in and around. Many Muslims worked in the handloom industry and were affluent and property owners as well. Engineer identifies these as "all the elements required for fuelling a communal riot" (Ibid). The intense rivalry between the two factions of Congress in Bihar also got reflected in the gang wars which went on in Bhagalpur. Engineer also points out that these gangs had political patrons which helped the ongoing criminal activities in the area.

In a situation like this the *Ramjanmabhoomi* controversy was "the spark required to ignite the situation" (Ibid). Both Engineer and Indu Bharati in their assessment of the riots suggest that there was gross negligence on part of the government and police which led to the escalation of violence (Bharti 1989, Engineer 1990). Bharti points out that "*Ram sila*" processions were allowed to pass through sensitive areas "(1989,p.2644). The participants carried weapons and shouted provocative slogans while passing through these sensitive areas. On October 24, 1989, the procession reached the Tartarpur area - a predominantly Muslim locality. A bomb was allegedly "thrown" at the procession for a nearby school and "the violence started (Engineer, 1995,p.1792). When the violence escalated the state government did nothing to bring the situation under control. Later reports also suggest that in many of the riot-affected areas the police themselves participated in looting and arson (Engineer,1995; Enquiry Commission

Report,1995; Bharti,1989). Bharti (1989) suggests that the then central government of Congress (I) had an equally important role to play in the events that transpired in Bhagalpur. The Congress (I) government by first opening up the locks of the *Ram mandir* and later not acknowledging the role of VHP and the "*Ram sila puja* committee" had clearly contributed towards the Bhagalpur communal violence (Bharti,1989,p.2644).

What added more fuel to the fire, were rumors of college students being killed by Muslims and of criminals dressed as policemen were killing Hindu students, and then throwing them into ditches. These rumors spread to the village areas where Hindu mobs started attacking Muslims in retaliation to the murders of Hindu students. The police who were aware of these rumors did nothing to stop them from spreading (Enquiry Commission Report, 1995). Muslim shops were burnt down, and Muslim property destroyed. Engineer notes that these riots completely changed the "economic scene of Bhagalpur as far as Muslims are concerned" (Engineer,1990,p.306). The monetary loss was huge and the riots left many more jobless. Destruction of the powerlooms added to the woes of the workers. An analysis of the riots and the events that followed will make to obvious that a communal riot of this scale would not have been possible without police connivance. Apart from personal property, many mosques were desecrated. Many accounts suggest that "saffron colour flags of Bajrang Dal were hoisted" over Mosques and the "police never bothered to remove the flags" (Ibid). In many cases looting, arson and massacre happened in the presence of the police themselves.

The enquiry commission constituted by the Congress (I) government submitted a report five years after the riots, and the report was also a testimony to the apathetic nature of police and their indulgence in violence in some cases. The Enquiry commission reports were also indicative of the "partisan" nature of police action (Engineer,1995,p.1730). In fact the commission also talks about the nexus between the police and communal elements inspired by parties such as the BJP which further "boosted the morale of the communal elements" and helped them execute their vicious plans (Ibid,p.1731). Frequent interference with the functioning of the commission was in itself responsible for the delays in the completion of the report. These delays were indicative of the "susceptibility of commissions of enquiry to the inclinations of the government in power and interventions of the judiciary" (EPW Editorial,1996,p.1056).

The sorry state of police action did not end with failure to protect the citizens and bring the riots under control but also spill over to their inability in serving justice. An Economic and Political Weekly, editorial in the year 1996 points out that although nearly a 1000 people were killed in the communal riots, the official police report was not able to come up with any numbers. There was delay in filing FIRs and in a lot of cases the police refused to file FIRs, which led to further delays. The gross injustice becomes clear when we take into account the figures. The police filed chargesheets in 140 cases, compared to over 400 cases in which the police filled final reports and failed to find any accused (Ibid,p.1057). What is even more surprising is that the court accepted these reports without ordering any further investigation by other investigative agencies. The editorial further suggests that the delays in the process of justice and the state's attempt at shielding those who were responsible for the crimes committed could be viewed as a deliberate attempt at "rendering the institution of the commission futile" (Ibid,p.1058).

The gross inadequacy of the system becomes evident when one realizes that victims have been awaiting justice for years after the violence. In 2005, a lower court in Bhagalpur sentenced 10 of the riot accused to life imprisonment. This could at best be a "symbolic justice" which is nothing when compared to the fact that "less than one-third of the families of the 1981 victims, listed as the riots' official casualties" received the compensation promised by the state government (Ibid,p.2116). Justice was served in only a few cases such as Chanderi and Logain massacres. However in most cases the victims await justice while "struggling socially and financially" (Farasat,2013,p.34). While the long drawn court cases played out, the victims and witnesses were left to fend for themselves without any state protection. Farasat suggests that along with the legal system the victims of Bhagalpur also "struggle against forgetfulness" as the atrocities committed against Muslims have "faded out of public memory" (Ibid,p.35). The failure of the state to provide justice has led to "fractured civic relations" and Bhagalpur is a town divided on communal lines even 27 years later (Ibid).

## **Mumbai, 1992**

The 1992 riots in Mumbai were "the worst riots the city had ever seen", left 900 people dead and left the "city changed forever after the riots" (Punwani,2003,p.237). This was however not the first instance of communal violence the city had witnessed. The Bombay-Bhiwandi riots

of 1984 went on for ten days and the Shiv Sena "incited" violence between "Maharashtrian Hindus and Muslims" (Engineer,1984,p.1135). The rise of Shiv Sena as the champion of the middleclass Hindu Maharashtrian is a phenomenon which has been discussed by many (Katzenstein (1973), Gupta (1982), Punwani (2003)). The Shiv Sena was formed in the year 1966 in order to champion the cause of job reservation and more economic opportunities for the Maharashtrian, "mainly in the lower echelons of white collar employment" (Lele,1995, p.1520). Dipankar Gupta points out that the main reason for the emergence of Shiv Sena was the sense of deprivation and the increasing problems of unemployment plaguing the lower and middle class in Mumbai (Gupta,1982,p.57). The other factor which helped the rise of Shiv Sena was the vacuum created in the state politics due to the crisis in the Congress organization. The warring factions of Congress leadership left the political scene in chaos. Katzenstein suggests that the "consciousness building" efforts by Shiv Sena heightened the growing frustration among the middle classes who were disappointed by the lack of economic growth (1973,p.394). Shifting from championing the cause of Marathi middle class to a pronounced "rightist" stance was taken up in order to "broaden horizons" in order to fulfill "political hopes and deep-seated ideological aspiration" (Ibid,p.399). The role of violence in the Shiv Sena's mobilization strategies of is undeniable. The riots in the wake of the *Ramjanmabhoomi* movement and *Rath yatra* was one of the most violent the city ever witnessed. The violence which ensued in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition left a bloody trail behind. The "People's Commission Report on Bombay Riots" found that the riots were a "reaction" to the demolition of the mosque and was expressed through "leaderless, unchanneled and impotent rage against the government which had betrayed the Muslim citizens of India" (1993,p.2256). Most deaths during the riots occurred due to indiscriminate police firing.

Fresh riots broke out in January,1993 and this time the violence was "pre-planned and executed by Hindu chauvinist forces" (Ibid). Hansen, recounts that in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the mosque, Shiv Sena chief, Bal Thakrey, went about declaring that the destruction of the mosque was the handiwork of *Shiv Sainiks* (Hansen, 2001,p.121). *Maha Aartis* organized by Sena played a huge role in whipping up "mass hysteria and to mobilise the Hindu masses against the Muslims"(People's Commission Report on Bombay Riots,1993p.2256). This led to heightening of tension in an already volatile situation. The Sena saw this as an opportune moment to recreate its image. The Sena wanted to reinvent itself after the electoral failures and

organizational crisis of 1991-92. Hansen suggests that during the period of the carnage and after, Thackeray delivered communally provocative speeches. Further he welcomed all the media attention being showered on him and “proliferated radical communal statements...” (Hansen,2001,p.124).

Scores of Hindu men led by Shiv Sainiks dawned on Muslim localities and carried on arson and loot. Over night the party of *goondas* emerged as the saviour of the Hindus and the hope of the Hindu middle class. Thus the Sena emerged as a “reliable defense against the Muslim menace” (Hansen,2001,p.125). It is interesting to note that the violence incited by Sena was soon "hijacked by local criminal elements" and the situation had then gone out of control of even the Sena leaders (Engineer, 1998,p.2215). The Srikrishna commission found that constant instigation by Shiv Sena and its leaders combined with communal propaganda of Hindu organizations and hate mongering through newspapers such as *Saamna* and *Navakal* led to further deterioration of the situation (Ibid,p,2216). The commission also pointed out the biasness which the police had shown in handling the ensuing violence. Hansen observes that in a matter of day “close to two hundred demonstrators, mostly Muslims, had been killed and hundreds wounded” (Ibid,p.121). While Muslim were meted with "harsh and brutal and, on occasions, bordering on inhuman" treatment, the Shiv Sena was allowed to “conduct large public celebrations of the demolition...”(Engineer,1998,p.2216;Hansen,2001,p.121). ). Flavia Agnes in her account of the Bandra (east) riots, talks about numerous cases of police atrocities and biases nature in police operations (Ibid). Muslim *bastis* were attacked. In the name of combing these localities, the police “entered houses, dragged people out, damaged their property and arrested many persons” (Ibid). Curiously all such acts were invariably directed towards the Muslims and the Shiv Sena and its supporters were left out of combing operations. The Congress government took little action against the Sena fearing Hindu backlash.

The inaction on part of the government resulted in escalation of violence and systematic attacks on Muslim majority localities, slums and colonies. Targeted looted and burning of Muslims shops and establishments made the pre-determination of the riots clear. The miscreants "conducted surveys" used electoral rolls and information from civic authorities to mark houses, apartments, *bastis* and even "rikshaws, cars and taxis" (Hansen,2001; Engineer,1993). After a Hindu family was burned in Jogeshwari in January 1993, the atrocities against Muslims reached

new highs (Hansen,2001,p.122). Jyoti Punwani's (2003) documentation of the experiences of violence and retaliatory violence between Hindu and Muslims is revelatory on two counts. It exposes the level of targeted violence and looting. It also shows how the violence pitted neighbour against neighbour and changed social relationships in the city of Mumbai forever. The city had also never witnessed this level of brutality during any other riots before this. Engineer's account of the violence narrates incidents where "bodies were beyond recognition as they were highly mutilated" (1993,p.507). The riots in Bandra (east) in December 1992 reached a new high due to the involvement of police atrocities. It was alleged that the police during the riots brazenly sided with the Sena and its supporters. During this period rumors helped keep the tension alive. Rumors of angry Muslim mobs roaming the streets looking for revenge, arrival of arms consignments from Pakistan and the Gulf and Muslims storing arms in mosques kept the tension brewing. Hindu vigilantism increased with people patrolling the streets at night.

The violence in Mumbai was distinguished by the large number of women participants. The Shiv Sena's women members were aggressive participants in the violence and helped prevent the arrest of many leaders "prevent fire engines from going to Muslim areas engulfed in flames, and even loot stores and attack Muslim women" (Banerjee,1996,p.1214). Sikata Banerjee in her study of the Shiv Sena women, points out that women were mobilized through "networks of *shakhas*" and keeping a "clever balance between tradition and change" (Ibid:1220). The Sena used the *shakhas* variedly for income generating activities, as day care centers, celebrating of Hindu festivals as well as problem solving. Banerjee suggests that through these activities, the Sena was able to fill the gap left by the Municipal Corporations and also build networks of trust among the women in the slums of Mumbai. The Sena was able to successfully activate these networks created through "an effective mix of ideological and economic incentives" which according to Banerjee was effective enough to "inspire political loyalty" (Ibid,p.1218).

Punwani in her investigation finds that the hatred and mistrust between the two communities had seeped down to a very everyday level where "bus conductors would willingly change large notes for Hindu passengers, but refuse to do so for Muslim ones" (2003,p.252). However, this all changed with the bomb blasts in March,1993. The bomb blasts have been described as "retaliation to the riots" which "tipped the scales in favour of the Muslims"(Ibid,p.2523). This time also the state came down heavily on Muslims. Punwani states

that "indiscriminate arrests, torture in custody, stripping of women, a clamp down on all unofficial/unlicensed businesses (in which category fall the majority of small Muslim businesses), a freeze on all licenses to Muslims" created an atmosphere of terror in which the Muslims found themselves cornered.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the rise of Sena in the state politics, its alliance with BJP, its brand of *Hindutva* mobilization led to the riots in 1992 and 1993. The retaliatory bomb blasts and state repression on Muslims created an atmosphere of deep distrust and fear which left the city changed forever.

### **Godhra, 2002**

The Gujarat riots have already been discussed in detail in the previous chapter. However, these riots were a turning point for civil society activism towards harmony building. Hence it becomes imperative to talk about the Gujarat riots in brief here. On the 27th of February, 2002, the Sabarmati express, carrying *kar sevaks* on their return journey from Ayodhya, was leaving the Godhra station when it was "stoned by an irate mob and some twenty minutes later, a coach had been burned to cinder along with fifty-eight helpless passengers" (Varadarajan ed.,2002,p.3). What followed was one of the worst case of mass violence in the history of independent India. Muslims were attacked and killed "in a state-wide carnage" and in the aftermath of the violence thousands were left homeless (Ibid). The state government's inaction led to the escalation of the violence. The stories of rape and violence against Muslims that emerged out of Gujarat left the nation in shock. The incident of communal violence in Gujarat is often termed as "state-sponsored pogrom"(Mander,2009, X).<sup>37</sup> As has been discussed elsewhere, the violence created an atmosphere of deep distrust among the communities in the state and the city of Ahmedabad. Mander writes that, in the aftermath of the violence "borders" were created in villages and states (Ibid,p.6). People restricted themselves to these areas and were "afraid to cross these borders" (Ibid). The internally displaced who were initially housed in relief camps, found themselves

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<sup>37</sup> Other reports which indicate state complicity are the Human Rights Watch report on Gujarat "We Have No Orders to Save You: State Complicity and Participation in Communal Violence in Gujarat."; Concerned Citizen's Tribunal "Crimes Against Humanity"; PUDR report "Maro!Kapo! Baalo!: State, Society and Communalism in Gujarat; Coalition Against Genocide Report "Genocide in Gujarat: The Sangh Parivar, Narendra Modi and the Government of Gujarat" March, 2005; PUCL report "First State Sponsored Violence and Now State Sponsored Muslim Depositions", June 2003; Human Rights Watch report "Compounding Injustice: The Gujarat Government's Failure to Redress Massacres in Gujarat", June, 2003.

without homes when the camps were shut down forcibly. Mander writes that those living in camps were under tremendous pressure from the state government to shut down and although some continued to operate without proper supplies for a few months, eventually they had to close down for lack of provisions (Ibid, p.63). The ones who were displaced from their camps found it nearly impossible to go back to their places of residence because of a sense of deep insecurity and the lack of state support in rehabilitation. A joint survey by *Janvikas* and Center for Social Justice found that "4500 people have been living in colonies built by mostly NGOs away from their normal place of residence ,i.e., the families have been relocated" (Nampoothiri and Sethi, 2012,p.91-92). The colonies were no better than the camps. The living conditions were below par and most of them lacked basic facilities. In a 2004 study conducted by Centre for Social Justice, it was established that 81 such displaced people colonies were running in the state of Gujarat (Mander,2009,p.70). Most of the colonies were set up by various Muslims religious organizations.<sup>38</sup> However, not a single colony was run by the state. Mander suggests that the lack of state involvement poses graves threats to "security and well being of civil society as a whole" (Ibid,p.72). The organizations who set up the relief colonies had their own vested interests in mind and this becomes clear from the reports which came out of the colonies. The residents were in a lot of cases pressured into following "the teachings of a particular sect that had taken the initiative to establish their colony" (Ibid).Civil society organizations joined hands to provide relief and rehabilitation and court cases are being fought till date. Thousands still remain internally displaced with the state government refusing to acknowledge their existence and the society in Gujarat remains completely divided in the aftermath.

### **Muzaffarnagar, 2013**

Muzaffarnagar, located in the western part of the state of Uttar Pradesh witnessed vicious riots in 2013. The reports coming out of riot hit areas are all indicative of involvement of political parties in fomenting riots in order to gain electoral success in the all important state of Uttar Pradesh. The exact reasons behind the vicious riots remain unclear. However, the genesis can be traced back to the death of two Jat, and one Muslim youth over the issue of harassment of a *Jat* girl. Most fact finding reports claim that the incidents that followed were given a communal

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<sup>38</sup> Jamait Islami, Gujarat Sarvajanic, Jamat ulema Hind and some other fringe Muslim organizations were running the camps (Mander, 2009,p.70).

colour by political elements. Following this incident a "*Maha Jat Pachayat*" was called for on the 7th September, 2013. Violence and communal tension increased surrounding this *maha panchayat*. Jats from neighboring districts travelled to Lisarh for the panchayat in tractor trolleys which were laden in arms. The speeches delivered at the rally was also "venomous" (Fact Finding report,p.12). Most of those delivering speeches were prominent BJP leaders, Khap Panchayats leaders and members of the Bharatiya Kisan Union. The participants shouted slogans such as "*Musalmanon ke do sthan, Qabristan ya Pakistan*" while passing through Muslim majority areas on their way to the Mahapanchayat (Ibid). This resulted in incidents of violence along the way. Violence escalated when these processions were on their way back from the *Mahasabha*. The fact finding committee found that rumors about people getting killed helped spread the fear. The administration was not able to stop the spread of rumors as there was no effective way of disbursing correct information. The ensuing violence led to a series of attacks on Muslims in various parts of western Uttar Pradesh and resulted in many Muslims fleeing to refugee camps.

Ashutosh Varshney suggests that the violence in Muzaffarnagar was surprising on several counts. First, while most Hindu-Muslim riots are an urban phenomenon, this was largely a "rural" riot (A Strange Fire, September 20, 2013) . Second, rural riots tend to be "small" and Muzaffarnagar was an "exceptional" case with large scale rural rioting(Ibid). The Muzaffarnagar riots also diverted from "historical trend" as a hitherto peaceful city had become engulfed in violence (Ibid). Fourthly, Varshney points out that the Muzaffarnagar riots went against Wilkinson's theory that chances of violence are reduced where the state government is dependent on minority votes(Ibid). In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party government at the time was heavily dependent on Muslim votes but was not able to stop the violence from escalating. Varshney says although one "exception" is not enough to "invalidate a probability theory", it is interesting to observe that SP government was unsuccessful in stopping several smaller riots in its tenure in Uttar Pradesh (Ibid). Finally, Varshney suggests that the riots also went against the theory that with "higher levels of income, riots decline in frequency and intensity" (Ibid)

Apart from the obvious Jat-Muslim angle to the violence, there were other deeper implications to this violence which spread to the rural parts of Uttar Pradesh and mostly affected poorer Pasmanda Muslims (Singh, 2016,p. 94). Jagpal Singh in his study of the riots highlights

that the existence of an "Institutionalized Riot System"<sup>39</sup> that helped the spread of violence to rural areas and the changes in the agrarian economy post green revolution has aided the growth of the institutionalized riot system. Ward Berenschot (2014), on the other hand, links the riots to patronage networks which are established through everyday transactions and can be exploited to incite violence during times of heightened communal tension. Both these aspects shall be explored in brief here.

Singh suggests that in the post green revolution agrarian society, two things happen simultaneously which lead to the development of the institutionalized riot systems in rural areas. The first is the "rise of new social groups and the demise of old ones" and the second is the "changing nature of rural-urban contradictions" (Singh,2016,p.97). These new social groups pervade caste boundaries and are spread across castes in varying degrees. Singh identifies "entrepreneurs, "intellectuals of societies (castes)," retired army/police personnel, the rural middle class (a middle class which has economic, social/kinship, and cultural links simultaneously in the cities and villages), footloose labour, non-farm labour, politically ambitious persons in every caste/community, and a large number of unemployed youth" as the various new social groups emerging out of the post-green revolution agrarian society (Ibid,p.97). The emergence of these new social groups have also meant that people have moved away from traditional forms of caste based occupation and ventured into newer kinds of jobs. This has also lead to the emergence of a sizeable portion of unemployed youth who can be easily manipulated into partaking in violence. The other major effect of green revolution is the changed "rural-urban contradictions" (Ibid). With the changing rural-urban dynamics, the traditional roles of the agrarian society have done away with to a large extent. Traditionally interdependent relationships have been done away with and more and more people from the villages venture out into cities. Singh observes that "Members from around 44% households of the sample live either permanently or live in cities such as Meerut, Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur or Delhi, and maintain regular contact with their families in the villages" (Ibid,p.98). Singh proposes that it is through these increased rural-urban interactions that "extension of the IRS from the city to the village" is made possible (Ibid).

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<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 1.

Singh suggests that there are three main components of the IRS in the villages. Based on their ideological and political orientation and organizational strength", IRS in the rural areas consists of the *Sangh Parivar* and its various factions; some Muslim leaders who are otherwise opposed to the *Sangh* but are controversial and known for their communally coloured actions; and the state government (Ibid). The *Sangh Parivar* has had a long history of fomenting communal tension which started with the *Ramjanmabhoomi* Movement in the early 1980s. The creation of more and more *shakhas* have ensured the widespread reach of the *Sangh*. In recent times, the *Sangh* has been able to foment communal feeling by taking up issues of "love jihad", "gau raksha", "ghar wapsi" and such. Singh believes the other two elements, some Muslim leadership and state/local government, act as enablers - as "agent provocateurs" (Ibid,p.99). Stereotyping Muslims as the "other", responsible for the woes of the Hindus and to point out the mistreatment dealt out to the Hindus by the state in Uttar Pradesh, helped the *Sangh* in creating an atmosphere of animosity. This situation was further worsened by the controversial statements of some Muslim leaders. Thus, Singh concludes that the three elements of the IRS "feed into each other in communal politics" and enabled the creation of a communal riot which left the village society completely divided along communal lines (Ibid,p.99-100).

Berenschot (2014) seeks to explain the emerging political and communal scenario in Uttar Pradesh through patronage networks. As has been already explained in chapter 1, Berenschot seeks to answer the question why do ordinary people partake in violence when they are incited by political leaders. Berenschot feels that the reason behind this are "exchange networks" where political elites mobilize the masses for electoral benefits in exchange for access to "state resources" such as jobs and other public services (2014,p.16). This exchange creates networks of dependency which can be easily activated in times of communal tension to incite violence. In the case of Uttar Pradesh, BJP has been desperate to gain lost electoral ground in the state. In a situation like this the patronage networks would have had a huge role to play in the violence that was carried out in Muzaffarnagar and the lack of police action there off. Local community leaders are a key part of the patronage networks. Their ability to influence large number of voters give them greater access to party leadership which in turn benefits the community who then have a greater access to resources. Berenschot (2014) observes that the Samajwadi Party has been able to come to power in UP because of its Muslim vote bank which has in turn benefited the Muslim community in UP giving them greater access to state resources

especially the police. This is clearly visible in the aftermath of Muzaffarnagar riots where in Muslim miscreants were released from jail and in some cases arresting officers transferred (Ibid,p.17). This in turn made it easier for the BJP to create a stronger us - versus - them divide which was exploited to the fullest before, and during the riots in 2013.

A third analysis of the Muzaffarnagar riots tries to understand the role the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) and *khap* panchayats played in the communalization of western Uttar Pradesh and Muzaffarnagar district. R. Ramakumar (2016) examines the role BKU played in the revival of the *khap*<sup>40</sup> panchayats in Western Uttar Pradesh and inadvertently led to deeply entrenched communal biases among the population of the region. Ramakumar believes that "the key" to understanding the rural riots in Muzaffarnagar is to understand how "traditional social institutions played hosts to the growth of communal politics" (2016,p.24) The BKU was established as a "new farmer's movement" championing the cause of farmers in Western Uttar Pradesh in the 1980s (Ibid,p.23). The BKU could be imagined as a "rural union of farmers" where both Muslim and Hindu farmers had shared interest which led to communal harmony in the region (Ibid,p.24). Under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Tikait, the BKU began championing the causes of rich farmers in the late 1980s. The BKU was also able to secure a number of "farmer friendly measures" passed by the United Front government in 1989 (Ibid,p.26).

The BKU continued with agitations and protests even after but by 1991 the vigor of the protests had reduced drastically. Despite this the BKU always remained a relevant part of the farmer's movement in Western Uttar Pradesh. This Ramakumar believes is due to the creation of a symbiotic relationship between the BKU and the *khaps* of Western Uttar Pradesh. Although the relationship between *khaps* and the BKU is evident from earlier literature what Ramakumar begs to draw attention to is, the way in which BKU, under Tikait, was able to infuse a new life into the "*nishkriya*" or "sleeping" *Khap* structure (Ibid,p.27). Tikait chose to rely on the *khap* system prevalent in Western UP in order to boost the growth of BKU and at the same time to consolidate his position as the leader of BKU. This in turn gave the *khaps* a new lease of life and over time made the BKU "increasingly more dependent on the *khap* structure" when it came to farmer

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<sup>40</sup> *Khaps* are defined as clans or *gotras*, are tradition institutional set ups of Jat socio-political power "with very close kinship ties". The *khaps* consists of villages where the residents are of the same *gotra*. The *khap* panchayat is the governing body of all such families belonging to the same *gotra* (Ramkumar,2016,p.24).

mobilization (Ibid,p.29). The rising power struggle within BKU also had its affect on the *khap* politics in the region which in turn resulted in the growing fundamentalism in the region.

The BKU was a happy amalgamation of Hindu Jats and Muley Jats in the initial phases. However this all slowly started changing in the 1990s especially with the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. The closeness of BKU leader Tikait with the BJP and Tikait lending his support to the BJP in the 1991 elections, led to a feeling of isolation amongst the Muley Jats which was further consolidated after 1992. Soon Muslim organizations started boycotting candidates nominated by Tikait and this was a gain for BJP in the region. BJP made further in-roads into the region when in 1999, the regional party Rashtriya Lok Dal lend its support to the BJP at the centre. This further contributed to the weakening of the "*bhaichara*" among the Hindu Jats and Muley Jats in the region. However, it is in the manner in which BJP was able to manipulated the two most prominent khaps of the region, *Baliyan* and *Gathwala khaps*, ultimately led its rise to power in the region (Ibid,p.33).

*Baliyan* and *Gathwala khaps* were "warring" *khaps* of the region which the BJP sought to bring together (Ibid). The animosity between these two *khaps* was a result of Tikait's meddling in the internal matters of the *khaps*. Sensing a vacuum in the leadership of *Gathwala Khap*, BJP was able to place one its leaders in close proximity to the leadership of the *khap*. Once this was done, BJP knew it could influence the leadership of *Gathwala Khap*. Rao observes that once BJP had achieved this, they moved on to giving "every local conflict a communal colour" (Ibid). The party also used the "anti-Muslim rhetoric" as a backdrop to mobilize the locals on issues which would fuel conflict between Hindus and Muslims (Ibid). This strategy of the BJP set the stage for the ultimate goal which was to bring the *Baliyan* and *Gathwala Khaps* together, unified against a common enemy - the Muslims. Thus began the process of the rise of BJP in Muzaffarnagar. Anti-Muslim propaganda in the region involved narratives of Muslim youth committing crimes and teasing young *Jat* girls. This desperate attitude of the Muslim youth was linked to the fact that Muzaffarnagar had only elected Muslim MPs between 1999 and 2004. Ramakumar suggests that the "invented image of the Muslim as a 'thug' was intended to be reinforced by the BJP's campaign that it was electoral prowess that gave Muslims the courage to commit crimes" (Ibid,p.34). BJP started a campaign against cow slaughter and illegal meat plants in Muzaffarnagar. Ramakumar comments that this became the "meeting point" of the *Baliyan* and

*Gathwala khaps* (Ibid,p.35). The anti-Muslim narrative was established and BJP used the *Khap* structure to uniformly spread the narrative. By the time riots broke out in 2013, the narrative had been ingrained and the animosity among the Hindus and Muslims was palpable. BKU put in a lot of effort to make sure that the *mahapanchayat* would be a success. Ramakumar concludes that the BKU itself did not promote active violence as the violence never spread to the Baliyan *Khap* areas. However, BKU leadership had internalized the anti-Muslim rhetoric and helped spread the propaganda through the *Khap* network. This led to complete a complete polarization of the population in the rural areas and led to large scale senseless violence.

The violence which thus ensued left at least a 100 dead and several thousand displaced (Mander et.al., 2016,p.41). Pasmada Muslims (labourers) were the most affected by the violence. The less organized Pasmada Muslims living in Hindu majority areas were considered as "soft targets" which led to large scale violence against them (Ramakumar,2016,p.39). Relief camps were closed down by the state government in three months, and no further help was provided. Even during those three months the living conditions in the camps were deplorable. Muzaffarnagar thus became one of the deadliest riots in India after the Godhra carnage of 2002. Civil society took active part during the relief process and continues its work in the rehabilitation process.

### **Civil Society Organizations**

#### **Act Now For Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD)**

ANHAD was established in March 2003, as a response to the Gujarat communal violence of 2002. In a personal interview Shabnam Hashmi, founder member ANHAD, narrated that her initial involvement in Gujarat was very personal in nature. Hashmi, a social activist, and her husband travelled to Gujarat in the immediate aftermath of the violence in order to get a sense of and document what was happening in Gujarat at that point (Personal Interview, May,2015, New Delhi). Working at an individual level, Hashmi travelled all through Gujarat documenting the stories of gang rape survivors. Hashmi says that although this was work at an individual level, it helped her connect with other individuals who were also part of the relief and rehabilitation process in Gujarat (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May,2015,). It is in this one year of travel through Gujarat that Hashmi and a few others felt the need for doing something more than just

the relief and rehabilitation work. Thus ANHAD was formed in the year 2003 with the hope countering communalism at an ideological level. ANHAD was conceived as a "platform" and a "loose action based movement" (Five year Report, ANHAD). ANHAD's brochure claims that it is a "movement for social transformation" which is not a structured organization nor a centralized movement capable of large-scale popular mobilization. Like most other organizations working on communal harmony, ANHAD also concentrates on the youth and women. It works towards establishing a public opinion in favour of peace and harmony and against communal forces. ANHAD has a very small team of people working towards a common goal. Most of the people working in ANHAD have themselves experienced communal violence and state violence first hand which prompted them to seriously work towards communal harmony building. ANHAD's works focuses on youth and women especially from marginalized communities. ANHAD also works with the youth in urban middle class and upper middle class settings to bridge the gap between communities and to burst the myths about the "other".

### **Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS)**

CSSS was founded in 1993 by Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, Dr. George Ninan and K C Pannicker in response to the 1992 Mumbai riots. EKTA which was a collaboration between various trade unions, civil liberties organizations, organizations working on gender justice and democratic values, was a precursor to CSSS. The biggest contribution of EKTA were the detailed fact finding reports compiled by the team. The initial rise of communalism in the 1980s had led to the formation of EKTA. However after the vicious riots of 1992, a need was felt towards a more focused approach towards tackling the issue of communal violence. It is under this circumstance that CSSS came into being. The introductory note suggests that the main goal of the organization was the creation of a "network of peace activists" capable of carrying the message of peace forward (CSSS website).<sup>41</sup> Hence, in the initial years the main thrust of the organization has been towards conducting workshops targeting the youth, women and young activists. Since then CSSS has been working towards creating a knowledge base which can be used in the process of communal harmony building, equipping the youth with knowledge on how to combat the communal onslaught and to become a resource centre for other smaller organizations. CSSS's main thrust is on research and creation of knowledge thought publications,

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com/>

lectures, seminars and workshops. CSSS has a governing body and a general body members of which come from different walks of life. Most members are eminent professors, social commentators, activists and academicians. The CSSS website also clearly states their donor agencies which are a mixture of both Indian and foreign donor agencies.

### ***Aman Biradari***

*Aman Biradari* which literally means a community for peace was established in 2003 as a "people's campaign for secularism, justice and caring" (*Aman Biradari* website).<sup>42</sup> *Aman Biradari* has several initiatives working at multiple sites in India. The Gujarat chapter of the organization is called *Nyayagrah* which has been functional since 2005 working as a grassroots movement for bringing justice to the victims of communal violence there. The Hyderabad chapter of the organization is *Aman Vedika* which works with women, youth and children from marginalized communities and backward classes. *Aman Vedika* works at the community level to ensure that people have access to public resources and helps in bringing about greater democratic participation. In Delhi *Aman Biradari* runs the *Dil Se* campaign which is a collaboration between Centre for Equity Studies, *Aman Biradari* and the Delhi government. The *Dil Se* campaign is directed towards the street children of Delhi. The campaign is envisioned as a community project to help protect the most vulnerable street children and provide them with basic resources, shelter, health care and education. Center for Equity Studies (CES) is registered as a separate organization but functions as a sister organization to *Aman Biradari*. CES is involved in research oriented work. CES has been involved in taking out important works of research on status of victims post riots and the India Exclusion Report (2015). It works in Bhagalpur, Muzaffarnagar, and Tilak Vihar in Delhi. In Muzaffarnagar, CES and AB first went with the intention of understanding the situation of people living in camps. A base level survey was conducted first. Then interventions were made into the community in the form of educating the people of their rights and helping them with the entitlement process. "*Chaupal* Meetings" helped villagers interact with district administration where they could voice their concerns and the administration was bound to reply to them. In Bhagalpur the intervention started as a research project specially concentrating on compensation and criminal justice. In the process of the research it was realized that the lack of adequate compensation has led the people affected by communal violence more

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.amanbiradari.org/index.html>

into poverty. Here the main thrust of the campaign is to make sure that people are made aware of their rights and helped with the compensation process. In Tilak Vihar, the residents are mostly widows of those deceased in the riots of 1984. One of the biggest problems here is drug addiction which also leads to domestic violence. Here the AB and CES teams have been running a children's library since February 2015. The library caters to children between the age group of 3-18 years. Even smaller children are engaged in fun activities and games. Older children are provided with tuition facilities. There is an effort to involve college students who can give tuition classes to local students. Young adults who have completed their education are helped with finding jobs. The women are also sensitized towards rising against domestic violence. Local women are also involved in the counseling process.

### **All India Secular Forum (AISF)**

The All India Secular Forum was established in the year 2002 as a platform for various civil society groups all over India. In a meeting in Panchmarhi in 2002, 40 social activists working on promoting secular values, decided that there needs to be a platform for civil society organizations to collaborate and pursue harmony building on a larger scale. AISF was established keeping this in mind and with the people present at the meeting. The members of AISF are also members of organizations in their own states, towns or cities. Working as part of those organizations, these members also work towards building a network of volunteers all across India. Currently AISF has volunteers working in five places - Varanasi, Ahmedabad, Orissa, Maharashtra and Udaipur. Prof. Puniyani who was a former professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai sought voluntary retirement from there, to concentrate full time on the case of harmony building in India. Prof. Puniyani was part of the *Ekta* initiative in Mumbai which was active during the 1992 Mumbai riots. Prof. Puniyani believes in a greater cooperation of civil society organizations in order to combat communal violence. Hence, AISF was formed with the purpose of forging greater cooperation between communal harmony groups all around the country. Prof. Puniyani heads the organization and is himself one of the most important social activists involved in combating communal forces. It is under the leadership of Prof. Puniyani that AISF has emerged as a resource organization conducting training for trainers, workshops, public lectures and creating knowledge material to spread awareness and create a public opinion for peace.

## **Times of Relative Peace**

As resource organizations, these organizations are constantly engaging with the questions of communal harmony, democratic governance, communal politics, and the shaping of a public opinion for peace. In times of relative peace, the main focus areas for these organizations are directed towards getting more people involved in the harmony building project. Hence, a lot of effort and resources are spent on conducting training programs, research and publication of articles, leaflets and pamphlets, constantly engaging with the youth and such other programs. This next section gives a detailed account of the kinds of activities each organizations undertake.

### **Training Programs**

In the initial years the main thrust of ANHAD was training camps for the youth. These training camps were conducted initially in Gujarat and then all over the country. The need to move away from tokenistic forms of harmony building to something substantial prompted the need to start work on these training camps. In the initial years, ANHAD conducted residential training camps for youth and students which dealt with issues of democracy, secularism, communal harmony, pluralism and diversity. The training camps grew so much in popularity that ANHAD had to devise a way to deal with this increased demand. Hashmi suggests that it became "physically impossible" to meet the demand for the training camps (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May 2015,). Hence, ANHAD created a series of leaflets and lecture series addressing the various issues which were then made into cds - Hindi and English- and then circulated. A good number of people who took these training session were grass roots activists who could then go on to train other people with their newly acquired skill set. Since the training sessions were directed towards achieving attitudinal changes, the process was long term and slow from the get go. The materials produced by ANHAD in the process of these training camps have been later used by other organizations in their training programs. In this way ANHAD has been able to establish itself as a resource organization for other smaller and regional organizations.

Another creative initiative of ANHAD to disseminate information has been exhibitions. One particular initiative which is highly relevant here is the "Between the Lies" poster exhibition in 2013. The exhibition consisted of a series of posters based on the lives of women rape survivors from 2002 - interviewed by Hashmi herself. These powerful stories drew a picture of

utter despair and also threw some light on the situation that prevailed months after the riots. The series also consisted of a series of posters on "myths" propagated by the state government for electoral gains. The series also shed light on the controversial encounter of alleged terrorists in the state of Gujarat. Other exhibitions have used to powerful national icons like Gandhi and Ambedkar to spread the values of democracy and secularism. ANHAD also arranged for seminars and talks in schools and colleges. Street theater was another important tool used in the process of awareness building.

CSSS, in its capacity as a resource center conducts training and sensitization workshops for youth belonging to various strata of society. These training workshops take place at colleges, with young activists and social workers, NSS volunteers and college professors. The basic aim is sensitization and facilitating interaction among youth from various caste, community and religious backgrounds. The topics being addressed are communal harmony, national integration, religion, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. The youth participating in these workshops undergo intense training for 2-3 days. The training sessions comprise of lectures by experts on these and related topics along with interactive assignments, group discussion and even field visit. CSSS workshops "encourage participants to interact with families that have experienced violence , understand the actual reasons therefore and draw their own conclusions through no-hold-barred group discussions" (CSSS website)

CSSS also conducts month long intense academic internships for about 10-15 college students every year. The month long program focuses on varied topics such as gender, minority rights and minority education. The interns do library work, attend lectures, group discussions and participate in activities. The interns are also taken on field trips to communally sensitive areas and places of historical importance. The program ensures that the youth interact with each other, are able to overcome their prejudices, and develop a better understanding of varied cultures and religions.

As a resource organization AISF often conducts training for trainers. AISF has developed a communal harmony kit to facilitate the training process and also to help other organizations with training. The kit consists of a film called the "*Ekta Sandesh*" which is a 50 minute film consisting of clips from various Hindi movies which give the message of communal harmony.

The next component in the kit is a card called "solar message".<sup>43</sup> The card has the cutouts of the symbols of various religions such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Taoism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism and the like. The experiment is directed towards explaining to the participants that there is strength in unity and preached the oneness of humanity. The experiment requires the card to be placed under the sun a few feet above the ground. As the sunlight passes through the card the cutouts of the various religious symbols cast shadows on the ground. As the card is raised higher up, the shadows turn into circles and when raised higher up the circles join together and form one big shadow. The experiment points out divided by religion, we are all together in humanity. The kit are used in training for trainers coming from the lower and middle income group localities or communally sensitive areas where Hindus and Muslims live in close proximity. The people receiving these trainings, called peace workers, then carry on sensitization programs in their *mohollas*, *basits*, schools and colleges. Puniyani says that the organization distributes these kits in functions and lectures organized by AISF or where members attend programs in individual capacity. He estimates that around 800 kits have been distributed thus far. In some cases sensitization programs have also been conducted with party carders. Congress and CPM, have in the past, wanted to conduct sensitization programs. However, such programs are difficult to organize because of the resistance and reluctance of the participants.

Next, is a flip chart called "Journey to Peace". The flip chart has themes such as "temple destructions"; "Tipu Sultan and Temples"; "Shivaji: Respecting all Religions"; "Conversions"; "Syncretic Traditions Mixed Cultures"; "British Rule: Changes in India Society"; "Rise of Communal Politics"; "Partition"; "Kashmir"; "Terrorism"; "Islam and Terrorism"; "Communal Politics" and the "Task Ahead". Each flip chart is accompanied by a brief narrative on the topic which brings up historical facts, alternative narratives of history and provides scope for further discussions on the topics. The themes chosen here are also issues used by right wing forces to mould history to spread hatred towards other religions and further the communal project. By providing alternate narratives and additional historical facts on these themes the flip charts try to reclaim history and paint a more balanced view of history and also contemporary issues.

The kit also comes with a series of DVD lectures called "*Raah Aman ki*" which also are based on similar topics as the flip chart. The lectures are of half hour each and are all directed

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<sup>43</sup> See Annexure I

towards opening up a space of debate and discussion on issues of communalism, minorities and such other topics. The final element of the kit are small booklets titled "*Gandhi Katha*"; "*Aman Katha*" and "*Ambedkar Katha*" - all directed towards driving home the point that India has always celebrated its mixed culture and the only way forward is to live together in peace and harmony.

### **Policy Intervention and Tribunals**

ANHAD held one of the first tribunals in 2008. This tribunal was in response to the growing complaint about the atrocities on minority youth in the name of fighting terrorism all over the country. In a personal interview conducted in June 2015, Shabnam Hashmi says that this was one of the turning points in the vast body of work conducted by ANHAD (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May 2015,). She says that opposition to this tribunal came from all quarters, especially the government (Ibid). The Home Ministry tried a lot to stop it but the tribunal went on nevertheless. The "People's Tribunal on the Atrocities Committed on Minorities in the Name of Fighting Terrorism" was held in Hyderabad between 22nd and 24th of August, 2008. ANHAD collaborated with local organizations in Hyderabad for the project. The jury included a Judge, a Chief Justice, editors of prominent papers, social activists, lawyer and an academician. The tribunal heard depositions in 40 cases over the course of the two days. A similar tribunal was held in Delhi in 2009. The "National Meet on the Status of Muslims in Contemporary India" was held in Delhi between 3rd and 5th October, 2009. The jury for the Delhi Tribunal too was made up of prominent social activists, lawyers and academicians. The proceedings and recommendations from both these were later taken out in a joint report titled "What it means to be a Muslim in India". The tribunals brought out stories of police atrocities on minorities all through the country. It also dealt with one of the most controversial issues in recent times - "fake encounters". The jury found that in most cases the detentions were illegal and the treatment of prisoners inhuman and in violation of human rights. The jury put forward recommendations which included to recommendations to the Human Rights commissions, sensitization programs and proposed amendments to the Criminal Proceeding Code. The recommendations were sent to the minority commissions and governments along with the findings.

One major policy intervention by ANHAD was during the formulation of the 12th five-year plan (2012-2017) in 2011. Following the Planning Commission's call for civil society organizations to come forward with recommendations for the plan, ANHAD joined hands with other NGOs to come up with recommendations on minorities. The plan also had a framework for making the voluntary sector more transparent, accountable and efficient. ANHAD was also part of the formulation process. In the run up to the 12th plan, ANHAD along with other NGOs worked towards formulating recommendations for the Planning Commission on ways to economically and educationally help the marginalized Muslim community in India. A round table meeting was held at ANHAD in January 2012, where organizations interacted with Planning Commission members to identify issues plaguing the Muslim community in India and how best to overcome said issues. ANHAD along with more than 1000 other NGOs was also part of a more formal process in which civil society groups participated in coming up with concrete recommendations on various issues. Hashmi herself was member of the monitoring committee. Hike in minority fund allocation and proper implementation of schemes in areas where minorities resided in substantial numbers were among the few issues raised by civil society organizations.

### **Awareness Building**

Documentation and research are key areas of intervention for NGOs working on communal harmony building. ANHAD has spent a substantial amount of time working in Gujarat. In the long period spent working in Gujarat, ANHAD has invested itself in working against the communal forces during the BJP regime in the state. There is hardly another NGO which has been as articulate or vocal in their criticism of the government. This has also meant that ANHAD has devised a lot of creative ways to disseminate information. ANHAD has over the last several years taken up many research projects delving into the life and conditions of minorities in the state of Gujarat and come up with status reports on governments. One major report which ANHAD brought out in collaboration with the Center for Social Justice ,Ahmedabad, detailed the lives of the internally displaced people of Gujarat<sup>44</sup>. This document was based on an earlier status report by Janvikas, which has been discussed in details in earlier

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<sup>44</sup> The Uprooted : Caught between Existence and Denial: A Document on the State of the Internally Displaced in Gujarat, 2007

chapters. A 2013 ANHAD report talks about the status of Muslims in post-2002 Gujarat<sup>45</sup>. The report was based on a public hearing conducted by ANHAD in 2011. During the public hearing, the jury heard 55 cases and depositions from all over Gujarat. The stories that emerge out of the depositions painted a picture of fear and despair among the Muslims in Gujarat. Simultaneously, the report sought to break the myth that post-Godhra, Gujarat was free from violence. Various fact finding missions conducted by ANHAD in later years show how minorities are targeted in a state which has been embroiled in "fake encounter" controversies and other atrocities against minorities. The report also shed light on the constant targeting of Muslim youth as terrorists and the toll it took on the lives of innocent victims, who were not even compensated for the harassment they face. Another important report which ANHAD published was the 100 days in office report after the BJP government came to power at the centre.<sup>46</sup> The report very efficiently highlighted the declining communal situation in the country. Apart from the reports, ANHAD also had done video and photographic documentation of the incidents which they report on.<sup>47</sup>

As a resource organization CSSS' main focus area is research. Under the leadership the late Asghar Ali Engineer, CSSS conducted quality research and has published many well researched article, books and booklets. These books, booklets and articles are used as resource materials for the workshops and trainings conducted by the centre. In the past, CSSS has conducted studies on topics ranging from "Electoral participation of Muslim Women", "Communal biases in Marathi News Papers" to "Uniform Civil Code" and "Policing System from the Minority Perspective". These topics cover a wide variety of subject and can be used later on in various awareness building exercises.

The CSSS also takes out a fortnightly publication, "The Secular Perspective"<sup>48</sup> and a journal titled "Indian Journal of Secularism". The Secular Perspective is a fortnightly publication of the CSSS which deals with various contemporary issues. The Secular Perspective also keeps publishing information on the communal violence taking place all over the country. The publication is widely circulated via emails. Printed copies of the same are also distributed. The topics for each issue are contemporary happenings which are directed towards creating an

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<sup>45</sup> Tracing Lives of Muslims in Gujarat Post 2002, 2013

<sup>46</sup> 100 Days Under the New Regime: The State of Minorities (September, 2014)

<sup>47</sup> Dang, Dhule, Muzaffarnagar and Gujarat are some of the incidents of Communal disturbance which has been documented by ANHAD in recent times.

<sup>48</sup> See Annexure II

awareness about present times and also create a knowledge base for the future. The commentaries are well researched and aimed at myth bursting, general awareness creation and resource material for training and workshop purposes. The Indian Journal of Secularism has been publishing original research material, book reviews and event appraisals for the past several years. The IJS is one of the pioneering journals dealing specifically with issues of secularism, communal violence and democracy in India. The journal has published research articles by eminent scholars in the field of communal politics and secularism such as Ghanashyam Shah, Christophe Jafferlot, Paul Brass, Romila Thapar, Ram Puniyani and the like. The host of topics which the journal deals with include, "History of Religious Movements"; "Evolution of the Concept of Secularism"; "Media and Communalism"; "Gender and Communalism"; "Human Rights" and cases of communal violence (CSSS website). The journal is also a valuable resource material used by social activists, students and organizations to understand the concept of communalism, and the need to combat this growing problem.

Apart from research and publication, CSSS also conducts seminars and consultation for various other institutes in India and occasionally even at the abroad. CSSS brings together eminent scholars, activists, journalists, religious leaders, government officials and academicians for these conferences. As a resource organization CSSS also delves into questions of democracy and works towards the creation of a public opinion for peace and harmony. Hence, apart from dealing with issues of communal violence, minority rights, secularism and harmony building, the seminars and consultations also deal with issues of good governance, communal violence bill, and elections and electoral patterns.

Organizing lectures and seminars on peace and communal harmony with school and college students has been a part of the awareness building process of the CSSS like many other organizations. CSSS keeps working on innovative ways to reach out the people with the message of peace and harmony. In 2015, CSSS organized a Peaceathon - a marathon for peace and harmony - in collaboration with a Mumbai college (CSSS website). The 5 kilometer run brought together youth from various colleges as well as locals of the area. Posters and banners with messages of communal harmony were put up along the route. The event also included children's theater and speeches at the end of the marathon. This kind of a symbolic initiative often helps spread awareness among people who would otherwise not have attended seminars or lectures.

Like most other organizations with a pan-India outlook *Aman Biradari* has also been dedicated towards research and knowledge creation. Center for Equity (CES) studies which is an independent sister organization of *Aman Biradari* conducts most of the research work. CES has undertaken some major research projects since its inception in 2000. One of the most important works of CES is a project which sought to understand the long term consequences of violence in four sites which have had witnessed violence in the past. The study was conducted in Nellie, Bhagalpur, Delhi and Gujarat. The study which was conducted between 2009 and 2011 used the Right to Information Act 2005 to file 800 applications to gain access to official information on the these four incidents of violence. The study has since been published in the form of a book titled "On Their Watch : Mass Violence and State Apathy in India -Examining the Records" (2014). The study sought to examine state records to understand where and how the state had failed or were able to protect its citizens and provide adequate compensation to the victims of violence. The RTIs filled at this point were directed towards getting answers for three sets of issues: "access to criminal justice, accountability of public officials and relief and rehabilitation of victims of mass violence" (Jha and Chopra, 2014:26). Hence, information was sought on complaints and FIRs about "witnessing or suffering violence", FIRs on cases of sexual assault, number of people arrested "disaggregated by religion and caste", remands in police custody, bails granted during this times, number of cases closed before going to trial, trails, charge-sheets, acquittals and trials and appeals" (Ibid,p.27-28). The information sought here was directed towards understanding whether or not any particular bias worked in favour of or against a particular community in the justice delivery process. The RTIs also sought to gather information on the course of action taken against officials who were identified by the enquiry commission as "complicit" in the cases of mass violence (Ibid,p.29). Information was sought on officials who were found guilty and against whom action was recommended, officials who were criticized in reports but against whom no action was taken and also those against whom "permission to prosecute was requested" (Ibid, p.30). The third sort of information sought was related to relief and rehabilitation. Hence, records of people displaced, relief camps, and compensation provided were also sought. The information collected from various government sources and agencies thus helped in a deeper understanding of not only the violence but also the state of victims after it. For example, in the case of Bhagalpur, the RTIs revealed that the "biased policing" of senior police officers resulted in "greater death toll" and "shoddy investigation". One other fact that emerged

from the study is that public officials who were accused of crimes were protected by subsequent governments even when they were governments with no right wing leanings. Hence the researchers reached the conclusion that the "protection of officials and political functionaries becomes systematic, regardless of the political dispensation of the day" (Ibid,p.153). At the same time there were officials involved who helped in the detailed documentation of the violence which helped the unearthing of a mass grave in Bhagalpur and later on helped the victims in their fight for justice.

The other important study undertaken by the CES is the "India Exclusion Report" (IER, 2015-16). The report is a result of a collaborative effort among various organizations and has contributions by multiple authors. The IER is an annual report which is being brought out for the past two years. The report takes a critical look into the "public policy, law, programmes, budgets, institutions and functioning of all people, especially the disadvantaged" (IER, 2015). The report tries to examine whether people are being excluded from access to public resources and if so what can be done to rectify this. This kind of a report can go a long way in building awareness, hold the government and its policies accountable, and encouraging people to get involved in the democratic processes.

The AISF publishes a monthly newsletter titled "Secular Action Network" (SAN). The newsletter is widely circulated via email. The newsletter deals with a wide variety of subjects relating to peace and harmony. The newsletter publishes reports on communal violence, fact finding reports, articles on contemporary issues, investigative pieces, interviews with political commentators, academics and the like. The newsletter also highlights incidents of communal harmony and members of the civil society being able to further the cause of national integration. The newsletter also has a section on resources which lists out books, articles, YouTube videos and lecture series which could add to the discourse on secularism, religion and communal violence. SAN also carries fact finding reports on various incidents of communal violence and various other discriminatory acts happening in various parts of India. The newsletter has in the past carried articles on the Dadri lynching<sup>49</sup>, Kandhamal violence<sup>50</sup>, Kairana incident<sup>51</sup>, 25th year

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SAN-October-2015-new-1.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SAN-April-2016-new-1.pdf>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SAN-July-2016-new-1.pdf>

of Bhagalpur riots<sup>52</sup>, 20 years Babri Masjid demolition<sup>53</sup>, Muzaffarnagar riots and the like. SAN also reports on the works of other civil society groups all around the country. For example, SAN reports on the monthly activities of CSSS and of Delhi based *Khudai Khidmatgar*<sup>54</sup>. SAN has also carried articles on work of the Jamia Teachers' Solidarity Association (JTSA)<sup>55</sup>. The JTSA has been working towards bringing to light cases where the Delhi police's Special cell has wrongfully arrested youth (majority of whom were from Kashmir) under terror charges. Similarly, SAN has carried articles on the police atrocities on Muslim youth of Hyderabad, post incidents of Bomb blasts in the city<sup>56</sup>. Older issues of the newsletter contain articles related to the 2002 Gujarat riots, ongoing cases and alleged fake encounters of Muslim youth in the years following the Gujarat riots. Apart from this the newsletter also carries relevant articles published in other established journals, magazines and newspapers which help shed light on the recent happenings in Indian politics, issues of communal violence and the like. The newsletter has carried provocative interviews with senior academicians, journalists and political activists such as Yogendra Yadav, Romila Thapar and Seema Mushtaq. It is thus clear that the newsletter is a way of making people aware of the communal situation in the country, working of various government agencies and to create a knowledge base for the formation of a debate and dialogue on religion and secularism. The newsletter also helps spread the word of civil society activists and awareness about various civil society initiatives towards harmony building.

Prof. Ram Puniyani who heads the AISF is a prolific writer who has been publishing books, booklets and articles pertaining to various aspects of the functioning of democracy, contemporary politics, critique of right-wing politics, myth busting and secularism. Prof. Puniyani, himself a former Professor at IIT Mumbai, dedicated a lifetime to the secular cause. Prof. Puniyani has written on a wide variety of topics such as the investigation of the *Samjhauta* Express and the arrest of innocent Muslim youth, the Babri Masjid demolition, Ayodhya land issue, and the hanging of Afzal Guru. Commentary on recent political developments and electoral results also form a part of the writings published. Such commentaries also help in the formation of a public opinion for the need of a secular government. Prof. Puniyani has

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.csss-islam.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/SAN-October-2015-new-1.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> file:///C:/Users/1213/Downloads/SAN-December-2012-new-1.pdf

<sup>54</sup> file:///C:/Users/1213/Downloads/SAN-November-2012-new-1.pdf

<sup>55</sup> file:///C:/Users/1213/Downloads/SAN-April-2013-new-1.pdf

<sup>56</sup> file:///C:/Users/1213/Downloads/SAN-March-2013-new-1.pdf

extensively written on the state of Gujarat, the BJP government there, and the need for a stronger resistance to right wing forces at the central level. Communal forces often take recourse to a lopsided interpretation of history to establish a historical difference between Hindus and Muslims. Communal forces have also used religion as a tool to spread hatred and deepen communal cleavages. Hence, another important intervention into the communal project by Prof. Puniyani is the retelling of history from a more secular point of view and an effort to provide an alternative narrative for Hinduism. Prof. Puniyani has written articles on Shivaji and Rana Pratap, two figures frequently used by right-wing political organizations to deepen Hindu-Muslim divide, and put forward historical facts to counter claims of these right wing organizations. The AISF also does book reviews of important books which can shed light on the plight of minorities in the current circumstances, secularism, religion and such other topics. Prof. Puniyani has co-authored a series of graphic books called the "explained series". These books use graphics and texts to explain issues like terrorism, communalism and politics of godmen. There are other individual graphics panels on issues such as Sachhar Committee Report. Politics of Fatwa, Mixed Heritage, Indian Society and the like<sup>57</sup>.

### **Shaping of Public Opinion**

ANHAD's goals towards long term attitudinal changes has meant that the methods adopted by ANHAD have been more direct and geared towards creation of a public opinion for democratic values. In 2004, ANHAD started the "*Youth Aman Karwan*" wherein about 30 young people would travel all across the country interacting with young people and appeal to them to vote, and also fight communal forces. These young people came from all over the country and belonged to various social strata. Most of the time press conferences were held at places where they would travel to. The group also held interactive sessions with local youth and addressed public gatherings raising issues of common concern. *Youth Aman Karwan* travelled through many cities, moved on when even faced with hostilities and became a success story for ANHAD. Ahead of the 2012 state elections, in Gujarat, ANHAD attempted to create a public opinion against the role of the state government which had been marred in controversies for a long time. A field visit conducted between the 5th and 11th of December 2012, revealed that ANHAD at that point of time was involved in political campaigning. In the run up to elections, "Youth

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<sup>57</sup> <http://explainedseries.com/exhibition-panel/>

Caravans" had left from Ahmedabad to various parts of Gujarat to spread political awareness, the dangers of choosing a political party with a deep history of spreading communal hatred and the need to participate in decision making process. The target audience were lower income group people living in slums, women, youth and people living villages and smaller towns. The youth caravans distributed leaflets, addressed public gathering and did door to door campaigning over the period of a month in various parts of Gujarat. Between 5th and 7th of December, I was able to follow one of the volunteers while she travelled to areas such as Chanasma, Patan, Sudhpur and Dhanera in Ahmedabad.

During this time Minaxi, who was interning with a state level leader of the Congress party, was working with ANHAD in the awareness campaign. Most of the time the volunteers would liaison with a Congress local committee member who would then help arrange for a meeting with villagers or with women through the local Congress women's wing. Days before the election the lines between a campaign for creation of a public opinion for a more secular government and a more direct campaign in favour of Congress were blurred. However, such direct political intervention came with its own problems. The Congress in Gujarat had its own internal problems which made working along with it very challenging. Organizational weakness in the women's wing meant that arranging for meetings would be difficult and often fail. The clash between the larger goals of a civil society organization working for communal harmony and that of a political party are often too big to reconcile. Added to this were ethical issues of a very direct political campaign. In an informal conversation Minaxi says that it was difficult to get permission for ANHAD events and getting media coverage also became difficult (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, December 2012). In later interactions with various key people of organizations working on communal harmony building in Gujarat, one realizes that the actions of ANHAD during this time did not sit well with most. Although the intentions behind the action was understood by all most did not agree to the methods adopted.

Any civil society organization working in the area of communal harmony building has to concentrate on certain key areas, one of which is capacity building. Since CSSS has established itself as a resource organization, it means that its work is also spread out in various parts of the country. One of the ways in which CSSS has approached the issue of capacity building is through the creation of peace centers in various places. Currently CSSS has six such peace

centers running in places like Ahmedabad, Udaipur, Sangli, Shamli, Bhagalpur and Kandhamal. The peace centers were created with the hope of creating a space for understanding and celebrating diversity at the grassroots level. The hope was the creation of a space which would encourage youth and communities to interact and encourage peaceful co-existence. To achieve this goal the peace centers worked with women, students, journalists and activists. These peace centers used street theater, film screening and joint celebration of festivals as tools to reach out to communities. School and college children participated in various kinds of competitions which were all directed towards opening up spaces of dialogue on diversity and peaceful coexistence.

The Shamli peace centre has been working towards creation of dialogues between communities which have been torn apart by the riots in 2013. In an event titled "*Aapsi Bhaichar or Shanti ki Sthapana*" conducted in April, 2016 an attempt was made to open up a space for dialogue creation between the *Jat*, Muslim, Dalit and OBC communities in Shamli. A session was held at the town hall there and was addressed by Irfan Engineer. The event was conducted by Afkar India foundation, a local NGO. CSSS director Irfan Engineer headed the process of dialogue creation. Sensitizing people on the evils of communal violence and the role political parties and right wing forces play in the creation of said violence was the major thrust of the talk. Various other centers have been also working on similar lines. The Kandhamal peace centre has been working with school and college children and promoting dialogue creation through seminars, discussions and film screenings on relevant topics. Similarly, in October 2015 the Bhagalpur peace centre had organized a "*Sadhbav Sanvad*" (CSSS website). In October of this year, festival of Durga Puja and Muharram were being celebrated at almost the same time. Times like these always are marked with heightened tension and hence the peace centre's interactive session was directed towards discussing the need for maintaining peace and combating communal forces.

One of the most vibrant peace centers is the Ahmedabad peace center. The centre is youth run and is headed by the very energetic Mushtaq Sheikh. Mushtaq heads the National Peace Group in Ahmedabad which has been functional since 2008-2009. The organization has no fixed office but keeps working in slums and lower income group neighborhoods. The National Peace Group performs street theater on various issues concerning the neighborhood, on women's issues, Dalit issues and the like. The group also arranges activities for neighborhood kinds such

as summer camps, day trips, cultural programs and joint celebration of festivals. Study circles run by the group also helps in creating scope of interaction between Dalit and Muslim communities who live in close proximity in the area. In a personal interview in July 2015, Mushtaq says that the continued effort of various organization along with the National Peace Group has been able to increase the level of interaction between the two communities (Personal Interview, July, 2015, Ahmedabad). Small skirmishes are contained and people no longer avoid going to the adjoining Dalit or Muslim neighborhoods. This he sees as a success of their efforts at dialogue creation.

CSSS has also conducted workshops with the police force in several areas. In most incidents of communal violence, the police and administration have had controversial roles in getting the violence under control. In several instances police has been known to use unfair means to arrest innocent people or show communal bias in their handling of a communal situation. Identifying this as a very important area of capacity building, CSSS has been conducting workshops and sensitization programs with the police since 2011. Such workshops have been held in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Panipaat and Mysore. Women police officers, sub-inspectors, senior police officials and constables have all undergone sensitization programs on topics such as "the role of police in civil society"; "promoting communal harmony and national integration; and "understanding communalism and dealing with it" (CSSS website). These sensitization programs are addressed by senior officials, retired police officials and the CSSS.

CSSS has also conducted sensitization programs with religious leaders and workshops for women. Secular education is key to the development of a community's attitude towards integrated society. Muslims coming from economically backward places often get educated in *madrasas* and hence are unable to compete in the job market. This CSSS identifies as a major reason for the backwardness of the Muslim community. CSSS held workshops in 2013 and 2014 for the *Ulemas* in order to sensitize them on the need for secular education. Similarly, CSSS has been conducting workshops with women from marginalized communities in order to impress the need for gender justice and gender equality. CSSS works in partnership with other local NGOs and civil society groups to conduct such sensitization programs.

A unique intervention to spread communal harmony and reach out to more people is the Unite India Mobile App for Android. The app was launched in February 2017 and has been developed by AISF member Sayed Khalid. Prof. Puniyani has written all the commentaries being used on the app. The app is designed as an interactive and informative platform. The app asks the user to register on the app and also gives the option of connecting with other local users. The app has 11 levels, each dealing with topics such as communal violence, misconceptions about minorities, battles-alliances among kings, Islam in India, Mixed Culture of India, Colonial history, Kashmir Issue, Global Terrorism today, communalism today and path to peace. Under each of these 11 categories there are several other topics of discussion. For example, under communalism topics such as "Is communal violence due to the conflict between the communities?"; "Is violence due to actions of minorities"; and "What was the role of Maha Aartis in Mumbai violence?" are listed out. Similarly, under mixed culture of India, there are topics such as "Is Indian culture a Hindu culture?"; "Do Hindus and Muslims have separate languages"; and "Were Hindu and Muslim cultures opposite to each other?". When one clicks on any of the topics they are taken to the next page where there is a short commentary on the particular topic. For example, if one clicks on misconceptions about minorities, the app will take them to a page where one of the listed topics is "Did Mahmud Gazni demolish Somnath Temple to Insult Hindus?". One click on this topic will lead one to a page which gives a brief historical account of Gazni's travel from Afganisthan to India and the battles he fought along the way.

The commentary tries to shift the narrative from where Mahmud Gazni, a Muslim ruler, plundered Somnath temple - a sight of Hindu worship- to one where Gazni, a conqueror destroyed a mosque and attacked a temple to merely plunder all the gold and treasures in it. In the third stage of the app one has to answer a series of five questions related to the commentary. At least three of the answers have to be right for the player to clear that level. From the above discussion of the questions and commentaries on the app, it becomes clear that the app is directed towards bursting some of the myths related to Hindus and Muslims, Islam, culture and history and providing an alternate narrative to the same. The makers of the app see it as a "Diploma Course in Communal Harmony" which can be completed in 10 hours<sup>58</sup>. The app wants to promote the ideals of "Mahatma Gandhi, Mualana Azad, Bhagat Singh, B. R. Ambedkar and

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<sup>58</sup> <https://sabrangindia.in/ann/launch-unite-india-app>

Subhash Chandra Bose" and refute the "religion-based nationalism practiced by people like Mohammed Ali Jinnah and V.D. Savarkar"<sup>59</sup>

### **Aftermath of Communal Violence**

Since most of these organizations do not have a grassroots presence, in the aftermath of a communal violence these organizations join local organizations in relief and rehabilitation efforts. Most organizations will set up fact finding teams to look into acts of violence and come up with detailed reports. Sometimes these organizations are also responsible for highlighting certain instances of communal violence which would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Since these organizations are pan-Indian in their outlook they also engage a lot with the justice delivery system for those affected by violence. Here in this section we will take a look at the various kind of activities done by these civil society organizations in the aftermath of a communal violence.

ANHAD's involvement in Kashmir started in 2005, when the earthquake hit Kashmir. ANHAD organized for relief material for the earthquake victims and helped the access the situation in the aftermath of the earthquake. Eventually ANHAD got involved in other work in Kashmir which involved livelihood creation, education and other community based activities. Eventually ANHAD also got involved with the question of human rights violation in Kashmir. The target population of most of the programs in Kashmir are the youth. Hence, ANHAD set up youth center, library, and a youth group in Kashmir. ANHAD also got involved in the human rights issues in Kashmir. Documentation of human rights violation cases were carried out in Kashmir. ANHAD also organized for a work on Right to Information. Apart from this ANHAD also worked towards livelihood generation in far-flung places like Uri and Tangdar.

ANHAD's fact finding team visited Muzaffarnagar after the riots and came up with a report on the incidents that took place there as well as the status of those displaced by violence. A 24 member team went to Muzaffarnagar to understand the situation there. The report highlights the gross failure of the government, local administration and the police to protect the people of the affected villages. ANHAD also filled a Public Interest Litigation under Article 32 of the Constitution of India. The petition raised a number of demands including the constitution of a Special Investigative Team to look into the incidents in Muzaffarnagar. The petition also

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<sup>59</sup> <https://sabrangindia.in/ann/launch-unite-india-app>

demanding for doctors especially lady doctors to take care of sexual assault victims. Demanding compensation for the victims and formulation of a plan by state and central government for the rehabilitation of the riot affected were the other important demands articulated in the petition

CSSS has had a long history of commitment towards communal harmony building and peace. One of the key components of harmony building is also understanding violence. Hence most organizations dedicate time and resource towards understanding the root cause of violence in the aftermath of communal conflict. An investigation into the actual causes of violence also help in the documentation process and can aide in the civil society group's role as a pressure group while fighting for justice for the riot victims. CSSS has dedicated a lot of time and resources towards the fulfillment of this role. Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer in his long and prolific career has headed many fact finding missions. CSSS still continues this work and comes up with detailed reports on the post riots situations complete with interviews from various parties involved. Some of the earlier works of Dr. Engineer were those of the Bhiwandi riots, Aurangabad riots, Meerut riots and the riots in the wake of *Ramjanmabhoomi* movement. These reports were widely publicized and are still used in understanding violence, role of administration and media and the rise of *Hindutva* politics in both academics and in other non-academic spaces. The reputation of CSSS as a resource organization is based on these early works of Dr. Engineer and the continued efforts of CSSS to take forward this legacy.

*Aman Biradari* have been working towards attaining justice for the victims of communal violence. Most organizations involved in harmony building have worked with victims of communal violence and helped them with gaining access to legal aid in the aftermath of communal violence. *Aman Biradari* on the other hand has a long term commitment towards attaining justice of the victims of violence. *Nyayagrah* has been working in Gujarat to achieve justice for the victims of the 2002 riot victims. They believe that for long lasting peace, justice needs to be served first. No meaningful peace and reconciliation process can be a success can be achieved without justice being delivered first and in fact it is through the process of attaining justice can an attempt be made towards creating faces for "dialogue and healing" (*Aman Biradari* Website).

*Nyayagrah* has been functioning in Gujarat since October, 2005. Prita Jha who has been working with *Nyayagrah* in a personal interview suggests that *Nyayagrah* was a unique initiative

because it tried to make the demand for justice into a "grassroots movement" wherein not one or two cases but everyone seeking justice was sought to be helped (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July 2015,). Jha suggests that *Nyayagrah* follows a kind of Gandhian *satyagraha* towards attaining justice and in the process holding up the constitutional law (Ibid). *Nyayagrah* worked in Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha and Anand, three places deeply affected by the violence of 2002. A team of lawyers and activists worked in these districts, going around places and interacting with survivors. Jha says that even in 2005 the atmosphere of fear and panic was so high that even people who were looking for justice were scared to take any actions in fear of "consequences". *Nyayagrah* stepped in not only to help people with legal relief but also "boost the morale" of people willing to fighting for justice (Ibid).

In the initial years following the initiation of the initiative 9 lawyers and 9 activists worked in the three districts. Slowly with the dwindling of funds the number had come down to three. The activists worked towards breaking barriers in the various villages and would constantly interact with the villagers in order to build a reliable support system ahead of court proceedings. Jha says that one of the biggest challenges working in the initial days after the violence was to actually convince people to fight court cases (Ibid). Due to the atmosphere of fear and the constant threats and intimidations, a lot of the victims did not want to get involved in court cases. In recent times *Nyayagrah* has also diversified its work and have started working towards dialogue creation and awareness building. Working with communities *Nyayagrah* has been working towards bringing communities together through local peace committees. These peace committees functional in Ahmedabad and in the other 2 districts are comprised of people from a particular locality or village. These committees, called *Insaaf Ke Dagar*, raise civic awareness, do joint celebration of festivals and help take care of the day to day needs of the people of their community.

*Aman Biradari* and CES has also been working in Muzaffarnagar since 2013. The AB and CES teams started working in Muzaffarnagar right after the violence broke out in 2013. An 11 - member fact finding team reached Muzaffarnagar on the 23rd of December 2013 to take a stock of the situation there. The main motive of AB was to "understand the experiences and every day conditions of the survivors of violence and those who have fled their villages in fear, so as to map humanitarian needs" (AB Fact Finding Committee report). The team visited 8

camps in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli where the displaced people were living post the outbreak of violence. The team interacted with the camp dwellers and experience firsthand the conditions of people living in these camps. The team's report suggests that the lack of government support and delayed government aid led the civil society organizations and NGOs to provide for those displaced. The scarce resources meant that people were living in abject conditions in these camps. One of the greatest problems in post violence Muzaffarnagar has been the non recognition of the camps of displaced people. This has left the camp dwellers exposed to the elements and caused even further deaths. AB teamed up with Muzaffarnagar *Adhikaar Jan Manch* (a collective of civil society and aid organizations) to appeal to the government to take note of the situation of the people in the camps and also to start a relief and rehabilitation process. The report gave a detailed account of the conditions in the camps along with a list of recommendations to the government and suggestions for the road ahead.

The AISF network helps bringing attention to various incidents of communal violence and hatred throughout the country. AISF has taken out press releases condemning the attack on Swami Agnivesh in a meeting in MP. The meeting was addressing the issue of manual scavenging by the Valmiki community which was attacked by VHP and members of other right wing organizations. Similarly, AISF has taken out detailed reports on cases of communal violence taking place in 2012, in Faizabad (UP), Assam and Hyderabad. The reports not only concentrate on giving a detailed factual account of the riots and communal disturbance but also goes on to analyze the incidents to come up with a detailed picture of the growing institutionalized system of riots. The AISF with other organizations such as ANHAD and Human Rights Law Network, had also extensively reported on the Dhule and Akot communal violence. A joint fact finding team had visited Dhule in January 2013 and come up with a detailed report on the incident. Such smaller incidents of communal violence might not receive enough public attention but civil society organizations like AISF make sure that these incidents of violence are reported widely, analyzed. The spread of right wing ideology and involvement of police and administration become very clear as more and more cases of communal violence are reported and analyzed. AISF along with other organizations has also in the past come out strongly against hate speeches by political figures like Assaduddin Owaisi and Varun Gandhi. Prof. Puniyani has often worked closely with other organizations and social activists to come up with statements and press releases on various contemporary issues, especially ones criticizing the government

actions/inaction towards minorities or in its inability to hold swift investigations into cases of communal violence and the like. These initiatives although small can go a long way in spreading awareness, sensitize the public towards democratic processes and create a public opinion for peace and harmony.

## **Observations**

Unlike civil society organizations working in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, most of the organizations in Delhi and Mumbai have a more pan-Indian outlook. These organizations have been able to establish themselves as resource organizations and help other smaller regional organizations to take forwards the task of communal harmony building. In turn, the smaller regional organizations, help these pan-Indian organizations intervene at grassroots level - where they have little presence. A second important fact here is that most of these organizations are headed by seasoned activists who have been working on issues of communal violence, communalism and harmony building for many years. This gives added credibility to the organizations. Although these organizations are concerned with grassroots level but they realized the importance of interventions at the national level and this is reflected in their body of work. Due to the lack of a steady presence in a community, interventions which are community-based are lacking in these organizations. Of course there are cases where these organizations have taken up community level work, but the focus of these organizations is elsewhere. These organizations have developed their own models of training for trainers and have been able to create a vast body of research material as well. For most of these organizations the focus has also shifted towards creation of a public opinion against right-wing organizations and communal forces and this has involved actively campaigning against the right-wing political parties. Hence, ahead of the 2014 elections most of these organizations came together in an effort to create a public opinion against BJP and their prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi (the current prime minister of India).

At this time these organizations came up with a number of innovative projects to establish the communal leanings of BJP , the myth of "Vibrant Gujarat" which was being used to create a certain image of the candidate and create a public opinion for the need to vote and take part in the democratic process. One such project was the "*Feku*" website. In the run up to the elections, BJP and its prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi had been using examples of

Gujarat and its growing economy in order to entice voters. *Feku* was created in order to launch an investigation into the claims of the right wing party and to see how true was the image of "Vibrant Gujarat". The website was launched in 20 cities all across India. The inauguration note suggested that the purpose of the website were twofold "to build a new democratic imaginary by exposing the record of the most authoritarian politician in India today and simultaneously produce a new level of engagement for the youth in Indian politics"<sup>60</sup>. A similar myth busting exercise was the "*Kachcha Chitta*" campaign - a series of videos talking about the myth of Vibrant Gujarat. Ahead of the 2014 general election, Hashmi went on a campaign tour all across the country talking to people, holding public meetings and lectures talking to people about the ills of the right wing politics and the need to create a space for a more democratic government. Ahead of the elections, CSSS also came up with a website called "defense of democracy". The website was also directed towards spreading information on contemporary political issues and work towards creation of a public opinion for peace. These organizations also came together to draft a pamphlet ahead of the elections which were to be used by activists in campaigning against communal forces. The direct intervention in creation of a political opinion in favour of peace is a long and uphill task which most civil society organizations have not engaged with. However, it is the effort of the activists who head these organizations which have resulted in these direct interventions.

Over the last couple of years, Indian politics has undergone a series of changes the biggest of which has been the coming to power of the right wing BJP as the ruling party at the centre. As the communal forces have grown stronger the spaces of civil society action have also shrunk considerably. The clamp down on civil society has been swift and resulted in the cancelation of foreign funding license of major NGOs and investigation into their functioning has been in the news for over a year now. In December, 2016 ANHAD also lost its foreign funding license. Funding has always been an issue for most civil society organizations have led to the discontinuation of many projects. With the changed political atmosphere of the country, civil society organizations are experiencing greater hurdles in recent times. A second related theme is the non cooperation of state agencies. Irfan Engineer in a personal conversation states that the sensitization program with police which was at a point of time conducted at regular

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<sup>60</sup> Inaugural note "Feku.in", 22.08.13

intervals is now discontinued (Telephonic interview, May,2017). The lack of interest on part of the police to organize and participate has led to the discontinuation of the program. He adds that the current political scenario hinders the civil society's intervention in these areas as well. Similarly, ANHAD, which has been involved with direct political intervention for a long while has often had to deal with threats and difficulty in getting permission for events and even false accusations of funding fraud. In 2013, the then Gujarat State BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP, Purushottam Rupala brought charges against ANHAD for non-disclosure of foreign funds received. All such allegations were later proved wrong by ANHAD.

CES while working on its communal violence study had to face innumerable hurdles in the collection of information. Since most of the information to be collected came from state agencies the hurdles became even more difficult to cross. In their book "On their Watch", the authors give a detailed account of the RTI filing process. Dealing with state authorities meant that even information which was technically supposed to be in the public domain was not actually available and RTIs were filled for the same. The researchers had to deal with delay in response, stalling and sometimes no response at all. Even national and state level commissions for women and minorities were equally difficult to deal with. While the National Minorities Commission responded to the requests and allowed the team to "inspect its records on the 2002 mass violence in Gujarat and the 2008 mass violence in Kandhamal, Orissa" other State Minority Commissions and Women's Commission failed to respond to the same (Chopra and Jha, 2014,p.45).

Civil society organizations which are based in Mumbai and Delhi have been more successful in cooperating with other organizations on issues of communal violence and how to combat communalism. As resource organizations, these organizations network with smaller regional organizations and help them develop strategies, conduct training and sometimes provide financial assistance. Since most of the organizations here are headed by charismatic social activists who are contemporaries, the scope of cooperation is broadened. These organizations have been able to come together on specific issues and help spread word about each other's work. This kind of cooperation is however limited to short term issue based cooperation rather than any move towards a movement for peace. This lack of motivation for a pan-Indian movement has restricted the influence of the organizations to smaller pockets and particular communities. The

limited interaction with political parties also doesn't help the case of these organizations. ANHAD is the only organization which has gone into any direct interaction with a political party. Most other organizations have been very direct in their criticism of state action and inaction. Organizations have come together to critically examine the current BJP government at the centre and openly speak about the various divisive strategies of right wing forces. However, working along with or cooperating with opposition parties is something which most organizations avoid. Most organizations are wary of the internal functioning and self-benefiting politics of political parties. However, this kind of cooperation could help provide civil society organizations the reach they currently lack.

## **Conclusion**

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the as resource organizations, the four organizations which have been analyzed in this chapter, have made multiple interventions into the growing communal situation in the country. The focus of most of these organizations is on awareness building and on research with the hope of adding to the existing knowledge base of the literature on communalism, communal violence and communal politics. In a lot of instances these organizations have also been able to come together based on certain issues. The willingness of these organizations to take on the political system in a more direct way they have also been able to shed light on instances of communal violence which would have otherwise gone unnoticed. The charisma of the leaders of these organizations has also helped them carry forward the task at hand and foray into areas where other civil society organizations have not been able to go. However, these organizations are plagued with the problem or lack of continuity and limited scope of interventions. The publicity of the materials published is low and a lot of the information dissemination happens through emails which limits the readership base. However, it is undeniable that in the changed political scenario and the shrinking space for civil society action, these organizations have been able to continue their work in full force. The focus of these organizations has been in bringing about an attitudinal change and this is a long term and continuous project, the results of which can only be visible in the future.

# Chapter Five: An Analysis of Harmony Building Functions of Civil Society Organizations in Hyderabad Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi

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## The Functional Approach

### Introduction

An analysis of civil society action can go a long way in understanding the role they actors can play in harmony building. Paffenholz suggests that there can be two major approaches to such analysis - "actor oriented" and "function oriented"(Paffenholz,2011,p.20). The actor oriented approach which basically looks into the "performance and features of civil society actors" has some inherent shortcomings (Ibid). This approach often concentrates on the "civil" aspect of organizations and hence ignores actors which may fall outside the ambit of civil behavior but actually has a greater impact on the workings of civil society. Important actors often get sidelined and not so important parties are given undue importance. This may often "conceal rather than explain realities" (Ibid). The functional approach suggests that there are various "models or concepts of civil society" which can be distinguished by the "functions" that civil society performs (Ibid). The two main authors of the functional approach were Merkel and Lauth (1998) who developed the model based on their research on system transformation in Eastern Europe. The model was further nuanced by the experiences from case studies in other contexts. The model considers civil society as an "analytical category" rather than a specific "historical form" and thus helps to understand civil society as it relates to the functioning of democracy as well as to specific societal conditions and regional contexts (Ibid,p.21). Merkel and Lauth identified five essential functions of civil society: Protection, Intermediation between state and citizens, Participatory socialization, Community-building and integration and Communication (Ibid).

A second attempt was made by Michael Edwards (2004) to understand the workings of civil society. His ideas on the categorization of civil society roles stem from the understanding

that civil society may "mean different things to different people" (Ibid,p.22). Edwards thus propounded three roles for civil society: Civil Society as associational life (a sphere where voluntary associations work towards spreading values such as cooperation and tolerance), Civil Society as the Good Society (where in the civil society associations work towards achieving certain social and political goals which are beneficial to all) and Civil Society as the public sphere (civil society as a space for citizens to debate and discuss questions of common good and public interest). In Edward's understanding, in order to achieve any meaningful social change, none of these roles can function in isolation. A constant "integration or synthesis" between these various roles will help negate the inherent weakness within a particular role and help maintain a balance which will ultimately contribute to the task of bringing about a positive and meaningful social change (Ibid,p.23).

In order to come up with her version of the functional approach, Paffenholz also undertakes a review of civil society in development cooperation. Two important factors that emerge out of this are the civil society's role in service delivery and in monitoring government functions and maintaining transparency. Thus, Paffenholz comes up with her "extended functional approach" by combining Merkel and Lauth's categorization with Edward's approach and these two new categories which emerge out of the development cooperation. The new model thus had seven functions: Protection of Citizens, Monitoring and Accountability, Advocacy and Public Communication, Socialization, Building Community, Intermediation and Facilitation between Citizens and States and Service Delivery.

Paffenholz concedes that this model developed in 2006, had some inherent weaknesses. First and foremost, the approach identifies civil society as inherently "good" completely ignoring the fact that there could be "uncivil" civil society which could in fact be detrimental to the entire project (Ibid,p.65). The second limitation of the approach is its failure to acknowledge other actors apart from civil society who could have a more significant role to play and also be crucial to determining whether civil society is active or not. The third limitation of the approach is the "underrepresented role of the state" which more often than not determines the role civil society will play (Ibid). These limitations were furthered proved through a series of pilot testing which validated the concerns with the approach. It also became evident that an analysis of the context is equally important to understand the impact civil society can have on peace building.

## **Understanding the Context**

Paffenholz points out that understanding the context is a means to understand the role that civil society can play in peacebuilding within the context of its operation. First and foremost, is therefore, an understanding of the "sociopolitical, cultural, economic, regional and global environments" of the state where the conflict is taking place (Ibid,p.66). An analysis of the political mechanism, media and other such key elements is essential in this regard. Secondly, it is also important to examine the "understanding of peacebuilding within the county being studied" (Ibid). Here, an examination of the various stake holders to peacebuilding - various strata of society, international and regional actors - help determine the nature of peacebuilding within the given context and also the "short term, medium term and long term" goals of peacebuilding as suggested by the stakeholders of peacebuilding itself (Ibid). A third component in the context analysis process is the analysis of the nature of civil society itself. The composition of civil society, that is the kinds of organizations in operation, for example: NGOs, self-help groups, unions and associations, religious group and the like. Also important is an understanding of the social base of these organizations and the financial organizations. Apart from this, "specific characteristics of civil society (e.g., violence); the internal organization of civil society (values, culture, gender); existing power relations; and the enabling environment of civil society (legislation, regulation etc.)" also are important considerations (Ibid).

### **I. Protection**

Paffenholz suggests that in times of armed conflict protection of civilians in these zones becomes a necessary prerequisite in order to fulfill the other roles and duties that civil society ought to play in conflict areas. Paffenholz elaborates further stating that in zones of armed conflict the state machinery is often rendered weak or ineffective and hence is not able to protect either itself or its citizens. Hence, "the provision of security and the reduction of violence are necessary for effective peace work" (Ibid.p.67). The concept of protection is very closely linked to Johan Galtung's (1964) concept of negative peace which is described essentially as the absence of active violence. Hence, the protection function of civil society extends from providing protection from a despotic state as well as any other armed party to the conflict. The major protection functions of civil society include "international accompaniment, watchdog

activities, the creation of "zones of peace", humanitarian aid, and civil society initiatives for human security" (Ibid).

Paffenholz suggests that the protection functions are often fulfilled by external NGOs who work together with local civil society actors either "indirectly" or more "directly" (Ibid). Indirectly, civil society organizations work in the capacity of a watchdog in the conflict zone ensuring that humanitarian aid is uninterrupted and human security is maintained. Direct involvement in the form of international accompaniment is another important tool for protection. In the case of international accompaniment, international NGOs often send outsiders to ensure that peace and human rights activists in conflict zones can fulfill their functions without any interruptions. However, such kind of protective functions are also taken up by local NGOs and civil society groups who work towards protecting their own communities. The other aspect of protection is related to the "security-related interventions" (Ibid). NGOs could get involved in landmine removals, disarmament and reintegration of former combatants in conflict areas. However, most of these are beyond the purview of NGOs. In most cases these non-state actors are not able to fully replace the state's protective functions.

### **Case Studies**

Of course the extent of the protection function is dependent on the context in which the CSOs are working. For example, in an analysis of the war in Guatemala, Sabine Kurtenbach suggests that the war here was fought openly using "insurgent tactics and harsh repression" (2011,p.89). The aim of civil society actors was to try and protect the civilian population from armed forces. Because of the nature of the conflict here, it was various international NGOs and solidarity organizations as well as the United Nations which had provided most of the protection in Guatemala. The war had prompted large scale migration and most refugees had fled to either Mexico or to the United States via Mexico. Kurtenbach suggests that the refugees were very organized and received "accompaniment, support and protection" from the United States (Ibid,p.90). The other form of "rudimentary" protection was provided by the "political umbrella of the Catholic Church" (Ibid). Kurtenbach concludes that in the case of Guatemala, the protection function was fulfilled because of cooperation between the Catholic Church, international NGOs, and the United Nations Field Mission which started working in Guatemala after 1994.

In the case of Nepal, civil society had a dual role from the very onset - "guarding against abuses from both the state and the Maoists" (Chalmers,2011,p.272). Rhoderick Chalmers in his research on the peacebuilding process in Nepal points out that the objective of the protection functions of the NGOs changed at various stages of armed conflict. In the initial of conflict, the violence went unnoticed because most of the violence was occurring in remote rural areas. However, civil society actors realized the seriousness of the situation and the "associated protection risks" way before the government took any serious cognizance of the situation (Ibid). Growing international concern and missions by International Committee of the Red Cross to access the situation in Nepal lead to greater focus on protection issues in Nepal. In the second phase (2001-2005) protection activities were directed towards preserving "space for democracy, civic functions and development" (Ibid). The growing presence of various national and international NGOs helped create awareness about these activities and towards the atmosphere of constant fear and threat in which these organizations were operating. It also brought to attention the predicament of national and international NGOs who were doing development and human rights work. These organizations which were negotiating the "most difficult and dangerous frontline relations" had to make "minor compromises" in order to keep their projects functioning keeping in mind the greater good of the communities being benefited by these programs (Ibid,p.273). The next stage of peace initiatives started with the royal coup in 2005. Chalmers points out that two major developments at this point was the realization among civil society actors that state itself had become "primary source of abuses" and the greater involvement of international organizations in Nepal (Ibid). The awareness that the state had now become main perpetrator of violence meant that the main aim of organizations became to provide protection to communities against state excesses. The establishment of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal (OHCHR) helped "boost" protection efforts of NGOs along with opening up spaces for broader conflict resolution and negotiation processes (Ibid). From the year 2006 onwards, the protection functions changed with the advent of the peace process and military ceasefire. Focus now shifted firstly towards providing legal relief to those affected during violence. Secondly, efforts were made towards bringing about changes in the legal system so that officials who had committed war crimes are not let go easily. Changes were proposed to the existing Army Act and to make sure a proposed Truth and Reconciliation Committee does not provide "blanket amnesties" (Ibid,p.274). The third and final focus was on

addressing new threats emerging out of various "local and regional conflict" like the *Madhesi* movement in 2007 (Ibid).

In Sri Lanka, the Civil Rights Movement was established in 1971 in the face of the JVP rebellion and "to respond to the escalation of ethnic conflict" (Orjuela,2011,p.113). The Civil Rights Movement was the first civil society group which took up the issue of human rights in Sri Lanka. It worked towards human rights abuse documentation and for constitutional reforms. As the violence progressed, more and more civil society organizations came up which took up the issue of human rights abuse. Sinhalese civic leaders also formed a network to assist Tamil citizens' right after the violence against them in 1983. The University Teachers for Human Rights-Jaffna (1988) and Mother's Front (1990) are two very prominent organizations. UTHR-J took up issues of violence committed by both the security forces and LTTE. The organization had to close its operations in Jaffna after one of its founding members was killed. Mother's Front (Matara), a women's organization was "protesting the 'disappearances' of tens of thousands of men in the anti-JVP violence" (Ibid). In later years, the Family Rehabilitation Center emerged out of Mother's Front. Established by one of the founding members of Mother's front, Family Rehabilitation Center concentrated its resources in providing trauma counseling to the war affected people of Sri Lanka. The Centre for Performing Arts was engaged with helping children and youth deal with trauma in the war zones. The CPA used mime games to help youth and children articulate their everyday experiences in a war zone. The Theater Action Group used traditional performance art techniques to help people articulate their living experiences under military oppression (Ibid).

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

In the context of Ahmedabad, state machinery to a large extent was not able to protect or provide for its citizens during the riots and in the days following as well. Most of the people displaced as a result of the widespread violence, found refuge in camps run by "self-help community leaders and Muslim *Jamaats*" (Oommen,2008,p.78). There were three camps in Ahmedabad itself - *Shah Alam*, *Daryakhan Gummat* Relief Camp and *Aman Chowk* Relief Camp. The three main concerns at this stage were "relief, rehabilitation and reconciliation" (Ibid,p.78). International agencies such as Care and ActionAid were heavily involved in providing relief to the affected people. Both *Janvikas* and CFD were working as part of NGO

collectives being financed by international donor agencies. Most of the initial protection functions were carried on by Muslim Religious Organizations. Displaced people were living in refugee camps and a lot of effort was concentrated in ensuring that aid reached these camps. Most of these functions were performed by Muslim religious organizations. The displaced were provided shelter and protection by these groups. Helping people file cases, FIRs in the immediate aftermath was an important function. In the aftermath of violence, certain NGOs were involved in getting justice for the victims. This involved long drawn court battles and providing protection to key witnesses. Although *Janvikas* and CFD were not directly involved in the process, this was a major function of Civil Society in Ahmedabad. Here also it can be seen that the protection function was a prerequisite for establishing normalcy and a precursor to all other civil society functions towards the reconciliation and harmony building. In Hyderabad the nature of conflict was very different from that in Ahmedabad. Sporadic conflicts meant that there was no large scale displacement of people. However the main protection functions were directed towards protecting the Muslim minorities from false cases and police brutalities.

### **Mumbai and Delhi**

While protection is an important pre-cursor to civil society intervention into peace-building, the extent to which civil society can perform its function is context dependent. So for example, in Bhagalpur, civil society's intervention 20 years later, limits the possibility of fulfilling this function greatly. Similarly, Centre for Equity Studies' intervention in Tilak Vihar has little or no scope for protecting functions. The other important aspect to keep in mind is the nature of organizations. Since most organizations in Delhi and Mumbai work as resource organizations, their work at the grassroots level is mostly collaborative in nature. The local NGOs with which these organizations work have a greater role to play in fulfilling the protection functions rather than these resource organizations themselves. However, in some cases these organizations also get involved in the protection function. In the case of India, an important part of the protection function is the protection of minorities and their rights. ANHAD is one such organization which has been working towards the protection of minorities since its very inception. It was also one of the first organizations to shed light on the cases of alleged "fake encounters" of Muslim youth which were coming out of Gujarat. One of the first such cases was the encounter of Ishrat Jahan and ANHAD came out strongly against such acts of state atrocities

against minorities. In a similar manner, ANHAD joined forces with other prominent organizations to come out strongly and criticizing state action during the Batla house encounters. The protection function here, becomes important because through this civil society works towards ensuring a safe space for minorities to assert their rights.

Sometimes even without grassroots presence, civil society organizations are able to intervene in a greater way in an emerging situation. In Muzaffarnagar as well, civil society organizations were able to intervene with the help of local organizations. Center for Equity Studies and *Aman Biradari* worked with local organizations to access the situation right after the riots in 2013.

## **II. Monitoring**

Paffenholz suggests that monitoring is a necessary prerequisite in order for NGOs to fulfill their functions of protection and advocacy and public communication. Monitoring helps in making the government accountable for its actions. Paffenholz further suggests that in the context of peacebuilding and civil society action monitoring is "closely related to protection, advocacy, and early warning as a means for action" (Paffenholz, 2011,p.68). Conflict situations are closely monitored by local and international groups who then pass on their recommendations to decision makers. These groups also provide information to human rights and other advocacy groups.

## **Case Studies**

Kurtenbach suggests that in the context of Guatemala, monitoring meant keeping a close tab on the "political developments" such as structural inequalities and rural problems which could be contributing factors to the war (Kurtenbach, 2011,p.90). It also implied an observation of the various aspects of the war such as the refugees, displacement due to war and the military actions during war. A third important monitoring function was to keep a check on "Human Rights violation" during war (Ibid). The Human Rights Office of the Archbishop of Guatemala was one of the most important organizations at work. They helped in the gathering and dissemination of information related to monitoring and human rights violation. The other important group which undertook important monitoring functions was the "independent academia". Kurtenbach observes that Guatemala has several internationally renowned research

institutes and think tanks which did a remarkable job when it came to monitoring the war situation there. Kurtenbach notes that in the case of Guatemala, national NGOs were dependant on the cooperation of international NGOs because the international NGOs enjoyed greater leverage with both the government and military. However, this cooperation also led to problems between local and international NGOs as the international NGOs had to follow protocol to stay on in the country which often prevented them from showing solidarity to the local NGO's position. Once the war ended, the main focus of civil society organizations was the "implementation of the peace accord" (Ibid,p.91). Kurtenbach observes that individual organizations took up monitoring of specific aspects of the accord which was within the purview of the organization's work. However, the organizations never made any effort to "make a comprehensive analysis of the implementation process or look at crosscutting problems" (Ibid). This according to Kurtenbach reduced the impact civil society could have on the monitoring of accord implementation.

Like in the case of protection, the monitoring function of CSOs changed with each phase of conflict in Nepal. In the initial stages, the exiting National NGOs working on Human Rights undertook the monitoring functions. It is because of the effort of these NGOs the government was compelled to set up the National Human Rights Commission in the year 2000. Reports published by local Human Rights NGOs went a long way in providing due international attention to the events in Nepal. Chalmers points out that these reports "added to the impetus to develop serious monitoring mechanisms" when most of the international community was unaware of the ongoing developments in Nepal (Chalmers,2011,p.274). After strict embargos were imposed on the press in Nepal, national human rights organizations took up the job of providing information to the outside world. This helped international organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and International Commission of Jurists to "monitor the deteriorating situation in Nepal" (Ibid). In the post coup period the OHCHR was a very important monitoring presence in Nepal which prevented further abuse on the citizens. Once cease fire was achieved, the main monitoring function of the civil society organizations was to ensure that cease fire was maintained and the model code of conduct was followed. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2006 made provisions for civil society monitoring but the proposed national cease fire monitoring committee never became a reality.

In Sri Lanka many Sinhalese civil leader and individuals were also involved in "hiding and protecting" many Tamil citizens as well. In 1981, a Citizen's Committee was created in Jaffna by civic and religious leaders in order to monitor violence and abuse by security personnel. Center for Development Alternatives was the first civil society organization to take an active interest in the election process in 1983. A Mother's front was created in 1984 in order to protest the mass arrest of young men by the Sri Lankan army. In the later years civil society organizations were actively involved in monitoring elections and building up a peace movement. In the run up to the elections in 1994, groups like Movement for Free and Fair Elections and the Movement for Peace with Democracy campaigned for fair elections without any violence and "democratic reforms and a political solution to the north-east conflict" (Orjuela,2011,p.115). Orjuela observes that in the mid-90s "civic peace activism" was at its peak (Ibid). With the peace negotiations breaking down and the new elected government turning to "war for peace" most civil society organizations sided with the government. However, organizations such as People's Council for Peace and Goodwill were formed to keep monitoring human rights abuse by the government in Jaffna.

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

Due to the large number of people who were displaced and living in camps in Ahmedabad, the main activity in the post-conflict situation in Ahmedabad was to make sure that the allocated relief was reaching the people. A second aspect of monitoring during the initial days was also making sure that the compensations allocated were being received by those in need. A hefty compensation package was announced for the dependents of deceased, widows and children, loss of property totaling to around 150 crore. However, when various NGOs and media houses went around looking into the disbursement of said funds it became clear that there were various issues with the compensation process. Properties were being undervalued, compensation was inadequate in some cases and victims were subjected to many bureaucratic hurdles. For example, a survey conducted by PUCL in Vadodara and Shabnam Hasmi in Panchmahal and Dahod district brought out the disparities in the compensation process where on an average the people were being paid 5% of the actual losses incurred (Oommen, 2008,p.80). In the months following the conflict, civil society organizations continued to monitor the conditions of those living in the camps. The surveys conducted by civil society groups continued to expose

the extreme conditions under which the internally displaced were living and the state apathy towards these people. For example, a survey of 13 camps in Ahmedabad conducted more than 3 months after the violence indicated that 40,000 people were living in conditions which were below the international standards (Ibid,p.79). In this sense, monitoring and protection functions go hand in hand. The other important aspect of the monitoring function is making sure justice is delivered. NGOs helped file cases and kept on pushing for justice. Over the years civil society organizations such as *Nyayagraha* and *Sabrang* trust have continued to fight the battle for justice, helping victims fight long drawn court cases. *Janvikas* continues to work with the IDP, monitoring their status and bringing out reports on the same. Monitoring crimes against minorities and making sure that false cases are dropped were all part of this particular function. *Apna Watan* and COVA worked hand in hand to make sure that the Muslim youth caught in the Mecca Masjid blasts were given a fair trial. They were successful in standing up for these boys and exposing the custodial torture on them. Since most of the violence in Hyderabad took place around the celebration of festivals and elections, civil society organizations have always been on high alert during these times. Monitoring the political atmosphere and working with the local administration, police and community leaders, civil society organizations have kept a close eye on volatile situations and prevented the escalation of violence.

### **Mumbai and Delhi**

Monitoring of an emerging situation becomes harder if there is no grassroots presence of an organization. However, Shabnam Hashmi in a personal interview suggests that once an organization starts intervening in a meaningful way in areas of communal politics and harmony building they are able to build a reputation for themselves (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May,2015). Often such prominent organizations are contacted by local activists and alerted of any emerging situation. Organizations such as ANHAD have earned such credibility which has helped them gain access to many such situations where even media was not able to gain access. One such case is the 2011 Gopalgarh shooting in Rajasthan where ANHAD was one of the first organizations to visit the scene of violence and bring out a fact finding report which helped shed some light on the indiscriminate police shootings which claimed the lives of minority Meo Muslims. Hashmi also suggests that this credibility has also helped ANHAD to stop many riots from happening all together.

A second aspect of monitoring involves making sure people have access to justice and compensation. *Nyayagrah* in Gujarat has taken up this aspect of monitoring in a big way. Most civil society organizations help victims in the initial stages of the post-conflict situation to file FIRs and file for compensation. However, *Nyayagrah* is one of the few organizations which have taken up this process of getting justice for the victims in a more direct way. Even after 15 years of the Gujarat violence people are fighting for justice and *Nyayagrah* has taken up the task of assisting people in the long and tedious process. Together with *Sabrang*, *Nyayagrah* is one of the few organizations which have intervened in a big way in the justice process. Most civil organizations working in post conflict situations also help victims with the compensation process. However, this remains a short term project for most organizations. Center for Equity Studies has taken up a unique project in which it went back to Bhagalpur 20 years after riots to access the current situation. As part of this project CES also took up the issue of compensation and started monitoring the compensation received so far. In certain cases where compensation was not received, CES helped victims file for the compensation due to them. Similar activities were also undertaken in Gujarat, where ANHAD closely monitored the disbursement of compensations and reported on the discrepancies in the process. Such activities help keep a spotlight on state action in post conflict situations and help victims, especially minorities gain access to a justice system and provide them with a sense of security.

Monitoring the political situation is also an essential component of this function. Most civil society organizations shy away from any direct political intervention. However organizations like ANHAD have taken up a more direct approach to politics. Hashmi explains that when dealing with an issue as political as communal violence, one has to engage directly with politics. She concludes "safe guarding constitutional values today is a highly political act" (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May,2015). ANHAD has been taking up such monitoring activities in Gujarat tracking the BJP government's various activities in the state. In the past years with the BJP government coming to power, civil society organizations have also kept a close eye on the situations of minorities in India, taking out reports on the same. ANHAD, CSSS, AISF and *Aman Biradari* have all joined hands with various other organizations in this monitoring process. Civil society organizations work as watchdogs ensuring that the government fulfils its duties towards all its citizens and upholds the constitutional values. Civil society

organizations don't always succeed but such functions are still essential for the smooth functioning of a democracy.

### **III Advocacy and Public Communication**

The advocacy and public communication functions of civil society entails bringing to the fore relevant social and political issues which could be of significance to the general public. This is one of the "core functions" of civil society in peace building. One of the main kinds of activities include campaigning by local actors to bring "these to the national agenda in conflict countries" (Paffenholz,2011,p.69). Activities in stage include awareness building, public workshops and campaigns which help people better understand the situation and the need for peace. The other activities are campaigning for greater civil society involvement in peace processes and creating a public opinion for peace negotiations and end of violence. International advocacy for certain specific issues in conflict areas is also part of advocacy. For example banning of landmines, blood diamonds and child soldiers can all be within the purview of the advocacy process.

Advocacy can be of "nonpublic" or of "public" in nature. Public advocacy involves a very public show of support towards a specific cause. Paffenholz suggests that the most effective forms of public advocacy is "mass movements and street agitations" (Ibid). Nonpublic advocacy refers to the civil society's informal intervention into the peace process through "private" communications with actors in the political system (Ibid). Civil society brings forward various "negotiation agenda in peace talks" with the help of "informal dialogues, diplomatic channels or political elites" (Ibid). Apart from facilitating the negotiation process, informal advocacy also involves setting up peace negotiations by civil society themselves. The demands of advocacy may keep changing depending on the phase of conflict in which the society is. In case of on-going armed conflict, civil society has to work towards campaigning for peace negotiations, ending active violence and preventing human rights violations as well as ensuring that there is mass support for the peace negotiations. However in the post-conflict phase civil society's energy would be directed towards ensuring the proper implementation of the peace agreement, taking preventive measure so that violence does not recur and to promote a general "culture of peace" on the society (Ibid,p.70).

## Case Studies

In Guatemala, advocacy became an important function of civil society after the political opening of the country in mid-1980s. Kurtenbach suggests that in the case of Guatemala unarmed status-quoists were able to use nonpublic advocacy in the peace process stage because of their influence on the government (2011,p.91). Civil society's influence on the government was limited which also prevented it from using nonpublic advocacy to a much lesser degree. The peace accord set up various peace institutions which had civil society members in key positions. Kurtenbach concedes that these institutions did not have much leverage with the government in itself and often the "cooptation" led to conflicts within civil society and deepened cleavages (Ibid,p.92). However, this inclusion of members of civil society helped form linkages between civil society at large and these institutions. Public advocacy in Guatemala involved "public communications" to "draw attention to the generalized impunity for homicide and other gross human rights violations" (Ibid). One such organization working in Guatemala is the *Fundación Mack*. The organization has been proactive in taking up various legal issues and issues of public security. This public communication became an important factor during the official peace negotiation process. Civil society organizations in Guatemala used public communication as a means to "formulate concrete demands" and hoped to influence "agenda setting" (Ibid).

The Assembly of Civil Society (*Asamblea de la Sociedad Civil*) brought together 13 civil society organizations in order to make recommendations to the government in the peace process. The various recommendations of the ACS was passed on to UN mediators and other stakeholders in the negotiation process. However, since the recommendations were not binding the final impact of civil society efforts in peace negotiations varied from topic to topic. Kurtenbach suggests that the most influential ACS's paper on the "Agreement on Identity and rights of Indigenous People" which were also followed in the actual peace agreement (Ibid). In the post cold war period civil society organizations also took up consultation positions with the government. One of the most important "institutionalized consultancy" of civil society was in the form of the Security Advisory Council (*Consejo Asesor de Seguridad-CAS*), created to advice the president on security matters (Ibid,p.93). In 2007 the CAS was able to successfully draw up a blueprint for reforms in the security system.

Nepal's civil society engaged in nonpublic advocacy in the form of facilitating dialogues between various parties in its effort to initiate peace negotiations. Chalmers considers these activities as very close to facilitation and hence concentrates on the public advocacy functions of the civil society organizations in this regard. Public advocacy was absent in the initial stages of the conflict as it took a while for civil society to wake up to the reality of the situation. It is only in 2001 during the initial phases of formal negotiations that "broader public endorsement of dialogue and more serious discussion of political means to address manageable Maoist demands" was encouraged (Chalmers,2011,p.276). In the post 2001 phase national civil society organizations took up public communication with greater fervor. Field research and a greater knowledge of the conflict itself helped civil society organizations to engage with public advocacy in a greater way. Chalmers points out that in this phase effort towards initiation of dialogue exchange was met with a lot of resistance both nationally (due to the resurgence of the royal government) and internationally (because of the Maoist insurgency being viewed with the lens of the Global war on terror) (Ibid). Civil society organizations hence had to come up with various strategies and techniques. One important strategy was highlighting cases of military or Maoist excesses. This phase also saw various coalitions emerge out of the civil society. The Children as Zone of Peace initiative brought together the United Nations, donors, government and civil society and owners of private schools. Organizations used street demonstrations, music concerts and radio broadcasts as means to engage with the public. Even after the royal coup civil society organizations kept pushing for peace and democracy to be upheld. Through public advocacy civil society was able to tap into "a deep well of popular frustration" with the continued violence (Ibid). Chalmers suggests that Civil Society organizations more or less stuck to specific issue based advocacy highlighting the fact that organizations were comfortable sticking to "specific areas of expertise" instead of trying to build "wider political platforms" (Ibid,p.277).

In Sri Lanka, non-public advocacy was directed towards influencing politicians and international figures who were integral to the peace process and sometimes even the war in an effort to end the violence. Letters directed towards the president; prime minister and LTTE as well as marches to the key government institutions; conflict resolution workshops organized for key decision makers; proposals for new legislations; personal interactions and seminars with key influential people have all been used by civil society groups in their advocacy for peace (Orjuela,

2011,p.130). Civil society organizations have also undertaken serious research work and conducted opinion polls on "issues related to peace, research about political reforms, the roots and consequences of war and deconstruction of national identities" (Ibid,p.128). Publishing articles, releasing press statements and newsletters have also been used in the spreading of information about the war. The National Peace Activism, established in the mid-1990s is one such organization which has tried influencing both political actors and build an opinion conducive to peace among the general population. Other prominent research institutes which contributed towards building up a public discourse on war include International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Marga Institute and Social Scientist's Association. Sri Lanka also had religious organizations like Centre for Society and Religion, Inter-religious peace foundation and YMCA which were working for peace. Orjuela points out that the *Sarvodaya* Movement with its "extensive village-level outreach" constituted a "peace brigade" with a large number of its village members (Ibid,p.117). Creative methods such as theater performances, dance and music were also used by organizations like NCP, CPA and MIRJE to build a public opinion about peace.

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

Civil Society organizations are most involved in India mostly in the "public" advocacy. Once the immediate work of providing relief is taken care of, the attention turns towards the reconciliation process. Both *Janvikas* and CFD conducted intense programs working with various sections of the society to start the reconciliation process. Any effort towards reconciliation cannot be fully effective without an understanding of the causes of violence itself. Hence civil society organizations engage in fact finding as a first step towards understanding the causes of violence. The Gujarat violence of 2002 is very well documented with several organizations coming up with detailed reports on the victims and the aftereffects of the violence. Similarly, COVA and *Apna Watan* in Hyderabad has been involved in various fact finding committees. The step in the reconciliatory process is the creation of a strong public opinion towards peace. In Gujarat the nature of violence was such that in the initial few months it was impossible to initiate any conversation for reconciliation or harmony. People living in camps and in fear of their lives did not want to be spoken to about the importance of peace. There is also a very important debate which points out that can there be any semblance of reconciliation without

any justice being served. It is important to note here that the reconciliation process is a long term goal and civil society organizations were actively involved in working with communities long after the violence was over. In fact the work in most cases still continues as does the court cases to get justice. However, a first step towards an attempt towards creation of sustainable peace, especially in ethnic and religious conflicts, is the creation of a public opinion for peace. Advocacy is directed towards achieving precisely this. Organizations in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad use techniques similar to Sri Lanka, Nepal and elsewhere. All the organizations bring out pamphlets, posters and other research materials which help in spreading awareness. Most of the print material is bi-lingual with versions in local as well as English. These are distributed in various communities during outreach programs. In Ahmedabad, the *Aman Pathiks*<sup>61</sup> kept on working with people affected by violence till 2007. During this time, *Aman Patiks* worked towards a reconciliation process taking the help of door to door campaigns, open air meetings in areas where Hindus and Muslims lived in close proximity. Shenaz, a former *Aman Pathik* while talking about her experience in *Gayatrinagar* and *Sundarnagar*, points out that the door to door campaigning and open air meetings were initially met with a lot of hostility when the program began in 2003. But slowly people started showing up for meetings and a process of reconciliation started (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July, 2015). COVA uses its children's theater group *Koshish* to spread the message of the importance of harmony and peace with the help of street plays during *Ganesh Chaturthi* celebrations.

A very innovative effort towards spreading awareness by *JanVikas* and partner organizations is the "Conflictorium". The "Conflictorium" is an interactive museum set up in the old city, Ahmedabad. The main aim of the project is to "contemporize the discourse on conflict by promoting acceptance of conflict as necessary to human refinement, promoting dialogue on most contentious issues".<sup>62</sup> The museum houses various art installations and uses audio and video mediums to initiate a dialogue about the meaning of violence and how it effects everyday existence. The aim is to involve more youth and open up various other "conflictoria" in the country to keep this dialogue going. Non-public advocacy is directed majorly towards government agencies such as Minority Commissions and Human Rights Commission. Organizations in both these cities have constantly put pressure on Minority Commissions and

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<sup>61</sup> Already mentioned in Chapter 3.

<sup>62</sup> Conflictorium Brochure

Human Rights Commission to keep a tab on any emerging situation and take into account any human rights violations in cases of large scale violence. As in other cases, in India also organizations conduct fact finding missions in violence affected areas in order to understand the root cause of violence and in turn pressurize the government to take action and create a public opinion for peace. The reports documenting incidents in Gujarat were effective in understanding the extent of violence and also the condition of the refugees which helped garner a lot of attention. Seminars, magazines, printed materials, street plays are all used as various other methods of engaging with the public and creating an opinion for peace.

### **Mumbai and Delhi**

Like all other functions, advocacy is also dependent on the context of the conflict. In the case of India, the nature of conflict demands public advocacy more than private one. As has already been stated, civil society organizations dedicate maximum effort into this function. Awareness building is one of the main focus area for most organizations. As in the case of organizations in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad, organizations here also produce a lot of research material. Newsletters, reports, fact findings are all part of the process. Organizations in Mumbai and Delhi are different from those in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad in the sense that they don't restrict their activities to these cities. Since these organizations have established themselves as resource organizations their work is pan-Indian in outlook. Most of the activities done by these organizations are in collaboration with regional organizations and with other organizations as well. The training materials published by these organizations are used by other smaller and regional organizations for their training programs. The resource organizations help other smaller organizations develop strategies and execute programs. Sometimes these organizations can also provide financial support to other smaller organizations.

Apart from this, civil society organizations in Delhi and Mumbai have also been experimenting with various kinds of other awareness building tools. Mobile apps engaging in myth busting, cultural programs, peace marches, exhibitions and lecture series are all part of the list of activities conducted by these organizations. These activities are all directed towards sensitizing the public and impressing upon them the need for communal harmony in the present time. Since these organizations have been able to create a name for themselves, they are often able to rope in important people to spread awareness on their behalf. Bollywood celebrities,

renowned artists, poets and singers who can easily capture the imagination of the people are often roped in for programs. CSSS has in the past also done sensitization programs with the police in various places. However such programs are no longer part of the activity list. Irfan Engineer in a private interview explains that although over the years CSSS has conducted 150 such training programs, it was always a difficult job to organize and get police personnel to participate (Telephonic Interview, May, 2017). In Maharashtra, a pro-active police commissioner's directives led to CSSS conducting many such programs. At the National Police Academy, CSSS also conducted seminars with mid-term training IPS officers and passing out IPS officers. Engineer concludes that in the present atmosphere, such trainings have become near impossible to organize.

The main stress of these resource organizations is on research and designing of training programs which can be used for further training by other organizations and individuals. Hence, CSSS, ANHAD, *Aman Biradari* and AISF have dedicated a lot of their efforts towards generating well researched resource material. These research materials deal with understanding the root causes of violence, fact finding, minority status reports, reports on those affected by violence as well as reports on the functioning of the government and any kinds of development affecting communal harmony. These organizations also come up with interesting training modules which include interactive games, role play and group discussions. These serve the twin purpose of awareness building and serving as resource material for the training of future activists and capacity building of smaller organizations.

#### **IV. In- Group Socialization**

Socialization is a prerequisite in spreading a culture of peace. The need to inculcate "democratic values" and "democratic attitudes" is of utmost important and this can be achieved through citizen's participation in "associations, networks and movements" (Paffenholz, 2011, p.70). The aim here is to bring about attitudinal change within the society by devising a plans towards a "peaceful conflict resolution and reconciliation" (Ibid). Rather than focusing on improving relations between two conflicting communities, here the concentration is to bring about changes within groups. Paffenholz suggests that national or local groups working towards peace in conflict or post-conflict societies can contribute towards this function. However most often this function is taken up by international NGOs working in these societies. Paffenholz

suggests that there can be two types of in-group socialization. The first is directed towards achieving a culture of peace. Peaceful resolution to a conflict can be achieved with activities that aim towards "enhancing" a culture of peace and ending violence in a way which will lead to reconstruction of the society (Ibid). Such activities are directed towards a society as a whole or towards a particular social group and usually involve capacity building and conflict resolution trainings. The other kind of socialization is directed towards a particular group (especially the weaker or marginalized group) and towards strengthening the in-group identity of the particular group. However, the in-group identity consolidation should not be based on any negative bias against another social group. This kind of socialization also should not be perceived as a threat by another social group. Rather the idea behind this kind of socialization is that previously antagonistic social groups which are "empowered" enough will be able to interact with each other in a meaningful way in order to resolve conflict (Ibid,p.71).

Traditional methods of peace education like training in conflict resolution and negotiation can be used for achieving "in-group social capital" (Ibid,p.70). Often NGOs also use tools of popular culture like radio, television shows, street theater performances, books, and poetry to achieve this socialization. However, Paffenholz suggests that there are some limitations of the in-group socialization practices. The culture of peace practices are often sporadic, lack continuity and hence are mostly not able to "create a critical mass for change" (Ibid,p.71). Hence even when they succeed at the local level, they are not able to achieve much at the national level. These activities are never able to gather enough momentum to turn into a large scale peace movement which could then pressurize leaders into peace talks. A second shortcoming is related to the lack of sustained involvement of people at the local level. Paffenholz points out that people who do not have basic human necessities of food and security often are not interested in engaging in developing a culture of peace (Ibid). Hence, the local impact also remains limited.

## **Case Studies**

The socialization process has different aims at different stages of the conflict. Kurtenbach suggests that in the initial years of conflict in Guatemala, Catholic organizations like *Acción Católica* and *Maryknoll* provided Spanish and basic education training which helped "empower a generation of rural civil society leaders" (Kurtenbach,2011,p.93). In the later years as violence worsened, civil society organizations attempted to bring people together based on common

issues and goals which in this case was to end the military rule and oppression. However, Kurtenbach observes that these efforts brought together people on "indigenous, *campesino* and trade union issues but rarely included activities to bridge existing cleavages" (Ibid). An important issue to be addressed in this regard is the politics of group identity versus the larger goals of a peace movement. In the case of Guatemala, Kurtenbach points out that during the war there was a clear division between groups demanding "cultural rights" and those pushing for "fundamental socioeconomic and political reforms" (Ibid). After the war there was a general tendency towards "ethnicization" of the conflict (Ibid). Maya leaders thought that it was important to consolidate the Maya identity before any effort could be put towards participating in the larger goals of the peace movement. This is indicative of the fragmentation of organizations when it comes to the addressing issues of identity. Kurtenbach observes that bringing groups together based on common goals and enemies is easier when there is a war to be fought. After the war however the ability to "compromise" and hence work together becomes difficult due to the loss of a shared goal (Ibid,p.94).

The nature of conflict in Nepal made it difficult for civil society to take any concrete steps towards in-group socialization. Chalmers points out that in the early stages of conflict civil society organizations paid little attention towards peace negotiations. The "internal democratic practices" of these organizations were mostly reflective of party politics (Chalmers,2011,p.278). Hence these organizations never really worked towards socialization. In the period between 2001-2005, civil society organizations and the political figures had to take note of the multiple cleavages within the society in Nepal. Failed peace talk and an escalation of conflict called for a necessary "rethinking of in-group democratic practices and the exclusive character of Nepali society, polity and much civic organization" (Ibid). After the coup civil society organizations gained a new confidence to push the agenda for peace. However, in-group socialization was not a concern of civil society. The focus had shifted towards forming a broader coalition for peace and providing alternate narratives for peace. Chalmers points out that civil society organizations at this point adopted "cohesive agendas" and recognized "the primacy of democracy as a rallying point" (Ibid,p.279). Even in the years following the coup when newer fault lines and Conflict emerged out of the Nepali society, civil society organizations did not do much work towards socialization. Chalmers observes that civil society organizations went back to existing political norms and hence "failed to transcend party politics" (Ibid).

Orjuela suggests that civil society organizations in Sri Lanka attempted to bring about attitudinal changes in the general population but the impact could be at best described as "personal, local and occasional" (Orjuela,2011,p.154). However civil society organizations constantly worked with people and imparting peace education through training programs, leaflets, pamphlets, posters and rallies to generate a discussion on peace, the need for it and the various ways of working towards achieving it. These activities essentially opened up spaces for a "public debate" (Ibid,p.155). The NPA and Center for Policy Alternatives along with other civil society groups put in efforts towards bringing about an attitude change.

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

In the case of all the organizations working in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad the impact of this function is quite limited as has been pointed out in the case of most other case studies. The in-group socialization is limited to the intervention of religious leaders in making people understand the need for peace. In Hyderabad such efforts were taken up by COVA where religious leaders visited violence affected areas to talk to people and mediate peace. COVA is known to direct most of their work towards empowering the Muslim population in the old city area. Hence, a lot of their activities are directed towards educating the Muslim population about their rights. Educating and inculcating democratic values in the population is another way in which in-group socialization is achieved and COVA through its campaign for greater participation in the area *sabhas* and other local administrative bodies tries to achieve this. In Ahmedabad in the post 2002 violence period most of the protection function was taken up by Minority Religious Groups and this was counter-productive in a way. During the course of many personal interviews conducted one common thread that emerged was the pre-conditions of living in such colonies. Strict adherence to religious values preached by the minority organizations was a necessary precondition which was counter-productive towards establishing platform for dialogue exchange. Since empowering the people towards understanding their rights is an important part of the socialization process, a lot of effort is put towards protecting minority rights. As has been pointed out addressing the issue of minority rights goes a long way in consolidating group identity and this becomes a precursor to the reconciliation process. The field workers working in the camps right after the 2002 violence narrate the resistance towards talks of peace and harmony. The first issues which were addressed were compensation for the

minorities and filling FIRs. This helped the minorities gain confidence and trust towards the field workers and later helped in reconciliatory exercises.

## **Mumbai and Delhi**

Bringing about attitudinal changes in people is always a long term project. As Orjuela (2011) points out, civil society's intervention in these activities can be very localized. As in the case of Ahmedabad and Hyderabad, the organizations in Mumbai and Delhi also concentrate on minority groups. As has been pointed out earlier on, one of the key focus of most organizations in Mumbai and Delhi is training and sensitization. These training programs are directed towards bringing about attitudinal changes. These workshops utilize lectures, visual media, group discussions, interactive games and street theater to drive home the importance of maintaining communal harmony and resisting communal forces. Most organizations have their own modules for these kinds of exercises. So while ANHAD has a video lecture series where eminent social activists and academicians talk about issues pertaining to democracy, AISF has a highly interactive model with games, flip charts and group discussions.

The other kind of activity under this function is strengthening in-group identity. Here the work of these organizations become sporadic. Some innovative actions have been taken and one such example is the work CSSS does with *Ulemas* and women. As has already been mentioned in Chapter 4, CSSS has in the past conducted sensitization workshops with Muslim *Ulemas* and women. These kinds of activities help strengthen the in-group identity while opening up the group to the importance of secular values while sensitizing them towards their rights. The lack of constant and consistent grassroots level presence of these organizations make it difficult for them to fulfill this function to the fullest potential. Organizations in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad who have a greater community presence are able to do slightly better at fulfilling this function.

## **V. Social Cohesion**

As opposed to in-group socialization which aims towards building "bonding ties" within groups, social cohesion is aimed towards "bridging ties" (Paffenholz,2011,p.71). In other words this is an attempt towards starting a process of community building through integration. Societies fall apart during violent conflict and there is a need to rebuild ties and restore trust in order for the social reconstruction process to be successful. Social Cohesion activities could be of three

kind - "Relationship-oriented cohesion for peace, Outcome-oriented cohesion for peace, Outcome-oriented cohesion for business or development work" (Ibid,p.72).

Relationship-oriented activities are oriented towards bringing representatives from two opposing groups together in order to build relationships between communities which will be conducive for peace. All activities are directed towards achieving a "long-term attitude change towards the other" (Ibid). Joint workshops, creating platforms for dialogue exchange and visits to areas demarcated as the other's, all come within the purview of relation-oriented cohesion activities. The second type of social-cohesion aims at achieving long term goals of peacebuilding. Members of opposing communities are brought together not only for the purpose of building relationships but in an attempt to achieve long lasting peace. Paffenholz suggests that the goals of this kind of social-cohesion building can only be achieved when key actors participate in conflict resolution workshops which would enable them to be part of the formal negotiation process (Ibid). The third type of social cohesion focuses on development work. Efforts are directed towards getting conflicting groups together "for some objective other than peace" (Ibid). Instead of building peace the main objective here is to bring people together based on common issues so that "new trust and social capital are built up almost unconsciously" (Ibid). Paffenholz concludes that often attitudinal changes are difficult to bring about. However, attitudinal change is not always necessary to bring about "behavior change" (Ibid). This essentially implies that while peace education might fail to bring about concrete attitudinal changes, it does not prevent people from coming together to participate in "joint work initiatives" (Ibid). Thus, out-come oriented cohesion efforts are more likely to succeed rather than other kinds of efforts.

### **Case Studies**

Social cohesion in the context of Guatemala also has had changing goals based on the stages of conflict. For example, human rights groups and women's organizations came together during the heights of violence but fell apart due to social and ethno-cultural reasons right after the war. However, in the initial phases of the peace process, civil society organizations especially churches provided spaces for informal dialogue exchange between the "guerrillas and different sections of the Guatemala's society" (Kurtenbach,2011,p.94). With the end of war, civil society organizations took up projects at the community level which aimed towards social reconciliation.

These initiatives concentrated on development work in communities without any direct peace building agenda. However, Kurtenbach concludes that most of these efforts were very isolated and small scale to make any deep impact on the efforts towards "relationship oriented social cohesion" (Ibid).

The nature of conflict in Nepal actually hindered the social cohesion process. For the most part civil society efforts were directed towards resolving conflict between political parties, Maoists and the Monarchy. This nature of conflict essentially made sure that the conflict resolution process was "an elite affair at the leadership level" (Chalmers,2011,p.280). Most urban based civil society organizations were not aware of the situations at the rural level. Civil society organizations did not sufficiently address the issue of broadening the peace process. As a result once this conflict was resolved several other regional conflicts emerged where marginalized people were involved (Tarai Plains unrest and the Madhesi Movements are example). Chalmers points out that this was by and large a failure of political leadership, it also brought to the fore "less than fully inclusive efforts directed towards social cohesion" (Ibid)

In Sri Lanka a lot of effort was put in by civil society to initiate dialogue between the Tamil and Sinhalese people. Orjuela in her account of the civil society's efforts towards "cross-ethnic" dialogue recounts how civil society actors undertook the difficult task of opening up spaces of dialogue between these two groups who did not even know each other's dialogues (Orjuela,2011,p.157). Civil society organization also arranged for visits to both the north and south. People travelled to refugee camps, villages, schools and camps which helped them bust some of the prevalent myths. *Sarvodaya* movement organized peace camps, arranged for youth from Jaffna to visit the south and Sinhalese to learn Tamil language and culture. The Community Development Centre also organized for Sinhalese women to visit Tamil refugee camps. Orjuela suggests that through these visits the Sinhalese women were made aware of the plight of the Tamils and the Tamils realized that not all Sinhalese were enemies. This helped create an atmosphere for mutual trust. Orjuela also suggests that even the "relief development work or trauma counseling" which was provided by a person of a different group could be viewed as a mark of "solidarity" (Ibid). The Community Development Centre also brought Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim children together so that they could interact with each other, learning each other's dances and songs and share food. The Center for Performing Arts was established to encourage

"non-violent cooperation across caste boundaries" (Ibid,p.121). Since its establishment CPA has used various tools of culture to promote peace and reconciliation. Songs and plays with messages of peace, cultural exchange between Tamils and Sinhalese and inviting Sinhalese artists to visit war affected Jaffna have been part of the CPA program. CPA has encouraged Tamils to perform on Sinhalese plays and music and vice versa.

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

A large part of NGO and Civil Society Groups activities are usually directed towards this function. In the case of India, civil society organizations direct a lot of attention towards creating spaces of dialogue between communities. Most of these activities are concentrated in disturbed areas where Hindus and Muslims live in close proximity. However civil society organizations also work with students in schools and colleges in creating an opinion for peace and social integrity. The main focus of social cohesion activities as elsewhere is to forge ties across conflicting groups. The major tools for this sort of activities are myth busting exercises, peace education, vocational trainings, street theater, joint celebration of festivals and such other activities. In Ahmedabad such activities started in the period following the violence in 2002. In Ahmedabad, youth from Muslim areas were encouraged to step into Hindu areas and vice versa as an effort to understand the similarities between the two communities. Many respondents suggest that this was an eye opening experience for both communities and helped overcome fears about the other community. Workshops bringing together Hindu and Muslim youth were conducted keeping in mind the agenda of getting to know the other community better and to open channels of communication. CFD was involved in one such exercise. COVA's training for trainers was directed towards creation of a leadership who would be able to then go into communities and start a process of dialogue creation. Most of these activities are concentrated at grassroots level and are directed towards strengthening intercommunity ties. Joint celebration of *Eid*, *Ganesh Chaturthi* and kite flying has also figured majorly in the agenda of NGOs like CFD, COVA and *Apna Watan*. As has previously been mentioned, COVA and *Apna Watan* along with other NGOs conducted programs such as street theater and pamphlet distribution during *Ganesh Chaturthi*. These programs always carried the message of peace and harmony and the importance of peaceful coexistence. CFD's community library and COVA's vocational training workshops for women and youth are also platforms which were created in hopes of myth busting and

dialogue creation platforms. Social cohesion activities are also directed towards school and college students and often civil society groups conduct workshops, seminars, debates with these groups with the objective of making peace, religion, concept of other, national integration as part of the daily discourse. All these activities are directed towards opening up informal spaces of dialogue exchange which then contribute towards reconciliation and harmony building process.

## **Mumbai and Delhi**

Social cohesion activities are of great significance to the organizations in Delhi and Mumbai as dialogue creation is one of the very important component of the reconciliatory process. Although not working within communities limit the extent of this kind of work for the organizations here, sporadically activities are directed towards dialogue creation. Early effort of organizations like ANHAD and *Aman Biradari* was concentrated in Gujarat. ANHAD was part of many reconciliatory efforts being taken up in Gujarat. ANHAD organized Peace Marches in which youth from all over Ahmedabad participated. The march started from *Shah Alam* (one of the biggest refugee camps after 2002) and went all the way to the other part of the city (which was not typically a Muslim area). Hashmi says that for some young participants this was the first experience of stepping in to the walled city - "it was like a journey for them" (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May,2015). Cultural programs celebrating the diversity and spreading the message for peace on the day of *rath yatra*, joint celebration of festivals and involving the youth in various kinds of interactive activities has been the strategy of ANHAD thus far.

*Aman Biradari's* work in Tilak Vihar in Delhi has also concentrated on getting the community together. Setting up of library, teaching young children and empowering the women in the colony has been some of the strategies involved in Tilak Vihar. Talking about their intervention in Muzaffarnagar, Mangala Verma (at the time working in CSE) suggests that the reconciliatory process can be an uphill battle soon after such a vicious riot had taken place (Personal Interview, New Delhi,May,2015). Getting people to come together based on common concerns can be an effective strategy. Talking about entitlements which both communities should have access to but are not getting access to, can make communities come together based on those shared woes. However, soon after riots the trauma and mistrust is so high that it is difficult to have such conversations. Hence, in most cases the process of reconciliation starts with acquiring compensation, livelihood and justice.

The organizations here might not be working in particular communities, and hence their way of creating platforms for them can be quite different from other community based organizations. CSSS has also been involved in reconciliatory efforts in Muzaffarnagar. Working with local organizations, CSSS has been able to set up a peace center in Shamli. Three years after the riots, CSSS went back to help initiate a process of dialogue creation concentrating on getting the various communities to come together and understand the importance of fighting communal forces. Joint celebration of festivals, peace marches and getting the youth involved in spreading the message of peace are the usual methods which are used across the board by all organizations. CSSS and AISF also organize training and sensitization workshops which also concentrate on myth bursting about the "other" community. These kinds of exercises also help in curbing the demonization process and make the other more human which in turn can help in the process of dialogue creation.

## **VI Intermediation and Facilitation**

Intermediation and facilitation is an important function of civil society which under normal circumstances acts as an intermediary and facilitator between the citizens and the state. In case of peace negotiations civil society actors can act as facilitator "between or among groups and at different levels of society" (Paffenholz,2011,p.73). Civil society's role in diplomatic conflict management however remains limited. Civil society can act as facilitators "between armed groups, between armed groups and communities and among armed groups, communities and development agencies" (Ibid). However such activities are most often undertaken by state governments or the United Nations. In the rare cases when civil society does intervene, it is the external civil society actors, such as "international NGOs, international networks and research institutes" which get involved (Ibid). Paffenholz suggests that key civil society actors should receive training in conflict resolution and negotiation in order to be able to play a greater role in conflict resolution. Nevertheless, local civil society can still play some important facilitation roles in conflict areas and Paffenholz enumerates four different kinds of roles - As facilitators between "civil society and warring parties in village or district levels"; Negotiating "peace zones" or "violence free days" to ensure some relief in violent regions; ensure the delivery of goods and services to people in war zones by negotiating between warring groups and international and national aid NGOs; as mediators between national and international aid

agencies and local civil society (Ibid,p.74). In war zones where the government mechanism has completely broken down NGOs help provide all necessary services and goods to the local communities. International and national aid agencies who are not familiar with local communities and context often take the help of local NGOs. Local NGOs then serve as go-betweens, negotiating with armed groups, international and National NGOs and local communities.

### **Case Studies**

In Guatemala, a lot of the facilitation was done by the Catholic Church which promoted "direct dialogue" between the guerrillas and the government. However this effort was not a success (Kurtenbach,2011,p.95). The National Dialogue initiated in 1989 had 47 organizations participating in it. This opened up spaces for dialogue among various social actors and the government on various themes such as "human rights, security and indigenous people" (Ibid). Although the National Dialogue opened up spaces for dialogue between the guerrilla and the citizens its impact was limited because a number of important organizations decided to stay away and at the same time the participants had to bear the brunt of the security forces. The more successful talks were held between 1990 and 1993 which was facilitated by the Catholic Church and certain Protestant churches. These dialogues between the URNG and civil society organizations resulted in the inclusion of civil society organization in the "formal negotiation" as part of the ASC (Ibid).

In Nepal civil society organizations were involved in the process of facilitation from the very beginning. In the initial stages most of the efforts were directed towards negotiating release of individuals from either state or Maoist custody or towards making sure local development work would progress smoothly. In the process civil society organizations were able to establish contacts within the warring parties. These contacts proved helpful when international organizations tried preparing the grounds for negotiations between the conflict parties. This way civil society organizations contributed to the first round of peace talks in 2001 which were ultimately unsuccessful. Civil society's role in mediation and facilitation grew from here on. By the 2003 peace talks, civil society was able to establish more contacts and hence had a greater role to play. The 2003 peace talks fell apart and also put a question mark on the "credibility of civil society as a neutral third party" (Chalmers,2011,p.281). Chalmers observes that the period

between 2005 and 2006 was the most crucial for peace negotiations and civil society actors played a key role in the negotiations. Civil society organizations made sure that the negotiations between the government and the Maoists went on without any hindrance and the negotiations were fruitful. Chalmers also observes that the negotiations would have continued even without civil society interventions but in all likelihood the negotiations would have fallen through without "constructive critical support of CS figures" who made sure the negotiations remained on track and critical issues of human rights was sufficiently addressed (Ibid). Once the cease-fire was in place civil society organizations were able to pressurize the conflicting parties to smooth over the remaining divides. In the ensuing regional conflicts local Madhesi civil society figures had a greater role to play because of their knowledge about local politics. These activists could act as mediators between the government and the new rebel groups hence, helping keep the lines of communication open. It is for this reason that other development agencies also relied on these local activists as channels of communication.

In Sri Lanka too, facilitation was taken up by two Catholic Bishops. Orjuela writes that the Bishops played an important role in conveying messages between the LTTE and the government when the "official channels" of communication were "closed" (Orjuela,2011,p.129). The families of war victims associations (Parents of Servicemen Missing in Actions, Association of Servicemen Missing in Action) also initiated dialogue and negotiations with the LTTE to help start the process of release of hostages. At the same time these associations also put across the LTTE delivery demands to the south. Civil society organizations ventured into LTTE zones to gather information and to convey to the people and LTTE, "the yearning for peace of the people of the south" (Ibid). Orjuela points out that the southern delegations to the north increased during the ceasefires in 1995 and between 2002 and 2005. Civil society actors also facilitated communication between civilians and armed forces. Orjuela gives the example of Vavuniya where civil society actors including a Buddhist priest were able to establish channels of communication in order to help release kidnapped civilians.

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

In the context of India, the facilitation process is mostly directed towards the conflicting communities. It has been noted that in a lot of cases the police and administration have been unable to fulfill their duties which have ultimately led to the escalation of a volatile situation.

The Gujarat violence of 2002 has often been named as a pogrom where the government systematically failed to protect one section of the society. However, civil society's engagement with the state power is limited in the context of India. Facilitation becomes a part of the general reconciliatory process where constant efforts are made towards opening channels of dialogue between conflicting parties. One of the after effects of violence has been cities being divided into clear cut Muslim areas and Hindu areas. Only in very limited areas both these communities live in close proximity. In such cases civil society organizations have tried to initiate a reconciliatory process. For example, CFD worked in two such areas in Ahmedabad: Abadnagar and Bhilvas. These were areas where tribal, Dalits and Muslims lived in close proximity and was one of the worst affected during the riots. Social Reconciliation Committees (SRC) and Micro-level Youth Groups were two approaches taken towards the reconciliation process. SRCs worked as the "apex bodies" at the grassroots level who were in charge of determining activities directed towards reconciliation at the community level (Oommen,2008,p.133). The committees included people from every community in the area and concentrated on the specific issues of those areas.

Through the SRC, CFD established MLYG which again had youth from various social categories (Hindus, Muslims, Dalits) come together and participate in various activities in order to open a channel of dialogue creation. One such initiative was the opening of area libraries. This was based on the concept of informal get-togethers in *mohollas*. Rafi from CFD says that the libraries were devised as the focal point of interaction between the youth of the area (Personal interview, Ahmedabad, July,2015). Starting with one library in a rented apartment at the "border" area between Hindu and Muslim community, CFD took this opportunity to identify local youth who could be influential leaders. The library became the focal point of many community activities such as film screening and study circles. In the process 28 such youth were identified who were then taken for a seven day training camp in Panchmarhi. These 28 youth came from different communities and some were even perpetrators of violence. The camp was directed towards trust building among them. Rafi says that in the initial phase these youth would remain aloof. Slowly a bond was developed through the trust building exercise and he says "*wapis aate samaye pura akhha group eksath train main bate karte karte aye*" (While coming back we all came back talking, together on the train) (Ibid). The success of this initiative was further reflected in the fact that these 28 youth went on to establish various youth groups in several communally sensitive places in Ahmedabad. Thus, the Ahmedabad *Shahari Yuva Manch* was

created. The youth groups now run 10 libraries, known as "Knowledge Based Center" in Ahmedabad. In some places the libraries are in buildings in *moholla* which are rented to the youth committee free of cost. In others where there is no designated place, CFD has provided the youth group with a soft board which has been placed at the "*chauraha*". Rafi proudly proclaims that in most cases CFD only pays for the newspapers. All other activities are taken care of by the local youth groups themselves. Apart from these KBCs being the meeting place for the youth, they also double as study circles. Community leaders and eminent activists are invited to give talks which could lead to dialogue creation and knowledge building.

Often community leaders and religious leaders become part of the dialogue facilitation process. COVA has in the past, engaged the help of religious leaders from Hindu and Muslim communities to initiate dialogues when the communal situation has become volatile. Community based organizations at the grassroots level also play a role in facilitation. International and national NGOs often depend on local community based grassroots organizations to gain access to communities. This can be seen in the case of both Hyderabad and Ahmedabad. COVA has an entire network of smaller grassroots level organizations which become part of the facilitation process in case of any communal escalation. In the case of Ahmedabad, organizations like CFD and *Janvikas* were able to carry on their reconciliatory work only because they already were involved with the communities. The other important aspect of facilitation as has been mentioned is training for facilitators. Care and ActionAid trained several young volunteers in the initial days after the conflict. The training provided, equipped the volunteers to provide legal aid and trauma counseling in the initial days after violence. *Janvikas* and COVA have their own training for trainers programs which is directed towards capacity building of smaller grassroots organizations with the objective of facilitating the long term reconciliatory process. COVA has also been working towards making some positive policy interventions. One such instance is the COVA's recommendations to the government regarding the financial inclusion of the poor. These recommendations were directed towards ensuring small and petty businesses access to easy bank loans. This effort of COVA was successful also as government accepted 8 of the 12 recommendations.

## Mumbai and Delhi

Facilitation and mediation takes places in the form of various kinds of activities and initiatives when it comes to the organizations here. Most of these organizations have at some point or the other been part of the reconciliatory process. There resource organizations might not have a lot of grassroots presence, but are able to gain access to the communities because of the reputation gained through years of working in the field of peace and harmony building. Hence it possible for these organizations to facilitate dialogue between communities which can sometimes prevent violence from erupting and also help the reconciliatory process. As has been already mentioned in Chapter 4, CSSS has been involved in such dialogue creation efforts in Muzaffarnagar. However, because of the particular nature of these organizations, they are able to do more than that. For example, *Aman Biradari* and CSE have established as system in Muzaffarnagar and Bhagalpur whereby they have been able to facilitate a dialogue between the villagers and local administration. Mangala Verma narrates the step by step process involved (Personal Interview, New Delhi, May 2015). Since the first step in the reconciliatory process is ensuring the due entitlements are made available, CSE and *Aman Biradari* working with local organizations worked towards educating people about their rights and entitlements. In the next stage village level social group meetings were held in which the groups would discuss their rights and the accessibility to various facilities. Then came the "*chaupal* meetings" where villagers got a chance to interact with district administration. These meetings would also serve as platforms for the villagers to voice their issues and demands. This would also ensure that the district administration was held accountable to the villagers for whom they worked. Camps would then be held where people were helped with ration card applications, widow pension application and the like. Verma suggests that a positive effect of this has been the "*tehsil divas*" which is not held every month or once in every 2 months (Ibid). These meeting organized by the district administration are taken seriously by the local people who take this opportunity to communicate with the district administration and voice their opinions on issues affecting their daily lives.

Facilitation in the Indian context can also be interpreted as making the demands of the people known to the state and government bodies. This is a function which the civil society organizations have been taking up more seriously in recent times. ANHAD has taken active part

in giving recommendations to the planning commission under the 12th five year plan. The motivation here was taking the civil society's help in understanding the conditions of the minority Muslim community and the steps that can be taken to address the issues plaguing the community. These kinds of activities are directed towards fulfilling the civil society's role as the representative of the people's interest to the state machinery. Some of these civil society organizations have also been vocal about their criticism of the proposed communal harmony bill. Most of the organizations recognize the need for such a bill but have been critical of the bill in its current formulation. CSSS, AISF and ANHAD along with several other organizations had come together to propose amendments to the proposed bill. However, the facilitation function is highly context dependent and civil society's scope can be highly limited depending on the context in which they are operating. In the current context in which the central government is coming down heavily on civil society organizations, especially those working on issues of human rights, peace and harmony building, the scope of this function is restricted. Civil society organizations can still continue to facilitate dialogue creation but any meaningful policy intervention is very difficult to achieve.

## **VII Service Delivery**

Service delivery becomes an important civil society function when governments are weakened or completely broken down due to armed conflict. Often NGOs and other faith based organizations help provide necessary aid to the population affected by war along with undertaking other peacebuilding exercises. However, if and when service delivery becomes a civil society peacebuilding function is a matter of debate. Paffenholz suggests that there are various strands of arguments in this regard. A line of argument suggests that aid delivery is a "separate function" of civil society (Paffenholz,2011,p.74). Since service delivery is able to provide necessary humanitarian relief and in the process save lives it is considered as a necessary "precondition for civil society to exit" (Ibid). A second line of argument views service delivery as "fulfilling an economic, social and humanitarian objective" and hence cannot be really labeled as civil society support (Ibid). Yet another line of argument suggests that aid delivery becomes an important function of civil society only when organizations use aid delivery as "entry points" for peacebuilding activities (Ibid). Paffenholz concludes that it remains unclear whether civil society aid delivery can help in peacebuilding. It is therefore important to understand whether

peacebuilding activities can provide entry points into societies which can further the peacebuilding process or works as an obstacle by "distracting energy from other functions" (Ibid).

### **Case Studies**

In case of Guatemala, service delivery was never used as an entry point into peacebuilding activities. On the contrary service delivery was concentrated in areas of high indigenous or poor population to provide essential resources for survival in times of conflict. Kurtenbach observes that even though humanitarian NGOs were "highly political" in their ideology, they steered clear of issues beyond the humanitarian relief because of the threat of the military and their repressive ways (Kurtenbach,2011,p.95). International NGOs helped address issues of psychological trauma among the indigenous communities by contributing towards "capacity building" (Ibid). Here capacity building meant providing diploma courses in mental health or other such activities. However, such activities were also not utilized as an "entry point for a broader process of reconciliation and reconstruction" because of the threat perception in the form of arbitrary military persecution (Ibid). The government's inability to provide the necessary services to its citizens have prompted civil society organizations to step in to provide the necessary services and they have to continue to fulfill this "compensatory function" as long as the government is not able to step up (Ibid).

In Nepal, by the year 2000 civil society organizations had become an integral part of the service delivery process. Even the state efforts into development work needed the help from civil society organizations. When in 2002 the government scraped the local elected bodies more spaces opened up for local civil society organizations. Chalmers points out that development donors who were previously relying on line ministers to inject funds into building state infrastructure now had to be dependent on NGOs for such activities. The NGOs essentially functioned as "service-delivery contractors" and "as interface between development actors and Maoist parallel governance structures" (Chalmers,2011,p.282). The constant interaction with Maoist and local leaders helped NGOs for a kind of relationship which could be utilized as an "entry-point into peacebuilding" (Ibid,p.283). The constant interaction created an atmosphere of trust and comfort which became helpful while initiating discussions about the plight of local communities. Once the King came back to power and violence escalated the relationship

between donors and the government went sour. At a time when the state was not able to provide for the citizens, NGOs were also able to do very little. Chalmers however points out that this inability of the civil society "probably contributed as much to the push for peace as its previous ability" (Ibid). During this time the only means of doing any development work was through a donor agency-local NGO partnership and this also helped boost the morale of local NGOs. The post-2006 conflict situation brought to the fore one of the biggest short-comings of NGOs. Dealing with violence and service delivery became a challenge for most organizations because their own organizations were "deeply unrepresentative of local communities" (Ibid). The lack of knowledge and networks among local communities made service delivery and peace efforts more difficult to negotiate.

In Sri Lanka aid work has been used to build networks and show solidarity. Civic actors taking food and other essential supplies to the south also utilized these opportunities to build relations in the south. Orjuela gives the example of a medical camp organized by ADEP and Rotary Club in Kurunegala. The medical camp was used as a platform to give medical supplies and treatment to families of war victims and at the same time served as a "recognition of the suffering of the families of 'war heroes'" (Orjuela,2011,p.131).

### **Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

In the case of both Hyderabad and Ahmedabad civil society organizations have used service delivery as an entry point into the harmony building process. In conversations with several organizations one key point emerges: engaging with communities on the basis of developmental work helps organizations gain greater access to communities. Organizations find that the developmental approach is far more effective than a more direct approach to harmony building. In the initial days after the violence in Gujarat, civil society organizations had to make every effort to make sure that people living in camps were provided with adequate supplies for survival. In the absence of the state and central government aid, providing materials for temporary shelter, food and other necessities had become the responsibility of civil society organizations. The other important work was trauma counseling especially for children. Bangalore based National Institute for Mental Health and Neuroscience (NIMHANS) played a very important role in this regard. NIMHANS worked with the various partner NGOs of GHP and trained community workers with the basics of psychological care. Narrating experiences of the

training, fieldworkers like Hosefa and Shenaz explain that the training was directed to equip them to handle trauma affected children (Personal Interview, Ahmedabad, July,2015). Various interactive games and tools of drawing were used to bring the aggression out of children living in camps. The other sections who were targeted during trauma counseling were the youth and women. CFD and its community level workers were greatly involved with the youth. Youth volunteers were given training in psychological support. In the second stage an effort was made to establish ties among the youth from various communities. Programs such as *Aman Bhoj*, *Iftar party* and *Sarva Dharma Sabhas* were conducted (Oommen,2008,p.242). Youth peace volunteers from various communities were brought together and made to participate in various kinds of interactive activities. In the period following the violence, *Janvikas* and CFD have worked towards understanding the needs of the communities and have designed programs in accordance.

Similarly COVA has also worked with communities addressing their needs and developing programs to address those needs. The most common activities are education for children, vocational training for youth and women, empowering women against domestic violence, healthcare, sanitation and infrastructure related issues. A lot of effort is also directed towards equipping the local population to place their demands with the concerned government officials. COVA has worked with local communities to strengthen participation in the area *Sabhas*. As has been mentioned in Chapter 2, ahead of the GHMC election COVA renewed its campaign for people's participation in the local governing bodies. COVA has also been working towards the financial inclusion of the poor and marginalized in Hyderabad. A "Pilot Project for Financial Inclusion" was initiated in the year 2013 by COVA. With the help of the State bank of Hyderabad and the Syndicate bank and "change activists" from several organizations along with several donor agencies, COVA was able to ensure the accessibility of the loans to the poor. Financial security of the poor is a very important step towards ensuring their empowerment. In the process, civil society organizations hope that they will be able to open up enough platforms of communication between communities, bringing them together on common woes and get a dialogue going. The other important work that COVA took up was the Right to Education for the poor.

## **Mumbai and Delhi**

The organizations in Delhi and Mumbai take up mostly empowerment and livelihood generating activities. In some cases they do provide essential services to victims in riot affected areas. However, service delivery as a way to pave way for harmony building is difficult because of the lack of presence in communities. ANHAD has done a lot of focused work with women in Gujarat and elsewhere. Apart from this ANHAD also has various women empowerment centers in backward and impoverished parts of the country. ANHAD's *Dhaani* initiative helped provide livelihood and education to women in rural Bihar. In 2008, ANHAD was in Bihar working for flood relief. Once relief work was over ANHAD was back to evaluate the situation and soon realized there was long term need of involvement to empower the women of the region. Hence, ANHAD started a campaign directed towards getting rural marginalized women vocational training as well as basic education. Village to village campaigns concentrating on Araria and Purnea districts, helped ANHAD set up empowerment centers in 13 villages over the course of 2 years. The women got skilled at making jute products and these were initially sold in local markets. *Dhaani* emerged from this effort to empower local women and because of a need to make this effort even bigger. Such empowerment centers have been established in other parts of the country as well. ANHAD has also worked with women helping them understand their rights and work towards empowering them to fight domestic violence. Similar vocational training exercises and employment generating trainings are also conducted by CSSS. CES and *Aman Biradari* have also involved themselves in such kinds of activities. In Bhagalpur as well as Tilak Vihar the organization's entry has been to understand the lapse in the government's efforts towards rehabilitation. The main motivation here has been to provide for the communities. To this end, CES has been running vocational training for the women and youth in the Tilak Vihar.

## **Conclusion**

Paffenholz's functional analysis helps us understand the kinds of functions that the organizations can fulfill while trying to work towards sustainable peace. From the above discussion what becomes clear is that the ability to fulfill a certain function is dependent on the context in which the organizations are operating. The meaning of each function also changes with the context. For example, in certain context monitoring can mean the monitoring the situation of the victims of violence and in certain other could mean monitoring of government

and state bodies so that they don't violate human rights. The scope of these functions is limited by the nature of conflict as well. For example, facilitation would involve facilitating dialogue between communities, between communities and state, between two or more warring factions depending on the parties to the conflict. In most cases functioning of civil society organizations is also dependent on the degree of violence. However, what is clear from the above discussion is that civil society organizations fulfill these seven functions at various stages of conflict in different degrees, modifying the functions according to the context at hand.

# Chapter Six: Understanding the Effectiveness of Civil Society Intervention in Harmony Building in the Four Cities

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In order to understand the functionality and impact of various civil society interventions, Paffenholz comes up with a timeline for the analysis. Paffenholz looks at each function "during armed conflict" and "after large scale violence comes to an end" to understand the "effectiveness of each function" (Paffenholz,2011,p.381-382).

## **I. Protection**

Paffenholz suggests that the "level of violence" in a given context determines the level of intervention required in terms of protection. At the same time the need for the protection function "decreases" as the incidence of large scale violence comes down (Ibid,p.382). Continued need for protection occurs in situations where even after the end of large scale violence the threat to a certain section of the population is still pertinent, and the crime rates are high leading to continued deaths and adding to the insecurity. In a situation where "selective social and political violence" increases the threat to the lives of minorities, the protection function becomes very relevant (Ibid). For example, in the case of Ahmedabad, threats towards the Muslim community was high during violence and even after the incidence of violence. For months after, smaller incidents of violence kept occurring and, minorities felt unsafe to go back to their homes. In Hyderabad, the level of insecurity would rise with each incidence of violence. In the case of Muzaffarnagar also people fled their homes in fear and then were unable to get back to their homes even after violence was over. Even when camps were forcefully shut down those displaced by violence didn't want to go back. The threat was so pertinent that it was impossible to move back. Mumbai, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad have some distinct Hindu and Muslim areas. Most of these pockets were historically present of course. However they got consolidated with the incidents of communal violence. The threat perception, distrust and fear of the other becomes so heightened that people refuse to go back even in the familiar surroundings they grew up in.

However, this increased relevance does not always translate into the actual intervention of civil society organizations into protection of the affected masses. In examining all the cases of civil society intervention, Paffenholz reaches the conclusion that any meaningful intervention in protection was undertaken only in one third of the cases examined. However, Paffenholz concedes that traditionally protection is a state function, where ever it is a "functioning state" that is (Ibid). Often during times of violent conflict however, the state either becomes a party in the armed conflict or is unable to fulfill its protection function. If we look into the specific case of Ahmedabad, the state had largely failed in protecting the minorities. During the violence in a lot of cases police were mere by-standers and in some cases even perpetrators of violence. In such situations it becomes imperative for civil society to take up this function. Often if the violence has gone on for too long people start relying on "clans, communities, families or religious entities" for protection (Ibid). As has been previously noted, in the case of Ahmedabad most of the early protection was in fact provided by religious organizations. A second layer of protective functions are fulfilled by NGOs who either provide "general protection measures" or address "specific forms of violence, such as violence against minorities, children and women" (Ibid). NGOs in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad have only been partially able to fulfill the protective functions. In Ahmedabad, relief camps and later refugee colonies were set up by minority religious groups. The involvement of civil society came later and continued for a prolonged period after. However, as Paffenholz points out, the responsibility to protect solely lies with the State and when the State becomes the perpetrator of violence it becomes difficult for civil society to fulfill its protective functions. This can be noted in the case of Ahmedabad and Muzaffarnagar where the state was reluctant and late in acknowledging the crisis at hand and withdrew support after the initial few months.

Once "large-scale violence" ends the need for protection "diminishes" or becomes more "specific" in its orientation (Ibid). In the aftermath of large scale violence more often than not protection becomes a necessary "precondition" for civil society's ability to fulfill its other peacebuilding functions such as monitoring (Ibid,p.383). This also stands true for both Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. Once the large scale violence had diminished in Ahmedabad civil society organizations had to concentrate on livelihood generation for the displaced, getting compensation for the riot affected and start a reconciliation process. It therefore became imperative for the civil society to make sure that the minorities felt safe and protected.

Paffenholz explains that with the end of large scale violence conflict can get transformed into increased incidents of crime or sometimes newer forms of conflict can arise after the signing of the peace agreement. In such cases the intervention of international civil society organizations become important to ensure the space for functioning of the civil society does not narrow down. In Hyderabad, right after the Mecca Masjid blasts, the false cases against minorities increased.<sup>63</sup>COVA and other civil society organizations came together to fight such cases against the minorities. Similarly, in Ahmedabad crime against minorities had increased right after the 2002 violence. Custodial deaths, false encounters and crimes against minorities had become a big concern which had to be addressed by various civil society organizations.

Paffenholz concludes that in the case of protection it was the "traditional and religious entities" such as family of religious groups which were able to fulfill the protection function more effectively (Ibid). When it came to NGOs and civil society organizations the protection function was better fulfilled when "monitoring and advocacy" functions which "attracted media attention" (Ibid). In the case of Ahmedabad, the initial stress was on protection and then the activities got merged with monitoring and advocacy functions. In Hyderabad because of the nature of conflict the protection function was always combined with monitoring functions. Advocacy was an on-going feature of all activities. A second factor which affects the protection function is the presence of international NGOs. The presence of international NGOs provided some form of security to the local civil society which then helped open up spaces for their functioning more effectively. The NGO's intervention in conflict situations are more often linked with the availability of funds. Paffenholz suggests that "the level of engagement - and thus the chance to have an effect" were highly dependent on the availability of funding (Ibid). This holds true in the case of Ahmedabad where the most concrete efforts were undertaken by two international NGOs, Care and ActionAid. Both these NGOs and the partner organizations worked towards reconciliation long after the violence ended. However, the scopes of the operations were scaled down as the years passed and the partner NGOs could work till the funding lasted. Hence, when the protection function is combined with the monitoring and advocacy functions and it garners enough media attention, a safe space opens up for the civil society to fulfill its protection functions in the best possible manner. On the other had lack of

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/compensating-victims/article5147176.ece> ;  
<http://www.firstpost.com/india/hyderabad-blasts-police-taking-away-innocent-youth-say-muslims-637675.html>

sufficient funds and escalating violence prove as deterrents for the civil society in fulfilling the protection function?

## **II. Monitoring**

As in the case of protection, the relevance of monitoring functions are high during armed conflict but this does not always translate into actions taken towards monitoring. Paffenholz explains that monitoring is often considered a highly political task which is sought to be "omitted, avoided or co-opted" by all stake holders in conflict (Ibid,p.384). The civil society's intervention in this case becomes limited because of the prevalence of regressive state or large scale violence. Paffenholz notes that often civil society's engagement with monitoring functions increases as the violence progresses. Often monitoring work involves high levels of threat of violence for the volunteering organizations engaged in it. Therefore, in most cases civil society's engagement in monitoring is non-existent or highly limited. Even when monitoring is taken up by civil society organizations, most of the efforts are directed towards monitoring "human rights violations and political developments" (Ibid:384). In case of Hyderabad and Ahmedabad also the monitoring functions remained restricted to violation of minority rights. No significant steps were taken towards monitoring governmental action during or immediately after the violence.

As the violence subsided civil society organizations started monitoring the disbursement of compensation allocated by the government to riot victims. ANHAD specifically took up the case of discrepancies in allocation of compensation in certain parts of Ahmedabad. CES went back to Bhagalpur after 20 years to analyze whether the victims of violence received the compensation promised and then started a process of making sure the compensation reached the victims. The other kind of monitoring is usually directed towards specific groups such as women and children. Monitoring can also be issue specific such as "landmines, land access, elections, discrimination" (Ibid). In the case of India, civil society organizations had to monitor human rights violation and crimes against minorities. In most cases of violence the worst affected are minorities (in most cases Muslims). Among the minorities also it is the women and children which were affected more than the others. Civil society organizations have been known to concentrate on women and children, making sure that crime against women are reported and children are taken care of. For example, the violence in Ahmedabad and Muzaffarnagar were marked by the unusual cruelty and violence against women. Hence, in Ahmedabad,

organizations focused on lodging FIRs on behalf of rape victims and documenting the incidents of violence. Civil society organizations also took up working with children in various camps in Ahmedabad. The main aim was to address the psychological trauma that the children endured during the violence. Volunteers used various kinds of games and interactive sessions to interact with children and help them overcome the trauma. In Muzaffarnagar, civil society organizations were constantly working with women victims, helping them lodge FIR's and widow pensions. Similarly, in Tilak Vihar, the most vulnerable were the women. CES did workshops with women to help them fight domestic abuse. Most of the monitoring functions are taken up by local and national organizations. Development organizations also take up monitoring functions. However the information collected is used for "operational purposes" rather than for protection or advocacy (Ibid). In the case of India though, most organizations take direct action.

Monitoring functions still remain relevant even after large scale violence has ended. Most often the focus shifts towards peace process and maintaining the cease fire. Paffenholz observes that with initiation of the peace process monitoring becomes "less risky" (Ibid). However during this phase organizations are inclined towards monitoring specific sections of the peace process and therefore often lack a complete understanding of the situation. In situations where the peace agreement itself mandates the presence of a national or international monitoring agency, civil society's role becomes limited. The presence of a strong and independent human rights commission at the national level also helps in the monitoring process. Since the nature of conflict in India is different from other contexts discussed here, this particular aspect of the monitoring function also plays out differently.

Monitoring in the Indian context in most cases involves the monitoring of an emerging situation so that it doesn't turn violent, monitoring state and other administrative bodies so that they fulfill their duties and monitoring the human rights situation. In India, most of the monitoring takes place after the violence itself. In very rare cases organizations have been able to monitor a certain situation and have prevented it from escalating into violence. COVA has its joint patrolling unit which is mobilized whenever there is an emerging situation. Joint patrolling teams have in the past been able to prevent violence. Similarly, COVA's initiatives to maintain peace during *Ganesh Visarjan* have also helped to maintain peace in the city. This initiative of COVA is however, successful only because of the administration that is equally on high alert

during this time. Here, COVA helps the state agencies to monitor a situation which in the past has turned violent. ANHAD has also been successful in preventing many violent situations from escalating into situations of violent conflict. However, most other organizations get involved in the monitoring process right after any violent incident, taking care of the needs of victims and monitoring government action. Although most state human rights commission and National human rights commission keep a tab on any emerging situation, in most cases they don't want to collaborate or cooperate with civil society organizations. Reports or recommendations submitted by various civil society organizations are mostly overlooked by these bodies. As has been already discussed in chapter 4, often the records kept with these organizations become inaccessible to civil society organization. The gap between the state agencies and civil society organizations prevent civil society harmony building work to become more substantial and effective.

Monitoring functions are affective only when they are undertaken along with protection and advocacy functions. Paffenholz observes that the role of media is important here as it is in the case of protection (Ibid,p.385). A free media means a greater reporting of monitoring functions where as restrictions of media reporting leads to less effective monitoring functions. Constant reporting draws a lot of attention to the conflict and helps keep the issue relevant both at the national and the international level. This was seen in the case of Sri Lanka where research institutions constantly "monitored the political developments" and published them (Ibid). This drew attention to the situation helping it remain relevant. Research and documentation are also an important part of the work done by organizations in India. Organizations in Delhi and Mumbai focus a lot on research and documentation. Research on various incidents of violence, internally displaced people, fact finding, and working of government and status of minorities are some of the focus areas. However, in the case of India the publicity and the reach of this research are very limited. Most of the time the reports and research are circulated in limited circles. Since most of the reports and research is circulated through emails and meetings only a certain section are aware of these reports and researches. The general public is never made aware of the existence of such research. Even if mainstream media talks about the work of civil society organizations in the aftermath of an incidence of violence, it almost never focuses on their work in times of relative peace. This gap between media and civil society means that civil society work never is in the spotlight and hence affects the reach of civil society as a whole.

Again the monitoring of specific issues becomes successful only when it is combined with advocacy and there is a lot of media reporting leading to national and international attention. Hence, it is safe to say that a combination of the monitoring function with advocacy and protection along with a free and fair media are the contributing factors towards a successful intervention of civil society into monitoring during and after large scale violence. Wherever the space for civil society and media shrinks down due to the presence of an oppressive state or because of the aggressive large scale conflict it becomes difficult to undertake monitoring functions in a meaningful way. In India, the media has by and large not seriously taken up the work of civil society organizations in harmony building. In recent times there has also been a talk about the shrinking space for civil society in India and the biased reporting of most media. In a situation like this the monitoring function becomes even more important.

### **III Advocacy**

Paffenholz suggests that advocacy remains an important function at all stages of conflict and also peace building. Advocacy can be directed towards gathering mass support for a regime change, setting agenda for peace talks and can be directed towards specific problems arising out of the conflict itself. Nature of advocacy changes depending on the phase of conflict. Advocacy can be variously directed towards "protection from violence"; addressing legal rights of "marginalized"; resolving underlying causes of violence; implementation of peace agreement and "keeping the country on the international agenda" (Ibid,p.386-387). Most of the advocacy functions are performed by national level NGOs who have an intrinsic knowledge about the context in which the violence plays out and peace is sought.

In the case of India, civil society organizations' advocacy is directed mostly towards shaping a public opinion conducive to long term peace. The activities taken up by civil society groups are all directed towards bringing about attitudinal change. Like Paffenholz suggests the bulk of such activities are taken up by local, grassroots level organizations, with an intrinsic knowledge of the communities. Harmony building work is also most effective in such cases. As has already been mentioned advocacy work is affective when it is linked with monitoring and protection. This is also true for organizations in the four cities. For example, *Janvikas* monitors the condition of internally displaced in Gujarat, has done intensive research bringing out the plight of these people and constantly attempt to bring their problems to the forefront. Similarly,

civil society organizations help bringing national attention to various incidents of violence which would have otherwise gone unnoticed. ANHAD has been proactive in bringing to notice incidents of violence in Dhule and Akot. Civil society organizations have worked in Ahmedabad (2002) and Muzaffarnagar (2013) in the aftermath if the violence here. The organizations were instrumental in bringing to notice the plight of the minorities in the post-conflict situation. Advocating for the rights of the marginalized has also been taken up in a big way by these organizations. *Nyayagarha* has been working towards a people's movement for justice in Ahmedabad. This particular aspect of the function has also been linked with the monitoring functions as organizations have been researching on the status of minorities and based on the research advocating for rights and better facilities for minorities.

Paffenholz concludes that advocacy is the most effective function of civil society. Although the levels of effectiveness vary at different stages of conflict, certain "success factors" can be identified (Ibid,p.387). For example if civil society is able to create a mass mobilization then the public pressure can be built in favour of peace talks. When large numbers of people are mobilized then it is easier to garner media and international attention which again is conducive for the success of civil society advocacy. Civil society organizations are often able to play an effective part in the peace process by bringing forward issues to the peace negotiations talks. This forms part of the formal advocacy agenda of civil society. Parallel movements by civil society groups are able to bring to the fore important issues of women's involvement in the peace process when they act independently without the influence of state or political parties (Ibid). Paffenholz notes that the involvement of civil society becomes less affective once the peace agreement has been successfully reached. This, despite the fact that advocacy for meeting the terms of the peace agreement remains an important agenda in this phase. In the Indian context the scope of civil society engagement in this particular form of advocacy is absent. The nature of conflict doesn't warrant civil society's intervention. In the case of India, communal violence is brought under control with the intervention of the police and army. In a lot of such situations a curfew is imposed in order to bring the situation under control. Civil society organizations get involved in the process of relief and rehabilitation. Civil society organizations can get involved in the advocacy process by campaigning for the police and administration to do their duties and protect minority rights. The police training workshops conducted by CSSS can be considered as

advocacy work as they are directed towards making the police and administration more accountable for their actions and making them look beyond their biases.

Paffenholz suggests that the effectiveness of civil society in the informal advocacy is more "difficult to assess" (Ibid,p.388). In most cases the involvement of civil society comes in the form of intervention from influential leaders who are recognized by all. An appeal to the parties in conflict only works when intervention comes from a highly respectable person holding some sway in the matter. Here the civil society can have very little to contribute. Here again the nature of conflict becomes very important. In India, as has been discussed in the introduction, a large number of incidents of violence involve electoral or political party competition. Political parties, with their vested interest, have been found wanting in taking concrete steps towards harmony building. Getting to the root cause of violence becomes near impossible for civil society organizations. Hence, most of the advocacy is directed towards communities to make them aware of the ill effects of violence and in the process shape a public opinion for peace.

It is the "targeted advocacy campaigns" with a much focused issued based approach in which the civil society intervention has a major impact (Ibid). In the international context, civil society organizations successfully intervened in addressing human rights violations, refugee returns, release of prisoners, legal interventions and the like. Similarly, advocacy in the Indian context also works best when it is directed towards specific issues. A big part of the advocacy process in India is also awareness building. Civil society organizations work towards making people aware of their rights and laws protecting them. The most successful advocacy by civil society has been in terms of championing human rights and protecting minority rights. Civil society organizations have been involved in getting relief to minorities falsely accused of crimes they didn't commit and legal interventions for the victims of riots.

Paffenholz notes that the success of these interventions could be attributed to the specialized nature of the organizations and an "effective campaign" which complements the knowledge that comes with the specialized nature (Ibid). Civil society groups in many conflict situations have been able to garner international attention for the conflict situation, thus helping keep the conflict relevant and real to the world at large. In India, the Gujarat violence received a lot of media and international attention. Many international NGOs were involved in the relief in rehabilitation efforts which went on for years after the violence. However, most other incidents

of violence fail to garner as much media or international attention. Local NGOs and civil society groups try a lot to highlight such incidents. Involvement of national NGOs help sometimes but under present conditions it has increasingly become difficult for civil society organizations to bring attention to such incidents. As in the case of protection and monitoring, advocacy functions cannot be fulfilled successfully when the space for civil society action is highly limited due to on-going violence or state repression. Restrictions on media and a lack of knowledge about the specific situation can prove equally difficult to negotiate. In India, in recent times there has been a lot of talk about media bias and the partisan kind of reporting being practiced by the national media houses. Civil society organizations have thus turned to social media to voice their concerns on matters pertaining to the increased intolerance in the society as a whole. Civil society organizations have been using platforms such as Youtube, Facebook, Gmail, independent media houses and blogspots to raise their voices and shed light on the various elements trying to disrupt communal peace in society.

#### **IV. Socialization**

In most conflict situations socialization functions is directed towards developing a "culture of peace" and to develop a general "constructive" attitude in dealing with conflict (Ibid,p.389). The other kind of socialization that takes place in conflict situations is "in-group" socialization which has already been explained. Paffenholz notes that in-group socialization primarily benefits the "marginalized" in an "asymmetrical conflict" to come together and "formulate demands", participate in the peace process and preserve and identity of their own (Ibid,p.390). Primarily socialization takes place in everyday sites of interactions such as schools, clubs, associations, workplace and the like. What is interesting to note that more often these traditional institutions of socialization "reinforce existing divides, often fostering radicalization" (Ibid). For example as biased education system can be used to spread the fear and suspicions of the "other" and in the process deepen divides. Also radical groups portraying the "other" as the enemy is a common occurrence in civil society. Paffenholz cites the example of Sinhala Nationalist Organizations in Sri Lanka which continued to portray the Tamils as the enemy other and thus deepening existing divides. Women's organizations often work towards mainstreaming gender issues while socializing women on their rights. The divides created by in-group

socialization become even more apparent after the peace negotiations when the transition is based on a "power-sharing" mechanism (Ibid,p.391).

In India, various right wing and religion based organizations work towards keeping the communal feelings alive and work towards deepening. The fear of the "other" is invoked by misusing historical facts and using them to benefit the communal cause. In recent times, the vocabulary of communalism has also been extended to include "*love jihad*", "*ghar wapisi*" and fresh debates around "beef ban" have led to many incidents of communal flare up in the country. These issues also create and recreate the image of the Muslim "enemy". There have also been attempts to interfere in the formal education system. Many right wing state governments have made changes in the syllabus and books which have been seen as a blow to secular education by many critics. These kinds of socialization instill a fear of the "other" in the minds of people from a very young age. In the aftermath of many incidents of violence, minority religious groups were the first to provide help to those affected by violence. Most of the camps and later internally displaced colonies were set up by religious groups. A place in the colony also came with a set of religious diktats to be followed religiously. These would definitely contribute towards deepening cleavages in a society already torn apart by violence.

What then becomes interesting to note is that most of the constructive socialization happens outside these traditional institutions. Specialized NGOs work towards spreading peace and education through workshops, brochures, books, pamphlets, training, public talks and the like. Although democratic values and practices are a precursor of the process of peace building, donor driven civil society often over looks this aspect. Paffenholz notes that most of civil society's intervention in this regard is directed towards a "general civic education campaign, such as voter education for election" (Ibid,p.392). In Paffenholz's understanding a crucial shortcoming of civil society organizations in this regard is the lack of a democratic structure in their own setup. More often these organizations are male-dominated and tend to represent the dominant sections (caste, class, religion) of the society and hence are able to contribute even less towards a "democratic socialization" (Ibid).

Civil society organizations in India, have been putting sincere efforts towards preventing and reversing the effects of everyday socialization. Many civil society organizations have developed their own secular or peace education curriculum which they impart in training

workshops. Public lectures trying to burst myths of the dangerous other or retelling the history without omission of facts have been the most frequently used strategy. Apart from this civil society organizations also concentrate on educating the minorities and marginalized about their rights and help them articulate their rights and demands. Like Paffenholz suggests, educating the minority provides them with a sense of security which then can be used to strengthening the community in a positive way. In the case of India, civil society organizations concentrate a lot on minority rights. Their work with minorities has also, in some cases, led them to being labeled as minority organizations. This makes their work among the dominant community less affective as they are viewed as minority sympathizers without a neutral understanding of the situation. The organizations also might not be democratic in their internal structures as a lot of these organizations are also driven by a single individual or a small group of people. However, this does not prevent them from working with the marginalized as the nature of society and conflict make them naturally oriented towards the marginalized.

Socialization is a complex process and the extent to which civil society can contribute affectively towards creating a dent in the short term is questionable. Paffenholz suggests that it is irrational to expect that the scattered efforts by a few local and national NGOs to put forward an alternative socialization can in fact overthrow the "deeply permeated notion of radical in-group socialization within existing socialization institution" (Ibid). Instead, the focus should shift towards the more difficult and long term process of bringing about changes within the traditional institutes for socialization itself. During and in the immediate aftermath of the violence the preoccupation is with survival rather than understanding the need for reconciliation. In a situation like this it is difficult to impress on people the need for "a long tern culture of peace" (Ibid,p.393). Hence, the socialization process would bear more fruit if it was directed towards achieving goals in the long term. The need for a free and fair decision making process and equal representation are values which will go a long way in promoting a "climate of handling conflicts constructively" (Ibid,p.392). This is what civil society organizations need to undertake.

## **V. Social Cohesion**

The exact scope of the social cohesion function is very contextual in nature. Paffenholz notes that the case of Sri Lanka would be very different from the situation in Guatemala. While it is quite clear that the in Sri Lanka efforts were to be directed towards bridging the gap between

Singhalese and Tamils, the nature of conflict in Guatemala made it difficult to understand who the opposing groups were and towards whom the reconciliation process should be targeted. However Paffenholz warns that the conflicting parties within themselves can also be divided along class or regional lines. Hence, it will be a grave mistake to consider the Singhalese or Tamils as a homogenous category. A need to be sensitive towards these various cleavages in societies is essential for the success of the peacebuilding process. Paffenholz remarks that:

Once violent methods for dealing with conflict have entered society, there is a high risk that other conflict lines will also turn violent. It thus becomes a matter of violence prevention (Ibid,p.394).

For example, in the case of Nepal although a successful peace negotiation could be reached between the Maoists and the State government, violence soon erupted in the southern Nepali Tarai region. Similarly in Sri Lanka the economic growth disparity in the Sinhala-dominated south led to the growing influence of the "hard-line" nationalist political party which ultimately resulted in a "war oriented government" (Ibid). Thus, it becomes obvious that the need to address all sorts of social divides is of paramount importance while working towards achieving long lasting peace. However, Paffenholz observes that in most cases this does not correspond to the actions taken by civil society organization.

Civil society actions are mostly concentrated along the main conflict lines. Social cohesion functions are most viable a semblance of peace has set in. Most of the work is therefore happens right after the cease fire agreement. Here civil society interventions can be broadly categorized into four distinct kinds of activities: activities directed towards building a "common peace proposal"; "issue-oriented problem solving workshops; activities directed towards bringing the grassroots organizations together; and relationship building exercises at the community level" (Ibid:395). A lot of the activities here are directed towards myth bursting about the enemy and help created platforms for dialogue between communities.

In India, civil society organizations working on communal harmony building have to be very sensitive about the audience they are addressing. Most research on communal violence has shown that most of the violence occurs in the poverty ridden and impoverished parts of the town. Although communal biases exist among the middle and the upper classes, it is the lower strata of

society which gets drawn into and most affected by violence. There are stories of peaceful coexistence in the same *moholla* and life being totally different after incidents of violence. Hence, civil society organizations have been working mostly with the economically backward in areas where they live in close proximity to each other. This is not to say that these organizations do not work with the middle or upper classes. However, most of the concentration is on lower income *mohollas* and *chawls* and communities. Like Paffenholz mentions the stress here is also on myth bursting and relationship building exercises. The main kinds of activities here involve joint celebration of festivals, inter-faith forums and creating spaces of interaction between communities. The spaces for interaction are sometimes libraries, study circles, self-help groups and the like.

Myth bursting is a huge part of relation building. In post-conflict Gujarat, civil society organizations took up the task of bridging the gap between communities. A Youth march to the old city, trust building workshops for Hindu and Muslim youth, joint *moholla* meetings, and joint celebration of festivals were few of the steps taken. In the initial period after the violence these activities were difficult to conduct. The programs with the youth were highly risky as many of them were part of the mob perpetrating violence. *Moholla* meetings were hard to organize because of the number of displaced and the level of distrust. Despite all these issues the organizations were persistent in their efforts. Although the trust building exercises might have been successful in smaller pockets, the project was kind of a failure if one considers the city as a whole. The city of Ahmedabad still remains divided into strictly Hindu and Muslim areas. Muslims find it hard to get rented spaces in the "Hindu" part of the city and Hindus rarely venture into the "Muslim" part of the city. The city's biggest Muslim settlement in Juhapura is often called as "mini-Pakistan". However, similar exercises were a little more successful in Hyderabad. There are distinct pockets of Hindu and Muslim settlements here as well. But in the old city, where most of the riots usually took place and where Hindu and Muslim population live in close proximity, trust building exercises have shown to have been more effective. Hindus and Muslims have been able to collaborate over issues in the city and also been able to prevent violence from spreading. This change of course can be attributed to the changing political scenario in the city but it cannot be denied that civil society interventions have also had its effect.

The strategy completely changes when these organizations are working with middle or upper classes. The urban middle class might have a communal bias which will mostly not get translated into acts of violence. However the aggression is also detrimental for social and communal relations in the urban setting. Hence, most of the efforts by civil society organizations go into bringing about attitudinal changes which involve long term strategies and the results of which always remain ambiguous at best. Civil society organizations have been known to organize seminars and lectures in the urban setting. Cultural evenings celebrating the diversity in the society are organized. Theater is another important means of putting the message across. Civil society organizations also work with school children and college students to bring about attitudinal changes. Organizing debates and seminars, film screening, arranging drawing, one act play, essay writing and other such competitions around themes of diversity are some of the other strategies put into place to create aware and tolerant children and youth.

However the situation is very different when instead of "group-identity conflict" the government is party to the ongoing conflict. Here the scope for social cohesion activities drastically narrows down. In such situations the development oriented activities are tailored in a way to be able address the "underlying cause of conflict" which is often social. Paffenholz gives the example of Nepal where apart from the obvious political conflict the underlying reasons for conflict were also the "existing inequalities between castes and genders" (Ibid,p.395). In such cases a serious effort is made to make sure that the developmental activities are targeted towards such inequalities and are more inclusive. A lot of the community level development oriented works are initiated by local NGOs who are supported by international NGOs. The "problem solving" activities are usually taken up by the "international NGOs (with or without local partners), academic institutions, and individual scholar practitioners" (Ibid,p.396). Even though state is not a party to the conflict in India, analysis of communal violence reveals that political parties often exploit existing inequalities in society for purposes of gaining political power. Hence, civil society organizations work towards doing away with such cleavages.

Civil society organizations here work with youth, women and children, the minorities and marginalized sections. Unemployed youth can be easily influenced into participating in criminal activities and hence civil society organizations concentrate on getting vocational training opportunities which will lead to employment generation. Similarly, civil society organizations

work towards the financial inclusion of the poor through various kinds of employment generating schemes and micro finance loans. Education is another key area of stress and civil society organizations have been working towards making sure universal education becomes a reality. However, here it is interesting to note that these civil society organizations are up against the patronage networks created by political parties through informal problem solving within communities. These kinds of patronage networks can be seen in Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Muzaffarnagar. The political parties form a formidable force with these patronage networks which can be a daunting task for civil societies to overcome. In most cases political parties, exploit the existing cleavages for their own electoral benefits. Since the networks created by political parties are stronger, civil society organizations have to put in greater effort to make any substantial changes. In some cases civil society organizations have even tried working with opposition parties to be able to counter such dividing forces. However, such cooperation is only short term and involves a lot of ethical dilemma for the civil society organizations themselves.

When it comes to understanding the effectiveness of this function, Paffenholz suggests that it is important to keep in mind how deep-rooted the process of socialization is. The values and beliefs instilled in the minds of people through their family, school, professional association etc. are deeply ingrained in them. Such socialization can completely run directly into the face of all the efforts made towards social cohesion which ultimately is detrimental for the peace process in it. The ability to change mindsets of people is a difficult task which might not bear fruit in its entirety ever. Drawing from all the international case studies, Paffenholz summarizes:".....social cohesion initiatives may be effective only in the long term, although no definitive answer is possible from the analyzed case studies..." (Ibid:396). Paffenholz reasons that it is the very nature of the initiatives which often lead to them being ineffective. Most initiatives are fragmented, narrow in their scope, and have a limited reach. Often the participants in problem-solving workshops are people who have "already overcome strong enemy images, essentially indicating that such workshops may be "preaching to the converted"" (Ibid:397). This stands true for civil society organizations working in various parts of India as well. The donor driven nature of initiatives and the stress on bringing about attitudinal changes also make these kinds of projects less popular. Success has been much greater in places where organizations have been able to bring together people for purposes other than "reconciliation and dialogue" rather than a more direct approach towards "bridging divides" (Ibid). Civil society organizations in India have

also been trying to follow a similar line of thinking and implementing initiatives keeping these in mind.

Another equally important criticism of social cohesion work is the unwillingness to engage directly with politics. Paffenholz observes that the apolitical nature of engagement of civil society often prevents them from addressing the real causes of conflict. Social cohesion exercises fails in addressing existing power imbalances and hence any attempt at building community relations will always remain incomplete and hence fragile. A second related fear is that often social cohesion works is tokenistic in nature and mask the donors' inability to take meaningful political interventions. In such situations social cohesion become "scapegoats for political inactivity" (Ibid,p.398). Most of civil society's activities are directed towards social cohesion. However, Paffenholz stresses that it is the "apolitical" nature of the activities that renders them less or ineffective (Ibid). This criticism of course stands true for the Indian context. Some of the pan-Indian organizations have been taking on political issues head-on. However, these efforts are dwarfed against the gigantic task at hand. Most civil society organizations shy away from making strong political statements and this prevents their work from being more meaningful and creating a greater impact.

## **VI Facilitation**

Paffenholz suggests that it is important to understand that facilitation works at different levels and hence it is important to employ this differentiation even in understanding the effectiveness of this function. Civil society organizations work at local, national and international level to facilitate dialogue between various affected parties to the conflict and those trying to provide aid. At the local level "community leaders" play a big part in the facilitation process where as civil society leaders are more active at the national level. As has been already mentioned the main focus here is negotiations at the community level, training for conflict mediators and facilitators and informal and formal facilitation by prominent civil society leaders to facilitate negotiations between conflict parties.

Paffenholz suggests that the "relevance" of this function at the local level is high at the local level. The local NGOs and groups are often able to facilitate the negotiation process because of their connections with the local communities. In Nepal local groups played an

important role in the release of prisoners in the village areas. The involvement of local religious leaders, community leaders, clan elders can play important role in the facilitation process. A key function of local level facilitation in most conflict situations is negotiations between communities and refugees to ensure their safe return. Once the return process is taken care of, civil society organizations engaged in "community mediation" and "facilitating dialogue" on issues such as "democracy promotion" (Ibid,p.399). The facilitation role is greatly dependent on the "legitimacy" of community leaders (Ibid). Apart from the societal position, intrinsic knowledge about the "home context" also gives legitimacy to the community leaders (Ibid,p.400). Often when leaders cooperate with local governing bodies or are "co-opted" into militia structures they lose their legitimacy. The degree of violence and state cooperation also greatly affect the scope of facilitation functions of local organizations.

Facilitation in Indian context is restricted to the local communities. Civil society organizations have not been greatly successful in ensuring safe return of people to their villages or colonies. Although a lot of work has been done with the internally displaced, the organizations have not been able to make sure their safe return. This has led to the creation of distinct Hindu and Muslim areas in most riot prone cities and towns. In most cases of large scale internal displacement, the state has shied away from taking responsibility of those displaced due to violence. State run refugee camps were closed down within a few months of violence without any real efforts towards reconciliation. Hence, the reconciliation process became even harder for civil society organizations to achieve. Immediately after the incidents of violence feelings of anger and distrust are heightened. Hence, civil society organizations concentrate in facilitating the process of getting justice and compensation for the victims. Livelihood generation and providing basic necessities for survival becomes the task of civil society organizations. As Dipankar Gupta (2011) suggests, the reconciliation process can start only when justice has been delivered. However, in India, most court cases go on for years on end. Civil society organizations facilitate the initial steps towards achieving justice and compensation so that they can start the reconciliation process. In the next phase, the reconciliation process is facilitated by creating common platforms for dialogue exchange. In all the cases this process starts out with a lot of resistance. Here civil society organizations can employ a number of strategies. Peace workers at the community level often approach community leaders to facilitate this process. As Paffenholz mentions, community leaders with strong bonds in the community and intrinsic

knowledge of communities help smoothen the reconciliation process. Here, the state's role is negligible. Apart from providing compensation to those affected by communal violence, the state has not been known to be part of any reconciliatory efforts. Organizations often organize meetings between the two conflicting communities. Other myth bursting exercises help bring communities together over time and form a kind of social cohesion.

At the national level the facilitation process is contingent upon the "existence of eminent civil society leaders and their legitimacy vis-a-vis the conflict parties" (Ibid). Paffenholz suggests that the neutrality of these leaders is not all important for them to be acceptable to conflict parties. More often these leaders have a good rapport and are hence trusted by with conflict parties. These engagements also pave the way for greater civil society intervention into mediation. Churches and other religious institutions can play a very important role here and can be the precursor to other greater civil society engagement. In the context of India, the nature of violence doesn't warrant this kind of facilitation efforts from the civil society. Although religious leaders have been involved in the facilitation process but they have been done at the local community level where the violence had taken place. The engagement of civil society with the state remains low as in all other aspects of harmony building process. Some organizations have been able to involve the local administration in reconciliatory efforts but this is by no means practiced widely. The involvement of local administration can provide legitimacy to civil society work, but in most cases the involvement remains tokenistic at best.

Paffenholz suggests that although training is an essential part of the facilitation process it is difficult to judge the effectiveness of this training. Paffenholz however observes that when the training received is "targeted" with a "clear purpose" it is more effective as opposed to a random training on conflict resolution (Ibid). The random training helps participants gather skills without any guidance on the practical use of these skills. Hence, facilitation is becomes more effective when the intervention is context specific and is combined with a detailed knowledge about the context itself. Training for trainers is one key area of focus for civil society organizations in India as well. Almost every organization have their own module for such kinds of trainings. The modules include interactive games, group discussions, lecture series, talks and seminars, personality tests and specific task oriented training. The training exercises are one of the more

successful initiatives of civil society organizations as a lot of the trainees go on to themselves become trainers and in a lot of cases future peace and harmony workers.

## **VII Service Delivery**

Paffenholz suggests that understanding the role of service delivery becomes difficult in light of the debates surrounding the question whether or not service delivery can be a peacebuilding function of civil society. The various case studies show that service delivery becomes a peacebuilding function only when "it creates entry points for peacebuilding" (Ibid,p.401). In this regard service delivery is relevant only when it can facilitate the fulfilling of other functions such as protection, monitoring and advocacy. The ability or inability of the state to provide services to its populations also becomes important here. Developmental activities which are health or education related often become the entry point for peacebuilding because they help "create channels of communication that cut across conflict line" (Ibid,p.402).

For example, in the case of Nepal aid work also doubled as protection for the communities. In most such cases the conflict parties have the feeling that they are "being watched" and this indirectly helps in keeping peace. The aid delivery process can also contribute in the peacebuilding process by "targeting aid systematically to marginalized groups and/or geographical area" (Ibid). This was the case in Guatemala, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The apolitical nature of service delivery however, often leads to it becoming a reason for conflict escalation. Often aid distribution ends up deepening existing social cleavages of class, caste and ethnicity.

Civil society organizations in India have been using the development channel to facilitate the community building process for a long time. Working with marginalized communities' lead civil society organizations to spend a lot of time on devising strategies which will make their work most relevant to local communities. Hence civil society organizations, with the intrinsic knowledge of local communities, work towards solving their everyday problems. In the aftermath of any incidence of communal violence, civil society organizations join the relief and rehabilitation efforts. Organizations who have previously not been working with the community, see this as a first step of association with the community. Once they gain the trust of the community, they gain legitimacy in the community and can then use this for furthering the cause of reconciliation. In some other cases, organizations would have been already working with local

communities and use their pre-existing ties with the community to prevent violence from occurring or sometimes start a reconciliation process where violence could not be prevented. In order to build these networks among communities, civil society organizations have been providing for the education of the children, vocational training for youth and women, employment generation, helping in the micro financing of small business, and taking keen interest in the everyday problems of the community. Civil society organizations also encourage communities to participate in their local government through campaigns for voting in local elections and making people aware of their rights. The organizations make people aware of the need to participate in these elections in order to be able to put their grievances forward and to increase their ability to fight for their rights. Most of the civil society organizations taken into consideration here, believed that a more indirect approach to harmony building via developmental activities, would be well received rather than directly talking about harmony building. Hence, in the case of India, service delivery definitely becomes an entry point into harmony building activities. However, like Paffenholz mentions, service delivery can end up deepening cleavages in certain cases. Sometimes, civil society organizations get so caught up in providing for the minorities that they tend to neglect the other community. They start getting identified as "Muslim organizations" and lose their legitimacy. This, however, happens in only rare cases. By and large civil society's engagement with harmony building benefits from their service delivery functions.

## **Conclusion**

From the above discussion it becomes clear that civil society organizations have been fulfilling various peacebuilding functions which are in tune with various international organizations. The nature and scope of these functions are limited by the context and the nature of conflict itself. Hence, organizations in India, have to modify their efforts based on the specific needs of their situations. For example, here monitoring also includes the monitoring of the election process, government and state bodies, compensation and rehabilitation process as well as emerging situations of conflict. Facilitation is between communities which have deep rooted distrust among themselves. The party system with their ability to establish patronage networks in communities make the task harder for these organizations. Noncooperation and in some cases extreme interference of the state prevents these organizations from making any real effort.

However the biggest problem of these organizations is the fragmented nature of their work. The situation in which they are operating warrant a movement for peace which the organizations have not been able to achieve. Hence, the efforts which usually are able to create positive impact at local levels, remain fragmented and are not able to create a bigger impact on the communal situation of the county as a whole.

# Chapter Seven: Conclusion

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Civil society organizations have been engaging with questions of communal violence, justice, rehabilitation, reconciliation and harmony building from the early 1990s. Engagement with harmony building is multi-faceted because the problem at hand is also multilayered. Civil society organizations have their own conceptualization of "peace" and "harmony building". Through the field study and analysis of various activities and initiatives of civil society organizations, what emerges is a stress on either "peace" or "harmony", depending on the context. Peace, here, can be conceptualized as the absence of violence and harmony as an environment where communities live together in mutual trust and respect. Hence, organizations employ both short-term and long-term approaches to build peace and harmony in different contexts. Civil Society's peace initiatives, in India, are informed by both the positive and negative understanding of peace and organizations strive towards striking a balance between the two. Their initiatives and activities are directed towards ending physical violence as well as structural violence. The activities and initiatives strive towards sustainable peace which is only possible if voices of the marginalized are made prominent. Hence, a lot of effort is put into educating the marginalized about their rights and activism around protection of minority rights. A second way of ensuring sustainable peace is identifying and addressing human needs. Civil society organizations in India, as elsewhere, have also dedicated sufficient thought into identifying the needs of the people they are working for. The activities and initiatives then attempt to bring people together based on those common needs. Common needs can also be used to make people concentrate on their similarities rather than their differences. As has been pointed earlier, peace cannot be imposed on a society. The demand for peace should come from within the society. Hence, civil society organizations strive towards shaping an opinion for peace. This process is only possible with the involvement of various actors at various levels of conflict. Organizations in India have been working towards achieving this. In some cases organizations have been successful in involving local administration and police. However, involving national level political leaders and administration is a more difficult challenge. Civil society organizations in India have not had much success there. Instead, organizations have been more successful at the community level using transformative dialogue to evoke a sense of togetherness and empathy

among communities. Organizations have been most successful at creating inter-community dialogue at the grassroots level.

Civil Society organizations' short-term approaches to harmony building concentrate on bringing a volatile situation under control and putting in efforts to ensure that violence does not break out anymore. However, this is only possible where civil society organizations have been able to create networks in local communities through prior engagement with the community. As has been pointed out earlier, civil society organizations often use development work to build networks of association and trust within communities. In some cases however, civil society organizations don't have any prior engagement with local communities and might be responding to a situation of communal violence which has already taken place. Here, civil society organizations might associate with local groups and organizations to gain legitimacy and access to communities with whom they have not been able to establish any communication. Ending violence is a short-term goal for civil society organizations.

Long-term goals involve bringing about a change in the attitude of people and shaping of an opinion for peace. The activities and interventions here are therefore oriented towards achieving the same. Long-term engagements might not show any immediate significant change. Hence, continuity in the programs is a must for achieving this kind of change. This is where a lot of civil society organizations falter. This is because continuity in programs is dependent on a lot of factors such as availability of resources, continued interest of the community in a certain program, political climate and donor agency's interest in funding a particular project. Civil society organizations in India, have developed very similar strategies to those developed by organizations working in other conflict situations. However, the organizations in India use these strategies in moderation. Analysis which emerges out of this study, has led to the emergence of certain key themes in civil society activism towards peace building in India. The following sections will discuss these themes to sum up the findings of the current thesis.

### **The Importance of Context**

A running theme in all international examples of civil society work in peacebuilding is the importance of context. The principles behind civil society intervention remain the same but depending on the nature of conflict, the interventions need to be contextualized. This remains

true in the case of India as well. Here, the organizations taken into consideration, have been concentrating on issues surrounding Hindu-Muslim communal violence and devising ways to bring about long-term peace between these two communities. In order to do so, civil society organizations concentrate first on understanding the causes of violence. Any analysis of communal violence in India reveals that each incident of communal violence is different from the other depending on the actors and situations involved. Hence, in order to effectively working on harmony building, civil society organizations first need to understand the root cause of violence in that particular situation. Strategies developed to deal with the violence have to be informed by the intrinsic knowledge of violence in a particular context itself. What might work in a given context might not in a changed context. Most harmony building activities involve the efforts of elders of the community and are directed towards children, youth, and women. However, the strategies and activities might need to change as the context changes. The activities and interventions are also altered according to the audience they are meant for. In lower income communities often civil society organizations approach harmony building through developmental work. Offering vocational training, medical facilities, libraries and study groups for children, working on the infrastructural problems of a locality help civil society organizations build networks in communities as well as bring people together on common platforms. In middle or higher income group communities these strategies might not work. Here, organizations concentrate on attitudinal changes through cultural activities, peace walks, seminars, debates and discussions.

Harmony building activities will also change with the changes in the conflict situation as well. In the early stages of any conflict situation, most organizations concentrate on relief and rehabilitation work. Then, as the situation changes, civil society organizations have to strategize in accordance with the particular emerging situation. In Ahmedabad, civil society organizations had to concentrate on crimes against minorities, internally displaced people and court cases in the period following relief process after 2002 violence. In Hyderabad, civil society organizations responded to the false cases and custodial torture of Muslim youth after the *Mecca Masjid* blasts (2007). In Bhagalpur, 20 years after the initial incident of violence, CES was working towards determining the extent of compensation received and devising strategies to help people get their due. The strategy thus changes from immediate relief and rehabilitation to long term reconciliation efforts and also in response to any emerging situation.

## **Community Based Approaches Versus Pan-Indian Approaches**

A second important point of analysis in this thesis has been based on the kind of activities organizations get involved in. Of the 8 organizations, 4 were community based and 4 were more resource organizations. The community-based organizations, in Hyderabad and Ahmedabad, were involved in particular communities in the cities in which they functioned in. They had networks of communication among communities concentrating on lower income neighborhoods and neglected parts of cities. Here again context played a very important role in the activities and actions of civil society organizations. However, for the most part organizations remained confined to the particular cities in their harmony building efforts. Here the concentration was on community level network building through developmental activities. They took up research work on a limited scale. These community-based organizations for the most part worked on their own. They avoided collaboration with other organizations working on harmony building. Although organizations came together on certain issues, they avoided long-term commitments to any collaborative efforts towards harmony building. Most organizations sighted difference in organizational vision and even donor agency intervention as reasons for avoiding long-term collaborative efforts. The only example of long term commitment is the Peace Alliance (which is a group of five organizations) in Ahmedabad which was formed at the behest of the donor agency.

The second kind of organizations are resource organizations. These organizations have a pan-Indian outlook have and in course of their operation, established themselves as resource organizations. They help other smaller or community-based organizations with capacity building, strategy development, training, financial assistance and research materials. The organizations carry on many in depth research programs which can provide valuable information to other research agencies, policy institutes and government bodies who are trying to implement some new policies. Although pan-Indian organizations might have community presence, their concentration is on research, fact finding and awareness building. Most organizations with a pan-Indian outlook will respond to emerging situations in any part of the country. However, while responding to violence these organizations have to take the help of local organizations as lack of community presence also means lack of credibility in certain situations. On the other hand, their reputation as resource organizations with a nationwide presence helps them gain access to

situations which are often inaccessible even to the media. These organizations also draw a lot of their credibility from the charismatic social activists who head the organizations. The level of cooperation between these organizations is also greater than those which are community-based. The pan-Indian organizations again come together on the basis of certain issues and might not go into long term collaboration with each other. However, the degree of collaboration is significantly more than that seen among community based organizations working in a particular city. The level of cooperation also is determined by the context and stage of violence. Immediately after violence or in times of heightened tension the cooperation will be far greater than in times of relative peace. The most significant example is of course Gujarat and Ahmedabad where civil society organizations came together to form two clusters in the immediate aftermath of communal violence in 2002. In the case of India, engaging in communal harmony building also means engaging in combating communal forces, and pan-Indian organizations have engaged with the questions of right-wing hate mongering in a more direct way.

### **Identity in Civil Society Activism**

While dealing with the complex problem of identity, the identity of the activists themselves becomes important. Most of the peace activists had gotten involved in harmony building because of their first hand experiences of violence. Having been affected or witnessing violence had propelled these activists to get involved in working towards ending violence altogether. In Ahmedabad, a new crop of civil society activists were born out of the tragedy of 2002. Young people affected by violence or being witness to violence were propelled towards ending this senseless violence and killing. These activists got involved in relief efforts and with the training received at that point, went on to becoming activists working towards harmony building in Ahmedabad. Organizations and activists try to deal with identity by concentrating on the similarities between the two communities and working towards quelling the fear of the "other". Hence, a lot of the activities of these organizations are oriented towards myth-bursting, creating spaces for dialogue creation and joint celebration of festivals. These activities form a big part of every organization's harmony building program. Inter-faith forums and interventions involving religious leaders are some of the other means of dealing with questions of identity. In most cases years of working towards harmony building have given the peace activists and

organizations a certain kind of credibility which goes beyond their identity of belonging to a particular community. However, in the Indian context, civil society organizations concentrate a lot on the marginalized community and minority rights. This sometimes lead them to be being type-cast as organizations working exclusively for minorities. This labeling leads to some amount of skepticism and loss of credibility of particular organizations. In most cases, civil society activists insist that their identity does not have an effect on their role as peace activists. Although it should be noted that in times of active violence or heightened communal tension identity of the peace activists also becomes very important. For example, in the relief camps, post Gujarat violence, Muslims were skeptical of Hindu relief and peace workers. However, in the analysis of civil society intervention towards harmony building it appears that organizations engage with identity in an effort to downplay the differences and championing the similarities between communities.

### **A Critique of the State from Civil Society's Point of View**

In various international cases civil society organizations working in peacebuilding play the role of intermediaries between the state and its citizens. Civil society organizations have been known to facilitate peace talks and getting involved at the policy level in various conflict situations around the world. In India, civil society organizations have had little scope of engaging with the state. Some organizations have had marginal success and have been able to intervene at the policy level (COVA and ANHAD as discussed in earlier chapters two and four respectively). However, most organizations have not had any significant success in this regard. This has been, for the most part, due to the reluctance of the state to engage with these organizations. Civil society organizations were involved in the 12<sup>th</sup> Planning Commission as consultants. However, the organizations worked mostly in areas pertaining to minority rights. The government has yet to take an strong steps towards communal harmony building in the country. Civil society organizations have also had limited success working with various government offices. Fact finding reports in cases of communal violence remain untouched in the various Human Rights Commission offices. In some cases again, civil society organizations had marginal success when collaborating with government agencies (CSSS,COVA and *Apna Watan* as discussed in earlier chapters). The overall trend however make these cases exceptions. As has already been

mentioned in earlier chapters, even extracting information from various government bodies has been sometimes proved as an impossible task.

A disturbing new development under the new NDA government (2014-present) has been clamping down of civil society organizations. A lot of the organizations have spoken about the difficulty of continuing operations and specially engaging with questions of communal violence and harmony building in the present context. Some organizations have had to cancel programs while others have had their foreign funding canceled. Most organizations spoken to, have voiced their concern about the difficulty of arranging funds to carry on their programs. Civil society can function to its fullest potential only when it has a conducive atmosphere to function in. In the present political climate, this is severely lacking.

### **Scope of Civil Society Activism For Peace**

Civil society organizations have had success in harmony building efforts at the community level. Development and service delivery oriented activities have been able to help create a space for network building among communities. These networks have helped a great deal in civil society's efforts towards harmony building. Civil society organization's efforts towards creation of spaces of dialogue between communities has been successful in a lot of cases. In as far as exposing the truth behind government propaganda, civil society organizations have concentrated a lot of effort on this. The forces of the government have, however, proved formidable in most cases. As far as bringing about long term attitudinal changes is concerned, civil society's success or failure is very difficult to ascertain. However, lack of continuity of programs and limited reach of civil society organizations makes one believe that such functions might have some effect at the community level, but would not have much effect on a larger all-India stage.

Civil society organizations are not the only ones with networks among communities. Political parties and other civil society organizations like the RSS also have such networks. The greater organizational strength and resources at their disposal make their capacity of network creation far more formidable than any one single organization working for harmony building. These organizations exploit preexisting networks to incite violence and hatred. Individual and fragmented efforts on the part of civil society organizations cannot provide any substantial

resistance against these forces. Long-term cooperation among civil society organizations and, a commitment towards creation of a movement for peace can provide the kind of resistance civil society organizations need against the communal forces. Hence, in conclusion, what becomes clear is that although civil society intervention into harmony building is important and has been making important contributions at the community level. However, without meaningful intervention and cooperation on part of the State, civil society's actions will not be able to get the desired results.

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## Annexure I - Tools used in Training of Trainers in Various Organizations

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# सूर्य संदेश

## तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

अनेक विद्यार्थी		एक प्रयोग
अनेक चिन्ह		एक सूर्य
अनेक पंथ		एक ईश्वर
अनेक जातियां		एक मानव
अनेक संस्कृतियां		एक राष्ट्र
अनेक राष्ट्र		एक विश्व
अनेक समस्याएं		एक संकल्प

साथ मिलकर बनाएं एक नई दुनिया !

The Shadow Card is part of the Communal Harmony Building Kit used by AISF along with Flipcharts and other visual aid.

**COVA, PERSPECTIVE BUILDING PROGRAM**  
Communal Harmony Exercises

**TOLERANCE – BAROMETER (General)**

1. There are in all 14 bits. Each bit has 3 or 4 different responses / preferences for a given situation.
  2. Each response / preference shows a different degree of tolerance. You can give your rank from 0 to 100 for each of the responses: From a minimum of "0" for the least tolerant and communal to a maximum of "100" for the most tolerant and secular.
  3. Please don't discuss the questionnaire or the marks to be given with your neighbour and complete the exercise on your own.
  4. If there are any queries please consult the resource person.
  5. Please keep the form with you after completion.
- TWO EXAMPLES ARE GIVEN BELOW FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE:

**EXAMPLES**

- 1. Given a chance in recruiting personnel**
  - i) A would prefer to appoint candidates from his/her own community/caste. 10
  - ii) B would prefer a member of his/her own community/caste if there were a tie with a candidate from another community. 30
  - iii) C never allows community/caste considerations any influence and goes purely by the suitability of the candidate. 70
  - iv) D would give preference to a candidate from a marginalised community/caste as affirmative action to help members of the disadvantaged sections of society to come forward. 95
  
- 2. When giving house on rent**
  - i) A prefers people only from own community/caste in renting out the house. 5
  - ii) B hesitates to give to a person from the other community/caste. 40
  - iii) C does not bother about the community/caste of the house seeker. 75
  - iv) D prefers to give his/her house to a member of another community/caste as an opportunity to live with other sections of society. 90

**ASSESSMENT SHEET**

- I. When shopping:**
  - i) A takes cognizance of the community/caste of the shop owners and prefers to buy from members of his/ her own community/caste. 5
  - ii) B is generally unconcerned about the community/caste of the shop owner. But has at times thought of or preferred to make purchase from a shop owned by a member of his / her own community/caste. 5
  - iii) C never thinks about the community /caste of the shop owner 100
  - iv) D recognises the community/caste of the shop owner and prefers to buy from the shop of another community member to promote better relations and harmony. 100
  
- II. When seeking house on rent**
  - i) A prefers to stay in an area dominated by his/ her own community/caste. 80
  - ii) B thinks about the community / caste composition of the area but the final choice depends on the suitability of the house, rent and location. 50
  - iii) C does not bother about the community /caste composition of the locality while seeking house on rent. 100
  - iv) D seeks a house in the locality of other communities/castes to facilitate better relations between his/her family and other communities/castes. 100

COVA's Training for Trainers tolerance barometer asks people questions on a range of topics from Religious Scriptures, their view on conversion to perception of religious symbols and voting on the basis of religion

**COVA, PERSPECTIVE BUILDING PROGRAM**  
Communal Harmony Exercises

**TOLERANCE – BAROMETER (Self-Assessment)**

1. This questionnaire seeks to help you to identify and understand your own inner biases and prejudices.
2. Nobody except you will see or know about your responses. You will not be asked to give this questionnaire to anyone. You can destroy the questionnaire after the session is completed.
3. Please be very, very honest while ticking your responses. This will help you in identifying your biases and subsequently overcoming them.
4. While choosing the bit from any of the situation, consider your response to such a situation during the past 5 years.
5. For each situation the bits are presented from the least secular to the most secular response.
6. Please tick the first bit if it applies to you. Go to the second bit if and only if the first bit does not apply to you at all. Similarly go to the third bit only if both the first and the second bits do not apply to you at all and so on.
7. In case you were never exposed to any of the situation listed below in the past, imagine what would be your most likely response in such a situation and tick accordingly.

**SELF ASSESSMENT SHEET**

**I. When shopping:**

- |      |   |                                     |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| i)   | I take cognizance of the community/caste of the shop owners and prefer to buy from members of my own community/caste.   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ii)  | I am generally unconcerned about the community/caste of the shop owner. But have some times thought of or preferred to make purchase from a shop owned by a member of my own community/caste. | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iii) | I never think about the community/caste of the shop owner.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iv)  | I recognise the community/caste of the shop owner and prefer to buy from the shop of another community member to promote better relations and harmony.  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**II. When seeking house on rent:**

- |      |  |                                     |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| i)   | I prefer to stay in an area dominated by my own community/caste.   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ii)  | I think about the community/caste composition of the area but the final choice depends on the suitability of the house, rent and location.   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| iii) | I do not bother about the community/caste composition of the locality while seeking house on rent.   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iv)  | I sought my house in the locality of other communities/castes to facilitate better relations between my family and other communities/castes. | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

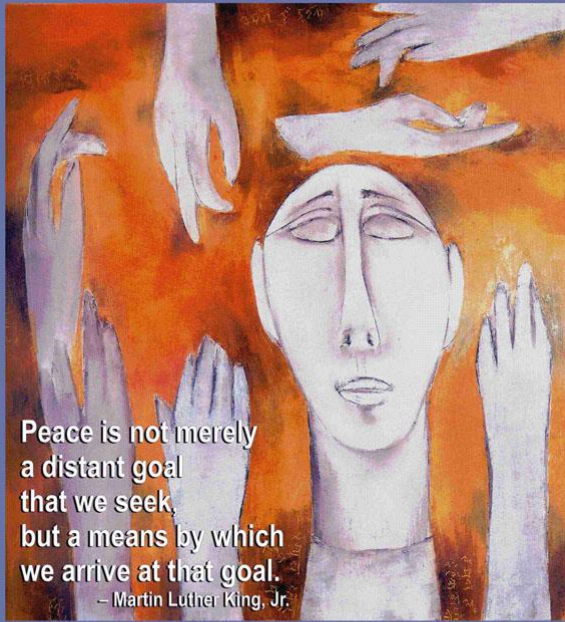
**III For the festivals of the other communities:**

- |      |   |                                     |
|------|---|-------------------------------------|
| i)   | I never visit any members of the other community/caste to greet them.   | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ii)  | On some occasions, I visited some friends from other communities to greet them on their festivals – but not regularly every year. | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iii) | I visit some friends from other communities to greet them on their festivals every year.  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

The Self Assessment barometer helps trainees understand their own level of tolerance.

## Annexure II - Awareness Building Programs of Organizations

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Peace is not merely  
a distant goal  
that we seek,  
but a means by which  
we arrive at that goal.  
- Martin Luther King, Jr.





# शांति

"A peace that comes from fear  
and not from the heart  
is the opposite of peace."  
- Gersonides

**Peace** is  
a never ending  
process...  
It cannot  
ignore  
our differences  
or overlook  
our common interests.  
It requires  
us to work  
and live together.  
- Oscar Arias Sanchez



## ANHAD Posters for peace campaign

<p><b>Youth For Peace (Anhad) 2003-2007</b></p> <p>Youth For Peace (Anhad) launched its first programme in Ahmedabad where in July 2003, around 50 students got together to form Youth For Peace. They were different from each other and from many of the traditional activists in many ways - the language they spoke, the clothes they wore, the music they listened to, places they hung out at and the colleges and institutions they went to. Nevertheless they got together because they had one thing in common - they all believed passionately and actively in 'peace' and more important all of them wanted to build a new world around 'peace'. A world where there is freedom to express ones opinions without out treading on other people's spaces. A more caring, just, humane world.</p> <p>Youth for Peace is envisaged as an ongoing activity conceptualised, designed, executed by and for the youth in campuses and schools around the country. The main aim is to make 'peace' a movement with immediacy and meaning for young people, and not just a remote idea or theory. The message of peace would be spread through Open House Discussions, Film Screenings, Debate and Poetry Competitions, Theatre Performances, Photography Exhibitions, etc.</p> <p>Youth 4 Peace was formally registered as a trust in October 2004. It has following members:</p> <p><b>Manoj Sharma</b> Managing and Founding Trustee</p> <p><b>Meena Manku</b> Now working as a journalist with Indian Express</p> <p><b>Manasa Patnam</b> Now working on a UN project and teaching at a University</p> <p><b>Sahil Raza</b> Graduate, Taking admission in MA</p> <p><b>Kandala Singh</b> Student doing her masters</p> <p>Youth for Peace is envisaged as an ongoing activity conceptualised, designed, executed by and for the youth in campuses and schools around the country. The main aim is to make 'peace' a movement with immediacy and meaning for young people, and not just a remote idea or theory. The</p>	<p>message of peace is spread through Open House Discussions, Film Screenings, Debate and Poetry Competitions, Theatre Performances, Photography Exhibitions, etc.</p> <p>Youth 4 Peace also works for the underprivileged sections and responds to any man made or natural calamity to help the victims.</p> <p><b>YOUTH FOR PEACE Activities 2003-2006</b></p> <p><b>PEACE CONCERTS</b></p> <p>Youth 4 Peace was officially launched on September 27, 2003 in Delhi with Indian Ocean Concert attended by over 3,500 young students from schools and colleges of Delhi. The concert of vocal and instrumental music continued for more than four hours in the evening. Luminaries like Nandita Das, Shubha Mudgal delivered short messages of peace. The concert treated history as Shubha Mudgal and Indian Ocean decided to perform together on the spot.</p>  <p>A similar concert was organised in Ahmedabad in November 2003. The response of the young students of Ahmedabad was over whelming, there were over 5000 students present. Many dignitaries like Malika Sarabhai and Martin Macwan were present to support the cause of peace and communal harmony.</p> <p>Youth For Peace plans to organise similar peace concerts in other cities and towns of India.</p> <p><b>WORKSHOPS AND FILM SHOWS</b> : More than 10 workshops, regular film shows followed by discussions with documentary makers have been organised in Delhi and Ahmedabad to sensitise the members of the Youth 4 Peace group.</p>	<p><b>WALK FOR PEACE</b> : On 18th November, 2003 more than 100 college students from the majority community, for the first time in their lives, reached the Shah Alam darogh in Ahmedabad under the banner of Youth for Peace. Shah Alam is a darogh revered by ordinary people of all faiths. The Walk for Peace from Shah Alam to Sanskar Kendra in Ahmedabad was therefore a very significant symbolic step taken by young people of diverse faiths to reclaim their collective humanity. In many ways, it broke both mental and physical barriers.</p>  <p><b>Youth Aman Karwan</b> : Meri Awaz Suno - was an epic expedition undertaken by students to appeal to the youth of India for peace and harmony. The Youth Aman Karwan was flagged off in Delhi on April 7, 2004 and it covered 15000kms. It passed through Jaipur, Ajmer, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Ahmedabad, Nadiad, Godhra, Vadodara, Surat, Mumbai, Nagpur, Raipur, Bhubneshwar, Vishakhapatnam, Vijaywada, Hyderabad, Anantpur, Bangalore, Calicut, Chennai, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Katti, Alwarabad, Lucknow, Dehradun, Jalandhar, Kathua, Patni, Top, Bastot, Ramban, Jammu, Udhampur, Srinagar, Mand Gaon, Ludhiana and Kurukshetra. It returned to Delhi on May 7, 2004.</p> <p>The students between the age group of 15-21 spoke different languages, came from different economic and cultural backgrounds. Some came from ordinary families, some from middle, upper middle classes, others were homeless children. Lya, Shikha and Shabon Paul came from Kerala. Taneer and Sandeep from J&amp;K, Adil and Yawar were from Hyderabad, Sibi and Samyukta from Chennai, Sahir, Swarnil, Kandala, Ajita, Harshita, Jaydeep, Hanee, Vrinda, Sumeet, Suror, and</p>
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<p>Sanjay from Delhi, Vinod, Arti, Sudha from MP, Tanmayee and Tapan from Vijaywada, Ganesh, Santosh, Shankar from Chattisgarh, Amitabh from Patna, Sambuddha from Bengal, Yasin, Rizwan, Manan, Kamna from Gujarat.</p> <p>They met young people in every city and organised meetings to pass on their message of peace and communal harmony to as many people as possible. In many places, people were deeply moved while listening to them, and they embraced and lauded the students and some also cried.</p> <p><b>Essay Competition for College and School Children</b></p> <p>Youth For Peace (Anhad) conducted essay writing competition for college and school students in Delhi and creative writing competition for students in Mumbai. The Delhi winners had the opportunity of discussing the social issues with Rahul Bose for three hours and the Mumbai winners spent 3 hours with Shubha Mudgal talking about our cultural heritage and composite culture.</p> <p>More than 5000 students in Delhi and Mumbai participated in the competitions.</p> <p><b>Rock the Nation Concert</b> : Youth for Peace organized a unique event called "Rock the Nation" on November 29, 2005 in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra at National Stadium. Rock the Nation was a competition announced for the local Rock Bands under which each band had to compose one original composition around the theme of communal harmony and peace. Each</p> 	<p>band was given 30 minutes performance time. More than 12 bands participated in the event. It was attended by over 10,000 students.</p> <p><b>Relief Work During Natural Disasters</b></p> <p>Youth for Peace sent its team of young students to the Tsunami hit areas in Nagapattinam district during the Tsunami disaster. Youth 4 Peace responded to the disaster in Kashmir and a team of 10 young students went to Kashmir. After the first visit to do relief work in Tangdar and Uri, Youth 4 Peace decided to work in Kashmir on a long term. It has since then organized a large number of activities with students in Srinagar. A team of 30 students spent over a month working in 40 villages in Uri and Tagdar. On the basis of a small survey conducted by Y4P, Ministry of human Resources sent a team to the area to look into the problem connected with education.</p> <p>Youth 4 Peace(Anhad) has now started youth clubs in far off villages of Uri and Tangdar to involve young people in sports and cultural activities. Youth 4 Peace believes that it is important to engage the youth in fruitful activities so that their energies are spend in the right direction.</p> 	
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COVA's Theater group *Koshish* performing plays on themes such as communal violence, harmony and importance of national integration

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# SECULAR

## Perspective

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In this issue

### The AAP Revolution

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**Citizen's Assertion Campaign  
Movement for  
Activation of Area Sabhas and Ward Committees  
Of GHMC- Hyderabad**

**31st January to 31st March 2012**

**True Democracy does not mean Voting once in Five Years.  
True Democracy Requires the Active Participation of all Citizens  
In Planning all the Development Programs and Activities for their Area**

True democracy must also enable all citizens to collectively participate in selection of beneficiaries of the welfare programs of the government like allocation of White Ration Cards, Gas Connections, House Patts, Pensions and Scholarships etc and not leave it to the discretion of a few individuals.

**Can we have True Democracy in Hyderabad?**

Yes, with the order for the formation of the Area Sabhas and Ward Committees issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh in February 2010, every voter of an area is now empowered to participate in deciding about the development programs for his / her area and selection of beneficiaries for all the government programs along with the elected leaders.

It may seem unbelievable but now the common voters of any area can exercise all these powers by just coming together and participating in the Area Sabha Meetings of their localities.

**Formation of Area Sabhas and Ward Committees by the GHMC**

Carrying the orders of the government of Andhra Pradesh, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), has formed Area Sabhas for every locality covering a population of 5000 in October 2010 and had constituted Ward Committees for all the 150 Wards in June 2010. Each Ward has from 6 to 10 Area Sabhas depending on the population. The Area Sabhas are required to meet once in three months and the Ward Committees should meet once in two months.

**Who is a Member of an Area Sabha?**

Every Voter of an area automatically becomes a member of his/her Area Sabha. There is no election, selection or nomination to enable a citizen to participate in an Area Sabha meeting. Any registered voter of an area is entitled to participate in the Area Sabha meeting.

At least 50 members of the area must be present to conduct the Area Sabha meeting.

**Who is Responsible to organise the Meetings of Area Sabhas?**

GHMC has assigned one officer from amongst the Project Officers and Community Organisers as Assistant Secretaries to each of the Area Sabhas and an Assistant Engineer or the Deputy Engineer as the Ward Secretary with the responsibility to organise the meetings of the Area Sabhas regularly and to communicate the decisions and minutes of the meetings to the Ward Committees for further action.

**Who can be an Area Sabha Representative?**

In order to convene and preside over the Area Sabha Meetings, GHMC nominates an Area Sabha Representative for each of the Area Sabhas from amongst the NGOs, SHGs and other civil society organisations of the Area.

**Powers and Responsibilities of an Area Sabha Representative**

During the Area Sabha meetings, though the Area Sabha Representative chairs the meeting, he /she is equal to any other member (the voter of the Area), in terms of participation in the discussions and in proposing suggestions.

The Area Sabha Representative becomes a Member of the Ward Committee and communicates the concerns and decisions of his / her Area in the Meetings of the Ward Committee for consideration and necessary action.

**Functions of Area Sabha:-**

- (i) To generate proposals and determine the priority of development programmes to be implemented in the area and forward the same to the Ward Committee;
- (ii) To identify the most eligible persons for beneficiary oriented schemes as per guidelines of the Government and prepare a list of beneficiaries in the order of priority and forward the same to the Ward Committee;

