PREVENTING ETHNIC VIOLENCE WITH LOCAL CAPACITIES:

LESSONS FROM CIVIL SOCIETY IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION**

Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities: Lessons from Civil Society in India

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The research questions are: How have civil society organizations (CSOs) in India prevented Hindu-Muslim riots?  And what can these experiences teach us about building local capacities around the world to prevent ethnic riots?  This study seeks to elucidate patterns of institutional identities, relationships, and micro-level processes that can improve CSOs' ability to prevent ethnic riots.  The Hindu-Muslim conflict offers a specific case from which a general framework for CSO interventions is induced.

There is little systematic comparison of successful micro-level processes of riot prevention.  Anecdotes of CSO successes do not offer guidance on why they were successful and if they are relevant for other CSOs in other places.  Understanding these successes and challenges in a comparative framework, rather than as isolated events, is not only important for developing preventive mechanisms in India, but it can also offer lessons for increasing capacities for prevention in other multi-ethnic societies.

Interviews, based on questionnaires that were developed, were the main form of data gathering.  Two types of comparisons was done: 1) comparing successful and unsuccessful cases of prevention between organizations in a city, and 2) comparing successful cases in different cities and noting similarities and differences in institutions and strategies.

In addition to specific lessons detailed in the thesis, the following broad principles were uncovered as important for effective prevention.

1) Regular contact with potential victims and leaders in communally sensitive communities is the foundation for prevention.

2) Development CSOs in the field are best placed to conduct operational prevention because their work in communally sensitive areas has earned them the trust of residents, they have detailed knowledge of the area, and have more funding. However, peacebuilding organizations have the expertise on conflict prevention, and thus should collaborate with development organizations.

3) Relationships with police will impact the effectiveness of intervention.

4) CSOs should create operational prevention networks with CSOs and build relationships with actors in the community in order to increase their power to lobby political authorities during crises, increase resources for prevention, and to scale up the impact of their activities to affect a wider area.

**PREVENTING ETHNIC VIOLENCE WITH LOCAL CAPACITIES:**

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<u>PhD Dissertation</u>

(Division of Global Affairs)

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

> A tradition has developed that it is only the magistracy and the police who
> should deal with the trouble.  This type of thinking has got to be corrected.
> All agencies of Government must be mobilized.  Every single man—
> Doctor, Forest Officer, Clerk, Village Volunteer Force member, even the
> teacher and the engineer for whatever duties may arise.  There are large
> sections of the public who must be made to feel that their help counts.
> The Code of Criminal Procedures and the Police Act provide provisions,
> adequate enough, to get public co-operation but the public, by and large, is
> not aware of their legal obligations for assisting the police.  It may be
> useful to have these provisions translated in the local language and widely
> circulated (Ghosh, 1987, p. 2).

My interest in understanding ethnic violence, and its prevention, began in

December 2001, in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United

States by al-Qa'ida and the December 13 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament by

Pakistan-based terrorist groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.  While visiting

Delhi, a family friend insisted that I meet his boss, who turned out to be a typical

underworld don that acts as overlords of neighborhoods in cities across India.  They

control their worlds by providing patronage to residents funded by partly legal and partly

illicit businesses operating with the knowledge of the police and politicians.

Upon discovering that I lived in America and studying political science, the boss,

a Hindu, launched into a vitriolic speech about how Muslims were the cause of all of

India's problems.  He claimed that if the Muslims of India and Pakistan were not around,

then India would be much more prosperous.  While India is beset by many challenges,

including caste and ideological (i.e. militant Marxists movements) differences that also

lead to violence, Mahatma Gandhi recognized even before Independence that the Hindu-

Muslim problem was particularly caustic to the soul and survival of this nation.  The

future of a secular India, and its stability as a democracy, rests on the challenges of negotiating between Hinduism and Islam.

This dissertation explores the experiences of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the prevention of communal riots in India and the lessons it offers for CSOs to prevent ethnic riots in other parts of the world. The research questions are: How have civil society organizations in India prevented Hindu-Muslim riots? And, what can these experiences teach us about building local capacities around the world to prevent ethnic riots? Current understandings of CSOs, especially indigenous local organizations, restricts their role to providing early warning and pressuring the government to respond. Yet, there is much anecdotal evidence that individuals and CSOs have managed to prevent riots, or at least prevent them from spreading. This study seeks to elucidate patterns of institutional identities, relationships, and micro-level processes that can improve CSOs' ability to prevent ethnic riots. The Hindu-Muslim conflict offers a specific case from which a general framework for CSO interventions can be induced.

There is little systematic comparison of successful micro-level processes of riot prevention. Anecdotes of CSO successes do not offer guidance on why they were successful and if they are relevant for other CSOs in other places. Understanding these successes and challenges in a comparative framework, rather than as isolated events, is not only important for developing preventive mechanisms in India, but it can also offer lessons for increasing capacities for prevention in other multi-ethnic societies.

Experiences of preventions in three Hindu-Muslim violence prone cities in India--Ahmedabad, Mumbai (formerly Bombay), and Hyderabad— were explored. India makes a good case study because of its history of ethnic tensions, democracy and vibrant civil

society. Democracy provides the context for the resolution of ethnic conflict and for an active civil society. India's civil society has matured through 150 years of activism. Its vibrancy may offer solutions to the Hindu-Muslim violence that governments have been unable to find. The final chapter draws lessons learned in these cities and attempts to provide more generally applicable recommendations that may be useful outside of India.

## The Research Project

The primary research question is: How have civil society organizations prevented Hindu-Muslim violence and riots? This dissertation engages three, often distinct, areas of study: ethnic conflict and violence, conflict prevention and civil society organizations.

Understanding variations between why violence afflicts certain localities while leaving other places unaffected may be key to building effective structures for preventing violence. Unlike civil wars, ethnic violence usually erupts in localized pockets, sometimes confined to urban areas and often to certain neighborhoods within a city (Mehta, 1998; Horowitz, 2001). While certain areas are engulfed in ethnic violence, other areas often remain peaceful, sometimes because citizens and authorities diligently prevent the violence from spreading. This study seeks to understand what actions and processes prevented the violence from spreading.

The *Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (1999) articulated prevention in terms of "operational prevention" (actions related specifically to impending violence) and "structural prevention" (addressing the root cases of the conflict). This research largely focuses on the former by attempting to understand the specific dynamics of prevention of imminent violence by civil society organizations.

While democracy in India offers the opportunity to prevent ethnic conflict (or more specifically, the Hindu-Muslim communal conflict) by channeling grievances to more peaceful mechanisms, a robust civil society is required to make prevention a reality. An active civil society existed in India well before the independence movement and introduction of democracy in the 20th century (Thapar, 2003; Rudolph & Rudolph, 2003). Today, civil society organizations are critically necessary for the functioning of India's democracy because civil society delivers services that the government cannot—and similar activism may be necessary to build peace between Hindus and Muslims (Oommen, 2004; Tandon & Mohanty, 2003). After every major riot, there are investigative commissions that offer recommendations for police and government reforms. Yet, political impediments prevent government authorities from tackling the issue meaningfully, even as people die in regular bouts of violence. Might civil society provide some answers?

Understanding the experiences and characteristics of successful civil society organizations' interventions may offer lessons that other civil society organization can use to prevent violence. The presence or absence of inter-ethnic civil society organizations has been noted as a critical variable in explaining the variation in Hindu-Muslim violence in India; with the presence of civic organizations correlating with the absence of violence (Varshney, 2002). More broadly, a civic-minded civil society and robust social capital are claimed as essential ingredients for peace in multi-ethnic and pluralistic societies (Tocqueville & Heffner, 1956; Bourdieu, 1977; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1992). Scholars and activists extol stories of how local civil society prevented violence (Van Tongeren, et al. 2005; Goodhand, 2006; European Centre, 2010).

However, these examples are anecdotal stories that do not offer systematic lessons for other organizations to adopt. By comparing experiences, this dissertation seeks to highlight the structures and practices that civil society organizations can build to more successfully intervene to prevent violence and, more specifically, riots

**Research Method and Propositions**

Comparing experiences of conflict prevention by CSOs can uncover lessons about the mechanisms necessary to prevent imminent ethnic violence. Two types of comparisons of the data was done: 1) comparing successful and unsuccessful cases of prevention between organizations in a city, and 2) comparing successful cases in different cities and noting similarities and differences in institutions and strategies.[1] Examining such variations within a similar context (i.e. India and within each particular city) offers a better way to test hypotheses than accumulating evidence that simply confirms a theory (King, Keohane & Verba, 1994).

Though this research was focused on eliciting local wisdom, literature review of ethnic violence and conflict prevention led to two hypotheses:

1) CSOs that are effective at preventing imminent violence are *not* organizations specifically devoted to conflict prevention. This has implication for the debate within the conflict prevention field as to whether it should be a priority to allocate resources to create specific conflict prevention structures (offices and organizations dedicated to prevention) or whether to "mainstream" prevention by advocating adoption of the "prevention lens" into other types of CSOs (development, human rights, etc.).

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[1] I intended to also compare successful and unsuccessful cases within each organization and unsuccessful cases between organizations but data proved difficult to obtain (understandably, as people were reluctant to discuss in sufficient detail their failures.) However, I include examples of unsuccessful cases from the few examples I uncovered.

2) One factor that is likely important in successful cases of prevention is the pre-established relationship between a CSO and police authorities. Although scholars such as Paul Brass (1997) and Donald Horowitz (2001) note the link between violence and ineffective or complicit police and political authorities, a positive relationship between police authorities and CSOs may be critical to effective prevention.

Examining the types of organizations that have conducted successful interventions and why they were successful will test the first hypothesis.[2] Noting whether CSOs engaged the police when successful and why such engagement was important will confirm or disconfirm the second hypothesis.

In addition to mining existing work on Hindu-Muslim violence, interviews were the main form of data gathering. Questionnaires for the interviews were developed. Two excellent sources for some parts of the questionnaires were already available. The World Bank's "Organizational Profile Interview Guide" provided a means to understand the institutional capacities of organizations (found in Appendix A). Ashutosh Varshney's questionnaire for his project *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life* (2002) provided inspiration on how to uncover the depth of inter-communal relations of the communities in which these CSOs work (Appendix B and C). A fourth questionnaire was developed related to discussing the specific activities of the people when attempting to prevent violence (Appendix D). These questionnaires were developed with the intention to standardize interviews in order to make the CSOs and the experiences of activists more comparable, and perhaps even quantifiable by assigning a criteria for scoring the answers. However, I quickly learned that I needed to depart from strict adherence to the questionnaires.

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[2] While this research does not survey all the organizations in India that were successful, the limited data set still proved insightful for this hypothesis.

Informal dialogue often produced more valuable information than formal interviews. This was especially true when talking to local residents. The effect of departing from the formal questionnaires was that it makes quantifying experiences difficult. But in return, I received candid insights that added greatly to the lessons uncovered.

### Defining the Terms

Key terms are briefly defined here. An in-depth exploration is done in the following chapters. These are not offered as universal definitions. Rather, they are intended to provide the reader with an understanding of how I use the terms.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity is used in its broadest sense to denote any real or perceived ascriptive identity: tribe, language, caste or religion that is either ascribed to people or chosen by the individual to belong to a group. Ethnicity includes religion. Similar in character, religion is a primary identity cleavage along which Indians—Hindus and Muslims—fight.

Ethnic Conflict. Ethnic conflict is any dispute between protagonists divided by ascriptive identity markers such as tribe, language, religion, caste or race. Of course, ethnic conflict can be peaceful (such as a debate) or violent (such as fistfight or riot).

Ethnic Violence. When ethnic conflict involves physical force (e.g. physical fights, destruction of property, riots or war), it becomes ethnic violence. While ethnic conflict precedes ethnic violence, it is not necessarily true that the greater the conflict the more likelihood that it may result in violence. In some cases, latent underlying tensions can surprisingly result in an outbreak of tremendous atrocities; while in other cases, two groups that openly engage in hostile debates may never resort to violence.

There are various types of violence: feuds, lynching, gang assaults, violent protests, pogroms, ethnic cleansing, genocides, civil war (sectarian warfare) and terrorist attacks. All these may involve ethnic groups. However, the size of the groups, the scale of the fighting, the severity of the violence, the degree of planning and organization, and their purpose are different. A feud normally involves fighting between sub-groups, such as families, within larger ethnic groups. Violent protests are not so much inter-personal, as they are more focused against institutions. Ethnic cleansing may involve atrocities between two or more ethnic groups, but, unlike genocides, it intends to drive a group out of a specific area rather than kill them all. Terrorist acts may intend to target a specific ethnicity but often disregard collateral killing of ones own ethnic group or self (as in suicide bombers); unlike riots which seem to take great care to hurt other ethnic group members while ensuring no harm comes to ones own group. This thesis deals specifically with what is called ethnic riots.

Ethnic Riots. When we think of ethnic riots, we think of a frenzied mob destroying property and attacking hapless victims of another ethnic group. A riot is just this and more. Donald Horowitz (2001) defines it "as an intense, sudden, though not necessarily wholly unplanned, lethal attack by civilian members of one ethnic group on civilian member of another ethnic group, the victims chosen because of their group membership" (p. 1). It is an event that, while seemingly random, is imbued with purpose and meaning. A riot is a tool used to achieve specific goals. An ethnic riot is an expression of antipathy by one ethnic group against another group. The riot feeds off previous events as well as current political, social and economic conditions. It is unique from other types of violence in that it is, in Horowitz's (2001) words, an "amalgam of

passion and calculation" (p. 32). It combines individual and group passions with individual and group interests. Its deliberateness is characterized by the prevalence of rumors and propaganda, incidental confrontations that ignite emotions, a lull that provides space for riot leaders to reassess plans, and other dynamics covered later in the thesis.

So far, I have specified that within the broader topic of ethnicity this research deals with religious identities, specifically the Hindus and Muslims of India. Furthermore, it is violence, and not just conflict, between ethnic groups that is the more narrow focus of this thesis. And, even more specifically, the type of violence I am most concerned about is riots. Therefore, because this research deals with disputes resulting in rioting between Hindus and Muslims, it may seem more accurate to label this 'religious riots'. However, this term implicitly ascribes religion as the cause for the riots. This is a fundamentally error that we must dismiss.

Religious Violence. To call a conflict "religious violence" is to make religion the defining characteristic, or reason, for the conflict. It implies two groups of people from different religions fighting over religious issues. The groups many indeed have divided themselves based on religious differences, such as Hindus and Muslims. However, they may not be fighting entirely about religious issues. In other words, it is more accurate to call disputes over religious symbols, places and rites as religious conflicts. But it is more likely that religious issues are not the central aspect of the dispute, if they are at all. Religion may just be a defining characteristic of the group, but the dispute may be about political power or distribution of economic resources. Thus, a more accurate term may be 'communal conflict and violence.' This provides the space to view the situation in

terms of the identity cleavages along which groups are divided as well as uncover the specific issues under contention.

Communal Violence. Whereas sectarian violence commonly refers to violence between sects within a religion, communal violence means violence between different communities. In addition to the groups' differing identities, the term also accounts for the conflict's political, economic and social context. C.A. Bayly (1985) writes that conflicts are considered communal in situations where the "broader aspects of a group's social, economic and political life were perceived as being unified and marked off from others by religious affiliation" (p.179). The Hindu-Muslim conflict in India is thus cast as communal violence because the people in conflict have mobilized based on their religious differences as Hindus and Muslims to contest issues not only about religion, but over political and economic issues as well. The persistence of the Hindu-Muslim conflict and the frequent eruption of violence and riots involve the pursuit of political power and the distribution of economic resources as well as religious/cultural, historical memories and psychological issues of the rioter. I will use the term "ethnic conflict" in reviewing the work of other scholars in order to present their ideas according to their usage, and then shift to the use of the term "communal violence" when discussing prevention.

Conflict prevention. Scholars of conflict prevention largely accept the idea that conflict per say can be productive when it is conducted through peaceful methods, such as in courts or legislatures. Conflict is a natural and normal process of negotiating interests. So, what is actually meant is '*violence* prevention.' It is useful to disaggregate violence prevention into two phases: structural and operational. Structural prevention, commonly thought of as "peacebuilding", addresses economic, political and social

problems that create the permissive conditions for conflicts and violence. Structural prevention is associated with root causes of conflicts: the personal and social insecurities, political and economic inequalities, and failure of state institutions. Operational prevention occurs as violence is imminent or to prevent the immediate recurrence of violence. In this research, I extend the definition of operational prevention to include preventing the spread of violence from one area to another. The focus during operational prevention shifts to addressing proximate causes, triggers, and the dynamics of violence that spread it from place to place. The subject of this thesis is operational prevention.

Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations. A comprehensive definition of civil society remains unsettled for two reasons: 1) it is originally a Western concept applied to non-Western contexts, and 2) the conceptual distinctions it posits of the separation between the state, market and civil society are too idealistic to accurately describe the true complexity of society. In theory, it is the web of social relations that occurs distinct from the state (formal governing authorities), the private sector (the market) and the family. In practice, the term "civil society" is caught between the ideal of a liberal definition as a separate sphere of society and the reality of diversity in local contexts, where familial relations, market and state overlap. It is perhaps more useful to think of civil society as social relations that take place in the public sphere which are *inter*dependent with the family, market and state.

I use the term 'civil society organizations' (CSOs) to refer to institutional representations of civil society. It includes formally registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in development, human rights and peacebuilding as well as informal citizens' groups such as "mohalla" (neighborhood) peace committees.

Religious institutions are also CSOs. CSOs may indeed be connected to the government or market, particularly in the form of working with government authorities, representing workers or receiving funding from government or businesses. However, CSOs must be organizationally independent of government and businesses, not have formal government authority, or exist with the intention of generating profits. This understanding of civil society organizations includes 'uncivil' organizations as well. 'Uncivil' means advocating for the subjugation of another group and using or facilitating violence to achieve goals. Groups that exclusively celebrate their own beliefs peacefully but do not call for the subjugation of other groups are not considered 'uncivil'.

## Perspectives

I do not discuss theories of ethnic *conflict*--that is, the root causes of Hindu-Muslim violence. Ideally, operational prevention should address root causes. This would better ensure that immediate solutions are sustainable over time. However, instrumental, zero-sum interests of the perpetrators of riots (e.g. politicians with electoral interests, criminals, historical trauma, etc.) and the lack of time to negotiate over these issues when violence is imminent compels short-term expedient measures that can freeze the conflict and prevent the loss of life and livelihoods. The immediate objective is to prevent or stop riots in order to save lives. It is after the stabilization of violence that longer term peacebuilding can address root/structural causes of the violence.

Similarly, I do not discuss why communities are constructed around ethnic identities and why people fight across ethnic lines of division. While this is contextually relevant for understanding ethnic/communal violence, exploring it would deviate us too

far from understanding riots in detail. Therefore, we take ethnic/communal conflict as a given feature of modern India, and indeed much of the world.

One individual I interviewed confessed that he fears research like mine because it puts unrealistic expectations on civil society organizations. The interviewee pleaded: "Do not have ambition of preventing [violence] in the whole state or district." Indeed, law and order is the state's raison d' être and civil society organizations do not have the authority or power to enforce peace. However, what I am examining is the role that civil society can have--infact, has had--in helping authorities prevent riots. This may indeed be a limited role. Nevertheless, there is remarkable space for even limited CSO activity to have great effect, if nothing more than saving a few more lives.

I intend to treat all sides fairly. That is, I do not intend to solely blame any one actor—Hindu nationalists, Indian nationalists, "secularists", Muslim communalists—for the Hindu-Muslim violence. In fact, many type of citizens and the unintended consequences of well-meaning policies have led to the production of violence. However, because there is much more literature on Hindu rioting (the majority community) against Muslims (the minority community), it seems to create an imbalance in the discussion. But some would argue that, in fact, it is Muslims who have suffered more than Hindus in riots since India's independence. Nevertheless, I do cite Muslim riots against Hindus.

I believe that loss of life is abhorrent, and the violence that leads to it is unnecessary. Violence is a failure of governance and the proper functioning of society. This research explores one under-utilized capital in the search for effective prevention.

**Map of the Thesis**

The thesis proceeds as follows:

- Chapter 1 reviews theories of human violence and dynamics of ethnic/communal riots.  I then apply these understandings to Hindu-Muslim riots in India.  Understanding riots in India provides the context for understanding the interventions of civil society actors and provides the basis for developing CSO prevention systems.

- Chapter 2 provides an understanding of conflict prevention, and more specifically, operational prevention.  I discuss previous recommendations for prevention in India.   I then explore historical understandings of civil society, contemporary understanding of the role of civil society organizations in conflict prevention, and discuss the role civil society has historically played in prevention as well as fomenting violence in India.

- Chapter 3 details civil society organizations explored during this research.  It compares and contrasts the organizations and their experiences.

- Chapter 4 discuses five lessons learned for the prevention of communal violence that are important to build better prevention structures.

- Chapter 5 will draw together the lessons learned in India and discuss how they may be practically applicable in other places around the world.  I provide a framework for civil society organizations to better engage in preventing imminent riots.

**Key Conclusions of the Research**

In addition to specific lessons detailed in the thesis, the following broad principles were uncovered as important for effective prevention.

Regular contact with potential victims and leaders in communally sensitive areas is the foundation for prevention.  Thus, development CSOs are more likely to be best placed to conduct operational prevention because their work in communally sensitive areas has earned them the trust of the residents, they have detailed knowledge of the area,

and have more funding. However, peacebuilding organizations have the expertise on conflict prevention, and thus can help development organizations. Additionally, peacebuilding and human rights organizations can assist by pressuring government authorities to act early, thus allowing development CSOs to forgo confronting authorities so they can preserve their access to vulnerable populations.

Relationships with police impact the effectiveness of interventions. The police have the official authority and physical power to intervene. A pre-established working relationship ensures that the CSO will get police to listen to its early warning information, gain the time and space to initiate intervention before the police charge in with force, and collaborate on investigations of rumors and incidents.

CSOs should create operational prevention networks with other CSOs and build relationships with other actors in the community in order to increase their power to lobby political authorities during crises, increase resources for prevention, and to increase the impact of their activities to affect a wider area. Peacebuilding organizations may be best placed to act as focal points because they have expertise in peacebuilding and prevention. They can serve as watch centers to collate information and coordinate CSO prevention network activities.

Sustainability is the neighborhood peace committees' Achilles heel. For them to be sustainable, they can offer welfare services in addition to advocating for communal harmony. Alternatively, they can partner with development CSOs who offer services, which also provides peace committees' access to populations not pre-disposed to communal harmony programs. In turn, development CSOs benefit by mainstreaming prevention into their work and increasing sustainability of its own development work.

Preventing ethnic violence by CSOs begins with accepting a role in prevention beyond early warning, something that is not evident to CSOs.  It also requires extensive preparation and practice by development organizations who, unlike humanitarian NGOs, are not experienced in rapid deployments and working in crises situations.

**CHAPTER 2**

**OF PASSIONS AND POLITICIANS: HINDU-MUSLIM RIOTS IN INDIA**

This chapter discusses general theories of human violence and introduces theories of ethnic/communal riots by examining the propositions of two key scholars in this field: Donald Horowitz and Paul Brass. I then apply these understandings to Hindu-Muslim riots in India. Understanding the riots in India provides the context for understanding the interventions of civil society actors discussed in later chapters. Additionally, understanding the dynamics of riots in India provides the basis for developing prevention systems for civil society organizations in similar contexts elsewhere in the world.

**Theories of Violence and Ethnic Riots**

The collective behavior approach of sociologists, beginning with Emile Durkheim, argues that crowd behavior (their rational interests and emotional passions) is qualitatively different than individual behavior. Individuals subsumed in a crowd were subject to a group mentality that allowed for irrational "hostile outbursts" of violence (Horowitz, 2001). However, by the 1960s, relative deprivation and resource mobilization theories gained prominence. Unlike older theories, these theories consider violence as a rational expression of the pursuit of desires and interests.

Relative deprivation theories (called "grievance") use frustration-aggression theory to suggest that deprivation stimulates violence. An individual's frustrated need creates a disparity between expectation and gratification that leads to the stimulus response of violence. Group violence follows similar logic. Groups that are relatively deprived when compared to other communities commit violence in order to fulfill their desires.

Resource mobilization theories (called "greed") focus on the instrumentality of leaders and groups in using violence as a tool to achieve practical benefits (political power, cultural rights or autonomy, economic wealth, etc.)  For example, the instrumentality of riots, as a tool for politicians to win elections, is the most popular explanation for riots in India.  Paul Brass's (1996) definition of ethnic riots notes that its use in India as a tool for political gain has become routine, and threatens to become imbedded into India's political culture as well and into the social identities of how citizens and religious groups in India relate to each other.

Grievances and greed are root causes of conflicts.  Root causes combined with proximate causes and precipitants/triggers produce violence.

- Root causes are underlying conditions such as: insecurity (e.g. security dilemma), inequality (between groups), private incentives (motivations of leaders to capture resources), perceptions (group identity), and historical traumas.

- Proximate causes are more immediate factors that exacerbate the conflict and predispose the situation to become violent.  Factors include mobilization of groups by elites (for economic or political power) and political demagoguery (propaganda and provocations).

- Precipitants and triggers are events that could spark violence such as election rallies, traffic accidents between members of different ethnic communities or processions through the other community's neighborhood and many others.

Donald Horowitz (2001) builds on these theories to account for another important element of riots: the emotions that allow ordinary individuals to commit extra-ordinary atrocities.  Horowitz writes that ethnic riots are "an amalgam of rational-purposive

behavior and irrational-brutal behavior…" (2001, p. 13). While the planning of riots may involve rational deliberation and calculations of personal and collective self-interests, the passions in carrying out the atrocities are often irrational and brutal. A riot often requires a grievance (such as deprivation) and/or greed (political interest) combined with frustration and rage (for the mob to engage in violence).

Paul Brass (2003) discounts prior history of antagonisms between groups and precipitating incidents, or the combination of the two, as causes of riots. He argues, "the decisive factor is the action that takes place before the precipitating incidents and immediately thereafter, action that is often planned and organized and that fills the intermediate space between past history and immediate circumstance" (Brass, 2003, p. 11). The actions that Brass refers to are the interests and machinations of those who seek to gain from riots. How minor incidents are framed into the larger narrative of Hindu-Muslim conflict, how justice is meted or not meted out in the aftermath of riots, how blame is apportioned, etc. determines for Brass the causes of riots. Brass prefers to read riots as instrumental tools used to achieve specific goals.

While I do not disagree with Brass on the manipulation of messages that frames understanding of incidents as ethnic issues, past history and precipitants are still important. The frenzy required for the mob to participate in a riot or for politicians to apportion blame with bias requires a history of conflict between the groups. It cannot be constructed out of thin air at a moment's notice with an expectation that the wider public will buy it. While I do not entirely agree, it is perhaps more useful to see this--how issues and incidents are framed-- as another variable that prevention must take into account.

Four variables posited by Horowitz (2001) and three additional elements of riots create the permissive conditions for communal riots. These are important for prevention.

1. Hostile relationship between two ethnic groups (antipathy)

2. Response to an event that arouses anger, rage, outrage or wrath (precipitant/triggers)

3. Justification for violence (social support)

4. Reduced risk that facilitates dis-inhibition (permissive context)

5. Organizers and participants of riots

6. Rhythm of the riot

7. Rumors

**Antipathy**

Antipathy is a necessary condition for riots. Without an emotionally hostile relationship, a conflict cannot boil over into violence. An inter-group conflict rooted simply in different preferences or interests can be resolved peacefully. However, when negative emotions such as anger and hate are present, it can predispose the conflict to violence. A hostile relationship is created when groups see others as possessing threatening characteristics. These characteristics include: a reputation or stereotype for aggression, historical antagonisms, opposition in a pervious armed conflict, possessing enough power to be considered a political threat, ethnically linked to a hostile foreign country, and being the focus of psychological comparison.

Ethnic groups that have had a long or recent history of being involved in war develop a reputation for being aggressive, such as Hindus think of Muslims because of the wars with Pakistan. People impute aggressive intentions to those who were

previously aggressive, and are likely to approach other group members in a more aggressive way.

A history of conflict between two groups normalizes violence as a means of conducting relations. Stories of conflict are put in history books and passed down as oral folklore, which serve to condition future generations into the conflict. Additionally, leaders evoke fear and anger by using historical memories and traumas (such as the trauma of India's partition). Historical enmity serves as tinder to fuel riots.

Ethnic groups have often found themselves on opposite sides of wars during the independence movements, such as Hindus fighting for independence from the British and many Muslims supporting the creation of Pakistan. In sum, "groups associated with violence tend to meet with violence in the deadly ethnic riot" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 165). History, prejudice and stereotypes lead to dehumanization (other group members painted as brutal killers) and de-individuation (reducing individuals to group stereotypes) so as to make other group members psychologically acceptable for killing.

When groups have considerable political power, particularly if there are the minority who controls the majority or a minority that seems to have disproportionate power (to their population) in society, their status will be threatening to competing ethnic groups. Horowitz (2001) writes of three conditions that are threatening: 1) influential in government, 2) numerically strong, and 3) cohesive and well organized (p. 168). The potential that a group can take control of the state means an uncertain future for those about to lose their share of the pie. Hindu nationalists stoke fears that Muslim birthrates are higher and may one day put Hindus in the minority; even though Muslims only

constitute 12% of the billion people of India. Hindu nationalists also accuse the state of being too preferential in their political and economic treatment of Muslims.

When ethnic groups have ties to another nation dominated by their 'brethren', mistrust breeds suspicions of disloyalty. The trauma of the 1947 partition, when India's 'arms were cut off' to create the Islamic states of Pakistan in the west and what would later become Bangladesh in the east, sewed hatred into Hindu-Muslim relations as well as rooting fears of future separatism and break-up of India. Wars between Pakistan and India since independence (in 1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999) have kept the trauma and fear alive. More generally, the issue of loyalty may be related to foreign relations between a national government and the other ethnic group's perceived homeland. If relations between the two countries are strained, as between India and Pakistan, there is a greater chance that there will be antipathy against an ethnic group associated with that foreign country.

Antipathy also comes from group comparison. Horowitz (2001) writes, "negative social comparison can elicit aggressive responses" (p. 180). When an ethnic group is comparatively less well off, particularly economically (like the Muslims in India), group members find their own status humiliating. Humiliation breeds an inferiority complex, resentment and a desire to lash out. Similarly, Hindus harbor resentment over the 600 years of Muslim rule in India. Hindu nationalists frame this period of subjugation as caused by Hindu passivity, meekness and disunity. Self-hate is projected onto the other group. But it can only be projected if the groups are similar enough to be comparable. This is the irony in the situation. While some may claim that Indian Muslims and Indian Hindus are two "nations", their genetic similarity, proximity and cultural inter-

connectedness makes them one family—just similar enough to be comparable, but different enough for cleavages to keep the family divided.

Finally, there is also an "economy of antipathy." Aggressors normally focus on one ethnic group to attack at a time. This allows for more efficient use of resources and reduces the risk of being overwhelmed with having to take on more than one enemy at a time. Thus, there is great selectivity of the victims. People from the target ethnic group are killed while members of other ethnic groups, even if there is also antipathy towards them, are left alone (Horowitz, 2001).

**Precipitants and Triggers**

A precipitant is "an event whose significance arises from its ability to pull together or symbolize certain underlying grievances" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 202). They "serve as signals for a crowd to act in unison" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 268). It is a meaningful event, often a minor incident made meaningful by leaders, that justifies a violent response. A precipitant may not immediately result in violence. Often, a subsequent event, like a spontaneous fight or rally, will trigger a riot. The precipitant can also be followed by a reactionary event, such as a demonstration or procession, which triggers a riot. In other cases, a spontaneous event like a traffic accident between members of opposing ethnic groups will incite emotions by tapping into the latent antipathy to spark a riot. For a precipitant to trigger a violent response, it must be symbolic enough to represent the grievances and antipathy already existing within the members of the community. Even if riots are highly organized and deliberate, an event that functions as a precipitant usually triggers the actual violence and rioting.

Precipitants and triggers are events such as:[1]

1) Ethnic processions, demonstrations, and mass meetings

2) Strikes with ethnic/communal overtones

3) Party and electoral rivalries threatening or solidifying ethnic party allegiances and elections

4) Official or unofficial alterations of relative ethnic status

5) Rumors of threatened or actual aggression by the target group

6) Police action. Although Horowitz discounts this as a rarity for triggering violence, in India the mere *presence* of police has sparked riots either immediately or soon after. For example, a riot by Muslims ensued after the initial bombing at the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad on May 18, 2007. The bombing initially claimed 11 lives. The enraged crowed then rioted against the police at the scene whom they felt provided inadequate protection. The crowd's feelings also boiled over because Muslim residents of the Old City around the Mecca Masjid have strained relations with the local police. The presence of the police actually enraged the mob even more, resulting in a riot in which the police fired into the crowds and killed an additional 5 persons.

7) Brass (2003) notes that funerary processions are also powerful triggers for violence in India.

**Social Support**

Social barriers against criminality and violence are critical to overcome since rioters are normal individuals who do not want to be alienated from their community. Justification for the killing provides rationale and legitimacy for the group and the

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[1] One through five are from Horowitz, 2001: pp. 271 and 288.

individual to engage in extra-ordinary violence. Reasons such as protection of the community (particularly of women and children) against imminent existential threats, that the other group needs to be 'taught a lesson,' or because 'they deserve it' provide social sanction for the rioters. Rioters justify their actions by believing they are simply coming to their groups' defense or that their actions are for the good of the country (something that the government itself should be doing but cannot).

**Permissive Context**

People are by in large risk averse. It is not that they do not take any risks, but even when filled with intense emotions and fury, they will most often riot and kill after having deliberately or subconsciously considered targets and locations most advantages for success and their safety. Riot leaders make strategic and tactical assessments of risk before riots. Strategic considerations include whether the riot will serve a purpose—whether to improve group status, a leader's standing and whether rioters will face opposition from police. Tactical considerations include choosing targets and locations where success is more likely and where opposition is least likely. Even in riots that are sparked by spontaneous ethnic fights, rioters conduct these calculations as the riots proceed, often in-between episodes of violence.

Horowitz (2001) writes, "Perhaps the most significant facilitator of rioting is authoritative social support…" (p. 343). Authoritative refers to political authorities and police. When political authorities and/or police provide active support (either by participating in the riot themselves or providing intelligence) or acquiesce (tolerating extremist rhetoric, not responding to calls for assistance from members of a particular group, or delaying in their response), rioters feel uninhibited in committing violence. The

risk of getting killed or getting caught has decreased. Impunity emboldens rioters. The police in India have been implicated in participating in riots, being grossly biased or being too passive in responding to communal violence. Similarly, politicians in India have been implicated in planning riots or deterring the police from preventing or taking action against the rioters. Contrastingly, emphatic disapproval of violence by political authorities or a forceful and early show of force by the police seems to deter ethnic riots (Horowitz, 2001; Brass, 2003).

**Organizers and Participants**

Politicians, businessmen and religious figures have been implicated in organizing and leading riots. Most people blame politicians for causing riots in India. But it is important to recognize that there is a difference between polarization that incidentally leads to the riot and actually organizing and leading a riot.

Politicians often do not directly lead riots, but well-organized ethnic riots are rare without political support. Whether it is a political party that fuels its power by creating ethnic voting blocs or whether it is biased government leaders that inhibit the police from preventing violence, political support is necessary for an organized ethnic riot.

Political support can be direct and indirect. By engaging in rhetoric that scapegoats members of a certain community, politicians lend support by conveying sanction and legitimacy for violence. Leaders also provide moral sanction by remaining silent with a riot is imminent.

Similarly, business leaders have often been implicated in the violence in India. However, they may contribute to polarization of the community but rarely plan and execute riots. They may take advantage of violence (during the riot by pointing out

competitors whose stores can be burnt down), but rarely engage in rioting. The role of businesses may be more relevant in the root causes, where economic competition may contribute to community tension.

Religious leaders in India typically are not directly involved in the violence, but they can polarize groups and increase the tension in the community.

Turning to participants, the riot mob is conspicuous for the normality of its members. The vast majority of foot soldiers are not criminals or deviants (although a few are deliberately sprinkled into the mob to spark the violence, incite looting and attack specific targets). In fact, the normality of the individuals in the mob is why social approval and legitimacy is so important. Without it, normal people would not engage in unlawful behavior or could not contemplate committing atrocities. The vast majority of rioters are male. Most are youth, between the teens to thirties, closer to the lower end. In India, they tend to be the poor of the slums. Slums serve as a recruiting ground for the disenfranchised as well as specialists of violence (thugs that are called "goondas" in India). Poor people of the slums are also selected for participation by their specific castes and sub-castes (e.g. Bhangis in 1984 Delhi riots, Maratha in 1984 Bombay riots, Dalits in 1986 Ahmedabad riots, Bhangis and Chamars in 1987 Meerut riots, Agris in 1984 Bhiwandi). In this sense, participants for a mob are ubiquitous and can be found quite easily. As Father Cedric Prakash of Prashant stated in my interview, "it is the poor who are the perpetrators and also the victims of the riots" (Prakash interview, 2007).

Criminal elements are important in riots. Goondas are the foot soldiers that prepare and instigate violence. They are used to spread rumors, order businesses shut down, create fear, whip up the emotion of the crowd by leading chants, trigger violence

in a procession by picking a fight, destroy shops and homes, and kill. They show the normally law-abiding fellow community member what can be done. Criminals can purposefully turn a rally violent in order to take advantage of the chaos to loot shops.

Paul Brass (2003) insightfully argues that a web of relationships at the local level, termed an "institutionalized riot system", explains how communal violence is practically produced on the ground. Values, history, politics and interests prepare the context for violence, but there are "intermediaries between the values of the people and the riot engineers" that leads to the outbreak of riots. First, "communalist mobilizers" seek to use riots to take advantage of the situation. These include professional politicians, activists in communal organizations, students and local businessmen who can gain from the violence. Second are the goondas. They are "hired killers" who instigate incidents that act as precipitants for riots and will engage in looting and destruction during the riots in order to exacerbate the situation as well as to reap material gains. Third is the mob. They make up the majority of the people that riot. Much of the mob is composed of normal people who are in frenzied mood. Brass notes that the police sometimes actually participate in the riots. Many other times, they facilitate riots by inaction or by being biased against the victims (thereby aiding or abetting the actions of the mob).

**Rhythm**

Riots have patterns and frequency. In general, riots resemble a "bell-shaped curve of growing and then receding intensity over time" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 72). While some riots that are months apart can be connected to each other, our concern for prevention is the daily cycle of activity. There is often a "lull" either before the first episode or between the episodes of violence. Horowitz (2001) describes the lull before the first

episode as "a time of apprehensive quiet during which rumors and warnings may circulate…while preparations for the attack go forward in inconspicuous ways" (p. 16). It is this period of palpable tension that leads Paul Brass (2003) to claim that most riots in India are anticipated. Many riots in India seem to be predictable because of the events that precede violence: election rallies, extremist political or religious speeches that focus on denigrating another community, or upcoming festivals with plans for processions. Lulls provide early warning and time to organize for forces that seek to prevent ethnic violence.

The lull can last from a few hours to several days. If the precipitant event is expected (such as a planned rally) and some planning for a riot has been going on, there will be a short lull. But the lull may also be short if the precipitant is unexpected (e.g. a traffic accident) but the environment is already tense.

**Rumors**

Although rumors are a constant feature of life, they are particularly dangerous when they are denigrating a whole ethnic or religious community during times of increased tension between communities. Rumors escalate after a precipitant and increase as violence becomes imminent. This is no coincidence as they serve an important facilitating condition for a riot. Paul Brass (2003) writes that rumors mobilize people and provide justification to commit violence. They sustain the momentum of an on-going riot. A couple of rumors that preceded Hindu-Muslim violence include:

- Bombay (Mumbai) riots (1992-93): Reports spread that Pakistanis and arms shipments had arrived in Bombay from the sea.

- Ahmedabad riots (2002): Following the Godhra train burning, the Sangh Parivar immediately called for mobilization of Hindus. At the same time, rumors of Hindu women being abducted, raped and mutilated were circulated ("The Psyche", 2007). Even three weeks after the riots, rumors forced shop owners to close when unconfirmed news of a stabbing in a bazaar spread through the sensitive areas of Raopura, Kothi, and Nyay Mandir ("Shops remain", 2002).

These rumors were false. Yet, in the minds of Hindus who live in communally sensitive neighborhoods, perceived threats are real enough to commit violence in defense of the community.

In summary, antipathy is a necessary condition for ethnic riots. Social support, appropriate targets, and precipitants are facilitative conditions for ethnic riots. Police bias or indifference towards victims also facilitates the outbreak of riots and exacerbates the scale of the violence. An uncertain political environment, in which the status quo is being redefined, is a facilitative condition. However, the diverse nature of riots makes it difficult to claim that one specific set of factors are necessary and sufficient causes for riot in all places at all times. Rather, it is a "function of the evaluation of the precipitant in the light of the distribution of support, the behavior of the potential target group, and the response of authorities" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 91).

### Political Riots and Spontaneous Riots

There are two types of riots that must be distinguished when we discuss operational prevention in India: political riots and spontaneous riots[2]. Their differences involve reasons for the riots, degree of planning, triggering events, and how a riot

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[2] Scholars of ethnic conflict, such as the Donald Horowitz and Paul Brass, use these terms in a general manner when discussing riots. However, the do not use them to categorize riots as either political or spontaneous as I have done here.

unfolds. Distinguishing between them determines the specific actions that organizations can undertake for prevention.

As discussed earlier, a popular explanation for riots in India is that political leaders are behind most riots. Political riots are violence associated with political leaders that serves instrumental interests (polarizing communities, creating vote banks, winning elections, etc.). The necessary variable is leaders that deliberately plan violence or create the conditions that knowingly will result in violent confrontation. Politicians either plan a riot (or events that could knowingly result in a riot) or are 'compelled' to facilitate riots (by the heightened emotions and expectations of their constituents) in ongoing tensions or violence. In contrast to spontaneous riots, political riots are characterized by a high degree planning. Preparations includes timing, determining the routes of processions, transporting rioters into the area, instructing goondas to instigate trouble and lead the riot, spreading rumors, handing out weapons, and ensuring that city administration and police will not interfere right away.

A political riot may plan to route the procession through a sensitive area of the neighborhood (or re-route if they committed themselves beforehand to the police to a less sensitive route). Organizers also deliberately pause the procession in front of the other group's religious site and play loud music. Specific people may be instructed to yell insults and spread rumors. Other participants may be responsible for throwing rocks and beating up bystanders. The mob might also be carrying weapons (often justified as religious symbols).

And importantly, the rioters are often people from outside the neighborhood or proximate area. Many are even shipped in from elsewhere. In India, certain lower class

people and Dalits are cajoled, sometime paid, to participate in rallies and processions that will turn into riots. However, local residents are often the ones to provide information on which properties should be destroyed and which persons are to be killed.

Politicians or other organizers will not only have heightened the emotional fervor of the community, but also lessened the abilities of official authorities from intervening. If the city administration and police are biased, then it will be relatively easy for the mob to carry out its plan. Mob leaders have been known to obtain voter rolls so they can identify members of other communities. The worst-case scenario is the active participation of government officials and police in the riot by taking one side. Many police units in India have a notorious history of facilitating the riot by their inactivity and even engaging in riots as part of the mob. In the 2002 Ahmedabad riots, individual policemen were sighted facilitating the mobs targeting of Muslims. Police authorities chose to disregard calls for help from Muslims. Even if the police are unbiased and intent on maintaining order, their hands may be tied with higher authorities instructing them not to intervene.

Police riot control tactics can also inadvertently exacerbate the situation. If the police have a reputation of being biased and have poor relations with the community, their presence at a rally, in an effort to be prepared, antagonizes the crowd. The police end up providing a physical entity unto which the crowd can project its anger. The sight of the police armed and ready evokes rage. Compounding the problem is that since most of the crowd is likely to be men, and most of the police force is also likely to be men, egos can't be discounted. Each side wants to prove their superiority to the other. CSOs

provide a way, particularly during spontaneous tensions, to prevent the need for stronger tactics or to help police carefully escalate their response if necessary (detailed later).

Spontaneous riots are those that result from unplanned confrontations between members of opposing communities. A traffic accident, inadvertent desecration of religious sites, ignorant insults, or even just a business argument can all lead to riots when the incident is framed on the basis of ethnic differences. The necessary variable here is the general antipathy that exists between the two communities. In other words, the context is communally charged but the riot itself is not pre-planned. The greater the antipathy and tension, the greater the chance that a confrontation will lead to a riot. And unlike political riots, spontaneous riots often involve mobs of people composed of neighbors and local residents. They often know each other. Leadership may develop on the spot. They will likely be the ones shouting insults and slogans if mobs form quickly. In the event that an incident does not immediately break out into a riot but dramatically increases tension between the ethnic communities, the leaders will likely be influential members of each community in the neighborhood. Higher-level leaders, such as politicians, may come onboard later to take advantage of the incident to exacerbate the tensions or continue the riot with other episodes of violence.

The next section details the dynamics of riots.

**Dynamics of an Indian Riot: A Festival, the Procession, and Violence**

I first review some general characteristics of today's riots in India. Then, examining violence during festivals and processions provides insight into more specific patterns of how riots unfold.

In his 1987 book *Communal Riots in India*, S.K. Ghosh wrote that some modern characteristics of communal conflicts are: "…spreading to villages… pre-planned…longer duration…greater use of firearms and higher causalities…greater lumpen [criminal] elements and anti-socials…political support…frequent breakdown of law and order machinery."

Indeed, Hindu-Muslim violence seems more widespread across India than it was before independence, including the prevalence of more religious violence in southern India. News of violence in villages also challenges the conventional notion that Hindu-Muslim violence is primarily an urban phenomenon. It is unclear if this is due to previous underreporting from rural areas or an actual increase in Hindu-Muslim violence. Nevertheless, more deaths have occurred in urban rioting than in rural rioting (Varshney, 2002). Another element of the urban-rural relationship is that villagers are trucked into cities to engage in rioting. Such evidence points to the idea that there is more deliberate planning in riots. There is implicit and explicit involvement of political authorities and the police that facilitate the conflict and the violence. Causality rates and use of firearms vary from the type and size of violence. However, one recent development involves the use of homemade bombs.

Riots during festivals and during processions in festivals are endemic in India. Christophe Jaffrelot (in Kohli & Basu, 1998) shows how the Hindu community uses festivals and processions for anti-Muslim mobilization, creating and strengthening Hindu identity, and as a campaign tactic during elections. Festivals and processions served three functions over the years:

1) Colonial period: With the British understanding Indian history and politics in terms of religious communities, parts of the Hindu community sought to mobilize their members around religion. Festivals were used: a) to make the diverse Hindu population in India (divided by caste, region and language) into a more cohesive challenger to the Muslim "threat", b) to promote Hindu interests with the British, and c) as an instrument for instigating violence to achieve Hindu supremacy.

2) Beginning in the 1920s: The 1919 Government of India Act democratized the political system (at the provincial level) by enfranchising landed elites and requiring Indian politicians to be more responsive to constituents. Religion provided a means for Indian politicians to legitimize and make political interests understandable to the masses. Defending the right to have processions and have the procession pass through certain communally sensitive locations was a strategy to win votes at the provincial and local levels. Festivals and processions were not only religious celebrations, but served as a political tool to display the strength and cohesiveness of the Hindu community.

3) Beginning in the late 1980s: Celebrating (and manufacturing) festivals became a more direct electoral strategy used to win local and national elections. Festivals offered the opportunity to forge greater Hindu unity across castes and between Hindus in northern and southern India. Processions became 'Yatra politics' (nation-wide processions to unify Hindus, exemplified by the rath yatra of Bharatiya Janata Party political party leader L.K. Advani in late 1990).

Religious festivals, and riots, offer an opportunity for Hindu nationalists to show the strength of the Hindu community, particularly as revenge for centuries of Muslim rule

over India (Jaffrelot, 1998). It is also a way to re-claim the sacred geography of India as the holy land of Hindus. As part of the on-going Indian-Pakistan conflict, processions provide ordinary people a method to make Muslims give recognition to the dominant status of the Hindu religion and culture in India. Similarly, some Muslims also use festivals as an opportunity to show their strength to the numerically superior Hindu population.

State and nation-wide yatras became a way for the Hindu nationalist Sangh Parivar group (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishnu Hindu Parishad, and Bharatiya Janata Party among others) to unify and mobilize Hindus across the country. Yatras were manufactured political processions overlaid with religious symbolism. The Vishnu Hindu Parishad (VHP) organized an "Ekamata" ('one mother') yatra in 1982-83 in south India. The VHP, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and with involvement of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politicians, conducted a nation-wide procession, the Ram Shila Puja (discussed further below), in 1989 prior to national elections. In late 1990, BJP leader L.K. Advani led a procession from Somnath (in Gujarat) to Ayodhya. It sowed the seeds for the demolition of the Babri Masjid (mosque) two years later (at which he was reported to be present). Building on these successes, the BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi launched an Ekta yatra (procession for unity) in December 1991. In all these examples, religion played an integral part in what were essentially political processions. Gods and idols were invoked. Religious songs and prayers were conducted. Priests in villages all over India consecrated bricks bound for the new Ram temple at Ayodhya. Yet at the same time, these processions were about defending Hindu culture and religion against the national government's "pseudo-secularism"—preferential

treatment for Muslims (and others) at the expense of Hindus. It was also about winning elections and seizing political power for Hindu nationalist parties like the BJP.

Because festivals are essentially religious, they are ideal focal points to call for support for a cause from the wider community. Religious festivals offer the opportunity to transcend the caste, linguistic and regional diversity in India. Religion is one issue that can emotionally bond together a socially and economically diverse Hindu community. It is the simultaneous nature of festivals as both common religious celebrations for all and as political rallying points that make them so significant.

The importance of using religion for politics in India is that religion is an inextricable part of private and political life in India. By being involved in festivals and organizing processions, politicians are displaying their religiosity. It is on greater display when they defend the right to have processions. Framing political issues in religious terms also makes the issue understandable to a large segment of the under-educated Hindu and Muslim population. Political interest in the guise of religion also neutralizes Hindu and Muslim moderates and secularists. When politicians or groups want to bring communities to the brink of violence or even allow violence to occur, processions serve as triggers for riots. The routes they take, the music they play, the chants they shout, the rumors they spread, and the cover they provide for criminals inside crowds to instigate violence provide ideal situations for riots to erupt. And in the aftermath, politicians reap the rewards of popularity and political office.

One infamous example of the interplay between processions and riots is the "Ram Shila Puja" and the 1989 elections. Prior to the 1989 elections in that autumn, the Vishnu Hindu Parisad declared that they would lay the foundation stone of the Ram Mandir

(temple) at the disputed site in Ayodhya.  The auspicious date was November 9, in the middle of the electoral campaigns.  The VHP, RSS and BJP decided to undertake a nation-wide procession to consecrate the bricks for the temple (which were stamped with the God's name "Ram").  Villages and cities throughout India could symbolically participate in the defense of Hinduism and building of the Ram temple by having their local priests bless the bricks as they passed through towns.

VHP and RSS activists prepared the ground for these blessing ceremonies through mahayagnas (meetings).  Anti-Muslim propaganda at these meeting created an emotionally caustic atmosphere.  Slogans such as "Long live mother Kali [a Hindu Goddess], Tartarpur [a Muslim dominated area] will be empty" and "We will avenge the insult inflicted by Babar on her children" (Engineer, 1996, p. 3).  This kind of propaganda led to "…a madness in the procession…The crowd seemed to be intoxicated with its power and was shouting anti-Muslim slogans with fervor".  An estimated 706 riots followed in the wake of these processions leading to some 1,174 deaths (Jaffrelot in Wilkinson, 2005).  There was also a correlation between the routes of the Ram Shila Puja and the rioting, which occurred mostly in north India (Hansen T. B. in Wilkinson, 2005).  The processions successfully polarized the electorate.  The BJP, as the political front of the Sangh Parivar, won 88 constituencies of the Lok Sabha in that year (1989), of which 44 constituencies they won had riots (Jaffrelot in Wilkinson, 2005).

The BJP became involved in the communalization of politics through the Ram Janmabhoomi/Babri Masjid movement in the mid to late 1980s.  It clearly had electoral payoffs.  The BJP increased its share of votes in the Lok Sabha (lower house of parliament) elections from 7.4% in 1984 to 11.4% in 1989.  Subsequently the Sangh

Parivar used the strategy to make the 1991 elections the most violent yet, further

expanding the BJP's share of the total vote to 19.9% (Hansen T. B. in Wilkinson, 2005).

The "rath yatra" (a procession from Somnath, Gujarat to Adoyhya by BJP President L.K.

Advani) in December 1990 even led the RSS to call for a "dharma yuddha" (holy war). It

was followed by yet another procession, the "Ekta yatra" (procession for unity—

presumably only among Hindus) the following December led by BJP president Murli

Manohar Joshi from the southern tip of India to the disputed territory of Kashmir. In

1984, the BJP had only 2 seats in the Lok Sabha. By 1991 its share increased to 117,

then 161 in 1996, 172 in 1998, and 182 in 1999. By the end of the 1990s, the BJP

capitalized on its growing popularity by capturing (often in coalition with other parties in

order to make a majority) five state governments (in the north) and finally the national

government in 1998.

Some extremist Muslim politicians have also used festivals for political gain. In

Calcutta in May 1996, Muslims insisted that their Muharram procession pass through a

predominantly Hindu area. Hindu residents mobilized and threw stones at the procession,

which lead to a riot with five casualties. It subsequently appeared that Muslim politicians

desired this route because they wanted to reassert their strength after losing an election in

the area to a Congress politician who won the votes of the local Muslims. Additionally,

the mafia wanted the local administrators transferred because they had stopped illegal

construction and had jailed bootleggers (Jaffrelot in Basu and Kohli 1998).

The Majlis-e-Ittehadul Musilimeen (MIM) in Hyderabad explicitly vies for

Muslim votes and seeks to represent Muslim interests. For example, after Hindus in

Hyderabad began public celebrations and processions of Ganesh Chaturthi starting in the

late 1970s, the MIM created a celebration called the Pankah procession in honor of a local Sufi shrine to be held around the same time.[3] These competing processions have led to violent communal confrontations. In 1984, the two celebrations were close enough in time to lead to the worst communal riots of the 1980s. The MIM contests elections for seats in the local municipal and state assembly and national parliament based on the Muslim vote bank. And when local attempts in Hyderabad have been made to set up peace committees, they have largely failed because the MIM politicians and the local BJP politicians simply hate each other (Varshney, 2002).

**During the Procession**

Processions themselves don't produce riots, but events during the processions ignite violence. The violence feeds on antipathy, crowd mentality (reduced inhibition and peer pressure), heightened emotions (excitement and aggressiveness) and opportunity. Instigators within the procession may cause an incident (the trigger) to start the violence—such as offensive chants, beating up bystanders, looting shops, etc.

Chants and slogans during a procession are particularly powerful at whipping up frenzy. During the Ram Shila Puja processions in 1989, the crowd often shouted "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan, Mullah bhago Pakistan" (Hindu, Hindu, for India; Muslim clerics must flee to Pakistan) (Jaffrelot in Wilkinson, 2005). Paul Brass (2003) writes that in India shouting slogans is an art often performed by a specialized person. They will incite the crowd to violence with slogans such as "Khoon Ka Badla Khoon Se Lenge" (blood for blood). A statement-response slogan will involve the specialist shouting by putting their whole body into the act (like dancing), and then the crowd responding with the

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[3] Ironically, Sufism has historically brought Hindus and Muslims together rather than serve as a vehicle to polarize communities as it does here.

name of a person along with "Murdabad" (death to) (Brass, 2003). A common Muslim

slogan that serves as a battle cry is "Allahu Akbar!" (Arabic for 'God is Great').

More deliberate provocations are when organizers change the predetermined route

of the procession and take it through a sensitive neighborhood. Processions have also

paused and played music in front of each other's religious places in a deliberate attempt

to taunt and cause offense. Defiling religious sites have triggered communal violence.

Pigs led in or pork thrown into mosques, cows' heads thrown into temples, and rumors of

desecrating the Qur'an or Ramayana has triggered violence during processions.

Violence during processions is also subject to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because

previous processions have resulted in riots, ordinary people prepare themselves for

violence, sometimes by arming themselves with weapons (Wilkinson, 2005). But

because they have primed themselves for violence, they often end up causing it

themselves by misinterpreting or overreacting to the slightest incident.

Examining some examples of Hindu-Muslim processions and violence illustrates

the dynamics of processions that coalesce to produce riots. The first example is a

description of a Shiv Jayanti procession in 1927 led by Hindu Sabha organizers in the

city of Surat:

> When the procession consisting of about 1000 persons and with five
> parties of *bhajanwallas* [singers and musicians] playing *manjiras*
> [cymbals] and singing religious songs, came to Parsi Sheri, it came to a
> halt owing to the menacing attitude of about 20 to 25 Muhammedans
> [Muslims] with lathis in front. A parley took place between the few
> Muslims and the advanced guard of the procession led by Dr Raiji [leader
> of the Hindu Sabha] and others. The Muslims got excited. Brickbats and
> pieces of road metal were flourished in the air…the City Magistrate asked
> the leaders of the procession to disperse the procession or to change the
> route as the attitude of the Muslims was threatening. It however appears
> that the leaders were divided over the question…when the armed party
> had been lined up across the road, the constables as well as the procession

advanced a little towards the mosque. This was immediately interpreted by the Muslims as the decision of the police to conduct the procession past the mosque with the protection of the armed constables, and with music playing. This was unfortunate as it led to an infuriate attack… (Jaffrelot in Wilkinson, 2005, p. 304, footnote 1).[4]

This example contains some common themes seen in other riots. First, the procession entered a sensitive area (Parsi Sheri) claimed by both Hindus and Muslims. The route was perhaps deliberately chosen to pass a mosque since the leaders of the procession refused to change course when faced with a Muslim mob and orders from the City Magistrate. Second, the Muslims appeared to be already conditioned to take offense to Hindu religious songs in front their mosque. It was probably not the first time such incidents occurred—indicating that a certain pattern of procession and police response is already expected of the participants. Further, the Muslim mob was already armed (with batons called lathis) and waiting. The Hindus were also prepared since the procession had an "advanced guard" consisting of its leaders (who incidentally were politicians) that would be the first to confront potential detractors. Third, the constables' actions were interpreted by the Muslims as biased. Since the confrontation already began its descent into violence, this last humiliation was intolerable enough for the Muslims to attack despite overwhelming odds.

This second example illustrates the clash of two competing processions: the Muslim Muharram observance and the Hindu Ganesh festival. It takes place in 1944 as reported by a British Administrator:

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[4] Original source: Report of K.L. Panjabi, District Magistrate of Surat, to the Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Government of Bombay, Confidential Proceedings in the Political Department for the year 1927, P/Conf/73, India Office Library and Records.

The last day of the festival (of Muharram)…was always an anxious one for the police. The whole city turned out to see the *taziyas*[5]; sightseers crowded streets and the roofs of the houses. The mourners, excited by the onlookers and fortified with drugs, worked themselves up to a final pitch of fervour and frenzy, which the most trifling incident might turn to blind fury. It was during the early part of the day, when the *taziyas* were still moving about in the crowded walled city, that the danger was the greatest. At some places rival processions had to pass close to one another; the routes of several lay right through the centre of the Hindu quarter of the city. An angry word or a slight mischance might easily precipitate a riot…there was a long tale of Muharram riots…One year the top of a large *taziya* stuck against a telegraph wire; a small bit was broken off and fell on the ground. In a few minutes a rumour spread through the crowds that a Hindu had thrown a stone at a *taziya*. Hindus and Muslims fell upon one another; hooligans set first to buildings, houses were looted, and for several days there was an orgy of bloodshed. On another occasion, just as the *taziyas* were being lined up on the circular road, it was heard that four Muslims had been stabbed by Hindus on the other side of the city. Dropping their *taziyas* on the road, the mourners and bearers rushed back into the city to loot the Hindi shops and murder any Hindu they might meet on their way (Jaffrelot in Wilkinson, 2005; p. 305, footnote 17).[6]

The Muhaaram and Ganesh processions were not always in such conflict, with Hindus and Muslims often observing each other's festivals. However, in 1893, Muslims attacked a Hindu procession as it passed in front of a mosque. They claimed the music in the procession was offensive (a common complaint even today). In response, B.G. Tilak, a leader in the Indian National Congress in the Bombay Presidency, ordered Hindus to stop participating in Muslim Muharram processions. In addition, Tilak reorganized the Hindu Ganesh (or Ganapati) celebration by turning a private (family) worship to a 10-day public celebration consisting of processions. The processions coincided with observance of Muharram, bringing the communities face to face in defense of their religion.

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[5] Taziyas are bamboo and paper replicas of a martyr's tomb that are decorated and paraded in the streets.

[6] Original source: Moon, Panderel. *Strangers in India*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1944).

Tilak's transformation of the Ganesh celebration from private into public celebrations has often led since then to the two communities confronting each other during these times. Muharram is an emotionally charged religious observance. And in the context of competition, the Ganesh processions have also gained great meaning for Hindus. The passing of processions through each other's neighborhoods is an assertion of group and personal identity and a claim to cultural and physical territory. Emotions and expectations are at the ready for the slightest incident (however misinterpreted or false) to trigger and justify attacking each other. Goondas are well placed in the processions to work the crowd up into frenzy, instigate aggression, and loot. Finally, rumors contort accidents into justifications for violence in order to create threats and fear.

This final example (Ghosh 1987, Chapter H) illustrates how festivals act as precipitants for riots as economic and political competition becomes rife. The city of Baroda in Gujarat was historically a communally harmonious city. However, this began to change in the mid 20th century. The memory of the large-scale riots in Ahmedabad in 1969 was foremost among the Muslims of Baroda. Since then, Islamic fundamentalist forces (Muslims Action Committee at the M.S. University) and Hinduvta forces (RSS and BJP) established themselves deeply into the social life of the city. Hindu leaders argued that the local Islamic study center being set up was funded by foreign Arab money. Muslim leaders argued that there had been no action taken against the growth of Hindu extremist clubs, who meant to attack Muslims.

Economically, bootlegging of liquor was an open, accepted and important part of the local economy. The Hindu (particularly the Bhoi community) and Muslim communities competed against each other for control of the sector. Hindu and Muslim

mobsters, protected by Congress Party politicians, also competed for a greater share of the business. Violence to eliminate competition would serve their interests well.

Communal violence was ongoing in the city throughout 1982. That year's Hindu festivals of Navratri and Dusserah and the Muslim month long observance of Muharram coincided to make for an explosive situation. The first incidents occurred in the nine days of Navratri that coincided with Muharram. Hindus were celebrating Navratri by dancing in the streets while Muslims built taziyas to mourn the killings of Hasan and Hussain. A youth was stabbed on October 23. Later that evening, violence erupted when Hindu and Muslim processions ran into each other. The police managed to disperse the crowds by using deadly force. The police were heavily prepared for more such incidents.

Four days later, the Hindu festival of Dusserah and Muharram overlapped again. Even though the police were prepared for violence, organized armed mobs of Hindus and Muslims, including criminal elements, took the opportunity to fight each other. The violence continued through the end of that year.

This example clearly highlights the politicization of festivals. Festivals in Baroda had normally been peaceful and occasionally each community would join each other's observances. However, violence, such as the 1969 riots in Ahmedabad, changed the context of relations between Hindus and Muslims and allowed extremist activists to transform the way in which festivals became celebrated. They were no longer opportunities for people to come together. Rather, they served as expressions of political desires, the deep-seated rivalries of organized criminals, and the frustrations or normal citizens. In addition to the political machination of local politicians, the division of economic activity along religious cleavages provided for ready-made groups of people

willing to kill competitors from other religious communities. Because livelihoods were based on patronage from one's own community, organizing mobs along religious division became the most probable means of actuating people's antagonisms. Festivals became ideal opportunities for the expression of these antagonisms because they are religious celebrations that are inherently emotional.

## Conclusion

These examples display the various factors involved in the creation of riots: religious identity, cultural claim on territory, interests of leaders, political incentives and possibilities to polarize populations, instigators in the crowd, bias in the police, history of antagonisms, rumors, and crowd emotions and mob psychology. Identity needs and political interests are co-dependent variables that influence and feed off each other to create the conflict condition. They create the condition for more specific variables— precipitants and triggers--to actuate the communal riot.

Steven Wilkinson (2000) claims that these variables are not necessary to explain the outbreak of riots. For him, the electoral incentives for politicians and the political will of the police to prevent violence are sufficient variables to explain an outbreak or its absence. This claim bears addressing.

While politicians and police may be sufficient variables in preventing outbreaks[7], politicians and police also exist in a context that makes or does not make communal violence possible. An outbreak of violence just cannot happen anywhere, even in districts where elections may be close. Politicians cannot resort to communally polarizing political strategies if there is not a chance that the message will resonate with

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[7] Although politicians and police are keys to prevention, it is because they have not been interested or able to prevent outbreaks that CSOs become important in prevention.

voters. Furthermore, leaders who dislike other communities cannot express these sentiments if the voters will penalize them for such feelings. Similarly, the police do not have an incentive to fail at providing safety and security in the face of communal violence unless there is popular and political inattention or support to be passive.

The examples of riots during festivals and processions beg the question: how can we prevent violence emanating from festivals and processions? But since this is not a new phenomenon, a more apt question is: why has it been so difficult to prevent riots sparked by processions? Ineffectiveness of the police is certainly one reason why riots break out. Many judicial commissions set up to investigate the riots have found that bias attitudes towards minorities to be a systemic problem in the police. One issue with police bias has been that minorities are under-represented among the police forces—making it easier for anti-Muslim propaganda to create bias attitudes among Hindu policeman who have had little contact with Muslims communities.

Police certainly do not fail at preventing or controlling riots for lack of capacity. Steven Wilkinson (2004) notes that even the poorest of states, such as Bihar, have been successful at preventing riots *if* the political will to do so exists among political leaders. And when considering how risk-averse mobs are, it may only take a little, but determined, show of force to dissuade rioters.

Rather, failure results more from the control of police by politicians, which has led to paralysis or partisanship among the police. Political interference leads to passivity or even support by police of communal elements[8]. When politicians have an interest in

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[8] Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission (Delhi riots), Justice Raghuvir Dayal Commission (Ahmednagar riots), Justice Jagmohan Reddy Commission (Ahmedabad riots), Justice D.P. Madan Commission (Bhiwandi riots), Justice Joseph Vithyathil Commission (Tellicheri riots), Justice J. Narain, S.K. Ghosh and

polarizing communities or do not have an incentive to protect minorities, they have tied the hands of police forces to keep the peace. The threat of being transferred or losing ones job is a compelling personal reason for police officers to follow orders to not intervene.

Recent history shows that the questions of whether the politicians can be trusted to protect people or whether the police can be counted to prevent ethnic riots are not forgone conclusions. This is why the question of whether there is an expanded role for civil society organizations in preventing communal violence is an important issue to consider. It is certainly not meant to replace the state and police in their responsibility to provide security and prevent riots or even to solve the problems of political interference in police work or ineffectiveness of police in preventing ethnic riots. Rather, given that these problems are so persistent, the question is: what can civil society do to help itself to prevent riots or at least save some lives by preventing riots from spreading?

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S.Q. Rizvi Commission (Jamshedpur riots), Justice R.C.P. Sinha and S.S. Hasan Commission (Bhagalpore riots), and Justice Srikrishna Commssion (Bombay riots).

**CHAPTER 3**

**CONFLICT PREVENTION AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS**

This chapter provides an understanding of conflict prevention, and more specifically, operational prevention. It also discusses previous recommendations for prevention in India. I then explore historical understandings of civil society, contemporary understanding of the role of civil society organizations in conflict prevention, and discuss the role civil society has historically played in prevention as well as fomenting violence in India.

## Conflict Prevention

The flourishing interest and practice of conflict prevention led to a landmark study in the late 1990s called the *Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict*. In its final report in 1997, the Commission conceptualized conflict prevention in two phases: structural prevention and operational prevention. Structural prevention, commonly also thought of as "peacebuilding", addresses economic, political and social problems that create conditions for the rise of conflicts between individuals and groups. The problems are root causes of conflict that include poverty and inequality, lack of human rights and rule of law, political freedom and grievances, cultural rights (such as autonomy and respect), historical trauma and so forth. Structural prevention and peacebuilding includes putting in place structures that can address these issues through peaceful means. Solutions include creating or reforming legal systems and dispute resolution mechanisms, enhancing democracy, reforming police, creating health and social welfare departments, building schools and cultural associations, and other institutions and methods that create stable and vibrant societies.

Operational prevention strategies occur when violence is imminent. A conflict seems headed towards a violent outbreak. Someone must step in to bring the parties back from the brink of violence, reduce tensions, separate the parties if necessary, and protect innocent civilians. Operational prevention seeks to deal with pacifying the immediate situation. This is the specific topic of this research.

Structural prevention and operational prevention can be placed on a time-line. Structural prevention deals with issues of conflict well before the escalation of tensions and also to re-establish peace after violence has subsided. Operational prevention occurs as violence seems imminent or to prevent the immediate recurrence of violence (such as waves of riots that are interspersed with period of calm). While grievances in structural prevention are the root of the violence that operational prevention seeks to address, these root causes do not need to be dealt with when attempting to prevent imminent violence. More importantly, solving the issue that serves as the precedent and trigger (such as desecration of a mosque or temple or a traffic accident) or promising to address the root cause issues at a later stage is sufficient to prevent the immediate violence.

**Operational Prevention**

Turning specifically to operational prevention, the Carnegie Commission (1997) identified four measures for prevention: early warning and response, preventive diplomacy, economic measures (such as sanctions and incentives) and the use of force. Operational prevention here is frame-worked from the perspective of the international community because that was the remit of the Carnegie Commission. It is necessary to adapt these propositions to the national and local level.

Early warning involves "relatively easy identification of major hotspots and checklists of problem conditions…[but] policymakers also need *specific* knowledge of the major elements of destabilization and the way in which they are likely to coalesce to precipitate an outbreak of violence" (Carnegie Commission, 1997, p. 45). A particular concern expressed by policymakers is that triggers (small events that turn conflicts to violence) are often difficult to identify and even harder to predict early enough to allow for intervention. Any person or institution, from international organizations to individuals can provide early warning information. Of these, civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may be uniquely placed since they often work at the grassroots and in locations where trouble breaks out. The challenge is to gather accurate and meaningful information (including about local histories and grievances) and to have access to the appropriate persons that can act on that early warning information.

Early warning is useless without early action. Preventive diplomacy attempts to engage crises before they breakout into violence. However, prevention is not possible without the political will to actually prevent the violence. Too often, policymakers and politicians are distracted by other events, don't consider the situation seriously enough, feel that the costs of engagement are too high, sit on the sidelines with consideration for other principles that might be at stake (especially sovereignty at the international level) or worst of all, prevent action because they have an interest in seeing the violence break out. Critical in preventive diplomacy is that channels for communication and dialogue are kept open. Preventive diplomacy must go beyond traditional diplomacy by political

authorities. Societies must marshal as many people and institutions as possible to prevent the violence.

Inducement (economic and political) and sanctions are practical tools to engage parties in conflict. Carrots can entice players to resolve their conflict peacefully. Sanctions are the stick that can compel recalcitrant parties to comply. These may be more applicable to inter-state conflicts or intra-state conflicts that involve civil wars or separatists movements. Ethnic and communal violence often boils down to a law and order problem once the parties are committed to polarization and are creating conditions that can easily spark violence. The responsible persons for communal violence are often politicians who are not directly responsible for the problem (so it is difficult to directly negotiate with them regarding the violence) or criminals who are not legitimate partners for negotiations. Nevertheless, inducements offered to groups and leaders before the tension increases may pacify the desire to resort to violence.

Finally, the Commission extensively considered the use of force, which is substantially different at the international level than in the domestic context. Yet, the issue is also critically important in preventing violence at the local level. Donald Horowitz (2001) notes that one variable used by riot leaders and rioters is to calculate their chances of carrying out violence without harm to themselves or legal repercussions; particularly, based on whether they will face opposition from police forces. A show of force by the police and communicating that the rioters do not have the sanction of the government is sometimes all it takes to suppress rioters.

The Commission states that these strategies are dependent on four key elements: 1) leadership, 2) a comprehensive political-military approach, 3) adequate resources to

support preventative engagement, and 4) plan for the restoration of host country authority. Once again these elements can be adapted to the local level.

Leadership brings the capacity of states or organizations to focus on the conflict. Other states, organizations or persons who desire to get involved but do not have the capacity to do so often wait for a leader to rally around. Leaders shape the strategy for engagement and maintain the political support required for success. Leadership for preventing ethnic or communal violence within the CSO community means having a lead organization to coordinate prevention efforts (discussed in more detail later.)

A comprehensive political-military approach refers, at the international level, to the use of military forces to deter violence, create space for political efforts, and assist in supplying and protecting humanitarian aid to victims. In the local setting, it refers to the national, state or local political administration and police. The police can strengthen political and CSO humanitarian efforts by not only providing the stick to enforce peace but also by making available police resources for command and control (coordination of response) and logistics (e.g. transportation).

The lack of resources can impede the best of intentions to prevent violence. Resources include everything from people to equipment and knowledge. Rarely does one government or organization have all the capacity to intervene to prevent violence. While governments may have physical capacities like police forces, CSOs may provide critical knowledge of the situation.

Finally, at the international level, a plan for the restoration of host country authority is critical to giving control of the situation and responsibility for societies back to the people. Most countries that come to help don't want to stay, and most people

probably don't want to be dependent on outsiders for the long-term. An exit strategy that includes how to restore governance to the local population is important right from the beginning of the intervention. Somewhat similarly, empowering neighborhood authorities can build long-term capacities to prevent conflict.

## Historical Recommendations for Prevention

The long history of communal violence in India is matched with a long history of commissions exploring their causes and making recommendations towards preventing future riots in India[1]. In addition, national civil society organizations such as the People Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and international NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have also issued reports on riots. This section reviews some of their recommendations. For now, I exclude specific recommendations regarding the potential role of civil society. I will discuss them in detail further below.

Issues that are repeatedly noted in the failures to prevent riots include problems with the Indian Police Service, government structures for prevention, hate speech and views of history, and justice in the aftermath of riots. Political interests, particularly the creation of vote banks to win elections, create an incentive to communalize society.

Police complicity, inaction, and ineffectiveness have repeatedly been cited as key issues (even by India's National Police Commission). At one extreme is police complicity in the riots. In the Ahmedabad riots of 2002, some of the local police were part of the riot mob. In other riots, the police have stood aside and watched rioters attack

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[1] Shah-Nanavati Commission (Gujarat riots 2002), Justice Srikrishna Commssion (Bombay riots 1992-1993), Justice R.C.P. Sinha and S.S. Hasan Commission (Bhagalpore riots 1989), Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission (Delhi riots 1984), Justice J. Narain, S.K. Ghosh and S.Q. Rizvi Commission (Jamshedpur riots 1979), Justice Joseph Vithyathil Commission (Tellicheri riots 1971), Justice D.P. Madan Commission (Bhiwandi riots 1970), Justice Jagmohan Reddy Commission (Ahmedabad riots 1969), Justice Raghuvir Dayal Commission (Ahmednagar riots 1967).

people and destroy property (such as during the first three days of the 1969 Ahmedabad riots). Police bias, specifically against the Muslim community, has long plagued India's police forces. The bias tends to be quite pronounced in the lower ranks, particularly the constabulary who are ones on the street in direct contact with citizens. Though we expect the police to be professional and impartial and rise above communal prejudices, they are also individuals like any other. They bring with them the prejudices of the society in which they live. The police also lack capacity in personnel, intelligence gathering, equipment, and leadership and training to deal with riots.

Despite a history of communal riots, the structures of prevention remain few and ineffective in India. Beginning at the top, there is often minimal political will to curb Hindu-Muslim violence. There is certainly the rhetoric against such violence. Part D of the *2006 Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for Minorities* (2006) is devoted to curbing communal violence (see below). However, since many politicians benefit from communal divisions, there is little practical action in local government.

At a more practical level, the responsibility to prevent violence is too diffused, and thus prevents accountability. Both the police and local civil administrations are endowed with various responsibilities regarding communal issues. Each can blame the other for failure. For example, in India the police can blame the District Magistrates, who have extraordinary authority to direct police in the event of a warning, for not recognizing the problem early enough and issuing orders to respond. The District Magistrate, or other city administration officials, can blame the police for failing to keep the peace. The police and local administration fail to use existing legal powers and response mechanisms in an early and timely fashion. Additionally, police and local

authorities are also subject to the machinations of local political bosses who may be communally biased or have an interest in creating communal tensions for political gain.

There is also little or ineffective coordination between government branches. Lack of cooperation and coordination between local police, state police, paramilitary forces, and the army results in inefficient use of resources. The consequences are particularly grave for riots, which requires government-police coordination for effective response. A lack of coordination and engagement also exists between government and civil society.

Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, a founding member and Chairman of the Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) in Mumbai feels that hate speech and teaching of India history as a struggle between Hindus and Muslims is one of the fundamental reasons for communal divisions in society (Engineer interview, 2007). Sangh Parivar nationalist organizations as well as mainstream curricula teach children in India that Muslim rulers subjugated Hindus for centuries. While this perspective of history is debatable (and not necessarily untrue), it instills a desire for revenge in Hindus that infects the attitudes of police, some politicians, the media, and society in general. In turn, Muslims have come to believe that Hindus are looking to seek revenge for this history and also for the loss of territory during partition of the country at independence.

These insights from investigations of riots over the last forty years have led to the following recommendations[2].

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[2] Some of these have been drawn from Ghosh (1987). S.K. Ghosh was the Inspector General of Police in Orissa (who served as a police office under the British and in Independent India), Director of the Law Research Institute in Calcutta and Commissioner on the Justice J. Narain, S.K. Ghosh and S.Q. Rizvi Commission that investigated the 1979 Jamshedpur riots.

As stated earlier, early warning is fundamental to reaction. Prevention requires timely and accurate information, communication and coordination. Local police stations must be vigilant to precipitants, such as rumors and minor incidents involving Hindus and Muslims, strangers in the community, and unusual incidents (e.g. political rallies). But having information is useless if it can't be passed along to superiors. Constables and inspectors must feel empowered to pass along early warning issues to higher authorities who, in-turn, must have the opportunity to engage civil administrators.

Early warning must be matched with early and active response. The police and civil authorities must take precipitants seriously and respond accordingly. They must investigate rumors, meet with all community leaders and actively engage the communities in order to prevent escalation. They must proactively use existing legal provisions to investigate and curb hate speech, round up criminals, prevent the movement of communal leaders and forces into sensitive areas, deploy police and paramilitary forces quickly and establish incident command and control centers.

Effective reaction requires pre-established capacity and processes to respond to communal incidents. The police must have adequate capacity in personnel and equipment, and established procedures to react quickly to communal incidents. Most of all, police must regularly practice reacting to incidents, large and small. Without practice, the police will find themselves scrambling to bring together the structures required for reaction as the emergency unfolds.

Police capacity includes relationships with local civil society organizations. CSOs can serve as focal points to engage the communities. As elaborated throughout the research, civil society and CSOs working in the neighborhoods have comparative

advantages useful for police and government authorities. CSOs presence and knowledge of events and people in troubled neighborhoods can provide detailed early warning information. The trust CSOs have established by working and providing services for communities can provide access for the police to engage local leaders. An organization's reputation for impartiality can provide access to investigate and suppress rumors. Police should factor in CSOs in their prevention and response plans. But doing so requires recognition of their importance and a deliberate attempt to establish a relationship.

Justice must be served to prevent future violence. Rioters and leaders in the riot crowd must be prosecuted. Laws that allow for preventive detention must be clarified and used more readily, with a view towards incorporating civil rights so as not to alienate communities. Politicians must be put on notice that they will be prosecuted for hate speech.

Police atrocities must be thoroughly and sincerely investigated. Police officials in the higher echelons of the chain of command must be prosecuted (and not just transferred) for their inaction during riots. Policemen who do not register and investigate minor cases of communal violence must be punished. The police must develop a professional cadre of investigators that will investigate communal incidents without bias.

While these recommendations from official investigative commissions make sense, they are not binding. Thus, the issue of political will is at the root of prevention. Political authorities need to provide policy and moral guidance, authorize activities, allocate funds, pass laws and provide space for civil society prevention initiatives. Support for prevention exists at the national level, at least in political rhetoric. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's *New 15 Point Programme for Welfare of Minorities* (2006)

provides strategic guidance for improving the welfare of minorities. Part D (points 13-

15) addresses the issue of prevention and control of communal riots:

> (D) Prevention & Control of Communal Riots
> (13) Prevention of communal incidents
> In the areas which have been identified as communally sensitive and riot
> prone districts, police officials of the highest known efficiency,
> impartiality and secular record must be posted. In such areas and even
> elsewhere, the prevention of communal tension should be one of the
> primary duties of the district magistrate and superintendent of police.
> Their performance in this regard should be an important factor in
> determining their promotion prospects.
> (14) Prosecution for communal offences
> Severe action should be taken against all those who incite communal
> tension or take part in violence. Special court or courts specifically
> earmarked to try communal offences should be set up so that offenders
> are brought to book speedily.
> (15) Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots.
> Victims of communal riots should be given immediate relief and
> provided prompt and adequate financial assistance for their
> rehabilitation.

The year before, the proposed *Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and

Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005* (Government of India, 2005) also attempted to

highlight the issue. Following the 2002 riots in Gujarat and the Gujarat government's

complicity in the massacres, the bill attempts to make authorities accountable for

preventing communal violence. One of the most significant provisions involves the

ability for the Federal government ("Centre") to designate areas as communally sensitive

and deploy the army if necessary. It has yet to be passed (as of late 2010) but critics from

many sides contend that it is inadequate anyway.

A major problem with the bill is that the provisions for providing more power to

the Centre to intervene ("Section 55") have been substantially curtailed as it has been

redrafted in negotiations. Currently, the state government has to request assistance from

the Centre. But why would it if it is complicit in the violence, as in Gujarat in 2002? The

Centre could still possibly intervene.  However, the definition of communal violence is limited to understanding as contained in specific acts.[3]  While it may cover violence as it is unfolding and help in stopping ongoing violence, it would not cover hate speech and the mobilization of people--critical issues in preventing rather than responding to violence.  In effect, the bill, as it reads, would not legally compel state governments to prevent violence.  In addition, it provides immunity to police and army leadership for their actions (or inaction) while only mandating junior policeman to act.  It does not properly recognize the role police have had in facilitating communal violence or committing human rights violations in their reaction.

In conclusion, preventing imminent riots in India has proven to be difficult.  One reason may be, as Horowitz (2001) writes, is that there is a "perceptual asymmetry" between those who want to prevent violence and those who perpetrate it.  If a conflict involves a specific action that leads to be a predictable reaction, then it is clear when and how to intervene.  However, if the process is gradual and incremental with no single action clearly responsible for the outbreak of violence, like the "notch-by-notch" character of many situations that lead to riots, knowing when and how prevention could have happened is evident only as hindsight after the violence has occurred.  Therefore, those who seek to prevent must be educated about the possibility of prevention, be continually prepared to intervene, and constantly vigilant of the situation on the ground. It is to these actors of prevention that I turn to next.

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[3] See the Indian Penal Code, 1860; Arms Act, 1959; Explosives Act, 1884; Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984; Places of Worship Act, 1991; Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988.

**Actors of Prevention**

The Carnegie Commission (1997) noted how various sections of society can contribute in operational prevention. Virtually everyone agrees that governments have the primary responsibility to prevent conflicts. This is not only because safety and security is one of the primary duties of government, but also because they have the most capacity to prevent violence. Domestically, police forces and other law enforcement agencies have physical resources far more than any other segment of society. Governments are also the only legal authority within a state that can have weapons, train personnel and have the authority to act in all areas of society (unlike security firms who can only offer protection to their clients). Governments also set rules and regulations about how violence can be prevented; and so control the permissive environment for CSO prevention activities. The government's judicial system is supposed to offer an independent and fair judiciary (and associated formal conflict resolution mechanisms) in which conflicts can be peacefully resolved. However, these are ideal states of government, and problems arise when governments lack effective capacity or are unwilling to prevent violence.

The Carnegie Commission groups all other actors other than official government entities under 'civil society'[4]. Religious leaders and institutions are among the most influential members in society. For prevention, they "have on occasion played a

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[4] The next section explores civil society more in-depth. In line with many other authors, I differentiate among the various civil society actors that the Carnegie Commission groups together. The market, or business community, and the family are often considered different realms of society separate from 'civil society'. I also differentiate between civil society actors. For this paper, I am primarily concerned with non-governmental organizations, formal groups such as neighborhood peace committees and other organizations that, while not registered as non-governmental organizations, act in an organized and formal capacity in peacebuilding and development. I am not concerned with institutions of civil society such as churches and universities.

reconciling role by inhibiting violence, lessening tensions, and contributing decisively to the resolution of conflict" (1997, p. 114).

The scientific community "provides understanding, insight, and stimulating ways of analyzing important problems" (Carnegie, 1997, p. 119). Whether it is new technologies for police to use in riots or theorizing the dynamics of riots and inter-group relations, the scientific community offers understanding and tools to deal with problems.

The media has a particularly influential role in the context of operational violence because it frames the people's understanding of the situation. How stories are reported can predispose tense situations towards violence or towards diffusing them. The challenge for the media is "to report conflicts in ways that engender constructive public consideration of possibilities for avoiding violence" (Carnegie, 1997). The media can reduce fear by disseminating accurate information about events, better investigating rumors before reporting them and publishing stories of peace and prevention efforts.

Sometimes business interests and economic competition facilitates riots by supporting the actions of criminals or extremist politicians. Not giving such support, alternatively providing support for communal harmony programs, employing members of all ethnic groups, establishing codes of conduct, and pressuring governments to keep the peace (for the sake of keeping businesses open) are roles that businesses can play in preventing violence. Fundamentally, the business community must understand that as a part of society they have a responsibility and economic benefit in keeping the peace.

Of particular interest for us are institutions of civil society such as civic organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Commission (1997) noted the diversity, vitality and relevance of NGOs to societies and to prevention:

> The Commission strongly endorses the important role of NGOs in helping to prevent deadly conflict. NGOs have the flexibility to respond rapidly to early signs of trouble. They witness and give voice to the unfolding drama, and they provide essential services and aid. Not least, they inform and educate the public…on the horrors of deadly conflict and thus help mobilize opinion and action (p. 114).

NGOs also,

> ...provide analysis into a particular conflict; convene adversarial parties (providing a neutral forum); pave for mediation and undertake mediation; carry out education and training for conflict resolution, build an indigenous capacity for coping with ongoing conflicts; help strengthen institutions for conflict resolution; foster development of the rule of law; help establish a free press with responsible reporting on conflict; assist in planning and implementing elections; and provide technical assistance on democratic arrangements that reduce the likelihood of violence in divided societies (p. 113).

Despite the range of things that NGOs can do on peacebuilding issues, their work on prevention when violence is imminent is often limited. Very few NGOs are actually able to intervene when violence is imminent (some do peacemaking, or "Track II diplomacy", in the midst of long-running violent conflicts and wars).

The most notable role for NGOs in operational prevention issues is early warning. Because they are rooted in the conflict and physically present among the affected population over a long period of time, their understanding of culture and local contexts make them privy to early warning information. For example, during the wars in Sierra Leone in the early 1990s, a local development NGO noticed that government soldiers increased their purchase of cigarettes from one week to the next. This tipped them off to the fact that a major offensive against the rebels was imminent because the soldiers needed extra cigarettes to take with them into the bush.

Indeed, civil society organizations can do more than early warning to prevent violence, even if only at the local level (whether in a city or simply in a neighborhood) in

most cases. There are many stories of individuals and their organizations intervening to prevent the outbreak of violence. Gandhi strove to make Hindu, Muslims, untouchables (Dalits) and women work together in building an India ready for self-governance. Peace committees in Mumbai and development NGOs in slums still work to build communal harmony. These experiences form the basis of this thesis's research and are the foundation to establish an expanded role for civil society in preventing communal and ethnic violence. Scholars have also theorized on various roles of civic organizations in conflict prevention. Ashutosh Varshney's (2002) research notes the importance of inter-ethnic civic organizations for communal peace. Similarly, James Fearon and David Laitin (1996) theorize that "self-policing" by communities can prevent extremist or rogue elements from precipitating violence. Other ideas will be discussed in detail throughout the thesis.

Yet, my research has also found that civil society's involvement in operational prevention is ad hoc—unplanned and at the initiative of courageous individuals to intervene. The purpose of this research is to uncover the dynamics of these interventions in order to build more systematic capacity for civil society organizations to intervene to prevent violence. But what exactly is civil society and CSOs?

## Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations

### Defining Civil Society

'Civil society' as a concept has much historical reflection. It is often presented as a distinct aspect of society vis-à-vis the state, market, and family, and is often set in opposition to the state[5]. John Locke and Montesquieu argued for the existence of an

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[5] The family has been largely disregarded as a specific sector of civil society in contemporary understanding. This has led to describing civil society as the "third sector" (after the state and market).

independent arena of activity in society apart from the state and market. Both saw civil society in opposition to the state, actively attempting to resist the state's constraints on individual freedom. Hegel's use of the term emphasized it as the space where the family and state were engaged in a dialectical relationship. He saw it as a space were private (family) economic interests interact; analogous to the space we now call the market. Marx also believed that civil society was a conception of private economic interests clothed as a universal or social 'good'. Gramsci argued that there was a realm of ideas, values and customs--civil society--that exists separate from the state and market. More contemporarily, Michael Walzer (1992) argues that civil society refers to an area of society that is uncoerced and where affairs are conducted without reference to the state or market (Tandon and Mohanty, 2003).

I use the term civil society in the broadest sense. The term "civil society" sits between the ideal of a western liberal definition as a separate sphere of society and the reality of diversity in the Indian context. Indian society is still slowly emerging from a past of hierarchical and feudal society. Politics, economics and social relations are intermixed. Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that in India much of what happens in the family and market is inextricably linked to the civic space. Additionally, much of politics in India (as perhaps elsewhere) is a product of and linked intimately to the dynamics of what happens in civil society. Therefore, it may be more useful to say that civil society are social relations that take place in the public sphere which are *inter*dependent with the family, market and state. Furthermore, civil society presumably

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However, this framing may be a bit presumptuous as the family and clan in many places still hold much loyalty and influence over the choices individuals make. Moreover, economic resources and livelihood are still tied to family networks, especially in developing countries.

involves *civility* in the resolution of conflicts, yet some civil society actors in India has opted to use violence to pursue goals. These organizations simply cannot be excluded.

**Civil Society-State Relations**

Of great concern to many philosophers has been the oppressive tendency of the state. Prior to the emergence of democracy (and the notion of equality), authoritarian governance was the norm. It manifested itself in the form of monarchies, feudal systems and rigid social structures that made advancement beyond the given status at birth difficult if not impossible. With the emergence of political equality in the post-Enlightenment reformations and revolutions, the state was something that should serve the people (not the other way around).

The problem with drawing a division between the state and civil society is that the state often sets the context for civil society and civil society organizations. The state provides (to varying degrees) security, rule of law, infrastructure and enabling policies (extent of freedom or restriction) that govern the scope of activities and vibrancy of civil society. For example, some states encourage civil society by providing NGOs tax-free status, while others attempt to control them by requiring them to register with the government and mandate accountability in their finances. With the state having considerable resources for the use of force (police and military), it could restrict or suppress CSOs if it so desired. The state enables or restricts civil society.

But we need not go too far in portraying the state as all-powerful, and civil society as completely subject to its whims. The state itself is founded, and thus dependent, upon society. The identity of states involve whether civil society is active or passive. Tocqueville claimed that the efficacy of democracies is dependent upon the active and

knowledgeable engagement of a civic civil society. Contemporary authors such as Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1986), James Coleman (1990) and Robert Putnam (1992) have built on this understanding. They advanced the concept of "social capital" to characterize the degree of social relations and networks of civil society which underpin political society. Bourdieu (1986) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (p. 5). For Coleman (1990), social capital is a resource (such as relationships, trust and social norms) that facilitates collective action. The peaceful operation of society requires trust as a social capital, which arises from networks of civic engagement and norms of reciprocity (Pai, Jayal, Bhattacharya & Mohapatra, 2004).

Putnam (1992) specifies two types of social capital: "bonding" and "bridging" social capital. Bonding occurs in highly homogenous communities with very similar identities (race, religion, etc.). It allows for strong bonding of the community around a common identity, but which also makes it difficult to transcend that identity when necessary. Bridging social capital is typically weaker initially because it denotes links with others based on other commonalities rather than ascriptive identities such as ethnicity (e.g. a student union composed of people of various ethnicities). Civic organizations can foster bridging social capital by facilitating interaction between members of different communities. It does not have to be on peace-related issues. For example, NGOs can foster cooperation between communities through collaboration on common issues of public health or the environment. Finally, a third type of social capital added by other authors is "linking" social capital (Harris, 2001). It refers to the

relationship between disadvantaged groups (e.g. poor, lower caste, etc.) and people in influential positions in society (e.g. government, banks, religious institutions, etc.) (Pai, et. al, 2004). As we will see further below, this type of social capital, that connects senior police and government authorities to neighborhood activists, becomes key in the case of peace committees and CSOs attempting to prevent ethnic violence.

**Civil Society Organizations**

Civil society organizations represent a particular manifestation of civil society. They are, in a sense, the institutions of civil society (like the executive or bureaucracy is an institution of the state and the stock market is an institution of the market). However, they are more diverse than the institutions of the state, market or family. Depending on the scope of the definition, CSOs have always existed in some form or another. However, usually they have been informal and local in scope or distinct from the political governance of nations, such as caste associations or labor unions. Civic organizations have also been of a religious character. Religions, their missionaries or social service branches, have directly engaged people to provide education and social services.

CSOs are non-governmental organizations working in development, human rights and peacebuilding. They may be formal non-governmental organizations, known as NGOs, or informal organizations such as neighborhood peace committees. These organizations may indeed be connected to the government or market, particularly in the form of working with government authorities, representing workers to businesses or receiving funding from government or businesses. However, what they are not are government bodies or for-profit entities. CSOs are organizationally independent of

government and businesses and do not hold political offices or exist with the intention of generating profits.

This understanding of civil society and civil society organizations include the 'uncivil' aspects as well. 'Uncivil' in my view means advocating the subjugation of another ethnic or religious group and/or using violence to achieve goals. Therefore, civil society organizations discussed in this thesis are those promoting communal links and prevention (Self Employed Women's Association, Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, Confederation of Voluntary Associations, St. Xavier's Social Service Society, Prashant, Mohalla Committee Movement Trust, Hyderabad Maithri Peace Committees, Bhiwandi mohalla committees, Shanti Sena), as well as Hindu nationalist organizations (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishnu Hindu Parishad, and Bajrang Dal) and banned Islamic extremist organizations Student Islamic Movement of India.

Three reasons that explain the recent rapid proliferation of the number of CSOs and expansion of their work are the spread of democratic politics, the delivery of public goods by CSOs, and their legitimization by international institutions. The form and vibrancy of civil society organizations within a society is dependent on the type of central government. Democracies, more than autocratic governments, allow for civil society to organize into associations. The demise of communism and the rise of popular politics have created space for greater articulation of citizens in more places around the world.

Yet another reason for the proliferation of CSOs is their function as providers of public goods. Governments encouraged, or used, CSOs to deliver public goods either as 'sub-contractors' or when governments are unable to reach their citizens. Particularly during the first era of CSO expansion, in the 1970s and 1980s, CSOs were heavily

involved in development projects at the local level. According to some critics (particularly neo-Marxists), governments used CSOs to deal with the externalities of the neoliberal free market; especially the shrinkage of welfare programs and the failure to redistribute resources (Tandon and Mohanty, 2003). CSOs are used to channel aid and provide public goods for governments. Conversely, other critics suggest that CSOs have proliferated because of the failure of government to meet the needs of all of its population, particularly rural populations, the urban poor, or minorities. Civil society has forced governments to allow space within society for their work.

A third reason for the rise of CSOs, particularly during the 1990s, was because international institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank have legitimized them. After the publication of Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work: Civil Traditions in Modern Italy (1992)* on social capital, the World Bank became a promoter of building social capital, almost as if it was the missing variable in the neoliberal economic program. The fervency behind the 'new' global development perspective encouraged international (government and philanthropic) donors to increase their funding to build civil society by funding the creation civil society organizations. Similarly, the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit encouraged the rise of the environmental NGOs (and development NGOs through the link with sustainable development) by highlighting their essential role in environmental protection. This broadened the area in which CSOs could legitimately engage governments, donors and international inter-governmental institutions.

## Civil Society Organizations and Conflict Prevention

Since the beginning of 1990s, an increasing number of CSOs have become engaged in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Some CSOs focus specifically on conflict-related issues, such as human rights and peacebuilding (e.g. promoting good governance, anti-corruption and acting as watchdogs of the government). Many development organizations attempt to incorporate a "conflict prevention lens" (also commonly known as "mainstreaming" conflict prevention) into their work by becoming more sensitive to the impact of their programs on generating or inhibiting violence between groups. Using the understanding of conflict prevention described in the previous section, we can conceptualize a number of ways for CSOs to be active in preventing conflict.

There are three general roles for CSOs: 1) protect citizens from state oppression (as Locke theorized), 2) provide services; in terms of conflict: establish forums for discussions, educate and train on peace, conduct peacemaking and peacebuilding activities (as De Tocqueville and Habermas described), and 3) develop pluralistic identities and communities (as Montesquieu and Gandhi envisioned). Table 1 summarizes these theories on civil society of these scholars and describes how those theories may translate to activism for conflict prevention.

**Table 1. Civil Society's Potential for Conflict Prevention[6]**

| Theoretical Tradition | Understanding of Civil Society | Potential contribution to conflict prevention |
|---|---|---|
| Locke (1632-1704) | Affirm an independent social sphere as a safeguard against arbitrary action by | Protect against the excesses of arbitrary state power and foster the rule of law. |

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[6] Source: adapted from Reimann and Ropers, (People Building Peace II, 2005); Translation from Merkel/Lauth, 1997; I added Gandhi to this table.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | the state. | |
| Montesquieu (1689-1755) | Promote social networks as a counterweight to central political authority. | Promote the growth of "acquired"—rather than "ascribed"—social affiliation, and of overlapping memberships, thus countering the scission of society along ethnic characteristics. |
| De Tocqueville (1805-1859) | Political socialization of citizens, through which the habit of democratic behavior is acquired. | Foster an open and discursive approach to conflicts, thus teaching citizens through political socialization to become used to dealing with differences. |
| Gandhi (1869-1948) | The private (family) is the public and political; political education is accessible to all, including illiterates and rural; civil society as the foundation of political order. | Develop transcendental identities based on equality (rather than negotiate between communal identities); personal change as foundation of social and political change and conflict resolution. |
| Habermas (1929-) | Create a public space ("Public Sphere") for disadvantaged interests, given the ossified power-based structure of political systems. | Provide through various forums and channels a favorable framework for the articulation of interests that are otherwise suppressed or disadvantaged, and foster the emergence of shared values. |

Protecting citizens from an oppressive state is by far not a forgone objective even in this new millennium. In much of the world, dictators and oppressive states regularly disregard their responsibility to provide safety and security for their citizens. The rights of citizens and the space for an independent and vibrant civil society are actively restricted. Even in well-established democracies, civil society has to continually monitor abrogation of human rights and fight to retain and expand civil liberties.

Civil society organizations help define the identity of society and state. By bringing together people for co-existence or assimilation, CSOs are advocating, socializing and training citizens to live and participate in pluralistic societies. The vision of both Montesquieu and Gandhi is for people to seize control of defining who they are, rather than being defined by history, and for these new identities to encompass larger groups of people based on democratic principles of equality and rights.

Civil society organizations help actuate the social capital of civil society. They provide platforms for individuals to come together to use the power of numbers, organization and coordination to petition the state to provide for the needs of the community. When individuals have multiple memberships in civic institutions, they create "bridging social capital"--"the dense networks that are a powerful force for integrating society and minimizing the potential for polarization along any specific divide" (Barnes in Van Tongeren, 2005, p. 8). Multiple memberships helps create "cross-cutting cleavages", where a person has multiple identities, that leads to inter-ethnic engagement which contains the potential to resolve and prevent group conflicts (Varshney, 2002).

Much of the peacebuilding by CSOs that has grown over the last two decades are activities during times of relative peace. Apart from early warning and some Track II diplomacy (including coordinated efforts by CSOs to hold protests and rallies prior to war), there is comparatively less activity to avert imminent violence. This is not for a lack of imagination. From Gandhi's vision of peace armies (something that the international organization Peace Brigades does on a limited scale) to local peace

committees in hundreds of neighborhoods around the world (such as the National Peace Accord in South Africa), CSOs can provide violence prevention options.

Catherine Barnes (2005) writes how CSOs can contribute to peace in local conflicts: provide early warning, mobilize political will, develop a constituency for peace, facilitate communication, generate alternative solutions and monitor situations on the ground. In attempting to directly prevent violence, CSOs can police neighborhoods, investigate rumors and precipitants, shelter and protect potential victims, advocate and pressure local authorities to forceful action to stabilize the situation and prevent violent hostilities from erupting.

After theorizing what is possible for civil society organizations, it becomes important to understand what has already happened. The next section looks at some of the history of Indian civil society's involvement in violence and prevention.

### A History of Civil Society Organizations in Violence and Prevention in India

The following sections discuss how the dynamics of civil society in India in the late 19th and early 20th century contributed to the construction of Hindu, Muslim and secular identities and how these movements fueled the emergence of Hindu-Muslim violence as well as the organizations for prevention.

**Muslim Deobandism & Hindu Revival Movements**

There was growing political awareness among Indians following the failure of the Sepoy Rebellion in 1857 (also known as the "first war of independence" in which Indian soldiers in the British army ("sepoys") sparked revolts across north India). Indian leaders and civil society movements emerged onto the local and national scene. Muslim and Hindu religious reform and revival movements also emerged. Along with attempting to

better their religious communities and life in general, these reform movements provided the vision and energy for the independence struggle. However, because these movements were essentially religious, they also impacted how Indians defined their personal identity and what Indian nationalism meant. The emphasis on religious identity in the political struggle for independence was a precursor to the emergence of communal divisions. Separate Muslim and secular movements for independence and communal riots in the early 20th century laid the foundation for communal tensions between Hindus and Muslim in India after independence.

The Muslim Deobandi movement developed as a reaction to British colonialism in India and to the mysticism in Sufism. The Deobandi school sought to purge Islam of the mystic influences of Hinduism, such as the veneration of idols and worship of saints, that had become adopted over time by Indian Muslims. The Deobandi school was puritanical in the sense that it established the Qur'an and the Hadith (pronouncements of the Prophet Muhammad) as the single source of guidance and law.

As a religious revivalist movement, the Deobandi school sought to increase the salience of religious identity among Muslims. Simultaneously, as a reaction to British colonialism, it manifested itself as a political movement, but one that could only encompass the Muslim population of India. By virtue of its puritanical interpretation of Islam, it membership was exclusive of non-Muslim Indians. This posed a significant problem because the majority of Indians are Hindus and secularists. For example, as independence approached, some members of the Deobandi school opposed mainstream Indian nationalist movement's push for secularism and the privatization of religion. Additionally, Deobandi beliefs presented a particular problem for the construction of

Indian nationalism. The Deobandi school posits that a Muslim's primary loyalty is to Islam, and only then to the country of citizenship. Secondly, Deobandi beliefs recognize the religious frontiers of their Ummah (community of believers) and not the primacy of national borders. While the Deobandi movement initially did not advocate violence, mostly confining itself to establishing madarassas, Hindus nationalists and secularists reacted to it with alarm because of the newly heightened Muslim religiosity which seemed opposed to their struggle to unite all Indians for independence.

Arya Samaj ("community of noble human beings") was an influential Hindu reform and revival movement. Between 1869 and 1873, Swami Maharishi Dayanand established 'Vedic Schools' which put an emphasis on Vedic values, culture and religion. It also sought to reform Indian society by purging it of what it considered the corruption of the ancient and pure Vedic philosophy. It condemned practices such as polytheism, idolatry, caste system, untouchability, child marriage and other such practices in the belief that they lacked Vedic sanction. Dayanand's ideas caught on in 1874 in Bombay when people saw in it the possibility of lifting up Hindu society and protecting it from the threat of Christian and Muslim proselytization to convert Hindus. Some of its members in Punjab also attempted to unify the Hindu community by bringing Sikhs into the fold, publicly stating that Sikhism was a branch of Hinduism. Members of the Arya Samaj began to introduce practices contrary to Sikh principles in the Sikh Durdwaras (temples). Sikhs resented this and managed to retain their separate identity and launch movements to regain control of their Durdwaras. Although it does not appear Swami Dayanand intended to control other faiths, he did believe that all of Hinduism's sects needed to believe in the Vedic principles in order to have a unified Dharma across India. The

Vedas became akin to the Bible or the Qur'an, making Hinduism a more defined religion than ever before. Importantly, Dayanand does not seem to prescribe how Hindus should peacefully relate to members of other sects or religions, as other Hindu spiritual leaders such as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda did. Absent this guidance on peaceful relations with other faith, it left open the possibility that Arya Samaj's principles would exclude non-Hindus as Indians.

The Arya Samaj movement and Deobandism did not espouse violence. However, they created *exclusive* religious identities. It was difficult for a member of one religious community to relate to the other on issues of religion. Hindus and Muslims could relate to each other in daily life when they worked or celebrated together, but when political and economic opportunities required one to emphasize their religious affiliation, they could no longer disregard their religious differences because both were competing for the same resources. This is well illustrated by the Arya Shuddhi and Muslim Tabligh proselytization campaigns.

**Shuddhi and Tablighi.**

Unlike Christianity or Islam, Hinduism was not a proselytizing religion. In fact, some Hindus still believe that while anyone can practice Hinduism, one must be born a Hindu to be Hindu. Conversion, or shuddhi (purification), in Hinduism was initially launched by the Arya Samaj to purify Hindus that had 'lost' their caste status because of contact with Dalits (untouchables) or from eating foods cooked by non-Hindus. It later evolved into a project to bring Dalits into Hinduism and to bring back Hindus that had been converted to Islam, Christianity and Sikhism.

The tablighi, or Islamic missionary, intended to counter the Arya Samaj's conversion drive by spreading Islam among non-Muslims. The tablighi became a way for Muslim leaders to mobilize the Muslim community across the subcontinent.

The practices of shuddhi and tablighi also had important implications for economic livelihoods. As the British opened up administrative positions in the colonial bureaucracy to Indians, they decided to allocate jobs and political representation based on the numerical proportion of each community. For the British, community was defined on the basis of religious groups. The British census of 1871 provided powerful incentive to create as large groups as possible. The practice of shuddhi and tabilighi were tools to mobilize people to create a pan-Indian Hindu community and a cohesive Muslim community whose numerical strengths could translate into jobs and political positions.

These reform movements increased the relevance of religion in people's identity, and the potential benefits to their livelihood that people could reap by associating themselves to a religious community. This also meant that people saw religious difference as something significant. In other words, association was not only about an increased understanding of their own religion and themselves, but also how the other person and their religion were different from them. This inevitably had political implications for how nationalism was constructed in the drive for independence.

Each community's attempt to strengthen their positions in the emerging democracy resulted in constructing rigid identity borders that kept communities apart and fostered violent communalism. While creating the possibility that some Indians could be 'members', they also created a position in which Indians of another religion could not be included. Furthermore, while neither sought to use violence (at least at the beginning),

neither adopted a stance of tolerance towards the other or mandated that their methods would be peaceful. This left open the possibility for members to castigate other religions and adopt violence as a means to achieve their goals. The combination of exclusive membership, intolerance towards others and the absence of edicts on the non-use of violence eventually led these civil society movements to become uncivil.

### Sangh Parivar & SIMI.

The Sangh Parivar (or "Family of Associations") is a network of Hindu organizations built around the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), one of the world's largest social welfare organizations. The major organizations within the Sangh Parivar are the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishnu Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal. Other organizations draw inspiration from RSS's Hindutva ("Hinduness") philosophy and activities. While most of the organizations associated with the Sangh Parivar are civic organizations, there are also political parties, foremost among them is the BJP.

A central proposition of Hindutva is of Hindu cultural nationalism (also know as integral humanism). It is the belief that the subcontinent is the fatherland (home) and holy land (sacred) of the Hindus. As such, it is the belief that Hindu culture--however, not necessarily the Hindu religion--should be the common social system for India. As much as the Sangh Parivar hopes to be positive in celebrating and propagating Hinduism, it is also defensive and reactionary of history.

In some sense Hindutva was borne in reaction to Muslim rule and British colonialism, because both ruled over the majority Hindus. Sarvarkar and Hedgewar wrote that these periods of oppression pacified Hindu society, making it weak and impotent. Hinduvta (defined by Sarvarkar in 1923) is about realizing past mistakes,

instilling responsibility and determination, and reasserting self-respect and honor among Hindus. However, realizing ones identity was as much about discovering the self as it was about setting yourself apart from the other, particularly Muslims.

An important critique made by Hindu nationalists is that India's secularism is actually "pseudo-secularism." Hindutva supporters maintain that the secularism practiced in India (not the separation of state and church, but rather the equal support by the state of all religions) has resulted in undue preferential treatment for Muslims and Christians. They claim that the fact Muslims and Christians have separate laws for marriage and divorce is antithetical to principles of a secular democracy. They demand a uniform civil code and end to preferential treatment for minorities.

Nothing in Hindutva is necessarily violent. It celebrates a religion and advocates for the social reform and empowerment of previously colonized and oppressed populations. Nevertheless, how it has been interpreted in reality by organizations in the Sangh Parivar (and given their political interests) has had violent consequences. Organizations associated with the Sangh Parivar have been implicated in some of the worst communal riots. The RSS was accused of involvement in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. Gopal Godse, one of the co-accused in the Gandhi murder case, confirmed that both he and his brother were actively involved with the RSS at the time of the assassination. The RSS was banned on February 4, 1948, but subsequently allowed to officially exist in July 1949.

More recently, RSS, BJP and other Sangh Parivar "Kar Sevaks" (kar meaning "hand" and sevak meaning "helper") volunteers were widely implicated in the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992; as well as for the many incidents of communal

violence that preceded it when BJP leaders LK Advani conducted the rath yatra (religious procession) across India. Similarly, members of the Sangh Parivar organizations (i.e. Bajrang Dal, RSS) have been accused of involvement in the 2002 Gujarat riots. Additionally, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi (a BJP politician and RSS member) was accused of facilitating the violence by failing to prevent it and then by restraining police intervention. Given the ideological indoctrination, physical training, and emotional succor that the Sangh Parivar groups provide, its members serve as soldiers at the ready to be used to carry out social services as well as riots.

Violence is endemic to Sangh Parivar's activities because its philosophy emphasizes Hinduism without making allowance for the toleration of Muslims and others. The RSS, BJP and other members of the Sangh Parivar have explicitly stated that all religions are welcome in India. But they also require that all religions accept, at a minimum, Hindu culture, if not the Hindu religion, as the basis of India. While some Sangh Parivar leaders have made greater allowances for minorities, they expect minority groups to adhere to Hindu culture and accept less rights and privileges than Hindus. These feelings easily translate into contempt and rage for Muslims by a significant minority, which has resulted in communal bloodletting.

### Student Islamic Movement of India.[7]

The Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) was formed in 1977 in Aligrah as a student wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami, a Muslim religious organization that seeks to establish an Islamic state in India based on the Shariah. As such, SIMI was greatly

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[7] For more on SIMI, see:Page: 81
http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/simi.htm
http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers9%5Cpaper825.html
http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369953

influence by Deobandi Islam. SIMI's mission is to liberate India from western concepts of secularism, democracy, and nationalism. They hope to institute an Islamic Khalifat, based on the Muslim Ummah, by waging jihad. It views the Hindu population and Sangh Parivar as antithetical to Islam and obstacles to its goals.

As a civic organization, it rallies Muslim students for the purpose of advocating an Islamic revolution. Believing that a powerful ulema (Islamic scholars) are necessary for its struggle, SIMI operates educational programs on Islam. SIMI published magazines in various languages, including *Tahreek* in Hindi, *Al Harkah* in Urdu, *Vivekam* in Malayalam, *Sedhi Madal* in Tamil, *Rupantar* in Bengali, *Iqraa* in Gujarati, and the *Shaheen Times*. Some of it publications seem intended to incite communal divisions. While in the beginning it provided a community where Muslim students could associate with each other, its principle belief in revolution and opposition to the state and Hindus have led its members to embrace violence.

Following the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1991, SIMI exploited the outrage in the Muslim community and sought to increase it membership. It further expanded it influence when the Hindu nationalist BJP party ascended to national power in the late 1990s. Throughout this time, SIMI also seemed to become more radicalized than ever before by increasing its association with known terrorist organizations in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Despite begin banned and being designated a "secessionist movement" by the Indian Supreme Court in February 2007, Indian intelligence officials believe that the group continues to thrive under the cover of other civil society organizations. For example, officials believe that in Kerela SIMI operates behind 12 organizations, which

they accuse of spreading "extremists religious ideals" under the guise of "counseling and guidance centres working for behavioural change."[8] Its members have been suspected of involvement in terrorist bombings in India, specifically those attributed to the Indian Mujahideen (IM). Some Indian police officials claim that SIMI transformed into IM.

SIMI began as an indigenous civic organization among Muslims students and transformed into, by many accounts, a terrorist organization. It fosters communal tensions and is bent on tearing apart the diverse fabric of Indian society.

**Indian Civil Society Organizations in Prevention**

Early in the 20th century, the British set up committees to resolve religious disputes. An internal administrative review conducted by colonial officials in 1913 of the "Formation of Conciliation Boards to settle differences between Hindus and Muhammadans regarding their religious rites" cited a number of problems with the committees:

> a. only being effective where conflict is not bad to begin with;
> b. being prone to collapse if tensions should decline or if the officials involved in the committee are transferred or lose interest;
> c. being focused on communal tensions, therefore keeping the communal pot boiling rather than helping reduce tensions;
> d. often including the wrong people, either people with no community credibility and power or else those people who are behind the conflict in the first place (Wilkinson 2005, Footnote 48, p. 29).

These are essentially the same criticisms that neighborhood committees face now (which are discussed more in depth in the next chapter). In his 1987 book, Retired Inspector General of the Police in Orissa S.K Ghosh noted:

> Peace committees were not organized before, during and after the riots and where organized they did not function effectively because some members were found to be communal minded. Instead of peace-makers, they

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[8] http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/simi.htm; Obtained May 18, 2008.

worked as instigators.  Selection of members of peace committees has to
be done with great care and circumspection.

Ashutosh Varshney (2002) discusses the problems of peace committees when they are organized from the top-down rather than bottom-up.  Varshney notes that in the city of Hyderabad, there are civic interactions between elite Hindus and Muslims but there is little among the masses.  Some elites even formed peace committees to counter communal violence.  However, many have failed to prevent riots and have only been effective at delivering relief after riots.  Varshney believes that this is largely because these elite-led committees are not "organically linked" to the poorer neighborhoods where many of the communal riots have taken place, largely in the Old City of Hyderabad.

**An Idealized Peace Committee.**

One institution of civil society that Gandhi proposed for preventing riots was the use of a 'peace army' (Shanti Sena).  Gandhi used the term "Shanti Sena" for the first time in the wake of Hindu-Muslim riots in 1922.  Sadly, Gandhi was assassinated a month before a February 1948 conference was scheduled to consider setting up nation-wide Shanti Senas.  In 1957, Vinobha Bhave, considered the "spiritual successor to Gandhi," finally set up a Shanti Sena to deal with communal riots that threatened rural development work.  In 1962, Narayan Desai, son of Gandhi's secretary Mahadev Desai, became Shanti Sena's director under which membership grew to approximately 6,000 by mid-1960s.  When riots were reported, Shanti Sainiks ("peace soldiers") rushed to the area to quell the violence.  Sometimes, they arrived in time to prevent violence.  The famous Gandhian activist Jayaprakash Narayan also became involved in Shanti Sena and led many Sainiks into riot-affected areas.  In 1975 Shanti Sena split between Vinoba

Bhave, who supported Indira Gandhi's declaration of Emergency, and Jayaprakash

Narayan. In 1978, Narayan Desai stepped down as secretary and the organization faded

away—just as the Hindu nationalists began to consolidate social and political power.

Shanti Sena's successes and problems are instructive for today's prevention

activities. Narayan Desai described the principle that Sainiks used,

> "We present ourselves not as saviours but as people eager to assist them in their difficulty. We gather information from them and try to understand their minds. And we try to find the forces of peace on both sides. Often there are people who favour peace but do not know how to work for it" (Shepard, 1987, p. 4).

Once news of violence was heard, approximately 30 Sainiks rushed to the town

and divided into teams. One team met with the leaders of both Hindu and Muslim

communities, established dialogue (and gained their trust), encouraged them to call for an

end to the violence, and assisted them in setting up peace committees. To break the

existing tensions and begin to build trust, the Sainiks would ask each community to

submit names of persons from the *other* community for membership on the peace

committee. These committees could discuss an end to the violence, sometimes by

investigating the precipitating causes (such as rumors), and finding solutions to common

problems. The Sainiks acted as mediators based on their reputation for impartiality.

Saniks also met with local police and politicians, urging restraint in their use of

force and not to say or do things that might exacerbate the situation. They appealed for

the use of non-violence and dialogue to resolve the situation. They also mediated

between the police and political authorities.

Teams of Sainiks investigated rumors or stories in the media about abuse of

members of one community by the other. By talking to people and moving through each

community's neighborhoods, Sainiks combated rumors and false stories. When they wanted to spread truthful information and discount rumors, they put up messages on neighborhood notice boards, handed out pamphlets, and used megaphones.

Sainiks also averted violence by placing themselves in harm's way. They patrolled sensitive areas and dissuaded people from engaging in violence. In a very practical way, their presence often raised the risk for rioters (who are, as explained earlier, mostly normal ordinary citizens). At times, the presence of Hindu Sainiks in Muslim areas convinced local Hindus that they had little to fear. Not only did the Sainiks 'survive' walking or spending the night in Muslim areas, but they dispelled rumors of preparations for attacks.

Finally, Sainiks assisted reconciliation efforts by acting as a bridge for communities to begin re-engaging each other and building trust after the violence. Narayan Desai remarked,

> "In the state of Orissa, there was a riot in which the Christians burned down the homes of the Muslims. My mother-in-law and other Shanti Sainiks there persuaded the Christian community to donate funds for rebuilding the Muslims' houses. Some of the people who contributed were some of the ones who had burned them down!" (Shepard, 1987, p. 7).

Shanti Sena's method depended on courage and self-sacrifice of committed individuals. However, the need for such Gandhian character and devotion perhaps also restricted the number of people willing to do this kind of work. It was difficult for the idea to become institutionalized across India.

Sainiks also often arrived too late to prevent violence, but instead grappled to stem further violence or reconcile communities in the aftermath of riots. Because they were so few and mostly lived in rural areas, the worst of the rioting was over by the time

they could organize transportation and negotiate past the police. In addition, because in most cases the Sainiks were outsiders, they often did not have intimate local knowledge of the communities. That they were outside mediators was often important because they could be viewed as impartial, but it also required local leaders to trust and accept them without knowing the particular Sainiks. The Sainiks were Hindus and so had to especially win the trust of Muslim communities. Their temporary presence also left communities with no sustainable ways to prevent future violence.

Nevertheless, the peace committees that the Sainiks fostered can be thought of as informal civic organizations at the neighborhood level. For whatever their deficiencies, the idea is still relevant for today's challenges of communal and ethnic violence.

**CHAPTER 4**

**THE ANATOMY OF PREVENTION: CASE STUDIES FROM INDIA**

This chapter details civil society organizations explored for this study—in the cities of Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Hyderabad.  Each section has an overview of Hindu-Muslim relations in the city and then examines each organization in that city.  It compares and contrasts their structures, operations and experiences in prevention.  Successful interventions and some unsuccessful attempts and challenges are described.  The latter part of the chapter compares and contrasts tactics used in the interventions and the strategies used to set up prevention programs.

**Ahmedabad, Gujarat**

Ahmedabad is home to approximately 5.2 million people.   Hindus are the majority and Muslims account for roughly 15% (780,000) of the population.   Many Hindus and Muslims live side by side in peaceful coexistence, but Ahmedabad is a city of contradiction.  Gandhi was born in Ahmedabad and focused many of his non-violence and Hindu-Muslim peacebuilding activities in the city.  This kept relations in the early 20th century amicable, even while Hindu-Muslim violence affected other parts of India in the drive towards independence.  Unfortunately, after Gandhi's death and India's independence, Ahmedabad became a focal point for the Hindutva movement and has experienced some of the worst communal violence in India.

Ashutosh Varshney (2002) attributes Ahmedabad's relative communal peace until the 1940s to four variables: Congress Party domination, vibrant Gandhian voluntary associations, robust labor unions and active business associations.  Gandhi's secular Congress Party was strongest in Ahmedabad and dominated politics to the exclusion of

Muslim separatist and Hindu nationalist views. Gandhi and the Congress Party campaigned for better Hindu-Muslim relations, labor rights and civil rights. Importantly, the Congress Party did not use a strategy of creating support for its causes by dividing Hindus and Muslims, as the Hindu nationalists and some Congress leaders would do after Gandhi's death. In fact, the Congress Party had an incentive for Hindu-Muslim unity--its drive for independence was a popular campaign meant to draw strength by representing all Indians.

The character of Hindu-Muslim relations began to change after independence. Gandhi's spirit and legacy held off major riots in Ahmedabad for decades after his death. But by the late 1960s, relations became so tense that the city was predisposed for communal riots. In 1969, approximately 660 people (430 Muslims, 24 Hindus, and rest unspecified) were killed in the worst Hindu-Muslims violence since independence. Shortly thereafter, Ahmedabad earned the reputation as the most communally-sensitive city in India. Major riots occurred in 1971, 1972, 1973, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986 (January-March and July), 1987 (January-February and November), 1990 (April, October-December), 1991 (January, March and April), 1992 (January and July) and December 1992-January 1993. According to Varsheny (2002), the root causes of these riots was the decline of the variables that previously kept Ahmedabad peaceful: Congress party domination declined in the city, Gandhian associations became marginalized, business associations lost power and the labor unions became less significant. At the same time, opposing forces (i.e. the Sangh Parivar family of Hindu nationalist associations) rose.

As the Congress Party's principle generation of leaders that were educated by

Gandhi faded away, the new Congress politicians were as typical as other politicians in India and wanted to reap the spoils of winning independence. They served the people, but they also served themselves by using divisive communal tactics that got them elected by polarizing society. Intra-party competition for power in the 1970s, between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's Congress Party at the national level and local Congress parties, also divided the party and left the local branches less organizationally-disciplined and less committed to what had been the Party's principles since Gandhi: secularity, a commitment to communal harmony, and uplift of the masses (particularly the lower castes and classes) (Varshney, 2002). As early as 1957, the National Congress Party leaders became so concerned that they investigated the local party organizations. They found that their young leaders were falling away from the founding priniciples of the Congress Party.

The local Congress parties became less popular, which consequently, gave the Hindu national party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) the opportunity to become popular. In the 2005 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections, the BJP won 96 seats, while the Congress won only 32 and one other seat was won by an independent candidate. The BJP is firmly entrenched in Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Unfortunately, the BJP's platform of Hindu pride and uniting Hindus across castes comes with the repercussions of polarizing sentiments against other religions, particularly Muslims.

Civic, social and educational organizations inspired and imbued with Gandhian principles also declined. Newsthesiss set up by Gandhi to promoted communal harmony and social welfare were no longer widely distributed. The government took over primary and secondary education and was more nationalistic than idealistic.

**1969 Riots**

The root causes of the 1969 riots, the worst Hindu-Muslim violence since partition at independence, had been building for some time. Economic decline combined with political opportunism by Hindu nationalist groups incensed the atmosphere in Ahmedabad. More immediate precipitants in 1969 that heightened religious sentiments included: a Hindu police officer pushed a Muslim cartpuller, causing a Qur'an to fall off the cart into a ditch; and, a week before the riots, a Muslim police officer inadvertently struck the Ramayana, a Hindu religious text.

The city was primed for violence, coupled with the little remaining civil society capacity to prevent the outbreak or contain the violence. The incident that is said to have triggered the riots occurred on September 18, 1969. As they regularly did, Muslims gathered for a celebration at the tomb of a Muslim saint, which was located near the Hindu Jagannat temple. Hindu holy men (sadhus) were returning to the temple with their cows. When the Sadhus tired to make their way through the Muslim crowd, a few Muslims were offended at the interruption and struck the Sadhus. Muslim leaders issued an apology that evening for the indiscretion of some Muslim youths. The next day, a newsthesis published the incident but without the apology. A false rumor also circulated in the Hindu community that the head holy priest of the temple was attacked. Muslims also heard of the previous day's incident and held an unruly gathering in front the Hindu temple. By that afternoon, the killings began. Both sides committed atrocities, but many more Hindu gangs roamed the streets. The city imposed an immediate curfew, but it was not effectively enforced. The riots lasted five days until September 23, by which time over 660 people (430 Muslims, 24 Hindus, and the rest unspecified) were reported to be

killed and thousands of others injured.  The army was called in to suppress the riots.

Politicians and Hindu nationalists not only primed the atmosphere for the violence, but may have led the riots.  As noted earlier, even if there isn't a master plan for executing a riot, it takes leadership on the ground to organize the violence.  The *Report of the Justice Jagmohan Reddy Commission on the Ahmedabad riots of 1969* states: "Here was not only a failure of intelligence and culpable failure to suppress the outbreak of violence but also deliberate attempts to suppress the truth from the Commission, especially the active participation in the riots of some RSS and Jana Sangh leaders."

During the riots, the ruling Congress Party leaders abrogated their responsibility to prevent the riots by their inaction.  Even more alarming, after the Congress Party split in the confrontation with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the local Congress Party in Gujarat struck a deal with the Hindu nationalists to stay in power and was beholden to them (Varshney, 2002).  With the riots serving the interests of the Hindu nationalists, Congress was impotent to intervene in the riots.  The police watched rioters attack people and destroy property during the first three days of the riots.  Morarji Desi, Gujarat's main Congress party leader and Prime Minister Gandhi's rival, arrived from New Delhi on the fourth day of the riots (the day before the riots ended) and disingenuously announced an indefinite fast until the violence stopped, well after more than 400 people had already died.  By then, the army was already beginning to impose order in the city.

## 2002 Riots

Ahmedabad experienced major riots throughout the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s.  However, the 2002 riots (from February 28 through mid-June) eclipsed the 1969 riots and are the worst Hindu-Muslim violence since independence, and it drew the world's

attention to Gujarat. The actual events and causes are still mired in controversy. What is not disputed is that somewhere between 1000-1300 people (three-fourths Muslims) were killed, approximately 2500-3000 people were injured, 523 places of worship were damaged (298 Sufi shrines and graves, 205 mosques, 17 temples, and 3 churches), 150,000 people were displaced (into 100+ relief camps) and millions of dollars in businesses and livelihoods were lost.

Economic struggles and social divisions that created the permissive conditions for the 1969 riots also existed in 2002. Additionally, Hindu nationalists played an influential role in both riots. Hindu nationalists did not lead the Gujarat government in 1969 but exerted enough influence over the ruling Congress Party to make it impotent in preventing the violence. In 2002, the BJP party was in power in Gujarat, led by Chief Minister Narendra Modi, at the time of the riots. This likely contributed to how long the violence lasted (over three months).

Several other factors that created the permissive conditions for the riots include the tension built up in the city between Hindus and Muslims because of the multitude of previous riots and tensions between India and Pakistan (whom the Muslims of India are especially associated) peaked as the two countries seemingly marched towards war. Furthermore, the Hindu nationalist strength in Gujarat likely made its Ayodhya campaign (to demolish a Muslim mosque and build a Hindu temple) especially relevant.

The agitation over Ayodhya led to the destruction of the religious site in December 1992. With the BJP leading the national government in 1998, hopes ran high among its Hindu nationalist base that a Hindu temple might be finally erected at the site in Ayodhya. Hindu pilgrims regularly went to the site. On February 27, 2002, the

Sabarmati Express train, containing mostly Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya, caught fire near the town of Godhra, Gujarat, killing 58 passengers, mostly Hindus and including many women, children and the elderly. Controversy still exists whether the train was set on fire by a Muslim mob or whether an accidental fire broke out. There was apparently a fight between Vishnu Hindu Parisad (VHP) volunteers on the train and some Muslims when the train stopped in Godhra. Whatever the truth, news quickly spread that a Muslim mob had stopped the train and set Hindus on fire. The bodies of the victims were brought to Ahmedabad the next day and paraded in the streets. On February 28, the VHP called for strikes. It triggered Hindu-Muslim violence starting on that same day.

The initial wave of "Hindu retaliation" lasted from February 28 to March 3. The first incident that set off the larger riots was believed to be an attack on a Muslim housing enclave, the Gulburg Society, in Ahmedabad. The rioters were incensed by an unfounded rumor, endorsed by VHP leaders, that Muslims had kidnapped three Hindu girls during the Godhra train attack. Rumors of Hindu women being raped and mutilated spread like wildfire. The media printed everything it heard (even a month into the riots), without confirming the accuracy of the news. Large scale violence subsequently unfolded. An especially poignant paragraph from the Human Rights Watch (2002) report on the riots, *We Have No Orders To Save You*, encapsulates the dynamics of the violence:

> Between February 28 and March 2 the attackers descended with militia-like precision on Ahmedabad by the thousands [...] and embarked on a murderous rampage confident that the police was with them. In many cases, the police led the charge, using gunfire to kill Muslims who got in the mobs' way (p. 1 Summary).

After a lull, the violence resumed on March 15. Incidents continued daily, peaking in mid-April, but lasting into June. Violence raged in 16 of the state's 25

districts.  Muslim mobs also attacked Hindus.  In one instance, more than one thousand

Hindus, including more than 550 Dalits, from communally sensitive areas of Dariyapur

and Kalupur in Ahmedabad were displaced to camps after being attacked by Muslim

mobs.  Some victims stated that their neighbors were in the mobs (Nandi, 2002).  Over

10,000 Hindus were made homeless after their homes were destroyed.  As is often the

case in riots, it is the poor that are the most affected.

Like the 1969 riot, Paul Brass's (2003) institutionalized riot system was in effect:

political authorities, cadres of instigators, and police contributed to the violence.  At the

top, the BJP led government, and Chief Minister Narendra Modi himself, have been

accused of aiding and abetting the Hindu mobs.  Whether he was personally responsible

or not is perhaps still arguable; but, what is clear is that the government appeared to drag

its feet or was remarkably ineffective in response to the violence.  Investigations have

uncovered evidence that the police were ordered not to interfere with Hindu gangs (thus

the title of the Human Rights Watch report cited earlier), and to delay any response to

pleas of help from Muslims.  The foot soliders of the mobs were Hindu nationalist cadre.

VHP and BJP leaders were reported to be part of the mobs, and others are said to have

provided direction to Hindu rioters before acts of violence were committed.  The police

were restrained by political authorities from doing their work.  They neither responded to

the calls for help from Muslims or reacted to the violence occurring right next to their

police stations.  Furthermore, some of Ahmedabad's police were noted to have guided

rioters to certain areas or actually participated in the riots.

**St. Xavier's Social Service Society[1] (Ahmedabad Case Study 1)**

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[1] I interviewed the current Director of SXSSS, Father Paul D'Souza S.J. However, he was fairly new, having become Director in mid-2006.  While he was able to provide information on SXSSS work and

St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS; also referred to as the "Society") has an extensive history of grassroots development and relief work in the slums of Ahmedabad since its inception in 1976. The vision of the Society is "to work for a more human and just society through the empowerment of the poor and marginalized people, very especially women and children, who are most vulnerable people in our society" (Moses in Van Tongeren et al., 2005, p. 415). Throughout the years, its work for community development evolved from relief and welfare work to initiatives on education, health, environment and peacebuilding.

SXSSS was created as a Social Service League program of the students of St. Xavier's School, Loyola Hall, which is run by Jesuits. The governing body includes Jesuit priests, diocesan staff, researchers and teachers who are not all Catholic or Christian. The staff includes Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Jains.

The Society attempts to cooperate with other local civil society organizations in Ahmedabad, particularly on human rights and civil rights campaigns. The Society was largely foreign-funded. It occasionally received some grants from the government and private donations. SXSSS often works closely with the government, particularly in the aftermath of riots when the government requests the Society's assistance. Father Cedric Prakash, the former Director of SXSSS (1987-2001), was appointed by the District Collector to a government emergency response committee, which allows privileged access to news of civil unrest and to enter areas that are off limits during conflicts.

thoughts on communal harmony, the history and examples in this chapter are drawn from articles and research done by Joseph G. Bock (1995). Therefore, much of the data about SXSSS and experiences discussed here are from the 1990s to 2005. Additionally, I draw from an article of Father Victor Moses, S.J, the former Director of SXSSS that is cited above. I also interviewed Father Cedric Prakash, a former Director of SXSSS and the person who spearheaded much of the Society's involvement in communal peacebuilding since 1987. While we discussed his experiences at SXSSS, much of that interview related to his current work with Prashant (which is also covered in this chapter).

Many programs, such as their Community Health Improvement programme and its Innovative Education programme, are set up in the slum areas of Ahmedabad. Community health programs provide monitoring services for children, health education, immunization, midwife training, tuberculosis treatment and health outreach when epidemics break out. The Innovative Education programme is intended to encourage students to attend school, sensitize parents to the importance of education, and offer supplemental schooling through field trips, films, camps and street performances by the children to raise awareness of health and community issues.

The Society's work in human rights focuses on women and the prevention of spousal abuse. The program aims to increase knowledge of legal rights and protections.

In rural areas, a food-for-work program engages villages in environmental protection. People plant trees, manage watershed and waste, and learn to adapt alternative fuels (such as solar kitchens used in feeding programs). In Ahmedabad, the Society has helped slums recover from floods. SXSSS sets up health clinics, distributes food and supplies for temporary housing. Furthermore, the Hindu-Muslim relationships built through the Society's peace committees have also led to Hindus helping Muslims.

Capacity-building involves the creation of committees in slums. The three formal committees are: a women's committee, a youth committee and a board to oversee each slum's credit union. Each committee is formally registered with the government as an NGO. It is through these committees that SXSSS establishes its credibility (Bock, 1995). There are peace committees devoted to preventing riots. SXSSS's primary peacebuilding program is called "Shanti" (meaning "peace").

**Shanti.**

The inspiration for Shanti lay in Fr. Cedric Parkash's Jesuit convictions that obligate him to the "service of faith and promotion of justice." In particular, his "heart aches for all those involved in violence—perpetrators as well as victims; rich as well as poor" (Bock, 1995). The idea was "not a planned process." In fact, while it was morally supported by SXSSS's foreign funders, it did not receive any specific funding from them. In 1991, Fr. Prakash and the Society began to question why the slums were so afflicted with violence. Fr. Prakash stated that they "realized quickly that the poor are the victims and the perpetrators of violence" *(*Fr. Prakash interview, 2007).

Joe Bock (1995) divides Shanti's approach into two categories: promotive/preventive and preemptive. Promotive/preventive builds community harmony by bringing together residents of a slum and encouraging interaction, understanding and cooperation. Activities include street plays, creative competitions, peace committees and interaction with the government. The purpose it to create a local capacity that diffuses and combats deliberate efforts to foment violence.

Street plays about communal violence and peace are intended to counteract the propaganda used to incite violence. Two principles are key: relevancy and simplicity. To be relevant, the play must be tailored to the local situation by using common language (phrases, idioms, etc.) and symbols (folklore, myths, etc.). Simplicity means using basic language, phrases and rhymes so it is understandable to a wide audience. Street plays can be used to diffuse tension, after violence to ease pain and fear, and regularly to foster understanding between communities.

Preemptive tactics include skills used to preempt the outbreak of violence by resolving disputes, countering rumors and providing shelter to potential victims. Fr. Prakash himself became involved in mediating Hindu-Muslim confrontations. He felt that being a Christian provided an aura of third-party neutrality.

The Society began much of this work through a simpler task—to provide a safe haven for potential victims. If the Society senses that violence is impending, it identifies church-affiliated buildings and offers a place for innocent people to find safety. It first did this in 1976, when a school building was used to hide Muslims for a Hindu mob. Another indirect manner of providing security is to have Hindus sit on the door step of Muslim homes when it seemed that Hindu riots were imminent (Bock, 1995).

Later, peace committees, which began in the aftermath of the December 1992 riots, were used to actively combat rumors and propaganda. When to do this is often explicit, as extremists have a habit of distributing (or paying young children to distribute) leaflets designed to increase communal tensions and foment violence. Fr. Prakash (2007 interview) states that their strategy is "to counter false propaganda as soon as it takes off—bit by bit and point by point." Peace committees refute specific claims, offer counter-examples, point out the real purpose of the extremist campaign and appeal to higher common values and sentiments.

All these activities and resources offer the potential to prevent violence or, at least, prevent it from spreading. However, critical to this, as Fr. Prakash says, is to identify "the lull before the storm" (Bock, 1995). Persistent awareness is necessary to stop the rumor or campaign before it picks up momentum.

**Analysis.**

SXSSS's access to slums is founded on the services that they deliver. These services engage a wide range of people—Hindus, Muslims, women, and children—based on their needs. In particular, it recognizes that women are key constituents, not only in development, but also as an entry into working with children and men—critical populations in the riot dynamic. These programs have also built the Society's reputation for impartiality. The access and trust built through these programs is then leveraged for communal harmony discussions.

The Society seems focused on empowering the poor through education, raising awareness of their legal rights, and by helping them build structures, such as committees, that they can use to address their own problems. The Society stands ready to assist them when necessary, including providing them access to government authorities during crises.

The Society is also engaged more directly in operational prevention. The peace committees are trained and empowered to intervene in communal disputes and to mitigate tensions with activities such as rumor investigation and holding community meetings to assuage residents. Importantly, as a corollary to this, Fr. Prakash was on a local governmental body that has formal and specific functions during crises. This provided SXSSS privileged access to resources that are critical during tensions, namely information and the attention of the District Collector and government authorities.

### Case Study: The Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee.[2]

Four Muslim youth are sitting at the Shaher Kotda police station in Ahmedabad city sometime in August 2004. The boys have been rounded up by the police from Jalampuri ni Chali on a complaint from people in a neighboring *chali* [neighborhood] that these boys have killed a dog belonging to them. One of the policemen recalls that Jalampuri ni Chali has an active Peace Committee that is well respected in the area. He asks

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[2] This section is paraphrased from an article written by Fr. Victor Moses, S.J., who was the director of SXSSS during this period (Van Tongeren, Brenk, Hellema, Verhoeven eds, 2005).

the boys to call any of the Peace Committee members to vouch for their innocence if they want to be set free. One of the boys is allowed to go to the *chali* and he returns with Abdul-Karim Abdul-Kader Ghanchi, a member of the Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee. The boys are, in fact, innocent and Abdul-Karim knows them personally. He explains to the police the sequence of events leading to their roundup and the boys are set free. Such a thing would have been unimaginable in Ahmedabad city two years ago. (Moses in Van Tongeren, et al., 2005, p. 414).

What could have been an incident that galvanized the Muslim community in violent defense of their youth was diffused by the presence of a peace committee and the willingness of the police to turn to it.

The Jalampuri ni Chali Peace Committee (JPC) was set up just two years earlier in the aftermath of the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat. Jalampuri ni Chali is located in the heart of Ahmedabad. The neighborhood had a long history of animosity between Hindus and Muslims. During SXSSS's relief work in the camps, the staff came across families from Jalampuri ni Chali. The society decided to "adopt" the neighborhood. They picked one Hindu and one Muslim woman to oversee the rehabilitation work. The women picked two representatives from each of the six streets in the neighborhood and an extra member, resulting in a committee of seven Muslims and six Hindus.

SXSSS facilitated the consolidation of the JPC, as the community members attempted to gain support for the committee, hold meetings and develop rules. The JPC served as the focal point for SXSSS's rehabilitation work. In-turn, it provided the Society with credibility in the eyes of the rest of the community.

JPC's successes include resolving Hindu-Muslim disputes, mobilizing support for the joint celebration of national and religious holidays, intervening with the police to take unbiased action against Hindus and Muslims and organizing Hindu and Muslim youth

volunteers to monitor the peace during the Rath yatra (a Hindu mass procession involving

thousands of people).

Some of the lessons learned by the JPC and SXSSS over time include:

- A representative forum, which includes members of all the concerned parties, is necessary for neutral and genuine functioning of a peace committee.
- It takes the courage of individuals to stand up to personal criticism from family and community members to painstakingly establish the committee credibility.
- Combating negative stereotypes and building trust between the communities is possible through deliberate and conscious effort.
- Building the skills, for mediation and leadership, of the committee members must be done through capacity-building interventions.
- Peacebuilding efforts and development interventions with the same set of people can become mutually reinforcing…The long-term sustenance of both activities has to be planned by design.
- Grassroots initiatives benefit from network linkages with other actors at all levels, from the local to national and international. (Moses in Van Tongeren et al., 2005).

*Unsuccessful Interventions.*

Bock (1995) illustrates two examples, one in which the Society failed and another

in which the people the Society had been working with were part of the problem.

In December 1992, mob violence erupted in the Sankalitnagar and Mahajan-no-Vando slums (the latter of which had two Hindu youth who participated in the destruction of the Ayodhya Mosque). During this period, staff members of the Society were "hounded" out of the slums, despite the Society's years of extensive involvement in both communities…Indeed, communal hostility in the slums apparently spilled over into hostility toward other programs of the Society [particularly, the Innovative Education programme and a Nutrition Improvement program in Mahajan-no-Vando slum]…(p. 15).

In another case:

In July 1993, a tiny shrine on a main road of Ahmedabad near the Shahpur Fire Brigade Station was turned into a fairly large shrine overnight. Despite protests from the fire brigade officials that such a shrine could not stay on public property, the people of Nagori Kabarasthan were adamant that it not be torn down. People with whom the Society had worked for

years were heard saying that they were willing to sacrifice their lives for the newly built shrine. Tensions ran high, but the local police were able to prevent a riot. The Society's staff, who had seen the tension evolve, considered the incident to reflect a failure of their approach since they had worked in the community for eight years, emphasizing the importance of keeping the peace, apparently to no avail (Bock, 1995, p. 16).

### *Shortcomings.*

The difference between the successful and unsuccessful cases illustrated above turns on the religious nature of the conflict. Fr. Prakash points out that these two incidents illustrate an important issue: the Society's approach and peace committee can successfully address tensions resulting from social or political issues, but they are unsuccessful when religious symbols, or religion, are directly involved. Bock (1995) insightfully notes that we must differentiate between religious identities and religious symbols. There may be conflict between members of different religions (i.e. Hindus and Muslims) over non-religious issues (e.g. land, elections, cricket matches between India and Pakistan, etc.). This is different from conflicts over religious symbols (e.g. mosque or temple in Ayodhya, cow-slaughter, etc.).

Dialogues over religious issues are particularly contentious because facts are hard to establish and the logical reasoning used to negotiate over secular issues is not relevant. When violence is imminent in these cases, the police often have to step in and physically separate the parties before the problem can be addressed, perhaps in a formal way such as through the legal system.

A shortcoming in the Society's work is that there is minimal engagement with Hindu and Muslim religious leaders. While there have been some interfaith dialogues, these have not led to including religious leaders into riot prevention programs, which may help in dealing with incidents that are religious in nature. Considering that a central

aspect of communal violence is because of religious identities and because religious leaders have influence over the constituents, it is important that they are part of the peacebuilding and prevention process.

Another unfortunate shortcoming is that many of the slum committees are not representative of the residents. It is understandable that the committees are meant to simply oversee programs and not meant as governance bodies. However, this also creates a situation where some residents now have more resources than others. These resources will be fought over or jealously guarded. An ongoing outreach program to convince those not participating in the programs might be necessary to prevent the committees from being viewed as biased.

**Prashant (Ahmedabad Case Study 2)**

Prashant is a human rights advocacy organization, and the fact that Fr. Cedric Prakash helped found it offers insight into a different dimension of prevention. "Prashant" is the common name for the Centre for Human Rights Justice and Peace, which was inaugurated in October 2001. Prashant is derived from Pra(kash) meaning "light" and Shant(i) meaning "peace." The words of Jesus, "let your light shine…" is the motto and guiding principle of Prashant. It also serves as the Province Office for Integral Social Development (POISD), which coordinates the developmental, human rights, justice and peace works of the Society of Jesus in Gujarat.

Prashant has been described as a "social action-research institution." It conducts research to expose conditions that it feels are overshadowed or incorrectly represented in official data and advocates for justice on behalf of the oppressed, poor and marginalized, with a special focus on tribal units, Dalits, Muslims, Christians, women and children. Its

formal activities include: 1) project support, monitoring and evaluation, 2) perception management, 3) training in development processes, and 4) workshops, seminars and public lectures.  In addition, it offers space to host meetings and trainings.  Prashant has also responded to victims of disasters (e.g. earthquakes, floods and riots) by advocating for the rights of the victims.  Similarly, it facilitated projects relating to watershed and water conservation.  These activities are largely conducted in Gujarat.

A typical example of Prashant's campaign for justice is its involvement in the "Forum for Justice in Gujarat."  A pamphlet titled "Gujarat Carnage 2002: Some Facts," published in 2007, serves to keep the riots fresh in the minds of Indians and to pressure the government to provide justice for the victims of the violence.  It provides facts (statistics regarding deaths, rapes, loss of property) about the riots and the current conditions of those who were displaced by the violence.

Prashant also attempts to increase the awareness and preparedness of individuals and smaller organizations on how to prepare and react to human or civil rights violations and violence.  These guidance notes encourage spiritual development (including conducting inter-faith prayer), good housekeeping practices (know and adhere to all administrative, financial, and employment laws), and involvement in the promotion of human rights, justice and peace (through open dialogue, study, documentation of a broad range of issues and situations, and participation in human rights campaigns, etc.). [3]  It also encourages networking: joining peace and human rights networks, working with other NGOs, befriending the media, and knowing your government and legal authorities. Advice on pre-empting trouble is particularly useful. This guidance includes:

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[3] I cannot provide the pamphlet in full because these notes are intended for private circulation. All the advice is strictly legal, and actually encourages lawful behavior. In fact, there is nothing specifically sensitive about it except for the wishes of the organization to control its dissemination..

- Create peace committees

- Identify local troublemakers and peace brokers

- Establish focal points in the peace committees in case of trouble

- Mobilize people and other like-minded organizations

- Immediately contact and work with authorities and police in the events of an incident keep detailed documentation of events

- File First Information Reports with the police and work with them to document all actions in detail,

- Access legal counsel

- Communicate with trusted media, Prashant and the National Human Rights Commission.

**Analysis.**

Central to Prashant's mission is building the capacity for peace and prevention by seeking to enhance the knowledge and power of individuals and local organizations. One reason that the proliferation of its knowledge on communal issues is important is because, as Fr. Prakash said, "There are not enough people involved in peace issues" (Prakash interview, 2007). Many secular CSOs, especially those run by Hindus, may not want to address communal issues because there may be a disincentive to do so. Activism on communal peace issues may result in the loss of public support among Hindus and government support, especially because the Gujarat government is led by the BJP party. Therefore, the vacuum that Prashant fills by taking on communal issues as its primary mission is critically necessary.

Second, the fight for justice involves confrontation with government authorities, especially when they are implicated in fomenting communal tensions and violating the rights of minorities. Fr. Prakash has not minced his words for the BJP-led Gujarat government on its responsibility for the 2002 riots, rehabilitation of victims, Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act of 2003, attacks on tribals and Christians, and biased school textbooks. While such confrontation is necessary, it also puts other CSO s in a tough spot. Organizations, particularly development and humanitarian NGOs, that need to work with the government in order to gain access and provide services to vulnerable populations, find it difficult to work with human rights and peacebuilding organizations that embrace a confrontational strategy even if they essentially support their cause. Yet, Prashant is in a position to act as a voice for them on prevention.

Third, much of Prashant's activities are founded on Fr. Prakash's work. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. Fr. Prakash is highly skilled and highly regarded by others. This affords Prashant opportunities to engage in high-profile work and provides access to influential people. However, at the same time the organization is dependent on Fr. Prakash to the degree that his activism either makes or breaks the organization's other projects.

Prashant's Christian foundations provide it a reputation of impartiality to engage Muslims and Hindus. However, periodic anti-Christian violence in India might make relying simply on a religious background less reliable. Its credibility as an impartial organization still needs to be established through active engagement with people.

Finally, Prashant recognizes the power of the media to promote good or bad interpretation of events. A fundamental aspect of its mission is called "perception

management." The power to sway opinion is critical to mobilizing enough support, particularly among Hindus, to change the communal conditions in Ahmedabad. From textbooks that are biased against Muslims, Christians and women to the printing of uncorroborated stories of atrocities during times of tension and riots, media and propaganda are also responsible for the prejudices and fear that prevail between Hindus and Muslims. Prashant attempts to counter this by publishing its own data and stories. It also seeks to create relationships with media persons who are unbiased and desire to foster harmony in Ahmedabad.

**Self Employed Women's Association (Ahmedabad Case Study 3)**

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was officially registered as a trade union in 1972. It seeks to educate, train and empower poor self-employed female workers. These are women who earn a living through informal work and small businesses. They do not earn a salary with welfare benefits, and so are not protected by labor laws. There are 83 different occupations represented in SEWA that are organized into four categories: vendors and hawkers, home-based workers (embroiderers, garment makers, etc.,), laborers and service providers (waste pickers, agricultural laborers, etc.) and rural producers (animal tenders, milk producers, etc.). SEWA's mission is to organize one union that advocates for full employment and self-reliance—work security, income security, food security and social security (health care, child care and shelter).

SEWA conducts its activities through a strategy of "struggle and development." The struggle is against constraints imposed on women by society and the economy, while development activities strengthen women's bargaining power and offer them livelihood alternatives. This is done through education and training (literacy and livelihood skills),

providing supportive services (savings and credit, health care, child car, insurance, legal aid, marketing support) and policy advocacy (research and lobbying).

The strategy is founded on four Gandhian values: satya (truth), ahmisa (non-violence), khadi (local employment and self reliance) and sarvadharma (integrating all faiths). Khadi is SEWA's mission. Satya and resistance by ahmisa are prominent themes in confronting the government that disregards the needs of the poor and minorities. Like Gandhi, SEWA embraces people of all religions and castes on an equal basis. SEWA encourages all women to think of themselves as workers in order to forge a common identity for its diverse membership. Women at all levels attach the suffix "ben" (sister) to their names, such as Pruthaben and Meghaben, the Shantipath Peace Centre coordinators. Common challenges—poverty, illness, environmental disasters, loss of homes, rearing-children, need for work, etc—brings the women together in community despite differences in religion or caste.

SEWA operates in seven Indian states in urban and rural settings and has approximately 959,698 members, of which over 483,012 are in the state of Gujarat, including 152,000 members in Ahmedabad (SEWA Annual Report 06, 2006). About 61% are rural and 39% urban. Approximately one-third is Muslim, and the rest Hindu or tribal[4]. SEWA women are often categorized as members (general workers), aagewans (grassroots worker-leaders) and organizers (heads of programs and senior leaders). In addition, Ektabens are women living in the most sensitive areas of Ahmedabad who work in the SEWA peace centers (also called Shantipath Kendras).

SEWA is governed by a two-tier level of elected representation and claims to be a "bottom-up" organization driven by the needs and voices of its members.

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[4] These figures are from SEWA's 2004 annual report.

SEWA's relations with other NGOs and the government are complex. Relations changed quite dramatically after the 2002 riots. Prior to 2002, SEWA collaborated with other NGOs to campaign for social change. While it still collaborates, its reputation in the NGO community suffered because of its decision not to vocally criticize the Gujarat government in the aftermath of the 2002 riots.

SEWA did not vocally criticize the government for several reasons. First, preserving access to its members was important. SEWA had developed good working relationships over the years with many civil servants and local police because of its development activities. During the riots, the police commissioners that SEWA had previously worked with gave protection for SEWA members in some areas. In the aftermath of the riots, police protection was critical because bombs were planted in front of SEWA's offices and many of its members in Ahmedabad were threatened or came under attack. Similarly, SEWA needed police protection in order to travel safely to its members' neighborhoods to survey damage. SEWA did not feel that criticizing the government would preserve these valuable relationships.

Second, SEWA feared that criticizing the BJP government would polarize its membership: "We felt that restraint was the need of the hour in an atmosphere filled with hate and fury, politics and even criminal activity" (Powers, 2007, p. 3). SEWA leaders believe that they expressed their beliefs through their actions even if they did not issue any statements. SEWA's senior staff tried to get government departments to respond to the violence but they were "overwhelmed by the magnitude of the situation" (Powers, 2007, p. 2).

Nevertheless, SEWA's relationship with national NGOs and international organizations is remarkably robust. SEWA regularly interacts with NGOs from around the world. It is also affiliated with three global union federations and works with UNIFEM and UNICEF. Global dignitaries, such as the Prince and Princess of the Netherlands, have visited SEWA projects. SEWA has been awarded honors from the governments of India and Spain, the AFL-CIO and by the private sector, such as the Indian National Federation of Cooperative Banks.

Curiously, while SEWA's senior leaders are regularly engaged with many NGOs and organizations, there is some confusion as to how the general SEWA members can relate to other organizations. Some of the women said that SEWA cautions against engagement or involvement with other associations (SEWA Ektabens interview, 2007). While general members may interpret this to mean non-involvement with other organizations, it is likely meant to refer specifically to political parties. If the objective of peacebuilding is simply to transform people and build the capacity of individuals, then such a rule may be justified. However, if peacebuilding intends to transform the environment of the community in which the members live (e.g., turn sensitive areas into peaceful neighborhoods), then engagement with other stakeholders (local religious leaders, local police) in the community is necessary and should be allowed.

SEWA's relationship with local government authorities is strained. Following the 2002 riots, BJP politicians increased scrutiny of NGOs, particularly by calling for a closer examination of their budgets. BJP politicians are angry at accusations by civil society about the complicity of its members, including Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, in the supporting the violence. Sangh Parivar members, who are the BJP's base,

have been accused of even organizing and carrying out the violence. While SEWA was mute in such accusations, it is nevertheless an NGO. Doubly, it is an NGO that has Muslims as members and has helped rehabilitate Muslim riot victims.

The ruling party's attitude towards SEWA invariably influences civil servants'. Government grants that SEWA's rehabilitation and peace program, Shanta Project, depended upon ended. Additionally, the BJP state government unsuccessfully charged SEWA with corruption. "The whole space for human rights in civil society is completely wiped out," states Reema Nanavaty, SEWA General Secretary. "The state will not support any NGO or any program of human rights. But we cannot compromise on values or ideology. Truth will someday prevail" (Powers, 2007, p. 7). While SEWA still attempts to work with local authorities, it has largely discontinued its partnership with the state government; however, SEWA has endeared itself to the national government.

The political conditions may need to change before SEWA establishes better ties and works regularly with senior civil servants such as the District Collector and the Commissioner of Police. However, this does not altogether prohibit attempts to build relationships with local police inspectors and constables. The police force, in general, was implicated for a certain level of complicity in the 2002 riots. There is still an evident aversion on behalf of SEWA organizers and leaders to building close relationships with the police. However, some officers in 2002 also helped SEWA members. Some of the local women I talked to believed that their relationships with the local police now were important for their safety. Building local relationships like these may be possible even if senior police leaders are not supportive.

**Rehabilitation and Peacebuilding.**

SEWA's formal work on communal harmony issues began in the aftermath of the 2002 Gujarat riots. Approximately 38,900 SEWA women were displaced by the riots (with 21,900 ending up in relief camps). The livelihoods of an estimated 100,000 members in the city of Ahmedabad itself were disrupted. While the need for immediate relief in the camps was evident, it also became clear that three other long-term issues had to be dealt with in the slums, where SEWA members would eventually return. First, there was a need to rebuild the structures (homes, livelihoods, relationships) that had been destroyed. Second, women, many with children, who had lost husbands in the violence and children who had lost both their parents, had special needs. Third, a legacy of hatred and division between Hindus and Muslims had to be healed if this was to be prevented from happening again.

Along with the government, other NGOs (also international NGOs, such as OXFAM and the Red Cross), SEWA women (250 Muslims and Hindus members) worked in five relief camps to deliver essential goods and services: food, medical supplies (including gynecology and pediatric care), child care and sanitation. They immediately realized that it was necessary to provide some economic activity for women in the camps. Since many of the women were garment workers, the Gujarat Cooperative Federation provided raw materials, production and marketing. SEWA offered one-day training for women who were not garment workers. Outside the camps, SEWA worked with employers to re-establish bidi (a type of cigarette) rolling and agarbatti (incense sticks) rolling. In addition, the provision of services such as healthcare, childcare and trauma-healing constituted a "peace-keeping process" as well. Instead of being

consumed with the hatred of each other, Muslim and Hindu women (and men) began to work with each other to reestablish their lives.

SEWA also mobilized the students of the Indian Institute of Management to survey and document the scale of economic losses. Seventy-five teams of SEWA women also helped the District Collector survey housing losses. Senior SEWA leaders engaged the state and national governments and informed them of the need for rehabilitation and the conditions in the relief camps. Elaben Bhatt, the founder of SEWA, was appointed by the Gujarat Governor (not the Chief Minister Narendra Modi) to the state's relief and rehabilitation committee. The Prime Minister visited Gujarat and asked SEWA to develop a program to help the widows and orphans. Shantaben, meaning "a woman of peace" of which may were widows themselves, assisted 231 widows with livelihood, housing, insurance and health (particularly trauma-healing).

**Shantipath.**

The Shantipath program began as a way to recover from the 2002 riots. The impact of the riots on the lives of SEWA's members ensured that the program integrated development and peace right from its inception. Its objectives are threefold:

1) Livelihood work:
   - To restart employment
   - To make available enough employment (to those women who got less work after the riots)
   - To make available proper wages and work (to women workers who got less wages after riots as compared to those before riots)
2) Life education: to provide an understanding and knowledge of unity, equality and respect of all religions to women workers through stories, songs, games, etc.
3) Disseminate the message of communal harmony and maintain the cultural heritage through various messages and the celebration of various festivals.

(Activities of the Shantipath Centre 2005 evaluation, 2005).

The program is situated within the slums, not at SEWA headquarters. SEWA obtained locations where women could easily come together and feel safe. SEWA began with three centres in places that were most affected by the riots and had a large number of its members. Two SEWA organizers managed the overall program, but local SEWA members took charge of the daily running of the centers. Bringing together Hindu and Muslim women was not easy.

The centres have come a long way and are very much a success for the women who participate. Training and work bring Hindu and Muslim women together. Regular contact leads to the realization that many of them share similar problems and experiences. Despite religious difference, they are all workers. It further allows them to understand that they are inter-dependent in a particular trade (e.g. garment work: machines, materials, production, marketing, sales, etc.). Any missing link in the chain will affect them all. Finally, positive experiences with each other allows for the understanding that they will all pay for someone else's riots.

These trainings lead women to participate in life education classes at their centre. The women are referred to as "Ekta women" (women of unity). The common name Ekta is given to them in order to "eradicate their differences due to the different religions they follow, but also create an atmosphere of equality, which in turn strengthen their relationship among them." After training, these women are responsible for disseminating the communal harmony message. The training itself involves discussions about what communal harmony means, games that distinguish virtues and vices related to peace, exploring symbols from various religions, and storytelling.

Ekta women are empowered to discuss peace with family and friends. One method of disseminating the message of communal harmony is through the joint celebration of religious festivals. This is possible because, while perspectives of God and the practice of worship is often different, celebrations are more defined by the shared culture that exists because of living in a certain place at a certain time.

**Case Study: Intervention in Gomtipur.**

On May 29, 2006, a large meeting (perhaps 200) of SEWA Ektabens from various parts of Ahmedabad were meeting at the Gomtipur Shantipath Centre. Two scooters, driven by a Hindu and Muslim, collided just down the street near a mosque from the Centre. Approximately 200 onlookers gathered at the scene. The situation quickly began to escalate. One of the Ektaben who had just arrived at the centre informed her friends about the ongoing incident. A group of about 20 Ektabens decided to rush to the altercation. As they arrived, they noticed men on each side picking up rocks. Immediately, five women lay down on the road between the groups of Hindu and Muslim men. Meanwhile, some SEWA Hindu women appealed for calm with the Hindu men. Similarly, the Muslim women did the same with the Muslim men. Both sets of women recognized men in the mob and approached them directly. The women argued that rioting would hurt all their livelihoods; that the police would roundup children for questioning; and that they would be the ones to suffer. The police arriving on the scene thought the women were part of the rioters. Luckily, some of the women were able to tell the police about what was going on before the police charged the mob. The mobs slowly dispersed and violence was averted.

When asked why they intervened, the women simply stated that they did not want to suffer another riot in their neighborhood.  When asked how they knew what to do, the women retorted that their arguments were what they had learned in SEWA trainings.  They also said that they drew courage from their numbers (SEWA Shantipath members interview, 2007).

This incident begs the question: What if the SEWA women were not already having a meeting?  Would any of them have known of the incident in time to intervene?  Would there have been enough of them in one place to intervene?

**Building riot prevention capacity.**

While there are thousands of women who are linked to SEWA, not all of them participate in the Shantipath Centres.  There are approximately 12,000-15,000 SEWA members in the Gomtipur neighborhood; yet, there are perhaps only a few hundred who participate in the Gomtipur Shantipath Centre.  Considering the importance of numbers for riot prevention, it is surprising that SEWA does not have a strategy to scale up its communal harmony programs.  SEWA's obstacles to scaling up are not entirely clear.  Perhaps it simply has to do with a lack of financial resources, as is often the case for most civil society programs. Two other reasons are also possible.

First, while the Shantipath Centres focus on communal harmony, this does not necessarily mean riot prevention.  Civil society's role in peacebuilding is well established.  However, preventing *riots* is not generally understood or accepted.  It happens ad-hoc.  Accepting the role to intervene and prevent violence begins with understanding the possibility that it can be done and physically preparing to do so.

SEWA appears to have not thought through the possibility of being involved in preventing imminent violence.

Second, SEWA attempts to be thoroughly democratic in its decision-making. It cherishes its bottom-up process of setting priorities. Therefore, it would be necessary for the women at the centres to identify capacity-building for riot prevention as a priority. However, if they don't know that it is possible, then they can't ask. Shantipath organizers and senior SEWA leaders can suggest the building of riot prevention capacity as an objective for the centres. Just as SEWA offers guidance on training to make garments and help women understand the meaning of communal peace, knowledge about riot prevention can flow from the top. This assumes that the "top," Shantipath organizers and senior SEWA leaders, themselves understand riot prevention. I believe that they are beginning to, but they are not quite at the level required to systematically set up a neighborhood prevention 'system'. For example, while I was visiting SEWA, an incident reminiscent of the Godhra train fire that triggered the 2002 Gujarat riots occurred, but there was little reaction by SEWA.

On Sunday February 19, 2007, minutes before midnight, the Samjhauta Express train was bombed near Panipat, Haryana (north of New Delhi). Television news reported that there were a large number of people dead (the total was 67 dead and 15 injured). While details remained sketchy, government ministers, politicians and journalists speculated that it was terrorism meant to derail the upcoming India-Pakistan dialogue. Nevertheless, a government spokesman labeled it an "incident [that is] very significant." The Home Ministry sent instructions to all state government to take actions to "maintain communal harmony."

I rushed over to the SEWA offices expecting to find a beehive of activity relating to the issue. However, the peace organizers merely claimed that they had heard something about it. There was not an effort to find out more, engage senior leaders about the events or communicate the latest information to the peace centres. I did not observe any discussions or activities relating to the incident. At some point, I directly asked if SEWA (at some level) would call a meeting to discuss the issue. I was told that this was not normally the case.

It is difficult to understand why given the history of communal riots in Ahmedabad, and the bloodletting in 2002, that SEWA did not see the incident as a potential warning sign. The fact that the train was a "friendship train" bound for the Pakistani border and that many of the victims were Pakistani Muslims as well as Hindus did not become evident until later. Given early information, there was nothing to say that there wouldn't be riots. One repeated phrase that I heard from many of the women that I spoke to regarding the 2002 riots was that the violence caught everyone off guard because they did not think something on that scale could ever happen. The thought that something like that could happen again five years later apparently did not occur either.

Lack of understanding leads to lack of preparedness. In 2002, some of SEWA's women called the main office requesting help. Not only was immediate help not able to reach them in their neighborhoods, but it took many SEWA members days before they could safely navigate the streets to get to SEWA's main offices where they felt they would be safe. Shantipath Centres might offer de-centralized places from which SEWA can reach its members and coordinate responses to communal violence. But this capacity must be deliberately built.

Resources for reaction need to be improved. A system of relaying information to the various Shantipath centres or calling emergency meetings to diffuse tensions can be developed. There are no landline phones at the centres and cell phones are not ubiquitous among SEWA members. If phones are too costly, a communication system using runners could be developed. Additionally, there is little internet connectivity to gather information even at SEWA headquarters. This may be a resource issue that will be overcome with time. In short, organizers and leaders must understand riot prevention and develop resources and procedures to react.

**Linking development to peace.**

Shantipath displays the advantage of linking communal harmony to livelihood issues. Women come for the services and help, but become exposed to a whole other range of new issues and skills. Women who normally do not have access to peacebuilding programs or would not attend peacebuilding in normal circumstances are introduced to members of other religions and issues of peace.

Additionally, development and service activities provide SEWA access to the most affected populations in riots, and the population that participates in riot—the poor. Permanently locating Shantipath centres in the slums affords a long-term presence that gives them unique stability and trust not available to peacebuilding and human rights organizations that operate out of centralized offices. The trust SEWA built through its activities in the slums prior to riots allowed it to immediately begin work after the riots.

Although SEWA focuses primarily on women and their young children, it also gains access through women to their husbands and adolescent sons. Men regularly stop by the centres to talk to their wives. While men are initially reticent to let their wives

become involved with the centre, once they do, they like the fact that their wives are in a safe place. Unfortunately, the peace centres do not offer programs for husbands or adolescents other than their participation in joint festivals. With more resources, SEWA may be able to involve adolescents and young men in more of its programs—particularly because these are the groups that make up the foot soldiers in riots.

Interestingly, working together also seems to make the communal harmony message more understandable. Through practical work, sharing stories, realizing similarities, and celebrating each other's important moments in life, the women are able to humanize each other. It builds a team spirit that can be critical in crises.

### Mumbai, Maharashtra

Mumbai (formerly Bombay) is India's largest city with approximately19 million people in the greater metropolitan area. Hindus comprise 67%, Muslims 18%, and there are also Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews. However, neither Hindu nor Muslim communities are completely cohesive to act as a unified religious community. Caste, class and ethno-linguistic backgrounds separate Hindus, as elsewhere in India. Hindus are present in every sector of the economy and dominate the political class. Muslims, while often congregating together in neighborhoods, are heterogeneous, distinguished by Shia-Sunni sectarian differences, class, and occupation. Different communities of Muslims work in various economic sectors, in small businesses, manufacturing, informal economic sector, and Bollywood. Mumbai is India's most cosmopolitan city, drawing people from all over to make a living in the largest commercial, financial, industrial and entertainment city in India.

The Indian National Congress (INC) was born in Mumbai and dominated India's political discourse since 1885, particularly advocating the notion of secularism. But in the 1960s, increasing immigration and competition over economic opportunities paved the way for the rise of religious and regional politics. Shiv Sena ('army of Shivaji'--the Hindu God), a right-wing political party, was established in 1966 to advocate for the 'native' Marathi people in Bombay and Maharashtra. It sought, initially by violence, to force out north and south Indians (Hindus as well as Muslims) out of Bombay. After the Shiv Sena won the Maharashtra state elections in 1995, it changed the name of city from Bombay (Portuguese/English meaning "good bay") to Mumbai ("mother", derived from the Marathi name of the Hindu goddess' Mumbadevi and Aai.)

The polarization of communities and politicization of identities came to a head in December 1992-March 1993. Mumbai burned as Muslims and Hindus killed each other in rioting for five days in 6-10 December 1992 (largely described as riots by Muslims on Hindus) and 15 days in 6-20 January 1993 (described as Hindu rioting against Muslims). More than 850 people died, at least 650 Muslims and 200 Hindus were injured, and businesses and livelihoods were destroyed. The rioting mostly set the slums ablaze in addition to some newly urbanized areas.[5]

According to the *Report of the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Commission on the Mumbai riots of 1992–1993*, the police and city government (led by the Congress Party) failed to anticipate the violence. Even during the rioting and the lull between the two phases in December and January, city leaders were unprepared to seize control of the situation. The Commission called the police "impotent" in their ability to help Hindus or

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[5] The worst affected areas were Jogeshwari, Pydhonie, Dongri, Agripada, Gamdevi, V.P. Road, Byculla, Bhoiwada, Nagpada, Kherwadi, Nehru Nagar, Dharavi, Ghatkopar, Kurla, Deonar, Trombay, Bandra and Vakola.

Muslims, and stated that large segments of the police had "callous indifference" to the pleas for help from Muslims. But the Commission, as well as other investigations, also uncovered a deeper story of politicians' involvement in the riots that is exemplary of the dynamics of communal violence.

Propaganda and polarization throughout the years, but especially in the months prior to December 1992 and in lull phase prior to the second riots in January 1993, stoked the tinder of Hindu-Muslim conflict. Throughout 1992, BJP leader L.K. Advani conducted his *rath yatra* (procession) throughout India in preparation for the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. The processions whipped up communal frenzy across India among some Hindus. The locations of the processions correlate with the locations of the Hindu rioting against Muslims.

This larger countrywide propaganda played into local activism in Mumbai. In Mumbai, a coalition of Shiv Sena, BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bajrang Dal and Vishnu Hindu Parisad (VHP) increased their incendiary rallies from July 1992 onwards. Similarly, Muslim radical organizations, such as the Student's Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), the Bombay Muslim Action, Tanzeem–Allah–o–Akbar and the Dalit–Muslim Suraksha Sangh, also held community meetings and published anti-Hindu pamphlets and community notice boards that incited the Muslim community to action. After the initial wave of Muslim rioting against Hindus in Mumbai, Hindu communal activists further intensified the atmosphere with vitriolic speeches against Muslims and by publishing provocative articles in newsthesiss like the *Saamna* and *Navaakal*. The city government and police failed to halt, what the Commission termed, "deliberate and systematic provocation."

The immediate precipitants of the first phase of the rioting were several events that occurred on December 6, 1992.  The Babri Mosque in Ayodhya was demolished by Hindu Kar Sevaks (Hindu nationalist volunteers) on December 6.  Immediately, Shiv Sena activists led "victory" celebrations and processions in Mumbai, in which anti-Muslim slogans were shouted.  Some of these processions went through Muslim-dominated neighborhoods.  While it is believed that Muslims then began to riot, the Commission states one incident by Shiv Sena activists as the first communal incident.

> ...at 2.30 p.m. on December 6, 1992, the first communal incident that took place in Mumbai after the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya was in Dharavi, where it was not angry Muslims but rampaging Shiv Sainiks led by Sena leaders Baburao Mane and Ramkrishna Keni who caused the first provocation.  The local police allowed Shiv Sainiks to conduct a cycle rally of 200–300 persons.  The rally passed through several communally–sensitive, Muslim–dominated areas in Dharavi and terminated at Kala Killa, where a meeting was held and addressed by the local activists of the Shiv Sena. Provocative speeches were made at this meeting' (Report of the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Commission, 1998).

On the following day, there were several demonstrations by Muslims in Dharavi protesting the previous day's rally by Shiv Sena.  In each case, someone from the crowd threw rocks at the police, who were attempting to speak to the protesters.  The police charged and fired at the crowds.  Large scale rioting by Muslims ensued shortly thereafter and lasted for a week.

Attacks by Hindus and Muslims on each other, many of them by criminals, between the two major phases of large-scale rioting (December 10, 1992 and January 6, 1993) kept the conflict boiling.  Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray cited the murder of Hindu Mathadi workers in Dongri (in south Mumbai) on January 5-6 and the burning alive of a Hindu family in a Jogeshwari slum (a communally-sensitive area in north Mumbai) on January 8 as precipitants, or justifications, for revenge.  Following January

8, the Commission's report states that Shiv Sena leaders deliberately executed attacks against Muslims and Muslim businesses (Report of the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Commission, 1998).

The second round of rioting (Hindus on Muslims) is characteristic of Paul Brass's "institutionalized riot system": the involvement of politicians, criminals, frenzied mobs of ordinary people and government authorities. Following the first round of the rioting, Hindu nationalists and Muslims criminal elements, were primed to continue the chaos. Hindu nationalist political parties like Shiv Sena stood to benefit from rallying, solidifying and expanding their Hindu support base. Incensed and fearful of the violence perpetrated by Muslims on Hindus, Shiv Sena leaders rallied people in defense of their community. Some city government leaders attempted to halt the violence by imposing a curfew; and may have been successful in some cases, but failed on a citywide scale. Community activist Sushobha Barve (2003) worked with the Governor of Maharashtra to set up a peace committee and prevent some rioting in Dharavi, one of the most communally sensitive areas. However, on a larger scale, the ineffectiveness of the Congress Party, city government and the police was too much. Police bias and complicity was critical in how the violence unfolded. In some cases the police failed to respond because of ineffective communication and coordination, and in other cases they choose not to react to calls for help and even watched businesses being burnt.

Following the riots, Muslims and Hindus of Mumbai became even more polarized. A large number of Muslims and Hindus migrated from their localities seeking safer neighborhoods. While the tension did not cause the March 12, 1993 terrorist bombings by D-Company, the riots did motivate D-Company leaders Tiger Memom and

Dawood Ibrahim to seek revenge for Hindu violence. More importantly, the tension facilitates terrorism by providing a sanctuary within the Indian Muslim populace that is not working with local authorities to actively combat Muslim terrorists in their midst. It is then a wonder that communal riots did not once again hit Mumbai when its neighbor to the north, Gujarat, descended into communal chaos in 2002. This may, in part, be the story of Mumbai civil society's peace-building efforts (which will be covered after discussion of prevention efforts in the nearby town of Bhiwandi).

**The Mohalla Peace Committees of Bhiwandi (Mumbai Case Study 1)**

While this case study is not technically in Mumbai, Bhiwandi's social, political and economic life is closely linked to Mumbai; and it contains good data for prevention.

Bhiwandi, a town 45 km east of Mumbai, was prone to Hindu-Muslim riots in the 1970s and 1980s. The population of 1.3 million is almost evenly divided, 52% Muslims and 48% Hindus. Both communities are economically poor, with 2/3 of the population living in slums. The population density is twice that of Mumbai, and while Hindus and Muslims live in communally segregated neighborhoods, both communities are inextricably forced to relate to each other because of economic integration. There were large-scale communal riots in 1965, 1968, 1970 and 1984. That changed in mid-1988, when Suresh Khopade was appointment the Deputy Commissioner of Police for Bhiwandi. He set up peace committees across Bhiwandi that brought together Hindus, Muslims and the police. These committees have been credited with not only transforming communal relations in Bhiwandi, but also proved their worth between 1988 and 1998, a particularly communal riot-prone period in Indian history when many cities, including nearby Mumbai, burned but through which Bhiwandi stayed peaceful.

When he arrived in Bhiwandi, Khopade set out to understand the situation at its root. Contrary to popular beliefs, he found no foreign hand (i.e. Pakistani terrorists or the Pakistan intelligence services) and no Mumbai mafia behind the violence. He claims that only 3.8% of the accused had a criminal background and none of the deceased were criminals (Khopade, 1984, p. 83). The residents of Bhiwandi were killing each other. He also found that the citizens of Bhiwandi did not trust the police. Indeed, Khopade claims that many of his constables were communally biased, mostly against Muslims.

Khopade eventually set up seventy mohalla (neighborhood) peace committees. Since neighborhoods were segregated, each committee covered two adjacent neighborhoods and had a minimum of 50 Hindus and 50 Muslims members. The members were selected on the basis of their reputation as peaceful persons and on the basis of knowledge and influence in their respective neighborhoods.

Importantly, while committee members were asked to take leadership roles, the police officially hosted the committees, with a police constable presiding over the meetings. Unlike the mohalla committees of the Mohalla Committee Movement Trust (MCMT) in Mumbai (discussed later), Bhiwandi's committees were centered on the police. In addition to chairing the meetings, one police sub-inspector was appointed as an official liaison for 2-3 committees. Khopade contends that it required the police to act as a neutral facilitator for Hindus and Muslims to come together (Khopade interview, 2007).

At least one meeting was held every two weeks. The meetings were deliberately not held at a police station, but rather within the mohallas at places like government buildings, schools and even places of worship. Regular committee meetings addressed

civil matters, issues to petition the government, organized cultural and sports activities and held joint celebrations of religious and national festivals.

When members of a committee heard news of communal tensions, a meeting was immediately called. The initial objective was to gather information about the rumors, incident and "anti-social elements." The committee would set out to control rumors. The involvement of police in the committees facilitated an easy exchange of information. Often, the police clarified or provided accurate information they had heard.

As the committees became popular, politicians became involved. Initially some politicians attempted to block the formation of the committees, fearing that their religious vote banks would be diluted. However, when secular political parties (i.e. Congress) began attending, the nationalist parties attended because they did not want to be left out. This is also different from the Mumbai MCMT peace committees. While MCMT feared the misuse of the committees by politicians (which actually did happen in a different set of peace committees set up by the police in Mumbai), Khopade believes that the involvement of politicians can be beneficial. He sees it as a way to bring the key actors behind much of the communal trouble together in one forum and to give them a stake in the process; and perhaps even transform their political interests. He also believes that it can serve as a way to keep an eye on politicians and actually make them responsible for maintaining the peace (Khopade interview, 2007).

The committees proved their mettle in the midst of some of the worst communal violence in Indian history. Between 1988 and 1991, Hindu nationalists agitated for the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Adoyha and to build a temple to the Hindu God Ram in its place. The agitation involved mobilization of Hindus across India. The marches,

called yatras, and rallies held by politicians often led to deadly violence. Tensions also

ran high in Bhiwandi. However, as Khopade writes,

> when passions ran high, members on both sides came together and
> voluntarily undertook the task of patrolling the streets for nights on end ...
> [As a result], the evil-doers preferred to lie low [and] were totally isolated
> by the constant vigilance against them by committee members (Khopade,
> 1984, p. 90).

Khopade remarks that the central idea was to "stop rumor mongering." Rumors

are the fuel that can easily spark violence. Some of the peace committee

members also accompanied constables on their patrols. They often intervened to

resolve minor situations before they erupted.

Khopade was transferred from Bhiwandi in 1991 but his successor kept

the committees going. When the Babri mosque was finally torn down by Hindu

fanatics, Mumbai burned in December 1992 and January 1993. The rioting came

close to Bhiwandi; however, the peace committees had matured enough to

establish a firm foundation of trust and resolve between its members that not a

single life was lost. As episodes of rioting tore through Mumbai, peace

committee members in Bhiwandi took to the streets to dispel the rumors. They

sought out troublemakers and informed the police. The committees advocated a

message to "keep our mohallas peaceful" (Khopade, 1984).

**Reflections.**

The relative simplicity of the Bhiwandi informal peace committees makes its

successes seem all the more great compared to the complex peacebuilding programs run

by NGOs. There is no budget and there are no administration hassles. No intellectual or

educational qualifications are prescribed or required, as the committee's work is founded

on the wisdom and commitment of its members. The engine that propels the committees is its reliance on a mutually beneficial relationship between citizens and the police. The citizens want peace in their neighborhood. The police need to fulfill their obligation to provide order. The police provide the institutional backing for the operation and sustainability of the committees. Importantly, the police also provide the force behind the diplomatic initiatives of the citizens.

If the mutually beneficial relationship is the engine, the fuel that powers it is the trust-based relationship between Hindu and Muslim citizens and between citizens and the police. Bringing together Hindus and Muslims around common issues built the trust that made it possible for the communities to stay together during times of communal tension, when countervailing forces were bent on tearing apart such inter-religious relationships.

Similarly, trust between citizens, particularly Muslims, and the police is essential. As professional as one hopes the police are, it may be too much to expect a Hindu-dominated police force to be without the communal sentiment that infects the larger public. Yet, that is exactly what is needed. Khopade (2007 interview) believes that putting constables or inspectors, who have never had to opportunity to engage Muslims and learn about their lives, at the center of the committees will also help transform them and the police force. As contact and positive experience between Hindus and Muslims is meant to transform relationships, so it is meant for the public and police. These relationships come into practical affect when citizens can trust the police with sensitive information; and, the police can provide citizens the space to resolve problems.

If the Bhiwandi model is so simple and proven, why have the committees disappeared since the mid-1990s? Perhaps it is because as riots have been less frequent

in Bhiwandi, citizens' interest has waned. But at the root of prevention lies

preparedness—and they may yet become necessary since communal violence in India has

not disappeared. The committees' function as civic forums was not been encouraged.

Khopade (2007 interview) also stated that police leadership is pro-elite (unconcerned for

the poor), status-quo oriented (adhering closely to official police policies), lazy (put in

only the required effort) and career-minded (as opposed to serving the people).

Khopade's criticisms might seem extreme, if not for the fact that he was a senior police

officer in the bureaucracy that he criticizes.

Various experiments at peace committees have uncovered different challenges

for sustainability. In Bhiwandi's case, being founded by and relying heavily on the

police for their functioning make the committees dependent on having the right police

commissioners and inspectors in charge. Given that mohalla committees are not

mandatory police practice, local police must go above and beyond to create and work the

peace committees. Unless there are dedicated police officers, a mohalla peace committee

that depends on the police will fade away as they have in Bhiwandi.

**"One day for you, the rest for us."**

An interesting concurrent concept that Khopade (1984) implemented along with

the peace committees was a crowd and riot control procedure for the police called, "One

day for you, the rest for us." Minor incidents, or deliberate provocations, during festivals

and processions often lead to more widespread violence and rioting because of police

overreaction. Faced with overwhelming crowds and little clarity into the identities of the

perpetrators, the police often do what they know best—charge forcefully into crowds

dispersing and arresting anybody and everybody. The crowd, already beset by a excited

mob mentality, degenerates into violence when confronted by an authority that they have little respect for to begin with.

Faced with this situation, Khopade decided that the police would not intervene in the event of minor altercations. Instead, they watched, identified and took note of the instigators of trouble. From working with the peace committees in the mohallas, the police often already knew the usual suspects and have them blacklisted. The police arrest the suspects the day after the festival, using their contacts in the neighborhood to track down the perpetrator and prosecute them if there is evidence. The police have given the one day of the festival to the troublemakers by challenging them to instigate riots, and have preserved the rest of the days for the peaceful citizens. Khopade contends that this method has saved many festivals and processions in Bhiwandi from degenerating into riots.

In essence, Khopade is betting that riots occur not because of the trigger, but because of the forceful police response to that trigger. This is often true. A case study from Hyderabad presented later illustrates this well. Even if the violence were to spread without the interference of the police, the police still have the option of intervening. While the concept is not perfect, Khopade believes that it has prevented riots.

**The Mohalla Committee Movement Trust (Mumbai Case Study 2)**

The Mohalla Committee Movement Trust (MCMT) is an informal association (not a official NGO) that established neighborhood peace committees in the aftermath of the 1992-1993 Mumbai riots. While much of its work now is devoted to bringing together Hindus and Muslims of neighborhoods, it began as a way to bridge the divide between the police and citizens, mostly Muslims, in communally sensitive areas.

Although the Bhiwandi committees inspired MCMT committees, the Mumbai program

began at the initiative of a group of citizens who attempted to curb the violence of the

1992 Mumbai riots. Foremost among these people is community activist Sushobha

Barve (2003) who describes her experience in *Healing Streams*.

On the evening of December 6, 1992, Sushobha Barve and her colleague Kekoo

Gandhy heard of the demolition of the Babr Masjid in Ayodhya and knew, from

experience, that riots could break out across the country. As the violence unfolded in the

coming days and weeks, Barve and her friends, Muslims and prominent Mumbai

residents, set about to manage trouble and relationships with the police in the Dharavi

area, known as Asia's biggest slum and an area familiar to Barve through her previous

work. Working their connections, they were able to set up a peace committee under the

chairmanship of the Governor of Maharashtra, C. Subramaniam. This allowed Barve to

gain curfew passes and freedom of movement, access information, oblige the police to

deal with her, and get the authorities to talk to the slum residents. Like many other

slums, violence struck Dharavi in December. However, Barve's many activities—

dispelling false rumors of stolen Hindu idols or rapes, reducing tensions, clarifying

information, facilitating conversations between police and residents, resolving minor

incidents, holding community meetings--did prevent many incidents from escalating to

more violence. Furthermore, when the second round of riots occurred in January 1993,

the relatively fewer incidents in Dharavi made it seem "like an island of peace."

However, the peace committees set up at each police station at the beginning of the

riots in December did not last long. Among their many problems was the involvement of

politicians and that the police, who had little trust of the citizens, controlled the

committees. However, many lessons were learned that allowed for the subsequent MCMT peace committees. Some of these lessons include:

- "In every riot often the main issue that triggers off the violence gets brushed aside and the secondary motive of arson, looting, land and property grabbing, and settling personal scores takes over."

- "…it is also true that some proactive initiative and preventive arrests would have saved them much trouble later on."

- "Some politicians side with a particular community because that community happened to be their constituency and was their vote bank."

- "…it was not going to be easy to register cases against rioters involved in the major incidents, as not many were prepared to stand witness against people who lived in their locality."

- "Our network consisted of people in the media, in the police and other prominent people…We had in fact worked out a very effective system of communication." (Barve, 2003).

There are now over 27 MCMT mohalla committees that are active to varying degrees. While each committee is free to decide its agenda, they all seek to provide a regular forum for local residents to voice concerns, express fears and provide early warning of rumors and troublemakers. These meetings become critical during times of increased communal tensions. They are trusted forums to which residents can turn to for accurate information, help, advice, and support.

Committee members act as mediators, facilitators or arbitrators. Because they are residents of the community, they often have knowledge of local issues and people. They

attempt to address grievances simmering under the surface. The work is often informal, such as a conversation over a cup of chai or a casual discussion with neighbors near street vendors. They may also accompany a policeman on foot patrol and introduce them to local people in order to establish trust.

The committees are run by respected elders from the community but are facilitated by concerned citizens from all over Mumbai, including lawyers, doctors and activists. It is a unique mix of bringing together blue-collar workers and the white-collar activists. Among the facilitators are people like Advocate Yasmin Shaikh and Maria Ishwaran, who are professionally skilled in the art of mediation. Shaikh, by virtue of her legal background, is able to offer advice to women and liaise with the police with considerable knowledge and expertise (Shaikh interview, 2007). Ishwaran has been a social activist for some time, and thus has a wealth of knowledge on resolving community conflicts (Ishwaran interview, 2007). In addition, her background in development work has provided her with an intimate understanding and familiarity with those living in slums. This expertise and local knowledge has allowed for a level of trust that is not characteristic of all the MCMT facilitators—leading to some committees working better than others. The devotion of facilitators like Shaikh and Ishwaran to peace and MCMT, and the willingness to forgo more lucrative employment, serve as linchpins for the sustainability of the committees.

MCMT senior leadership is also critically important. The involvement of well-known and respected retired senior police officials like J. F. Ribeiro and Satish Sahney provide the mohalla committees access to current senior police and government officials. Senior police officials, such as the Commissioner of Police and Assistant and Deputy

commissioners, are key to the effectiveness of the committees. The mohalla committee's purpose is the issue of safety and security—the job of the police. Most police officials (particularly at the local level) are not convinced of the role of citizens in assisting them, or have a minimalist attitude in taking initiative on such projects. Senior police officials are able to pressure or provide authority to senior inspectors at local police stations to engage the mohalla committees. Because so much of MCMT's work is related to the police, these relationships are important. When such relationships are absent or weak, the committees can be ineffectual.

The committees seek to include respected residents and elites, community elders, and religious figures who might help to resolve problems between Hindus and Muslims. Waqar Khan and Bhau Korde were two of Dharavi's facilitators. One example of Khan and Korde's work is the Hindu Vinayak Chaturthi celebration. Previously, the procession to take the Hindu God Ganesh's idol to be immersed in the sea passed in front of the Muslim Badi Masjid, causing trouble on an annual basis. Korde says, "Through discussion [between Hindus and Muslims] we resolved the issue. Now the Hindus do not take the procession outside the masjid if it is prayer time or a Friday" (Kaur, 2003, p. 2).

Importantly, the committees deliberately exclude politicians and police. This is different from Khopade's Bhiwandi committees. One reason is that the presence of police often intimidates residents—particularly Muslims and especially Muslim women (Shaikh interview, 2007). Second, politicians are widely viewed as the cause of communal violence. Third, MCMT fears that local politicians will use the forums for their own political or nefarious purposes. Indeed, other Mumbai peace committees that

were set up and run by the police have become dominated by local politicians who use them to exercise power.

Although MCMT committees began as a way to address the citizens-police relationship, it was not long before the committees took on the work of addressing Hindu-Muslim relations. Most of the slums in which the committees were set up had a significant number from each community, often segregated within the neighborhood. While most Hindus and Muslims are quick to implicate politicians as the cause of riots and the violence is often carried out by rioters from outside the area, it is the local resident who point out what is to be destroyed and who is to be killed. It is the underlying apathy, fed by the memories of riots and the "propagandization" of history and religion, which facilitates the execution of communal violence. These latent communal tensions rise to the surface in the midst of an everyday altercation between a person who happens to be a Hindu and another who happens to be a Muslim. Diffusing these crises became a regular, if not all-consuming, activity for the mohalla committees.

MCMT quickly realized that it was difficult to sustain interest in the peace committees from the residents themselves. Much like the problem faced by peacebuilding programs anywhere, issues of peace quickly become secondary given the struggle to meet daily livelihood needs. Thus, the committees evolved to address other needs in order to sustain the residents' interest in peace issues. Six of the mohalla committees, including those of Advocate Yasmin Shaikh and Maria Ishwaran, have a "Women's Grievances Redressal Cell." These cells assist women with domestic problems, including providing emotional support as well as giving legal advice. For example, because many Muslim women have never engaged the police by themselves

because of cultural prohibitions, these cells help interact with the police to file complaints and cases. Other activities that are organized include education for women on 'godmen' (self-styled religious figures and fortune-tellers who are known to swindle money from the poor). Poster contests engage children on peace. Some committees have become involved in advocating for access to water, improvements in infrastructure and other basic needs for slum dwellers.

Another program that has been active for over a decade is the annual Cricket Tournament. Hindu and Muslims boys form teams supported by their local police station. The games are used to build relationships between the boys as well as between them and the police. The hope is to create groups of young men in every locality who will spread the message of peace and come to the aid of the police during communal tensions. A cricket match was organized quickly the day after the Godhra train incident in Gujarat. It managed to diffuse the tension in the JJ Marg area of Mumbai.

**MCMT reacts to Samjhauta Express Bombing.**

On Sunday February 19, 2007, minutes before midnight, the Samjhauta Express train was bombed near Panipat, Haryana (north of New Delhi). I was in Ahmedabad at the time conducting interviews with the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). While SEWA had little reaction to the bombing, MCMT considered it an early warning signal for potential Hindu-Muslim riots. Indeed, many of the residents of the Nagpada area of Mumbai were apprehensive enough to call MCMT facilitator Advocate Yasmin Shaikh for help. She called for a meeting of the mohalla committee by advertising it on the community boards that are located in almost every neighborhood. She learned of rumors that the "Muslims did it" were circulating. Some of the neighborhood residents

asked her, "Can we go out[side]?" She held three meetings, where approximately 250 people attended each one. She let the residents express their fears. In return, she told them not to pay attention to the rumors and to stay clam. She provided them with as much information as she knew, emphasizing the fact that the culprits were yet unknown and both Hindus and Muslims had been killed on the train (Shaikh interview, 2007). The explosion was characterized (particularly by politicians) as a terrorist act that targeted both Hindus and Muslims. The government also immediately issued an order for all states to ready themselves to maintain communal peace. These activities probably did the most to prevent an outbreak of violence. But the idea that MCMT was able to respond to the fears of residents when they called for assistance is instructive of the need people felt for such a committee and how such a committee can operate to contain rumors and prevent localized violence.

**MCMT Intervention Process.**

Maria Ishwaran (interview, 2007), a facilitator who runs the Women's Cell in Jogeshwari, elaborates on the MCMT approach in the event of a crisis. Phase one is to identify sensitive locations and the youth in the area. The committee members go to marketplaces and talk to shop owners and people. Often, signs of trouble appear first in the marketplace because it is common for troublemakers to force shops to close down as a way to create tension. With committee members frequenting the marketplace, it may be possible to identify troublemakers and persons from outside the community. This can be reported to the police, who must be pressured to begin preventative measures.

Phase two is to hold public meetings. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for people to express their fears, gather information on rumors, dispel rumors by providing accurate information and create a sense of community through strength in numbers.

Phase three is to hold public meetings with the police so they can speak directly to residents, communicate their activities and gather information about the crisis. For the public, the meeting allows citizens to interface with authorities and express their concerns and also exercise pressure on the police to act quickly and justly.

**Challenges for MCMT.**

A foremost challenge for MCMT is sustainability. MCMT depends on the volunteerism of its professional cadre of facilitators. These people often come from the upper or upper middle class. While they can afford to give up earnings to be involved with MCMT, they have the time and energy that most people cannot afford. Professional volunteers have been increasingly more difficult to come by and sustain. An additional dimension to the problem is the qualifications of the volunteers. All of the facilitators have a deep commitment to the work, but not depth of experience in community work or peacebuilding, like Advocate Yasmin Shaikh and Maria Ishwaran have. A community leader observed, "they [MCMT facilitators] lack the ideological training, which the Right [Sangh Parivar] has. Whether there are self-sustaining mechanisms in the mohalla committees to withstand the pressures [of tensions and riots] needs to be tested" (anonymous interview, 2007).

Some senior leaders of MCMT recognize the problem of financial sustainability. However, some of them are resistant to becoming an official NGO for fear of becoming embroiled in financial issues and becoming preoccupied with fundraising. Similarly,

while MCMT appears to have a broad base of support in Mumbai, the active involvement of elites in its work is ephemeral. Attention to communal peace issues is difficult to sustain, for community residents as well as for the elites of Mumbai.

One solution to address both of these problems is to partner with local development organizations. MCMT has already learned that they need to offer service programs, such as women's cells, to attract and sustain the interest in communal harmony. Similarly, programs for boys and youth are necessary to keep them from becoming drawn into communally polarizing groups. Partnering with development organizations can help provide access to slum residents, increase the impact of MCMT's programs and provide it with an option for sustainability. Valuable information on neighborhood dynamics and the impact of communal tensions on ongoing developing programs can be gained in the course of local residents discussing developmental needs. Such information would be insightful to understand the economic roots of conflicts as well as provide early warning of impending trouble.

Another challenge for MCMT is its philosophical approach to dealing with Hindu-Muslim relations. "Intellectual policing" has pre-dominated MCMT's approach. It has preferred finding practical solutions to problems over moral or emotional appeals to unity. It has also largely eschewed dealing openly with religious issues and diversity. These issues may have to be addressed. For one, Muslims are more enthusiastic about the programs than Hindus, probably because it is Muslims who are victims in most of the riots. While it is unclear as to why many Hindu participants of MCMT have become less active, whether because of a lack of interest or lack of incentives, dealing with identity differences (e.g., religion) may be important in breaking down stereotypes and myths.

MCMT and the Bhiwandi peace committees have proven to be successful in certain instances. Why then have they not been replicated more widely in other cities? Both former Bhiwandi Deputy Commissioner of Police Suresh Khopade (interview, 2007) and former Mumbai Commissioner of Police and MCMT senior leader Satish Sahney (interview, 2007) expressed that it is because new police commissioners do not want to live off the successes of previous commissioners. New leaders like to create their own legacies. Continuing a program rarely leads to advancement, whereas solving a fresh problem can advance one in the bureaucracy. Therefore, the idea of peace committees has to be institutionalized into the system of governance of communities and standardized as police practice.

**Comparing MCMT and Bhiwandi Committees.**

Unlike Khopade's Bhiwandi committees, the police are not a formal part of the MCMT mohalla committees. Part of Khopade's rationale for having the police run his committees was to transform attitudes of his constables as well as to transform police-community relations. While a significant part of MCMT's purpose is to build and manage trust between the police and the residents, it also seeks to build trust between Hindus and Muslims outside of the community-police relationships. In addition, senior leaders of MCMT believe that not having the police preserves the safe space necessary to have open dialogue among residents. Contrastingly, some residents do feel that the peace committees lack power to effect change without a formal role for the police. MCMT seeks to maintain this balance by working closely with the police when necessary.

As to which is better, experience suggests that the MCMT model works better for Mumbai. Mumbai peace committees that were set up by the police separate of MCMT

are infested with local politicians who use them to show-off power in their neighborhood. This was the same sentiment expressed by some Hyderabad residents regarding the official government-run peace committees there. It appears that in cases where the issue is solely police-community relations, it may be feasible, and even necessary, to have police formally in the committees. However, when the issues are primarily about relations between groups in the community, such as communal violence between Hindus and Muslims (where the police may be a third protagonist), the committee may decide that it is best for the police to participate more informally or on a more ad-hoc basis as the situation demands.

**Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism (Mumbai Case Study 3)**

The Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS, also called the Centre) is a NGO that serves as a peacebuilding research and training institute. Established in the aftermath of the 1992-1993 Mumbai riots, the organization works on issues of communal harmony and interfaith dialogue. Much like Prashant in Ahmedabad, it is an advocacy organization concerned with issues of social justice, human rights, education and women's rights. It created the All India Secular Forum to establish a network of activists and supporters that promote secular values and communal peace.

CSSS states its purpose as the effort to "create a value based democratic polity and to create intellectual infrastructure for the same." Its niche within the peacebuilding community in India is that the organization seeks to contribute academic research and understanding to combat "the communal menace." It states its goals as:

- To spread the spirit of Secularism and communal harmony and social peace
- To study problems relating to Communalism and Secularism
- To organize inter-faith and ethnic dialogue and justice (CSSS website, 2008).

Much of organization's research is disseminated through its quarterly publication, the *Indian Journal of Secularism*. In addition, a number of books, articles in journals and newsthesiss, speeches, and an e-mail distribution list assist in publicizing its perspectives.

In addition to its research, CSSS conducts educational seminars and training workshops on communal peace. It principal target groups are teachers, journalists, police, and students. It considers these as crucial groups for maintaining communal harmony and promoting inter-religious understanding. CSSS also augments its trainings with awareness campaigns on women's rights, particularly among minority women.

There is a CSSS General Body (18 persons), Executive Council (9 persons from the General Body), and Team (21 persons: three program coordinators, five Research Fellows, an editor of the journal, and administration). While no specific statistics are available, CSSS includes Muslim, Christian and Hindu men and women. CSSS has only one office in Santa Cruz (East), Mumbai.

Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer is one of the founding members and Chairman of CSSS. Trained as an engineer, he is a well-known Muslim scholar and prolific author. He has amassed an abundance of work on liberation theology in Islam, including being a leader of the progressive Dawoodi Bohra movement in Islam. Engineer founded the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies in 1980, which is currently associated with CSSS. He advocates a culture of non-violence and inter-religious understanding and harmony. His views on the roots of communal violence in India emphasize the role of self-seeking politicians and the culture of divisiveness between Hindus and Muslims resulting from misunderstanding and biased rendering of India's history (Engineer interview, 2007).

The General Body is composed of eminent academics, social activists and prominent citizens. They have links to elites and power brokers of Mumbai. There is also a nine member Eminent Advisory Broad composed of well-known Indians from inter-disciplinary backgrounds.

By virtue of its purpose to coordinate the work of other organizations involved in communal peace, CSSS has wide networks with other NGOs and social justice movements across India.  This network continually grows with each workshop.  CSSS also has well-established international links, such as with the Heinrich Böll Foundation (Germany), Minority Rights Group International (UK), the Asian Resource Foundation (Thailand) and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (USA).

While CSSS does not have a regular working relationship with city administrators, it does interact with police officers through its training programs. However, it is unclear how deep and ongoing these relationships are.  Since there is no regular interaction beyond the classroom, it is uncertain if CSSS can call on these police officers in the event of a riot.

**Peacebuilding.**

CSSS holds one-day seminars, two-day workshops, two-day student/youth camps, and seven-day peace education camps.  These trainings intend to: 1) impart an understanding of the communal and political situation in India; 2) provide an understanding of the "real" causes of communal violence, including revisiting Indian history, and; 3) inculcate an appreciation for religious, cultural and linguistic diversity. These programs emphasize the values of secularism and pluralism.

The understanding these workshops provide are based on two aspects of the communal issue (which are largely founded on Dr. Engineer's beliefs): 1) politics and politicians as part of the proximate causes of communal violence, and 2) a particular understanding of Indian history that paints Muslims and Hindus as historical antagonists is a root cause that keeps tensions alive by invoking fear, anger and distrust.

Engineer (interview, 2007) feels that views of Indian history are at the root of the battle between Hindu nationalists and secularist forces in modern India. For the nationalists, past Muslim oppression provides the intense feelings that serve as the rallying cry to make India the home and sacred place of the Hindus. For secularists, a more syncretic view explains Indian history in a way that Muslims and Hindus can co-exist enough to create a modern India that is democratic, pluralistic, and secular.

When CSSS conducts workshops in other states, it is often because it receives a request from a local person. In Bhopal, an Member of Parliament made a request on his own behalf to which CSSS responded by organizing a number of workshops and camps for social activists, journalists and others. In addition, CSSS also held dialogues with senior police, judges, lawyers, teachers and activists on the *Communal Violence Bill, 2005*. While these are effective in disseminating the message of harmony, the participants often live in different communities and lack proximity to each other to create effective local committees to prevent riots. CSSS also proposes programs after identifying communally sensitive areas. It has held a number of workshops across Uttar Pradesh, a state with a bloody history of Hindu-Muslim riots and where Ayodhya is located.

Another critical problem with these workshops is that it often draws people who already believe in communal harmony. Unlike development organizations that piggyback peacebuilding onto their service programs, it doesn't attract or have access to the rioters and slum dwellers. This is not to say that everyone who attends believes in peace. Many of the people who go there hold deep prejudices about Hindus or Muslims. However, they already believe that peace is possible and that they have a role in achieving it. Trainings expose police officers that may be deeply biased to perspectives of Indian history to ideas of pluralism and communal harmony. Nevertheless, the workshops build the capacity of those interested in peace. Trainings for police officers are often mandatory upon orders of the senior police leaders.

CSSS conducts interfaith dialogues with the purpose of having "a frank and open meeting of different faiths and discover[ing] the similarities that bind rather than the differences that separate them." These dialogues include religious leaders, women, youth from Dharavi (a historically communally sensitive neighborhood in Mumbai) and Dalits.

CSSS sponsors Ekta (peace) clubs at local colleges as a way to promote the values of pluralism and communal harmony among students. CSSS has organized street plays in the slums of Mumbai to spread the message of the dangers and costs of communalism. Its advocacy work involves occasional meetings to bring together peace activists, police and judges to discuss specific issues, such as the *Communal Violence Bill, 2005*.

**CSSS as an expertise and resource base for prevention.**

Despite considerable research into communal violence, CSSS does not think of itself as having a role in intervening when riots are imminent. It is open to joining other NGOs to conduct peace marches and activities, but it is difficult for it to become involved

in riot prevention because it does not have extensive presence in sensitive neighborhoods or slums like development organizations such as SEWA in Ahmedabad or COVA in Hyderabad. However, the train bombing near Panipat mentioned earlier in the SEWA and MCMT cases illustrates the role CSSS can play in operational prevention.

On Sunday February 19, 2007, minutes before midnight, the Samjhauta Express train was bombed near Panipat, Haryana (north of New Delhi). Fearing an escalation into a Hindu-Muslim riot, "Mr. Ram," a former organizer and student of a CSSS training workshop once held in Panipat, reached out to CSSS and wanted to place an idol of the Hindu god Hanuman on the grounds of a local mosque as a show of peace (CSSS program coordinators interview, 2007).

Mr. Ram contacted Ms. Qutub Jahakidwal at CSSS, the designated person at Centre tasked to keep in touch with local partners and former participants. Mr. Ram asked for advice on what should be done to prevent rioting. CSSS staff, particularly Dr. Engineer, advised him to hold a meeting composed of the Hindu and Muslim residents of the neighborhood that he was worried about. Mr. Ram contacted some former CSSS trainees in the area to help organize a meeting. They went from house to house and to market areas and appealed to residents to attend a meeting that they organized at a local school. In fact, it wasn't difficult to get people to come since just a month before, Mr. Ram and his colleagues had prevented altercation between Hindus and Muslims from getting out of hand. At that time, Dr. Engineer advised Mr. Ram to: a) hold a meeting in neighborhood, b) form a mohalla committee, and c) organize a Shanti yatra (peace march). Having done these things, Mr. Ram and his colleagues had temporarily diffused the situation and became known to local residents.

A meeting was held a few days after February 19<sup>th</sup> (CSSS staff did not know the specifics).  Apparently, Mr. Ram attempted to provide accurate information about the Panipat bombing incident in order to prevent rumors from being generated.  Like the month before, they held a peace march in the neighborhood.  Despite a small turnout (no numbers are available), it was apparently enough to dissuade any potential instigators from taking advantage of the situation.  There were no riots or violent incidents between Hindus and Muslims in the aftermath of the train bombing (Engineer interview, 2007).

The peripheral role that CSSS played may not seem as critical as the work of people on the ground preventing the violence.  Yet, it is a very important aspect of the operational prevention system.  CSSS showed that it could act as a resource base for participants it has trained.  It can support local riot prevention initiatives by providing advice, facilitating communications, generating support, scaling up activities, spreading the message, seeking support from key authorities, lobbying the government to take action, etc.  It can act as the hub of a wheel in which the many spokes lead to various local initiatives.  In times of emergencies, a centralized operations center can provide a place where local people can turn to for support.

### Lessons learned, but yet to be implemented.

Dr. Engineer has learned some other valuable lessons over the years that he wanted to pass along.  One is the importance of large numbers of committed people acting together.  During 1992 and 1993 riots in Mumbai, Dr. Engineer was part of a group that attempted to prevent violence by organizing peace marches.  He admits that they were not very successful.  He said that a major reason for their failure was that they "did not have large [enough] numbers of committed people" (Engineer interview, 2007).

In this same spirit, the importance of civil society organizations banding together cannot be overemphasized. Each organization is comparatively weak to the power wielded by politicians, government authorities, police or criminals. Numbers speak volumes. They make the vocal minority's interests (those who are actively interested in preventing in riot) resonate disproportionally by scaling up the message. Just as importantly, they give voice to those who abhor the violence but are not in a situation to actively promote prevention and peace. Dr. Engineer recalled that one of the peace marches was very much welcomed by Hindus in one locality. These people would likely have stayed silent without someone else taking the lead to organize and advocate their opinions.

Another lesson, or more of a word of caution, is the limits of CSOs. Engineer (interview, 2007) stated, "Do not have ambition of preventing [violence] in the whole state or district." From the outset, I have attempted to emphasize that examining the role of CSOs in the prevention of communal riots is not about CSOs replacing the state and police. Rather it is about exploring how CSOs can assist in preventing imminent violence. Civil society simply does not have the power, or authority, to enforce law and order. But CSOs do have a role in helping themselves. In fact, after this research, I have come to believe that civil society has comparative advantages in prevention that are necessary for the government and police to maintain the peace. CSOs have privileged access to information, people and trust that can allow them to stop precipitating events from escalating into community-wide violence. In addition, while the police and government must tread a fine line between civil liberties and curbing insidious propaganda that fosters enmity and incites violence, CSOs have the opportunity to

combat that message with a message of peace. Finally, civil society has the opportunity to pressure authorities and police, politicians, religious leaders and even criminals to take preventive action and maintain the peace.

A role that peacebuilding organizations such as CSSS have yet to develop is training in riot prevention skills. These organizations have not taught others how to investigate rumors, fill out police First Information Reports, conduct community outreach, write articles or advertisements for community bulletin boards and newsthesiss, use technology (such as the Internet and communication radios) to gain and disseminate information, etc. Some of these skills are perhaps inherent in people, but they can be enhanced. This kind of training begins with peacebuilding organizations accepting a role in riot prevention. While people such as Dr. Engineer engage in prevention as individuals, there is little evidence to suggest that CSSS or other peacebuilding organizations are structurally ready to launch activities when tensions are escalating.

### Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

The Hindu-Muslim tensions that existed in Hyderabad when it became part of independent India in 1948 continued to prime the city for communal violence for the next half century. Hyderabad is a city of 4 million people with approximately 57% Hindu and 42% Muslims. Muslims are concentrated in the Old City, at the center of Hyderabad, where many of the riots occur. Between 1978 and 1995, there were Hindu-Muslim riots, or incidents of violence in the city every year, except 1987-1989, 1991 and 1994. Most recently, a communal riot erupted on March 27, 2010 and lasted for four days. The tensions and riots are a product of the complex interplay of social and cultural practices, economic competition, political manipulation and 'uncivil' society. Yet, there have been

fewer communal riots and tensions in the last ten years, giving cautious optimism that the cycle of communal violence can be stopped.

Hindu and Muslim differences provide the identity cleavage and passion along which Indians have fought over political and economic interests. Religious processions (including Hindu marriage processions) provide the opportunity to express their competition and antipathy through violence. Riots in 1981, 1982, 1983 and 1984 (July and September) in Hyderabad were precipitated by processions. Large processions are conducted during three festivals. The Bonalu (in July) and Ganesh festival (ten days in September) are Hindu festivals, with the former dating to ancient times and the Ganesh festival dating to the turn of the $20^{th}$ century. Muharram is an Islamic observance that can coincide with the Ganesh festival in September depending on the Islamic calendar.

The routes taken by these processions are often through communally sensitive neighborhoods and by mosques and temples. They are often deliberately provocative. At times, the processions even purposefully paused in front of the other community's temple or mosque to blare their music or chants loudly. In 1983 and 1985, the Ganesh festival procession and Muharram procession literally ran into each other at an intersection, leading to violence. Muslims also created a Pankha procession after the growth of the Ganesh festivals, setting up a situation when violence is likely. Furthermore, activists and troublemakers are embedded within processions to instigate violence. Over the years, the expectation of trouble has led even innocent people to prepare for it by arming themselves—priming people enough to cause the trouble they expect (Naidu, 1990).

Riots in Hyderabad built a momentum all their own. People expected them and politicians used them. An institutionalized riot system took hold in Hyderabad. Police

bias, and sometimes complicity, allowed politicians to keep the Hindu-Muslim communal fires burning. Politicians used criminals (called goondas in India) to instigate trouble during processions and elections. Each riot set up the conditions for the next riot.

Since the mid-1990s, there have been fewer large-scale riots in Hyderabad. Land laws preventing the transfer of property in the aftermath of riots (cited as a cause of some previous riots), the overall economic development of Hyderabad, and more police oversight of processions and election rallies are partly responsible. Most importantly, with the gradual fall from power of the Hindu nationalist BJP party in Andhra Pradesh over the last decade, the Muslim Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimin (MIM or "Majlis") party rules the Old City unchallenged and have all the seven State Assembly seats for the area. Since the seats are not competitive, Hindu nationalist politicians have little reason to whip up communal tensions.

But, according to some of the people in the NGOs I interviewed, there exists an uneasy peace. This is perhaps what led to the most recent riots in late March 2010. As Ashutosh Varshney (2002) notes, there is integration among Hindus and Muslim elites, but little interdependency and integration among the Hindu and Muslim masses. It is perhaps because root causes of previous violence still exist that makes the work of the following organizations in Hyderabad significant.

**Confederation of Voluntary Associations (Hyderabad Case Study 1)**

The Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) describes itself as "a national network of over 800 organizations working for communal harmony, peace and social justice (COVA Annual Report 2005-2006). COVA works with women, children, youth and men from different communities on issues of communal harmony, women's

empowerment, children's rights, youth advancement, education, health, environment, citizenship rights, natural disasters and man-made conflicts like communal riots."[6]  In effect, COVA is both a non-governmental organization and a network of non-governmental organizations.

COVA began in 1994 to address the issue of communal conflicts and riots in the Old City area of Hyderabad.  COVA's director, Dr. Mazher Hussain (interview, 2007), said that they soon learned that "involving people from different communities in development programs is an effective way of achieving communal harmony and national integration."  Development work provides the foundations for COVA's human/civil rights and peacebuilding programs.  In Hyderabad, COVA trains women, children, youth, slum communities, and some professionals through its Economic Empowerment Programme, Children's Programme, Youth Programme, and Civic Rights & Advocacy Programme.  COVA's Peoples Union for Civic Action And Rights (PUCAAR) is a civic rights campaign that raises awareness of citizen's rights and trains people on social advocacy.  This also includes a National Campaign for Rights to Basic Services.

COVA's main office is located just opposite the Mecca Masjid (main mosque) in the Old City of Hyderabad, a strategic location in the heart of a communally sensitive area.  A minute walk away is the Charminar, a major landmark and a uniquely Muslim symbol with its four minarets.  In a corner of one of the minaret, at the outside base, is a small Hindu shrine.  It is purposefully placed there to offer local Hindus a place to pray and simultaneously challenge the sensitivities of the mostly Muslim population.

COVA figures state that its organizational leadership (Governing Body, Managing Committee and General Body) is evenly composed of Muslims and non-

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[6] Descriptions of these programs can be found at COVA's website: http://www.covanetwork.org/

Muslims and men and women. COVA's programs provide it access to the poor, children, students and women who are Muslims and Hindus. From a cursory impression, it appears that the majority of participants in the programs are Muslims, but with a significant percentage of Hindus and Christians.

Since the late 1990s, COVA has expanded to promote networks and organizations for communal harmony in Hyderabad, nine districts of Andhra Pradesh, Saharanpur (Uttar Pradesh), Kolkotta (West Bengal), Gujarat, and Jammu and Kashmir.

While COVA conducts its own trainings and rights campaigns and works to implement programs through grassroots partners, it also maintains links to city, state and national government authorities. COVA and the Hyderabad police maintain regular contact. The chief of the Hyderabad police has the phone numbers of COVA leaders and can reach them at any time, and vice versa. The local police station confirmed that they knew COVA, even claiming that they sometimes refer people to them.

As for religious leaders, COVA recognizes that they are important forces for peacebuilding. COVA hosts an interfaith forum once every three months. Religious leaders are invited to celebrations in which Hindus, Muslims and others celebrate each other's festivals. While it is unclear as to the distribution of who and how many religious leaders are involved in these forums and celebrations, COVA's relationships with them affords access to religious leaders during times of communal tension.

COVA claims access to elites in Hyderabad, with 19% of their funding (in 2005) is derived from them. There is little involvement of the business community. Dr. Hussain (interview, 2007) admitted that businesses only keep nominal links with COVA

as "insurance" for times of troubles.  Small business-owners in the Charminar area voluntarily engage COVA when violence breaks out.

**Peacebuilding.**

Peacebuilding is done through various irregular events.  Some previous activities include joint celebration of religious festivals (for Dussera, Deepavali, Ramzan-Eid Milap) by COVA team members and youth, lectures on communal harmony by distinguished personalities, facilitating watching cricket matches together by youth from different communities, Mr. Hyderabad South City Body Building competition, interfaith forums, and theaters on violence and peace.  All these activities are intended to provide positive contact and experiences between people of various religious and caste communities in the context of popular events.  While some of these are one-time events, they allow COVA to focus on the process of bringing communities together and be flexible to changing situations without having to sustain too many defined programs.

The Peace Alliance Partners (PAP) program aims to mainstream conflict prevention into development organizations.  Through uncovering personal biases and building "perspectives for peace," it intends to sensitize and equip the board members, staff and volunteers of other organizations with attitudes and skills to promote community integration through their development work.  The goal is to "change the context of approval"—a transformation of personal and social values to make social equality, religious pluralism, and 'Indian' identity a norm.  This training is for NGOs in COVA's network located in nine of Andhra Pradesh's districts outside of Hyderabad.

PAP also reaches out to students.  Concerned that the portrayal of all Muslim rulers as villains and all Hindu kings as heroes plants the seeds of antipathy, COVA tries

to teach students (specifically those earning degrees in Masters of Social Work) "true facts," presumably a more balanced picture of Indian history.

COVA responds to communally tense situations by organizing activities such as peace and anti-war marches and forums with religious leaders. Women who have previously participated in trainings volunteer to deliver messages and maintain peace in their neighborhoods. COVA engages in riot prevention with three principles:

- Controlling the spread of rumors through a network of volunteers.

- Stationing a team of volunteers at the Government Hospital to take care of victims, which reduces their fear and prevents the press from exaggerating events.

- Activating groups of volunteers in mohallas to maintain peace in their areas. (Paraphrased from COVA pamphlet, 2008).

Two specific riot prevention initiatives include activities during Ganesh Nimajjan procession and "Volunteers near Mecca Masjid." During the Hindu Ganesh Nimajjan processions in the Old City, in which about 500,000-600,000 people participate, COVA volunteers provide water along the route of the procession and are stationed in sensitive locations in order to prevent incidents from escalating. In 2004, 600 volunteers from student unions and civil society organizations were mobilized. Volunteers are also stationed on Fridays at the Mecca Masjid. The situation is tense and ripe for violence as 5000 men leave Friday prayers. The city police actively seek COVA's collaboration during these times. However, this appears to happen irregularly and when senior COVA leaders make a determination about the possibility for violence.

**COVA's best practices.**

Of the organizations I explored, COVA was perhaps the most advanced in both understanding and defining the principles for its work in communal harmony.

COVA's strategy to integrate development work with peacebuilding provides access to critical populations and resources that can serve as leverage for peacebuilding. Dr. Mazher Hussain, Director, and Noorjahan, Coordinator of Community Development Programmes, both emphasized that it is very difficult to simply talk to people about peace and communal harmony (interviews, 2007). It is not a priority for individuals to get involved because family members pressure them not to engage with members of other communities. However, welfare services provide direct benefits to their lives. Thus, people who could not normally be involved in interacting with members of other communities engage each other in the course of these programs.

Simultaneously, development and services build trust. COVA can leverage its reputation as an unbiased provider of services to engage people on peace issues. In addition, some of these women become volunteers, and volunteer during times of tension. Noorjahan claimed that there are about 1100 women volunteers (Hindus and Muslims) working in 120 localities.

Development also makes the communal harmony message understandable. Noorjahan (interview, 2007) repeatedly emphasized that peace is not as understandable as one might assume, given that most of the poor have little education and are constantly exposed to radicalized messages if they live in segregated neighborhoods. She claims that introducing messages of peace by allowing people to come in contact with each other during trainings allows them to begin understanding members of other communities.

Integrating development and peacebuilding also provides additional resources for communal harmony programs. Funding for peacebuilding programs is scarce. Incorporating peacebuilding modules into development projects (or peacebuilding organizations conducting communal harmony programs) through development organizations allows institutions to leverage development funds for peace issues. Once trained, programming development projects with a conflict-prevention perspective is essentially cost-free. Additionally, communal harmony programs better assures that violence does not destroy the hard work done by development organizations. As John Timothy Naicker, Training Officer for PAP said, "sustainable development here also means that the work is not being erased by future communal violence" (Naicker interview, 2007).

COVA also recognizes the importance of building linkages with government authorities. Collaboration with government authorities is a central aspect of development work. The government creates the permissive environment and often sets priorities and provides funding for NGOs. Being involved in city, state and national government programs affords COVA the opportunity to build relationships not only for its development and civic rights campaigns, but also when crises require access to senior decision makers that can make things happen.

Dr. Hussian underscored the importance of NGOs working together in networks. Cooperation scales up the impact of each organization's effort by multiplying the affect of each voice. For example, during its visits to Gujarat in the aftermath of the 2002 riots, COVA realized that there was very little collaboration between Muslim organizations and other NGOs, all of whom were trying to grapple with the riot situation and provide relief

and rehabilitation to the victims. Coordinating their efforts and message could have had a greater impact on governing officials.

COVA's involvement in police programs for youth has provided opportunities to build relationships with neighborhood and senior police authorities. The trust built between the police, COVA and its members led to regular meetings. The information flow becomes critical in times of emergencies. For example, a Muslim COVA member witnessed the harassment of a Hindu by Muslim youth on her way home. From training, she knew to call the local police commander and had the station's number, at which time he quickly dispatched his police to investigate the incident. The incident never escalated to violence or even made the rumor mill (Noorjahan interview, 2007).

### Shortcomings.

COVA's network and relationships with other organizations in Hyderabad largely remains untapped for organizing a civil society early warning and response system. There are indeed obstacles. Communal harmony is not a priority even among civil society organizations that are familiar with the concept. This is, in part, likely due to a shortage of funding and personnel. Even within COVA, the PAP programs hope to conduct training for police and teachers, but find themselves understaffed. COVA recognizes youth are a critical group, but it has not found a solution to sustain their interest. As children graduate from school or need to work to help their family, their interest in peace issues wanes.

COVA itself appears overconfident that there is little need for conflict-sensitive training in Hyderabad. It claims that most of the organizations it is involved with in Hyderabad are trained. Yet, there is no collaboration to address riot prevention in a more

organized manner. PAP largely focuses on training around the state, but does not do much training in Hyderabad, yet large cities are where the deadliest violence occurs. Even if this means that these organizations have an understanding of conflict, it does not mean that they know riot prevention techniques (rumor investigation, organizing community meetings, etc.). Given COVA's focus on building networks and links to other organizations in Hyderabad, there are ideal opportunities to develop an early warning and response network.

**The Human Chain.**

On February 27, 2002, the railway coach of the Sabarmathi express was burned as it passed through the town of Godhra, Gujarat following an altercation between Muslims and Hindu VHP activists. Fifty-eight people, presumably all Hindus, died. The media was quick to implicate Muslims for torching the railway car. VHP and the Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi of the BJP party insisted that the attack was planned and called for a statewide strike on February 28. Communal violence began on February 28 and engulfed much of Gujarat. Violence raged between February 28 and March 3, subsided and then reignited on March 15 and continued sporadically until mid-June. Communal tensions ran high across the country.

On March 8, women volunteers of COVA in Hyderabad participating in International Women's Day events took a pledge to maintain peace in their neighborhoods. The next Friday, March 15, was palpably tense following the violence earlier that day in Ayodhya. In fact, the "Shiladan Ayodhya" program, planned by Hindu nationalists in Ayodhya, made it clear that there was a very high potential for Hindu-Muslim riots anywhere in the country. Predicting that there was the potential for

violence after the Friday Namaz in Hyderabad's Old City, fifty women covered in burqas, including Noorjahan, assembled at COVA and walked across the plaza to the Mecca Masjid to wait for the crowd of men to emerge from the mosque. Volunteers from other NGOs joined them later.

The police too were expecting trouble and were stationed a short distance away. However, their presence often exacerbates the situation. They provide a visible opposing force to rally against. Police preparedness conveys to the mob that the police are already on the offensive.

As people departed the mosque, some miscreants started shouting slogans, including "Allah Akbar"—a Muslim battle cry. Violence seemed imminent, but COVA's women stepped in. They formed a human chain across the road, interspersing themselves between the Muslim men and the police.

Another group of women engaged the police and pleaded with the Deputy Police Commissioner (DCP), who was on the scene, not to order a police charge at the crowd. They requested some time to talk to the mob. The DCP, who knew and had worked with COVA before, acceded and gave them some time to try to calm the situation.

Noorjahan (interview, 2007) says that the women pleaded with the men to not engage in violence. They posed the question, "Why?" They argued to the older men that their sons would ultimately pay the price—either because they would be hurt during the fighting or the police would round-up young Muslim men after the rioting during the post-incident investigation. The Muslim community would once again bear the blame for the riots. They pointed out that there were no bad Hindus here. The stones they will throw would likely injure other Muslims, as no Hindu civilians were around. Noorjahan

believes that the burqa itself may have helped. She thinks that because the men didn't know if their wives and daughters were involved in the human chain, they would not want to risk harming the women in an effort to get past them to the police.

In the end, the Muslim men dispersed and the police stood down. What could have been a bloody encounter was averted. We cannot know if the women's arguments actually dissuaded the men from fighting. However, the brief moment of having to pause and talk to the women broke the mob's momentum. This may have been enough for rationality to win over emotions.

### Missed opportunities.

While the success of the March 15 intervention must be celebrated, lessons from missed opportunities also provide insight for the future. The Gujarat riots began on Thursday, February 28. On Friday, March 1, a day after the Gujarat riots began and a week before the COVA decided on their course of action, Muslims in Hyderabad leaving Friday prayers, fueled by the atrocities in Gujarat, threw stones at police, damaged a Hindu roadside shrine and set fire to a police vehicles. The violence had already come to Hyderabad before COVA reacted. Thus, it is fair to say that it was not only the violence in Gujarat and the "Shiladan Ayodya" program in Ayodhya that provided COVA early warning. Even then, it took a week (March 8) until COVA met to decide on a course of action, and only on the sidelines of pre-planned International Women's Day events. COVA had already been working on communal peace issues for eight years, but was not organizationally prepared to engage in operational prevention. This is not to say we should have expected COVA to do something, but it is important to note that many

NGOs today are where COVA was a decade ago—without an understanding that civil society organizations do have a role in preventing imminent violence.

Next, the initiative to intervene appears to have come from COVA women volunteers and not from senior leadership. Thus, the intervention was ad-hoc and dependent on the individual initiative and courage of the women. Once again, this is understandable given the lack of systematic involvement of COVA in riot prevention at that time. However, it was fortunate that the DCP on scene knew COVA and had the patience to not intervene immediately.

Though much has been learned by COVA since then, an operational prevention system still does not exist. COVA works in some of the most communally sensitive neighborhoods of Hyderabad: Charminar (where COVA offices are located), Karwan, Mellopalli, Kishanbagh, Gowlipura, Nampalli; yet, communal violence still took place in these areas in the last few years. For example:

2006:

- Charminar (February 11): Hindu-Muslim fighting injures 5 persons after a shop is set on fire.
- Karwan (February 24): Hindu religious figures are desecrated; stone throwing by Hindus and Muslims; police had to fire lathi charges to disperse the mob.

2003:

- Melapalli and Nampalli (June 5-6): Hindu-Muslim violence results in one dead; stone-throwing and 10 vehicles are set on fire.
- Kishanbagh (Dec. 4): Sikhs and Muslims engage in fights after a Muslim youth allegedly damages a Sikh temple. One person is killed and four are injured in

stabbing incidents. When news about the attack on the gurdwara spreads, Sikhs begin to attack Muslims. Muslims also retaliate and some Sikhs are injured.

- Sultan Shahi and Gowlipura (Dec. 6): Hyderabad erupts when Muslims mourn the demolition of Babri Masjid on that day in 1992; simultaneously, Hindus are celebrating Shaurya Divas (day of courage). Police resort to firing to stop mobs from looting and arson. Three persons die because of bullet injuries and two die in stabbing incidents.

These law and order incidents are the primary responsibility of the police; but, civil society organizations, like COVA, can assist. Given their previous success and their presence in these locations, we can ask how civil society can help in preventing such incidents, or at least ensure that they violence does not spread. While most of these examples are spontaneous incidents where COVA must be maximally aware and prepared to react, COVA can prepare every year for December 6, since it is the anniversary of the destruction of the Babri Masjid and the Hindu day of courage.

**Hyderabad Maithri Peace Committees (Hyderabad Case Study 2)**

The Hyderabad peace committees that would later become the Maithri ("friendship") community policing project began in 1982. Eleven elite citizens of Hyderabad came together out of concern for Hindu-Muslim communal problems that plagued the city. One of its founder's was Sri Kishan Sharma, now the President of the South Zone of the Maithri initiative. The original committee worked in a few sensitive neighborhoods, with some minor successes that brought it recognition. Unfortunately, there are no records of these committees preventing riots or bloodshed. In the early 1990s, it was dismissed for being small in scale and idealistic in outlook. However, the

1993 violence in Hyderabad changed that perspective. The police were ordered get a hold of the communal problems in the city. The police saw the existing Hyderabad peace committees as an innovative mechanism to address communal tensions, and so officially recognized them in 1994.

The mission of Maithri is stated as: "To render courteous, compassionate and caring response and increase public confidence in police with respect to maintenance of peace and order and feeling of safety from crime." In its fundamental outlook, it is police-centered. It is a police-public partnership program whose aim is to serve as a "bridge between the police and the public." For the public, the program attempts to create trust and build relationships with the police. These relationships serve as the foundation to provide effective ways of creating and maintaining communal harmony.

For the police, it offers more effective means to interact with citizens, especially those who live where communal violence occurs the most. Additionally, the peace committees take on some of the more intractable communal issues and tensions that the police often find too difficult to handle. Furthermore, the Hyderabad central committee provides information on sentiments, rumors and information circulating in the mohallas that have the potential to spark communal tensions and violence. When possible, the police are able to act very early to prevent situations from escalating.

Hyderabad is divided into four zones in the Maithri initiative—North, South, East and West. The president of each zone is vetted and appointed by the Commissioner of Police (CP). The presidents are the main liaisons between the peace committees and the CP and local station inspector. There are regular calls and meetings between the police leadership and the presidents.

The police offer training to the mohalla peace committees. Training is given on issues such as detection of crime, conflict resolution and even the use of lathis (police batons). Sri Kishan Sharma claimed that peace committee members have even been converted to the Home Guard during certain occasions.

The Maithri Central Committee serves 43 peace committees each one linked to a police station (representing 25% of Hyderabad's 172 police stations). Approximately 25 Maithri volunteers are on each mohalla committee. The Central Committee holds a minimum of one meeting per month, even if there are no communal tensions. The Deputy Commissioner of Police and Additional Commissioner of Police attend these meetings. Regular meetings provide an opportunity for peace committee members and volunteers to become familiar with each other and create an atmosphere for dialogue. It also allows Maithri to pass along information on known criminals and activities of strangers, as well as report on corrupt police officers.

The mohalla committee members are all residents of the areas in which they serve. Thus, they know each house, strangers entering the neighborhoods, and the dynamics between the people living in the area. This familiarity also allows elders in the community to vouch for people whom the police have wrongly accused of criminal behavior. Based on the trust built by the police and senior Maithri officials, the accused are sometimes released into the custody of the Maithri members.

Maithri also brings city political leaders together for meetings as a way to address the underlying causes of violence. Meetings between politicians are often held in the Police Commissioner's office. Presumably this serves as both a neutral venue and to impress upon the politicians of the presence of a more 'forceful' authority.

When tensions arise, the Central Committee and the local mohalla committee members hold meetings within the area of concern to diffuse the tensions. The meetings involve residents (both Hindus and Muslims), the police and, often, local religious leaders. Central Committee members also convey information of the incidents and tensions, and whatever they may have learned, to the senior police and security officials. Sometimes it is the police that contact the senior Central Committee and ask them to hold a mohalla meeting in a particular area of concern.

### Reacting to the Mumbai terrorist attacks.

Maithri went into action during the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba. The central government and local authorities feared that the terrorist attacks would spark communal violence across India. Hindu reprisal attacks or Muslim extremists taking advantage of the situation for more attacks were a possibility. The Maithri Central Committee and mohalla peace committees activated volunteers. For 15 days following the attack, mohalla committee members and volunteers walked the streets of their neighborhoods keeping an eye out for trouble and strangers. They worked in eight-hour shifts. When the volunteers received information or rumors, they passed it on to the Central Committee. The activities of known troublemakers and strangers were reported to the local police. Central Committee members liaised with senior police officials, while up to three local committee members liaised with the local inspectors and sub-inspectors. In the end, no acts of communal violence broke out. Perhaps they never would have anyway, but Maithri ensured, with little cost but time and energy, that there was no chance that tensions could spin out of control (Sharma interview, 2007).

**Maithri in perspective.**

Sri Kishan Sharma claims that Hindu-Muslim relations in Hyderabad have been transformed for the better since the mid-1990s—partly due to the Maithri initiative. While communal relations in Hyderabad do appear to have changed, with less frequent communal violence, it is difficult to attribute this to Maithri. As discussed earlier, the political conditions and police priorities to tackle communal issues also changed. It is not that Maithri's work did not also contribute to the change. However, the robustness of Maithri's activities could not be verified. There is little documented data to assess its activities. Apart from a couple of police constables who acknowledged its work, I did not have access to Maithri's mohalla committee members or volunteers. Nevertheless, Maithri's peace committees have become accepted by the police and some citizens. It is of note that Maithri is structurally different than the peace committees of Mumbai, Bhiwandi or Ahmedabad. The differences and lessons are discussed below.

## Comparing Institutions and Experiences

Having detailed how these institutions prevent, and in some cases fail to prevent, Hindu-Muslim riots, I turn to comparing and contrasting their experiences. First, I discuss tactics used in prevention, and then turn to broader strategies for prevention that the organizations are attempting to implement. Then I note some specific ideas and resources useful for prevention that became evident during the research.

## Similarities and Variations in Tactics

### *Women as barriers.*

Two of the most successful intervention discussed in this research—COVA's "human chain" and SEWA's Gomtipur incident – involved groups of women interposing

themselves between protagonists.  In COVA's case, it was between the Muslim men and the police.  In SEWA's case, it was between Muslims and Hindus.  The women created a physical barrier that the men had to overcome to get to the 'enemy.'  Because the men's justification for their 'need' to commit violence did not involve anger (an essential ingredient needed for people to commit atrocities) towards the women—especially their own women—the women became an insurmountable emotional obstacle.

Both COVA and SEWA's women spoke of deriving their courage because of their numbers.  SEWA deliberately taught the women in their life education classes to work in groups.  COVA's women planned ahead of time to work in groups.

It's difficult to speculate if SEWA's women could have been successful if there were only Hindus or Muslims in their group.  This highlights the difference between the COVA and SEWA's case.  COVA only had Muslim women, while SEWA had both. However, COVA's incident involved Muslim men and the police and not an opposing Hindu mob—in which case having Hindu women may have been critical.

### *Personalizing arguments.*

The women, in both cases, appealed to key members of the mobs that it was their own communities that would suffer from the violence.  They highlighted the short-term repercussions: causalities among the young men, destruction of their own property, arrests, and the possibility of more communal violence in the immediate future.  The appeals created an additional psychological barrier that the rioters had to overcome to commit violence, along with providing a brief window of time to arrest the emotional fury that is necessary for the men to commit violence.

### *Relationships create opportunities.*

COVA and SEWA's women also had a prior relationship with the protagonists that were probably critical to their success. In COVA's intervention between Muslims and the police, the police commander on the scene had worked with COVA. Though the commander may not have known the women specifically because they were in a burqas (and it is unclear if the women introduced themselves to the commander by name), he personally vouched for the group. Similarly, the Muslim mob did not know the women behind the veils, and may have believed that some of the women could possibly be their wives and daughters. In SEWA's intervention between Hindus and Muslims, the Hindu and Muslim women (who were not all in burqas) recognized some of the men in the mob. They approached these men and appealed to them.

Political riots, however, draw people from outside the community, including 'professional' goondas that are paid to instigate the violence. Emotional and rational appeals in the latter case might not only be fruitless, but physically dangerous for the women attempting to intervene. This again suggests the importance of distinguishing between the types of riots in order to prepare effectively.

### *Police-peace committee patrols.*

During times of tension, members of the Bhiwandi mohalla committees and MCMT Mumbai mohalla committees sometimes accompanied police during foot patrols. The police leveraged the trust built in this work to get detailed knowledge of the neighborhoods and their particular situations. In turn, the peace committee members leveraged the authority, and force, inherent in the police.

This is critically important because the police do not have a good reputation for being impartial. The residents of Mumbai's mohallas did not trust and feared the police.

Having the MCMT members vouch for the police eased the citizen's fear. It also allowed

MCMT to ensure that the police were not being biased.

However, MCMT also conducts patrols without the police. Maria Ishwaran

(interview, 2007) describes their more common practice: forming teams of 5-10 Hindus

and Muslims to go out to the marketplaces and businesses to talk to residents. When

rumors are heard, they are reported to the police. The absence of police may help

residents engage the MCMT teams more freely.

**Similarities and Variations in Strategy**

*Access through services.*

One of the most effective strategies used by many of the organizations is the

delivery of health and family services as a platform for peacebuilding and riot prevention.

COVA provides counseling services to families. SEWA provides skills training,

childcare and financial services to women. SXSSS advocates and coordinates campaigns

for public goods and better living conditions. MCMT and Maithri provide legal

counseling for women by drawing on the expertise of their volunteers, of which many

have legal backgrounds. The legal services are especially useful as they fill an important

need for free and safe opportunities for conflict resolution. These types of services

provide access for the organizations to at-risk populations by building trust between the

organization and the people. Critically, they build a reputation for the organization as an

impartial actor that is concerned about the common good. They also allow the

organizations to build intimate familiarity with the people, groups and dynamics of the

neighborhoods—the kind of information necessary to prevent violence.

MCMT, COVA and SEWA's services and programs also have the effect of empowering women to become involved in the community outside their family and advocate for social and economic issues that affect the whole community. COVA and SEWA's skills-building programs for women resulted in the creation of women's groups that could then engage in conflict resolution.

Engaging women also provided access to boys and men at-risk of being caught up in the spiral of communal violence. The vast majority of those that are involved in ethnic riots are men and boys as young as late teens. Yet, many peacebuilding programs can't reach these critical segments of the population because they do not have access to them. But organizations such as SEWA, COVA, SXSSS and MCMT gain access to some boys and men by providing family and health services to their wives, mothers and daughters.

### *Relationship with government.*

The organizations with the most robust programs also closely engage with local government and police. These relationships came into play during times of crises.

Maithri and Bhiwandi mohalla committees are essentially government-sponsored initiatives. This allows them direct access to the police and their resources. However, it also appears to make people cautious about engaging the committees for fear of politicians' involvement, more so in the case of Maithri. Prashant and CSSS engage government officials, but are also advocacy organizations that seek to reform government. Their engagement with officials and politicians is both cooperative and deliberately adversarial in other instances.

Development and service organizations such as COVA, SEWA and SXSSS depend on the approval of the government so they can access the population they wish to

serve. Furthermore, development initiatives inherently require coordination with local government in order to be effective. This longer-term working relationship also assists CSOs to call for help in riot situations. But the way in which these CSOs engage government is also important. They avoid politicians, but seek to develop a working relationship with civil servants. This helps them avoid being caught up in the politicization of their work and being linked to politicians that instigate communal tensions.

SXSSS often works closely with government (but not politicians), particularly in the aftermath of riots when the government requested the Society's assistance. Father Cedric Prakash, the former Director SXSSS (1987-2001), was appointed by the District Collector to a Gujarat government's emergency response committee, with allowed privileged access to critical and timely information of civil unrest and allowed him to enter areas that were off limits during riots.

### *Delivering the message.*

SXSSS and COVA have put great effort in making the message of communal harmony understandable. Even though peace seems like common sense to those already convinced (particularly the peacebuilder), it is not something that is easily acceptable to those who have grown up in fear and suspicious of each other. Peace is a leap of faith for people challenged each day to survive. For those with minimal or average education, classrooms and formal discussions may not be convincing. That's why many of these organizations have sought to make the message of communal harmony more understandable through activities. SXSSS performs street plays that address communal harmony. SXSSS, SEWA and COVA encourage joint celebrations of religious festivals

as a way to experience each other's lives. These creative ways of addressing communal relations are often more meaningful than classroom lectures and trainings.

### *Transforming identity.*

All institutions examined seek to overcome the primacy of religious identities by making nationality—as Indians—more significant. Each organization mentioned their work as ostensibly in the service of creating "national integrity". It is on the basis of Indian nationality that they are able to develop a cadre of Hindu and Muslim teams that can work together to keep the peace and prevent riots. A larger Indian identity also eschews the difficulties in addressing the religious differences between Hinduism and Islam.

While SEWA members mentioned the idea of their common "Indian-ness," SEWA's philosophy is to emphasize women's identities as workers. They build cooperation based on gender and occupation. As women workers, they struggle for better pay, better working conditions, and better livelihoods.

However, unlike the other organizations, COVA and SEWA also address religious differences by emphasizing common beliefs and practices in Hinduism and Islam. Discussions lead to women realizing that their daily lives and cultural practices are similar. The women become aware of how intertwined Hindu and Muslim festivals used to be in India. SEWA encourages celebrating each other's festivals.

Despite the emphasis on identity, all the organizations acknowledged the importance of instrumental interests—particularly the desires of politicians for power, fame and wealth. However, while some of the groups, such as Bhiwandi's mohalla committees and Hyderabad's Maithri, include politicians, police officers, and religious

leaders in their dialogues, none of the groups explicitly works on the institutional structures that frame the instrumental interests of elites that give them incentives to foment and sustain communal identities. In other words, they don't tackle issues of electoral laws and practices that entice, perhaps even compel, politicians to campaign on the basis of religious (and caste) vote banks. Additionally, while the reform of the police has been long discussed, it isn't widely implemented. Police are understaffed, undertrained (including the need to be better educated on communal issues), underpaid (to reduce corruption), have poor working conditions (especially the long hours), and should be insulated from political interference.

### *Warning and preparedness.*

While COVA and SEWA interventions differed in planning, they were both prepared. COVA's women planned to intervene while SEWA was fortuitous. COVA's women committed to intervening a week before Friday prayers at the Mecca Masjid—a known trouble spot during a tumultuous period. They heeded the early warning signs based on the violence that took place in Ayodhya and Hyderabad. Contrastingly, SEWA's women happened to be holding a meeting at their offices down the street from where a scooter accident took place. They spontaneously reacted to the incident.

Despite SEWA's fortune in this case, planning for intervention is critically important because large-scale riots are often sparked by minor incidents that are blown out of proportion by the rumor mill. Nipping neighborhood conflicts in the bud prevents supplying the necessary fuel to the riot. This was evident in my observations of the difference between SEWA and COVA in reaction to February 14, 2007 Samjunta Express bombings. SEWA did not hold any meetings or discuss the incident in any

formal manner. If this incident had sparked an incident in their locality, SEWA would have had to once again react spontaneously. Contrastingly, senior officials at COVA and MCMT took note of the Samjunta train incident as a potential spark for violence and held meetings to prepare for it. Luckily there were no outbreaks, but COVA would have been prepared while SEWA was not.

### *Collaboration with other CSOs.*

The organizations researched here had a variety of relationships with other CSOs, from inter-dependency to passive engagement. While CSO relationships with the police and key civil servants appear to be a highly preferable variable, relationships with other CSOs is desirable but not a necessary variable. However, this may be truer more for development CSOs than for peacebuilding CSOs; since peacebuilding CSOs lack the access to respond to local incidents, which developments can provide.

Maithri and the Bhiwandi peace committees had little direct involvement from other CSOs. Maithri and Bhiwandi were essentially police-sponsored programs and it is understandable, given the reputation of the police in India, that other CSOs would be reluctant to jump onboard. However, given the deep penetration into neighborhoods that some CSOs have, and the need for such access by peace committees, it is surprising that the peace committees don't make a more concentrated outreach effort. Conversely, CSOs could gain greater access to police authorities by voluntarily participating in the peace committees. That they do not is in some ways an indication of the lack of priority that most development CSOs give to becoming involved in peacebuilding.

While MCMT is a peace committee that engages the police, it is more like an CSO. Although it appears to cooperate with other CSOs, much of the collaboration is

conducted as senior level discussions rather than specific working relationships in the mohallas. CSOs are not deliberately excluded from MCMT work in the mohallas, but the informality of MCMT may not provide it with enough resources to actively go out and establish relationships. Conversely, CSOs know who to interact with at MCMT.

Prashant works with, and in many ways for, other NGOs. As an advocacy organization, its relationship with other organizations provides it with a large coalition and helps advocate its positions. But as a peacebuilding organization, it is also dependent on local organizations embedded in the slums to be able to reach out to residents. While its senior staff is networked heavily to senior civil servants and politicians, they have little penetration into specific communally sensitive areas.

COVA is widely networked with local organizations. In addition, it cooperates in nationwide NGO forums and networks. However, it also appears to conduct its peacebuilding in Hyderabad without substantial coordination with other groups, including some of its development partners. It offers training in conflict prevention to other organizations, but the project appears not to have been widely taken advantage of by other NGOs in Hyderabad.

SEWA is largely independent of the work of other NGOs. It does attend and collaborate in NGO forums. However, SEWA has put forth the effort to maintain its impartiality. It does not always join other organizations, particularly human rights and advocacy organizations, in publicizing governmental abuses, such as in the case of the alleged role of the Gujarat and Ahmedabad governments in the 2002 riots. SEWA interventions in preventing communal riots are largely dependent on their own local

neighborhood chapters. For example, they do not collaborate with SXSSS who also have peace centres in other neighborhoods of Ahmedabad.

SXSSS does attempt to cooperate with other local civil society organizations in Ahmedabad, particularly on human rights or civic rights advocacy campaigns. However, there is no active collaboration on peacebuilding projects in the neighborhoods.

### *Religious leaders.*

These organizations have diverse perspectives on interacting with religious leaders. SXSSS is an inherently religious (Christian) institution. It has Hindus, Muslims and Jains on its staff and works with Muslims and Hindus in the neighborhoods. However, it does not appear to engage with religious leaders directly by holding dialogues with them or including Hindu and Muslim religious leaders in peacebuilding programs. The inclusion of religious leaders in prevention or reaction to the riots was not mentioned to me; and Bock (1995) does not mention it either in his study of SXSSS.

Prashant is also an inherently religion-based organization. It belongs to the Society of Jesus in Gujarat and is directly under a governing body headed by the Gujarat Jesuits. Christianity is an inspiration for its work. Its Director, Fr. Prakash, remarked that its Christian character also provides an aura of neutrality when dealing with Hindu-Muslim conflicts. As an advocacy organization, it works with other organizations widely. However, like SXSSS, I did not find any evidence that it specifically sought to engage religious leaders or institutions in peacebuilding.

SEWA does not prioritize engagement with religious leaders. It deliberately eschews the differences between Hinduism and Islam, instead focusing on the common

identity as a worker. Some SEWA women know their local imams or Hindu priests, but it does not appear that they turn to them for help regarding communal relations.

COVA includes Hindu and Muslim religious figures more actively. They ask local religious leaders to release statements to their congregations aimed at preventing support for riot activities. COVA also noted that not all religious leaders are willing to become involved in riot prevention for fear of losing support from their followers. Interestingly, COVA did not mention any outreach to the leaders of the Mecca Masjid mosque, where COVA has had to respond to communal tensions. COVA has been able to call some religious leaders for assistance in preventing riots because these leaders are also included in peace dialogues (for students) in their peacebuilding programs.

CSSS, as a peacebuilding think-tank and advocacy organization, runs interfaith dialogues. These dialogues include religious leaders, as well as women, youth from Dharavi (a historically communally sensitive area) and Dalits. CSSS has worked with residents and religious and police leaders that are keys to preventing violence. However, it has not utilized these resources for riot prevention. Nevertheless, it trains, equips and serves as a resource for former students who are engaged in prevention in the field.

The three peace committees discussed in this thesis are open to involvement of religious figures but don't actively recruit them. This is probably due more to a lack of capacity rather than the belief that it is not important. In fact, MCMT mentioned turning to local religious figures for dispute resolution. I did not find any evidence that the Bhiwandi peace committees or the Maithri peace committees engaged religious figures in mitigating conflict, but it is possible that they did.

Overall, a major shortcoming of these organizations is that there is minimal engagement with Hindu and Muslim religious leaders. While there have been some interfaith dialogues, these have not led to drawing these religious leaders into riot prevention programs. Considering that a central aspect of the communal violence is based around Hindu-Muslim religious identities, it is important that religious leaders are part of the process.

### *Roles for the police.*

The role of the police in the three peace committees differed. The police ran Bhiwandi peace committees, because one of the central purposes of the committees was to tackle the poor community-police relations. Hyderabad Maithri is police-sponsored, but they are not run by the police. MCMT engages the police, and even uses their facilities, but only invites the police to be involved when necessary.

The advantage for the Bhiwandi committees is that they had an institutional backing that better ensured their sustainability for a certain time. This is a critical deficiency that the MCMT peace committees in Mumbai constantly face. Second, residents participating in the committees felt that they were close to the locus of power, better ensuring that grievances could be acted upon with authority. The feeling of having access to authorities likely encouraged greater participation; even if greater participation doesn't necessarily mean greater effectiveness. Third, important information about troublemakers and rumors went directly to the police who could do something about them. When time is of the essence--violence is imminent--direct access is critical. There was no middle management to take it from the citizens to the police. Finally, according to former Bhiwandi Deputy Commissioner of Police Suresh Khopade, making inspectors

and constables responsible for running the committees exposed the police to their constituents and helped transform prejudices within the police force. Similarly, Maithri has become institutionalized into police stations, which are required to support and work with it.

Police involvement has its disadvantages. The presence of police often intimidates residents—particularly Muslims and especially Muslim women. It inadvertently excludes people helpful for riot prevention. Second, police are widely viewed as biased (in favor of Hindus) and corrupt. Their involvement affects the legitimacy and effectiveness of the peace committees. Because police involvement in the committees offers access to authority and power, politicians and criminals have an incentive to participate in the committees for their own political or nefarious purposes.

While the police sponsor but do not run Maithri, it still appears to suffer from too close of a relationship with the police. A suspicion that the committees are simply police in sheep's clothing has hindered their legitimacy and penetration into the sensitive neighborhoods of Hyderabad.

In MCMT, police are invited to participate in some meetings and the various committees build separate informal relationships with the police. However, this has disadvantages as well. While this makes MCMT more inviting for citizens to participate in, the police involvement required to make it effective is based on the whims of the most senior police leaders.

So what is the best formula? When civil society is able to establish legitimate and vibrant committees on its own, then its relationship to the police should be informal. It should nurture relationships with the local police beats as well as senior police leaders.

However, when civil society organizations and peace committees are absent, police can set up and run committees. Civil society-borne peace committees are more organic, but must create linkages upwards to authorities to be effective. This creates links to senior police and politicians that allows peace committees and CSOs to leverage relationships when necessary in order to prevent violence.

### *Target audiences.*

CSSS workshops and Prashant activities involve constituents who are already committed to peace (social activists) and "fence-sitters" (police and students who are open to communal peace, but are seeking peacebuilding skills.) Many of these people are part of the middle or professional class. SEWA and COVA workshops involve the poor and those who may not be predisposed to the communal harmony message. Mohalla committees are somewhere in between. They involve professionals, such as lawyers and social activists, serving as volunteers. They also invite local residents who want to become peacebuilders and may directly include local victims of the violence.

Undoubtedly, each category is important. CSSS workshops enhance the skills of the police authorities and activist who have the power to intervene. They also shape the views of the students and tap into their enthusiasm and energy. While Prashant does training, its focus is on advocacy. It pressures, and in some ways empowers, authorities to take action for communal peace, violence prevention and justice. Both these organizations enhance the possibility of the effectiveness of top-down interventions into communal peacebuilding.

SEWA, COVA and the mohalla committees' access and work with local residents are the core element in peacebuilding and violence prevention. As many of the case

studies in this research detail, while these organizations may not have direct access to the perpetrators of the violence, they can have access to those affected by the population and those in proximity to perpetrators (i.e., parents and community elders), who can assist to prevent communal violence and riots.

**Some Ideas and Useful Resources**

The experiences of these organizations also suggest several other specific lessons for prevention. One, it would be ideal if authorities could delay the release of the victim's bodies to the families, if only for hours or a day. The bodies of riot victims who have been killed are paraded through the streets in order to raise communal tensions. An attempt by police to escort the funeral procession in one case in Mumbai did not help the situation. While delaying the release of the bodies may be ideal, it may not be possible for religious and personal reasons (as in the case of Muslim bodies having to be buried as soon as possible).

Curfews are not used enough to prevent the escalation of tensions. Curfews can 'freeze' the escalating tension, providing space for CSOs and the police to intervene and investigate. They may even avert imminent violence by providing time and space for tensions to dissipate. This may be truer for spontaneous riots than for political riots. Since political riots are comparatively better and more deliberately organized, it may be difficult for authorities to impose curfews, especially in the case of religious processions. However, if rioting or violence begins even in these cases, curfews can prevent large mobs from gathering and prevent mobs from moving from neighborhood to neighborhood. Politicians often prevent the police from actively using curfews. CSOs

can counter that pressure on the police by forcefully advocating, at the first early warning signs, for the establishment of curfews.

CSOs can also advocate for 'self-curfews.' If the CSO has been working with local residents or has built a good relationship with local elders and religious leaders, CSOs can advise that people voluntarily observe a curfew, particularly men and boys.

Mobile phones were also under-utilized by the CSOs that I interviewed, especially organizations that have volunteer networks such as COVA, SEWA, MCMT and Maithri. While mobile phones are not ubiquitous yet, particularly among the poorer population, they are cheap enough for organizations to have them on hand to distribute if necessary.

When I began this research, I included the neighborhood peace committees (i.e., MCMT, Bhiwandi peace committees, and Maithri) believing them to be no different than 'typical' civil society organizations (i.e., SEWA, COVA, Prashant and SXSSS). One hopeful difference is that peace committees are the simplest form of violence prevention and peacebuilding. Any neighborhood can form a peace committee. It does not require funding, special status with the government, a building of its own, or a professional staff. All it requires is a few passionate people to begin a group that commits to building communal links. Of course, an effective peace committee requires some of the assets detailed in this thesis. Some of these requirements include: a network of volunteers that includes members of each ethnic, religious or caste communities living in the neighborhood; inclusion of members from outside the local area that may have professional skills (i.e., lawyers, activists, media professionals, etc.); being embedded in the neighborhood; relationships with local elders, police authorities (local and senior), and local religious figures; relationship with the local civic administration; a form of

communication (i.e., cell phones, roster, etc.) between the volunteers; links to professional peacebuilding organization for training and support; and links to development CSOs that are doing work in the area. While it is not necessary for peace committees to have all these assets, those that strive to build these capacities will be different than peace committees of the past and are more likely to be successful.

**Conclusion**

The experiences of these NGOs and peace committees reinforce some of the hard-won lessons in prevention and peacebuilding and highlight some new dynamics.

In spontaneous riots (riots with organization, but not conceived deliberately by politicians) the existing capacity (i.e., presence in the mohallas, access to victims and perpetrations, and human resources) of development CSOs that have offices in local neighborhoods offers the potential for a more swift and effective response to preventing communal altercations and riots. These development CSOs can draw in other organizations or serve as focal points for intervention for the larger civil society community and even for governmental authority.

In political riots (riots fomented by politicians), peacebuilding and human rights civil society organizations are well placed to spearhead violence prevention initiatives. These types of riots are often well organized, sometimes with rioters trucked in from elsewhere, and they are backed by the power of political patronage. It is difficult for any single actor to confront such power. But advocacy organizations, such as Prashant, are used to such challenges. They could lead riot prevention efforts by confronting the benefactors of the violence (e.g. politicians); but they must also engage and work with locally rooted CSOs and peace committees to stop precipitants from sparking violence.

Neighborhood actors can hold rallies and campaigns to dissuade rioters from entering neighborhoods, dispelling rumors to prevent support for the rioters, hold neighborhood meetings to ease tensions, react to precipitants and provocative incidents, and work with supportive media to convey accurate information and messages of peace.

The CSOs and peace committees explored in this research were also fortunate because the issue of communal violence reached a level of prominence in the 1990s that it was possible for organizations to change and take on the challenge of peacebuilding. Hindu-Muslim communal tensions and riots have been traced back to before India's independence, as have efforts to establish Hindu-Muslim peace committees. But in the 1990s, senior politicians and citizens recognized communal violence as an important problem that needs to be resolved if India is to sustain its secular democracy and economic progress. The police, such as in Bhiwandi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, are willing to try innovative solutions because they have been pressured, unlike ever before, to prevent violence. It was a sitting deputy police commissioner in Bhiwandi that began experimentation with peace committees, and it was retired senior police officers in Mumbai that were willing to partner with civil society activists to create peace committees in Mumbai. CSOs also took the opportunity to build peacebuilding and prevention programs within their institutions in the aftermath of deadly communal riots. The prioritization of the issue at the national level provided the motivation to invest scarce resources in conflict prevention, and local residents volunteered because they felt the necessity for such programs after the deadly riots in Gujarat. The Gujarat riots in 2002 also spurned interest among influential people (i.e. lawyers, businessmen, police

officers and politicians) in the wider society to attempt and enact a change in relationship between Hindus and Muslims.

Many of the lessons learned on making riot prevention more effective relate to processes and capacities within civil society organizations. But fundamentally, an incentive for inter-ethnic peace, or a significant and credible disincentive for communal violence, is necessary for key partners (i.e., police, elders, etc.) in the community to partner with civil society efforts. For example, the local police must benefit from communal harmony (e.g., to receive rewards from their superiors, better working environment, etc.) or face punishment for not doing so (e.g., removal from service, demotions, etc.) If these partners do not see benefits for them to be engaged in riot prevention, then CSOs will be left to cope with a situation that often exceeds their capacity to successfully intervene. CSOs can create incentives and disincentives. This, perhaps, is the larger struggle of peacebuilding—to change the dynamics of societies, and interests of political leaders, where communal harmony, rather than communal divisions, is seen as beneficial and necessary.

**CHAPTER 5**

**LESSONS FOR PREVENTION**

This chapter details five broad lessons learned from the research and case studies presented in the previous chapter. These lessons are important elements for building better structures for prevention.

### Fundamental Issue: Believing in "Operational Prevention"

The most general, but most critical, finding in this research is that there is a fundamental lack, by civil society organizations (CSOs), of understanding and accepting a role for CSOs in operational prevention beyond early warning. This, in turn, leaves CSOs unprepared to systematically engage in prevention when tensions arise.

Institutions dedicated to reacting to crises--such as the police, firefighters, hospital staff, disaster management specialists--constantly prepare and train to be able to respond with competence and confidence to crises. So, why is it that CSOs, even those whose core mission is communal harmony, do not prepare and practice to react in times of tension? It is either that they don't believe there is a role for CSOs in crises or they don't know how to engage—and thus, prepare—for operational prevention.

CSOs role in early warning has been extensively detailed and generally accepted. However, this, and many other anecdotes of CSO activism, shows that there is more that CSOs are capable of doing.

First, CSOs provide information not easily accessible to the police or government. CSOs rooted in the community can observe unusual patterns of behavior and sense the prevailing tensions. Through their daily work with residents, they are privy to rumors and possibly even plans for protests. They are also familiar with the underlying causes of

the violence. The trust they have built up with their constituents will be indispensable for gathering information that the police and governments cannot access. They may even know the local troublemakers. This information can inform official actors about what to address and who to talk to.

Second, CSOs can convey accurate information, particularly when the populace views official authorities suspiciously. Earlier, I noted the critical role of rumors in riots. They raise tensions and tip conflict to violence. CSOs can investigate and dispel false rumors. If the rumors have a grain of truth, the facts can be clarified and further action (by the CSO or the police) can follow. CSOs also have the presence to hold neighborhood meetings. These can be used to ease the tension of residents by providing them accurate information about the rumors or other events that are likely to cause a stir. Importantly, these meetings can also raise the cost of violence by reminding residents of the repercussions to their livelihoods and their families. Finally, CSOs can pressure the media to report the stories accurately or frame the conflict in a more conducive way to easing tensions rather than exacerbating them. Such reporting can assist in wider civil society campaigns to mobilize public opinion and action (e.g. for peace rallies, place pressure on authorities to act, etc.). It can also provide access for those many, but often silent, people who are supportive of peace.

Third, CSOs can conduct activities that mitigate tensions. CSOs can convene protagonists to discuss the problem. Depending on their reputation in the locality, they could act as a neutral and impartial facilitators or mediators for the immediate cause of the conflict. However, these types of activities are probably more effective in

spontaneous riots rather than the political riot.  The political riot contains too much deliberate planning to dissuade the instigating party to talk.

CSOs can also convene religious leaders (particularly when the groups in conflict are divided by religion) to hold dialogues that encourage peace.  Because religious leaders are so eminently respected and influential in their communities, their guidance can have a powerful impact on their constituents.  However, it will take a great deal of prior relationship building if CSOs hope to counter the incentive for religious leaders to sit safely apart from the conflict or to support politicians professing to increase their religious community's political power (such as the BJP on Hinduism).

Ashutosh Varshney (2002) also notes that civil society can promote communication between members of different religious communities and, more deeply, establish links between communities through associations that serve mutual interests. Early warning information, communication conduits and inter-ethnic associations are critically necessary for preventing inter-ethnic communal riots.  Finally, CSOs can begin peacebuilding and prevention in the aftermath of a riot (addressed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter).

### Advocacy Civil Society Organizations & Development CSOs

Civil society organizations specializing in development work are often better placed than peacebuilding CSOs to prevent imminent violence in neighborhoods because they have access and capacity needed for effective prevention.  However, peacebuilding CSOs can contribute knowledge about conflict prevention and conduct advocacy activities that may be necessary to prevent the overall descent into violence.

Civil society organizations often specialize in either development or peacebuilding (which includes human rights civil society organizations). There are important differences in philosophy between these organizations that impacts prevention possibilities. While some advocate for justice and human rights through confrontation (typical of human rights and some peacebuilding organizations), others (many development organizations) choose not to publicly criticize governments in order to maintain access to their constituents (mostly the poor). Each has advantages and disadvantages for operational prevention. Their roles also differ in the two kinds of riot situations: the spontaneous riot and political riot.

Being rooted for the long-term in communally sensitive neighborhoods is necessary to: 1) build familiarity and trust (with the various ethnic communities, their local leaders and elites), 2) maintain knowledge of the people and dynamics of the neighborhood in order to be constantly aware of early warning indicators, and 3) have established resources such as local offices to coordinate from or to offer people protection in the event of a riot.

Access refers to the possibility of working with people who are 'critical populations' in the riot dynamic. As Horowitz (2000) states, typical characteristics of the mob participant are unmarried men between the ages of 18-30 (with a greater representation from the lower end of this range) who are involved in unskilled labor. It is important to note that a high proportion of the populations in developing countries, as in India, are under the age of 30. It is often the poor, who serve as the foot soldiers, and the victims, in the riot. Sometimes the riot includes radicalized middle class men. Riots

most often occur in the slums or neighborhoods where both groups live.  It requires regular contact to build up familiarity and a reservoir of trust with this population.

Peacebuilding organizations have an expertise in communal harmony programs by virtue of their focus on social and ethnic relations of the communities, research on peacebuilding issues, and local, national and international networks dealing specifically with peace and security issues.  However, what they often do not have is the access to local and critical populations and capacity (i.e. resources) to affect communal harmony.  While some peacebuilding CSOs conduct trainings, much of the training is limited to professionals (other civil society staff and police).

Similarly, peacebuilding organizations are centralized and often located outside riot-prone areas.  Peacebuilding organizations do not have the funding to have multiple offices in riot-prone areas or to work over the long-term with critical populations.  While some organizations work with critical populations, they do not have the financial resources to sustain communal harmony programs because peace is often not a priority for people, especially in times of peace.  Lack of resources constrains peacebuilding training to those that can afford it, such as the police and government officials.

Development and service-delivery type civil society organizations have greater access and capacity because they are often located in areas that are communally sensitive and riot-prone and work daily with the population—the poor—that is most affected by riots.  People who work all day in order to survive have limited time, energy and resources to learn about peace.  However, services (i.e. healthcare, job training, etc.) provide an economic incentive for involvement.  The communal harmony message can be filtered along with the provision of services.

Peacebuilding CSOs can enhance access for development organizations. For example, MCMT is rooted in sensitive neighborhoods. By partnering with them, development CSOs can use the frequent meetings of the mohalla committees to engage residents. Conversely, the involvement of development CSOs in these meetings would greatly assist the sustainability of the mohalla committees by attracting more residents to attend the meetings.

Combining development programs with communal harmony programs also makes the message of peace more understandable. As Noorjahan (interview, 2007) of COVA stated, we should not assume that the peace is easily understood. For people who have grown up with distrust or in violence with the other community, asking them to live in harmony is akin to asking them to change religions. Noorjahan (interview, 2007) feels that mainstreaming the harmony message into service-delivery provides sustained interaction that can break down barriers of suspicion, provide opportunities to convey the message of communal harmony, give time for questions to be raised and answered, create space for people to change, and perhaps work with members of the other community.

Such a strategy can also better reach men and boys, who make up the majority of any riot population. While at SEWA's Gomtipur peace center, I noticed that the husbands often stopped by, if only for a moment, to talk with their wives. What is critical about this is that SEWA had to initially convince many husbands to allow their wives to participate in the peace centre. Ostensibly, many of the men did so because there were livelihood benefits to be gained by allowing their wives to be involved with SEWA. Apparently many men also like the fact that they knew where to find their women when

needed. That the men come by the Centre shows an acceptance of their wives'
involvement in the Centre's activities.

Why should development NGOs devote limited resources to include communal
harmony in their work? Communal harmony directly contributes to the sustainability of
their work. Riots undo development work and create new problems: displaced
populations, health crises, economic setbacks and the loss of trust between neighbors.
Prevention of violence between communities is a way to prevent the loss of valuable
resources spent in development and to prevent creating greater needs that will require
even more resources.

**Philosophical Differences and Riot Situations**

While the benefits of collaboration seem apparent, important philosophical
differences inhibit cooperation. There is a trade-off between advocacy and access.
Advocacy involves explicitly embracing political agendas on behalf of the victims of
poverty and oppression. It often involves directly confronting the government, such as
through protests and publicizing human rights violations. Organizations that conduct
development work (and also humanitarian relief work) often do not prefer this strategy
for fear that being critical of authorities will restrict access to their constituents. The
government not only allows access but it provides the legal framework for CSO activity,
helps define priorities, and sometimes even directly works with CSOs. The difference in
philosophies often results in a lack of cooperation between advocacy and development
CSOs. However, these differences also present an opportunity for prevention.

When spontaneous tensions develop or a riot is imminent, development CSOs
may have first warning of a situation. Staff, volunteers and constituents of the CSO can

react to the situation by deploying personnel to the site of an altercation. Or if an incident has already occurred, they can deploy personnel to investigate the incident, meet with the parties in conflict, and dialogue with community leaders. The latter situation, with a space between the incident and a potential riot, presents an opportunity for development CSOs to access a network of peacebuilding organizations to consult on conflict resolution procedures to diffuse the situation.

Political riots are comparatively well organized. They have the backing of powerful individuals (i.e. politicians, criminals, government authorities), which makes it difficult for prevention once a riot is in the offing. However, peacebuilding/human rights CSOs and development CSOs can cooperate to help prevent the riot or at least help prevent it from spreading. As tensions mount (and early warning indicators are apparent), a network of peacebuilding and human rights CSOs must become vocal in pressuring political authorities to prevent a riot by mobilizing the police, warning or arresting troublemakers, and establishing curfews if necessary.

In the meantime, development CSOs can stay out of the advocacy in order to preserve their access to vulnerable populations (i.e. the poor or target group). Instead, they can conduct neighborhood meetings to ease tensions, dissuade participation and support for the riot, and heighten vigilance against troublemakers. They can prepare neighborhoods in the event of violence by providing plans for protection and perhaps evacuation for the targeted population. They can also provide peacebuilding/human rights advocates with early warning information to use in their advocacy with official authorities. The foundations of such collaboration must be built ahead of time.

## Mohalla Committees as Affordable Prevention Centres

Ashutosh Varshney (2002) claims that mohalla ("neighborhood") peace committees that emerge organically from grassroots (bottom-up growth) are better than those manufactured from top-down (by city administration or social elites) because grassroots organizations have greater mutual consent between the ethnic community members and have greater involvement of local residents.  He claims that top-down organizations imposed from above do not work well "because of their politician members, though inducted for purposes of peace, may in fact already be committed to polarization and violence for the sake of electoral benefit" (Varshney, 2002, p. 47).  I contend that it is not so important how peace committees emerge or who begins them. Rather, it is more important *who* composes them and *what* they do.

As mentioned earlier, neighborhood peace committees are not new concepts.[1] Early in the 20th century, the British set up peace committees to resolve religious issues. An internal administrative review conducted by colonial officials in 1913 of the "Formation of Conciliation Boards to settle differences between Hindus and Muhammadans regarding their religious rites" cited a number of problems with these committees:

1. Only being effective where conflict is not bad to begin with;
2. Being prone to collapse if tensions should decline or if the officials involved in the committee are transferred or lose interest;
3. Being focused on communal tensions, therefore keeping the communal pot boiling rather than helping reduce tensions;

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[1] Another version of a peace committee, the Gandhi-inspired 'Shanti Sena' (Peace Army), has been discussed earlier in the paper. During their existence, they had notable success in re-establishing peace after riots and even preventing Hindu-Muslim violence. However, as noted before, a fundamental problem of the roaming peace committees were that the committed individuals were often outsiders to the community. This inhibited their effectiveness and sustainability (the concept in fact faded away). But lessons from this experience prove to be critical when combined with the local peace committees as discussed here.

4. Often including the wrong people, either people with no community credibility and power or else those people who are behind the conflict in the first place (Wilkinson 2005, Footnote 48, p. 29).

These are essentially the same criticisms that neighborhood committees face now. Discussing them provides us a better understanding of how to create peace committees that can overcome these challenges.

The first criticism is related to the issue of endogeneity. Are peace committees a cause of peace or are they a product of already existing peaceful conditions? Varshney (2002) argues that it is not endogenous because riots broke out in the slums of Surat and Ayodhya in 1992 but not in other areas of these same cities where pre-existing social networks and newly formed neighborhood watch committees are present provides evidence that inter-communal engagement is crucial for peace (Varshney, 2002). However, Wilkinson (2005) wonders how much civic engagement is needed for this to be true. Is the 60 percent of Hindu-Muslim engagement in Aligarh too low which resulted in riots, while the 84 percent in Kozhikode sufficient which resulted in peace? If there is no definitive level of inter-communal engagement that can be correlated with peace, perhaps it is not inter-communal engagement that is responsible for peace at all. It could be other variables that are responsible, such as proactive police and government political will.

Perhaps we cannot definitively claim that peace committees can stop communal riots. Members of MCMT admitted that their Mohalla peace committees of Mumbai have been untested in a major riot since they were set up after the 1992 riots, but they may be underplaying their role in preventing

violence in Mumbai while Ahmedabad burned during the 2002 riots. Although there weren't major tensions in Mumbai during 2002, MCMTs work over the previous decade may have forestalled escalation of tensions. Additionally, one can also speculate if the many minor incidents these committees did manage to resolve over the years prevented larger scale riots. A fundamental problem with prevention has always been proving it efficacy, because it is difficult to correlate activities with nothing (the absence of violence.)

The second criticism—the lack of the sustainability—remains a key ongoing challenge. The mohalla committees in Bhiwandi lost their robust character after the transfer of Deputy Police Commissioner Suresh Khopade. Similarly, after Satish Sahney's tenure as Mumbai's Commissioner of Police, the new commissioner set up different police-led peace committees that are less effective. Both Khopade and Sahney noted that there is a tendency for every new police commissioner to create their own unique projects because they do not want to rest on the successes of the previous commissioner. One solution is to institutionalize the idea into normal police practice. In fact, Khopade has made presentations to the Indian Police Service Academy in an effort to institutionalize the concept. Some cities in India have picked up the idea, but the lack of understanding of what works and what doesn't has prevented its wholesale adoption.

MCMT in Mumbai has also encountered sustainability problems. As peace sets in, people lose interest in the committees. Why spend time, energy and money on something that is seemingly not necessary? Encouraging development

of local leadership and participation of elites and professionals (i.e. lawyers or social activists) has been difficult.  One method to attract local involvement is to link the committees with the provision of welfare services, either by the peace committees or through partnerships with development NGOs--a lesson that is discussed in the previous section.

The third criticism--keeping the communal pot boiling by focusing on the problem--is essentially philosophical.  While some people argue that specifically focusing on the problem makes it even more salient that it might be, others contend that denying a problem that evidently exists will only cause it to become worse over time.  Addressing the Hindu-Muslim problem may indeed reify the existence of a division in identity between the two communities, but not addressing it leaves the issue usable to people who would exacerbate the division for personal interests.  While there is no definitive way out of this philosophical conundrum, a popular strategy among peacebuilders in India is the attempt to transcend the division by creating transcendental identities, such as 'Indians' (for COVA) or as 'workers' (for SEWA).

The fourth criticism has important repercussions for the structure of peace committees.  Who is involved in large part determines what will be done.  Most people seem to agree that politicians, persons associated directly with political parties, and persons with criminal records are not good candidates (at least officially) to serve in peace committees.  Their political interests and machinations hinder the working of committees.  The police-led mohalla committees in Mumbai (not MCMT committees) suffer from paralysis and have

been reduced to occasional talk shops because politicians used the committees for personal interests, such as to win favor with the police. SEWA requests its members to abstain from involvement with political parties or even other civil society organizations for fear of political interests overtaking the Peace Centres.

However, Suresh Khopade's committees in Bhiwandi allowed the involvement of politically affiliated individuals, even from extremist organizations. Khopade states that members from Hindu nationalist groups found themselves compelled to get involved because members from their opposition were involved. Khopade further states that this is an advantage because it offers the opportunity to transform these individuals and make them responsible for peace. This assumes that the committee will transform these individuals rather than the individuals transforming the committee for their own personal use. It is true that the peace committees were instrumental in preventing Bhiwandi from descending into violence while Mumbai burned in 1992-1993. However, no evidence exists whether transformation of these individuals was actually successful and if they were involved in that instance.

Having discussed the major criticisms of peace committees, we turn to detailing how neighborhood peace committees can be set up to function effectively.

**Criteria and Membership**

MCMT has a strict policy about its members not having a criminal record. Although this seems obvious, who is designated a 'criminal' can sometimes be quite political (e.g. a slum dweller is more likely to be picked up for minor transgressions than a well known businessman or local elite). The spirit of this rule is that persons who are

recidivist criminals are not allowed in order to maintain a good reputation and good workings of the committee.

As noted above, MCMT as well as SEWA's Peace Centre prohibit the involvement of politicians, political party activists, or those with aspirations to enter politics. Though Deputy Police Commissioner Khopade disagrees with this criterion, this is probably a good rule considering the history of trouble politicians have made in peace committees. However, a middle way might be found in situations where political members show a sincere interest in peace. They could be involved as 'informal members', occasionally invited to attend meetings. This would provide a link between the committee and influential political members who might be helpful when needed. Additionally, if politicians were involved, they can be pressured into taking responsibility for violence when tensions are on the rise.

Turning from criteria that excludes to that which includes, the mohalla committee must have a representative cross-section of the neighborhood's demographics (ethnic, religious, caste, class, occupation, etc.). Some committees, such as MCMT, have found that Hindu participation (the majority community) has declined. This is in part because it is Muslims who suffer in most riots. An uneven participation results in a lack of legitimacy of the committee. One remedy may be that the mohalla committees can provide access to welfare services for all the residents. Even if the mohalla committees don't provide the services, linking with other civil society organizations may draw in more participants across ethnic and religious divides.

Another important cross-section of the population is young males. They participate in riots in disproportionate numbers, are highly susceptible to rhetoric calling

for violence and are influential with their peers. MCMT has attempted to involve them in its programs by enticing them with cricket competitions; but sustaining their interest and building lasting relationship across religious divides has been difficult.

Women are also uniquely important in mohalla committees. A later section discusses in detail the unique roles women can play in mediation and prevention. For now, it is sufficient to say that some of the most active members on communal harmony programs in the mohalla committees of Mumbai, peace centres in Ahmedabad and CSOs in Hyderabad are women.

Mohalla committees also need political, business, and civic elites as supporters and to contribute their resources and relationships. Rich elites can donate financial resources. Those with time can donate their expertise. All of them have relationships to powerful individuals and influence in important circles that can provide access to decision-makers when tensions are on the rise. Even though the Old City area of Hyderabad is full of small and medium sized businesses, COVA has found it difficult to get them involved. Business interests, such as real estate, were implicated in causing or at least taking advantage of riots to drive out poor people and buy up their property. The enactment of legislation in Hyderabad now prevents the acquisition of property within one year of a riot in order to prevent such motivations. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that Hindu or Muslim shop owners might take advantage of riots to hurt their competition. Dr. Mazher Hussain of COVA (interview, 2007) suggested that communal harmony programs might need to be sold as sort of an "insurance policy" for businesses. By pointing out that all businesses are hurt in a riot, businesses might find a financial incentive to support communal harmony programs and mohalla peace committees.

Religious leaders are also important. Since it is religious identity and interests that fuel the passions of rioters, the calming voices of religious leaders could prove critical in times of tensions. However, occasionally holding inter-religious forums is quite different than intimate involvement of religious leaders in the committees. Their regular involvement may in fact hinder the effectiveness of committees by making it too confrontational about religious issue and identities. Nevertheless, having relationships with religious leaders that are able to come together and advocate for peace during times of tensions will be invaluable resources for preventing riots.

Links with the police builds trust and a working relationship that will be critically important in times of tension. Whether it is exchanging information on events and people in the neighborhood, passing along early warning information, referring troublesome cases to the police, requesting physical assistance, or assisting police in investigations and dispute resolution, the relationship between the committee and police can be critical if the committee intends to be effective in preventing violence. Yasmine Shaikh of MCMT cited several cases in which she accessed the Mumbai Commissioner of Police's office through contacts of the former Mumbai Police Commissioner Sahney. Directives from above helped prompt the local police to take action. In India, having a relationship with the District Collector can provide critical access to information and resources during civil disturbances.

But there are two types of relationships. One is an informal working relationship between the committee and the police, in which they are familiar with each other, have a reservoir of trust and occasionally cooperate on programs and issues. A second type of relationship is more formal, in which the police are members of the committee or even

run the committees. The pervious type is exemplified by MCMT and COVA and the latter type by Khopade's mohalla committees of Bhiwandi and the newer police mohalla committees of Mumbai. Both have advantages and disadvantages and it will depend on the purpose of the committees and the reputation of the police in the city whether one is better than the other.

Having police present in the committee makes some members feel constrained, inhibited or threatened at the sight of authority sitting in the committee. This is especially the case for women, youth and the minority community. On the other hand, some involvement of the police may empower the committee with authority and convey to local residents that the committee has some power to get things done. This is important for when one of the grievances is police practice. After the 1993 Mumbai riots, Police Commissioner Sahney attended most of the initial meetings of the mohalla committees. He insisted that his deputies and the local inspectors also attend. The police had gained a reputation for being anti-Muslim and too forceful in their policing. The residents vented their anger at the police. Sahney felt that it was important for residents to express their emotions before building new relationships. However, it is worth noting that the direct involvement of the police in the committees in this case was to discuss the issue of policing, not to facilitate better relations between Hindus and Muslims. An option that could be used here is to have an official police officer liaison to the committee; who would attend upon invitation for certain meetings when the committee feels necessary.

Alternatively, Deputy Police Commissioner Khopade structured the mohalla committees in Bhiwandi so that police constables would chair and run them. He felt that since the police have the primary responsibility for the security and peace, it was logical

that police and residents interact through the committee. It prioritizes the committee's work as building relation with the police rather than working out relations between Hindus and Muslims. Only once the police are seen as a neutral facilitator can Hindus and Muslims discuss issues about their relationship. Khopade also admits that part of the reason for putting constables in charge of the committees is to transform their attitudes towards the communities, particularly Muslims, and to professionalize the work of the police by giving them the responsibility to effectively run the committees and maintain communal peace. But part of the problem is that the newer police mohalla committees of Mumbai are rather ineffective because the local inspectors and constables who run the committees are uncommitted to their successes. This brings us to an essential ingredient in the effectiveness of peace committees in resolving problems, maintaining peace and preventing riots—their relationship with police leadership.

Former police commissioners Sahney and Khopade emphasized that the support of the Commissioner of Police (CP) and/or the Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) and/or the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) is important to the mohalla committees' effectiveness. Support from senior police offices is also important for a mohalla committee's relationship to local police officers. Local inspectors and constables have little incentive to take on the additional work of engaging the mohalla committees, even if the committee is intended to help them in their work. Directives from senior leaders can prompt local police officials to work with the committees. Alternatively, the lack of support from seniors inhibits the abilities of local inspectors to take the initiative to work with the committees.

Some words of caution are warranted regarding relationships with the police. One, in situations were the police are seen as grossly biased and perhaps considered part of the problem, too much of an intimate relationship with the police can damage the legitimacy of a peace committee. Certainly, a mohalla committee cannot be seen as a proxy for the police, especially as a means for the police to gather intelligence. Unless a mohalla committee is set-up and run by the police, mohalla committees or CSOs must be independent and relate to the police as equal entities. Second, peace committees cannot depend altogether on their relationship with the police commissioner (or his deputies) for cooperation or as benefactors. Commissioners and high-level staff change frequently. Often the positive cooperation from a CP, DCP or ACP is replaced by disinterest of the next. In the end, a mohalla committee will have to carefully manage its relationship to all the elites with a view towards what is most effective for its legitimacy as well as its practical effectiveness.

Finally, an experienced facilitator is needed to anchor the mohalla committee. An NGO staff member, lawyer, community worker, etc. who has knowledge of community relations, facilitating committees and mediation experience provides professional skills to a mohalla committee. They can organize and facilitate meetings, coordinate investigation of rumors, mediate disputes on the spot, provide counseling, give guidance on initiatives, etc. And very importantly, they can also train local leaders to lead the committees. MCMT faces the challenge in Mumbai that its future is uncertain if more local leaders do not emerge. Lastly, Maria Ishwaran of MCMT (interview, 2007) noted that it is often the relationship between the facilitator and the local police beat inspector that determines the working relationship between the larger committee and the police. Facilitators can

provide access for the committee to the police (and vice versa) and establish links with elites and senior level police authorities.

It is important to add that a mohalla committee is not formal in its composition. Although it may have a semi-formal structure (facilitators, relationships, criteria for involvement, location, regular members, etc.), it should be open for participation of irregular attendees from the neighborhood. The ability of all people to come and go is important for legitimacy and conveys that the committee is accessible. Its accessibility will be important during times of tensions when neighborhood meetings are held to diffuse tensions, build solidarity, and gather information.

**Set Up**

Being largely volunteer organizations with very limited resources, mohalla committees need to minimize costs. MCMT facilitators are volunteers. Some are professionals, such as Yasmine Shaikh who is a lawyer. They make great sacrifices in their personal careers to volunteer with the committees. This makes mohalla committees cheap organizations to run since there are very little personnel expenses. Program expenses for initiatives are funded with the ad hoc donations of interested persons.

A mohalla committee's informal set-up allows for it to meet in public buildings and common areas (even outdoor areas). It would be ideal if all the communities saw the location as a neutral space. Even when one of the protagonist's is not the police, it is best not to hold it at police stations. This has the effect of discouraging the involvement of youth and women. There are exceptions. MCMT has added "women's cells" to their work. These cells provide family-counseling services intended initially for women. They are located in an independent room next to or inside the police compound. This has

allowed MCMT facilitators convenient access to the police for situations when cases need to be referred to police (or in the less usual case when the police need to refer cases to the MCMT facilitators.) Nevertheless, communal harmony programs that involve contending communities or the police are best placed to meet in neutral locations.

Although public spaces are inexpensive, it does not exclude the possibility of having permanent locations. SEWA's Peace Centres conduct both communal harmony programs and livelihood training. COVA can also use its headquarters offices to conduct dialogues. But it is important that they are located in communally sensitive neighborhoods and viewed as neutral locations by all the parties.

While low in cost, some peace committees still find it difficult to sustain themselves. More institutionalized organizations may be necessary, particularly for a paid facilitator that can anchor the committee. This is more of a reason to partner with official NGOs or development NGOs.

**Work of Peace Committees**

Like other civil society organizations attempting to engage in the prevention of riots, mohalla committees have some general tasks:

1. Monitor for early warning signs and relay information to authorities;

2. Conduct neighborhood meetings for discussion and venting emotions;

3. Convey accurate information to residents about ongoing events, dispel rumors and provide "sane words" during tensions;

4. Coordinate early response activities (e.g. act as a rally point, liaison with community leaders and police, etc);

5. Investigate rumors and facilitate communication between communities, leaders and official authorities.

There are other tasks (such as advocacy) that committees may perform depending on the specific context of the conflict and timing. For example, rather than diffusing tensions between two religious communities, the conflict may involve one community's (such as Muslims) troubled relationship with the police (as was the case when MCMT was set up after the 1993 riots.) Additionally, mohalla committees will perform other functions more common to peacebuilding during times of relative peace. The women's cells of the MCMT act as alternative dispute resolution and counseling centers. SEWA's Peace Centre's build familiarity and trust between religious communities through positive and collaborative contact in the course of offering livelihood training. COVA and SEWA organize joint celebration of festivals. Development organizations might use regular meetings of the committees to provide information and build constituency for their services. Reflexively, formal NGOs can empower mohalla committees with their resources (expertise, manpower, money) and links to official authorities (police, collector, city administration). Combining development activities with communal harmony can help build capacity and sustain resources for prevention programs.

## A Unique Role for Women

The identity of women, as women and mothers, and perhaps their inherent characteristics and social roles as nurturers and communicators, provides them a special role in preventing violence. The women of SEWA and COVA intervened between Hindus, Muslims and the police to prevent riots. One reason they were successful is because they identities as women helped them diffuse potentially violent confrontations.

In a confrontation that is inherently fraught with intense emotions, male egos are at play. Women do not present a threat to these egos. They can defuse situations without making the groups feel as if they have succumbed to the other side.

By intervening and physically placing themselves between the contending groups (in a spontaneous riot) or in the way of a procession (e.g. in a political riot), women also create a psychological and physical obstacle that men must overcome. The rioters must confront women who have not been the focus on their emotional build-up. Psychological preparation (justification for the violence), emotional fervor (rooted in antipathy and hate), and assessment of the other side's capabilities are necessary for ordinary men to commit violence and atrocities. This is why targeting in riots is often specific, and often why members and property of communities not party to the conflict are unharmed. When women unexpectedly intervene, it becomes difficult (but not impossible!) for rioters to psychologically justify hurting the women before they can get to their targets.

It is less likely that women from the riot mob's own group would be attacked. Imagine Muslim men and boys being confronted with women wearing burqas. The mob wouldn't know if these women are their mother, sisters, daughters or family friends! They cannot take the chance of attacking their relatives. This situation arose in COVA's intervention in Hyderabad. It is similar for Hindu women. Despite not having the benefit of wearing a burqa and making their men guess as to their identity, the riot mob would probably not attack members of their own group to get to their opponents. Additionally, in many cultural contexts it is shameful to attack women. Mobs intent on attacking another group's men could likely not redirect their fury to attack women from their own communities.

If women are to intervene in such situations, certain capacities are needed to make success more likely. One, it appears important that women gather in as large groups as possible. The SEWA women mentioned that they find strength in numbers. In fact, during the 2002 riots in Ahmedabad it was not until the third day that SEWA's volunteer women gathered at SEWA's offices. When asked why it took so long, they responded that it took that long to gather enough women to feel safe enough to make their way to the offices. From the SEWA and COVA cases, it appears that somewhere between 10-15 women per protagonist (e.g. Hindus, Muslims, police) is minimally necessary to intervene against a spontaneous mob of about 100-200 persons. It might require less to investigate a rumor or resolve a conflict stemming from an incident that has yet to spark violence; but the larger the group, the better.

In addition to numbers, the group affiliation of the women is important. In spontaneous riots, each community must have a group of women to intervene against a quickly formed mob or to engage in resolving a conflict stemming from an incidental altercation (e.g. traffic accident). It may be necessary for the women to engage members of their own community before confronting the whole situation together. However, it might be necessary to engage the police as a joint group.

A team also requires preparation. The team members must know and trust each other. They need to know how to contact each other quickly and rally at a pre-determined location with appropriate equipment (e.g. mobile phones and contact information of important people of each community, the police and other government officials, etc.). And through prior discussion, the group can develop arguments that are culturally persuasive. The women of SEWA like to point out to rioters that it is they who

suffer while the politicians are the ones to gain.  They also told the men that it is their sons who will be arrested and detained after the riots.  The women of COVA emphasized that it will lead to future repression (especially for Muslims) from the police. Both organizations' women appealed to the police to give them some time to resolve the issue by noting that it may prevent bloodshed.  For situations such as when incidents may spark violence in the near future, MCMT facilitators guaranteed to work with the police and provide them information if their resolution efforts seemed likely to fail.

Intervening in political riots is more dangerous since there are senior leaders (e.g. mob bosses, politicians) not at the scene calling the shots.  Activists in the mob tasked to carry out the violence have too much to lose if they don't follow orders. However, even in these situations women can attempt to impose a self-curfew on their male family members (in order to prevent them from becoming rioters and victims).

All this is not to say that women are not involved in the violence.  Although women have participated in riots in India, they are a very small percentage when compared to males.  The more significant role they play in riots is by providing social legitimacy for violence.  Rioters depend on legal and social impunity, which includes the approval or acquiescence of wives and sisters.  Rioters commit atrocities because they believe the violence is condoned by their community as a defense, particularly of their women and children, against the aggression by the other community.

Women's group can reduce the legitimacy of the riot by stigmatizing the use of violence.  Providing health services, livelihood training, daycare, family counseling and legal services attract women to become involved in civil society organizations.  Once educated, women can teach their children, particularly boys, about the benefits of peace.

By becoming advocates for peace and educating their families, women are key pressure points to inhibit the social sanction required for people to participate in riots.

## Peacekeeping & Prevention in the Aftermath of a Riot

Civil society organizations can play an important role in preventing the recurrence of violence in the aftermath of a major riot. The immediate period after a round of violence is filled with tension, with the possibility of another riot by the same group or retaliatory riots from the group that was initially victimized. Although civil society organizations lack the capability to impose order by force, SEWA's activities in the aftermath of 2002 riots in Ahmedabad suggests that there prevention is necessary even as people and cities are recovering from deadly riots.

SEWA began work in relief camps even as the violence of the 2002 Ahmedabad riots raged on. After a few days of calm, another round of violence would begin. Jaya Parmar, a SEWA health team member describes her experience:

> Mine in a small predominately Hindu chawl [neighborhood], surrounded by a large Muslim area. It also has a strong SEWA presence. Whenever there were news and rumours of looting and arson in other parts of the city, our Hindu and Muslim neighbours would get agitated and start throwing stones and sometimes even small crude bombs at each other. Whenever this started, some of us, would call out loudly: "We are one, stop this, we have lived together for years, don't let others divide us. After a few minutes of shouting, invariably, the attack would stop (Shantipath, 2002, p. 12).

These kinds of activities are critical to preventing the descent into mass atrocities. Small incidents of violence fuel larger scale mass killings. Interventions at the local level prevent the accumulation of anger, tension and legitimacy that leads to killing.

Within relief camps, this type of peacebuilding and prevention work was possible because SEWA was also involved in organizing childcare, health care, trauma counseling, garbage disposal and keeping toilets clean. In some relief camps in rural

areas, SEWA workers were threatened.   But diligently explaining their purpose and constant dialogue with local leaders paid off help to ensure their safety.

In the aftermath of riots, CSOs can patrol the streets. This requires capacity and courage.  Groups of members can help to diffuse fear and anger by engaging residents of their neighborhoods to discuss what has happened.  This also provides information for early warning if another riot is in the offing.  Members of both communities can also partner to monitor communally sensitive areas, particularly the dividing line between the segregated areas of a community.  They can watch for small incidents that may lead to outbreaks of violence and intervene if possible or alert the police if necessary.

The danger of personal harm is real.  Additionally, the accompaniment of the police is not realistic as they are probably busy with other duties or having them alongside may inhibit residents from being candid.  This does not mean that CSOs cannot take any precautions.  Informing the police (or some other trustworthy authorities) about whereabouts and activities, patrolling in large numbers (4-8), patrolling in mid-day (well before dusk), carrying communications gear and walking with other residents of the neighborhood may increase safety.  These activities require prior preparation: good relations with the local police beat and/or senior police authorities, local neighborhood volunteers who are willing to patrol the streets, communications gear, a command center or focal point that can take reports, knowledge of what data to gather, reporting procedures, a group of CSO leaders to sift through information and analyze it, a process of relaying the information to the correct authorities and so forth.

An important aspect of these activities is that they may be more palatable for residents of the affected neighborhoods if they are coupled with service-delivery. People

asking too many questions may raise suspicions, especially in the community from which the rioters emanated. Why would they give up their fellow brethren? But when it is done by a CSO that provides services and known for it neutrality and impartiality, the residents who do not wish for riots may be more willing to provide information.

While patrolling the streets may be too daunting for many civil society organizations, an activity all CSOs can do is to speak with their local constituents to gather as much information as possible regarding what has happened. This information can be analyzed to figure out the dynamics of the riot. It can provide valuable information about the organizers of the riot, identities of the perpetrators, communally sensitive locations, and so forth. Since it is plausible to assume that a string of riots close in time to each other may have similar dynamics, this information can help authorities and CSOs prepare in the right places for the next round of violence or even put pressure on instigators of the tensions to prevent a recurrence of violence.

CSOs could attempt to hold neighborhood meetings to diffuse tensions and fears. Dialogue between members of communities that are fighting may be unlikely, since the victimized members in the riot are probably furious or fearful. However, it is possible that certain residents (who have gotten to know and trust each other in their previous regular interactions through the peace centre or mohalla committee) may desire to undertake peace-advocacy activities jointly. Regardless, the CSO can hold separate meetings with the different ethnic communities in order diffuse tensions, suppress rumors, communicate accurate information and attempt to redirect anxiety or anger towards more non-violent activities.

**CHAPTER 6**

**A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PREVENTION OF ETHNIC RIOTS BY CSOS**

This concluding chapter draws together the lessons learned and discusses how they may be practically applicable in other contexts outside India. I provide a framework for civil society organizations to better engage in preventing imminent riots.

This research, albeit limited in the number of case studies, provides evidence in support of the two hypotheses posited, but with caveats. The first hypothesis was that CSOs that are effective at preventing imminent violence are not organizations specifically devoted to conflict prevention. Development organizations do seem to be better situated to conduct operational prevention of imminent riots because their work in communally sensitive areas has earned them the trust of the residents, they have detailed knowledge of the area, and have more funding. Regular contact with potential victims and leaders in communally sensitive areas is the foundation for prevention. However, peacebuilding organizations have the expertise on conflict prevention, and thus can help development organizations. Development CSOs should mainstream conflict prevention into their work to avoid favoring one community over another and thus creating more conflict. But they can go beyond this to partner with peacebuilding organizations to develop specific riot prevention capacities. Additionally, peacebuilding and human rights organizations can assist during prevention by pressuring government authorities to act early, thus allowing development CSOs to forgo confronting authorities so they can preserve their access to vulnerable populations.

The second hypothesis was that pre-established relationship between a CSO and police authorities is critical to successful prevention. CSO need police to listen to its

early warning information, give them time and space to initiate intervention before the police charge in with force, and collaborate on investigations of rumors and incidents. While this does seem to be a very desirable practice, SEWA's experiences suggest that is not essential. Relationships with police and political authorities will make prevention efforts, particularly in political riot situations, more effective over time. However, it does not preclude CSOs from intervening to stop spontaneous riots.

Two other principles highlighted in the course of this research are important for effective prevention.

CSOs should create operational prevention networks with other CSOs and build relationships with other actors in the community in order to increase their power to lobby political authorities, increase resources for prevention, and to scale up impact of their activities to affect a wider area. Peacebuilding organizations may be best placed to act as focal points because their daily focus is on peace and security issues and have a wider understanding of the peacebuilding field.

Sustainability is the neighborhood peace committees' Achilles heel. For them to be sustainable, they can offer development or welfare services in addition to advocating for communal harmony. Alternatively, they can partner with development CSOs who offer services, which also provides peace committees' access to populations not pre-disposed to communal harmony programs. In turn, development CSOs benefit by mainstreaming prevention into their work and increasing sustainability of its own development work.

**Realizing the Possibility of Prevention**

The role of criminal actors in Paul Brass' (2003) institutionalized riot system suggests an important point: Given a fertile context for communal or ethnic conflict at the national or state level, local reasons and actors are often required for people to engage in violence. While city or neighborhood-level explanations for violence add frustrating complexity to understanding communal riots, this localized nature of riots also offers an opportunity for localized prevention efforts. This is the reason why civil society organizations (CSOs), which have deep roots in the neighborhoods where they work, bring much needed capabilities to the prevention of communal violence. Donald Horowitz writes (2001):

> "The lull does provide a chance to head off the riot by force, but success in such a venture requires not merely swift mobilization but adequate intelligence, which is not always easy to obtain in a situation fraught with what seems to be confusion" (p. 94).

Specific, actionable information is just one comparative advantage that CSOs bring. Issues of trust, reputation for impartiality and neutrality, and the ability to act as a go in-between between police and citizens are useful elements that CSOs can contribute.

The more fundamental problem for activists is not realizing that there is a role for civil society organizations in preventing riots. Having become experienced at peacebuilding and justice, it is now time for civil society to expand its role to preventing imminent violence. The expansion is already underway with regards to providing early warning. However, given so much anecdotal evidence of successful interventions by civil society, it is possible to conceptualize new roles and frameworks for how civil society organizations can intervene to prevent imminent communal riots.

From theories of ethnic violence, lessons learned in conflict prevention, and past and recent experiences in India, we can induce a practical framework for the role of CSOs in the prevention of ethnic riots that may be applicable worldwide. However, it bears caution that since this research was exclusively conducted in India, it may only be applicable in contexts similar to India. For example, India democracy allows for active civil society organizations. Thus, we must assume that at least a semi-free space for civil society is required for CSOs to tackle security and prevention issues. Furthermore, one of the lessons from this research is the importance of a relationship between civil society organizations and local police authorities. However, police are part of the problem in many societies and may actively oppose the work of CSOs. This condition does not preclude CSO activism to prevent violence, but it will reduce its effectiveness. Thus, the degree to which police, whether at the neighborhood level or senior police authorities, are engaged and supportive of CSO activity in prevention is a significant variable.

### What to Prevent: Reacting to Political and Spontaneous Riots

In chapter two, I distinguished between two types of riots: political and spontaneous riots. It is important to distinguish between these riots because they determine the extent of activities that CSOs can undertake.

Political riots are violence associated with political leaders that serves instrumental interests (polarizing communities, creating vote banks, winning elections, etc.). These types of riots are characterized by a high degree planning. Planning includes timing, determining the routes of processions, transporting rioters into the area, directing certain people to instigate trouble and lead the riot, spreading rumors, handing out

weapons, ensuring that city administration and police will not interfere right away, and so forth.

Spontaneous riots are violence resulting from unplanned altercations between members of opposing communities that escalates into larger violence either immediately or soon after. These riots are fueled by a heightened sense of communal identity and the general antipathy between the communities. And unlike political riots, spontaneous riots often involve mobs of people composed of neighbors and local residents. In the event that an incident does not immediately break out into a riot but dramatically increases tension between the ethnic communities as they rally around the issue, the leaders will likely be influential members of each community. Higher-level leaders, such as politicians, may come onboard later to take advantage of the incident to exacerbate the tensions or continue the riot with other episodes of violence.

In political riots, CSOs face overwhelming odds because of the preparedness and the level of support from powerful individuals. Responding to political riots requires more centralized coordination among CSOs. Peacebuilding and human rights CSOs can put pressure on police and political authorities to force them to react early, while development CSOs can conduct monitoring and awareness activities in neighborhoods. Allowing peacebuilding and human rights CSOs to take the lead in advocacy for early response also allow development CSOs to preserve their relationship with authorities and sustains their access to areas and people.

In political riots, CSOs need to act prior to the precipitant event (e.g. a religious procession or political rally), which is sometimes planned and openly advertised. CSOs with presence in sensitive neighborhoods can increase vigilance for troublemakers or

incidents that might contribute to rising tensions. They can hold neighborhood meetings to dispel rumors and ease fears. In neighborhoods made up of people that are members of the target ethnicity, CSOs can increase vigilance by telling residents to be watchful for unusual activities or people. CSOs can act as a medium through which local residents can communicate early warning information to the police. In mixed neighborhoods, CSO meetings can remind residents, particularly those from the group that will conduct the attack, of the costs of riots. CSOs can dispel rumors and encourage families to not to let their boys and men get caught up in the frenzy.

Peacebuilding and human rights CSOs perhaps have a greater role in political riots than in spontaneous riots. Given their capacity to recognize early warning signals and established advocacy networks, they must put pressure on leaders to respond to the tensions. City authorities can be put on notice that they will be held responsible. Senior police authorities must be pressured to make preparation to intervene, quickly establish curfews, and provide channels for the flow of information from civil society. Local political leaders (especially belonging to the community doing the rioting) must also be put on notice that they will be held accountable for the actions of their communities. The media must be alerted. Religious leaders can also be implored to calm their constituents. Interestingly, Maria Ishwaran of MCMT (interview, 2007) said that even local goondas can be called up and told that they are now responsible for peace in the community.

CSOs can use their national and international networks to surge attention on the city. An external interest in the local situation may provide a disincentive for the rioters by raising the costs of violence. Impunity and social sanction is no longer guaranteed, so it will take greater propaganda and emotional incitement to overcome inhibitions.

Once a political riot breaks out, the space for prevention activities will likely be constrained.  CSOs can shelter people and attempt to prevent the violence from entering the neighborhood in which they are located.  Continued pressure on authorities to establish a curfew can stop the riot or provide a calming period in which the riot can organically die.  Because mobs often travel long distances across the city or from outside of the city altogether, a curfew can impede movements.  While the riot leadership can use a pause to plan a next phase of violence, CSOs can also use this time to coordinate their activities to prevent the next round of violence.

In spontaneous riots, CSOs with offices in the field (such as development organizations) may be better suited to initially intervene than CSOs that are centralized (such as peacebuilding and human rights CSOs).  Intervening in these situations requires rapid response.  Local offices may hear of an altercation nearby and can react by gathering their members and responding.  They can also better predict when tensions may rise in local areas based on their knowledge of the dynamics of the neighborhoods.  As the mobs form and begin to oppose each other, persons from the CSO can quickly intervene before the threshold to violence is crossed (such as throwing rocks).  Because the CSO is rooted in the community, some of the mob may be familiar with the CSO or its members and may vouch for its impartiality.  Likewise, the police will eventually arrive at the scene, and probably in threatening force. They many exacerbate situation if the police have a reputation of being biased.  The CSO interveners now have three sides to negotiate with.  A prior relationship with the police can help them forestall police action until it is truly necessary.

If an unplanned altercation does not lead to a riot right away, CSOs can take advantage of the time lag to investigate the incident and engage the leaders of both communities. CSOs can work with them to resolve the situation by facilitating discussion or acting as a mediator. Police can be kept informed as events unfold. CSOs can also conduct neighborhood meetings to provide accurate information about the incident (and dispel the exaggerated rumors) and allow residents to vent their anger. All these activities will be dependent on the trust the CSOs have built up with the residents.

Both types of riots require extensive preparation. The kinds of preparation that is necessary will be detailed below. In short, spontaneous riots require decentralized capacity to react. Although any type of organization can do this, it is likely that development and service-delivery CSOs, with local presence and reservoir of trust, is better placed to react. Political riots require centralized coordination and a division of labor between peacebuilding/human rights CSOs and development organizations, in which the former pressures authorities to act and the latter conducts monitoring and interventions.

## When to Prevent

The "Theories of violence and ethnic riots" section of Chapter One detailed various dynamics of riots. Putting these dynamics into a sequence, we can envision a riot as involving propaganda, preparation, rumors and precipitants, and execution[2]. To a greater or lesser degree, both political and spontaneous riots will include these elements. Once I detail these dynamics, I apply prevention activities to addressing them.

1) Propaganda. Long-term, ongoing propaganda includes stories and texts that paint one group as aggressors and one's own group as victims. They fuel riots by

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[2] This framework evolved from a discussion with Dr. Ashgar Ali Engineer (2007).

keeping the communal tension simmering.  Spontaneous riots, in particular, feed off this propaganda since it is latent tensions that re-frame everyday altercations as ethnic conflicts.

More immediate propaganda is important in the riot dynamic since its purpose is to immediately heighten communal tensions.  Reminding people of the humiliation from past oppression, the prospect of losing political power and how that might lead again to oppression, or the idea that foreign powers are supplying their diasporas weapons to kill and rape, serves to increase the stakes and rally the community to the cause.  This type of propaganda is evident when politicians scapegoat other communities.  It is done at rallies, through public statements, and distribution of pamphlets, tapes and videos (including on the internet).  More immediate propaganda requires organization to create and disseminate this material, thus it is more present in the case of political riots and can serve as an early warning indicator.

2) Preparation.  Preparation involves planning and mobilizing resources.  In spontaneous riots, there is little advance preparation.  Nevertheless, as tensions heat up in an argument between two opposing sides, groups coalesce for action, delineate agendas and territory, and prepare for violence.  Preparation becomes more deliberate when a spontaneous incident does not immediately lead to violence.  In the intervening lull before violence breaks out, it takes intense planning by individuals to rally their compatriots to respond to an altercation with violence.  Neighborhood extremists and criminals may create mobs, conceive plans to target vulnerable sections of the other community, and prepare the riot mob to vent their anger on the 'enemy'.

Preparation in a political riot can be extensive. Rioters, who are sometimes rural people, tribals or Dalits, are bussed in for rallies and processions. Maps and lists of people to be targeted are sometimes obtained and distributed. Weapons are allocated. Processions routes are meticulously planned to pass through sensitive neighborhoods or in front of the other community's religious sites. Politicians contact colleagues in the local city administration and police and pressure them not intervene when the riot begins; or even ask for their participation in carrying out the violence. Instigators are strategically placed in processions so they can whip up the crowd into a frenzy or begin minor altercations that trigger larger violence. Politicians contact mafia bosses, who in turn give instructions to criminals to instigate havoc. Criminals are sent around to order shops and businesses to close down. Local criminals also prepare to take advantage of the situation to loot or eliminate competitors. Political leaders may plan a rally that incites the crowd without meaning to have it become violent. But criminals have other ideas, and take advantage by sparking violence.

Preparation may come before or after the next stage, precipitants and rumors. Extremists may prepare the situation for a precipitant, such as a political rally. Or, once a precipitant such as a physical confrontation between members of both communities has occurred, preparations may then be initiated for the riot.

3) Precipitants and rumors. Precipitants bring latent tensions between communities to a focal point. Precipitants include incidents such as a traffic accident between one community and another, an offense against religious symbols, a murder or rape that happens to involve a member of one community victimizing a member of the other community, a political rally, and religious processions. These events can serve as

impetus for broader action by the whole community or serve as signals to commence action. Precipitants are also used to entice a reaction by the other community, thus beginning a downward action-reaction spiral towards violence.

Rumors, whether true or not, heighten fears and provide justification for resorting to violence in reaction to precipitants. Rumors are intended to exaggerate the severity of the situation and make the situation seem like an existential threat. They polarize communities. Importantly, rumors also marginalize the arguments of moderates who are advocating peaceful resolution of the problem. Thus, rumors create consensus for violent action or reaction.

4) Execution of the riot. Finally, the riot is not inevitable even after all the preparation and precipitants. The timing and conditions have to be favorable. Donald Horowitz (2001) writes,

> [An] attack might be expected to occur: first, when the prospects of success are good and, second, when the prospects of success are poor but the threat from the target is so great as to override inhibitions deriving from fear of the consequences (p. 361).

If one group feels that they are better armed or that the victims are unprepared, they may feel that the timing is ripe to attack. This calculation occurs in conjunction with an assessment as to how the police and political authorities will react. If authorities are complacent or supportive, then a sense of impunity will embolden rioters to act. However, even when faced with overwhelming odds, people will find the courage or frenzy if they believe that the threat is truly existential or the offending activity by the other community is grave. Leaders may know that the situation is not critically serious or grave, but what is

important is that rioters and the broader community that supports their action, believe that that the situation requires a violent response.

The riot has leaders, participants and a rhythm. Even when a riot seems spontaneous, there will be an element of organization. The organization in a riot is particularly evident when the riots direction and attacks correlate with violence specifically against members of the other community while sparing the lives and property of members of ones own community. Spontaneous outbreaks of small-scale violence now provide an opportunity for extremists to plan and execute larger scales of violence. Often, riots extend over days with periods of calm lulls. The lulls can be during the day, when sunlight doesn't provide for the anonymity for the rioter. As the violence peaks and lulls, organizers may specify targets for further violence. Neighborhoods or businesses that haven't suffered may be specifically noted. Simultaneously, the reaction or lack of reaction by police and authorities will largely determine how the riot proceeds.

It is along these four stages that we can conceive prevention opportunities.

## How to Prevent Along the Four Stages

Donald Horowitz (2001) writes, "Whether violence emerges seems to be a function of the evaluation of the precipitant in the light of distribution of social support, behavior of the potential target group, and the response of the authorities" (p. 91). To attack these dynamics of riots along the stages discussed in the previous section, there are four activities that CSOs can do for prevention: provide early warning to authorities and citizens, advocate for early response to political authorities and police, activities that remove legitimacy for the violence and impunity for the rioters, and conduct community activities to combat rumors, clarify information and ease fears.

Early warning involves being on watch for proximate indicator and precipitants. Initial response involves rumor control, investigating incidents, contacting local elites and coordinating with local police officers. As the situation escalates, pressure can be applied on political authorities to take action, on the police to begin preparation for deployment, on leaders who are fomenting tensions and even on local criminals who may instigate trouble. To prevent tensions from becoming critical, it is necessary to hold neighborhood meetings to dispel rumors and reduce fear, as well as organize peace marches or rallies to display that the constituents of peace are as numerous as those that will resort to violence.

In stage 1, propaganda, peacebuilding programs are particularly relevant in countering the type of propaganda that frames the reality for the community. Communal harmony and training programs, such as those by Dr. Ashgar Ali Engineer and CSSS, attempt to transform the worldviews of citizens in order to diffuse the latent tensions that make violence possible. But of more critical concern is the propaganda in the immediate period of tension. Politicians scapegoating of the other community can be combated by opposite messages. When communal tensions were increasing, Maria Ishwaran and her colleagues of MCMT advertised messages in newsthesiss in order to combat the fear being spread by communal organizations (Ishwaran interview, 2007). Dr. Engineer wishes he had conducted peace marches through sensitive neighborhoods prior to the Mumbai riots in 1993 (Engineer interview, 2007).

The 13 February 2008 arrest of Raj Thackeray, the party chief of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, is exemplary of the laws available for police to prevent riots by nipping incitement in the bud. The Mumbai police filed an First Information Report (FIR) against Thackeray under India Penal Code (IPC) Section 153 (wantonly giving provocation with

intent to cause riot), 153A (promoting enmity between groups on the basis of places of birth, residence etc) 153D (assertions prejudicial to national integration) and 117 (abetting the commission of any offence by the public). These IPC sections can be used more frequently, but are not. Civil society organizations can pressure the police to make such arrests by filing an FIR[3].

In stages 2, preparation, and 3, precipitants and rumors, identifying and responding to early warning indicators is critical. While the Carnegie Commission's (1997) notes that there are general early warning indicators that highlight states at risk for collapse and violence, location specific indicators are needed to predict high-risk situations for communal violence. Table 2 (below) lists the Carnegie Commission's "general" indicators and develops "proximate" and "precipitants and triggers" indicators for India. Although none of these indicators in any category by itself leads to violence, the chance of violence increases if there is all three. New situations can also spark violence, but local lists like these for particularly sensitive areas around the world are informative for local prevention activists because extremists use recurring events to create situations that can lead to violence. Therefore, CSOs can seize the initiative and work to obstruct the activities of extremists to generate violence at first notice.

**Table 2.  Early Warning Indicators in India**

| *General* (Worldwide) | *Proximate* (World and India) | *Precipitants & triggers* (India) |
|---|---|---|
| - Poverty <br> - Inequality among groups <br> - High number of youths | - Competitive elections, with the possibility of winning along religious or | - Route of procession through other group's area; music before mosque; |

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[3] In India, an FIR is information recorded by a police officer, given either by the aggrieved person or any other person, about an alleged offence. The police begin an investigation on the basis of a FIR. The person requesting an FIR to be filed need not even be the aggrieved person. It can also be hearsay and need not be by the person who has had firsthand knowledge of the facts.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| per adult ratio<br>- Lack of institutional mechanisms to resolve conflict<br>- Demographic pressures: high infant mortality, rapid changes in population (including massive refugee movements, high population density, youth bugle, insufficient food or access to safe water, ethnic groups sharing land, territorial claims, environmental problems relating to livelihoods<br>- Lack of democratic practices: criminalization, de-legimitization of the government, human rights violations<br>- Regimes of short duration<br>- Ethnic composition of the ruling elite differing from the population at large<br>- Deterioration or elimination of public services<br>- Sharp and sever economic distress: uneven economic development along ethnic lines and a lack of economic integration between ethnic groups<br>- Legacy of vengeance-seeking.<br><br>(Source: Carnegie Commission 1997) | caste divides; Ethnic, religious or caste tensions related to elections particularily 6 months prior to election<br>- Change in status quo of existing party and electoral rivalries<br> - National events characterized on ethnic, religious or caste terms<br>- Ethnic, religious or caste processions, demonstrations, and rallies<br>- Strikes with ethnic, religious or caste overtones<br>- Official or unofficial alterations of communal or caste status<br>- Rumors of threatened or actual aggression by the target group (in order to justify a preventive attack)<br>- Police confrontation of a group's protest or gathering, particularly when police are aggressively postured and/or are known to be biased against the group.<br><br><br><br>(Sources: Number one is Wilkinson, 2005; Two through seven are from Horowitz, 2001, with my addition of "religious and caste" to ethnic; Eight, police action, is mine [Horowitz disagrees with this indicator but it has proven to be valid in India.) | involvement of organizations associated with violence;  people bussed in from outside city; lack of police planning for event<br>- Rallies: politicians or religious leaders giving radicalized speeches<br>- Altercation between two persons in which their religious affiliation is mentioned<br>- Riots in other areas of India or city characterized as Hindu-Muslim or caste issue<br>- Incidents involving desecrations of religious places, texts or idols<br>- Call for bandhs (protests intended to disrupt daily life) affecting a particular religious or caste group<br>- Friday Muslim namaz/prayers<br>- Religious festivals: Muharrram, Dussehra, Ganesh Chaturthi (and Nimajjan), Diwali, Id, Christmas (in Gujarat)<br>- Activism on cow-slaughter issue or killing of a cow<br>- Dec. 6 demolition of Babri Masjid anniversary/ Hindu day of courage<br>- Surge in distribution of inflammatory brochures<br>- India-Pakistan cricket matches<br>- Dead bodies being paraded t after a killing being characterized as religious violence<br>- International events that |

| | | affect an entire religious group characterized. |
| --- | --- | --- |

While these indicators provide early warning and suggest when violence is likely, for effective prevention local actors must be aware of specific issues including:

- Who is the target?

- Where are targets located (neighborhoods and business)?

- Where are the targets most vulnerable (sensitive locations where the two groups meet, businesses, homes, etc.)?

- Who are the local criminal elements?

Having pre-established relationships helps get access to political and police authorities in order to provide early warning. Informing supportive media, CSO networks and citizens can help raise a level of awareness and the need for action.

Timing is critical. Early mobilization and early response is required to suppress rumors before they get out of hand or frame a precipitant before extremists provide the meaning that becomes the dominant view. Rumors, however untrue they may be, have a way of becoming stronger once they gain momentum. Because rumors often tap into pre-existing prejudices and beliefs (such as the other community has always wanted to kill us and now they are getting weapons to do so), people have a tendency to believe them outright. The anxiety and fear that rumors create closes off opportunities for dialogue and decreases possibilities to step back from the brink of violent confrontation. Civil society and political authorities must suppress rumors early before they infect the thinking of whole communities. CSOs can seize the initiative to frame a potentially controversial incident and provide an understanding of the situation as a problem of the whole society rather than as a problem that pits one community against the other.

Extremist politicians have the advantage of advance planning. They either deliberately raise a divisive issue, and thus have already framed it according to their interests, or take advantage of an unforeseen altercation by framing it according to their pre-existing divisive beliefs. In these cases, it is almost inevitable that CSOs are already late in reacting to provocations. However, the lull, between the time when a precipitant occurs and when violence may break out, provides the opportunity to react and take away control of the issue. Prior preparation, activating resources at hand and attacking the base of support through which extremists conduct their activities can offer some hope that violence can be prevented.

CSOs and political authorities must remove the supporting conditions, legitimacy, and impunity that allow for the outbreak of violence. For violence to go from general criminality to mob action, it requires the wider community to support such action by providing legitimacy to the violence. In addition, a sense of impunity emboldens rioters to commit wanton acts of destruction. Legitimacy and impunity reduce the inhibition that people normally feel to do extra-ordinary things like destroying and killing.

Removing impunity is comparatively easier than eliminating legitimacy. Horowitz (2001) writes, "Ordinarily, clear and consistent disapproval of violence [by authorities] deters ethnic riots…As police hesitation reduces inhibitions in a crowd, early, determined police action can avert what might have been a very serious riot" (p. 363). In India, filing the aforementioned First Information Report to compel the police and authorities to take action against extremist leaders and similar legal actions elsewhere in the world, stepped up police presence in neighborhoods, putting local criminals on notice that they are being watched, political authorities putting leaders on notice that they will

be held accountable and, in extreme situations, announcing a preventative curfew are just some methods to remove impunity.

Unfortunately, "legitimation can sometimes outweigh lack of impunity in overcoming inhibitions on violence" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 360). Because legitimation rests on the approval of fellow citizens, and precipitants and rumors exacerbate anxiety and fear and close off opportunities for the broader public to calmly engage an issue, it is difficult to combat the support that the community gives to 'its fighters' that are out to protect and save them. Nevertheless, civil society and authorities have the opportunity to reduce anxiety and fear by countering propaganda, investigating and suppressing rumors, and resolving minor issues before they blow out of proportion. If they are able to do this, then, "in the absence of justification, however, the deadly ethnic riot is likely to die out" (Horowitz, 2001, p. 370).

By the time stage 4 arrives, the execution of a riot, it may seem that there is practical little prevention CSOs can do beyond continuing to pressure authorities to take action to stop the violence and perhaps rescuing potential victims. The situation now appears mostly in the hands of the authorities. Yet, there is still a prevention role for CSOs. Riots rarely encompass every neighborhood. So, organizations can attempt to prevent the violence from spreading into the neighborhoods where they work. Prevention need not only mean preventing the outbreak of violence altogether, but it can also mean preventing it from spreading and engulfing wider section of the city and community.

**Targeting the Actors of Violence**

Prevention activities must pinpoint, isolate and dis-empower key actors in order to be effective.  They are: a) the leaders, b) foot soldiers or the riot mob, and c) the wider community that provides social sanction for the riot and rioters.

Earlier, I discussed the role of politicians, businessmen and religious figures in polarizing communities and organizing riots.  Without the leadership of these elites, the atmosphere of the community either cannot become tense enough to foment a riot or the existing latent tensions cannot coalesce to explode into violence.  Accidental events can't serve as precipitants for wider violence if these leaders do not interpret it as a communally provocative incident.  It is the influence and power of these leaders that compel governing and police authorities to look the other way in the face of early warning.  There are also local criminal elements that serve as operational leaders to carry out the wishes of the elites to organize rallies, make plans for attacks, and provide the 'rules of engagement' as to what and where the violence will take place.

**Leaders**

It is comparatively easier to confront elites than the mob leader.  Even then, there should be no illusion that elites, once they decide to engage in a course of action, are easily dissuaded by appeals for peace.  However, as in the above case of Raj Thackeray in India, there may be legal avenues to inhibit leaders of the riots.  At the least, it puts these leaders on notice that they are being watched and may be held accountable.  This is also true for police forces.  While police authorities in India, and most other developing countries, may not view themselves as beholden to public, putting them on notice in the

early warning period that they will be held accountable for their actions or inactions may serve to put some pressure on them to respond early.

Of course, it would be too difficult for any one civil society organization to act alone in taking legal action, and thus probably bear the burden of the wrath of these elites and their followers in the aftermath. This is why it is important that civic organizations band together, despite differences in philosophies and activities, and act in concert. Partnerships, and each organization's national and international relationships they bring to the table, can serve to protect each other against retribution by elites.

**Foot Soldiers**

CSOs are ill-equipped to confront frenzied mobs, the foot soldiers for higher-level riot leaders. Although the hope is that CSOs can undertake courageous interventions to confront mobs similar to those detailed in this thesis, CSOs can more easily take other actions to minimize the strength of the mobs. CSO can engage local elites, and even criminals, who serve as the operational leaders that instruct their followers to whip up the mob, instigate violence, and lead in the looting and killing. These local leaders are often known to organizations, such as development CSOs, which are long-rooted in communities. While most CSOs may not be in regular contact with these local criminals, they can engage community leaders who may know these people. The essential idea is to communicate to the community that people, other than official authorities, know that the communal tension is rising and that planning for violence may be underway.

**Community**

The wider community provides social sanction for the riot. The rioters are conspicuous for their normality as average citizens. For such normally risk-averse people

to overcome inhibitions to engage in destruction and death, they must feel supported by fellow community members. This support underpins, by providing psychological support and social and political legitimacy, the recourse to violence.

Prevention can target the community by providing information that dispels rumors, conveys accurate information, offers alternative interpretations of events, and counters the propaganda spewed by extremists. Elites, such as religious leaders and journalists, are important players in compelling their communities to provide support for actions. They interpret information and provide understanding. They can either create fear or diffuse tensions. As such, actors of prevention can seek the support of friendly religious leaders and media to reduce fear and tensions. Early high-visibility events and actions can help before rumors gain momentum and close off opportunities for people to change their minds, marginalize moderates or cooperate across communal cleavages.

## Coordinating Prevention

Undertaking prevention can't be done on a whim, at the last minute. The nature of the activity--the intensity and pace of violence and prevention--requires preparation and practice. Three elements are useful: 1) a lead civil society organization(s) and prevention networks, 2) civil society-police/government-elites engagement, and 3) practice.

### CSO Focal Point(s) and Networks for Prevention

Leading by committee rarely works in emergency situations. One or a few organizations must be responsible for coordinating civil society action when a crisis emerges. A peacebuilding organization (as opposed to development or humanitarian CSOs) may be best placed to coordinate prevention efforts because of their expertise in

peace and security issues. First, it can act as a permanent watch center for the city (or a number of peacebuilding organizations could divide the city up into sectors to maintain watch). Given that all CSOs seem to be persistently strapped for resources, such a watch center is likely to be most in-line with the core mission, and expenditures, for peacebuilding organizations. Other organizations, particularly development organizations rooted in the neighborhoods, can feed information into the watch center. Second, as tensions rise or events that are potential precipitants for riots occur, the lead organization(s) can promptly call an emergency meeting of the network. This meeting can clarify information and create an action plan to diffuse the situation.

In most cases, development-focused CSOs will be better situated than peacebuilding CSOs to conduct prevention activities in communally sensitive, and thus vulnerable to violence, neighborhoods. Therefore, conflict prevention and riot prevention capabilities should be mainstreamed into development organizations rather than peacebuilding organizations being focal points for prevention for communities. However, development CSOs need assistance from peacebuilding and human rights advocacy organizations in developing the knowledge and skills to conduct interventions, pressuring government authorities to act early, and coordinating city-wide prevention activities (e.g. peace rallies, information-sharing, etc.)

Collaboration is a key force multiplier. In the realm of civil society, coordination becomes important in order to exponentially increase the voice and power of individual organizations. Essentially, this means the creation of a network of as many CSOs as possible that are interested in preventing violence. A network can be as 'firm', coordinating their activities regularly, or 'soft', only sharing information occasionally, as

the situation and relationships permit. Collaboration between peacebuilding, development, humanitarian and other CSOs can bring together different capacities and comparative advantages. But cooperation requires the willingness for CSOs to collaborate in a prevention network despite differing philosophies, because it is of benefit to all of them.

**Relationships with Police, Government and Elites**

Building relationships with police, governing officials, media, religious leaders and businesses is important. First, building relationships with these various actors can provide access to decision-making authority and power when most necessary. Second, there are latent prevention capacities within these actors that civil society can activate.

Police relationships are key. Having trusted access to police will help in convincing them to give civil-society efforts a chance and not to use force too quickly or too harshly, investigate rumors and detain troublemakers. Access to trusted government officials is important when the police or other authorities are part of the problem. Critically important is to identify who has the power to make decisions regarding law and order issues in the specific location where CSOs work. In India, the Commissioner and Additional Commissioner of Police, District Magistrates and District Collector have various authority vested in them. The District Collector is still often the head administrator of a district and has the power to act as the executive magistrate during civil disturbances. In effect, this means that they have more policing authority than a municipal police commissioner. As such, a close and trusted relationship with the District Collector in India can be immensely beneficial in dealing with communal conflicts. However, in reality, the power of the District Collector varies from location to

location as some positions are more active in some places than others and as politicians exercise considerable influence over these positions in some places more than others. For example, senior police authorities in India are often encumbered by the restrictions imposed on them by politicians even though the police may have legal authority to act. It may not be preferable to develop institutionalized links between CSOs and the police or official authorities if they have a reputation for communal bias. This may actually damage a CSOs reputation for impartiality. However, informal relationships can turn into valuable conduits of information and coordination during crises.

Relationship with trusted media colleagues will help in combating propaganda and delivering accurate information. Often considered the fourth estate in democracies, newsthesis, radio and television journalists have the power to frame the issue, and thereby incite or diffuse tensions. It is likely that some journalists are biased from the beginning, which makes it that much more important to identify and work with like-minded colleagues who can convey messages of peace on short notice.

Though rarely do they ever organize ethnic or communal violence, some religious leaders and business owners lend overt or implicit support for tensions. However, there are also those that have an interest in preventing tensions. CSOs can provide these persons with opportunities to support peace initiatives. By identifying and building relationships with these individuals, CSOs may be able to use them during prevention. Courageous religious leaders can restrain their constituents from engaging in or support violence. They may even be able to shelter and protect potential victims. Business elites are often well connected to other influential members of society. While many may not want to get involved in an unfolding situation, there may be some that can provide access

to important decision-makers in the city or at state and national levels from which attention and help is needed.

**Practice**

Preparedness comes through practice. Tabletop exercises can assist organizations in identifying their strengths and weakness. This exercise can be replicated for the whole civil society network. The goal should be to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for how the network and every organization will react when early warning information indicates an impending crisis. Of course, these SOPs are ideal. Since each crisis is different and each organization is likely to interpret it differently and suggest different reactions, flexibility is key. Flexibility in managing the network and flexibility in how organizations respond is necessary. It is important to note that a network is not about managing individual organization's reaction and actions, but rather should hope to coordinate the network's interactions with police and political authorities, particularly in relation to what the police and government should be doing to prevent the violence.

## Conclusion

How the principles and lessons detailed in this research manifest themselves in practice depends upon the specific societal contexts (i.e. ethnic community relations, strength of civil society, government openness to civil society activism on peace issues, police attitudes and capacity, etc.) and dynamics of riots ('spontaneous' and 'political' riots). But in all situations, CSOs can not only pressure authorities to prevent or stop the violence, but they can also engage in activities along the continuum of the riot: propaganda, preparation, rumors and precipitants, and execution. CSOs must understand that they not only have a voice to provide early warning, but also arms and legs to

prevent a situation from descending into violence. There are opportunities for action by providing early warning to authorities and citizens, advocating for early response to political authorities and police, activities that remove legitimacy for the violence and impunity for the rioters, and conducting community activities to resolve incidents before they escalate, combat rumors and clarify information, and ease fears. Effective action takes a strategy to identify the specific dynamics of local riots, develop early warning indicators, and target the leaders and rioters. Finally, these prevention issues and activities have the best possibility of success if CSOs can advocate for prevention systems to be put in place in times of peace, when there are no riots. CSOs can advocate for policies that allow greater freedom for civil society to engage on security and police issues in the community, on policies that support the creation and work of peace committees, better police training and mandates for engaging in CSOs, and other policies that tip the balance from emphasizing reaction to prevention.

## APPENDIX A

### Organizational Profile and Member Interview Questionnaire[9]

1.　ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

1.1　Name of organization _____

1.2　Type of organization _____

1.3　Membership (quantity)_____

1.4　Location (district, village, neighborhood) _____

1.5　Names of leaders _____

## 2. LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW GUIDE

### 2A.　*Origins and Development*

2A.1　How was your organization created? Who was most responsible for its creation (e.g., government mandate, community decision, suggestion of outside NGO)?

2A.2　What kinds of activities has the organization been involved in?

2A.3　In what ways has the organization changed its structures and purpose? What is the main purpose of your organization today? What are the organization's long-term goals?

2A.4　As the organization developed, what sort of help has it received from outside? Has it received advice and/or funding or other support from the government? What about from nongovernment sources? How did you get this support? Who initiated it? How was the support given? What benefits and limitations has the organization derived from this support?

### 2B.　*Membership*

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[9] Adapted from World Bank (1996). *Annex 1D Organizational Profile Interview Guide*. Instruments of the Social Capital Assessment Tool

2B.1 Can you tell me about the people involved in your organization? What backgrounds (gender, religion, caste, etc.) are they from? How do they become involved? Are all people in the community involved? If not, why are some members of the community not involved? *(Probe for diversity and contact across ethnic identities.)*

2B.2 Why do people join or are willing to serve (as officers/leaders/board members) in the organization? Is it hard to convince people to continue being active in the organization? What kinds of requests/demands do they make on the leadership and organization?

2B.3 Are active members in this organization also members of other organizations in the community/region? Do people tend to be members of just one organization or join many simultaneously? Can you explain why?

*2C.* *Institutional Capacity*

2C.1 How would you characterize the quality of *leadership* of this organization, in terms of…

…stability?

…number of leaders/availability?

…diversity/heterogeneity of leadership?

…quality and skills of leaders?

…relationship of leaders to staff and to the community?

…engagment of leaders with political (city administration, police, courts, politicans) and business leaders?

2C.2 How would you characterize the quality of *participation* in this organization, in terms of…

…attendance at meetings, both internal to the organization and externally with other organizations?

…participation in decisionmaking within the organization?

…dissemination of relevant information prior to the decision?

…informal opportunities to discuss the decision?

…consultation processes with base organizations or with the community?

…broad debate, including opposition positions, and honesty?

…dissemination of the results of the decisionmaking process?

…the number of women, young people, poor people who work in the organization and who occupy positions of responsibility in the organization? *(Probe for type of diversity, and presence of continuents and elites.)*

…opportunity for people not in management positions to make critical decisions (e.g. on short notice)?

…whether any groups within the community feel excluded from the organization? What groups are they?

…the level of participation of more prosperous families (elites) in the organization?

…whether certain elites are sympathetic, supportive, interfering, adversarial, or negative influences?

2C.3 How would you characterize the ***organizational culture*** of this organization, in terms of…

…the existence and level of knowledge of the procedures and policies?

…whether the procedures and policies are carried out? Whether there are problems with nonattendance at meetings, theft of property or supplies?

…conflict resolution mechanisms within the organization?

…conflict resolution mechanisms for the community?

…the nature of conflicts between the organization and community members?

2C.4 How would you characterize the ***organizational capacity*** of this organization, in terms of…

…carrying out specialized activities (e.g., providing credit, holding training workshops, organizing neighborhood meetings, etc. )?

…supervising and contracting consultants?

…preparing financial reports for banks, donors, and government?

…reacting to changing circumstances (e.g., change in government, tensions in the community)?

…developing specific plans for the future (instead of reacting to opportunities as they present themselves)?

…reacting to crisis situations (e.g. criminal violence, rumors)?

…reflecting on and learning from previous experiences? Does your staff regularly attending education and training courses?

**2D.** *Institutional Linkages*

2D.0  How would you characterize your organization's relations with the local community (especially where your programs are situated)? What kind of opinions do you think the various people in the community have of your organization?

2D.1  How would you characterize your organization's relationship with other community organizations? When do you feel the need to establish collaboration/links with them?

2D.2  Do you have links with organizations outside the village/neighborhood? With which ones? What is the nature of those links?

2D.3  Do you feel sufficiently informed about other organizations' programs and activities? What are your sources of information?

2D.4  Have you attempted to organize or work with other organizations to achieve a mutually beneficial goal? (*Ask for which activities*.) Is this a common strategy among organizations in this village/neighborhood? (*Probe as to reasons why or why not*.)

2D.5  Could you describe your relationship with the government? Have you had experience in trying to get government assistance? What was your experience? Which level of government do you find most cooperative (local, district, national)? Has the government made particular requests of your organization?

   --city administration: Mayor, District Collector

   --civil servants

   --District Magistrate

   --police (and PAC); police commissioner

2D.6 Is your organization linked to any government program? Which government program(s) is your organization involved with? Why those particular programs? What sort of role does your organization play in the program? Are there certain characteristics of these programs that make it easier for your organization to work with the programs?

2D.7 Do you feel sufficiently informed about government programs and activities? What are your sources of information?

2D.8 Have you attempted to give inputs to the government? What were the circumstances? What have been the results? What kinds of challenges did you have to deal with? (*Probe for any role in planning, operation, and maintenance of government-sponsored services*.)

2D.9 Has your organization been invited to participate in any of the various government activites?

2D.10 In general, how do you assess your organization's actual influence on government decisionmaking at the district level? At the state level?

2D.11 Could you describe your relationship with the local business community? *(Probe for engagment with landowners, business with diverse employees, etc.)* Do you know managers or proprietors of the largest businesses in city/neigborhoods (near where you work)? Do you work with them or regularly communicate with them?

2D.12 Could you describe you relationship with local political parties and their leaders? Do you know them personally? Do you work them on specific projects? Do you communicate with them on a regular basis?

3.	MEMBERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

### 3A.	*Organizational History and Structure*

3A.1	How did this group start?

3A.2	Who have been the leaders of this group? Who are the leaders now? How and why did the leadership change over time? What are the qualities of leadership?

3A.3	Why did you decide to join this group? What kinds of benefits do you get by being a member of this group?

3A.4	How are the leaders of this organization selected? How are decisions made? To what extent do you feel the organization represents your concerns to the outside world and to the government?

3A.5	Why are some people not members of this organization?

3A.6	How do you feel this organization complements, replaces, or competes with government institutions' activities in the community?

3A.7	How do you feel this organization complements, replaces, or competes with nongovernmental institutions' activities in the community?

3A.8	What would you do to make this organization more effective?

### 3B.	*Institutional Capacity*

3B.1	How would you characterize the quality of *leadership* of this organization, in terms of…

…stability?

…number of leaders/availability?

…diversity/heterogeneity of leadership?

…quality and skills of leaders?

…relationship of leaders to staff and to the community?

…engagment of leaders with political (city administration, police, courts, politicans) and business leaders?

3B.2   How would you characterize the quality of *participation* in this organization, in terms of…

…attendance at meetings, both internal to the organization and externally with other organizations?

…participation in decisionmaking within the organization?

…dissemination of relevant information prior to the decision?

…informal opportunities to discuss the decision?

…consultation processes with base organizations or with the community?

…broad debate, including opposition positions, and honesty?

…dissemination of the results of the decisionmaking process?

…the number of women, young people, poor people who work in the organization and who occupy positions of responsibility in the organization?

…opportunity for people not in management positions to make critical decisions?

…whether any groups within the community feel excluded from the organization? What groups are they?

…the level of participation of more prosperous families (elites) in the organization?

…whether elites are sympathetic, supportive, interfering, adversarial, or negative influences?

3B.3 How would you characterize the ***organizational culture*** of this organization, in terms of…

…the existence and level of knowledge of procedures and policies?

…whether the procedures and policies are carried out? Whether there are problems with nonattendance at meetings, theft of property or supplies?

…conflict resolution mechanisms within the organization?

…conflict resolution mechanisms for the community?

…the nature of conflicts between the organization and community members?

3B.4 How would you characterize the ***organizational capacity*** of this organization, in terms of…

…carrying out specialized activities (e.g., providing credit, holding training workshops, organizing neighborhood meetings, etc. )?

…supervising and contracting consultants?

…preparing financial reports for banks, donors, and government?

…reacting to changing circumstances (e.g., change in government, tensions in the community)?

…developing specific plans for the future (instead of reacting to opportunities as they present themselves)?

…reflecting on and learning from previous experiences?

### 3C.    *Institutional Linkages*

3C.1    How would you characterize your organization's relations with the local community (especially where your programs are situated)? What kind of opinions do you think the various people in the community have of your organization?

3C.2    How would you characterize your organization's relationship with other community organizations? *(Probe for knowledge of, links, collaboration.)*

3C.3    Could you describe your relationship with the government? Have you had experience in trying to get government assistance? What was your experience? Which level of government do you find most cooperative (local, district, national)? Has the government made particular requests of your organization? *(Probe for knowledge, engagment with, and collaboration.)*

    --city administration: Mayor, District Collector

    --civil servants

    --District Magistrate

    --police (and PAC); police commissioner

3C.4    In general, how do you assess your organization's actual influence on government decisionmaking at the district level? At the state level?

3C.5    Could you describe your relationship with the local business community? *(Probe for engagment with landowners, business with diverse employees, etc.)* Do you know managers or proprietors of the largest businesses in city/neigborhoods (near where you work)? Do you work with them or regularly communicate with them?

3C.6    Could you describe you relationship with local political parties and their leaders? Do you know them personally? Do you work them on specific projects? Do you communicate with them on a regular basis?

# APPENDIX B

## Peacebuilding Program Interview Questionnaire

1.    Program Identity

1.1    What type of program is it? What is its purpose? How long has it been in place?

1.2    Who does it attempt to engage or who is it specifically for? Who isn't it for?

1.3    Who do you hope that it will further engage (that haven't participated in it yet)? *(Probe for knowledge of and involvement by the various members of the community.)*

1.4    Who runs the program (including outside consultants, speakers, etc.)?

2.    Program Context

2.1    Why is it needed here? *(Probe for old and contemporary history)*

2.2    Do you think the program is well known in the neighborhood?

2.3    Who outside of its beneficiaries are aware of the program (city administration, civil servants, police, political parties)?

3.    Activities and Capacities

3.1    What activities have been conducted so far? (Probe for frequency, numbers of participants, identity of participants, etc.)

3.2    Where does it work (neighborhoods)? Why there?

3.3    How does it relate to the different ethnicities to each other (e.g. by deliberately talk of religious issues, non-directly through addressing common economic and social needs.)?

3.4 How are specific activities under the program initiated?

3.5 Does the program keep in contact with the participants (or vice-versa)?

3.6 Do the participants keep in regular contact with each other (either through the program or independently)?

3.62 *If yes:* Can you contact the participants at any time of day or night?

3.7 How effective do you think it has been?

3.8 What has been the biggest challenge? What have your learned from this program?

3.9 What training is needed before participating in the program? Are there any requirements for the participants?

3.91 Do you think you can use the program to prevent an imminent riot?

3.92 What would be needed for the people and participants of this program to engage in preventing a riot?

## APPENDIX C

### Mohalla Peace Committees Interview Questionnaire

1. When was the committee started? How did it come together?

2. Who are the leaders/organizers/directors? What is their status? Why did they join?

3. Who are the members?

4. What do your members do for jobs?

5. Why did the join?

6. Where is it? What is the ethnic make-up of the neighborhood?

7. What is the relationship between the various people of the neighborhood? *(Probe for economic dependency or inter-dependency.)*

8. How often do you meet?

9. What happens at these meetings?

10. What do you do when you hear a rumor?

11. Do you investigate together or send members of communities to speak with leaders in their communities?

12. Can you contact your member at any time night or day?

13. See Organizational Interview Guide for the questions below

14. What government offices have you needed, or do you need, most?

15. …City Administration/Municipality

16. …Police

17. …Courts

18. …District collector

19. What is your relationship with the police?

20. How often do you interact with them?

21. Have you called on them for assistance?

22. During times of tensions, have you talked to them? About what?

23. Have the police contacted you for help?

24. Do the police help you when you need them? What biases, if any, did you notice in police behavior?

25. What is your relationship with city officials? Mayor, District Collector, District Magistrate…

26. What is your relationship with local businesspersons?

27. What is your relationship with local political parties and politicians?

28. Do you face any difficulties in getting work done? Do you feel any biases in the way government offices deal with you?

29. (IF INTRA-ETHNIC program or committee): Is your community well-represented in the police and administration? If the number of officers belonging to your community go up in the police and administration, will it make a difference to you? Will it benefit the community?

## APPENDIX D

### Incident Interview Questionnaire

*1. Purpose and criteria*

1A. Question activities during:

1) Times of nation-wide Hindu-Muslim tension and incidents (1992-93 post-Aydhoya violence, 2002 Gujarat riots, Delhi parliament bombings Dec. 2001, Bombay terrorist bombings July 2006, etc.,)

2) Times of local Hindu-Muslim tensions (especially around festivals, local elections)

3) Local tensions that were prevented from resulting in violence (investigation of rumors, calming neighborhoods, etc.)

1B.    Successful case vs. unsuccessful case in one organization
       Successful cases in multiple organizations

1C.    Probe for: rumors and propaganda, timing (festival, elections, time of day), who (religious, caste, class identity);

Brass: a) Communalist mobilizers, b) criminals, c) mobilized mobs, d) police and PAC

*2. Questionnaire: Activities and actions related to specific incidents of violence*

2A.    Incident History

What happened?

When did it happen? *(Probe for timing: (festival, elections, time of day)*

Where did it specifically occur? *(Probe for exact location, occupants of the land,*
*neighboring properties)*

How did it start? *(Probe for identity of specific persons.)*

What do you think was the cause?

Who do you think was responsible? Who was most responsible?

Was there tension or was tension increasing in the community before the
incident? *(Probe for rumors and propaganda.)*

What has been the history of relations in the community? *(Probe for context:*
*History, Dominant groups, Ethnic relations, Economic interdependency,*
*Neighborhoods make-up (integrated/segregated)*

2B.   Response *(Probe for detail time-line)*

What did you do? Who was involved (identities of the persons)?

Why do you think you were successful? Or Why do you think you were
unsuccessful?

What do you think you need to be successful again/in the future?

2C.   Future capacity

What do you think can be done to prevent such a riot/incident in the future?

*(Focus on operational issues)*

…in the organization

…in the community

…in the government (administration, police, politicians, businesses, etc.)

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## Interviews
The following interviews were conducted in January-February of 2007.
### *Ahmedabad.*
Prashant
   Father Prakash, Cedric. Director of Prashant and former Director of SXSSS

Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)        http://www.sewa.org/
   Pruthaben and Meghaben, Shantipath Peace Centre coordinators
   SEWA Shantipath members interview
   SEWA Ektabens

St. Xavier's Social Service Society (SXSSS)        http://www.sxsss.org/
   Father D'Souza S.J., Paul. Director

*Mumbai.*

Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) http://www.csss-isla.com/
  Engineer, Dr. Asghar Ali. Director
  CSSS program coordinators

Mohalla Committee Movement Trust (MCMT)
  Ishwaran, Maria. Mohalla Committee Facilitator
  Sahney, Satish. Former Mumbai Commissioner of Police
  Advocate Shaikh, Yasmin. Mohalla Committee Facilitator

Khopade, Suresh. Former Deputy Commissioner of Police, Bhiwandi; Current Commissioner of Railway Police.

*Hyderabad.*

Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA)   www.covanetwork.org
  Hussain, Dr. Mazher. Director.
  Naicker, John Timothy. Training Officer for PAP.
  Noorjahan, Coordinator, of Community Development Programmes.

Maithri
  Sri Kishan Sharma, Founder and President of the South Zone.

# VITA

## SRINIVAS VAITLA

| | |
|---|---|
| 3/1992 - 5/2003 | Staff Sergeant, U.S. Air Force, California Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve; Texas, Alaska, California, Utah |
| 6/1995 - 12/1996 | University of Alaska, Anchorage<br>Undergraduate coursework |
| 8/1997 - 3/2000 | Bachelors Degree, University of California-Santa Barbara, CA<br>Major: Political Science        Minor: International Relations<br>Internship: Caux Scholars Program (Switzerland)<br>Reg Robinson Award for Excellence in International Relations |
| 8/2000 - 5/2002 | Master's Degree, American University, Washington, DC<br>Major: International Politics   Minor: Conflict Resolution<br>Merit Scholarship; Teaching Assistantship<br>Internship: U.S. Department of State<br>Master's Thesis: "Norms and Interests of Humanitarian Interventions" |
| 7/2002 - 9/2005 | Liaison to the United Nations, Initiatives of Change—International, New York, NY |
| 8/2004 - Present | Ph.D. student, Rutgers University-Newark, NJ<br>Major: Global Affairs          Concentration: Security Studies<br>Dissertation field research: January-February 2007<br>Dissertation: Preventing Ethnic Violence with Local Capacities: Lessons from Civil Society in India |
| 1/2005 - 9/2006 | Special Fellow, U.N. Institute for Training and Research<br>New York, NY |
| 12/2007 – Present | Foreign Affairs Specialist, U.S. Department of State<br>Washington, DC |
| 5/2011 | Ph.D. in Global Affairs |