

GUIDELINES ON COMMUNAL HARMONY

**Ministry of Home Affairs,
Government of India**

Introduction

The maintenance of communal harmony, and the prevention / avoidance of communal disturbances / riots, is a prime responsibility of the State Governments.

Preventive Measures

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- Preventing a communal riot is important than containing it. The District Administration should assess on a regular basis and identify specific areas which are prone to communal sensitivities and tensions in the light of
 - demographic profile
 - Existence of any structures, monuments, etc.,
 - Disputes over land
 - Routes of procession
 - History of past disputes
 - History of Religious Conversion/Reconversion
 - The Station House Officers and other senior officials at the police station level should keep a close watch.
 - Communally sensitive places should be identified in the riot prone areas. Police Stations / Posts should be set up in all sensitive / trouble-prone areas.

Preventive Measures

- Regarding to sensitive/hyper-sensitive areas the District Administration should anticipate possible developments and prepare detailed SOPs and contingency plans
- Special attention to be given to developing mechanisms for intelligence and information gathering.
- A weekly/fortnightly intelligence/situation report should be sent by each police station and should be reviewed on a monthly basis at the level of District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police.
- Senior Police and Administration officers at the District should visit the communally sensitive areas from time to time.
- Activities of organisations with avowed goals should be continuously kept under careful watch and scrutiny. If any such organization are found to be indulging in any Unlawful activity as defined in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 then we can declare them as Unlawful Associations.

Administrative Measures

- Once in a quarter State Level Integration Committee meeting under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister should be held.
- State Government may be set up a Nodal Cell to act as a clearing house of information.
- At the State and District levels, there should be a crisis Management Plan.
- At the field level a list of elements should be readily available in all Police Stations.
- In communally sensitive towns and areas, Peace Committees with fair representation should be set up.
- In the event of any incident the Peace Committees should be immediately activated with the aim of defusing the situation.
- A Code of Conduct should be developed and Peace Committees should also be involved in educating the public about the contents of such code.
- Care should be taken not to permit the use of loudspeakers between 11 P.M. and 6 A.M. The provisions of the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 should be widely publicize and followed.

Administrative Measures

- Organisers of religious processions may be asked to give a substantial deposit if the processions passes through any sensitive areas.
- Video/Audio coverage and cameras may be used to record the processions.
- Appropriate measures should be taken to regulate the carrying of firearms etc.
- Measures should be taken to regulate the exhibition of persons or display of any provocative object including symbols, placards etc.
- Effective and meaningful action needs to be taken to curb and check rumors.
- Areas vulnerable to the outbreak of communal violence need to be identified and monitoring and preventive measures to be put in place.
- Adequate steps should be taken to ensure that no damage is caused to place of worship.
- Any Construction of religious places shall be made only after duly approved by the appropriate Authority.
- The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988 prohibits storage of arms and ammunition inside any place of worship.
- If a communal incident occurs a detailed report should be sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs immediately.

Personnel Policy

- The Composition of the police force should be a representative of the social structure of the region.
- Below are the steps which have been recommended from time to time to be taken:
 - Fill up vacancies in communally vulnerable areas on priority basis.
 - Creation of composite battalions of armed police which should include all members of all the communities.
 - Review the training programmes
 - Steps should also be taken to ensure smooth functioning between the civil administration and the Army.
 - Medical Relief Teams should be constituted.
 - In Communally sensitive and riot prone areas police and administrative officials should be posted.
 - Every Public Servant should exercise the lawful authority vested in him/her.

Visits by VIP / Dignitaries

During communal disturbances, various VIPs/Political dignitaries visit these areas with a view to strengthening the public confidence. It is necessary that care may be taken by all to ensue that measures taken by the local administration for maintenance of law and order and conducting relief operations etc, continue as per the plans.

Participation of Stakeholders

- In a communally sensitive area the District Administration can tap the resources and energy of those who are most likely to incur loss like small shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, daily-wagers and women in ensuring peace.
- The District Administration should maintain comprehensive information and database regarding voluntary organisations who are working in the field of promoting peace.
- Proper SOPs to be framed.

Press/Media and Awareness Building

- Multi-media publicity and promotion campaign needs to be conducted on a continuing basis.
- Involvement school students by arranging various competition and talks on the subject of Communal Harmony
- Provide the media with facts to avoid speculative reporting leading.

Enforcement Action and monitoring of Cases

- Prompt and immediate preventive / enforcement action to be taken.
- Carefully monitored and wherever necessary Special Investigation Teams (SIT) to be constituted.
- Appointing Special Public Prosecutors
- Special Courts may be set up

Relief and Rehabilitation

- A system of expeditious disbursement of the relief should be devised.
- While providing assistance and relief there should be no discrimination.
- The District Administration should ensure timely provision of essential supplies.
- If Relief camps have been set up then proper arrangements for security and other appropriate amenities to be made.
- An appropriate mechanism may be established for speedy disposal of insurance claim and assistance from financial institution on account of damage to residential and commercial property.
- The Central Government has launched a Central Scheme for assistance to the Victims therefore proper arrangements for implementation of the scheme may be ensured.

THANK YOU