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## PSYCHOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF SOME RECENT RIOTS IN INDIA

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*The purpose of this article is to describe very briefly psychological observations about some recent riots in India and how psychological knowledge can be used to help understand riots, how to deal with them and how to prevent them in the future. It is important to find out the psychological answer of why some individuals actively participate in antisocial behaviour but others do not from the same community. This article focused on the role of irrational thinking which results in to lack of internal control, frustration, emotional excitement, de-individualization etc. Author viewed that all these factors are contributors or moderators for the behavioral involvement of participants in riots. Some recently occurred riots in India such as riots after Baba Ram Rahim conviction of rape, Patidar, Gurjar, Jat community riots and also riots after incidence of Bhima Koregaon violence was considered in the present study. This article is also focused on how these riots are rationally different from 'Movement of Jan-Lokpal Bill' in April 2011 promoted by Anna Hazare or 'Silent rallies' organized by Maratha community across the state.*

### Introduction

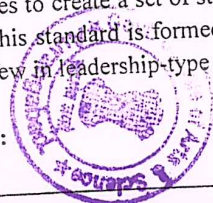
In India, anarchy situation aroused during Gurjar Andolan in Rajasthan, Jat Andolan in Haryana, Patidar community riots in Gujrat for reservation quota and other demands, violence erupted after Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh conviction of rape, and violence erupted in some places in Maharashtra after the violent incidence in Bhima-Koregaon. Irrespective of whether their demands right or wrong, violence used during these riots have created an anarchy situation in India. All these incidences received the psychologists' attention in view of how psychology can help to prevent and control these anarchy situations.

Crowd psychology, also known as mob psychology, is a branch of social psychology. Social psychologists have developed several theories for explaining the ways in which the psychology of a crowd differs from and interacts with that of the individuals within it. This field relates to the behaviors and thought processes of both the individual crowd members and the crowd as an entity. Crowd behavior is heavily influenced by the loss of responsibility of the individual and the impression of universality of behavior, both of which increase with the size of the crowd. Berlonghi (1995) classified crowds in to four types these are casual, conventional, expressive, and acting. According to him a crowd changes its level of emotional intensity over time, and therefore, can be classed in any one of the four types.

When the leaders become aware of mass psychology and take it into their own hands, it ceases the common sense of people and they completely believe in their leader. People do not really identify themselves with him but act this identification, perform their own enthusiasm, and thus participate in their leader's performance. This fictitiousness of their own group psychology makes fascist crowds so merciless and unapproachable. If they would stop the motive for a second, the whole performance would go to pieces. In Indian context opportunistic leaders who lead riots have taken the benefit of impact of psychological variables on participants such as emotional contagion, imitation, conformity and anonymity.

Leaders who gather the cast base crowd, in these ambiguous crowds' individuals will assume a new social identity as a member of the crowd. This group membership is made more famous by confrontation with other cast groups. The group identity serves to create a set of standards for behavior; for certain groups' violence is legitimate, for others it is unacceptable. This standard is formed from stated values, but also from the actions of others in the crowd, and sometimes from a few in leadership-type positions.

Psychological aspects of riots:



In a riot situation some individuals actively participate in antisocial behavior, but others do not, and still others act to discourage hostile activity. Specific causes observed for behavioral involvement of some participants in riots are (1) insufficiency of internal control or lack of internalized restraints acquired through learning, (2) effects of frustration, (3) emotional excitement, and (4) precipitating incidents (one or more), (5) They seem that there is no possibility of culpability.

Following are psychological causal factors for why people involved in riots:

-Due to the anonymity of the crowd the individuals involved in the riots lose their sense of individual self and personal responsibility, and they are not fears regarding legal culpability or punishment because they know that it is difficult to prosecute individual members of the mob.

-According to Sigmund Freud's crowd behavior theory, becoming a member of a crowd serves to unlock the unconscious mind. This occurs because the super-ego, or moral center of consciousness, is displaced by the larger crowd, to be replaced by a charismatic crowd leader.

-Deindividuation theory argues that in typical crowd situations, factors such as anonymity, group unity, and arousal can weaken personal controls (e.g. guilt, shame, self-evaluating behavior) by distancing people from their personal identities and reducing their concern for social evaluation. This lack of restraint increases individual sensitivity to the environment and lessens rational forethought, which can lead to antisocial behavior. More recent theories have stated that deindividuation hinges upon a person being unable, due to situation, to have strong awareness of their self as an object of attention. This lack of attention frees the individual from the necessity of normal social behavior.

#### An example set by Anna movement & Maratha community:

Generally, researchers in crowd psychology have focused on the negative aspects of crowds, but not all crowds are volatile or negative in nature. An antisocial leader can incite violent action, but an influential voice of non-violence in a crowd can lead to a mass sit-in. For example, in the beginning of the socialist movement crowds were asked to put on their Sunday dress and march silently down the street.

Two more-modern example of non-violence and involves the sit-ins are during the Anna movement and Maratha community silent marches in various districts of Maharashtra state. Crowds can reflect and challenge the held ideologies of their socio-cultural-economic environment by non-violent and democratic ways also. They can also serve integrative social functions, creating temporary communities.

Movement led by Anna Hazare in Delhi and Maratha community in Maharashtra proved that an influential voice of non-violence in a crowd can lead to a mass sit-in. In other side cast basis riots organized by Jat, Gurjar, patidar community, riots after Bhima-Koregaon violent-incident and religious base riots organized by Baba Ram Rahim incited violent action. This again proved the convergence theory which holds that crowd behavior is not a product of the crowd, but rather the crowd is a product of the coming together of like-minded individuals.

#### The role of psychologists during riots:

The role psychologists is now extended to develop democratic attitude and to sustain national integrity among citizens. Some researchers found that impact of violence during riots are very harmful for children's and in Indian context it is also uphold an identity based on cast, religious roots etc which scratches the national integrity. Exposure of violence during riots resulted in to symptoms of PTSD, sleep disorders, fear of going out, fear of destruction of house, fear of playing with other community members, difficulty in forming close relationship etc. among children's and adults also. (Davies and Flannery, 1998)

Psychologists can help to improve the coping capacity of community and to improve some cognitive and non-cognitive skills which are fostered by family, schools, and communities especially in childhood (Cunha, Heckman, and Schennach, 2010).



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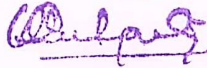
CBT is a therapeutic approach that can be used to treat a range of harmful beliefs and behaviors, including depression, anger, and impulsivity. First, CBT tries to make people aware of and challenge harmful, automatic patterns of thinking or behavior. Second, it tries to disrupt these patterns of thinking and to foster better ones by having people practice new skills and behaviors—learning by doing to focus on forward-looking behavior and self-control. By self-control, psychologists and criminologists typically mean one's short-term abilities to regulate emotions and to be resistant to impulse, as well as more sustained abilities to be planful, persevering, and patient.

If mental health professionals help the victims at the right time by way of counseling, supportive psychotherapy, group therapy or behavioral modification with the help of relaxation, then the impact will be reduced. In addition to individual risk factors, multiple developmental tasks, behaviour and exposure in multiple contexts should be addressed. It is important that prevention and intervention efforts begin as early as possible; psychologist should use social media for this purpose. It is a need of time a national level organization or authorities of psychologists should form, which helps to guide the people who are involved and misleads or used during riots. Smart use of social media by psychologists authority would be helpful for reduce the violent behaviour during riots.

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