

# Socio-Religious Relations In Allahabad During Festive Seasons (1919-1928)

Key Words: *Allahabad, Socio-Religious Relations, Communal Rights.*

ISSN 0975 1254 (PRINT)  
ISSN 2249-9180 (ONLINE)  
www.shodh.net

A Refereed Research Journal  
And a complete Periodical dedicated to  
Humanities & Social Science Research

शोध संवयन

*The greatest success of Indian National Movement was combined with the biggest failure also. The greatest success was the achievement of independence on Aug 15, 1947. But it was proceeded by the biggest failure i.e. partition of the country. The partition of the country was the culmination of ugly process commonly called as Hindu-Muslim communalism which started as consequence of the emergence of modern politics, with the arrival of the British. Except for the partition days, the communal monster was seen in its ugliest face during 1922-27 era where whole country particularly North India was seized on it. During this period of study as far as Allahabad was concerned, it could be seen as communalism...*

*...Because of that I've quoted only two major religious groups i.e. the Hindu and the Muslims in my Research Paper and also took them only as the basis of discussion.*

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There are two main reasons behind it. Firstly the major population of India is comprised of these two religious groups. Secondly, the time period that I've undertaken and specified in my Research Paper, during that we may clearly point out the visionary differences between these two social groups, not only in Allahabad but, over many other areas, districts under United Provinces and these circumstances were quite common in those days.

Religion always had of course explosive potentialities in promoting conflict and inspiring extreme and violent action. After the First World War till 1922 the two communities were seen somewhat cooperating over some issues. But after 1922 the mass movement declined, the coalition fell apart, street riot broke out in various cities and Allahabad was one of the important part of United Provinces during this period. It was the capital of United Provinces and also the head office of All India Congress Committee.

Before we discuss the emergence and growth of communalism, it is necessary to define the term; communalism. It is basically an ideology, communal riots are only one consequence of the spread of this ideology. Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result common secular that is social, political and economic interest. But the last stage of communalism is reached when the interests of followers of different religion or different religious communities are seen to be mutually incompatible antagonistic and hostile.<sup>1</sup> But communalism appeared only during the festive season and after that both the communities got busy in their own business and in India this type of communal tension arose especially amidst 1924-27.

In 1919, emergence of the Khilafat movement Gandhi's call for Satyagraha seems to have caused even less stir. Both the Cownpar and the Allahabad were averse to taking part in the movement.<sup>2</sup> In this period they were united. The great example of unity seen in municipal elections, Hindu Mahasabha and Zahur Ahmad faction in municipal politics held long enough to sweep the old Muslim patrons led by Baqi Khan, off the board in March 1919. Abhyudaya was a Hindu weekly Newspaper, edited by Madan Mohan Malviya and he was a great representative of The Hindu Mahasabha.

Victory of only Hindu Mahasabha representatives Zahuar Ahmad, Kamalluddin Zafri

and Sayyid Hyder Mehdi, all extreme Muslim leagues, topped Baqi Khan's own poll in ward III while Baqi Khan of the Muslim party returned with a defeat.<sup>3</sup>

In this year, Bharat Milap and Dushehra, Moharram were passing off peacefully. It was the earnest desire of the local Seva Samiti to do all it can to promote a good relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims and to manage matters in such a way that there may be no reoccurrence of unhAppy incidents like previous years. Both the communities should be present, procession of the both the communities the Hindu and the Muslim volunteers should be as a member of seva samiti. So that all the festivals can take place successfully.<sup>4</sup>

Both the communities were happy with each other, leaders embraced each other, and Muslim butchers exchanged beetle leaves and cigarettes with passing Hindus instead Lathi Blows.<sup>5</sup>

On 17 October 1919 Friday, both the communities dedicated Namaz of Id. in Idgah and Liyaqat Hussin, Zahur Ahmad and Krishnakant Malviya were present there.<sup>6</sup>

C.A. Bayly explained the nature of Allahabadian community.

In general, political impulse carried over the bounds between the Hindu and the Muslim. It is not really possible to write of 'Hindu Politics' or 'Muslim Politics' in Allahabad except as far as religious ideas acted as a restraint over the freedom of politicians. Even when we look at the Hindu and the Muslim interest groups working in local or regional politics, these religious attributions were often banners under which different economic and social groups organized whose motives had little to do with religion. In the case of cow protection movement at the beginning of the period and the khilafat movement, both being of the religious character, significantly affected the direction of political activity.<sup>7</sup>

In 1920 on occasion of Dushehra Chauki fulfilled the political aim. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Madan Mohan Malviya and other national leaders inspired them. These chaukis were giving messages of Hindu-Muslim unity, Swadeshi and Jaliyanwala-Baag 1919 and also against the British imperialism.<sup>8</sup>

The government report says there was no communal tension and theoretical tension emerged in the year 1921 and 1922.<sup>9</sup>

But in 1923 communal tension started rising at Allahabad, so, Mrs. Naidu said at Allahabad in All India Congress meeting, 'Hindu-Muslim differences

have reached a point which may be most harmful to the national cause".<sup>10</sup>

Municipal and district boards continued to be a fruitful source of friction between the Hindus and the Muslims. Hindu's motion of no confidence against the Mohammdan Chairman and vice-versa was one such feature in the struggle.<sup>11</sup>

The prevailing state of feelings in Allahabad caused anxiety for some time. Elaborate precautions were taken to secure the peaceful celebration of the Moharram and the Chehellum and every effort was made to ensure similar result at the Ramlila.<sup>12</sup>

Shuddhi and Sangathan movement had caused a deterioration of communal relation here, as elsewhere. Commissioner of Allahabad division was worried about purchasing of large quantities weapon and ammunition in September.<sup>13</sup>

October was month of Roza and Ramlila, It was soon evident, however, that the Mohammdans were disposed regarding certain features of the Ramlila procession as provocative. There were protests at two 'mosque' on the score of music. On the morning of seventh of October, alarming situation arose when frustrated Hindus began to loot the vegetable market. So an order was declared to prohibit the lathi and dangerous weapons.<sup>14</sup> On the morning of 9th October, certain Hindus and the Muslims started throwing brickbat at one another near the Calvin Hospital, and because of that, 314 person were arrested in the Allahabad city.<sup>15</sup>

Commissioner of Allahabad indirectly held Hindus responsible for those disturbances. Abhyudaya News weekly opposed it, and wrote; 'what better sample of Government's efficient arrangement can we produce than this that a riot was taking place at a distance of only ten steps from the kotwali and yet authorities could not stop it.'<sup>16</sup>

After the communal disturbances, the Dushehra procession had ended. The Bharat Milap of city was also to take place the same evening, but the Hindu adopted a reasonable attitude and postponed it for some quieter times while the authorities directed the Mohammdans to celebrate Barawafat only at few licensed place in day time only.<sup>17</sup>

In 1924-25, when municipal chairman Kapil Dev Malviya submitted his annual report he wrote.

'Some of the present day members of the municipal board not only are communally biased but themselves create communal tension to obtain notoriety and popularity within their separate communal electorates.'<sup>18</sup>

Starting in 1925 in Allahabad, the rivalry of prominent Hindus and their anxiety to figure an influential leader delayed the resumption of friendly relations between the Hindus and the Mohammadans.<sup>19</sup> Communal tension continued acutely especially in Allahabad City the general feelings were in very excitable state.<sup>20</sup>

Suddhi and Sanghtan movement were also responsible for that situation. In early twenties a double programme of Suddhi and Sanghtan was founded by swami Shradhnanda.<sup>21</sup>

Suddhi literally meant purification as orthodox Hinduism regarded all non Hindus as unclean. They started process of conversion in selected areas.<sup>22</sup>

A few other statements of prominent Hindu leaders delivered during 1906-27 are given below:

'Just as England is for the English, France for the French, So is India for the Hindus. If the Muslim wished to cooperate with us unconditionally, we shall welcome them, and otherwise Hindus should march alone.'<sup>23</sup>

The other Hindu organization known as Hindu Mahasabha was started as a multi-purpose body to take care of Hindus Socio-religious interest but in 1924 its sphere had extended to political field as well.<sup>24</sup> It was in fact the philosophy of the Mahasabha to form a united front against the Muslim and its formation resulted in becoming a graveyard of Hindu Muslim unity.<sup>25</sup>

During this period public peace was shattered over some trivial questions like playing music before mosque and the slaughter of cow. Muslims would not tolerate Hindu Musical procession passing their messages and causing interruption in their prayers.<sup>26</sup>

In Allahabad Madan Mohan Malviya warned the govt. that if they did not allow the Hindus of Allahabad for Ramlila, they will rouse the conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims. So he wanted the government to give licenses for prayers, religious song and music and their shout of Malviya view; Govt. writes, "It is in no way essential to the performance of the Ramlila that music should be played in front of mosque at the time of evening prayer."<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Malviya suggested the government to appoint a committee or commission consisting preferably of three people who may be selected by the government to enquire but we regret that the government did not see its way to accept.<sup>28</sup>

The situation however took a new turn with the open appearance for the first time on the scene

of pt. Madan Mohan Malviya as the protagonist of the Hindus of Allahabad.<sup>29</sup>

Bad feelings were constantly in evidence in the district and municipal board. The Hindu majority of the Allahabad Municipal board was showing strong bias.<sup>30</sup> For two years, the Hindus did not celebrate their Ramlila, the only reason being music before mosque but in this year Dadhikando procession failed to clear the subrati mosque by the time of evening prayer. The Muslim in the mosque started a bombardment with bricks and other missiles, one Hindu and one Muslim were killed and 25 others were injured.<sup>31</sup> In this incident, the Hindu were undoubtedly provocative, but the Muslim were the aggressors.<sup>32</sup>

After the riots, the Allahabad's Hindu community decided that they would not celebrate Dadhikando. So the Muslims and the government body planned together to took out a fake procession. This involved not just them but also the Zameendar, police Inspector, and Raisaheb. And audience was carriage drivers, but the most embarrassing thing was that on the elephant where the statues used to rest on, were Muslims, inspector and police men sitting. In this way, they tried to put fake impression on everyone's eyes, but because of Hindus boycott, their intentions went down the drain.<sup>33</sup>

From 1924 to 1927, Hindu-Muslim became very bitter so, when Hindu-Muslim conference held on Allahabad against the statutory commission but not a single Muslim person was present in this meeting and main causes' being that M.M. Malviya was president of this meeting.<sup>34</sup>

In 1928 both the communities were concentrating in statutory commission and not just Allahabad but whole country was busy on it.

If we take out the conclusion over the basis of explanation of all the facts, then during the time period of 1919-1928, there are three points which come out over the subject of social circumstances in Allahabad.

Firstly, from 1919-1923 the environment was very normal and full of brotherly feelings. Here, we could clearly see Hindu-Muslim unity during the Khilafat Movement, not only this but also after the Jalianwala Bagh massacre, Allahabad became clear proof of one of the places which marked the united India.

Secondly, during 1923-1927, in Allahabad, the opposition between the two social groups becomes quite clear and highlighted. Especially during the

festivals, people turned rowdy. Reasons being loud music being played in front of the Mosques during namaz and cow slaughters during Bakri-aid. All this resulted in mass riots which were not only limited to Allahabad, but the news came from almost every corner of the United Provinces. All these activities neither had political nor national reasoning or explanation, because as soon as the festivals were over everything came back to normal. This was the specialty of these riots. It appeared as if religious matters held more importance than the political and national matters.

Policies of the British Government were proving helpful in spreading the violence, which is why there was no new ordinance to calm down such matters. Moreover we cannot expect a foreign government to understand the national and religious feelings of our people.

Third point of the conclusion is that in 1927 after the formation of newly found Simon Commission, the wave of nationalism was regenerated and restored among the mass and now everyone's concentration was back to nationalism, ignoring their personal, regional as well as religious matters. Which was a good sign for not just Allahabad but whole nation.

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