

**Negotiation and Reconfiguration of Identity during Landmark
Socio-political Turmoils in Post-independence India (1975-1993):**

A Study of Select Novels and Movies

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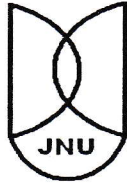
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Pranjal Protim Barua



Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067, India
2017



Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

Date: 19/07/2017

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation titled “**Negotiation and Reconfiguration of Identity during Landmark Socio-Political Turmoils in Post-Independence India (1975-1993): A Study of Select Novels and Movies**” submitted by **Pranjal Protim Barua**, Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(PROF. SAUGATA BHADURI)

SUPERVISOR

Professor Saugata Bhaduri
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

(PROF. UDAYA KUMAR)

CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi-110067

Date: 19/07/2017

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This thesis titled “**Negotiation and Reconfiguration of Identity during Landmark Socio-Political Turmoils in Post-Independence India (1975-1993): A Study of Select Novels and Movies**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.



Pranjal Protim Barua

(Ph.D. Student)

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JNU

Dedicated
to
Alaa, Deuta
&
Almighty

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Introduction

This research would investigate the treatment of certain events of socio-political turmoil in post-independence India within a range of cross-generic texts, from the perspective of how 'identity' gets negotiated and reconfigured through them. "Despite historical fluctuations, human identity – the answer to the question "Who am I?" or "Who we are?" – has never been very stable." (Dallmayr 2003, 13) The word 'identity' here refers to varying dimensions: personal or individual identity, the psychological make-up of individuals, their locatedness in a certain socio-cultural context, their political identity as citizens of a nation, and the rights and duties associated with the same.

Identity is a socially constructed definition of an individual. As socially constructed, the definition of an individual makes use of culturally available meanings and distributes them according to rules of interaction and patterns of stratification. The meaning of an individual, then, derives from these socially constructed definitions – that is, his or her identities. (Weigert, Teitge and Teitge 1986, 34)

The territory of the research is marked within a span of eighteen years of intense socio-political turmoil that the country witnessed post-independence, from the period of the Indian Emergency in 1975 to the 1993 Bombay bomb blasts. Within the span of these 18 years, the research will focus on several events: the Indian Emergency from 1975 to 1977, the Operation Blue Star in 1984, the subsequent Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, the Babri Masjid Demolition in 1992 and the subsequent serial bomb blasts in Bombay in 1993.

In its simplest meaning, a narrative is a story – a "spoken or written account of connected events" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). These accounts may occur in materials such as novels, films, textbooks, or other sites of discourse production (e.g., news media). Or they may occur in the speeches of leaders, the conversation of a community group, or the telling of an individual life story. Hence the idea of narrative transcends disciplinary boundaries in that these storied accounts are located at every level of analysis. They can be identified in the "raw data" of historians, literary critics, anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, psychologists, and scholars in fields like education and cultural studies. As windows into mind and society, stories know no bounds, and it is precisely this inherent transdisciplinary nature of narrative that makes it an ideal root metaphor for political psychology. (Hammack and Pilecki 2012, 76)

The primary idea is to study narratives that have emerged out of these landmark events of political turmoil, and to analyse the varying types of reaction in them to these events, both immediate and retrospective. "Narratives are based on cause-and-effect relationships that are applied to sequences of events." (Fludernik 2006, 2) To cover this vast terrain, however, some investigation into the background of these socio-political events would also be required, and thus the breadth of the research is to be widened, to facilitate the accommodation or incorporation of some archival and documented material and records, which will comprise the secondary area of this research.

The characteristics of narrative voice essentially amount to distinctions of time, "person," and level. It does not seem to me that the temporal situation of the narrative act is a priori any different in fiction than it is elsewhere: factual narrative is also acquainted with ulterior narration (which here, as in fictional narrative, is the most frequent), anterior narration (prophetic, anticipatory), simultaneous narration (reporting), and even intercalated narration, as in diaries. The distinction of "person," that is, the opposition between heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrative, divides factual narrative (history vs. memoir) as it does fictional narrative. Undoubtedly, the distinction of level is the most pertinent here, for the effort to achieve verisimilitude or simplicity generally discourages too heavy a use of second-degree narration in factual narrative: it is hard to imagine a historian or memorialist permitting one of his "characters" to narrate an important part of his narrative, and we have known since Thucydides what problems transmitting a somewhat extended discourse poses. The presence of a metadiegetic narrative is thus a quite plausible indication of fictionality—even if its absence is no indication of anything. (Genette, Ben-Ari and McHale 1990, 763-764)

Various literary narratives will be considered for the study to analyse the narrative aspect of historiography outside the commonly perceived canon of history and historicity. History will accommodate and reflect on the events discussed, but how far the literary narratives in form of the movies may be read in conjunction with the politico-historical facts and data is analysed within the scope of study.

Every author-historian has to imagine, as White suggests, that part of the past with which they wish to engage. The story space is the world of the once real past (or not as the case may be in some experimental history) as imagined (i.e., fictively construction) by the historian and which the history consumer is invited to visit through the history.

The story space clearly references a part of the once real world, but in that reference the historian chooses to invoke who *said* what, who *did* what, assumes there are mechanisms which will explain to us *why* they did it, what *agencies* and *structures* operate(d), what events were *significant* and which were not, and which theories and arguments will be applied to explaining the message of it all. Moreover, new information can be added and old information reconsidered. (Munslow 2007, 18)

The literary narratives will be read and testified with the Inquiry Commission reports constituted from time to time to locate the reason behind such catastrophes recorded in the annals of traumatic history of our post-independent past.

[I]n the area of collective violence, national advisory commissions have a distinctive fact-finding role to play that is related to-in a sense, lies midway between-the respective roles of both the news media and the social sciences. Commissions, media, and science all have the responsibility, among others, of presenting the facts to the citizenry about episodes of collective violence so that an appropriate response by the social order to such episodes becomes at least a possibility. Commission reports differ from news reports in that they appear months after the event (rather than hours, days, or weeks) and are usually far more informative. On the other hand, commission reports usually precede more thorough scientific or historical studies by months or even years, and they achieve a level of public visibility which such studies rarely attain. (Campbell 1970, 171)

The research is done on this period, because amongst post-independence events, the partition and the ensuing hostility in Indo-Pak relations, right up to the 1971 war have already been extensively researched upon. But, by stating the same, the fact is not negated that the chosen area has also been researched upon, but what is different about this research is that in it these events will be put together in a chronology to delineate them into a broader structure and undertake a comparative study of such ruptures in post-Independence Indian historiography. Another reason behind choosing this area is to shed light on how India suffered post-independence, due to problems of its own making which cannot be necessarily traced back to colonialism or partition. The idea of 'independence' is thus to be problematized in this study, to show how the 'independent' state operated in face of political cataclysms, and used its repressive machinery to facilitate the operations of the state and normalize the law and order situation. Once ruled and oppressed by foreigners, today the citizens have turned victims in the hands of their fellow countrymen, as this study proposes to show. This aspect will

critique the idea of interpretation of 'nationalism' being appropriated by a section to have influence over another section. Since, "interpretation affects the "nature" of what is interpreted" (Margolis 1993, 10), the idea of 'us' and 'them' is interpreted in various levels to legitimize the rage and 'violence' (Arendt 1970), both individual and collective, at diverse levels and layers as seen in the 'narratives'. (Barwell 2009)

The state has to cope regularly with collective violence emerging from communal and caste conflicts. Communal violence is not pitted against the state but represents an ugly and menacing form of inter-sectional animosity which flare up without notice and, at times, on trivial issues. The frenzy of communal conflagrations converts normally law-abiding persons of a society into irrational groups which take violence to unprecedented levels of brutality and inhumanity. (Rao 1988, 167)

The aspect of nationalism and the 'relative essentialism' (Fales 1979) to assert the interpretation (Perez and Fulks 1993) of the powerful as normative and thereby articulate the subjective component of interpretation as its objective equivalent. To make the purpose of the research more focussed, it is important to introduce the socio-political turmoils taken into consideration. The range of the political problems taken into consideration in the research starts from the Indian Emergency of 1975 to 1977, to the Operation Blue Star and the subsequent Anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, and the demolition of the Babri Masjid followed by the serial bomb blasts in Bombay. The purpose of taking these issues into consideration is to facilitate a comparative study of similar types of violence and political turmoil emanating in India and to do a cross generic study of various ruptures that have happened in this recent socio-political history of eighteen years.

In India, in a political culture of mutual distrust and increasing violence, the dangers are legion. India's democracy is challenged by communalism, excessive caste consciousness, and separatism. But in the state response to these challenges, India confronts yet another dilemma- weakening the very values of individual liberty that are at the core of its democratic commitment. (Hardgrave 1994, 85)

The Indian emergency *was the* landmark internal political turmoil that India witnessed after the departure of the British from India. Some other political turmoils post-independence were the Indo-China war in 1962 and India-Pakistan war in 1971. But in these situations external agency came into play. The clamping of the Indian Emergency of 25th June 1975 was a strategic political decision of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi

who strongly recommended the urgent necessity to impose National Emergency as per constitutional norms and provisions in Article 352, and declared a state of emergency, effectively bestowing upon her the unquestionable power of authority to silence any act of subversion or resistance to the then ruling government and its policies. The curtailing of civil liberties in a democracy was ironic, which then was a matter of utmost contestation and that remains to be a matter of debate even today. This was read as blunder and a knee-jerk reaction of the government's paranoia towards being toppled from the seat of power.

In the histrionic turn of Indian political affairs, the formative years of Indian democracy stumbled upon a duality; firstly the bizarre undemocratic necessity to hold on to the singular democratic authority, the Congress party, and secondly, in the irony of delineating the idea of democracy and dissent in the constitution as part of theory and principle, but not being able to accommodate the space for the 'alternative' in practice. This dichotomy of theory and practice materialised in form of the proclamation of Indian Emergency. The protected ideals of freedom and liberty were threatened as all the fundamental rights and legal solutions stood suspended. There was a solipsistic defence of the emergency on the grounds that it was clamped upon to protect the State and the Indian people from imminent anarchy that threatened. The emergency rule faced blatant condemnation and is undeniably one of the most contentious periods of the socio-political history of post-independent India. This was for the first time that the Indian population faced such a grim political upheaval emanating out of our internal political scenario where unreasonable strategies were directed towards citizens who democratically elected the government who were suppressing them. The paradox here is that the victim and the victimizer both shared the same territorial, historical as well as socio-political space, and even after the declared independence from the British we found ourselves trapped in the dark confines of neo-colonial hangover and oppressive strategies of the state machinery. The infamous Indian Emergency was known for making rapid economic strides at the cost of basic socio-ethical and humanitarian values. The Shah Commission report not only questions the proclamation in principle, but also shows various loopholes in the government policies including misinterpretation of family planning with forced sterilisation, forceful dislocation of the poor under the Slum Clearance and beautification of city programme, media censorship and police 'action'.

The second important event in the research is Operation Blue Star, which was the first military intervention by the state in any religious establishment post-independence. In the backdrop of the growing unrest in Punjab due to internal conflicts, the idea of 'Khalistan' captured the imagination of the mass populace. This idea of 'Khalistan' was decisively appropriated with subtle articulation of religious fanaticism by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who formulated the uncanny amalgamation of religion and politics to synthesize into the idea of 'secession'. The amalgamation materialised in Bhindranwale uniting the secessionist forces under one 'clarion' call for Khalistan and euphoric assertion of the Sikh identity with intense valour. His boldness soon caught fancy of the mass populace as his radicalism was subtly camouflaged as the imminent necessity to protect the threatened Sikh identity. All these somehow contributed in Bhindranwale getting a tacit support in his agenda which eventually let him stockpile arms and ammunitions in the supreme seat of Sikh religious order, the Akal Takht. Though the idea was to flush out terrorists from the *sanctum sanctorum* who were strategizing for a secessionist movement, and the state was left with no other option but to engage with the situation militarily, but such a military approach against the very citizens of the country and that too in one of the major religious establishments, the Golden Temple, the epicentre of the Sikh faith across the nation and round the globe, attracted harsh criticism against the government for its strategies. The Army generals who were engaged in the infamous operations had given convincing testimonies to legitimize the need to use harsh tactics including use of tanks as last resort to counter fort-like unsurpassable defences. Voices of protest rose within the nation and got translated into various dimensions based on varying interpretations and speculations by agencies across the globe. The anger as a result of the attack on the Golden Temple has created a ripple effect across the Sikh community emanating from Amritsar as the epicentre to places within and beyond Indian territorial confines.

It is well known that every action yields some sort of reaction, and in such a socio-politically sensitive and volatile situation some sort of harsh reactions from the receiving end of the violence were quite anticipated. In such a tense state of affairs, Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31st October 1984 by her personal bodyguards who were coincidentally Sikhs, which made matters worse in places in and around Delhi. The gory bloodbath in Amritsar now engulfed the Sikh community in Delhi, and many of the supporters of Indira Gandhi wreaked havoc on the entire city by inflicting mindless and inhuman pain to the entire Sikh community in Delhi, as they were considered to be

conspirators to the prime minister's assassination. The violence was inflicted to such an extent that interviewees find it repulsive to even narrate the act of insanity and revulsion. In this very situation people had to negotiate and change their respective identities in accordance with the then prevalent situations in Delhi.

Some years later, in 1992, while the country was still reeling under the uncertainties and instability of the recent infamous political upheavals in the country, and the nation also suffered a severe economic crisis owing to the non-participatory and closed nature of the economy, the country witnessed the politically motivated minority targeted ethno-religious attack in Ayodhya which started with the 'rath yatra' by L.K. Advani across the country and finally culminated in the demolition of the structure. The Babri Masjid, often disputed in being termed as a 'disputed structure' which served as an ancient monument, was caught in a community ownership crisis, and history being primarily a contested narrative inherently was subject to subjective interpretations. The demolition of the structure ignited communal discord that led to flagrant denominational conflagration across the nation and especially the cosmopolitan Bombay. As a reaction to this unfortunate event and the prevalent inter-communal discord, the violence which emanated from Ayodhya, shifted to Bombay which was set ablaze as a vehement expression of retribution in the retaliatory riots of December 1992 and January 1993.

Communalism is a multi-layered ideology, existing within two larger realms- the socio-religious circuit, with which we are most familiar as it is the more obvious one, and the other, less obvious and less tangible, is the realm of attitudes and ideas. The first is predicated on the existence of the second; in order to sustain the first, the realm of ideas has to be carefully nurtured. It is the job of communalists to keep alive *difference* and then imbue it with the emotion of hatred, It continues to be done variously: through textbooks in schools, misinterpretation of historical facts, promotion of the Self as exceptional, imaging in popular media, vitriolic rhetoric, literalist interpretations of 'religious obligations', and constructions of monolithic collectivities, to name a few. It is important to note the difference between religion, which is a belief system, and the *appropriation* of religion for economic and political gain, which is at the heart of communalism. (Grewal 2007, 153)

As a counter-action of retaliation and an act of revenge for the both the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the massive death toll of Muslims in the riots, Dawood Ibrahim hatched

the conspiracy executed by Tiger Memon which ripped apart the city of Bombay on 12th March, 1993 due to serial bomb blasts claiming immense loss to life and property.

The turbulence that is endemic in contemporary India is often attributed to the decline of moral values or their displacement by the pursuit of narrow personal or sectional interests. There is a constant refrain that values have gone out of politics, civic life, the professions, and education. These are represented as being driven increasingly by the desire for individual gain as against social well-being. (Beteille 1998, 265)

All the narratives may be viewed from the perspective of being the ‘truth’ or sceptically viewed from Foucault’s concept of *episteme*. (Foucault 1989) On either of the approaches the chronology of narration is analysed by Genette as,

Genette uses an alternative term for discourse; namely ‘narrative’. However, for him the three key elements in every realist or fictional narrative remain *story, narrating and narration*...Here Genette is describing the usual chronological understanding of history as story first, then its narrating and finally, the narrative, which is the product of story and narrating. (Munslow 2007, 22)

By amalgamation of narratives of varying time-lines, the idea of ‘identity’ negotiation will be ascertained. The first chapter focuses on the aspects of Emergency proclaimed in 1975 and how the individual and the society dealt with it. A close reading of the narratives in conjunction with Shah Commission inquiry reports brings to light various perspectives in regard to the period. The primary texts, *A Fine Balance* and *Hazaron Khwaishein Aise* developed the aspect of identity negotiation and reconfiguration in the backdrop of the major internal socio-political turmoil in the independent India. The issues will be read in conjunction with the Shah Commission report.

The second chapter focuses on the aspects of Operation Bluestar and the politics involved therein. On the cause and effect model, this chapter merges two issues – Operation Bluestar on June 4, 1984 followed by the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31st October, 1984 and the subsequent Anti-Sikh riots. The chapter will bring to light the interesting inputs of the Nanavati Commission reports regarding the involvement of various state machineries which appropriately finds resonance in the narratives of the novels *Pages Stained with Blood* and *Can you hear the Nightbird call?*, and in the movies *Amu and Maachis*.

The third chapter discusses the build-up to the demolition of Babri Masjid, its repercussions across and beyond the nation. While the novel *Lajja* discusses its effects and communal fracture in Bangladesh, the movie *Bombay* portrays the aspect of similar conflagration in the most cosmopolitan city, Bombay. These communal riots eventually incite a feeling of bitter rancour which culminates in the serial bomb blasts across Bombay on 12th March, 1993 described in Zaidi's non-fictional narrative *Black Friday*, the novel which eventually got adapted into a movie by the same title, directed by Anurag Kashyap. All these issues are studied in conjunction with the Liberhan Commission report and Srikrishna Commission report.

The fourth chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on a cross-generic analysis of novel and movie as a medium of narration and representation. The second part of the chapter explores on the points of convergences and divergences, draws corollaries amongst the events, studies the nature of violence, and the reflections of the agents of violence based on the tools used and formulates an understanding of identity and its fluidic nature. "Identity is one of the most fluid socio-cultural constructs; it affects material realities and in turn, is continually affected by the ebbs and flows of material processes." (Grewal 2007, 191)

While analysing the aspects of 'collective violence', there are studies that speculate that conflict is because of a discord between the varying sections due to plurality, and since India is a plural society in various determinants, the conflict may be due to the intolerance of one towards the 'other'. However, studies have reflected that-

[W]here power is centralized around a trans-plural group, such as a military junta or monarch, or transplural ideology, such as communism or fascism, then violence is highly likely, regardless of what plural units may or may not exist. However, when political power is centralized, nondemocratic, and highly dependent upon one's social group membership, be it race, religion, ethnicity, or some cultural division, then collective violence is also highly likely. (Rummel 1997, 170)

Hence, the study will analyse the role of the state in functioning of the society and its effects on the individuals who construe their location in the society vis-à-vis the state within a dialectics of duality, of 'self-understanding' (Burge 2011) and 'interpellation.' (Althusser 2001) "Identity is a powerful organizing presence in social life today—a social fact, or so it would, at least, seem." (Leve 2011, 513)

However, the study aims at understanding how do individuals deal with newly formed identities. It will also study the post-event materialisation of the 'self' out of distorted perception, traumatic past and uncertainty of the future, and how it traps the idea of 'self' (Burge 2011) and 'identity' (Geach 1967) in a space of ambiguity, collective violence within a deferred sense of justice to the aggrieved. The study will also analyse the role of the state and its 'apparatuses' (Althusser 2001) in dealing with violence and its victims through close-reading of the literary and cinematic narratives in conjunction with the inquiry commission reports.

Chapter 1

Indian Emergency: The political shame

The National Emergency proclaimed in 1975 was a crucial executive decision made to confine the spread of the anti-government sentiment rapidly growing among a significant faction of the national population and was slowly and gradually affecting the 'collective unconscious' of the pan-Indian psyche. It was then difficult to assertively discern the right and the wrong and arrive at a transcendental understanding of the fact. This chapter will therefore implore upon the process of victimization vis-à-vis the predicament of euphoria in the name of Emergency. "The Internal Emergency (1975-77) was a turning point in the alienation of the masses and in the importance that they attached to democratic popular and civil rights struggles against the government." (Sathyamurthy 1997, 717)

The class analysis model provided an excellent explanation of the Emergency, with its suppression of the masses and careful allocation of benefits to the dominant urban and rural classes. Indeed, a replication of the 'Brazilian miracle' of economic development seemed well on its way to implementation, featuring rapid industrial growth, increasing exports and foreign investment, and benefits for urban bourgeois classes and rural agricultural entrepreneurs, with the costs being paid by a repressed industrial laboring class, an urban lumpenproletariat and the lower echelons of the peasantry and landless agricultural workers in the countryside, all kept firmly in tow through an increasingly powerful police establishment and declining real income, with the whole process enveloped in continual gasconades of leftist rhetoric from a rightist central government. (Blair 1980, 238)

Acting upon the letter from the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, for the need to impose internal emergency as the situation in the country was getting worse. "A few minutes before midnight on 25 June 1975, the President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, proclaimed a 'State of Emergency' under Article 352 of the Constitution" (Mukherjee 2015, 46) The role of the Home Ministry in the need to impose Emergency was bypassed by the Prime Minister in abject disregard of the sanctity of the Prime Minister's Office and distributive power framework necessary in a democratic framework.

As already pointed out in para 5.52, the Prime Minister in her Top Secret letter to the President had stated that she had not taken her decision to the Cabinet, by virtue of her

powers under Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rule 1961 and that she would 'mention the matter to the Cabinet first thing tomorrow morning.'

In response to the Commission's inquiry, the Cabinet Secretariat brought to the notice of the Commission the full particulars relevant under the Transaction of Business Rules and Allocation of Business Rules, both of which have been promulgated under Article 77 of the Constitution. Under the said Rules, it has been mandatory that "matters relating to the emergency provision of the Constitution (other than financial emergency) are to be dealt in the Home Ministry. This, read with Rule 3 of the Transaction of Business Rules, therefore requires that all business pertaining to the emergency provision shall be transacted in the Home Ministry, with cases relating to the Proclamation of Emergency being brought before the Cabinet. (Sub-para 2 of 5.66)

In Sub-para 4 of 5.66, the Commission Report observed; "This would be particularly so when the Emergency is to be declared on grounds of internal disturbances, as the Home Ministry deals with the Intelligence Bureau, Preventive detention and National Integration. It is the Home Ministry which is in touch with the State Governments on matters relating to law and order. The Cabinet Secretariat did not however receive any proposals from the Home Ministry in respect of the Proclamation issued on the 25th of June. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 58)

It has been noticed in the inquiry commission report that the due procedure of Home Ministry's introduction of the threat perception and ratification by the union cabinet was bypassed by the Prime Minister as a knee-jerk reaction to the inputs of potential mobilisation of alternate political forces in the next morning. This shows utter disregard of the democratic ideals and paranoia on the part of the Prime Minister's obsessive and paternalistic approach to curb and contain any dissenting voices in a democratic framework.

Kasu Brahmananda Reddy, the then Home Minister, told the Shah Commission that he was summoned to the Prime Minister's residence at about 10:30 p.m. and was told that on account of deteriorating law and order condition, it was necessary to impose an internal Emergency. He informed Indira Gandhi that powers already available under the existing Emergency could be availed of to deal with the situation, but was told that while this possibility had been examined, the declaration of an internal Emergency was considered necessary. Brahmananda Reddy told the Commission that he then signed a letter to the President of the Republic and appended the draft proclamation of

Emergency for the President's assent with this letter. The letter signed by Brahmananda Reddy was on a plain sheet of paper and not on the letterhead of the Home Minister of India. (Mukherjee 2015, 46-47)

The reason behind such an immediacy was not justified within the provisions of the constitutional paradigm. This way in which the Emergency was proclaimed in all its alacrity raised apprehensions, whether such a provision was indeed necessary for a nation shifting from a colonial repressive and authoritative functioning to a democratic one. The worthiness and legitimacy of the Emergency provision and its after-effects in terms of legitimization of dictatorship, under within the constitutional framework was raised during the very drafting of the constitution for the fear of threat to the idea of democracy itself.

The development of a dictatorship was totally unimaginable to the thinking of most Indians and contrary to the opinions expressed by almost all political leaders since independence. When H V Kamath had opposed the inclusion of Emergency clauses in the Indian constitution pointing out that a similar clause in the Weimar constitution of Germany had been used by Hitler to impose his dictatorship through parliamentary means, his fears were lightly brushed aside. The possibility of a parallel situation arising in India was confidently discounted then, and Mr Kamath exclaimed: "God help the people of India."... It was the nation's opposition to the Rowlatt Act, with its provision of preventive detention and other arbitrary powers, which had led to a massive agitation in the entire country and the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh in Punjab. No one believed that a national government would contemplate or impose such undemocratic measures in free India. But such hopes were to be belied. In fact, right at the time of the framing of the constitution under pressure of administrative expediency certain freedoms were getting diluted. As it turned out, the tradition of freedom derived from the freedom movement proved a wasting asset. (Sinha 1977, 2)

At this juncture one is forced to contemplate upon the ambivalence of the conflicting positions of the victim and the victimizer. In the foray to understand and comprehend the problematics of identity negotiation it is imperative to locate the shift between the victim and the victimizer and how the equation progresses in the course of the chapter.

The Allahabad High Court held Indira Gandhi to be guilty of malpractice during her 1971 electoral contest in Rae Bareilly. While the court found her guilty on two technical grounds- taking assistance of government officers to construct rostrums and supply power for loudspeakers at two election rallies and taking assistance of Yash Pal

Kapoor, a government official, for furthering her election prospects- it acquitted her of the other charges... This being the case, it became clear that Indira Gandhi's election was declared void because of a legal technicality. No one would believe that her victory by a substantial margin could not have come without the services of Yash Pal Kapoor or the construction of rostrums and power supply to loudspeakers by government officers. (Mukherjee 2015, 71)

The judgement of the Allahabad High Court in this regard is debated and had caught attention of plethora of political and media forums. "A Western newspaper commented that the judgement was too severe, akin to giving out a death sentence to someone for violating traffic rules." (Mukherjee 2015, 71) But J.P. Narayan's offensive intensified the already critical judgement and the treatment of the same.

The day after the judgement (that is, on 13 June 1975), JP thundered from Patna, 'Mrs Gandhi's failure to bow to the High Court verdict would not only be against the law as found by the Allahabad High Court, but against all public decency and democratic practice.' On the same night, opposition leaders sat on a dharna outside Rashtrapati Bhawan demanding her resignation as Prime Minister. (Mukherjee 2015, 72)

In face of stiff resistance by the opposition accusing Indira Gandhi of election malpractices, the congress leaders unite to chart a road-map to face the crisis.

The Congress decided to meet the challenge in two ways: (a) a plea for an absolute 'stay' on the order of the Allahabad High Court was filed on 23 June to the vacation judge, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, of the Supreme Court; and (b) a public meeting was organized in Delhi at the Boat Club on 20 June. The rally at the Boat Club was a mammoth one, with one estimate putting it at fifteen lakh people from almost every part of the country. To the people assembled at the rally, Indira Gandhi made an emotional appeal to protect India's endangered democracy. She pointed to conspiracies hatched by some opposition parties in the name of 'the rule of law' but which had the sole purpose of removing her. She observed, 'The question is not whether I live or die, but one of national interest. Meanwhile, the Congress Parliamentary Party convened a meeting on 18 June where Indira Gandhi said: 'My continuance does not depend on what the opposition demands but on what my own party and the people want.' A resolution, proposed by Jagjivan Ram and seconded by Y.B. Chavan, affirmed complete confidence in Indira Gandhi and declared her continued leadership as Prime Minister to be 'indispensable for the nation.' Dev Kanta Barooah, the then Congress

President, made his oft-quoted remark, 'India is Indira, Indira is India.' He further observed: 'The judgement in no way diminishes the moral authority of the Prime Minister and that the firm desire of the people provides the justification for her continuance in the [sic] office. We have lost a battle. We must prepare to win the war.' (Mukherjee 2015, 72-73)

As a counter to that, Jayaprakash Narayan retorted, "The point at issue is not whether Congress MPs have faith in Smt. Gandhi's leadership, but whether there is rule of law in the country and whether it applies to everyone, high or low." (Mukherjee 2015, 73) And as a reply to the debate between the Congress and the opposition, the apex court intervened-

[it] was then that Indira Gandhi got the much-awaited conditional stay from the Supreme Court. Justice Krishna Iyer observed, 'I propose to direct a stay substantially on the same lines as have been made in earlier similar cases, modified by the compulsive necessities of the case.' He held, 'The High Court's finding until upset, holds good, however weak it may ultimately prove.' Justice Krishna Iyer's stay order was not entirely in Indira Gandhi's favour. She was allowed to continue as Prime Minister but, as far as the Parliament was concerned, while she could participate in the debates of the House, she was not allowed to vote on any issue or draw a salary. (Mukherjee 2015, 73)

To this the opposition led by Jayaprakash Narayan became even more aggressive and his rhetorical attacks questioning the very fundamentals of the socio-political system became increasingly vehement and blatant.

On 25 June 1975, JP addressed a massive rally at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi, at which he announced a programme of civil disobedience. He repeated his exhortation to the police and the army to disobey 'illegal' orders, challenging Indira Gandhi to bring charges against him if she thought he was preaching treason. He asked students 'to walk out of classroom and walk into jails.' He suggested to the Chief Justice of India, A.N. Ray that it would not be in his personal interest to sit on the division bench of the Supreme Court which would hear Indira Gandhi's appeal, as he was obliged to the Prime Minister for his appointment. 'This is India. There can't be a Mujib [Mujibur Rahman's of Bangladesh] here,' declared JP. The reference was to Mujibur Rahman's role in converting Bangladesh from a parliamentary to a presidential system, and to a one party (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League) system. (Mukherjee 2015, 74)

Post the proclamation of Emergency,

In a letter written from jail, JP wrote that he was appalled at press reports of Indira Gandhi's speeches and interviews, and added, 'The very fact that you have to say something every day to justify your actions implies a guilty conscience.' The letter went on to state, 'Having muzzled the Press and every kind of public dissent, you continue with your distortions and untruths without fear of criticism or contradiction. If you think in this way you will be able to justify yourself in the public eye and [bring] down the opposition to political perdition you are...mistaken.' He flatly denied the charges that there was a plan to paralyze and destabilize the government. He maintained that, in a democracy, people did have the right to ask for the resignation of an elected government if it became corrupt and/or had been misruling. And if there was a legislator who persisted in supporting such a government, he, too, must go, so that the people might choose a better representative. (Mukherjee 2015, 75-76)

This clearly hinted at an atmosphere of paranoia and suspicion of treason, and the desperation of the then ruling government to contain any kind of subversive and seditious attempt at dismantling the government.

The letter sent by Indira Gandhi in the capacity as the Prime Minister to the President recommending proclamation of Emergency, as sourced from the Shah Commission's interim report:

TOP SECRET

Prime Minister of India
New Delhi, June 25, 1975

Dear Rashtrapatiji,

As already explained to you, a little while ago, information has reached us which indicates that there is an imminent danger to the security of India being threatened by internal disturbance. The matter is extremely urgent.

I would have liked to have taken this to Cabinet but unfortunately this is not possible tonight. I am, therefore, condoning, or permitting a departure from the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rule 1961 as amended up-to-date by virtue of my powers under Rule 12 thereof. I shall mention the matter to the Cabinet first thing tomorrow morning.

In the circumstances and in case you are so satisfied, a requisite Proclamation under Article 352(1) has become necessary. I am enclosing a copy of the draft proclamation for your consideration. As you are aware, under Article 352(3) even when there is an imminent danger of such a threat, as mentioned by me, the necessary Proclamation under Article 352(1) can be issued.

I recommend that such a Proclamation should be issued tonight, however late it may be, and all arrangements will be made to make it public as early as possible thereafter.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd/- Indira Gandhi) (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 55-56)

In response to the letter by the Prime Minister, the President declared Emergency as per constitutional provisions.

PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

In exercise of the powers conferred by Clause 1 of Article 352 of the Constitution, I, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, President of India, by this Proclamation declare that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India is threatened by internal disturbances.

New Delhi-25th June, 1975

PRESIDENT

(Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 56)

In light of such desperation and indignation, the common masses had to bear the brunt of the 'excesses' of the Emergency rule. As a case of the plight of the common masses the chapter intends to examine the characters in the novel, *A Fine Balance* and the movie, *Hazaron Khwaishein Aise*.

As a moment of national shame, a blot on India's democratic record, the Emergency has been built more as a moment for forgetting than as one for remembering. The agenda for forgetting the Emergency than as one for remembering. This agenda for forgetting the Emergency is marked by the lack of public monuments which might invoke its memory as well as by memorials which encourage a very different reading of the past. (Tarlo 2003, 19)

Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance* explores the fate and plight of four characters who have crossed roads from varying social, regional and historical backgrounds in the 'city besides the sea' which most probably describes it as Bombay. The times in which they meet are crucial as they try to find a bleak ray of hope in the face of the imminent crisis. Situating the four characters, Dina Dalal, Maneck Kohlah, Omprakash and Ishvar, in the context brings the gender-caste-regional dynamics into the forefront in walking the tight rope during the Indian Emergency. The characters find themselves trapped in a vicious circumstances challenging enough to negotiate with their respective identities in the face of the internal turmoil that emanated out of the imposition of Indian Emergency. The case of identity negotiation revolves around the simple contention during emergency – “‘Well, you be careful,’ said Dina. ‘These days, friends and foes look alike.’” (Mistry 2004, 449)

Maneck Kohlah, who hailed from the mountains in the north had gone to Bombay to study about air-conditioning. The need to study this technical trade is the first instance into Maneck's long journey of negotiations of his identity that eventually gets fractured in varying contours of space and time. In the city he comes across a different situation altogether from his rustic and easy lives in the mountains. His interface with politics of the student union in the college and the way it was being deliberated by the state forces in the time of emergency is something which was completely new to Maneck.

The four central characters in the novel, *A Fine Balance*, undergo a journey of transformation within themselves when their identities are challenged and they are forced to negotiate it in shifting contours of time and space. The novel articulately blends the respective stories of four characters in a singular space in the time of proclaimed 'emergency' in India.

With the Emergency, everything is upside-down. Black can be made white, day turned into night. With the right influence and a little cash, sending people to jail is very easy. There's even a new law called MISA to simplify the whole procedure. (Mistry 2004, 346)

Dina Dalal, whose husband had died on the day of their third anniversary, had to negotiate with the approval/disapproval of her brother Nusswan about her existence after the marriage. She did make an attempt to claim her independence despite an imminent financial distress and continued staying in the flat where she used to stay with her husband, but things did not quite fall in place as she wished to. Dina found support in her friend

Zenobia, who referred her to one of her clients, Mrs. Gupta, the manager of Au Revoir Export Company, which was the only ray of hope in the dark cloud of hopelessness hovering over her destiny. It was this company that had given her a scope of financial independence along with a task of finding at least two tailors with the expertise to cater to the needs and demands of the export company. In the meantime, Zenobia had arranged for a paying guest at her place, both to lighten her financial burden and also to give her company in this need of the hour. Maneck, who moved in as the paying guest happened to be one of their mutual friend, Aban Kohlah's son, who moved in to the city to study air-conditioning. Maneck and Dina were getting along well together and a bond of motherly love, affection and care was slowly developing from Dina's side to which Maneck reciprocated with equally propensity.

It was at a critical juncture of time that Ishvar Darji and his nephew Omprakash Darji made an entry to the cosy little world of Dina Dalal. But the entry of Ishvar and Om and the story that would follow had an interesting prologue delineating the compulsive reason behind their becoming 'tailors'. 'Darji', the title is used with an intent and conviction to establish their identity more on a socio-cultural footing than merely for economic reasons.

Ashraf Chacha is going to turn you into tailors like himself. From now on, you are not cobblers- if someone asks your name, don't say Ishvar Mochi or Narayan Mochi. From now on you are Ishvar Darji and Narayan Darji. (Mistry 2004, 130)

The identity that they were born with was that of 'Chammars', who at that point of time were downtrodden owing to the retrogressive caste-class dynamics that was rampantly consuming the then society of the 1970s. Ishvar's father and Omprakash's grandfather, Dukhi made an emphatic and courageous attempt to categorically step out of the confines of the caste dynamics and try an alternate profession out of the place of work. This attempt of Dukhi was ardently supported by Ashraf, the owner of Muzzafar Tailoring Company and his good friend. Ashraf was the one who planted the seed in Dukhi's mind for trying an alternate profession in tailoring upholding both the dignity of labour and the financial gains that came along with it, compared to the present social footing of his then current profession of tanning and dyeing the skin of dead animals. Dukhi found this idea both interesting and beneficial not just for him but for generations to come. He also saw it as a god-sent opportunity to save his family from age long suppression of the hierarchical caste system and to redeem his life from the pit of pain, misery and anguish. This also shows

how the society was intricately united on communal lines in its very foundations, but the tyranny of the feudal order threatened the well-knit communal fabric with polarised and ulterior motives.

Thereby, Dukhi's sons, Narayan and Ishvar were sent for apprenticeship in the town with Ashraf Chacha, to which they initially protested on grounds of leaving their family behind but with time they honed the skills well to establish themselves as versatile tailors independently. With the tailoring, their financial situations improved and so did the social status. This shift was received with mixed reactions from different sections of the society. People in their community were overwhelmed by the success and all of that had bred jealousy and scorn amongst the landowning class who simply could not digest that somebody so low, as per their understanding, rose so high beyond the set threshold. All this disparagement amongst landowning class looked forward to venting out the anger and the unfortunate argument of Narayan with Thakur Dharamsi's men for his voting rights, had given the local goon the much awaited opportunity to seek hollow revenge.

Thakur Dharamsi's goondas, freed from their election duties, were turned loose upon the lower castes. 'I want those achool jatis to learn a lesson,' he said, distributing liquor to his men before their next assignment. 'I want it to be like old days, when there was respect and discipline and order in our society. And keep an eye on that Chamaar-tailor's house, make sure no one gets away.' The goondas began working their way towards the untouchable quarter. They beat up individuals at random in the streets, stripped some women, raped others and burnt a few huts... That was the end of the punishment, but not for Narayan's family. 'He does not deserve a proper cremation,' said Thakur Dharamsi. 'And the father is more to blame than the son. His arrogance went against everything we hold sacred,' what the ages had put together, Dukhi had dared to break asunder, he had turned cobblers into tailors, distorting society's timeless balance. Crossing the line of caste had to be punished with utmost severity, said the Thakur. (Mistry 2004, 168-169)

Thakur Dharamsi's men not only tortured Narayan to death in an inhuman way, but also tried to wipe off the entire clan by setting ablaze their house with people in there. This was also a symbolic lesson/message that the feudal order wanted to convey about the impending doom and fate that would follow if someone lower in the social strata tries to transgress the limits of 'societal norms and conventions'. Ishvar and Om luckily survived as they were away in the town, and later heard about the tragedy that had befallen on them.

At that critical juncture of life with dwindling business of tailoring in the town with the advent of a ready-made garments shop and also threat looming over them from Thakur's men, they, on the due advice of Ashraf Chacha, departed for the city beside the sea, abode of opportunity to find a better life and a way of living, their destiny crossed roads with that of Dina Dalal's.

With the passage of time, unfortunately Om and Ishvar crossed roads with Thakur Dharamsi when they returned back home for Om's marriage. His evil designs had consumed the masses with tremendous fear and trepidation which got regrettably sanctioned by the proclamation of Emergency. Ashraf told Om about his new found identity and the validity with which he would spread terror and violence.

My child, that demon is too powerful. Since the Emergency began, his reach has extended from his own village to all the way here. He is a big man now in the Congress party, they say he will become a minister in the next elections- if the government ever decides to have elections. Nowadays, he wants to look respectable, avoids any goonda-giri. When he wants to threaten someone, he doesn't send his own men, he just tells the police. They pick up the poor fellow, give him a beating, then release him. (Mistry 2004, 595-596)

A local criminal with numerous horrendous crimes associated with his name is now being paraded to be a probable member of that party which sought independence for the nation and its citizens along with their democratic rights from the clutches of the British empire. This indeed is a postmodern tragedy at the face of the very vision that our founding fathers had envisioned.

Both, the tailor duo and Dina Dalal found a sense of urgent need for each other. The tailors needed a job and Dina needed two tailors to cater to the needs at Au Revoir Export Company. In the due course of work they develop a familial bond with Maneck and Om getting along well, owing to the same age group, and adding some vigour and vitality to the otherwise sedentary and monotonous lifestyle of Dina. To corroborate the complexity of the vagueness of the proclamation of the Emergency, the government exploited the state machinery- police and press to ensconce the matter. As Ishvar rightly claimed – “They are the government. They can do anything they want. Police said it's a new law.” (Mistry 2004, 352)

Their first crisis came in the form of the rent-collector's attempt to file a complaint to the landlord about Mrs. Dalal breaking the rules of tenancy and illegally keeping a paying guest, giving shelter to the tailors in the verandah and running commercial business in the flat. Though this came as a shock to Dina, she astutely and vehemently retorted that Ishvar is her husband and Maneck and Omprakash are their sons. This spontaneous reaction emanating out of the sub-conscious hints at a shift in her perspective and identity, if looked retrospectively about how she had to be convinced by Zenobia to make her feel that there was nothing wrong in keeping a paying guest. Her assertive behaviour also hints at her regaining of balance and her self-confidence coming back to the normative level to protect her honour and identity in the face of crisis vis-à-vis the practicality of the society driven by a hollowness in the human bond. As time passed, Dina Dalal who at some point of time flashed a sense of understated upper-class attitude which puts her in subtle contrast with the financial situation that she faced when tailoring for Au Revoir had just commenced, had transformed into a person with more egalitarian mindset with not just allowing Ishvar and Om share her verandah as their shelter but also did she allow them to share her kitchen and dined together. This slow and subtle changes talked in about the basic human sensibilities and mutual need of each other to complement each other's existence. She did not just stop at that and with her motherly affection ignited, she tried to do her best with the limited resources available to her, to arrange to a warm welcome of Om and his newly bride, by preparing a quilt to be gifted as a wedding present and also to arrange for a thick curtain in the verandah to provide for the much needed privacy of the newly married couple. The shift was so stark that her close friend Zenobia was taken aback by surprise as to what was Dina attempting. That gave her enough scope of contemplation and speculation about Dina's sudden transformation but no conclusion to arrive at. With all this preparations in place, it is obvious that her hopes rose higher and higher about their arrival with passage of each day. Much to her discomfort the hopes had then started to take a bleaker possibility starting off with contemplation and apprehension to find the hope of their return turning into a bitter consternation to settle down with a feeling of being deceived by life once again. Later, in the epilogue to 1984, it is implied that Dina gets to know their tragedy that had befallen on them with the preposterous sterilization drive under the aegis of family planning initiative that had rendered them to a state of misfortune and agony with irreversible consequences.

Ishvar and Om, in the context of the infamous national emergency, symbolize the plight of the common masses who were forcefully subjected to the family planning initiative, which went on like wild fire to consume the masses' potential to procreate, citing the potential possibility of population explosion. The forcefulness with which the issue was dealt with attracted a possibility for public outrage, but a careful and opinionated government propaganda with the repressive state forces covered it all under the carpet claiming it as the need of the hour, and masses who were the victims of the inhuman and callous design had no option but to become 'consenting subjects to their own exploitation.' The incident that is narrated in the novel about they being picked from the market place and were transported to the sterilization camp for fulfilling the set quota for people to be sterilized is a fictionalized version of the fact that marks the dark days of Indian emergency. Mistry at various point blurs the line between fact and fiction, and blends it with such intricate details that it is really hard to differentiate the one from the other. Ishvar once asked, "Dinabai, what is this Emergency we hear about?" to which Dina replied, "Government problems-games played by people in power. It doesn't affect ordinary people like us." (Mistry 2004, 83)

Ishvar, who at once was a promising tailor with a hope of better future both for him and his nephew, ventured into the unknown city to face the debacles of life without the fear of failure, found himself trapped in the ambiguity of what destiny had in store for them.

'You fellows are amazing,' the sweaty cook roared over the stoves. 'Everything happens to you only. Each time you come here, you have a new adventure story to entertain us.' 'It's not us, it's the city', said Om. 'A story factory, that's what it is, a spinning mill.' 'Call it what you will, if all our customers were like you, we would be able to produce a modern *Mahabharata* – the Vishram edition.' 'Please, bhai, no more adventures for us,' said Ishvar. Stories of suffering are no fun when we are the main characters.' (Mistry 2004, 441)

The trajectory shown in the life of the tailors is a standing testimony to the visceral admonition around which their lives, family and fortunes got convoluted in the desperate attempt to initially move out to the normativity of societal strictures and then get carried away by the rosy picture of the urbane overshadowing the gross brutality behind their past family misfortunes. The chapterization of the novel draws the trajectory in a subtle yet profound manner, to show draw the dialectics of the limit and transgression intertwined in

the transient fluidity of space and time. As the chapters goes by, Prologue:1975, City by the Sea, For Dreams to Grow, In a Village by a River, Small Obstacles, Mountains, Day at the Circus, Night in the Slum, On the Move, Beautification, What Law There Is, Sailing Under One Flag, The Bright Future Clouded, Trace of Destiny, Wedding, Worms, and Sanyas, Return of Solitude, Family Planning, The Circle is Completed, Epilogue:1984, it starts from four strangers meeting in a city by the sea to realise their own interpretation of dreams for an independent identity. But as their destiny had it, they closely got dependent on each other both for survival and sustenance in the face of imminent crisis.

The cyclic imagery of the characters' fate coming down to the same situation where they started from, is symbolic of inescapability from the circle of destiny. "Apart from the motifs of the journey, the quilt and the circle, there is also the motif of 'balance' – a 'fine' balance. It is this fine balance which if the persons concerned learn to master, helps them to lead a relatively peaceful, happy life; if they fail, it tips them over into the abyss." (Bharucha 2003, 166) Maneck wants an independent life beyond the fringes of his family business, but his journey speaks of it in the contrary and yields to the needs of the family and society in general. His attempt to assert an identity of his own is refereed as a futile attempt in giving him a temporary suspension and excess on a consolatory note while keeping his identity/individuality masked in accordance to the familial decisions/ domains. He faces a threat to the identity that he aspired when he was confronted by different guys in the hostel. The process his identity development also ripened with his discussions with his friend Avinash, who sought a need for a crucial student movement to negotiate matters of rights and state order, when democracy was facing an imminent crisis on the form of proclamation of National Emergency. In such a scenario, staging and mobilizing the masses for such movements amounted to a so-called conspiracy against the state, and the government had the legal and constitutional patronage to quash any such attempts of dissenting, alternate and free voice. That was a very crucial juncture where Maneck saw a different picture of morphed reality and the discussions with Avinash about planning and staging a fundamental movement had confounded Maneck with an uncertain sense of confusion. On the eve of of the government and its machinery functioning on a rather stringent note, a viable alternate of finding a solution amicable solution though dialogue and other democratic means was still considered to be more effective. "Let's do this democratically, let's not behave like goondas on the street. It's bad enough that the bloody politicians do." (Mistry 2004, 281) The idea of an alternative to counter the functioning of

the then ruling dispensation had reverberations in the University spaces as well critical issues were discussed in the campus.

[They] would weed out all the evils of the campus: nepotism in staff hiring, bribery for admissions, sale of examination papers, special privileges for politicians' families, government interference in the syllabus, intimidation of faculty members. The list was long, for the rot went deep. The mood was euphoric. The students fervently believed their example would inspire universities across the country to undertake radical reforms, which would complement the grass-roots movement of Jay Prakash Narayan that was rousing the nation with a call to return to Gandhian principles. The changes would invigorate all of society, transform it from a corrupt, moribund creature into a healthy organism that would, with its heritage of a rich and ancient civilization, and the wisdom of the Vedas and Upanishads, awaken the world and lead the way towards enlightenment for all humanity. (Mistry 2004, 282-283)

As a result of the proclamation, to counter-balance the students' movements in the campus, the government seemed to have authorised and recognized the importance and need of an alternate epicentre of student politics to initially counter and thwart the existing campus ideologue and in the process get along to subvert and dismantle it altogether.

On campus, a new group, Students For Democracy, which had surfaced soon after declaration of the Emergency, was now in the ascendant. Its sister organization, Student against Fascism, maintained the integrity of both groups by silencing those who spoke against them or criticized the Emergency. Threat and assaults became so commonplace, they might have been part of the university curriculum. The police were now a permanent presence, helping to maintain the new and sinister brand of law and order. Two professors who chose to denounce the campus goon squads were taken away by plainclothesmen for anti-government activities, under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. Their colleagues did not interfere on their behalf because MISA allowed imprisonment without trial, and it was a well-known fact that those who questioned MISA sooner or later answered to MISA; it was safer not to tangle with something so pernicious... After taking over, Students For Democracy released a statement in the next issue that the publication's new voice would be more representative of the college population. The rest of the paper was filled with a model code of conduct for students and teachers. One morning, classes were cancelled and a flag-raising ceremony was organized... [and he] appealed to the figures of authority to come forward, prove their love for the country, set an example of patriotic behaviour.

On cue, lecturers, associate professors, full professors, and department heads approached the dais, en masse, in a feeble show of spontaneity. The organizers tried furtively to slow them down, to make it look like a genuine outpouring of support. But it was too late to improve the choreography. The entire teaching staff had already lined up at the table, like customers at a ration shop. They obediently signed statements saying they were behind the Prime Minister, her declaration of Emergency, and her goal of fighting the anti-democratic forces threatening the country from within. (Mistry 2004, 286-288)

Such was the fear and implications of the forbidden idea of subversion that the primary agents of knowledge dissemination and social transformation were made to shed off their altruistic nobility and magnanimity, and were in turn made mere puppets to save their own skin and facilitate the operations of the ‘rule of law’ within the framework of Emergency. “Denim jeans and the Emergency! There is no obvious connection unless, perhaps, that the student of anti-Emergency rallies wore denim jeans with their *khadi kurtas*.” (Tarlo 2003, 66) The faculty and students alike had to negotiate their ethics and rights of dissent, supporting the marginal, protesting against the oppression of the powerful and raising a voice for what was right, to safeguard their human rights in face of the draconian and precarious ‘rule of law.’

Maneck distanced himself from all of it and tried to find solace in a neutral identity away from the political atmosphere and the troubles emanating out of them. But he was startled to hear the sad news about Avinash’s death and only then he could understand the underpinnings of how the student movement was contained by the state and the fate of the student leaders thereafter. Avinash’s father while informing Maneck about his son’s mysterious and unfortunate death told him-

Four days ago they [police] told us there was a body in the morgue. They sent us to check... They told us the body was found many months ago, on the railway tracks, no identification. They said he died because he fell off a fast train. They said he must have been hanging from the door or sitting on the roof. But Avinash was careful, he never did such things... At last, after such a long time, we saw our son. We saw burns on many shameful parts of his body, and when his mother picked up his hand to press it to her forehead, we could see that his fingernails were gone. So we asked them in the morgue, how can this happen in falling from a train? They said anything can happen. Nobody would help us. (Mistry 2004, 573-574)

His understanding of the truth behind the situation really did not ignite the fire within him to raise the voice or to contend against the government but unknowingly and unconsciously remained a silent spectator to both; the actions and consequences of what life had to offer to him. After completion of his diploma programme he went back home to find himself easily dragged into the consequences of high hopes and expectations that were pinned on him both; by his family and friends alike. The veracious negotiation between his rights and duty by his parents and his family friends found a profound arrival of his decision in form of his job in the middle-east, to which he readily agrees upon and departs to meet the varying newfound demand of the job.

Hence, a sense of lack always overrides the actions of the characters in their journey of fulfilment which is deferred with shifting space-time coordinates of the desire vis-à-vis the attainment. The journey of the lost soul pervades its way in the world of the cobbler turned tailors as well. Both Ishvar and Omprakash's journey to the city long away from their native village is symbolic of the dual leap that they were taking; one is to transcend the caste barrier that dictates the profession of an individual and the other is the shift from the countryside to the urban sphere, confident enough to face the challenges of the cosmopolitan clientele and nifty tailoring demands. With aspirations in mind and expectations to touch the zenith of success by hard-work and honesty, they bid Ashraf Chacha farewell to live the golden dream of moving to the city from a small-town, toiling hard, earning enough money and to finally return back and set up a substantial business in the home-town to be able to compete with the rising demands of the ready-made garments in the market. In the fog of expectations and resolution, they could hardly see the dreary path of life in the city. It was a refuge for them to have found a job with Dina Dalal that ensured a running income for them to meet the expenses in the city. But a bitter challenge for them was to find a place to stay, and their recurrent encounters of shifting locations clearly reflects upon the problematic compulsions that the common people were subjected to on account of the emergency. They initially found a small room, a make-shift arrangement, in the slum to stay which was dingy, unhygienic and unsafe to stay as it was illegally constructed. Much to their surprise, one day they found themselves uprooted of their existence in the slum as the property dealer shook hands with the state forces to clear the slum, evict the households and relocate the dwellers within a short notice. Their agony was amplified when they moved from pillar to post to find a place to stay. In the meantime, they found solace alongside the pavement dwellers in the footpaths. Finally, they found a

place to stay in the verandah of the tiny apartment of Dina. This episode of their adventure in finding accommodation tactfully blurs the line between fact and fiction. It portrays the imminent corruption and the rampant nature of state violence that was unleashed on the common masses, under the hollow rhetoric and state-sponsored discourse like- “The Need of the Hour is Discipline.” (Mistry 2004, 81)

Another grim reality that they had encountered was that of the business of beggars/begging and the underlying strong nexus of corruption that was closely interlinked therein. The story thereafter takes twists and turn with the four central characters crossing roads with other peripheral characters like the Beggarmaster, Shankar, Rajaram etc. Every character adds a twist to the story in their own unique way. The institution of the Beggarmaster, who supposedly owns the beggars and runs the business, seems to be both the saviour as well as exploiter of the crisis situation that the beggars are confounded with in the then current dispensation of the state-orchestrated anarchy. These are the shades of identity that people were forced to wear in those hard times. One could hardly wonder the tailors wearing the identity of a beggar in the city, as reflected in the epilogue, where they have no other option but to take recourse to begging and embrace the harsh realities as a consequences of the infamous emergency.

The aspect of tailoring symbolizes a trajectory in their identity formulation and negotiation at the face of crisis that they come across to break the normativity of conventions and social stranglehold. At the beginning Omprakash’s father and Ishvar elder brother, Narayan sought the liberty of his professional right to take up a profession of his choice without succumbing to the societal pressure to take up the age old profession of being a *Chammar*, duly acknowledged by his father Dukhi. This attempt of enablement by lower community was taken as a note of dissent by the upper class to the age-old retrogressive norms of caste based work-practices and this brewed an air of animosity and disdain in an already prevailing air of scepticism and derision. Since Dukhi could sense the threat posed by the upper class to such a progressive subversion on their part, in lieu of their safety, he decided wisely to send off his sons for apprenticeship with Ashraf in the town. The attempt of safety worked till Narayan and Ishvar were away in the town, but soon it stood foiled when they returned back to the village to set up a tailoring shop, get married and stay with their family. Their expectation and thinking soared newer heights and hence with a progressive bent of mind, Narayan, asserting his political right questioned the election

malpractices in the polling booth, to which he met an unfortunate and disgraceful death in the hands of the local goons loyal to Thakur Dharamsi. This journey is a pre-admonition to the consequences of return to the same space in a different time, where a newer and progressive thought did not fit into the older spatio-temporal paradigm. Even Ishvar and Omprakash's return for marriage back to the village had led them to fateful condition of irreversible consequences. The draconian *modus operandi* in which the sterilisation drive was promoted was a grave insult both to the constitutional machinery as well as the politico-legal framework. "What to do bhai, when educated people start behaving like savages. How do you talk to them? When the ones in power have lost their reason, there is no hope." (Mistry 2004, 615)

The fact that...citizen generally refer to the Emergency as *nasbandi ka vakt* (the sterilization time) and that some even think that the term *emergency* means "sterilization" gives an idea of the atmosphere of the times. (Tarlo 2000, 242)

One of the many incidents narrates how, during the sterilisation drive which had wiped people off from the logic of rationality. "With forced sterilisation the difference between dictatorship and democracy, between servitude and freedom became tangible." (Sinha 1977, 70)

As the sterilisations proceeded, an elderly woman tried to reason with her doctor. 'I am old,' she said. 'My womb is barren, there are no more eggs in it. Why are you wasting the operation on me?' The doctor approached the district official keeping a tally of the day's procedures. 'This woman is past child-bearing age,' he said. 'You should take her off the list.' [to which the official questioned] 'Is this a medical conclusion?' 'Of course not,' said the doctor. 'There is no equipment here for clinical verification.' [To which the official ordered] 'In that case, just go ahead. These people often lie about their age. And appearances are deceptive. With their lifestyle, thirty can look like sixty, all shrivelled by sun.' (Mistry 2004, 610-611)

Another incident is described in profound detail regarding the forced order to use unclean and infected surgical tools to operate to maintain the target compromising their safety. After the second auto-clave, used for disinfecting the surgical instruments, had broken down the doctors took to boiling water to disinfect the instruments. But to the utter dismay for the visiting senior administrator he found it as a waste of time and expressed disappointment at the doctors on duty. He asserted-

‘Instruments are clean enough. How long do you want to heat the water? Efficiency is paramount in Nussbandhi Mela, targets have to be achieved within the budget. Who’s going to pay for so many gas cylinders?’ He threatened that they would be reported to higher authorities for lack of cooperation, promotions would be denied, salaries frozen... ‘We have to be firm with the doctors,’ confided the administrator. ‘If it is left to them to fight the menace of the population explosion, the nation will drown, choked to death, finished- end of our civilization. So it’s up to us to make sure the war is won.’ (Mistry 2004, 612-613)

For use of such unhealthy instruments during sterilization people suffered, had severe side-effects. Such cases are symbolized in the form of Ishvar’s unfortunate swelling and blackening of his legs post-operation. Doctors later claimed, “[the] poison in the blood is too strong. The legs will have to be removed in order to keep the poison from spreading upwards. It’s the only way to save his life.” (Mistry 2004, 623) So, doctors who are supposed to be protectors of humanity are now facing humiliation for doing their duty and hence had to negotiate with their identity to accommodate the demand for meeting targets and thereby violate the standard operating procedure as per the dire needs of family planning programme.

There is no doubt that the pressure in government institutions, though intense throughout the system, accumulated most at the bottom of the hierarchy where those with no one beneath them could not gain merit by motivating inferiors but could merely save themselves from unemployment by submitting their own bodies to the operating table. (Tarlo 2000, 244)

Another issue of identification and (mis)identification of who is the government, and its different shades of assertion and operation is seen in the case of Ishvar and Om oscillating in the ambiguity of government space with varying jurisdiction between police and family planning authorities. It was those unfortunate times that they pushed the ball to each other’s court and the common mass found themselves trapped in the ambiguity of circumstances and consequences. Om and Ishvar went to the police to register a complaint post-castration due to forceful manner of the operation. But as the police found that it happened in the *Nussbandhi Mela*, the police constable retorted- “Not police jurisdiction. This is a case for the Family Planning Centre. Complaints about their people are handled by their office.” (Mistry 2004, 620) To their utter dismay they found a rather discourteous behaviour “[at] the Family Planning Centre the moment Ishvar said eunuch, they refused to listen further. ‘Get out,’ ordered the officer. ‘We are fed up with you ignorant people. How

many times to explain? Nussbandhi has nothing to do with castration... If we start believing you, then all the eunuchs in the country will come dancing to us, blaming us for their condition, trying to get money out of us. We know your tricks. The whole Family Planning Programme will grind to a halt. The country will be ruined. Suffocated by uncontrolled population growth. Now get out before I call the people.” (Mistry 2004, 620-621) In such cases, it gets byzantine with smudging of the boundaries of the perceived role of the police - as perpetrators of injustice or protectors of justice. Whom do the common masses, which Om and Ishvar symbolizes, identify as government to take care of their rights or they undeniably misidentify the shadowy aspect of reality and are thereby caught up in the maze of (mis)identification of the alterations and shades of reality.

People like Thakur Dharamsi who use to be goons and used to illegally influence voters during election are now becoming important agents of the then ruling dispensation, who are facilitating, advocating as well of intimidating both the masses and officials alike for dire irreversible consequences, from a rather illicit but powerful socio-political vantage point. The case of Thakur Dharamsi and the way he operates can be equivocated with Foucault’s idea of the panoptic and the concept of surveillance. He becomes the hovering presence, whose absence is present and is used in an articulate manner to further the concept of surveillance and penal action in case of transgression/ disruption of ‘normativity’. “Remember, Thakur Dharamsi will be coming later to check the totals. If he is not pleased with you, you may as well send in your resignations.” (Mistry 2004, 613) Chapter XXIV of the third and final findings of the Shah Commission report entitled- ‘General Observations’ stated-

24.11 ... It is necessary to face the situation squarely that not all excesses and improprieties committed during the emergency originated at the political level. In a large number of cases it appears that unscrupulous and over-ambitious officers were prepared to curry favour with the seats of power and position by doing what they thought the people in authority desired. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 230)

It is symbolic of the unruly spread of tentacles of power under the aegis of state sponsored emergency. Different shades of identity that they had exhibited are from being a leather worker to a tailor and ending up in being a beggar. It is the ramifications of Emergency that had such an impact in deferring their dream to the farthest point of non-fulfilment

consumed by flagrant disillusionment. Thakur's threat of dire irreversible consequence in case of non-conformity is tantamount to the inhumanity that he exhibits and portrays in many of the inhumane acts that he has been involved in directly or indirectly. Two of the acts that astoundingly affronts the readers of his sheer inhumanity; initially is the way he wreak havoc in the family of Narayan and burnt him and his family ablaze, and as if that was not enough, he followed it up by having Om castrated, to ensure that the family does not have any lineage left to claim and assert their rights and question the decadence and perversion of the caste system and social order.

Dina Dalal also undergoes the crisis to find her independent self after the unfortunate and untimely death of her husband. She faces all the adversities that the society had thrown at her and the way in which she stands up to the challenge is both daring and commendable for a widow to do so in the seventies.

Dina as a young girl, a married woman and a dependent widow, constantly upsets the balance of patriarchy and has to pay for it in her truncated education, her husband's death, the loss of her tailors, her home and ultimately her much-prized independence. Dina however is a fighter and after every loss of balance, she clambers onto the knife-edge again to once more achieve that ever-elusive fine balance. (Bharucha 2003, 166)

After the death of Rustom Dalal, Dina's husband, she continues to stay in the rented apartment with the loving memories of her dead husband. She refuses to move back to her father's house as she did not want to cross roads with her brother and wanted to stay away from his regular jibe of Rustom being an imperfect husband. To find a way of sustenance for her basic needs she sought Zenobia's help and thereby entered the world of Au Revoir Exports and met Mrs. Gupta, the upright business minded manager. It is from Mrs. Gupta's perspective that we get an alternate view of the way Emergency was perceived. Mrs. Gupta symbolizes the galvanized and ardent cohorts who support the dictatorial regime within the Emergency structure as it blatantly suppresses the mere right to form union by the workers to voice out their concerns, dissenting voices and to aid the productivity in general. In an instance, post-emergency proclamation, Dina claimed- "I thought the court found her guilty of cheating in the election." (Mistry 2004, 80) Mrs. Gupta vehemently retorted-

That's all rubbish, it will be appealed. Now all those troublemakers who accused her falsely have been put in jail. No more strikes and morchas and silly disturbances... As I told you before, I prefer to deal with private contractors. Union loafers want to work less and get more money. That's the curse of this country – laziness. And some idiot leaders encouraging them, telling police and army to disobey unlawful orders. Now you tell me, how can law be unlawful? Ridiculous nonsense. Serves them right, being thrown in jail... Thank God the Prime Minister has taken firm steps, as she said in the radio. We are lucky to have someone strong at a dangerous time like this. (Mistry 2004, 80-81)

Not just Mrs. Gupta, who upholds the idea that- “The Emergency is good medicine for the nation. It will soon cure everyone of their bad habits” (Mistry 2004, 406) , but also Dina's brother Nusswan, who is a businessman as well, patently supports the high-handedness to the state design to shoot down the idea of alternate opinion and subversion of the current regime of power. Nusswan claims,

These days only a technical education will get ahead. The future lies with technology and modernization... Yes, the country has been held back for too long by outdated ideologies. But our time has come. Magnificent changes are taking place. And the credit goes to our Prime Minister. A true spirit of renaissance. (Mistry 2004, 430)

Advocating for the need of stringent measures to contain anarchy in the society Nusswan claims-

Hardworking, educated people like Maneck is what we need. Not lazy, ignorant millions. And we also need strict family planning. All these rumours of forced sterilization are not helping. You must have heard that nonsense... Probably started by the CIA – saying people in remote villages are being dragged from their huts for compulsory sterilization. Such lies. But my point is, even if the rumour is true, what is wrong in that, with such huge population problem? ... It's all relative. At the best of times, democracy is a seesaw between complete chaos and tolerable confusion. You see, to make a democratic omelette you have to break a few democratic eggs. To fight fascism and other evil forces threatening our country, there is nothing wrong in taking strong measures. (Mistry 2004, 430-431)

On being questioned about his views on newspapers being censored, Nusswan intelligibly and verbosely admitted,

And what's so terrible about that? It's only because the government does not want anything published which will alarm the public. It's temporary- so lies can be suppressed and people can regain confidence. Such steps are necessary to preserve the democratic structure. You cannot sweep clean without making the new broom dirty. (Mistry 2004, 432)

The attitude of people like Mrs. Gupta and Nusswan symbolizes the capitalist voices' affinity towards the emergency regime which unreasonably sanctions robbing the masses/workers of their rights in line to the preposterous urgency to sanitize the society and (re)defining the idea of 'discipline' altogether. "On the industrial side, the Emergency represented not just a continuation of the status quo but a positive boon to the dominant class." (Blair 1980, 257) Capitalists like Nusswan has an rather opportunist optimism sense towards the entire episode of clamping of Emergency, which is brutally silencing option of the alternate and dissent. Since "labor force was 'disciplined'-strikes were no longer permitted," (Blair 1980, 258) , Nusswan euphorically states-

The important thing is to consider the concrete achievements of the Emergency. Punctuality has been restored to the railway system. And as my director friend was saying, there's also a great improvement in industrial relations. Nowadays, he can call the police in just one second, to take away the union troublemakers. A few good saltings at the police station, and they are soft as butter. My friend says production has improved tremendously. And who benefits from all this? The workers. The common people. Even the World Bank and the IMF approve of the changes. Now they are offering more loans. (Mistry 2004, 432)

In this context, it is crucial to understand the idea of 'discipline', that raises the fundamental inquiry regarding – Discipline for whom, who writes the rules, who defines discipline, and thereby who sanctions surveillance and the validity of behind the need to invoke Article 352 of the Indian Constitution for proclamation of emergency. Dina's attempt of independence and enablement was constantly threatened by the fragile financial foundation that she was in and hence, at times, she had no other option but to swallow her pride, self-respect and negotiate her way through with her brother Nusswan tolerating his whims and fancies in time of imminent financial crisis. She attempted to break out of the void of financial uncertainty by first keeping a paying guest and later she found respite in the regular orders from Au Revoir Export Company duly complemented by the skilled hard-work of Ishvar and Omprakash to meet the demands of their client. All these promised

a change in their respective fortunes and lives but unfortunately they found stumbling blocks in their journey with constant threat from the rent-collector. To such occasions, they shaded and negotiated their identity well to survive and sustain. Dina Dalal instinctively claimed Ishvar as her husband and Maneck and Omprakash as their sons as an answer to the crisis of their identity and legitimacy behind running a business from rented apartment. As the rent collector figured that Dina Dalal had illegally put up a business in her rented apartment violating tenancy rules, he made it a point to apprise her in advance regarding the consequences, if it comes to the knowledge of the landlord. A kind of surveillance was always there in place somewhat regulating the rights of the citizens.

Why get upset with me sister. It's all here-dates, times, coming-going, taxi, dresses. And more proof is sitting in the back room... This is the problem, sister. You cannot hire tailors and run a business here... And a paying guest, on top of that. Such insanity, sister. The office will throw you out for sure. (Mistry 2004, 474-475)

To all of these accusations, Dina was caught in a fix and compelled to react ingeniously, she countered the rent collector-

“You are taking rubbish!” she started the counterattack. “This man,” she said, pointing to Ishvar, “he is my husband. The two boys are our sons. And the dresses are all mine. Part of my new 1975 wardrobe. Go tell your landlord he has no case.” (Mistry 2004, 475)

This instinctive behaviour of Dina Dalal implies how identities get negotiated and reconfigured to arrive at a mutual consensus for survival. In that sudden witty admission “[it] was difficult to say who she shocked more with the apocryphal revelation: Ishvar, blushing, and playing with his scissors, or Ibrahim, wringing his hands and sighing.” (Mistry 2004, 475)

This also hints at the basic bonds of human nature that one tends to forget in the civilizational rush for urbaneness and cosmopolitanism. Ibrahim, the rent collector, later admits,

‘...forgive me, sister,’ he sobbed. ‘I did not know, when I brought them, that they would do such damage’ [about the landlord’s goons who came to evict her from the flat] for years I have followed the landlord’s orders. Like a helpless child. He tells me to threaten somebody, I threaten. He tells me to plead, I plead. If he raves that a tenant must be evicted, I have to repeat the raving at the tenant’s door. I am his creature.

[Consenting subject] Everybody thinks I am a evil person, but I am not, I want to see justice done, for myself, for yourself, for everyone. But the world is controlled by wicked people, we have no chance, we have nothing but trouble and sorrow... These Emergency times are terrible, sister. Money can buy the necessary police order. Justice is sold to the highest bidder. (Mistry 2004, 498)

In the course of the novel, while Maneck, Om and Ishvar get along each other well, Dina Dalal tries to draw an elusive line of social distinction from a conservative mind-set- “No, And I should tell you right now – I don’t like your chatting so much with them. They are my employees, you are Aban Kohlah’s son. A distance has to be kept. All this familiarity is not good.” (Mistry 2004, 319) But towards the end of the novel, the equation seem to have changed and it is found that Dina goes out of the way to sneak food out from her brother’s kitchen for Om and Ishvar, as utter desolation had befallen them with the elusive twist in their destiny called- Emergency.

Dina ushered them in. She filled the water glasses for them and, while they drank, dished out masoor in plates from Ruby’s [sister-in-law] everyday set on the sideboard. How many more years could she do this before Ruby or Nusswan [brother] found out, she wondered. ‘Anyone saw you come in? Eat fast’, she said. My sister-in-law is coming back earlier than usual.’ (Mistry 2004, 706)

With many similarities with the novel, the movie, *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aise*, also locates the problematic niceties of the Indian emergency and showcases the advent/rise of a thought for the need of a mass movement. The movie, set in the times of emergency, coupled with dexterous cinematography, depicts the line of unembellished difference between the haves and the have-nots, much in line with the Marxist theoretical and philosophical paradigm, and gives a cinematic perspective of the identity negotiation aspect that we are dealing with. The movie interestingly juxtaposes the binaries of urban/rural, rich/poor, sophistication/simplicity to amplify the question of- haves and have-nots vis-à-vis the imposition and dealing of the emergency. The characters in the movie- Vikram, Siddharth and Geetha, have varying and contrasting aspirations and there seem to be an underlying semblance of events that unify them. The camera movement and cinematography was done in a manner that ensured seamless transformation of one scene to the other. The movie has a rather unique form of narrative agency, the epistolary form, which is instrumental in plot progression. Correspondence in form of letters between the characters shed light at the

distance, both physical and psychological, which unites as well as separates them. There is a close interplay of Vipralambha Shringara rasa and Sambhoga Shringara rasa that shapes the identity and fate of the characters. The letters open up the scope to understand- distance, as an important metaphor and symbol, in dealing with the question of identity.

Vikram is an interesting character who aspires to be a business tycoon with his crafty tactics of negotiation and vital political connections. He hails from a family with strong affiliations to Congress ideology. The movie portrays his father as being loyalist to the Congress party and thereby exposes the irony of the emergency rules and dictates when he is later arrested at midnight of emergency by the same Congress regime. While leaving for the city Vikram claims the futility of his father's efforts to curb the turmoil by referring to its very origin, power-centre and perpetrators of violence. "Why enact this farce? Some of our own party members started it." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) To which his father retorts- "If everyone shifts responsibilities, then God help us all." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) Vikram's character is shown in the strategic site of interaction between the politics, bureaucracy and business. He negotiates a vital deal of turning a timeworn fort into a palatial heritage hotel, which earns him bureaucratic attention and political connection. In his ever longing wish to strike the optimum balance between his personal and professional life. He embarks on his professional journey of becoming a successful businessman with the shadow of delusion of being in relation with Geetha recurrently possessing and driving him from within. His high ambitions and aspirations do not fall in line with Geetha's lifestyle, yet the movie vividly portrays the desperation and obsession that he has for her. He gets madly driven by instinctive behaviour to be by her side, but a sense of incompleteness and an angst of hopelessness seeps in as he feels the hollowness of their ambiguous bond. Geetha always looked up to him as a good friend and clearly drew a line between her emotions and practicality. Vikram fell prey in equivocating her affinity for Siddharth vis-à-vis himself, which made her his weakness and a void of uncertainty that he always lives with.

Geetha symbolizes glaring womanhood who identifies her rights, asserts her independence and lives her life in her own terms. Initially, she is seen as submissive subject of a conservative household. She is married, as per quintessential middle-class conformist notion, to a well to do bureaucrat, whom she herself claims to as someone who "had everything that a girl could possibly want." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) But her

affinity for the alternate discourse of upholding the true spirit of democracy and egalitarianism coupled with the incessant desire to be with her love, Siddharth, had compelled her make a difficult decision of separation from her husband. She did not choose the conventional way of being a 'wife' in the elite society, but broke away to realize her affinity towards the 'cause', the alternate discourse propounded by Siddharth for an immediate need for people to unite and break the hegemonic customs and orders that feeds on democratic ideals to unleash tyranny and inequality in the society. The journey of Geetha stepping out of her comfort zone into the realm of stark reality in the society shows a growth in her character and marks the trajectory of finding herself an identity vis-à-vis the societal identity thrust upon her. In the process, she tacitly ignites her passion for subversion and understands the potential crisis of identity that one has to succumb to, if they do not realize their individuality. She plays a critical role in signifying the potential emancipatory space of a women and the choice that an individual already has but fall short of objectively realizing it in being overshadowed by predisposed subjectivity. Her journey as a young girl in college to a transformed self that is assertive and practical, has a lot of underpinnings in the social and psychological maturity that she had imbibed by her socio-cultural and demographic interaction in London. Her identity undergoes a prominent change in her London episode which she so earnestly eulogizes that she finds London as the place to send her newly born child to grow up vis-à-vis the brute reality of the rural life he would have otherwise encountered.

The growth in her character provides ample acumen for the movie to advance the narrative in line of a women realizing her identity vis-à-vis her association with two men in varying affiliations and aspirations, to finally appropriate to fight for the 'cause' of the masses as her conclusive entreaty in life. Though it is hard to discern the paradox that- was it for Siddharth that she joined the movement or was it vice-versa, one thing is pretty much clear that she did negotiate with the realization of her personal and social identity, and reconfigured it consequently, to arrive at a definite understanding of what she negated in her journey to arrive at the deferred understanding of what she indeed wanted.

Siddharth typically exemplifies the idea of a firebrand activist and crusader of social justice. He strongly fights to uproot the timeworn retrogressive age-old customary beliefs, to establish a social order for upholding the needs of an egalitarian society. In a letter addressed to Geetha, Siddharth states-

The violence of the oppressed is right, the violence of the oppressor is wrong. And to hell with ethics. I mean weren't Bhagat Singh's actions correct. It made me think of ourselves. I mean, who do we think we are? Strutting around, sprouting radical jargon, a little politics, some rock and roll... but mostly shock value. Isn't it shameful that I, Siddharth Tyebji, son of a Muslim father and a Hindu Bengali mother, can speak neither Urdu nor Bengali? My parents did not give me one thing of value that they could. This has to change. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Siddharth hails from a well-to-do family and his father is a judge with strong connections in the power corridors. Despite being born with the silver spoon he chooses to live a life of hardship and committed to uplifting the condition of the masses. He is strongly influenced by the Marxist ideology and realizes that the power and privileges that a certain class of the society is exercising is at the cost of the sweat and blood of the poor. The fact that the poor is made of believe in the absoluteness of their relation with the privileged is 'false consciousness' that the masses are indoctrinated with to facilitate the operations of the dominant ideology of hegemonic power structure.

The 42nd amendment of the constitution was on the anvil formalising the extraordinary powers of the executive (it got the assent of the President on 18 December 1976). The Prevention of Publication of Objectionable Matter Act, 1976 had already been enforced since December 1975 (through an ordinance) making any criticism of the government and ministers virtually impossible. (Sinha 1977, 69)

Desperate to bring about a change and be a driving force in the movement, he shuns his elite identity with the associated privileges and prejudices. In a subtle and promising way he joins the movement, far away from palatial bungalows and comfort of the mesmerizing city life, in the rural places namely Bhojpur etc. He had an undeterred sense of commitment to the 'cause' and that shows up when he did not just abandon his urbane lifestyle but also went on to the extent of sacrificing his love, Geetha, to join the movement. Talking about some students who sacrificed their lives for the movement in Bengal, Siddharth claims-

They were the best and brightest of Bengal. But instead of taking the comfortable roads that their parents had laid down for them, they went down the dirt and the muddy roads to the villages to end the vulgarity of oppression. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

The movie shows how Siddharth gradually loses focus in the movement when he feels that despite the need, people are not yet ready for it and it will require some time to gain the optimum momentum to pitch the revolt. At the end when he moves to London to study medicine, it comes as a surprise for viewers to see him step out of the realm of ideological flair that he created. This cannot outrightly be deemed as lack of perseverance on the part of Siddharth but it symbolizes the limitation of human nature and expectation. His passionate upheavals about bringing justice initially found a lot of grounds to explore, implore and act upon, but as time traversed the trajectory of ideology and ground-reality, the possibility of attainment of the end seemed more deferred leaving him with a futile hope about the future of the movement. He also symbolizes denouncement of an elite life which puts him in stark contrast with Vikram, who believes in the ideology of convenience and climbing the socio-economic ladder. In a letter addressed to Geetha, Vikram states-

I am still stuck in Meerut because trains have been cancelled due to the Hindu-Muslim sibling rivalry that has flared up again. This time it's not so bad, only 38 (thirty eight) dead... But most of the town does not give a shit... What really gets everyone excited here is the news that the local hardware merchant's daughter ran away with their cook... This state of affairs only worries my father, thirty of his Gandhian colleagues, seventy socialists and a hundred and two others no end. But being worried is my father's main profession. He should have worried more about us, though... And we would not have been stuck at the lower-end of the great middle class. Which is why I can't understand you rich kids playing this- let's change the world game. While you are looking for a way out, I am looking for a way in. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Siddharth has a unique sense of rhetoric that the contemporary generations could relate to and understand the relevance to the movement. Addressing some students amidst a rock show in the University campus in Delhi, he says-

To all you fans of Jimi Hendrix and Bob Dylan, who fought against injustice in their own country, we want you to think, question. Don't just listen, not even to us... Tell Daddy that there is a famine in Bihar. Tell him that people are dying in the country side, tell him that he is responsible for this, because he is a collaborator in a state, which is a state of big landlords and bourgeoisie capitalists. And tell daddy that life is not just about getting proper English education, earning a fat salary and loving one's parents. There are countries in this world where people have established a new order. China... Vietnam... Telangana. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

While Siddharth tried to frame an argument against policies of oppression, Vikram stands hand in glove with the power regime to extract any opportunity that he could from the situation. His conversation with Geetha sheds light at his overwhelming aspirations to be suave and rich. He quotes lines from English literature to exemplify a finesse in his demeanour and more importantly to impress Geetha.

Once upon a time, a princess was walking down the street all alone, abandoned by her prince, [When a gallant knight rode up to her on his royal steed] He swept her off her feet and they rode into the sunset. [Not every story has a happily ever after Vikram] Well, because every story have its Siddharth, right?" (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Geetha right away clarifies her intentions about her affiliations- "[Your Knight in shining armour will escort you to the lion's lair] As long as you don't keep me from the lion, Sir Knight." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Vikram's practicality did not resonate well with the idealistic overtones that Siddharth propounded. Vikram did not see any merit in that entire cause and rather saw it as hollow rhetoric and waste of time. Geetha says-

We are going to join the University strike tomorrow. You are with us aren't you? [To which Vikram retorts-] I think it's a load of shit. I don't know what you are trying to accomplish... Siddharth was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father is an ex-judge. He can afford to think the way he does. We can't. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Identity negotiations of the characters vis-à-vis their interactions and actions, with Indian emergency as the backdrop, show how their lives get affected by such socio-political turmoil. The director, Sudhir Mishra, begins the movie with the claim that-

Pandit Nehru made a horological mistake. At the stroke of midnight when India awoke to "light and freedom", the world was not asleep. It was for instance two thirty in New York. Anyway, my father's generation loved him and wanted to believe in his dream and that we had a tryst with destiny. I did too. By the time my elder brothers and sisters (not that I had any) went to college in the late sixties, Nehru had died and his dreams had soured. The baton had passed on to his daughter, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This is a story of my imaginary siblings' lives in those times... when India was pulled in a thousand directions. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

The Nehruvian idea of social equality stood in doldrums and faced acute crisis when National emergency was proclaimed. It was a big blow to the democratic ideals of the nation building and that is how violence gets intrinsically instilled within the varying shades of functioning of a democracy.

Throughout the movie Siddharth is shown to have a tumultuous relation with Vikram, partly because of Geetha but mainly because of difference in ideology. Vikram had strong reservations for mercantile mind-set and engaged in crony capitalism by forming a close nexus with the government in power. While doing the hotel deal he clearly unhesitatingly retorts- “I fix things, sir [...] fixer, dealer, broker, pimp – depends on your point of view sir.” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) While people like Vikram tried hard to climb the social ladder and make it big, people like Siddharth who already had all access to power structures and privileges found a fire in him to cross the line to be on the other side. The side that had enough depth in it to arouse curiosity in the mindscape of urbane youth like Siddharth. The void of poverty that was encapsulating the mass at large was the principal driving force for Siddharth to plunge deep into the ambiguous bog of hopelessness with undeterred commitment and purpose. But as he lived by the ways and means of the poor and destitute, he realized that the problem of indoctrination did not lie elsewhere but deep within them. He found that it was the internalization of the ideology of the dominant that had made them “consenting subjects to their own exploitation.” (Althusser 2001) The constant failures had further reinforced his idea that it was nothing but the allegiance to the hegemonic power structure that had been a hurdle in the process. While all of these were already antagonizing the fate of the masses, the proclamation of Emergency dealt a severe blow on the already gleaming face of hope.

The state sponsored programmes that were operationalized were a blot on the face of human rights of the citizens of the nation. The legitimization of such horrendous and life-threatening endeavours is a scar in the face of both democracy and humanity. The manner in which the five point programme was implemented gave corrupt government officials and shady politicians dreadful power to wreak havoc among the masses in a so-called benevolent method to bring a substantial control over the alarming and exponential shift in the demographic pattern, especially with a steep rise in the birth rate with a looming danger of population explosion. Sanjay Gandhi’s infamous sterilization drive, which measured people from varying age groups from the same demographic yardstick, got the much needed cabinet approval to bulldoze the prospects of the younger generation with gross brutality and inhumanity.

In the Delhi version of the post-Emergency narrative, the poor suffer a form of double victimisation. Not only are they sterilised, but they also lose their homes in the massive slum clearance project directed by Sanjay Gandhi in the name of resettlement. David Selbourne's eye-witness account, published during the Emergency, and republished after it, sets the scene: 'In clouds of dust, and with children weeping beside their smashed and bulldozed hovels, as I saw myself, trucks now drive the displaced away and dump them without food, sanitation, water or building materials for "resettlement" in the name of a new politics of "discipline" and "development".' Writing in more controlled language, the Shah Commission concludes: 'The manner in which demolitions were carried out in Delhi during the Emergency is an unrelieved story of illegality, callousness and of sickening sycophancy by the senior officers to play to the whims of Sanjay Gandhi.' (Tarlo 2003, 37-38)

As mentioned in Emma Tarlo's book *Unsettling Memories: Narratives on Indian Emergency*, in the section titled- *Paper truths: The language of Family Planning*, she states-

The new language finds its most direct expression in a small and unpretentious looking document called the DDA Family Planning Centre Allotment Order which is found in over 28 per cent of the files. It is reproduced below:

DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FAMILY PLANNING CENTRE

Allotment order

1. Name and Age
2. Father's name
3. Plot
4. No.of Family members
5. Date of voluntary sterilisation
6. Nature of assistance claimed
7. Order

Signature of applicant

Officer-in-charge

Date:

Here, the allotment order is just an empty form, devoid of details, but since each form must have been empty before being filled, it is interesting to pause to contemplate it first in its blank state. No doubt, the title alone gives official acknowledgement of the fact that the DDA was issuing plots on the basis of family planning. But what does it mean by 'family planning'? For this we have to go to point 5 which demands bluntly 'Date of voluntary sterilisation'. [Interestingly] So 'family planning' is defined as 'sterilisation' and 'sterilisation' is defined as 'voluntary' even before the person has begun to fill in the form. What we find in this small piece of paper is a fragment of the dominant Emergency narrative- a token of official family planning euphemisms in action at a local level...When one looks at the answers given in response to point 5 of the form, one finds not only a date and sterilisation number, but also one of two phrases: either 'self-sterilisation', or 'motivated case'. (Tarlo 2003, 79-80)

The obsessive and undemocratic push towards the Family planning programme is evident in the manner in which language was used in the official document pre-supposing some kind of a tacit and invisible agreement forced upon the citizens. The citizens have no option but to agree upon without an overt consent which is ironic in a democracy. The term 'self-sterilisation' terminologically assumes the voluntariness of on the part of the patient to be victimised in lieu of a plot instead of one that is unjustifiably snatched away from them under the slum clearance policy without compensatory relocation. So, the people are in a disadvantageous position right from the onset.

The term 'self-sterilisation' seems clear enough, suggesting that in return for sterilisation a person was able to obtain a plot. But the term 'motivated case' is by no means self-explanatory... 'People were told they could get a plot either by getting sterilised or giving a case. This meant that they had to make some sort of private deal with the person concerned. If I want to motivate you, then I'll offer you this money to get sterilised. You might say you want more, so we strike a deal. I have to accompany you to the hospital as proof that I am the motivator. You get sterilised, and I get the plot. That's the incentive. (Tarlo 2003, 80-81)

As mentioned in the novel, people like Rajaram who took up the job as a motivator could see the hollowness of the programme from within and how hard was it to find a way to sustain with utter humiliation in the society as a social being. He knew he compromised with his values and ethics and allured people to walk into the dark confines of inhumanity and also put their lives at threat.

Even though I didn't like the new system, I agreed to try it. By now, everyone realized that Motivators were giving bogus talk to people. Wherever I went, city or suburb, they insulted me, called me a threat to manhood, a dispenser of *napunsakta*, a castrator, a procurer of eunuchs. And here I was, just doing a government job, trying to make a living. How can you function like this day after day? No, I said, this is not for me. (Mistry 2004, 452)

The policy of sterilisation is intricately linked with the bigger scheme of beautification of the city is unswervingly concurrent with the Slum clearance and relocation. Unfortunately, as the paper truths suggest, the voluntary sterilisation drive had a hidden and binding agreement with the masses. Under the latency of the agreement, one who got themselves sterilised could avail a plot.

Apart from 'regularisation cases', we also find 'transfer cases'. These are often accompanied by a small note, as in the case of a sweeper who states that he wants to transfer to Welcome... [and] he achieves his request through getting sterilised. In another transfer case, there is a letter from the applicant in the file. The file is interesting since it bears witness to the moment of transition when sterilisation papers became incorporated into DDA policies... The executive officer of the DDA responded to the letter by scrawling a note to his subordinates: 'Please furnish a report, 7.6.1976.' To this the concerned officer replied on the same day: 'All families were resettled in Trilokpuri. We are not allowing changes in such cases, 7.6.1976.' This appears to be a definitive answer, but at the very bottom of the same page, another officer has added: 'Vasectomy case. Change to Seelampur allowed.' This additional note is dated 21.8.1976. By August 1976, sterilisation had clearly become a medium through which people could negotiate their housing rights with officials of the DDA. (Tarlo 2003, 87-88)

In a discussion with the Slum Department in Welcome, Delhi, Emma Tarlo finds the entire gory episode of sterilisation and plot allotment vis-à-vis the Emergency as very disturbing and when the official was asked of the family planning drive, in retrospect, he replies,

The policy was in the national interest. [He switched back to an official voice.] But the government would not have changed were it not for the forcible sterilisation and the demolitions. Those were the two principal things. The fact that the government did change shows the extent to which people were being forced. (Tarlo 2003, 91)

Hence, the plethora of Emergency euphemisms and rhetoric, voiced and camouflaged the draconian government policies by astute and incisive use of semantics. The perspicacious choice of words made the (un)democratic sound egalitarian and in interest of the nation.

This conversation provides us with the missing keys for decoding the language of 'family planning' in which 'family planning' means sterilisation which is defined as 'voluntary'. Government statistics suggest that the word 'family planning' did not always translate thus, but they also show that the slippage in meaning was a gradual process which began back in the 1960s when vasectomy was increasingly advocated over other family planning methods. Literature also suggest that the 'voluntary' nature of the mass vasectomy camps introduced at that time is highly debatable. During the Emergency, the precise nature of the meaning of the term 'voluntary' was clarified. By the time we read of people voluntarily demolishing their own *jhuggis*, we know that we are dealing with the euphemism of the Emergency when the takeover of meaning has become complete. (Tarlo 2003, 91)

The Capitalist and the economically powerful people like Nusswan advocates the slum removal programme-

The main thing is, now we have pragmatic policies instead of irrelevant theories. For example, poverty is being tackled head-on. All the ugly bustees and filthy jhopadpatis are being erased. Young man, you are not old enough to remember how wonderful this city was. But thanks to our visionary leader and the Beautification Programme, it will be restored to its former glory. Then you will see and appreciate (Mistry 2004, 430)

The Shah Commission reports notes the notoriety with which the matter was dealt with.

22.4 As the discussion in Chapter XIII of the Commission's Interim Report II will indicate, the actions taken were ill-conceived and in certain cases cruelly inhuman. Thousands of people were uprooted after giving a few hours' notice, often without any warning and without remedy or compensation. The demolition activities were carried out ignoring the misery caused to men, women and children. Their lifelong abodes were demolished with the aid of bulldozers and their belongings were thrown and strewn all over the area cleaned by such operations. They were forced to move to places where even the basic necessities of life like light, water and transport facilities were not immediately available. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 209)

“They said it’s a new Emergency law. If shacks are illegal, they can remove them. The new law says the city must be made beautiful.” (Mistry 2004, 342) Some colloquial parlance those got appropriated in the official narratives during the Emergency which smeared the line of perception and reality. The clause of ‘eligibility’ is definitely preposterous and slanderous, as the masses were doubly victimised to be ‘eligible’ under the pre-conditions of Emergency.

We now know that a ‘regularisation’ takes place under the threat of eviction. In family planning parlance, this is ‘disincentive.’ The ‘incentive’ is the right to remain living in the house one has purchased or built or the right to have an alternative plot after one’s home has been ‘voluntarily’ demolished. An ‘eligible’ person is a person who either is sterilised or has ‘given a case.’ ‘Giving a case’ means paying someone else to get sterilised. The person who pays for a sterilisation is a ‘motivator’ while the person who accepts the deal is ‘motivated.’ An ‘ineligible’ person is a person who neither gets sterilised nor purchases the sterilisation of another. (Tarlo 2003, 91-92)

Several official irregularities were recorded during the close nexus of (in)voluntary sterilisation and the demolition drive. Emma Tarlo presents several cases from her interviews, and one such case is stated below-

Reassessed, in light of these clarifications, the files of Welcome record the process by which the DDA, caught within a wider structure of sterilisation targets, cast its bureaucratic net over the colony in search of victims for sterilisation. It found its victims in that ambiguous space which had always existed- and which continues to exist- between what is known and what is officially recorded... So in the mid-1970s it was home to a number of people who were living in a loophole between official policies and officially recognised irregularities. During the Emergency, that loophole tightened. Instead of being a space for negotiation, it became a noose which squeezed its victims into participation in family planning- offering them the grim choice either of getting sterilised or of paying someone else to take their place. The rules and regulations of the colony had suddenly lost their flexibility. They now functioned as official levers with which to scoop up sterilisation cases from residents trapped by the finer details of the law. (Tarlo 2003, 92)

Apart from the autocratic functioning of power, there are reports which show a certain section of masses’ complicity to the entire exercise with the element of economic benefits.

But does this vertical and totalitarian model of power really correspond to the picture that emerges from the files? Had the system really lost its flexibility, or was it simply that the terms and conditions of negotiation had been redefined? ... When I questioned the DDA staff of Welcome on this issue, one of the lower divisional clerks responded: ‘Some were sterilised by force [*zaberdasti se*] but actually, once it was known that you could get major benefits through sterilisation, then many people chose to get sterilised out of greed [*lalchi se*]. (Tarlo 2003, 92)

The economic incentives succeeded in making the masses myopic to see the immediate profit overshadow the distant loss. Though, the entire campaign is perceived as undemocratic, the people’s inner desire to reap benefits out of the situation was tapped precisely by the government. “When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.” (Nye 2004, x) Unconsciously, Joseph Nye’s ‘Soft power’ concept that was developed much later may be corroborated in retrospect to understand this transmutation of ‘choice’ from ‘need’ to ‘greed.’

Force has somehow transmuted into choice; ‘need’ has transposed into ‘greed’. Our earlier image of innocent victims helplessly trapped in a bureaucratic web gives way to the possibility of pragmatic opportunists, reaching out for benefits and ‘rewards’. And yet it is from the fusion of these two pictures that a new perspective emerges from which we can try to capture the diversity of people’s experiences of that elusive moment we call ‘the Emergency’. (Tarlo 2003, 93)

In face of such perspectives, characters, both in the novel and the movie, had undergone a substantial shift in their life and fate. One can easily find a division in the society’s power relations, on one side a miniscule proportion of powerful people dictated the terms of democracy and its functioning to the larger majority who eventually became subjects of the schemes of then nationalist propaganda. To such an attack on the hopes and aspirations of the poor, the government did face some passive resistance in form of movements and revolts which were bulldozed under the draconian provisions of ‘National Emergency’ as delineated in the constitution. Siddharth exhorts- “We have to change the world. And change it fundamentally” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

The characters undergo a fundamental shift in their identities, both respective and relational, vis-à-vis their trajectory of destiny and plot progression in spatio-temporal framework. The idea of identity negotiation and reconfiguration is presented in a dexterous

manner by portraying the intricate interplay of fate and plight and smudging the quivering line between 'predestination' and 'freewill'. (Feinberg, et al. 1986) On one hand, Vikram and Geeta start off from a lower order in sociological circuit and eventually climbs the ladder of social strata and makes it big into the space of socio-economic security and power. Siddharth, on the other hand, already has at his disposal what others are aspiring for, socio-economic security and access to the power corridors. He is initially allured by ideology for putting up a fight/movement for the noble cause of an egalitarian society but eventually gets disillusioned. He states, "I can't fool myself any longer. I just can't do this." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Even through the course of the movie he walks the tight rope of idealism and practicality and finds it rather difficult to accommodate and reconcile the duality. In narrating one of the potential moment of an upheaval against the tyrannical landlord by the peasants he flagrantly admits that the idea of dismantling the master/slave or bourgeoisie/proletariat binary is rather a convoluted and critical affair. He states-

It's really complicated. Let me try and explain. One day the untouchables in the village were up in arms. Landlord's son had raped one of their girls...They had all gathered outside the landlord's house. The feeling was overwhelming. To my naive mind it seemed the revolution was at hand. And then suddenly the land-lord had a heart-attack... The lower caste villagers who had been who had been screaming for his blood a minute ago, were suddenly overcome by some ancient dutiful urge to save him. After all, he and his family had been their lords and masters for centuries. So a jeep was despatched to summon a doctor. Being lower caste, the only doctor they knew was also a lower caste. So here's the problem. The landlord's son did not want a lower-caste doctor touching his father. But the father who was dying, didn't give a damn...This strange compassion of the villagers towards their oppressor, in this moment of need, taught me something- What? I am still trying to decipher. (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

It is important to understand that the line of demarcation between allegiance and subversion is constantly shifting as their sense of duty and obedience towards their master is ingrained in their minds in a systematic manner down the generation. The silence that the peasants exhibited is their tacit acceptance of the injustice of unequal social dissection which eventually made them consenting subjects to their own exploitation and had paved way for the hegemonic status quo to operate in favour of the land-owning class.

In Siddharth's final letter to Geeta his state of mind and disenchantment about the entire episode is revealed. Siddharth decides to leave for London to study medicine, which in itself serves as a critical juncture for a curious mind to embark on a journey to understand the human physiology and anatomy after failing to understand their psychology. He states, "Sorry, I parting, I guess, was inevitable. Maybe, even necessary. You have to, I suppose, get over your first love in order to be free. Thank you for sending Chetan to London, with my father. It was indescribable, the feeling of seeing him after all these years... The world hadn't changed in ways that had I wanted it to. I know that you're right when you say, it has. That no one can rape a lower-caste women in that parts easily anymore. He might get a certain body part chopped off. And I know that it is a leap of about 5000 years, But still? Anyway, Probir da is still there and you... As for me, you know I'm studying Medicine right now... Maybe the mysteries of the human bodies will be less confusing. And somebody I will return, Maybe." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) His cynicism in arriving at anything definitive and final is established in his outlook. He tries to locate the singular epistemological truth behind the existence of the peasants and smear the coat of inequality from the face of sociological existence. In this over-arching attempt he fails to understand the impossibility of arriving at a monolithic, singular truth, the transcendental signified of the signifier called 'truth'. The core of the search for the singular 'truth' thereby lies within the hollowness of a nebulous void of ambiguity trapped fluctuating coordinates of space-time (in)equilibrium.

It was the time of Emergency that crucially affected their relative intersections in varying spaces and coordinates. Vikram had already made it big by the time 'Emergency' was proclaimed. Geeta had taken a definitive decision and a categorical step to forego her safe socio-economic cocoon and actively engaged and dedicated her life for the cause of the poor. And for Siddharth, the time was ripe for the movement to spark off. All of these met a fateful and convoluted turn with the provisions of 'Emergency' becoming stumbling blocks for their active proceedings.

Geeta writes to Vikram about her experiences in the village vis-à-vis the claims of Emergency. She states, "Once upon a time, there was a girl called Geeta. Remember her? She was arrogant, opinionated and thought she could change the world. And so she came here to Bhojpur. And then, what happened? I don't know. It's too difficult to describe... Siddharth says, our set-up is a bourgeoisie feel-good scheme. This naturally forms the

basis for most of the unnecessary tensions in my life... You know something Vikram? Nobody gives a damn about this place. It's as if it doesn't exist." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) In continuing her fight to voice out the concerns of the villagers on account of the oppression by the land-owning class, she found that the Emergency escalated the mark notches higher to worsen the plight of the common masses. The brevity in which the matter of population explosion was raised and a counter-measure was suggested in form of the infamous 'sterilisation drive', talks in length of the utter disregard of democratic and humanitarian values. This succinctness of execution of the 'family planning programme' manifested slap-dashing of the frontiers of civilisation to some darker echelons of barbaric normativity. Geeta visited the Government sterilisation camps, which were supposedly carrying out the operations in an unhygienic manner, to which she protested in legal means. The doctors and the official at the camps derides her attempt with vilifications like- "What petition has she brought this time? She claims we're using unhygienic equipment to sterilise the man." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

The movie shows scenes at Government Sterilisation camps, where people are brought in jeeps and trucks by the police, tied up in ropes and forcefully dragged into the tents. "The nauseating experience of compulsory sterilisation was only the most obvious feature of the emergency." (Sathyamurthy 1997, 718) It re-creates the atmosphere of inhumanity in such a prosaic manner that one comes into close quarters of reality and experiences at that point of time. It showed the banners like- '*Chota Parivar banao*' (Make Small family), '*Biwi rahegi tip-top, Do ke baad full stop*' (Wife will remain fit and fine, if you stop after two children). Throughout the emergency, Geeta makes an ardent attempt to fight for the cause and not get deterred, but she faces a lot of hurdles in the process. She gets arrested on grounds of preventive detention along with some other members which had put her in a vulnerable situation of being exploited by the corrupt state machinery. She gets molested in the police station in the presence of the station in-charge to which he fallaciously reports that the police station was attacked in his absence and certain convicts/suspects had to bear the brunt of the mob attack. With newer struggles confronting her time and again, she grew stronger and mature to lead her life for the cause of the society with a hope and faith that things are and will change with time. She does not try to arrive at anything fundamental or ground-breaking but rather participates in the social change with a spirit of optimism.

The character of Vikram shows the other side of the Emergency, the side that had contacts in the power corridors. His character also traverses the space of conflict between the then present dispensation under Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the emergence of an alternative populist mass discourse and ideology under the anti-Congress rhetoric of J.P. Narayan movement. He hailed from a family loyal to Congress dispensation rooted in the Gandhian ideals. It is through his character that we understand the fraudulent operations of people in power. He made his mark into the hazy nexus of Politics and business after clinching the hotel deal for Mr. Wadhvani. He is appreciated by a bureaucrat from Finance Ministry- "Aren't you the chap who got some deal fixed for Mr. Wadhvani? Jolly Good, my man! We need people like you who can get things done." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) That had earned him a lot of socio-political accolades and more importantly in-roads into the economic and power machinery. On being said that his job is easy as everybody in the country is corrupt, he ripostes "Not everyone sir. The trick is to know who is. That's where I come in." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005), which had earned him the attention of the finance minister himself. The Minister claims- "Vikram is a good boy. Not like those other bloody rats, who is deserting a sinking ship." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) Interestingly the background of the scene, showing a tilted and flipped picture of the Prime Minister and nobody taking any initiative to put things in order but rather safeguard their own interests, is very crucial in talking of the times how the core of the Congress political machinery was slowly losing ground at the face of an imminent crisis of ideology. Vikram questions- "Is the ship sinking?", to which the minister replies-"Well, that's what they say, that's what they think." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) This marks his involvement in a series of financial irregularities and one it being symbolized in the form of illegal issue of the bank overdraft. The close aid of the finance minister said it is just a matter of time and the matter will be secretly concealed. He ironically tells the Bank Manager, "You are doing it for the interest of the Nation. We will get him a medal for that." (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Vikram also tangentially touches upon the other side of power dispensation as he visits Randhir Singh, once a close aid of the Congress now stepping into the opportunist boots of the potential alternate power centre. In a stereotypical political rhetoric, Randhir enunciates- "Nowadays anyone who opposes the ruling party is labelled as a 'traitor'. In the land of Mahatma Gandhi, in the land of Subhash Chandra Bose, it's Hitler who rules. Friends, don't be blind agent of that dynastic party. Wake up! Down with Corruption."

(Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) Vikram questions Randhir- “Aren’t your new colleagues the ones you were abusing yesterday?” to which Randhir counters, “Oh yes, Times change, People change.” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) Finally at the nightfall while everyone was discussing the problems in ruling dispensation, the Central government took the final step to contain the movement before things slipped off their hands. The radio voiced out the alarming news, “A state of National Emergency has been declared in India. In a midnight swoop, all top opposition leaders have been arrested. This includes the Gandhian leader who spearheaded the anti-corruption movement against the Congress party and its supreme leader, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This follows the Allahabad High Court judgement against Mrs. Gandhi which indicted her on corruption charges. Calling the opposition agitation as a conspiracy to destabilize the nation, the Congress party spokesmen said it was necessary to save the country from total chaos and anarchy. He also labelled the opposition call to the country’s armed and civil forces an act of treason.” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005)

Indira Gandhi took recourse to the most formidable and perilous constitutional provision on account of the then threatened National Security, proclamation of ‘National Emergency’ under the aid and advice of Siddhartha Shankar Ray.

It is believed that Siddhartha Shankar Ray played an important role in the decision to declare the Emergency; it was his suggestion, and Indira Gandhi acted on it. In fact, Indira Gandhi told me subsequently that she was not even aware of the constitutional provisions allowing for the declaration of a state of Emergency on ground of internal disturbance, particularly since a state of Emergency had already been proclaimed as a consequence of the Indo-Pak conflict in 1971. (Mukherjee 2015, 45)

Siddhartha Shankar Ray in his deposition to the Shah Commission said that Indira Gandhi insisted on something strong and his reference to her perspective to the need for ‘shock treatment’, reflects upon the intent of the government pre-proclamation to initiate some stringent measures in anticipation of the imminent doom to the nation if not contained immediately.

According to Siddhartha Shankar Ray’s deposition before the Shah Commission (set up by the Janata government to investigate the ‘excesses’ of the Emergency), he was summoned to Indira Gandhi’s residence on the morning of 25 June 1975. He reached 1 Safdarjung Road and met Indira Gandhi, who said that she had received a slew of

reports indicating that the country was heading into a crisis. She told him that in view of the all-round indiscipline and lawlessness, some strong corrective measures needed to be taken. Siddhartha babu told the Shah Commission that Indira Gandhi had, on two or three previous occasions, told him that India needed some 'shock treatment' and that some 'emergent power or drastic power' was necessary. He recalled to the Shah Commission that on one such occasion (before the announcement of the Allahabad High Court judgement on 12 June 1975), he had told her that they could take recourse to the laws already on the statute books, and cited to her the success with which he had tackled the law and order problem of West Bengal within the framework of the law. According to Siddhartha babu, Indira Gandhi then read out intelligence reports of Jayaprakash Narayan's public meeting scheduled for that evening. The reports indicated that he would call for an all-India agitation to set up a parallel administration network as well as courts, and appeal to policemen and those in the armed forces to disobey what were supposed to be illegal orders. Indira Gandhi, he maintained, was firm in the understanding that India was drifting towards chaos and anarchy. (Mukherjee 2015, 45-46)

It was also noticed that there were many takers and vehement supporters of Indira Gandhi's policies and the proclamation of Emergency, but as soon as the Shah Commission was constituted and mandated to inquire upon the excess of emergency, all these people back-tracked, including Siddhartha Shankar Ray, leaving Indira Gandhi alone to face the commission single-handedly.

Interestingly, though not surprisingly, once it was declared, there were a whole host of people claiming authorship of the idea of declaring the Emergency. And, again not surprisingly, these very people took a sharp about-turn when the Shah Commission was set up to look into the Emergency 'excesses'. Not only did they disown their involvement, they pinned all the blame on Indira Gandhi, pleading their own innocence. Siddhartha babu was no exception. Deposing before the Shah Commission, he ran into Indira Gandhi – draped in a crimson saree that day – in the Commission Hall and tossed a sprightly remark: 'You look pretty today.' 'Despite your efforts,' retorted a curt Indira Gandhi. (Mukherjee 2015, 47)

Indira Gandhi questioned the singular perspective of the inquiry Commission, thereby not questioning the veracity of the commission but the politically motivated constitution of the Inquiry Commission. The letter by Indira Gandhi to Shah Commission is reproduced by Pranab Mukherjee as Appendix 3 of his book.

In her letter dated 21 November 1977, Indira Gandhi stated:

I should further like to point out that the terms of reference of this Hon'ble Commission are one-sided and politically motivated. While they empower the Hon'ble Commission to enquire into the excesses committed during the emergency, they are silent about the circumstances which led to its declaration. This country is vast and beset with deep-rooted and wide-ranging problems. The administrative machinery is fragmented. Urgent measures have to be taken. Programmes are implemented at various levels and by different individuals and agencies. Some excess in their implementation cannot always be avoided nor do they always come to notice at that time. I have publicly expressed regret for any unjust hardship caused to any individual. But if the professed purpose of the inquiry is to check abuse of power in the future, it is equally imperative that the circumstances which created chaotic conditions in the nation before the emergency should also be enquired into and not allowed to be repeated. (Mukherjee 2015, 265)

Emergency twisted the fate of the characters in the movie. Siddharth and Geeta on being arrested on account of 'Emergency' are harassed to such an extent that somebody as revolutionary as Siddharth finds it difficult to understand the dynamics in power operation and to find a right way to stage a revolt with optimum balance of ideology and practicality. Disillusioned and cynical at the end, he negotiates both with his idealism and love, to make a tough decision about leaving both the movement and Geeta to depart to London. Vikram, on the other hand faces the plight of destiny as he becomes mentally retarded due to the gruesome attack inflicted in him by the police-officers during his visit to rescue Siddharth who was arrested under the provisions of 'Emergency'.

In both the narratives, the novel and the movie, the characters are made to end up in situations and conditions where they started off end up arriving at the same state while traversing the trajectory of space and time. Characters from the novel, Maneck came from a well-off family who could afford to send their ward for formal technical education in the city and ended up being a well-bred professional with experience of business from the Gulf region. Om and Ishvar who tried to make it big by first breaking the caste hierarchy and make inroads into economic independence and social respect could not really walk out of the domains of fate and conventionality, and ended up being on a more pathetic situation than ever- from leather workers to tailors to finally end up being castrated and limbless beggars. "Ishvar and Om have to balance between their low-caste origins and their new *darji* status. Their origins ultimately destroy this delicate balance and hurl them down into an abyss of abject bodily and spiritual

horrors.” (Bharucha 2003, 166) Maneck was flabbergasted to know of the tragedy that had befallen on Om and Ishvar. “They are both beggars now... You wouldn’t recognize them if you saw them. Ishvar has shrunk, not just because his legs are gone – all of him. And Om has become very chubby. One of the effects of castration.” (Mistry 2004, 697-698) Dina Dalal who wished to be free of from the dictates of her brother Nusswan and his family. Hence, she avoided her father’s house to live in that tiny flat without compromising on her self-respect and independence. But as destiny had it in store for her, her dreams of escaping the domestic confines and live a life of independent entrepreneur beyond the shadow of her brother’s apathy were sacrificed. Her indomitable spirit was slowly fading out with the passage of time.

Nusswan gave up teasing Dina because it was no fun if she did not retaliate. There were times when he sat alone in his room, recalling the headstrong, indomitable sister, and regretted her fading into a submissive subject beaten down by time and circumstances. Well, he sighed to himself that was what life did to those who refused to learn its lessons: it beat them down and broke their spirit. But at least her days of endless toil were behind her. Now she would be cared for, provided for by her own family. Not long afterwards, the servant who came in the mornings to sweep and swab, and dust the furniture was dismissed... Dina took the hint and assumed the chores. She absorbed everything like a capacious sponge. During her private moments she wrung herself out and then was ready to blot up more. (Mistry 2004, 660)

People like Nusswan, who not only advocates but also celebrates the ‘excesses’ of Emergency in the context of instilling discipline in the masses, laments easing of Emergency provisions as he reads it as necessary evil. “Problem is, the excitement has gone out of it. The initial fear which disciplined people, made them punctual and hardworking- that fear is gone. Government should do something to give a boost to the programme.” (Mistry 2004, 661)

‘Distance’ is also an important metaphor in the movie. It does not merely imply physical distance but distance between the Urban and Rural mind-set, in ideology – conservative and loyalist vis-à-vis the radical and revolutionary. From the ideological perspective, Siddharth and his group being part of society raises his voice for the cause of the society, much in line with Gramsci’s concept of ‘Organic Intellectual’, who see themselves as different from people like his father who can understand the plight of the poor but do not act, upholding the conservative conviction and a mental block, to let things be as they are.

The distance between Delhi and Bhojpur is symbolic of the gap in thinking and mind-set of the people. “Delhi and Bhojpur are not separated merely by a thousand miles but also five thousand years. You must have heard of exploitation, disease, apathy and lawlessness. There’s all that here and much more. But once you have been here and seen the despair, you cannot leave.” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) There has been a distance in development parameters eliciting the urban-rural divide. The urbaneness of the city is shown in stark contrast with the rural conditions. What one found in the city’s intellectual discourse and ideological discussions regarding the plight of the poor and what should be done to address the problems, the same issues are found to be practised in and around the rural areas symbolized as Bhojpur.

About the distance in the generation and their outlook, the movie clearly draws a frontier of dialectics between in the varied approaches and opinions towards the problems of class difference and feudal order. Siddharth, in a discussion between his father, delineated the problems, as he felt and saw, with the complacency situation of the society in general with influential people in power abstaining from upholding their duty for the rights of the masses. In the discussion his father asks him whether he is serious about the Bihar thing which according to him is a ‘stupid’ thought, to which Siddharth retorts - “Because I am sick of people like you who sit and pontificate about India, its problems, its oppressive political and social systems and then do nothing about it.” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) To such a brazen riposte of Siddharth, he patiently questions the entire idea behind the insurrection altogether on a rhetorical counter-narrative- “So you have faith in an ideology that talks of annihilation and the murder of people as an acceptable way of changing the system? What gives you that right?” (Menon, Singh and Ahuja 2005) In such a situation the confrontation is not on a personal level rather it is a confrontation of variance of conflicting and contradictory ideology.

Distance also played a crucial role for Dina, Maneck and Om-Ishvar. On Maneck’s sudden departure from Dina aunty’s place, she was stunned to find that-

‘I think I’ll go back to Dubai straight from there. [His hometown in the north] More convenient.’ She knew the hurt was showing on her face, and he did not seem aware of it. His words grew indistinct to her ears, already travelling the distance he was to put between them. (Mistry 2004, 687)

As Ishvar claimed about Maneck not recognizing them and the gap that seemed to have come between them and Maneck- “But he went so far away. When you go so far away, you change. Distance is a difficult thing. We shouldn’t blame him.” (Mistry 2004, 707)

The epilogue of the novel narrates the events post-emergency in a profound manner. It situates itself in 1984 after the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the subsequent anti-Sikh riots that have consumed the country. The brazen animosity against the Sikh community is expressed in terms of the fear-

Don’t you know? People are being beaten and butchered and burnt alive... Sikhs are the ones being massacred in the riots. For three days they have been burning Sikh shops and homes, chopping up Sikh boys and men. And police are just running about here and there, pretending to protect the neighbourhood... Our best soldiers, the BSF. First line of defence against enemy invasion. Now they must guard borderlines within our cities. How shameful for the whole country... It started when the Prime Minister was killed three days ago. She was shot by her Sikh bodyguards. So this is supposed to be revenge. (Mistry 2004, 665-666)

The epilogue also offers a glance at how the things shaped up after the Emergency and how people negotiated their identity vis-à-vis the change. Much to the despair of the common masses,

... nothing has changed. Government still keeps breaking poor people’s homes and jhopadpattis. In villages, they say they will dig wells only if so many sterilizations are done. They tell farmers they will get fertilizer only after nussbandhi is performed. Living each day is to face one emergency or another. (Mistry 2004, 666)

On the issue of Indira Gandhi authorizing the attack on the Golden temple, her sanctity as the democratically elected Prime Minister and as upholder of democratic rights is questioned. In the mass perception, she was closely associated in creating a counter-weight to facilitate her functioning and keep the state governments ever subservient to her dictates.

Same way all her problems started. With her own mischief-making. Just like in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Assam, Tamil Nadu. In Punjab, she was helping one group to make trouble for state government. Afterwards the group became so powerful, fighting for separation and Khalistan, they made trouble for her only. She gave her blessing to the guns and bombs, and then these wicked, violent instruments began hitting her own

government. How do they say in English – all her chickens came home for roosting... And then she made the problem worse and worse, telling the army to attack the Golden Temple and capture the terrorists. With tanks and what-all big guns they charged inside, like hooligans. How much damage to the shrine. It is the most sacred place for Sikhs, and everybody's feelings were hurt... She created a monster and the monster swallowed her. Now it swallows innocents. Such terrible butchery for three days... They are pouring kerosene on Sikhs and setting them on fire. They catch men, tear the hair from their faces or hack it with swords, then kill them. Whole families burnt to death in their homes... And all this, sahib, in our nation's capital. All this while police do their shameless acting, and the politicians say the people are upset, they are just avenging their leader's murder, what can we do. (Mistry 2004, 667)

The helplessness and sheer desperation of the common masses, especially the Sikhs, to come out of the pangs of violence is profoundly portrayed but the matter gets crucially amplified and complicated in their inability to do so. The narrative of the Sikh driver as mentioned in the epilogue of the *Fine Balance*, bridges the link to how violence goes on to torment the masses in one way or the other, only with the change in its form and nature. The worst situation is that the masses who were victimised in the hands of 'colonizers' (Boehmer 2005) in the colonial past, now were victims to people whom they had perceived to be their own.

Hence, they also negotiate with their identity – social and religious, to make the rational choice between idealism and practicality at the face of such imminent crisis of humanity. The driver who happened to be a Sikh and was facing a life threat as other in his community were facing negotiated his identity to fit into the circumstances - "I am a Sikh – I have shaved off my beard and cut my hair two days ago. But I'm still wearing a kara... Solid as a handcuff. I am manacled to my religion – a happy prisoner." (Mistry 2004, 669) "Religion is defined as faith or conscience rather than as action." (Sullivan 1996, 136) His exasperation at the entire episode of violence and bloodshed had lead him to a profound understanding of the prejudicial, penitent and abysmal social order/disorder that one is living in.

The real murderers will never be punished. For votes and power they play with human lives. Today it is Sikhs. Last year it was Muslims; before that, Harijans. One day, your sudra and kusti [religious items of Parsi community] might not be enough to protect you. (Mistry 2004, 669)

Chapter XXI of the Shah Commission report titled- “Implementation of the Family Planning Programme during the Emergency” states discrepancies in implementation by changing the family planning initiative of the government during the emergency. The ‘voluntary’ part of the drive as identified by the commission.

Voluntary nature of the Family Planning Programme

21.2 The manner in which the family planning programme should be implemented in the States has also been receiving attention of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning from time to time and guidelines in this regard figured in various pronouncements and papers emanating from the Ministry. Dr. Karan Singh, the then Union Minister of Health while inaugurating the Central Family Planning Council meeting on April 5, 1974, stated as under:-

“While the fixing of targets is useful to guide the workers on the level of achievement, strategies have to be developed to see that the people themselves readily accept the programme without any compulsion. Family planning must be a voluntary and people’s programme... Motivation, persuasion and creating health and family planning consciousness in the country is one side of our effort. The other side is the provisions of services....” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 153)

21.3 Similarly, a paper prepared by the Ministry of Health and Family Planning and placed before the meeting of the Family Planning Council on April 5, 1974 emphasizes the voluntary nature of the programme in the following words:-

“... Since sterilisation is a permanent method and averts a large number of births eventually, as compared to other methods, greater importance is sometimes attached to this method by the officials at all levels although it is not strictly in keeping with our policy of ‘Cafeteria Approach’, There should be no compulsion about or insistence on any particular method or device out of various available methods because local conditions and people’s preferences vary from place to place... The aim should be to protect the targeted number of reproductive couples against the risk of pregnancy, leaving the final choice of the contraceptive method, to the couples themselves...”(Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 153)

During the Emergency the voluntary nature of the programme got practically changed in terms of the patients being forced to get sterilised for certain basic benefits. The situation became such that “citizens generally refer to the Emergency as *nasbandi ka vakt* (the sterilization time)...” (Tarlo 2000, 242)

Change in the voluntary nature of the programme during the emergency

21.4 The voluntary nature of the programme as adopted by the Government of India till about 1974 appears to have undergone a change during the period of emergency as appears to have undergone a change during the period of emergency as appears from a note dated October 10, 1975 sent by Dr. Karan Singh, the then Union Health Minister to the then Prime Minister on the subject of “Crash programme to intensify family planning”. An extract from this note is given below:-

“The problem is now so serious there seems to be no alternative but to think in terms of introduction of some element of compulsion in the larger national interest... While I am not at this stage advocating compulsion, it is essential that our policy should exhibit the determination of the Government to bring home the realisation of the importance of containment of population to individual families. This can be done by enforcing a judicious and carefully selected mixture of incentives and disincentives. The present emergency, and the declaration of the 20-point economic programme by the Prime Minister, have provided an appropriate atmosphere for tackling the problem...” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 153)

The categorical shift in government’s approach towards the aspect of Family Planning during Emergency is stated in the Consultative Committee meeting’s decision and its need for augmentation being subsequently recognized by the Prime Minister in letter and spirit is stated in inquiry commission report.

21.5 A change in the approach of the Government of India is also evidenced by the proceedings of the meetings of the Consultative Committee of MPs attached to the Ministry of Health and Family Planning held on January 20, 1976, in which Dr. Karan Singh spoke of some sort of compulsion in regard to the implementation of the family planning programme. An extract from the minutes of this meeting reads as under:-

“... The Chairman added that so far the family planning programme had been voluntary in nature but a point had been reached when it was necessary to

introduce some sort of compulsion. Some of the States had already introduced such measures. The Central Government would not stand in the way of other States following suit...”

21.6 At about the same time, Smt. Indira Gandhi, addressed the 31st Joint Conference of Association of Physicians of India on January 22, 1976, where she observed:-

“ ... We must now act decisively and bring down the birth rate speedily to prevent the doubling of our population in a mere 28 years. We should not hesitate to take steps which might be described as drastic. Some personal rights have to be kept in abeyance, for the human rights of the nation, the right to live, the right to progress...”

The above observation of the Prime Minister were given wide publicity by the Department of Family Planning through the pamphlet entitled ‘Time to Act Decisively’. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 154)

The report also captures the vital aspect of the change injected in the terms- “it is necessary to go beyond the purely voluntary approach”, and how such a decision got materialised is such gory form performance to be measured on quantifiable parameters ignoring the qualitative aspect.

21.7 Subsequently, in a note dated March 5, 1976 seeking the Cabinet’s approval, *inter alia*, to a package of incentives and disincentives for Central Government employees, it was stated by the Ministry of Health & Family Planning that:-

“ ... To sum up, judged by the level of acceptance of family planning in the country so far and the great leeway that requires to be made up if the desired reproduction in the fertility is to be brought and our developmental goals are to be achieved, it is necessary to go beyond the purely voluntary approach in the family planning programme...” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 154)

While the currency to authorize things under the aegis of censorship did give the government the tooth to keep its perceived autocracy under control, it suffered in the long run. In an interview with *The Mexican Weekly* on 8th July 1975, Indira Gandhi is reported to have said-

Censorship had to be imposed for the same reason that the emergency was proclaimed- to prevent incitement to people to defy laws. If the situation is under control, one of the reasons is that the apparatus of provocation was denied to anti-government forces; the bigger reason is that the majority of the people do not subscribe to the opposition's view. (Gandhi 1976, 75)

Indira Gandhi in her speech in Rajya Sabha on the Declaration of Emergency, 22 July, 1975 said-

Once there were no newspapers, there was no agitation. The agitation was in the pages of newspapers. If you ask why there is censorship of the press, this is the reason why. If nothing else has proved it, this has proved it. I have no doubt that had the newspapers come out and started inciting people as they did before and as unfortunately they have done in times of communal trouble there would have been a terrible situation. Our task was to avoid such a situation and we did avoid it. (Gandhi 1976, 76)

The Chapter VI of the first interim report of the Commission stated the circumstances referred by the government to legitimize the censorship of media and press.

6.5 While explaining the reasons for the imposition of Emergency, Smt. Gandhi has said that it was the newspapers which were inciting the people and creating a terrible situation. According to her, the agitation was only in the newspapers and once the newspapers were placed under censorship there was no agitation...

6.7 The reason for the measures taken against the media in general and the Press in particular was, according to Shri B.G. Verghese [former Editor of the 'Hindustan Times], to keep the public in ignorance and instil fear in them thereby suppressing dissent in every form, individual, political, parliamentary and judicial and that it was used as an instrument of news management aimed at thought control. Shri Raj Mohan Gandhi, Editor of 'Himmat' Bombay has confirmed that censorship was used to eliminate dissent and it vastly exceeded the requirements of the Defence and Internal Security of India Rules. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 33)

The report also goes on to show the autocratic manner of power functioning in form of disconnecting electricity from the newspaper offices which is like cutting off water supply from agricultural fields.

6.10 Consequent upon the declaration of Emergency on June 25, 1975, control of the media had become necessary... During the 2 or 3 days when the censorship apparatus was being set up, power supply to the newspaper offices in Delhi remained disrupted. The Government disconnected electricity to the newspaper offices on the night of the June 25, 1975 when Emergency was imposed... Two or three days later after the censorship apparatus had been set up, electricity supply was restored to all the newspaper offices. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 34)

With varying narratives we arrive at the fact that Emergency had a serious implication on the way the democratic behaviour of governance was perceived and how people had undergone a 'shell-shock' in aligning themselves with the Emergency excesses. "In March 1977, when the opportunity was given to the electorate to express its verdict on the emergency, an unequivocal negative vote was registered." (Sathyamurthy 1997, 718) The pain got reflected in the voting behaviour of the masses that saw Congress' seats plummeting down to a position of minority.

Indira Gandhi's fascist imposition of Emergency rule led a collision between the phantasm of secular democracy and the realpolitik of sectarian politics of the Congress... The electorate of India is a savvy one, especially when there are excesses being committed by an elected government. The electorate can be manipulated only so much and no more; it sent the Congress packing in the 1977 elections. (Grewal 2007, 44-45)

The reports and the narratives, novel and cinema show how situations change and were thereby dealt during the Emergency which eventually had a cascading effect on an individual's identity and how it stood negotiated and reconfigured.

Chapter 2

Bloodbath: From Amritsar to Delhi – Operation Blue-Star and the subsequent Anti-Sikh riots

In a place like Punjab, religion and politics are so intricately intertwined that “it is sometimes hard to find out where politics ends and religion begins.” (Kamath 2004, 147) And in a space like that an attack on the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Sikh faith elevated the religion-politics complexity to a much graver level.

Nowhere is the mix of religion and politics seen so glaringly as in Punjab. This is especially so in the context of the Bhindranwale phenomenon wherein religion was converted into a handmaiden of politics. And not ordinary politics as understood in terms of a democratic framework. But the politics of subversion and secession. (Kirpekar 2004, 103)

The attack on the Golden temple was codenamed as ‘Operation Bluestar’ aimed at flushing the terrorists headed by Bhindranwale out of the Golden Temple.

Since Independence, it was for the first time that the Indian Army had been employed to fight a pitched battle against a section of its own people. The assault on the Golden Temple on 5-6 June 1984 turned a shrine of great sanctity into a battlefield. (Aurora 2004, 123)

But an attack on a religious place and especially the use of army was not witnessed in the history of independent India, and hence ‘Operation Bluestar’ had a mixed reactions from critics and officials, some saw it as necessary while others read it as messing up of democratic principles in the name of containment of subversion.

The repressive laws enacted rescinded the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution with regard to Punjab, a part of the ongoing slaughter of their human rights. It began in a systematic manner with Operation Blue Star when indiscriminate arrest of women, children and old persons was made within the precincts of the Temple buildings. (Nath 2008)

To arrive at a certain definite standpoint regarding the ethicality of the matter is quite crucial and it is then imperative to trace the origins to testify the repercussions therein.

“The desecration of the Golden Temple was a transformative event in Hindu-Sikh relation.” (Varshney 1993, 248)

The Punjab crisis, which began as a fundamentalist problem and then morphed into a Sikh issue, all in the space of a decade (1978-88), was about jockeying for political power, controlling economic power, and aggrandizing personal power. Punjab’s ‘lost’ decade was about the contestations of hubris primarily between three sets of players – the Congress represented by Indira Gandhi and Giani Zail Singh; the Akali Dal and SGPC; and the loose cannon, Bhindranwale, and his coterie of supporters. (Grewal 2007, 34)

In the face of such a stalemate between the diverse and varied perceptions towards the event, it is rather inconceivable to locate the core of the event, the quintessence of the space-time singularity within the plethora of narratives and perceptions.

Plato has said that the state of a man’s knowledge on any subject may be under one of the following three categories: (i) Ignorance, (ii) Belief, and (iii) Knowledge. I would like to add two more categories, that is, (iv) Half Truths, and sometimes, (v) (DFD) Disinformation Fed Deliberately through various media designed to cover up or whitewash the unpalatable. (Nath 2008)

As the White Paper on the Punjab agitation, duly published by the Government of India, as reproduced by M.S. Deora, states:

By about middle of 1983, antinational and terrorist groups had established complete control over the Golden Temple and converted it as the main base for their operations. The large quantities of weapon of offensive character and communication equipment and the arms factory discovered from the temple fully bear out their ultimate objective, namely, full-scale insurgency. Any delay on the part of the government in breaking these well-entrenched bastions of terrorists and secessionist would have been disastrous for the whole country. The events in Punjab have raised some vital issues: Is it right for places of worship which are revered by millions to be used as arsenals? Is it right to transform such places into sanctuaries for criminals and subversive elements? How do we prevent the secular foundations of our republic from being eroded?

It is inconceivable that the Akali Dal and the SGPC were not aware of the open desecration and misuse of the holy precincts of the Golden Temple, but no voice was raised against this by them. Can the SGPC which has the legal responsibility for the management of these

religious shrines plead ignorance and absolve itself of the responsibility for their misuse? The Golden Temple and other gurdwaras were used to provide total immunity to criminals and to those who worked to disrupt the unity of the country.

The recent occurrences Punjab cannot be divorced from the wider international context. Powerful forces are at work to undermine India's political and economic strength. A sensitive border state with a dynamic record of agricultural and industrial development would be an obvious target for subversion. Repeated external aggression and other pressures having failed to break the unity of India, attempts are now being made to cause internal disruption, pressing religious into service. Other questions are being posed:

- (i) How is it that sophisticated weapons in such large quantities managed to get inside the Golden Temple and other gurdwaras?
- (ii) Was not the government aware that such arsenals were being built up inside the Golden Temple and other gurdwaras? Was there not a failure of intelligence?
- (iii) Was there any support from foreign countries and sources available to the terrorist?

... Intelligence on the quantity and type of arms acquired by the terrorists as well as their intentions and strategy of action was broadly correct. The arms and ammunition were smuggled into the Golden Temple and other gurdwaras in '*kar seva*' and other vehicles which used to carry foodstuffs and other materials... However, the ground information was weak. For instance, while the government knew about the plans of terrorists to sabotage railway tracks and to stage dramatic action against railway stations, exact location and the particular gangs to be deployed for attacks were not known. While serious acts of sabotage were detected, actual attack on small and isolated flag stations could not be prevented.

As for supply of arms, initially the terrorists got them through surprise raids on armouries and through occasional snatching from the police personnel... more sophisticated arms [were obtained] through sources outside the country. More facts will be available when investigations are completed... However, one fact stands out, that the main distribution centre of arms to terrorist gangs was based in the Golden Temple.

The Government have reason to believe that the terrorists were receiving different types of active support from certain foreign sources. However, it would not be in the public interest to divulge such information... The action which the government has had

to take in Punjab was neither against the Sikhs nor the Sikh religion; it was against terrorism and insurgency. The Sikh community stands firm, along with the rest of the nation, in its resolve to preserve and strengthen the unity and integrity of the country...Even after the tragic events outlined in the foregoing pages, the government remains committed to its stand that a lasting solution should be found through the democratic process of discussion. For this an atmosphere of peace, mutual trust and accommodation is necessary. In any settlement there has to be give and take, and above all, a commitment to the basic concept that the country's interest always come above the interests of a state or groups are ignored...It is government's sincere hope that all sections of the people will contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of trust and amity. (Deora 1992, 562-566)

The government documents enumerate various logic to corroborate the matter in its favour to justify the act of violence. It raises various vital questions ranging from the legitimacy of using the religious site as 'arsenals' and safe havens for 'subversive elements' to the patronage of the Akali Dal and SGPC (Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee).

In the "Text of the White Paper on The Punjab Agitation Issued on 10 July 1984", the government traces the roots of the 'divide' and violence as:

The violence associated with the sectarian feud between some fundamentalist Sikhs and Nirankaris, was the starting point of the tragic events in Punjab. There were killings in the clashes of April 1978 and later, climaxed by the assassination of Baba Gurbachan Singh, the spiritual head of the Nirankaris on *April 24, 1980*. Thereafter, dogmatism and extremism, accompanied by terror and violence, were to overwhelm the political life of Punjab. The consequences of this determined assault on society cannot be measured simply in terms of the number of people killed or injured. The whole thrust of extremist violence was to fragment the people of Punjab and destroy their common culture. (Deora 1992, 533)

The government also maintained that the attack was not directed against a particular religious community but against a dangerous terrorist outfit who had unfortunately sought shelter within the premises of the sanctum-sanctorum. The diplomatic discourse of the government to blanket the act has faced serious criticism for human right violations at both National and International level. The government's integrity was put into scrutiny by citing the act of concealment by an officer of the Indian Army, Lt Gen J G Aurora, who was integrally associated with the Indian government during the Indo-Bangladesh war 1971.

It was claimed that the Golden Temple was not damaged during the operations because strict instructions had been issued to the army not to fire in that direction whatever the provocation. In actual fact the Golden Temple had more than 250 bullet marks which I saw with my own eyes... Chances are that in the heat of the battle some small fire arm was directed on Harmandir Sahib in spite instructions to the contrary. It is understandable. What is not understandable, however, is why the information about the damage was kept a secret. Such secrecy only resulted in the loss of credibility of the government-controlled media. (Aurora 2004)

Lt. Gen Aurora's accusation about the flawed tactics used in the operation and the entire debate of the necessity of Army action is countered by Lt. Gen K.S. Brar who was the on-field commander of Operation Bluestar.

Never has the tenet, a soldier is sworn to die so that the nation lives, sounded more apt than to describe the conduct of troops and officers during Operation Bluestar. As aptly stated then by Lt. Gen K Sunderji (who later rose to become the Chief of Army Staff), "We did not go in in anger, but with sadness; with a prayer on our lips and humility in our hearts."

At times like this, there is no defeat and no victory, nor [is] craving for reward- it but a duty that has to be performed. The people of India need to pledge that never again will a place of worship be permitted to become an arsenal, nor a sanctuary the womb from within which violence and crime is delivered. Temples must always remain bastions of faith and brotherhood, not of communal hatred or fratricidal class war. (Brar 1993, 10)

The chapter while not moving back in time to comprehensively locate the reasons of the secessionist movement and rise of Bhindranwale, as it is beyond the scope and target of the work, but will obliquely refer to the dialectics between the Akhand Kirtani Jatha and the Nirankaris. The growing animosity against the Nirankari(s) fuelled the fire amongst the youth for an armed rebellion coupled with non-containment of the movement by the Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak committee.

Stray incidents of terrorism against Nirankaris were taking place. The Court had acquitted many against whom cases of terrorism were registered. Nirankaris were known to be responsible for killing 13 workers of Akhand Kirtani Jatha and two of Damdami Taksal on the Baisakhi day 1978, and that these two fundamental organizations were bent upon killing the same number of Nirankaris in what they misconstrued as 'meting out justice' to the guilty. They could any time turn this into reprisals against police, whom they considered responsible for staged encounters. The

cycle of ‘vengeance’ killing of Nirankaris and those whom Damdami Taksal and Akhand Kirtani Jatha considered responsible for terrorism against police and the government in 1983. (Nath 2008, 193)

It will locate the victimization and identity negotiation processes as a fall out of the operation and how common people had to bear the brunt of armed conflict in a civilian locale. The use of army instead of police or other paramilitary forces has been an issue under contention since the operation.

Operation Blue Star was a tragedy and a blunder of dimensions which defy proper description. Even if there was some semblance of justification for use of army against heavily armed insurgents entrenched in the Akal Takht, there was no justification whatsoever for Operation Rosewood. Why should army go on a witch-hunt in the villages, search houses and round up the Sikh youth, since there was no armed resistance in the villages? We have an excellent army which is renowned for valour and professionalism, but there has to be circumspection in using them against civil populace... The fact is that army is not trained to fight with their countrymen. They are trained to fight armies whom they seek to destroy. Thus, they think of foes and friends only... *US Military Review*, May 1977 [states] as to what military role is when summoned to the aid of civil power. It reads as under:

“The concept of the application of force in a domestic operation is the anti-thesis of the traditional mission on the battlefield: the destruction of enemy forces. Here the conception is ‘Zero Kill.’ This requires a measured response. Suppression is an act of returning a condition to a desired former state. The latter is the true objective of the Control force. The operation is not a contest of relative strengths. The successful accomplishment of a mission to restore order in a domestic situation, disturbance without bloodshed or injury to the perpetrators is a noteworthy military achievement consistent with the traditional role of the soldier in this free society. This is the implied task of every such mission.”

This brings us to the primary roles of army and the substance of those roles. (Nath 2008, 197-198)

Without legitimizing Operation Rosewood, it is necessary to understand it as a preventive measure taken to form a protective ring for troops involved in the operation, if they were to be attacked from outside by agitated masses provoked by the rhetoric of Bhindranwale.

As reports about the army action spread, there was a mass upsurge in the countryside. Sant Bhindranwale often used to say, “Beyond Mecca there is nothing for the Muslims and beyond Harmandir Sahib there is nothing for the Sikhs. If government attacks Harmandir Sahib, you needn’t wait for instructions from Sant Longowal or me. You just rush to Harmandir Sahib and defend it. On that day I expect you to liquidate in every village all those who show disrespect to Sri Guru Granth Sahib...” This upsurge was due to exhortations of the militant leader. Villagers started gathering in hamlets around Amritsar before converging on the Temple “to defend it”. A helicopter reconnoitred the countryside looking for even the smallest groups of people. Dozens of microphones continuously warned that “shoot at sight” had been ordered. (H. Kaur 1990)

“The militant Sant suffers from grandiloquent delusions about his messianic role.” (H. Kaur 1990, 2) The apprehension of a counter attack by civilians swayed by the fiery rhetoric of Bhindranwale and also the tactics of waiting till stored food of the militants run out, was read as ineffective in the first place and a hint of scepticism showered doubts about a counter-action against their passivity. Kuldip Nayar and Khuswant Singh feel a strong need for an alternate strategy with due complication and resistance kept in perspective and use the best tactical option available at its disposal, argues on certain issues:

I am raising these question not because I am against action being taken against the extremists, who had made the agitation a monstrosity by killing innocents and by misusing the gurdwaras, but because I think that the army could have employed more sophisticated methods of flushing them out. Sikh opinion feels far more horrified over the destruction of the Akal Takht than over the death of Bhindranwale... And I am not suggesting, as some have, that a siege of the Golden Temple should have been tried. It might have taken a month or more to flush out the extremists and in the mean time Bhindranwale’s men would have roused the Sikh masses and thousands of them would have marched towards the temple to lift the siege, as they tried on 5 and 6 June. Also, terrorists had stockpiled food. One hundred thousand sacks of flour were seized by the troops. A confrontation between the army and civilians over a prolonged period could have been disastrous... The army itself should ponder over the way it tackled the extremists in Golden Temple. I am emphasising this because almost all over the world special units are being raised and trained in methods of dealing with terrorists in a situation like the one there was at Golden Temple. If a terrorist group were to seize South Block at the secretariat in New Delhi, there must be a better way of flushing them out than by bringing down the building with heavy guns.(Nayar and Singh 1984, 110-111)

There were speculations about the army action, when a mass perception was arising about under-usage of competent para-commandoes and para-military forces like the BSF and CRPF, who were trained specifically for close combat attack. On these speculations the views, based on an interview by Kuldip Nayar, are mentioned as under:

Could not the CRPF and the BSF have done the job? Why was the army necessary? The fact that the troops went into the Golden Temple had upset the Sikhs most? I asked. Dyal said a fortnight later, 'It was not a para-military job; the terrorists were too well entrenched. Every conceivable place in the temple had been used as an emplacement. Only the army could have done the job.'... Surendra Nath, the Governor's Adviser who was in charge of Home Affairs before the army came into the picture. His reply was, 'We did think of the CRPF and the BSF but gave it up. We realized that they would not be up to the job.' I believe that the CRPF did try to storm in one day before the army operation began but retreated with considerable casualties.

It is evident that only the army was competent to do the job, but the tactics used by it will remain controversial for long. It appears to me that the army went in for a direct attack on the target, a strategy popular in the second world war, without any of the sophistication or use of modern techniques that one would have expected from talented officers like Sunderji and Dyal, who were in charge of the operation. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 109)

What is also debated is the justifications on the use of tanks in the temple premises instead of a well-planned stealth commando operation, to which the government's stand on taking the militants head-on, that was based on a mood of euphoria rather than logical understanding of the fact, led to both fatal casualties of the armed forces and crude criticism of the government's decision of attack.

B.H. Liddell Hart had experimented with the new forms of tactics, which more realistically recognised the existing superiority of modern defence, and sought to turn this to advantage the other way- as an offensive aid... Again, all warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when using our forces, we must seem inactive; when are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him. (Nath 2008, 199)

Khushwant Singh, in similar line of argument of that of Liddell Hurt, attacks the government's decision of using the army of such an operation, and the subsequent damage caused to both property and human lives. He claims:

In an age when a handful of Israeli and German commandos could through a well-planned action overcome well-entrenched enemy thousands of miles away from them, the best our generals could do was to storm the Temple complex with tanks and armoured cars, blast the Akal Takht to get a Bhindranwale and about 200 of his men. In the cross-fire, upwards of 5,000 people, a majority of them pilgrims, including women and children lost their lives. Contrary to official contention that no damage was caused to the central shrine. I counted scores of fresh bullet marks on the Harmandir when I visited it a fortnight after the army action. Far from doing a competent job, our army commanders botched up a simple operation. What could have been achieved by a surprise commando raid, a limited siege or by use of gas was instead done in the most hamhanded manner of an untrained butcher.

Even more ironic is the fact that while a foreign government yielded to popular demand for a high-powered non-official enquiry into the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in which 381 lives were lost and published the commission's report censuring General Dyer for excessive zeal, the government of independent India felt no compunction to hold an enquiry into "Operation Bluestar" in which it deployed its army to fight their own countrymen and the loss of life was more than thirteen times that what it was at Jallianwala Bagh. It is this sort of insensitivity that has persuaded hot-headed young Sikhs to believe that they would get on justice from the government unless they turn to terrorism. The mood of frustration explains the dastardly murder of Mrs. Gandhi and General A.K. Vaidya, former Chief of Army Staff and the wicked killings of innocent Hindu. One unpunished crime generates another. (K. Singh, Introduction 1990, x)

Khushwant Singh referring to the government's inaction in terms of enquiry and looking into the matter from an insider-outsider perspective juxtaposes two pattern of governments rule; British and Indian. The former ruled in pre-independent India and the latter ruled post-independence. The suffix 'pre' and 'post' denotes a shift in agenda of governmental functioning and goals to achieve. The two events, Jallianwala bagh massacre and the Operation Bluestar, witnessed military invention within close quarters of the spatial framework but had been separated by temporal drift of almost 65 years. In the span of 65 years, apart from the voluminous changes the Indian nationscape has witnessed as a

composite socio-political phenomenon, the thing that India has a global reputation for is the principles of democracy. Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of 'democratic socialism' was globally accepted as unique and rational complimenting the ideas of democracy that the nation had found its future in.

Keeping in view the needs and aspirations of the Indian people, Nehru evolved his own approach of democratic socialism for putting the backward and exploited country on the path of progress. He injected socialist philosophy in the programmes of the Congress party while it was still fighting the battle of political liberation of our country... Although Jawaharlal Nehru denied his place to be called a political philosopher, yet we cannot overlook his contribution to the theory of democratic socialism. Indeed many of the third World Countries have accepted democratic socialism as a method for bringing about peaceful changes to ensure the fruits of democracy and socialism to its people. (D. Singh 1991, 19-20)

Nehru maintained a categorical opposition to the unjustifiable means to achieve desired ends. His ideas did not particularly align with the utilitarian philosophy of J.S. Mill and Jeremy Bentham, as quantitative factors cannot alone be a measure of Nation-building but it is the qualitative factors that has to be crucial in dealing with issues of rights and justice in a democratic framework. His ideas were more tilted towards John Rawls' conception of justice and society.

Nehru thus evolved his own concept of socialism which was different from the one which the Russian people had established in their country under inspiration of the teaching of Marx. He was fully convinced that good means alone yield good results and one cannot impose a philosophy over their people, which is altogether alien to the aspirations of the people. Nehru pointed out that:

“I am not a communist chiefly because I resist that communist tendency to treat communism is a holy doctrine. I suppose I am too much of an individualist. I feel also that too much violence is associated with communist Methods. The ends cannot be separated from the means.”

...Keeping in view the peculiar conditions in our country, Nehru adopted his new approach to bring socialism in our country by using democratic and constitutional methods. He had portrayed the type of society which he wanted to be established in India in his Autobiography:

“Our final aim can only be a classless society with equal economic justice and opportunity for all, a society organised on a planned basis for the raising of mankind to have material and cultural levels to a cultivation of spiritual values, of co-operation, usefulness, the spirit of service, the desire to do right, goodwill and live... ultimately a world order.” (D. Singh 1991, 25-26)

In reference to the Indian advocacy for democracy and ‘democratic socialism’ in the global forum, it is rather ironic to find that a lot of (un)democratic means were used to contain the supposed disintegration of the values of democracy and integration, like use of the Army option, media blackout and not holding a proper enquiry into the fall-out of the Operation and its operational flaws when a significant scale of human rights violation. These are in clear contradiction to the strong affirmation that Nehru had taken- ‘The ends cannot be separated from the means.’ Hence, the military resort was contrary to the belief of the ideas that bears the very foundation of our nation and its identity. This raises question of the preparedness of the army and the preliminary task that the army has to undertake, like reconnaissance, intelligence inputs and strategic planning, before commencement of armed attack. There are also interpretations of gross underestimation of the enemy’s defences and overestimation of Army’s tactical potential in striking the precise balance between penetrating the enemy defences with least civilian casualty. The element of stealth and surprise was considerably absent in the strategic process.

It is urged that the Government of India should constitute a Court of Inquiry of three Retired Chiefs of Army Staff to find out whether Gen. Krishnamurti Sunderji, GOC Western Command, had well thought out Operation Plan.

1. Whether this plan was based on proper reconnaissance of the Bhindranwale Defensive Posts.
2. Whether any Aerial Survey of Akal Takht and Harmander Sahib defences had been made.
3. Why did the Army Brass misled the Prime Minister that Bhindranwale’s resistance can run over in 5 hours.
4. Why did they press Artillery and Armour to destroy Akal Takht.
5. Did they not know that there would be thousands of pilgrims inside the holy Harmander Sahib during those days.
6. What were the briefing to various officers and ranks. (Nath 2008, 213)

It is also interesting to understand that the way in which the government had handled the matter to contain the proliferation of critical nuances of the operation and belligerently advocates the need of army action vis-à-vis the threat to country's essentially pluralist and cohesive form of national integration.

In the life of a nation there come moments of determined decision and decisive action, [e]specially when its foundations are in jeopardy. Precisely at such moments, however, a nation and its people need to temper their responses with clarity and circumspection, when neither misplaced euphoria nor unwarranted panic should be allowed to distort their basic perceptions. The Indian nation-state and its people, so early in their post-independence history, are standing today at such a critical juncture. Notwithstanding anxiety and tensions, we should not be swayed by irrational passions. We must see the inevitable, nonetheless tragic events in Punjab in their correct perspective... It should be stated clearly that the army was called on to defend Indian secularism, a critical ingredient of the fabric of our nation. The state intervened not on behalf of any one section; it acted on behalf of all those who are an integral part of the Indian nation which is secular and non-denominational. The drift in Punjab had to be stopped by determined action to demonstrate unambiguously and emphatically the fundamental principle that *the Indian state would not permit communalism and fanaticism to overwhelm its secular character.*

The action in Punjab demonstrates India's determination to uphold the nation's unity and integrity. This is valid for all threats to these basic ingredients of Indian nationhood whether they arise in north or the south, in the east or the west. It should, however, be obvious that the end of the army action in Punjab will not automatically eliminate dangers, a product of international machinations which are likely to be further intensified in the days to come. Vigilance from external dangers, must include well-thought-out political measures to ensure that our own internal weaknesses and follies do not provide a fertile ground to the enemies. (R. K. Mishra 1984)

The content of her speech delivered in Bhubaneswar a day before her death seemed to fore-tell her imminent tragedy that she was going to encounter soon.

It is remarkable that on October 30, 1984, she delivered a public speech in Bhubaneshwar which was prophetic:

"I am here today, I may not be here tomorrow. I do not care whether I live or die. I have lived a long life and I am proud that I spent the whole of my life in the service

of my people. When I die, I can say that “every drop of my blood will invigorate India and strengthen it.”

The fact is that she had been tempting death by interfering with her security. To her what was important was her image.” (Nath 2008, 212)

Is it as a result of conspiracy or otherwise, is yet undisclosed, but there is strong apprehension and contemplation about an underground plot to assassinate the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.

Mrs. Gandhi started receiving threats from the Sikhs all over the world soon after the army action on the Golden Temple. The most vocal cry came from Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the self-proclaimed President of the National Council of Khalistan. He promised an award of \$ 100,000 to whosoever killed Mrs. Gandhi. Violating all diplomatic and professional norms, the BBC broadcast this offer. The Prime Minister’s security was instantly tightened. On Independence Day, August 15, 1984, two other women were disguised as Mrs. Gandhi and instead of one, three white Ambassador cars sped to the Red Fort, with entire paraphernalia of the PM’s security, to deceive possible assassins... In spite of the apparent alertness on the part of the PM’s security the fact that the assassins struck and killed Mrs. Gandhi on October 31, 1984 only goes to prove that far from solving the Punjab problem, the army action had aggravated it. (H. Kaur 1990, 83)

Distinguished IPS officer in close professional ties with the then Prime Minister claim to have got an idea of the conspiracy not just within the national borders but much beyond it to touch the fringes of the collective mindscape of the Sikh diaspora abroad.

My wife was on a visit to Canada and was staying in a Jat Sikh family in Toronto in June 1984, when Operation Blue Star took place. She told me on phone that Sikhs in Canada were outraged by the army action in the Golden Temple. She had heard several of them planning to assassinate the Prime Minister for her military operation in Darbar Sahib. (Nath 2008, 206)

He also states the fractures in the psyche of the Sikhs, who on the preliminary understanding could not justify the attack on the Golden Temple, for whom governmental think-tank was supposed to be rather more rational and legal vis-à-vis the radical and myopic stand of the Sikh fundamentalists. He could sense an imminent backlash and eventual victimization of the Prime Minister as a result of the Operation.

Everyone expected Sikh backlash in response to ill-conceived and badly executed Operation Blue Star... [It] wounded Sikh psyche beyond repair. Alienation of Sikh womenfolk and teenagers, older Sikhs' anger and anguish remained subterranean leading to various conspiracies, which cannot be revealed here, but culminated in the assassination of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. (Nath 2008, 201)

She was brutally assaulted off guard, by her own security men inside the secured premises of Prime Minister's residence, pumping more than a dozen bullets into her body. Apart from the attack, the kind of attitude that was shown by the assassins hinted at an underground conspiracy to kill her.

At 9.15 a.m. the calm of One Safdarjung Road [PM's official residence] was punctuated by a volley of shots fired by her bodyguards, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, both Sikhs. Using a revolver and a sten gun, they had emptied the magazine of their weapon into the woman they were supposed to protect... Beant Singh was shot dead by the commandos of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police within minutes of being arrested, so we will never know his warped reasoning. We do know, according to Mark Tully's BBC news reportage, that after fatally wounding the prime minister, Beant Singh raised his hands in surrender and said, '*Mein jo karna si o mein kar laya; hun jo tussi karna hai, o karo.*' (I have done what I had to do. Now you do what you have to do.) Satwant Singh was severely injured in the scuffle with the commandos. When he was brought to Willingdon (now called Ram Manohar Lohia) Hospital, Dr. Mandira Kapur recounts, he was alive, conscious and talking. 'He said, "Hindu-Sikh bhai-bhai... Indira Gandhi *ki policy ne hame marva diya*".' (Indira Gandhi's policy has led us to our death) The spin-doctors claimed that Satwant Singh was infused with 'extremist views' when on a recent holiday to his home in Gurdaspur district which was known to be a hotbed of extremism. (Grewal 2007, 35-36)

To practically unravel the hideous plot to assassinate the Prime Minister, it is indispensable to permeate into the close security circle and compromise the top strategic security cover for the Prime Minister. Intelligence input coupled with threat perception could sense a threat to her security being compromised.

Thirty-three year old sub-inspector Beant Singh was one of the most trusted guards of Mrs. Gandhi. He had an unblemished service record and had been with her for nearly eight years. He had even accompanied her abroad on several occasions. But Beant Singh was emotionally upset after Operation Blue Star. According to an interrogation

report of sub-inspector Amarjit Singh (of the PM security), he often allegedly said after the army action on the Golden Temple that he would not let the PM unfurl the flag on August 15. The PM had feared a murderous attack on her. Deputy Commissioner of Police Special Security District, Mr G.R. Gupta, gave verbal orders on June 10, 1984 to remove Sikh security men from the inner security cordon... All of them were removed from the inner security cordon and recalled nine days later on June 19, 1984 on Mrs. Gandhi's personal intervention.(H. Kaur 1990, 87)

Despite the threat perception and categorically from the Sikhs, Smt. Indira Gandhi showed formidable demeanour in instilling the values laid by the founding fathers of our nation and in drafting the constitution. She could have done away with all the Sikh security personnel from the close perimeter of her security cover, but she chose 'trust' over 'apprehension' and proved the mettle and grit of an unparalleled leader with a magnanimous spirit of courage and determination.

Indeed, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was an enigma and her paradoxical stand on certain issues remains a great mystery till this date. Her enigmatic attitude was the result of the contrasts making her personality: she was earthly yet ethereal; a pagan who enjoyed all the delicacies of the world offered by variegated flora and fauna, yet a highly spiritual individual who never wanted to harm a single living being; a person who was paragon of the exquisite beauties as well as the sordid realities of the political world! (Nath 2008, 211)

On the contrary, the action of Beant and Satwant Singh goes down in the history of Indian security as ghastly and shameful act of culpable homicide amounting to socio-communal polarisation and affiliation to religious fundamentalism.

Beant Singh, who used to trim his beard and was a habitual drinker, took *amrit* on October 14, 1984... [along with his family] left for Amritsar by Shan-e-Punjab train. Beant Singh spent some time at Akal Takht where he is alleged to have sworn revenge. (The Sikhs have a history of savage revenge against all those who have desecrated the Golden Temple. In 1740, Mussal-ih-uddin, contemptuously known as Massa Ranghar, desecrated the Golden Temple, and was killed by two Sikhs, Bhai Mehtab Singh and Bhai Sukha Singh. Moreover, there has been a well-established tradition of martyrdom among the Sikhs- a fundamentalist streak that baffles a twentieth century mind.) (H. Kaur 1990, 88)

All these apprehensions and speculations were proved true and the reprehensible plot was revealed and admitted by Satwant, one of the two assassins. Upon interrogation it was revealed how they had diluted and merged different facets of their identity; socio-religious and professional. Upon the fits of euphoria to address the ethereal paranoia and seek retribution they had shed off their professional duty to protect the Prime minister. Their idealism and belongingness towards the cause of revenge and affiliation towards the collective consciousness of the Sikh agony overshadowed their professional line of honour for duty. They had negotiated with their identities as trustworthy security force for the Prime Minister with that of a myopic obsession for blood, revenge and violence.

During his interrogation Satwant Singh disclosed that... “At about 7.45 A.M. Beant told me that a film was being made on the PM. She would come and go through the TMC gate (Thomas Machine Gun gate) two to three times and that we must not lose an opportunity to kill her”, said Satwant in his confessional statement. An hour and twenty three minutes later they succeeded in committing the dastardly act. (H. Kaur 1990, 89)

They were so consumed by the addiction for revenge that they could not foresee the fatal consequence of their act of vengeance. By shedding off their identities as policemen and their duties they ascribed more to the radical and fundamental reaching after of fact and reason. As a result of which the backlash on the Sikh community was soon manifested as a knee-jerk reaction on harsh judgement pronounced for one of the Sikh security personnel of PM security, Balbir Singh, who was arrested right after the assassination based on trepidation and without any prima facie evidence.

Balbir Singh was sentenced to death by Additional Sessions Judge, Mr. Mahesh Chandra on January 3, 1986 for conspiring to murder Mrs. Gandhi under Section 302 read with 120-B of the I.P.C... But on August 3, 1988, after 46 months of the assassination, he was acquitted by a three member bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice G.L. Oza, Justice P.C. Ray, and Justice K. Ranganath Shetty. The judgement said that the “document” found on Balbir Singh with scribblings “June 1984”, “Army Operation” and “Felt like killing” was “no evidence at all on the basis of which his conviction could be justified.” If “anger or protest of Blue Star Operation could be used as a piece of evidence then all those members of the Sikh community who felt agitated over the army operation must be held as members of the conspiracy.”... Mrs. Gandhi’s living assassin, Satwant Singh, and the man charged

with conspiracy, Kehar Singh (son of Beant Singh) were hanged on January 6, 1989, despite mercy appeals by a section of their countrymen and the International Commission of Jurists, Geneva, Amnesty International and Lord Gifford, the British Law Lord. (H. Kaur 1990, 89,90,92)

It will categorically mark the trajectory of gory bloodshed due to the fractured psyches of aggrieved masses with a grievous euphoria of revenge vis-à-vis the growing paranoia among the Sikh community who were brutally desecrated and slaughtered asphyxiating humanity to its critical threshold, based on the study of novels – *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call*, *I Accuse: The Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984*, *Pages Stained With Blood* – and movies – *Maachis* and *Amu*.

The novel *Can You Hear the Nightbird call?* explores the character of Bibi ji and her husband Pa-ji's trip to the Golden Temple on the eve of Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom day, 3rd June, which happened to fatefully coincide with the Operation Bluestar. Pa-ji, a rich Sikh Businessmen from Vancouver, Canada, along with his wife visited the Golden Temple with all devotion and utmost jubilation. As fate had it sealed for them, they refused to shed attention to Balraj's forewarning about the impending predicament due to the possible military action in the Golden Temple, Pa-ji was caught in the cross fire and lost his life like many others who were trapped in the quagmire of destiny.

Pa-ji had heard of the deeply conservative preacher named Bhindranwale, whose pungent diatribes against the government of India were earning him an ever growing following among the Sikhs. He had heard stories that it was Indira Gandhi who had promoted Bhindranwale for political reasons and now he had fallen into disfavour with her. (Badami 2006, 315)

There has been an indictment that the rise of Bhindranwale was not just an unpretentious rise of a leader with fundamental and radical rhetoric, but is a covert attempt by Indira Gandhi to raise him as a counter-weight to check the political potentials and manoeuvres by the state government in the state of Punjab.

Ironically, both Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who had helped each other survive politically in the late seventies, were also responsible for each other's death. A cynic aptly remarked that the game which they had played with divided could not but end disastrously for both. (H. Kaur 1990, 83)

Balraj had told them of the crisis that had been emanating and how forces were deployed to contain it. The curfew was imposed and Amritsar was literally cut-off from the rest of the world; its borders were sealed, phone lines were cut and media blackout. During the evacuation process, some hours before launching attack by Army, one of the pilgrims stated-

We will be driven to police stations and kept there until the end of curfew. Then we will be allowed to catch a bus or take a rickshaw home. But I don't know what out-of-towners will do. The borders of Amritsar are sealed. No traffic in or out. Not even the trains are running. We are all trapped here.(Badami 2006, 332)

References to Media blackout wherein all the journalists were asked to leave Amritsar is raised by Mark Tully.

On the night of 3rd June Punjab was cut off from the rest of India and movement inside the state brought to a standstill to prevent an uprising. Rail, bus and air services were stopped, telex and telephone lines cut, and the Pakistan border was sealed... Because all communication had been cut on the night of 3rd June, no news of what was happening in Punjab was reaching the outside world. Journalists were told to stay in their hotels.(Tully and Jacob 1985, 152-153)

“Strict censorship, including a blanket ban against foreign pressman entering the State, made it impossible to get any except doctored news of what happened in the months following ‘Operation Bluestar’.”(Nayar and Singh 1984, 126) However, what is being reported about the Operation Bluestar during the operation, apart from records and biographical testimonies, comes from the rare repository of documentation made possible by valiant reporting of Brahma Chellaney.

The official ruling was that only foreign correspondents had to go because foreigners had been barred from Punjab under the new regulations brought in when the army took over responsibility for security. Before we left that rule was stretched to cover Indians working for foreign papers too. However, Brahma Chellaney, an Indian working for Associated Press, managed to stay behind. He had only arrived in Amritsar that day so his name was not on the police list of journalists. (Tully and Jacob 1985, 154)

Mark Tully, a citizen by naturalisation (The Constitution of India 2015) was questioned by the security agencies against his resistance to abide by the arbitrary media blinding

strategy. He was questioned as a British journalist based on appearance, thereby reconfiguring his Indian nationality with the apparent visuals to be ascertained with that of a British nationality.

When a senior army officer had learnt that there were foreign correspondents still in Amritsar he accused the police of revealing military plans to the press. But I still felt the battle was worth fighting and so shouted at the police officer, 'I am not going to leave. You can arrest me.' He shouted back, 'Yes, I will arrest you. You British think you can still rule us and tell us what to do.' It was an uncomfortable moment because the last thing I wanted after some sixteen years in independent India was to be accused of being an imperialist. (Tully and Jacob 1985, 153)

The government took recourse to strict measures like imposing curfew and sealing the borders of Amritsar city to preclude threat from surrounding hamlets. He had also warned them of the stalemate that they would be trapped in, if curfew was imposed and they were to be evacuated from the vicinity of the Temple to clear ground for a full scale military attack with reduced casualty. Bibi ji ignored the warning of not staying in a guest house in the precincts of the Golden Temple and ecstatically had upheld her utmost faith in God and his intervention in time of crisis. "How can your home be safer than a place of God, sister? We will be all right, don't worry. If things look bad we can always phone, and you can come and pick us up." (Badami 2006, 315)

To which Balraj extrapolated the potential of crisis as:

"It isn't that easy. In this country, a breeze can change into a storm before you end a sneeze! You might not have time to phone. Besides, if there is a curfew we will not be able to come to get you... The temple is an arsenal and the situation is very unstable. You really should stay with us for a few days and then... Besides, I've heard rumours of trouble. They say that Sant Bhindranwale is holed up in the temple complex with his followers and the government is out to get him. I've heard they have been stockpiling arms in there for months- in various buildings, even in underground storage rooms. It is not very safe. (Badami 2006, 314-315)

Acceding to Pa-ji's and Bibi ji's indomitable belief in peace and serenity in and around the Golden Temple, Balraj drove them to the temple guest house, but as they approached the temple they could come in close interaction of reality far from their illusory idealism.

This was where she loved to shop for bargains whenever she came to Amritsar, but the market, which should have been full of pilgrims, appeared empty. Instead, soldiers leaned against the doorway, and Bibi-ji glimpsed them on the flat rooftops that abutted or overlooked the walled temple complex. Her unease grew, but she said nothing. “Did you see that?” Pa-ji remarked, as if reading her silent thoughts. “It looks like a war zone!” (Badami 2006, 316)

The city of reverence, a space of Sikh religious belief, being treated with a military situation was taken in bad taste by the Sikh community. The identity of the Sikh sanctum-sanctorum got negotiated as an arsenal and battle-ground for the Army to fight terrorists hiding in Akal Takht, the supreme seat of Sikh religion. “‘It is not we who are at war’, Balraj remarked bitterly... ‘It is our government, headed by the Pandit’s daughter, Indira Gandhi, who is at war with us!’” (Badami 2006, 316) The reaction by Balraj was more of an outburst rather than absolving the terrorists in creating such a situation to compel the government to take such a drastic step. Biji remarked, “What kind of government would send army inside a temple, Pa-ji? Is this Mrs. Gandhi truly mad?” (Badami 2006, 331) Bi-ji and Pa-ji’s reactions and critique of the Prime Minister was an overtly emotional outburst of their inner discontent at the sight of their venerated city turning into a militarized zone of conflict.

After what seemed an inordinately long drive, which involved reversing several times to avoid roadblocks, they arrived at the temple gates. Here too soldiers stood around in small groups, carrying guns as casually as cricket bats, a sight that offered a disturbing contrast to the churn of colourfully dressed pilgrims. Bibi-ji shivered slightly, feeling deeply unnerved by the juxtaposition of the carnival atmosphere within the temple gates and the grim-eyed soldiers loitering just outside. (Badami 2006, 316-317)

As they reached the Temple and visit the shrine in the early hours of the day their dilemma in the question of the place of God been taken over as a site of conflict got amplified when she sighted the men with guns on the other side of the line of contention. On one side she could clearly understand that it was army deployment to extradite Bhindranwale and on the other side of the line of fire were the militants seeking refuge in the temple premises.

Bibi-ji looked up at the water tower that soared behind the guest houses and noticed two men wearing tall, bright, orange turbans... Were they carrying guns? She shaded her eyes with a hand and gazed up, but the men were no longer visible. “Did you see that?” she asked Pa-ji. “Men with guns? Not soldiers.” (Badami 2006, 323-324)

As they were slowly and gradually getting closer to the crisis scenario in conjunction with the admonition of Manjeet about the impending crisis, they could overhear the matter of government's role and justification of military intervention in a place of worship as discourse amongst visiting pilgrims. Bibi-ji and Pa-ji on their visit could tacitly participate in conversation regarding the matters debated in view of military action in the temple.

“How were we to know that there would be trouble here? All those men with guns and bombs all over, is this any way to treat a place of worship?”

“It is the government, Rani,” whispered Kashmir. “That Indira Gandhi. *She* is the one who had no respect for our faith. *She* is the one who has sent the army into this sacred place.”

“But what about the extremists who have been hiding here all these months with their weapons?” Rani's voice bitter in darkness. “How are they any different from the government?”

“Extremist? They are freedom fighters. My brother knows them well. Fighting for us. It is the *government* that is against us.”

There was an anguished pause. Then Kashmir turned to Bibi-ji. “And you, which town are you from?”

“We are not from here. We came from Canada for the celebrations. To offer seva. We did not know there would be trouble.”

“Didn't know?” Rani was suddenly angry. “How could you *not* know? It is people like you sitting in foreign countries, far away from everything, nice and safe, who *create* trouble. *You* are the ones who give money to these terrorists, and we are the ones who suffer!” Bibi-ji was silenced. Pa-ji was quiet too. (Badami 2006, 326)

This debate also plunges into the mass perception about that the internal conflicts and violence being not mere subjects of organically developed ground realities but are manifested reality of a vicious orchestrated form of political nexus funded by people, outside the territorial limits of the nation, who are immune to the pangs of violence.

Pa-ji with his logic and rationality in the face of crisis, rebuffed his wife's claims about the governmental policy going berserk. He also defends the Prime Minister and presents a counter based on stockpiling of arms in the temple premises. “We don't know what is happening. There are extremists here too, it seems, inside their own sacred temple, defiling with guns and bombs. It is better not to judge anybody yet.” (Badami 2006, 331)

This raises an important question that if government's action of military intervention in the Golden Temple hurts the sanctity of the sanctum sanctorum, how the use of the same temple premises for stockpiling arms and ammunitions and providing safe asylum to armed militants be justified based on the same note of preserving the sanctity of a religious place.

“I don't know. But it is not a good idea even to leave this building. The army has entered the compound and I hear there might be trouble. Have you seen them? How hard they walk on this sacred ground. Even God must be terrified!” He lowered his voice. “And it is not just soldiers who desecrate with guns and bombs. Over our heads, on the roofs and under our feet in the storage rooms, our own brothers and sons and fathers, armed too, stamp as hard as demons.” (Badami 2006, 327-328)

This sheds light on how Akali leadership had tacitly agreed to Bhindranwale's offensives and by shielding him and his men with a powerful tool of silence, evasion and dereliction. Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh observe that it is under the due patronage of Longowal and Tohra, heads of Akali Morcha and SGPC, that Bhindranwale could afford to hold grounds in the sacred Akal Takht and organize crime against the state.

Longowal had known for some months that weapons were being secretly brought into the Golden Temple and that Bhindranwale had been fortifying the Akal Takht. Some foreign journalists (Mark Tully of BBC was one of them) had asked Longowal about the fortifications but he had been evasive in his replies. Perhaps if he had spoken against the sacrilege of converting the Temple into a fortress and a refuge of killers, there would have been no need for the authorities to call in the troops.

As Longowal mused over these 'ifs' and 'buts' in his room on the second floor of the Guru Nanak Niwas, Bhindranwale, feeling secure in the Akal Takht (Supreme seat of Sikh religious order), was telling some journalists: 'If the authorities enter this temple, we will teach them such a lesson that the throne of Indira will crumble. We will slice them into small pieces... They will chew iron lentils (*lohe ke chane chabayenge*) Let them come...' (Nayar and Singh 1984, 91-92)

SGPC president, Tohra is blatantly criticised for giving safe passage not only for Bhindranwale and his men but also for the permission to stock-pile arms and ammunitions in the Akal Takht.

When firing ceased, Gurcharan Singh Tohra, President, Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, went from his office on the ground floor of Guru Nanak Niwas to the Akal Takht to plead with Bhindranwale to surrender since the army was now bound to enter the Temple complex. Bhindranwale sent him back, calling him a 'coward' and 'Indira Gandhi's agent.'

Tohra went back, perhaps regretting that he had asked the Akal Takht priest, Kripal Singh, early in December 1983 not to stand in the way of arms being carried into the Akal Takht by Bhindranwale's men. Bhindranwale had not dared enter the Takht for eight days till Kirpal Singh relented; and once Bhindranwale moved in, Kripal Singh, in turn, did not go in to Akal Takht for two months to register his protest against the violation of Takht's sanctity permitted by the SGPC President, Tohra. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 97)

The repentance of Tohra is tantamount to his gross exploitation of power and abuse of his office. "Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee came into existence on 15th November 1920, and the Shiromani Akali Dal a month later, to look after the management of Gurudwaras, which were wresting from profligate Mahants" (Nath 2008, 138) to misuse the sanctity of the Akal Takht to veil the ulterior motives of the militants. It is ironic to find that the supposed protectors of the sanctity had negotiated with their identities to tacitly participate in subversive processes across the line that they are protecting.

In this scenario, it is important to introspect into the matter whether human rights violation only apply to the actions of the government or does it also cover the brutal killings of armed personnel, like H.S. Manchanda, Lala Jagat Narain and DIG of Police, Atwal, and others even before commencement of the operation.

Barely a year after Jagat Narain's assassination, his son was shot as were others who also fell victims to the militants' bullets: H. S. Manchanda, President of the Delhi Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee; A.S. Atwal, DIG of police and Giani Pratap Singh, retired *Jathedar* (Head Priest) of the Akal Takht. (Brar 1993, 21-22)

Rationality and legality finds itself equivocated in varying perspectives to shape narratives of varying shades with fluctuating contours of truth. This concern was raised by L.K. Advani, by virtue of being Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha on the floor of the house, by making a speech, regarding the White Paper published by the government on Punjab agitation, on 24 July 1984:

I would say that Army action was inevitable, and unavoidable. This is almost the unanimous view of the country. There may be some nuances here and there. The biggest critic of Army action in so far as Members of Parliament are concerned whom I have read is Shri Khushwant Singh. He has said that this Army action was wrong... but action should have been taken after the death of Mr. Atwal. And, when he says that after the death of Mr. Atwal action should have been taken, I do not see what action could have been taken except to chase the assailants, chase the murderers, right inside the premises of the Golden Temple Complex. After all, everyone knows that they came from within the Golden Temple Complex and attacked Mr. Atwal, killed him, on the staircase of the Temple while he was bringing *prasad* after returning from his prayers and that the assassins went back into the Golden Temple Complex. This is mentioned in this White Paper also and it has not been disputed by anyone. So, if action was to be taken against the murderers, against the killers, of Mr. Atwal at that time, it would have meant entering the Golden Temple. Though the army was not there, maybe the police, maybe the CRPF, maybe the BSF, maybe the paramilitary forces available on the spot at the time would have done this duty. But, basically, when he objects to the entry inside the Golden Temple Complex I say that objection does not stand when he says that action should have been taken after the death of Mr. Atwal. (Deora 1992, 569-570).

To this Khushwant Singh replied:

The situation today is this that the religious susceptibility of every single Sikh has been deeply wounded. Ninety-nine per cent of these Sikhs had nothing whatsoever to do either with Bhindranwale or with Akalis, or with the Government or with the politics of any kind...It is a wounded community in a vengeful mood. We have to do something to prevent it from exploding. What is more, it has widened the gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs. The wedge was undoubtedly driven in by the Akalis, it was widened in by this evil man, Bhindranwale. The army action has made it so wide as to make it appear to be unbridgeable... I had sought assurances and been given the assurance- I from here and the then Home Minister from there- that the army would not be moved in because the results would be horrendous. Did the government ever consider two alternative possibilities? No. 1, a commando action by people in plain clothes who would have gone and tried to overpower Bhindranwale and his men? ...Did you ever consider the possibility of putting a cordon round the Golden Temple and the city of Amritsar, occupying the Guru ka Langar, cutting off food and rations and starving those people to come out? No. The White Paper does not mention these alternatives. All we know is that to face about 300 to 500 armed desperados – and no more – you sent in six

divisions led by three full Generals, tanks, armed cars, mountain guns and all the weapons at your command to blast these people out. (Deora 1992, 578,580)

Khushwant Singh also sheds light on supposedly (ill)-logical actions undertaken by the government post the operation by which he raises serious doubts on their integrity and respect for humanity and for a particular community. He raises concerns of media being handled as puppet with tacit tactics of ‘censorship’ and regulation.

The archives on the Golden Temple alongside the Prakrims, which housed over 1000 hand-written manuscript copies of the Granth, the Hukmnamas (Ordinances) bearing Gurus’ signature, have gone up in flames. And this was not during the action; it was after the action that this thing took place.

We have treated the Army as a sacred cow. What has been done in Amritsar should go on record. I first draw your attention to this report in the Times of London dated 14th June based on Associated Press account which mentions that a number of Sikhs who were taken prisoner with their hands tied behind and shot in the head in cold blood. I have not heard a single word of ... (*Interruptions*) Let the Government contradict it. This is the most serious allegation made. There are other equally painful things from people living in Amritsar... (*Interruptions*)

Let me talk now of your concept of the healing touch. The “place of honour”- and I put the words in inverted commas- goes to the Government- controlled media and the press subservient to the Government. I just give you a few instances where same person holds the gun in one hand and the microphone in the other- total monopoly of the microphone [,] this is the kind of “news” we can expect... This is the result of censorship. And this is not the healing touch. (Deora 1992, 581-582)

To this Indira Gandhi replied about the matters raised by L.K. Advani and Khushwant Singh on that very day (24 July, 1984) in Rajya Sabha itself.

And I cannot imagine that any Sikh should think that I would do anything, that I would be responsible for anything that could hurt their feelings... An hon’ble member spoke about a letter I wrote. Yes I wrote to Chaudhury Charan Singh that it was a very serious matter to send the police or army to a religious place. I felt it then and I feel it now. If I had to take this action, it is because there was no other course open at that time. For me it was an extremely painful decision to take at that moment. I said that there was no way out for me. I had no idea that it would be such a big action. We had certainly hoped that it would be over soon. Some people ask: “Why did you not take it [actions] earlier?” We did not take it

earlier because the opposition leaders as well as others were saying, “You can come to an understanding with the Akalis, then perhaps no further action will be necessary.” But at no time did the Akali Leaders themselves condemn the terrorism or the murders. Afterwards, when this was remarked upon, I think condemnation did come rather late in the day. But, when they were asked for further talks- I am sorry, I do not remember the dates- a letter came from Sant Longowal [Head of Akali Dal] to the then Home Minister, Shri Sethi, asking, “What do you want to discuss?” Shri Sethi wrote: “The main problems now left are river waters and territory. But we think it is very important that the question of the Golden Temple being used to collect arms and to give shelter to criminals should also be decided.” The reply was, “You have introduced an extraneous matter,” or something like that. So, I am just trying to inform you about the difficulties which we faced in dealing with this problem and coming to a solution. I do not want to blame anybody. I am not blaming the Opposition leaders. I am not blaming the Akali Party. But I want to make it clear that the action we took was certainly not against the Sikh community; it was not against the Golden Temple or the Sikh religion in any way; and it was not even against the Akali Dal. It was against only those people who had gained control of the situation...

So the whole situation is an exceedingly complex one and you cannot possibly put all these complexities and details into the White Paper. The White Paper has to be a bare statement of facts. In this, I must admit, we were guided by the bureaucracy. We were advised that this is the framework of any White Paper. And we have to adhere to it. (Deora 1992, 594,597,598,601)

Despite Khushwant Singh’s rhetoric and rationale behind the preposterous nature of the attack, Lt. Gen Dyal attempts to clear the picture by presenting a perspective from within, and give an insider’s view of the operational and in-field compulsions. “The Golden Temple was now a battle-field; and the army in the midst of an operation in which the positional advantage lay with the terrorists.” (Nayar and Singh 1984, 99) Since, it was within the city and moreover a religious institution, Army could not use its stringent tactics and war machinery. The terrorists who were inside had access to strategic positions to target forces right at various entry points, were a potent threat. “The subversive activities of groups inside the Golden Temple complex had assumed menacing proportions in the context of India’s security environment.” (Deora 1992, 515)

The holy Akal Takht was a veritable fortress, every aperture of which emitted heavy fire. Terrorist guns all over the complex also joined in. ‘There were 30 LMGs within a distance of 110 yards. I have not seen such firepower in three decades of my career, not even during the wars with Pakistan,’ Lt Gen R.S. Dyal, MVC, said. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 99)

The ferocity and battle-preparedness of the terrorists in the Golden Temple was unimagined by the Army and paramilitaries alike. Major Gen. Shabeg Singh used his military experience to turn the Golden Temple into an unsurpassable 'fortress.' Shabeg Singh almost made sure that forces could not approach without the cover of tanks and he was prepared to surprise the Army with rocket launchers catching them defenceless. So, the overall scenario turned out to be a compulsion for the Army to resort to the use of tanks as the last resort.

Dyal recalled, 'Resistance was so heavy that they could not have cleared the terrorists from the Akal Takht if they had not used tanks.'

Brar first brought in armoured personnel carriers (APC) at 4.10 a.m. from the Guru Ram Das Sarai side to close-in on the Akal Takht. But anti-tank rockets fired from the Akal Takht substantially damaged one. This was another shock for Brar; no one had suspected that the terrorist had rockets. After the destruction of the APC, seven tanks were brought in from the Guru Ram Das Sarai side... Once the tanks were stationed, appeals were made to surrender. Nearly 200 of them did, including 22 stationed in the Harmandir Sahib.

Tanks opened fire in the afternoon of 6 June. Under the cover provided by tanks, the jawans who had retained the position near the tree rushed in and captured a portion of the Akal Takht... The main assault on the Akal Takht and the basement, which was the terrorists' arsenal, began that evening. This was when an incendiary bomb fell in the library and set it on fire. The SGPC alleged that the library was set on fire by army on the morning of 7 June. But it seems to have been an accident, the responsibility for which is difficult to determine. The library had some rare books and manuscripts, including handwritten copies of the *Granth* and *hukamnamas* bearing the signatures of several Gurus. All that is left of the treasure is a mound of ashes. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 103)

In disagreement to Lt. Gen Dyal's testimony of the event and justification to the apparent flaws by the military, Lt. Gen K.S. Brar defends army's position arguing it as indispensable and necessary. He presents his defence on various counts; 'Legitimacy of Military Action in a Place of Worship', are mentioned as under:

Both the Government and the army have been criticised on this issue: the Government for issuing what some call an unethical and bizarre order, and the army for having accepted the order as being legitimate, and necessary to execute. It has already been brought out earlier that the Government avoided taking the ultimate step of ordering the army to enter the Golden Temple until the cult of violence had reached its crescendo and

no other alternative remained. The forces removed or eliminated, in order to prevent the break up of the country. It had become an inescapable necessity to cry halt before it was too late.

Soon after our action in the Temple, while briefing the domestic and international media men, I was asked a question by a foreign news reporter. He said. "General, how could you have ever agreed to carry out a military operation inside the Temple?" He had nothing to say when, in reply, I said, "What would you do if St Paul's Cathedral was desecrated and converted into an arsenal? If it was made into a military fortress by militants, from where secessionist forces were working towards the disintegration of your country?" At times like this, if clear thinking is to prevail, our emotions need to take a back seat.

While on the subject of unholy use being made of holy places, two examples in history stand out very prominently as... [firstly] The first serious incident involving opposition to the Saudi Arabian Government... when approximately 300 Muslim fundamentalists seized the Grand Mosque in Mecca... "After receiving a ruling from the country's religious leaders, the *'ulama'*, that the seizure was an 'ignoble crime and an act of atheism in the house of God', Saudi forces blasted open the doors of the mosque and charged the dissidents... [secondly] "In the battle of Cassino during World War II, in February 1944, the 4th Indian Division, of the Eight Army, was tasked to capture the monastery at Monte Cassino. (Brar 1993, 140-143)

On the aspect of the violation of the norms of 'Application of Minimum force', Brar stated:

It has often been said that the principle of "minimum force" when the army is called out in aid of civil authorities, was not applied in the case of Operation Blue Star and that we, in fact, violated this statutory requirement by using tanks and artillery against the militants... As it is, the troops assigned this extremely difficult and sensitive task were under severe restraint as they were under explicit orders prohibiting them from directing any fire in the direction of the sanctum sanctorum, despite the extreme provocation of being fired at from the sanctum sanctorum. It requires moral courage of the highest order, to be able to control one's fury when one sees one's comrades being mowed to death without being able to retaliate... The use of tanks and artillery has already been covered in detail and their appearance on the scene, as a last resort, has been blown out of proportion by critics.

The restrictions placed on our soldiers called for a very degree of discipline, junior leadership and motivation throughout the course of the fierce fighting inside the Temple complex. I felt proud to be part of this great army, which followed the principle of

“minimum force” in letter and spirit. One can gauge from the number of casualties we suffered- 83 dead and 248 wounded, most of which occurred on the very first night of the battle- that we paid a very heavy price to do so.

What is even more revealing is the very high ratio of Officer and Junior Commissioned Officer casualties we suffered. I cannot recollect any Operation- either in war or in peace- in any country where the number of Officer/JCO (or equivalent) casualties have been proportionately so high. This only goes to prove that responsible leaders were always in the forefront to ensure that the task was accomplished at minimum cost to human life and of course minimum inescapable collateral damage to the buildings in the holy complex, in, adherence to the sentiments of the nation. (Brar 1993, 144-146)

Though constitutionally it was mandated that minimum force should be used, the term ‘minimum’ is contextual and relational, and it depends on the extent of resistance and counter to the use of force. The idea is to force submission but when subversive elements use advanced machinery and strategic tactics, then the security forces get compelled to intensify the use of force.

While our law, which restricts or minimizes the use of force is laudable, we must take into account that any assumption that police violence will be curbed by mere rules and laws may not be valid as it ignores the pressures and motives which come into play in dealing with violence on a large scale. What actually occurs in the field is that while the organization is governed by a set of laws for minimization of violence, other forces arise from the situation in which a higher degree of violence is provoked. When the police used violence to counter violence, we must also take into account the potential for excessive violence by the police themselves... Restrictions and instructions regarding handling of violence, restrictions have to be necessarily vague due to the difficulties in visualizing and spelling out the situations in which counter violence may have to be used or in which it can be avoided. All administrative structures empowered to use violence to control aggressive and agitational situations are aware of the concept of the minimal force, but in practice, find it difficult to determine what is the minimum for a given situation, (Rao 1988, 165)

Hence, the line of normativity keeps on fluctuating and is not fixed, in view of the ambiguous nature of force to be used and how situations arise and are thereby tackled.

[T]here are situations and circumstances when it is not only justifiable for the state to use force, but when it becomes obligatory and inseparable... While [the] position is

quite clear in the case of an external attack, the responsibility for tasks relating to internal security has become a matter of serious controversy in recent years. Questions may arise whether the civil police can take up these tasks as a natural extension of their enforcement function or should the responsibility be shared by the police and para-military forces or even by the Army. (Rao 1988, 166)

On the aspect of the violation of the norms of 'Alleged Wanton Destruction of the Sikh Library', Brar stated:

While some [soldiers] were taking stock of their casualties and others were attending to their administrative needs, a few grenades landed next to them from above, causing an immediate flutter. Just as the troops took cover and were in the process of clearing this seemingly uncleared militant nest on the upper floor, they fired upon from above. In order to silence the nest, a few grenades were lobbed by the troops in the direction from where they were fired upon. This was followed by a short exchange of fire and within minutes, flames were seen in the storey above. The Sikh library on the first floor was on fire. The exchange of fire continued for almost thirty minutes during which the militants hurled country-made grenades which they were igniting with match sticks. It is very likely that it was these match sticks that had started the fire, though it could also have been a result of the grenades lobbed from below... Having sacrificed such a large number of lives to preserve the sanctum sanctorum, what reason would they have to destroy the library wantonly? (Brar 1993, 147)

On the aspect of the violation of the norms of 'Slaying of Several Prisoners with their Hands tied behind their Backs', Brar stated:

Brahma Chellaney, an Indian reporter for an overseas media magazine, drew a lot of mileage from a slanderous and vicious despatch sent out by him accusing the army for having tied their hands of a group of people apprehended inside the Temple, behind their backs, before shooting them dead in cold blood...All those people taken prisoners during the course of the Operation had been kept in manageable groups... On one particular occasion, there was a sudden commotion during which one of the prisoners of the group, who had had his hands freed on the pretext of easing himself, suddenly tried to overpower the sentry and snatch away his weapon. Simultaneously, the other prisoners in the group made an attempt to escape. In a spontaneous reaction, the second sentry, who was at the moment standing a little further away, opened fire as a result of which a few people in this group were killed.

What needs to be seen in correct perspective is that the deaths were the result of an immediate reflex action of one individual, who acted according to his impulse at that particular moment. I daresay, others in his position may have reacted differently. But this certainly does not justify the criticism that the prisoners were deliberately murdered in cold blood after their hands had been tied behind their backs, as was implied in so many words, in the slanderous report which appeared in print. If there had been any deliberate plan to eliminate prisoners in this manner, one, cannot imagine that the perpetrator of the deed would have been so naïve as to hand over the dead bodies to another agency, without first untying the hands! In fact, it only clearly proves that the Indian soldier, with a simple peasant background, is far too innocent and straightforward to be accused of such brutalities. But then, at times such as those, a pen can prove much more dangerous than a sword, in crucifying a disciplined body of troops, ready to lay down their lives for their country. (Brar 1993, 148-150)

Despite K.S. Brar's elaborate defence of the allegations and accusations, it is supposed that Indira Gandhi, despite the compulsions, did realize the operational flaws of the army action on varying counts. She was assured of 'minimal' use of force to carry out the operation and the irony of the fact is that it turned out otherwise.

Mrs. Gandhi sensed that she made a grievous error of judgement. She was not big enough to admit her mistake but nevertheless decided to visit the Golden Temple. From accounts of people who accompanied her, she was appalled at the sight. She had been assured that resistance would be overcome swiftly and damage to buildings would be minimal. Whatever anger she felt against the people who had misinformed her, she decided to take the line that the government had no alternative except send in the army, and that the army had done the best of an unpleasant job. Government media and a subservient press toed her line. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 118)

The hotly debated aspect of the 'need' to use Army in the Golden Temple complex is one of the catching point of various deliberations. Without taking any sides, it may be analysed that the use of forces might have been necessary or vice-versa, but a retrospective analysis is done with the luxury of time which at the time of the real event would have been the constraint for the person deciding upon her/his action to whether use forces and if yes, then till what extent. Since, the situation is always contextual, a definitive totality cannot be bound around the statutes and is best left to the discretion of the person on-field to negotiate upon the situation and thereby accordingly reconfigure the tactical stratagem to strike a subtle balance of the use of 'minimal force' and 'taking control' of the mission.

All administrative structures empowered to use violence to control aggressive and agitational situations are aware of the concept of minimal force, but in practice, find it difficult to determine what is the minimum for a given situation. No one can say except the man on the spot, what type of force has to be used, when and how it has to be regulated. We must implicitly accept that no law can prescribe these parameters and inhibit the freedom of action and judgement of those entrusted with such a difficult task... given the generality of most restrictive rules, the legitimacy of violence has to be ascertained after the event. (Rao 1988, 165)

Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh, in their book, *Tragedy of Punjab*, accused the government over information and facts being misrepresented in the White paper on Punjab agitation as a result of due intervention by the then Prime Minister's secretariat.

A special cell of top civil servants was set up to prepare a draft. This was scrutinised by the Prime Minister and her trusted Cabinet colleagues and sent back for corrections, amendments and additions; its date of publication had to be postponed many times. It was finally released by the Press Information Bureau (PIB) on 10 July 1984. Every Indian newspaper carried summaries issued by the PIB, a few carried its entire text. But even editors who took their guidelines from the PM's secretariat were compelled to admit that it was a most disappointing document. They criticised it as incomplete and misleading; some even described it as a dishonest attempt to whitewash government mishandling of the Akalis and Bhindranwale. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 119)

When the army directed evacuation process nearly failed, out of sheer desperation, Pa-ji and Bibi-ji tried to get in touch with Balraj to get them out of the crisis repenting their stubbornness to stay in the temple guest house. "Bibi-ji nodded and pushed her way through the crowd towards the reception desk and Pa-ji. "Did you phone Balraj?" she asked hopefully. "The phone lines have been cut." Pa-ji said." (Badami 2006, 332-333)

On that fateful morning, the evacuation process did not proceed as anticipated and the innocent pilgrims were caught in the cross-fire between the militants and the army and Bibi-ji who had been to the Golden Temple the day before as a happy and contented wife stands widowed with the unfortunate death of her husband. Bibi-ji had to succumb to the will of destiny and accept the bitter truth that life has to offer and negotiate with her identity from being a wife to a widow.

An elderly man beside Bibi-ji was the first to realize what was happening... “Inside!” he shouted as he pushed past Bibi-ji. “They’re shooting! Get back inside!”... People churned around, trying to run this way or that. Who was shooting whom? No one seemed to know... “Pa-ji?” She stopped abruptly, turned and shouted. “Pa-ji!” She struggled to reach Pa-ji, who had been dragged away from her, away from the guest house, by the panicked movement of the crowd...He turned and waved to her urgently. Go in, his hand said, go in.

Another shot rang out. Bibi-ji saw her husband fall forward as if someone had slammed him hard from behind. She waited for him to rise. She no longer saw the crowd or heard the woman screaming beside the other fallen body. She was aware only of herself standing there and Pa-ji lying on the ground a few steps away. Reaching him, she knelt down slowly, her dupatta settling around his still body. (Badami 2006, 334)

The incident of evacuation and people caught in middle of cross-firing is inexorable truth that both the Army and the victims have to live with.

Major General K.S. Brar and Ranjit Singh Dayal, Chief of Staff to General K.Sunderji of Western Command claim that they had made several appeals on public address system to the pilgrims to leave the Golden Temple premises. Observe Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, “The hostel complex was eventually evacuated in the middle of the attack on the Temple itself. During the rescue operation, many innocent people were killed, many were injured and many were wrongfully arrested.” (Nath 2008, 202-203)

The statement by Bibi-ji right after Pa-ji’s death- “Come, Pa-ji. It is not safe here” (Badami 2006, 334), when read in conjunction with her earlier argument - “How can your home be safer than a place of God, sister? We will be all right, don’t worry.” (Badami 2006, 315) , amplifies the repentance of her obstinacy and adds up to her agony of loss. This vacuum of the absence of Pa-ji in her life finds its palpable manifestation in terms of his hovering absence being felt back in Vancouver.

Back in Vancouver, her friends arrived, offering words of sympathy. Leela and Balu, the Majumdars and all those – so many – whose lives had crossed hers and Pa-ji’s. But each time she accepted their words of condolence, she felt that in acknowledging Pa-ji’s death she was in fact causing it. (Badami 2006, 336-337)

The operation had a widespread effect on people's psyche but the Sikh community was traumatised to know that their epicentre of religious belief system was attacked which seeped into the Sikh's 'collective conscious' as an attack on their honour and a threat to their socio-communal and political identity. The Sikh community was driven by an odd and bizarre combination of euphoria and paranoia with a subterranean vouch for revenge.

A knife in the heart. A dagger in the back. An insult. An outrage. Shock then anger, spread across the world like acid, burning into the soul of every Sikh, turning even moderate, temple once-in-a-while worshippers into true believers. Their most holy place had been desecrated by the Indian government. Tanks had rolled across delicate marble floors, crushing ancient inlay. The library had been consumed by flames; centuries-old sacred manuscripts had been destroyed. Pilgrims had been killed. Nobody was sure how many- some claimed that it was two thousand people and others insisted that it was much higher. Humiliation, indignity, death. (Badami 2006, 335)

Pa-ji absence was immensely felt by Bibi-ji and back in Vancouver she could not digest the reality of Pa-ji's death and his absence. In their restaurant she would almost hallucinate about Pa-ji sitting in the counter or talking to the customers.

He [Laloo] had temporarily taken over the running of the restaurant. Bibi-ji had not come in since her return from India; she knew she would only see Pa-ji sitting at the till or leaning over the tables to talk to his customers, and would hear his bellowing laugh and cheerful voice. (Badami 2006, 338)

The joviality and air of rationality was missing and was replaced by a sudden surge of obsession for revenge. The air of familiarity soon got replaced with discussions of vengeance. For someone as peace-loving as Bibi-ji it was indeed surprising to see her allow the element of subversion rise in her home. She did not just allow all the talks and emotions to come out as silent spectator but wished to actively participate in the moment of subversion and be intricately part of it.

Laloo's voice was often the loudest, bitter in its pain. "They have no respect for us Sikhs," she heard him cry one night. "That's why they could go in like that and trample on our beliefs. I am beginning to like the idea of a divorce from India."

“Yes, Khalistan is what we need!” This was a voice she did not recognize, a young man recently arrived from India. “They forget we are Sikhs, the lions who protected them from the Mussulman invaders, and now they treat us like this?”

“Blood for blood!” shouted another young man. “For every dead Sikh, a hundred Hindus.”

Bibi-ji listened, silent, dazed.

“We should hold protest marches every day in front of the Indian High Commission,” Lalloo said. “With the biggest rally on August 15th- Independence Day.”

“I wish to join the rally too,” Bibi-ji said to Lalloo the next morning, surprising herself. She had never been one for protest marches and processions. But this year she needed to do something symbolic, for Pa-ji’s sake. Instead of celebrating Independence Day at the Patels’ as she had done for so many years, she would march in anger. (Badami 2006, 337-338)

The fictional description by Anita Rau Badami, of the revolt and agitation raised by the Sikh community, finds its factual evidence in the form of the narrative of protest emanating all over the world in Indian embassies, high commissions and consulates to register their anguish on a global platform and garner support for a separate territory, Khalistan as a safe haven vis-à-vis the crisis in Punjab.

Around two hundred Sikh men, women and children marched to the Indian embassy in Washington on 7 June. The protest at Vancouver in Canada turned violent and two protesters went on a rampage within the consulate building before being arrested.

Similar angry demonstrations were held in front of the Indian High Commission in Ottawa and the consulate in Toronto... From Ottawa came further reports that on 5 September a meeting of the National Association of Canadians of Indian Origin was disrupted by forty-odd armed Khalistan supporters and delegates forced to pass an anti-India resolution. Canadian authorities were reportedly taking a grim view of such nasty activities of the pro-Khalistanis. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 106)

Grewal presents an altogether different view of how the unrest in the Sikh communities abroad had a repercussion in terms of false appropriation of the normative Sikh identity to that of the ones actively involved with the Khalistan movement. “The Sikh uprising was not simply a cultural battle for a separate identity; it was a political battle for nationhood. A nation, to repeat, is not just a cultural community; rather, it is a sovereign cultural community.” (Varshney 1993, 230)

The alleged movement for Khalistan is counter-intuitive to what constitutes a movement. It had a minority mandate within the Sikh *quam* in India. However, within the diasporic Sikhs, particularly in Vancouver and Toronto in Canada, and Bradford in the UK, fiery rhetorical constructions of Khalistan were part of their complex non-white-immigrants-as-sojourners identity which merged with a 'homeland-less', perhaps even exilic, identity; it offered monetary support and lot of raucous noise about Khalistan but little else. Those few Indian Sikhs who advocated for a Khalistan, became a lunatic fringe who received disproportionately excessive attention from the media which constructed an image of a Khalistani as the normative Sikh. Thus, the Sikh-Khalsa as the normative orthodoxy elided into Khalistani as the normative identity. To some extent, these fringe Sikhs were responsible for constructing the public political identity. (Grewal 2007, 198)

The Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 were counter-productive in terms of the Sikh community's growing resentment and dwindling of faith in the intrinsic idea of syncretism in Indian democratic system. The anger rising amongst the Sikh community got materialized in terms of expressions and rhetoric of violence and terror.

Violence and terrorist activity were also seen as a possible expression of the suppressed anger following the riots. When the transistor bombs exploded in Delhi in May 1985 they were interpreted by one of our young interviewees as a possible outcome of the anger of a section of the Sikhs to the fact that even though many Hindus had saved their Sikh neighbours, the majority of the people of Delhi had allowed the city to become the 'theatre of violence'. (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 25)

Taking account of the rising agony and discontent amongst the members of the Sikh community beyond the national borders, the government found it hard to strike an amicable balance to set things in peaceful perspective. The government attempt to control the damage was rendered futile *vis-à-vis* the protest and resistance that was building up as an anti-thesis to the 'Operation Bluestar.'

It took Mrs Gandhi sometime to fully realise how badly the Sikhs had taken the army action. None of them was willing to buy the story that she had purified the Temple by ridding it of brigands who killed innocent people and that she was left with no choice but to send in tanks to blast them out of their fortress. Angry demonstrations continued in all cities of the world where there were Sikh communities. Indian embassies and diplomats were assaulted, Khalistan slogans shouted in the Los Angeles Olympics and the Indian tricolour torn up. Both Mrs Gandhi and the President were flooded with

thousands of letters and telegrams cursing them in the strongest language. The Ministry of External Affairs flew out to its embassies thousands of tapes and audio-visual material for free distribution to Indians living abroad. These contained speeches of the President, the Prime Minister and other who supported the government action. As far as Sikhs were concerned, their impact was totally negative. To set the government's record straight, it was decided to issue a *White Paper*. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 119)

The atmosphere of friendly family restaurant turned into a hub of discussions and planning for subversive activities. Not only nationally but on an international level as well, the fire in the Sikh youth got channelized in one particular direction to seek revenge and fight for justice thereby asserting their perceived threatened identity.

The Khalistan phenomenon is a perfect example of disagreements within the Sikh community. Among the approximately 19 million Sikhs around the world, there is no proper survey done of the support for Khalistan, indicating an overwhelming support (or not) for it; hence there is no empirical way to conclude the 'popularity' or 'cohesive' or 'consistent' response leading to a conclusion of 'Sikh Unified Collectivity'. Wagering a guess, it would not be surprising to note that the Khalistan phenomenon is more of a diasporic Sikh issue. (Grewal 2007, 159)

There was a deep seated agony, betrayal and lack of trust for the government and they felt that they were deceived. This saw a fracture in the otherwise harmonious relationship between the Hindus and Sikhs in Canada. The unconscious fracture and an unstated discomfort gradually sprung up between the two communities. Pa-ji's friends, Balu, Shah, Majumder and Menon, who used to visit him in his restaurant were mourning as they felt his overwhelming absence. This mourning was interrupted by a debate based on difference of opinions regarding the justification of the attack.

An altercation broke out at a neighbouring table between an elderly Sikh and two younger men. "Are you saying that it was okay for the Indian army to invade our temple? What kind of talk is that?" one of the younger men shouted.

The older man [Balu, a Sikh] held up his hand. "All I am saying is that there were militants and snipers from our own community hiding in every corner of the temple complex as well. They too had stockpiled arms, they too committed sacrilege by turning our temple into a war zone. How do we know it was not their bullet that killed out Pa-ji?"

Harish Shah, who had been quiet until then, leaned over and said in a low voice to his friend, “He is right, you know. What was Bhindranwale doing inside the Golden Temple? A preacher with guns and bombs? It is okay for him start a war inside his own temple, but it was wrong of Indira Gandhi to send in the troops to stop it? What else could she have done?”

“I agree that it was wrong of Bhindranwale to turn the temple into an arsenal, Shah,” Majumdar said. “But Mrs. G could have used different tactics to deal with the situation... She could have cut off water and electricity and waited until the food supplies had run out as well. That would have smoked them all out soon enough. And it would have avoided unnecessary bloodshed and destruction, not to mention further stoking resentment.”

But the young man continued to glower at Balu and his friends before adding in English, “Bastard Hindus, you will pay for this.”...

Outside as they made their way to their cars, Shah turned on Majumder. “I don’t bloody need you to apologize for me. I meant every word I said. And what do you mean by dragging me out like this? I wanted to tell that turbaned thug a thing or two. Didn’t you hear? He called us ‘Bastard Hindus’!” (Badami 2006, 340-342)

The use of words like, ‘bastard Hindus’ and ‘turbaned thug’, hints at the subtly rising animosity between the two communities who were harmoniously linked to each other in a constructive socio-cultural interaction. The growing animosity is based on fractures and resentment that had infringed upon their psyche and their unconscious acceptance of the distorted truth of their relation as absolute, blinded by the flair of obsession and revenge. Menon, one of Pa-ji’s friend mentioned the growing animosity and its reverberations in conjunction to the situation back in Punjab:

A group of young Sikh men brushed past in their way into The Delhi Junction, and he looked nervously at them. “No, I have to go home,” Menon said. “But you know, Shah, I heard from some friends in India that it is even more tense in Punjab now. Anyone with a beard and a turban is suspect. The army and the police are dragging people out of their houses in the middle of the night and taking them away.”

“To be tortured, the rumours go,” Majumder added. “People disappear without trace.” A starchy, sharp-edged silence followed. (Badami 2006, 341)

The victimization of the Sikh youths continued across the countryside who were detained as terrorists.

On the political front, the sense of alienation among the Sikhs continued to grow. The government kept busy arresting all such elements who could organise protests against its actions. And on 22 June the President promulgated an ordinance which made the National Security Act more stringent. The direct result of this was that detenus could not obtain easy revocation of their detention order... Meanwhile, the army operation continued to mop up terrorists all over the state. Nearly 5,000 Sikhs were arrested on suspicion; troops went from village to village searching the house for arms and terrorists. Dyal denied that any discrimination was made between the Sikhs and Hindus but there were quite a few instances where only Sikh houses were searched in the countryside. (Nayar and Singh 1984, 107,112)

The victimization of the Sikh youth had opened a new horizon, the seeds sown for the inter-communal divide by Bhindranwale, which was earlier taken as a moment of euphoria, now seemed indispensable to 'preserve' the integrity and honour of the Sikh community in the face of crisis and threat to their identity.

From 1982 to 1984, Bhindranwale, with his towering, charismatic personality and flair for addressing large gatherings, rode the crest of popularity amongst the Sikh masses throughout the State. He toured villages, exhorting Sikh youth to uphold the great traditions of the Khalsa as enunciated by Guru Gobind Singh... He spoke at length of the discrimination and alienation of the Sikhs at the hands of the Delhi *Darbar* and persuasively foretold a spell of gloom for the entire Sikh race unless it collectively opposed the slavery imposed by the 'Hindu Raj'. He succeeded in mesmerizing those whom he addressed, and extracted from them a sacred vow that they would be prepared to make any sacrifice necessary to redeem their honour, and carve out a separate Sikh State. Bhindranwale's tapes were in circulation in every village of Punjab, and his name had become synonymous with that of a messiah- the saviour of the Sikh race. Many Sikhs, including the intelligentsia, even began to venerate him as their eleventh Sikh guru. (Brar 1993, 22-23)

The fracture in the community was realised when the mutual co-existence, despite from different communities – Hindus and Sikhs – as Indians that united them in a bond of harmony and respect for each other was broken apart. As a retaliation to the impulsive behaviour of the grief-stricken Sikh community in Canada some Hindus as also took it as a

threat to their identity and saw a bizarre justification in the attack to the Sikh community. As a counter to Menon's narrative about the army action and arbitrary arrests of people from Sikh community, Shah vehemently retorted:

“Really, where do you get all this information? Or should I call it *misinformation*?”

“Well, I heard it some months ago from a young man who had been tortured,” Majumder said. “Pa-ji brought him to meet me. He wanted some advice on how the poor fellow could enrol in a course at our college.”

“Nonsense. He must have made it up.” Shah laughed again. “And I have decided not to go to The Delhi Junction anymore. Not that I have anything against Bibi-ji, but I don't trust her waiters – or Laloo, for that matter. Did you see the look in his eyes when he brought us the bill? Those bastards are so angry with us, I wouldn't be surprised if they spit in our food before serving it.”

Us and Them. Balu thought uneasily. When did we split into these groups? The Singhs were family. How could Shah, who had known them even longer than he had, abandon the friendship so abruptly and without a second thought? (Badami 2006, 341-342)

The use of the words in italics, ‘*Us and Them*’, reflects upon the fracture that had already happened on the unconscious level and its manifestation of the unfortunate and impending inter-communal split. Hence, it is interesting to understand that the out of various identities, in face of crisis, the one that surfaces into the conscious collective psyche is that of their communal identity, overshadowing the harmonious mutual co-existence of their past. This fragmented sense of consciousness towards belongingness to the idea of being Indian got threatened and questioned with communal and radical subjectivities stemming from the sub-conscious dialectics of social equation. The cordiality of the food joint turned into a hot-spot for subversive plans of the collective paranoia of the Sikh community.

Now large meetings were held at the Taj Mahal every day. Bibi-ji did not know many of the people who attended, and after a while she stopped trying to remember their names. Talk of revenge and of Khalistan whipped around like a bitter wind, fuelled by the arrival of yet more people from Punjab. Their stories were of more brutality, murders, disappearances, torture, humiliation. Jasbeer told Bibi-ji how dangerous it was to be turbaned Sikh man in Punjab, how you could be picked up by the police or army, thrown into jail or shot dead in fake “encounters.” She was tempted to ask him what he had been doing during his long absence, how he came to know such things, but realized that she was afraid to find out. (Badami 2006, 343)

The rising animosity due to the attack on Golden temple became a phenomenon that had engulfed almost the entire Sikh community in varying manifestations; the aged ones would maintain their outer calm and take the practical route to avoid dangers, while the younger generation took it with a spell of impulse and obsession to retaliate and voice out their disagreement to their self-perceived, circumstantially raised so-called majoritarian propaganda of the government to marginalize the Sikh community. The letter from Nimmo to Bibi-ji states:

...How is our Jasbeer? I was so glad to hear from you that he is staying at home instead of wandering around Punjab in these terrible times. Our young men are hot-headed and jump into trouble without any regard for their safety or the safety of others. Pappu too has taken to saying uncomplimentary things about Indira Gandhi at the top of his voice. I keep begging him to keep his thoughts to himself since these are not good times for us Sikhs, and who knows what might be waiting for us round the corner? But he won't listen to me. He says this is a democracy and we all have the right to speak our minds.

Bibi-ji, I went with Satpal to do seva at the Golden Temple, to join with thousands of other Sikhs who come daily to build our sacred place. I saw for the first time the bullet holes in the walls of the shrine and I cried with hurt and with fear. And anger-with the government for sending tanks into our temple. Are we the enemy, or are we citizens of this country?

I am not the only one who feels this way. Indira-ji may have withdrawn the army from the Golden Temple, but she has left a sea of anger behind. I hope we don't all drown in it. (Badami 2006, 344)

The riots that perpetuated as an retaliation for the brutal murder of Indira Gandhi found some of its roots in her decision to engage the Army in a frontal attack on the Golden temple, which she took to assert the need for integration and unity of our nation-scape, ironically ended up in a creating a stir, a fracture in the thread of commonality and national integrity after her unfortunate assassination.

After Operation Blue Star in June of that year when the army stormed the Golden Temple in Amritsar, after years of violence in Punjab that led up to Blue Star, India looked like it was coming apart. And ever since Blue Star, everyone knew that sooner or later, probably sooner than later, some Sikh would get Indira Gandhi. No retrospective claim this; an assassination had always looked inevitable.

Indira Gandhi herself seemed to have seen it coming. Just a day earlier, on 30 October, she had delivered a speech in Bhubaneswar ahead of the elections due in December. The speech has been translated and reported here with minor variations. ‘If I die here today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation. I do not care whether I live or die... I shall continue to serve until my last breath and when I die, I can say, that every drop of my blood will invigorate India and strengthen it.’ Those were among the very last words she ever spoke in public.

She was so wrong. In the days that followed the assassination, India was not invigorated, nor strengthened. It cracked and crumbled. Her blood provoked bloodshed such as India had never seen before. The very state of India, the custodians of India, were to assault an idea of India that had been dear even to Indira Gandhi.

Inevitable as it was, the assassination shook us all. Whatever one’s politics, whatever one’s views on her responsibility in creating the Punjab crisis in the first place, she didn’t deserve to die like that- to be shot dead by the very men who had sworn to protect her. With that shock over the assassination arose fears, fears over India itself. (Suri 2015, 163-164)

Badami shows how two events that are happens in a parallel manner gets co-related and shapes the destiny of people involved. How Operation Blue Star had epistemological links with the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the blood-shed that had emanated soon after to wreak havoc and trample upon the very face of humanity.

Indira Gandhi hurriedly finished breakfast with her family. She was in a rush to meet filmmaker Peter Ustinov, who was making a documentary on her for BBC television... For a women of sixty-seven, the prime minister was remarkably brisk. She reached the opening in the hedge, barely noticing the armed guard who stood at attention there. Beside him was the security booth in which another guard waited with a Sten gun in his hands. As she approached the booth, the first guard drew his revolver and emptied it into Indira Gandhi’s stomach and chest. At the same moment, the other one emerged from his booth and fired several rounds into her. By the time the turbaned guards had completed their task, twenty-two bullets were embedded in the prime minister’s small body. Indira Gandhi died at 9:15 am.

Also at a quarter past nine that morning, the bus carrying Satpal to Modinagar left New Delhi’s interstate terminus... “I think everybody should go home and stay there,” the head priest said anxiously. He pointed to his turban. “It is not difficult to spot one of us, and anyone looking for a fight would have an easy target. If the prime minister really is dead and if the killers were Sikhs, I am afraid there may be trouble.”

Nimmo hurried home wishing there was a way to contact Satpal [her husband], who must have reached Modinagar by now. Had he heard about the killing? Was he safe? And her children? Her daughter had gone to school as usual, and Pappu was at work. She could do nothing but wait for them.” (Badami 2006, 347)

The choice of words like ‘turbaned Sikhs’ shows how the socio-cultural identity gets a material manifestation and how this identity markers can become susceptible in the face of crisis vis-à-vis the crisis to that identity that it marks.

“What are you saying? Unless you both cut your hair and beards and become munda Sikhs, you will never look like everybody else here either, will you?” Nimmo has said with unaccustomed asperity. She wondered at Satpal’s naivete. In order to disappear in this country they called their own, they would have to sacrifice a part of who they were. Like the tiger in a story she had heard as a child, Satpal and her son would have to burn their hides to rid themselves of their stripes. She could only imagine the pain that would involve. (Badami 2006, 354)

In this complex web of identity negotiations to protect themselves, Nimmo becomes the victim at the receiving end of crisis. It is from her perspective that we analyse other characters and the relationship therein. Feeling the crisis she called exhorted that Kamal, her daughter, needs to keep herself home as the times are showing dangerous intentions. “What can happen? Nimmo wanted to cry: *You can lose everything in one single day, your past, your present and your future.*” (Badami 2006, 350)

Paradoxically, she lost her family on the same day itself. Her husband was killed in Modinagar, her son was murdered by mob. But the most poignant fact was that her daughter was killed right in front of her, burnt alive inside steel cupboard. This episode hints at two dimensions from symbolic perspective. Firstly, it is symbolic of the Sikh community who were attacked and massacred right inside their safe havens and secondly, the helplessness associated with the members of the community who could do nothing substantial to contain the spread of the wild fire of socio-communal rage.

Nimmo glared at the intruders. She recognized some of them – there was the fellow from the ration shop...And behind them all, hiding like the coward that he was, was Asha’s husband... Nimmo looked at Asha’s husband. “Why are you here, brother?” she asked. He shifted his eyes away from her straight gaze. “You better tell them what they want to know. Otherwise I can’t say what will happen,” he mumbled. “You have known us for twenty, twenty-five years, brother. Why didn’t you tell them that my men

are never here at this time of the day?” Nimmo said. “Satpal is in Modinagar, he called at your house, you know that. You were there, and Asha – you heard me talking to him.” (Badami 2006, 358)

This instance shows how the omnipresent harmony and cordiality that defined the relations between the neighbours was now replaced by a deep-seated animosity with a consuming motive of revenge marking the ever deepening socio-communal fracture. It cannot be brushed aside with a uniform perception that all of the neighbourhood turned hostile, as there were instances of many neighbours who helped the Sikh community in the hour of need. One of her close neighbour warns her of the probable danger and also offers refuge to Nimmo to keep them safe.

Her friend looked over the wall and said in a low urgent voice, “Nimmo, listen. My husband said to tell you that he was at the ration store yesterday and heard some men asking for the list of people in this area. He thinks they are getting addresses of the Sikh homes here.” (Badami 2006, 355)

This opens up a new dimension towards the organised nature of the pogrom rather than this being a fit of uncontrolled communal rage of vengeance. There are references of the event being organised in a strategic way.

Events have causal connections, with one leading to another not by acts of providence but as deliberate human undertakings. The post-modern person is shocked by violence; an element of surprise captured in that one sentence which has become a cliché, ‘how could have happened?’ There ought to be shock and disgust but no surprise when violence occurs to be shock and disgust but no surprise when violence occurs because no large-scale violent event, if not natural, is ever unplanned. People did not wake up on 1 November 1984 and suddenly form mobs, get kerosene and spend three murder days. A few Sikh men did not accidentally stop a bus in Punjab, pull out Hindus and shoot them because it took their fancy. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale did not crawl out of woodwork one fine day and become a ‘leader’ of Jat Sikhs... What is being argued here is that large-scale violence, irrespective of its origins, is ultimately a consequence of strategic planning which in turn is carefully coordinated to fulfil certain impulses, the morality of such impulses notwithstanding. These urges have a common denominator—the issue of power, its production, its exercise, and its retention. There are rational explanations even for those acts which appear to be absurd and impossible; mostly because they are neither absurd nor fantastic to those who believe them. The pathos is first in the act of violence and then in living with the consequences of violence. The

violence during November 1984 emerged out of the larger national issue of the Punjab crisis; their causal connection is not immediately apparent but it exists. November 1984 is the climax of a story that started in Punjab. (Grewal 2007, 33-34)

It was not a Sikh-Hindu clash but an organized movement as Pappu was given refuge at the time of crisis by a Hindu family in a Hindu locality, but the information got leaked to the mobs from someone inside the locality. This hints at the fractures of thought in their perception towards the Sikhs.

Indians are generally conservative; and second, ideological inclinations are derived more from different predispositions rather than from empirically derived facts. Again, Asghar Ali Engineer's theoretical frame explains this idea further: 'There may be a degree of difference... But the perception of one community about the other does not depend directly on objective reality but the psychological complex of socio-religio-political prejudices. Perception... is a psychological category as much as a sense-data category. The perception of one community of the other would very much depend on their mutual relationship- hostile or cordial, not merely on facts and observations.'... The politicians/vested political interests/governments merely access an attitudinal presence- in this case communalist predilections- at the right time when all the material conditions are perfectly aligned in order to play us off each other. That we succumb to being played off is our responsibility because it was our internalized prejudices which were manipulated to begin with. In that we are agents in the Indian body politic, not a passive mass of humanity. (Grewal 2007, 156)

Nimmo, symbolized the people from the community who had an inner anguish for the attack on the Golden Temple, but that was all that they had against Mrs. Gandhi and the government. They did not blatantly criticise the government in absolute terms but on a relative annotation of the unfortunate decision that brewed the crisis to be emanated in form of an attack on the Golden Temple.

"But your husband [Satpal] did not like her, did he?" Asha said suddenly, catching Nimmo off guard. "He never did, I know. And you were also angry when she sent the army into your temple! So why are you pretending to feel sad?" "She was a defenceless women," Nimmo stammered, unnerved by the spite in Asha's voice. "I always voted for her, you know that. I was upset about the army operation, but that doesn't mean..." (Badami 2006, 349)

Nimmo is also shown as a character with a lot of patience and faith in the government systems, its ways of administration and the socio-cultural ethics of how it is the

responsibility of the citizen to uphold law and order in the society and not get driven away into the alluring call of the underground and she debated against the militant subversive activities. Much to her dismay the idea of 'justice' gets trapped in the liminal space of who is the victim and who is the victimizer after the victim turns victimizer in a rather convoluted manner.

“There is never a good reason to kill an unarmed old woman,” Nimmo glared at her son. “And I am hearing stories that you are involved with those Khalistani boys. Is this true? Haven't I told you to stay out of all that non-sense? Listen with both ears open, Pappu. Some of those men are violent, and violence does nothing but breed more violence.” “What about violence to get justice, Mummy? Look at what happened to those pilgrims at the temple. The talk is that more than two or three thousand died. And Pa-ji. What did *he* do to deserve death? He was unarmed and peaceful. Who will bring him justice? Hanh? Tell me!” “And you think *you* will? Do you know the meaning of justice?” (Badami 2006, 352)

Amartya Sen's idea of justice sheds light on the popular perception towards the blurring line of justice and injustice.

Consider an often-repeated proposition in a closely related field, the practice of law. It is frequently asserted that justice should not only be done, but also 'seen to be done'. Why so? Why should it matter that people actually agree that justice has been done, if it has in fact been done? Why qualify, or constrain, or supplement a strictly juridical requirement (that justice be done) by a populist demand (that people in general can observe that it is being done)? Is there a confusion here between legal correctness and popular endorsement- a confounding of jurisprudence with democracy? (A. Sen 2010, 393)

Pappu's alacrity in favour of justice for the victims of the Golden Temple attack suddenly fell asunder when he faced the crisis from close quarter and felt an imminent life threat with the mobs standing at their door-step. As he was leaving home he consoled his mother saying:

Pappu decided to go to the shop as usual... “Nothing will happen, Mummy. Don't worry. Besides, there is a scooter that has to be finished today, we are already a week behind on the repairs and the customer is threatening to not pay us.” (Badami 2006, 354)

He exemplified a different temperament altogether in the face of crisis and in the way he dealt with it.

God, he prayed, send me a miracle. I will do any seva for you, I will wash the floor of every temple in this country for a year, for two years, I will dedicate my life to the poor, oh God send me a miracle. (Badami 2006, 366)

In the face of the life-threat, hidden inside a Hindu home, his helplessness was exemplified in the form of desperation he exhibited to shed off his identity to shave off his hair and beard to get rid of the specific markers of his identity – his turban and beard that had made him an palpable target.

“Where is the sardar?” a voice asked – the same one that had threatened to break the door. Looking around in a panic, Pappu spotted Mohan Lal’s old-fashioned razor on the sink and grabbed it. He removed his turban and unbound his hair. Gripping the razor, he started sawing clumps of hair, cursing at its thickness... He attacked his face, scrapping away at his beard and moustache, cutting himself all over in his haste. Blood flowered against his skin and flowed down his neck. *Never mind*, he thought, *never mind*. (Badami 2006, 365-366)

In this subtle instance of identity negotiation and reconfiguration, “With a steady hand, he [Pappu] finished shaving his face, trying not to think of the sacrilege he was committing.” (Badami 2006, 367), to save himself from disassociating himself from the identity markers that socially identify him as a Sikh. He felt the psychological pain akin to physical removal of skin from the flesh, when he was peeling off layers of his identity in a desperate attempt to save his life. But the newly formed distorted identity had contorted reflections of his past image of being a Sikh which revealed maladroitly in undoing his identity. Hence, he became an obvious target to the mobs. “The murder was never done in silence; the ease, joy and deliberateness of the violence was always accompanied with the choicest verbal abuse, or maniac derisive laughter, or both.” (Grewal 2007, 167)

A silence met him as he stepped out followed by a crack of laughter...Laughing, they dragged Pappu out into the silent gully. One of the men jammed a car tire down over his body, pinning his arms to his sides, poured kerosene over him and flicked a match, setting him alight. (Badami 2006, 367-368)

This reflects in the organized nature of violence and the complacency exhibited by the mobs shows the accepted fact that their actions will not be apprehended by the police thereby making a mockery of the security apparatuses and the perceived law and order situation.

A new weapon had been created – the kerosene tyre... It couldn’t be the weapon for an individual murder driven by some personal motivation. You couldn’t hope to

surprise a victim with a kerosene-tyre. The killing itself would be problematic. It would set off too much smoke, the screaming would get loud, it would all attract too much attention. Not what anyone might want for the quiet murder they could get away with. Walking up to a victim lugging a tyre would hardly be discreet... But in 1984 killers felt no need to disguise their murders as anything else, to pretend these might have been accidents. They were confident they didn't need to. (Suri 2015, 85)

The issue of such violence is given a poignant angle when the death of Satpal is described in a manner which talks about how things are eventually spread and its repercussions outside the territorial limits of Delhi. He was trapped in a fix when no transport seemed to undertake the risk involved to taking a Sikh as passenger.

He [Satpal] reached the bus terminus as early as possible to catch the first bus. But now the idiot of a driver wouldn't let him climb in. "It's not your money, Sardar-ji," the driver said apologetically. "I don't want any trouble. I hear there are people looking for turbans. You should go home!" "But that's why I am trying to get into your bus, sahib," protested Satpal. "I live in Delhi. How else will I get there?"... Satpal turned away, angry and helpless. He waited for the next bus, and again wasn't allowed to get on. (Badami 2006, 368-369)

The incident further goes on to show how the police machinery implicitly consented in favour of the mob-violence by dereliction of their professional call for duty and remained mute spectators to the fury of madness and consuming rage and anger.

He [Satpal] turned around and found himself face to face with a gang of men, their faces filled with hatred. "Killer!" they shouted. "Fucking murderers! We will teach you how to kill a helpless woman." Satpal backed away only to find his path blocked by more men. He lowered his head and ran into one of them, taking him by surprise. He raced through the gap that opened up and across the road to a shuttered café where he had earlier noticed two policemen.

"Help!" he shouted, waving his arms to attract their attention. They did not seem to notice him. He reached them and grabbed one by his arm. "Help me," he pleaded. "Those men are going to kill me." He looked over his shoulder. The group was strolling towards him. "Please, help!" he begged again. (Badami 2006, 369)

The collapse of the security apparatus is evident in the manner in which the mobs could overtly perpetrate crimes in the presence of police. The policing apparatus had exhibited dismal dereliction of duty and demeaned sanctity associated with it.

The policemen he had grabbed gave him a considering look. "I have no orders to help," he said. "What?" Satpal cried, incredulous. "I am not in charge of crime, Sardar-ji," he sneered. "I am only here to direct traffic. For crime report you have to go the police station. I am not authorized." The other policeman shrugged. "I am on duty only from ten o'clock." And he turned away. (Badami 2006, 369-370)

Several instances of negligence of duty on part of the police was reported to the Nanavati Commission and the commission in its section - 'Overall Consideration' states that:

Mr. S.C. Tandon was the Commissioner of Police and was directly responsible for the maintenance of law and order in Delhi. It is no explanation to say that he was not properly informed by his subordinates. It was his duty and responsibility to remain aware of what was going on in Delhi during those days and to take prompt and effective steps. He should have known that the policemen on the spot were ineffective and in spite of curfew mobs indulging in violence were moving freely and were committing acts of looting and killing also freely. He ought to have taken strict action against the defaulting officers immediately and ought to have given directions to be more strict with the crowds. There was a colossal failure of maintenance of law and order and as the head of the Police Force, he has to be held responsible for the failure. The course of events do disclose that the attitude of the police force was callous and that he did not remain properly informed about what was happening in the city. (Nanavati 2005, 178)

The humiliating death that he suffered symbolised the barefaced and brazen victimization of the Sikhs who were hand-picked in an organized way and burnt alive.

He [Satpal] turned to face the men. "I have children, I have a wife," he pleaded, looking at the blank, implacable faces of his attackers. "I voted for Indira-ji. Please." He folded his palms and fell to his knees. "I didn't do anything, brothers, I didn't do anything." A middle-aged man in a pale green kurta laughed. "Hey, look at this brave lady-killer on his knees! And these bastards call themselves lions! Does a lion grovel like this?" "Let's see what he keeps inside his turban. Definitely not brains!" remarked another of them. "Hello, Sardar-ji. Remove your pagdi!"

"Please let me go. You can take all the money I have if you want," Satpal begged... "The bastard is paying us bribes," the first man said indignantly... "Do you think Indira-ji had time to bribe those fuckers before they shot her? Hanh? Hanh?" He jammed the iron rod under Satpal's turban and flipped it back hard, dislodging the carefully coiled blue cloth to reveal the knot of grey hair neatly braided and bunched with a rubber band. "Open your hair, sardar-ji!" He shoved the rod against Satpal's chest, forcing Satpal to fall back onto his heels. "Let's see how long you have grown it, eating the salt of this country. (Badami 2006, 370-371)

The helplessness that Satpal faced was grim and menacing for the readers to internalize the agony within such poignant portrayal of violence. The manner of violence was so prosaic that it directly affects the sensibilities of the reader to feel the vulnerability of the victims from close quarters. "Silently Satpal uncoiled his hair and waited trembling to see what further indignities they would inflict on him before they killed him." (Badami 2006, 371)

The organized nature of the mob is further justified when they used an adroit strategy of murder by using tyres to necklace the victims and burn them alive. "Until then it was thought tyres could kill if the tyre of a vehicle ran over someone. Now a detached tyre had turned killer." (Suri 2015, 85) In case of Satpal's death the method of murder by using tyre as a weapon became even more profound to present the selective mode of victimization.

He [Satpal] knelt while one of the men poured kerosene over his head, the acrid smell making him dizzy and nauseous. One men dropped a car tire over his head and jammed it about his shoulders, immobilizing his arms. Another lit a match to his streaming hair, wet with kerosene. The flames ate into his scalp, crept like a dreadful river down his face, licked at his eyebrows, his eyelashes. The heat burned his eyes and his last thought was that he could not even weep. He could not even weep. (Badami 2006, 371)

The character of Nimmo portrays the utter desolation and alienation that had affected the community after the men in the family were selectively murdered. As a survivor of the riots, where she despite being a Sikh was saved due to her gender not being a male. Post-riots, her identity as mother of Pappu and wife of Satpal with all hopes and jubilation, had undergone a radical shift to be sunken in despondency and reconfigured as a widow. "The survivors – women newly widowed, children newly orphaned, and the old newly abandoned – found themselves in relief camps, gurudwaras and in relatives' homes." (Grewal, 2007, p. 165) The space of 'home' which was supposed to be safe and had memories of good family times turned spaces of murder and death, and the women had no option but to live in the space of 'death', with the trauma of loss eternally present, both physically and psychologically.

For many women who survived the November killings but lost their menfolk, husbands, sons and father, what stood out in their consciousness was the dramatic transformation of their homes from a space they regarded as inviolable and protected from "outsiders" to the very site of the killings. A young Sikh woman who lost her father during the killings captures the inability of women survivors to understand how the sanctity of the home and its normal impenetrability could be invaded by the equally incomprehensible

dynamics of the world outside, but from which they had nevertheless felt sheltered.
(Chakravarti 1994, 2722)

She shares a similar fate as that of Bibi-ji, who suffers alienation of a different kind, firstly with the loss of her husband Pa-ji and secondly with Jasbeer going away to India to be with his mother, Nimmo. The epilogue of the novel presents how the feelings associated with Jasbeer in the heart of Bibi-ji defies the normativity of a son being connected to his mother in the home he is born. In the letter that he receives from Jasbeer regarding his release from prison which states, ““*Dear Bibi-ji, just to let you know. I am out of prison and will be home soon.*” *Home?* She thinks. Her heart flutters with hope for a moment. *But which one?*” (Badami 2006, 395)

The stress on the word ‘home’ and on the idea ‘which one’, clearly reflects upon a perplexing logic to flout the conventions of normativity vis-à-vis the crisis of alienation she is facing and as a situational demand accepting Jasbeer as her own son. In the imposed desolation and loneliness, she is bereft of human company and especially any close ones. In a state of hallucination she blurs the boundary between her own and what she believes to be her own.

The novel hints at a conspiracy of blowing the Air India flight that runs underneath the plot and finds its references in the discussions between Jasbeer and Lalloo regarding reservation of Jasbeer’s air tickets to India from Vancouver.

“Lalloo oversaw the arrangements, as usual, contacting his travel agent friends to book a flight for Jasbeer. [Specifically retorts] “Not Air India,” he said decisively. “There are talk that flights on that airline will be sabotaged.”

“What do you mean?” Jasbeer asked. “Sabotaged? How?” Lalloo shrugged. “I don’t know. There are rumours I have heard. There is something bad going down soon. Maybe just a boycott – symbolic because it is India’s national airline. In any case, I would feel better if you travelled on some other flight.” (Badami 2006, 374)

The apprehension turns true and the tragedy finds its mention in the ‘Epilogue’ of the novel, where it is read in continuation with the midnight call by Majumder to Balu, after getting the news of the Air India flight being bombed, to confirm if Leela was flying by the Air India flight from Vancouver.

She [Preeti] thinks of that terrible morning when Alok Majumder had phoned them with the news. They had gone to Ireland to identify Leela’s body, but nothing had been found

of her. Only the tapestry handbag that Arjun had given her as a farewell gift, with the freezer bags of food inside still intact. (Badami 2006, 396)

The incident had wide-spread repercussions on the social and political identity of the Sikhs as the fateful incidents had cast an ambiguous shadow on their integrity and their identity has undergone a societal scrutiny viewed from the lens of fractures and distortions emanating out of insecurity of a polarized society.

A public Sikh identity was forged in which allegedly traditional, religiously guaranteed militarism merged with modern militant secessionism to become fundamentalist terrorism. If there was any doubt or residual hesitation in such labelling, it was sealed with the Canadian Sikhs' act of blowing up an Air India flight with more than three hundred innocent travellers on it. Sikhs, particularly the men, were fundamentalists- militants- terrorists; the burden of proof was now on the Sikhs to prove otherwise. There are serious repercussions in the situational reality of a minority, in its future within the state, and its citizenship when such identities become the single lens of viewing them. (Grewal 2007, 204)

The spread of the Anti-Sikh feelings culminating into riots based on misinformation is something that is reported to have engulfed the nation with an air of communal animosity.

The massacre was not limited to Delhi: there was a loss of more than 200 lives in Kanpur and 200 in Bokaro, Bihar. In Patna, Daltonganj, Jamshedpur, Bhagalpur, Hazaribagh and Jhumri Talaiya, too. Sikhs were not spared. When the rumour spread in Lucknow that the Sikhs of Punjab had sent the Lucknow Mail filled with Hindu bodies, Sikh passengers were pulled out of trains at Lucknow railway station and murdered. (J. Singh 2011, 30)

The novel, *Pages Stained with Blood*, presents a vibrant account of the situations of Sikh community in Delhi and how their relationship with people from other community came under threat. The writer, Indira Goswami, narrates the story of Balbir and Santokh with ardent passion to depict the pain and threat that they faced during the Anti-Sikh riots. "Writing about such a theme clearly reflects the ideological concerns of an Indian writer on the one hand and responsibilities towards the civil society on the other." (Satyanath 2012, 72) The novel, *Pages Stained with Blood*, traces the subversive activities in Punjab and their effects across the community nation-wide, states a diary entry on the part of the author dated 24th April, 1983.

The country was in turmoil. The Director General of Police in Punjab, Attwal, was shot dead by terrorists yesterday on the steps of the Golden Temple. The body lay riddled with bullets, the Prasad halwa scattered. Blood spurted from his head and chest and flowed down the steps... Police checking had intensified on the streets and lanes of Delhi. Sikhs are being forced to get down from buses at Sarai Rohilla, Rani Jhansi Marg, Kingsway Cand at many other places and searched. (Goswami 2002, 67-68)

After the attack on the Golden Temple, her diary recorded the dreaded event with resounding poignancy.

From 6 June to 8 June, 1984 my notebook carries nothing but account but account of blood and dust ... Killings and more killings! The sweepers, who came remove the dead, waded in and out through heaps of used cartridges. Some images are etched in my mind, too deep to be washed away... Thursday, 7 June, 1984, All the papers carried the news that the army had captured the Golden Temple... One newspaper said that three hundred extremists had been arrested from thirty seven gurudwaras, five temples and one mosque. All sorts of news and all sorts of calculations... The shadow of the Golden Temple loomed large over Delhi. The police used tear gas to disperse a violent crowd near the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara. Section 144 had already been clamped there. The rebel Sikhs set fire to ten buses around the gurudwara. Most Sikhs had closed their closed their shops in Delhi and the neighbouring areas in protest. The police found a bagful of cartridges near Sarai Rohilla. Some were old, while others were freshly greased for immediate use. (Goswami 2002, 109-110)

Goswami presents a vivid picture of her social relation with two Sikhs; Santokh Singh and Balbir Singh, and how they got intricately linked with her life on a regular basis. A shift in their life-style with grossly affected profession space and how the Anti-Sikh animosity had charted a different destiny for Balbir and Santokh was poignantly portrayed by the writer.

I don't want to discuss that visit any further. I say, "Look Santokh Singh, I have been rather close to you. Three Sikhs – you, Balbir Singh, and the Sikh Baba have become a part of my family. I feel sorry and can understand your feelings, especially since the Akal Takht has been destroyed..." "I hear thirty bullets had been pumped into Bhindranwale's body." The silent Santokh Singh suddenly roars. "His back was riddled with bullets, not his chest."

"His back?"

“Yes, that’s right, he was shot from behind.”... I have no answer. The bullets fired at the Harmandir Sahib have wounded every Sikh heart. In the morning papers, A Sikh professor has reiterated the same sentiments.” (Goswami 2002, 113-114)

While the narrative in regard to Santokh Singh and Balbir is poignantly touching in reference to the disastrous circumstances that they were subjected to, the figure of the Sikh baba and the symbolic ‘silence’ associated with him is unique. “Most of the Sikhs who appear in the text are the ones who either perished or suffered heavily in the anti-Sikh riots of 1984.” (Satyanath 2012, 73) The Sikh baba’s silence is because of the psychological shock that he got during partition and had since then become a passive subject of post-traumatic stress disorder. The omnipresence of the figure of the Sikh baba in the narrative is a subtle reminder of the loss that the Sikh community had suffered during partition and its continuation may be extrapolated with the impending Anti-Sikh rage and upsurge after Indira Gandhi’s assassination by her Sikh bodyguards.

Curiously, the Sikh Baba never speaks in the narrative. It is Balbir Singh who tells the narrator that it is since the shock and trauma of the rape and murder of his daughter near the Khankhana Sahib border during the Partition days, that the Sikh 'Baba has not spoken a word' (p.25). The Sikh Baba's personality is clearly reflected not only in the epithet 'Sant' used for him by the narrator but also through his actions. His deep silence, sadness, constant searching and concern for others link not only the 1984 riots with the aftermath of Partition, but they seemed associated also with similar incidents such as the looting, killing and devastation of Delhi by Nadir Shah and the Rebellion of 1857. Thus Pages stained with Blood, wherever they come from, constitute a metanarrative. (Satyanath 2012, 73)

His silence is symbolic and reflective of the silence on the other side in their inability to contain the ill-conceived rage against the Sikhs. It is also symbolic of the collective perspective of the Sikhs who read the attack on their Sanctum sanctorum as back-stabbing by their fellow country-men. This had fuelled a sense of paranoia with an exigent euphoria to avenge the attack on the Golden Temple became the driving force of the impulse who saw the Operation as an attack on their socio-religious honour.

Santokh Singh voiced out his concern at the Operation and as a fallout the fracture that organically developed in the collective conscious of the nation creating an ambiguous space for sympathy, empathy and fear for the Sikh community to be unfortunately trapped in.

No, no, I don't want tea or anything. No one offers a Sikh three-wheeler driver a chair or asks him for tea. When it rains, we stand drenched and in sweltering heat we do not even get water to drink, unless we ask for it with folded hands. Things have become worse now... These days, commuters avoid three-wheelers driven by Sikhs. They suspect us. My vehicle came empty from Minto Bridge. (Goswami 2002, 114)

As and when the Sikhs were slowly dealing with the paradox, on one hand was the sense of being beguiled at the necessity of Army action in the Golden Temple and the illegitimate use of the temple premises as sanctuary for armed rebellion against the state, the sudden assassination of Indira Gandhi worsened the already paranoid social conditions to a further level of desolation and anxiety.

Sikh psyche was deeply wounded when an army that families has assiduously served with offering their sons and daughters, assaulted the sanctity of Harmandir Sahib. It was/is an ignominy that few have forgotten and even fewer choose to forgive... Zail Singh postured his grief; I know of nobody who was convinced by his disingenuous anguish. Indira Gandhi proceeded to add insult to injury by praising the army's action in her speeches. Minister of Information and Broadcasting, H.K.L. Bhagat began a series of programmes on Sikhs and Operation Blue Star in order 'to promote communal harmony'; it was done by projecting on television the images of arms' and drugs' seizures in the gurudwara. These efforts stopped short of screaming out, 'they deserved it, they were guilty'... Sadly, what none of us knew then was that it was only the beginning of the tests that Sikhs would have endure that year.

Indira Gandhi lost her life on 31 October 1984 to the bullets of two of her bodyguards; both were Sikh. And India's Sikhs paid – for her assassination, for the botched-up political manoeuvring in Punjab, for not arresting Bhindranwale's person and rhetoric when there were umpteen chances to do so, for a power-hungry Zail Singh, for an inept Akali leadership, for a political environment which bred and sustained hatred and for secularism which has been on life-support system since the beginning of India's fourth decade of existence. (Grewal 2007)

The novel locates the idea, of instigation of the masses by the politicians, which justified their horrific deeds and ensured them protection from all legal means.

A thin politician stands in the place usually occupied by the gamblers. Three or four people surround him. Suddenly, he yells, "Dead bodies are lying in your houses. Has your blood turned white? Why don't you do something...?" He repeats the same thing. A crowd begins to gather round him... What is that? What are they [mobs] doing? They have

pounced on a Sikh who has come cycling by... Suddenly, there's a great uproar. "He is... ablaze... they've set him on fire!" The crackling and bursting sounds of something going up in flames! A heart-rending cry seems to split the sky into two... (Goswami 2002, 133)

Such political instigations are possible for a strong leader-follower relationship where the leader has an active psychological control over the followers. "The assets at the disposal of a leader may include every category of social value. At its simplest the control that is exerted over a follower's focus of attention is at least a degree of influence over his information." (Lasswell, 1966, p. 211)

His voice seems to shake heaven and earth. "The body is still lying in the hospital, has your blood turned white?" His shouts and exhortations are followed by the stamping of feet in the slums. We can see flames rising from the Anand Parbat Punjabi Basti. The smell of burning plastic, rubber, rexine, tarpaulin, wood, electric wiring, spreads through the air. We [the writer and her close aides] can't see what is happening behind the wall in the slum nearby, but occasionally we hear a few heart-rending cries. There's also the occasional cruel shot of triumph.

Thud, thud, thud!

Finish them, kill them all!

We hear anguished cries.

Wahe Guru! Wahe Guru! (Goswami 2002, 135)

The portrayal of the violence is insightful in terms of the choice of words to translate the gruesome and ghastly nature of barbarity that got inflicted in the hard times of political inaction, where the common man was left astray in the hands of destiny

The place [after the mob attack] is filled with smoke. There is a peculiar smell all around. A sweeper is sweeping a side lane. There is a crowd around him. I go ahead and stand by him. He is trying to sweep into a pile a heap of long hair and beard, wrenched from the heads and faces of the Sikhs. But suddenly he stops short. With the hair, not quite burnt out, is a human jaw with its two rows of teeth, and a lump of human flesh. (Goswami 2002, 141)

The devastation and the inhumane acts perpetrated during the riots is unnerving with the gory detail. The images like 'not quite burnt out', 'lump of human flesh', juxtaposed with absence of police or army to contain such eventuality is symbolic of the lack of intent. The figure of the 'passive onlooker' is satiric for the state apparatuses, which had eventually turned into a passive onlooker instead to being active intervener to control violence.

There is the sound of more voices and of running footsteps. It's strange that there are no policemen in sight, nor any sign of the army. I'm [the narrator] a passive onlooker, an unwitting witness to the loot and arson. There are many people in their balconies. They are all watching the spectacle. (Goswami 2002, 141)

The assassination had materialised the intangible fracture between the communities and the nexus of political delinquency with callous and atrocious human right violations had consumed the essential ideals of humanity from its very core.

3 November, 1984... The [news] papers are full of news of loot, arson and plunder. There are also horrifying photographs of Sikhs who were pulled out of the Pink city Express and butchered. Despite the shoot-at-sight orders, the Central Reserve Police and the armed forces have been able to control only certain areas in South Delhi. The dance of death is at its height. From Block No. 32 of the Resettlement Colony at Trilokpuri, four truckloads of skulls, bones and ashes have been brought out. Soon after, fifteen more bodies are discovered. (Goswami 2002, 143)

The gory imagery of corpses heaped on the road is both emotive and agonizing. It may be implied that the number of bodies outnumbered the capacity in the morgues, which entails that the violence and bloodshed leading to such alarming numbers was much beyond any rational calculation and past the perceived capacity of morgues estimated by the state. The imagery gets horrific when references to blood spilled over and autopsy done in open.

The corpses of Sikhs fill the mortuary at Tees Hazari. Ultimately, they have had to be heaped on the road, blocking the footpaths. After post-mortem, the bodies are being put into gunny bags and then loaded onto trucks like sacks of potatoes. The stone platform used for post-mortems has a film of blood clinging to it like onionskin. The doctors carry on dissections like automations. Outside, under the peepal tree, more autopsies are being carried out. The crows on the trees caw raucously at the sight of blood. On the wall around the mortuary human beings perch squarely to watch other human beings being cut open. A group of rowdy mourners who have come to see the body of Indira Gandhi, set fire to many houses on Loni Road at Shahdara. Some twenty four Sikhs have tyres put round their necks and are burnt to death in broad daylight. Many are killed in police firing at Khan Market, Roshanara Road, Kotla Mubarakpur and Jahangirpuri. There is no true account of those deaths, and bodies are lying about in roads and gutters. The trans-Jamuna area is a scene of carnage. Visions of Santokh Singh and Balbir haunt me all the time. (Goswami 2002, 144)

The visual imagery is well supplemented with the olfactory imageries like “the stench of burning tin, rexine, gunny bags, petrol and human flesh spreads all around” (Goswami 2002, 134), to enhance tenderness of the narrative. The fear psychosis instilled in the Sikhs and Goswami presents a case when the Sikh drivers from the nearby Taxi stand were targeted and they collectively got together in a comparatively safe space at her house.

They are now in the room which is serving as an arsenal. They look as if they have been roughed up. Almost all of them have their turbans torn and their beards ruffled. Their clothes have been reduced to shreds and are just clinging to their bodies. The two badly injured ones are half-carried and half-dragged inside. One falls prostrate on the floor. A stale smell spreads through the room... I stand at the door petrified! I recognize each one of them. They are all Sikh drivers from the Nagia Park taxi stand. They must have been caught in a frenzy of bloodlust. (Goswami 2002, 137)

The writer presents the poignancy of the victimization in the stark portrayal of violence where not just the elders but also the young Sikhs were targeted and not even the son of Balbir Singh was spared by the mad and unstoppable juggernaut of urban barbarity. Goswami narrates it in a profound manner.

I cry out. “Wake up Sonnu. He knows me. He has been to my house several times.”

She remains silent. I say, “Balbir sometimes used to bring him along and he had to miss school. I remember he didn’t like missing school just to push a cart. Please wake him up. He’ll recognize me. He will also recognize the boxes.”

The mother takes off the sheet covering Sonnu. All three of us cry out in shock. Both of Sonnu’s eyes are bandaged. The mother says, “His eyes were pierced with a sword. Take away these boxes. I can’t keep them.” (Goswami 2002, 152)

After the gory bloodshed and riots, the city of Delhi no more allured the narrator and especially after the death of Santokh Singh and sudden disappearance of Balbir, the disillusionment became far more profound. She could no more stand on her balcony and watch people pass by, as the image of Santokh Singh’s corpse would remind her of the dark days especially with the reflective presence of his ‘absence’. (Derrida 1978)

After the killing of Santokh Singh and the disappearance of Balbir, I found Delhi very distressing. Moreover, I could not open, anymore, the door of the balcony facing the gol chakkar. It was there that the dismembered corpse of Santokh Singh had lain. (Goswami 2002, 158)

Nanavati Commission of Inquiry states the savagery and immense propensity of the proclivity towards hatred and abhorrence, as manifested in the Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984.

The attack on Smt. Gandhi took place at about 9.20 a.m. on 31-10-1984. She was taken to All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) Hospital for medical treatment. This information had spread like wildfire and thousands of people started gathering near AIIMS. The crowd was gradually becoming impatient as the exact condition of Smt. Gandhi was not being disclosed to it. The South District Police was required to make elaborate arrangements to keep the crowd under control and to ensure safety of visiting VIPs. Between 1 and 1.15 p.m., media started breaking the news that Smt Gandhi was dead. By about 2 p.m. the angry crowds started shouting slogans, and after some time they were pulling out Sikh passengers from buses and manhandling them. The first incident of pelting stones happened at about 5 p.m. The massacre that followed thereafter was a nightmare for the Sikhs and the civilized society.(Nanavati 2005, 17)

The ambiguous trap gets materialised in form of the mindless violence that the community gets subjected to in the infamous Anti-Sikh riots consuming humanity to its deepest echelons.

The year 1984 is now a metaphor for an era, from Operation Blue Star to the November pogrom, and is sometimes extended to the 1990s when the state hunted terrorists in Punjab's countryside. For the collective consciousness of the Sikhs it represents a more modern gallughara, another massacre in the 500-odd years of Sikh history. It also represents the Sikhs' ability to survive and recover their dignity, with faith and courage. For many Indians it was a time of unmitigated horror which when remembered, elicits strong responses that we would willingly forget. (Grewal 2007, 150-151)

Jarnail Singh, in his book, *I Accuse*, discusses certain instances of political interferences and how political leaders incited the mobs.

Jagdish Tytler has been accused of inciting the burning of the gurudwara in Pulbangash area which led to two Sikhs being burnt alive. If anyone from the killing mobs was caught by the police, Tytler would turn up to release them, saying that they were Congress workers. Tytler was made a minister of state. On 19 November, Rajiv Gandhi, addressing a crowd at India Gate on his late mother's birthday, said, 'But, when a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it does shake a little'; to the Sikhs it was like rubbing salt on their wounds. (J. Singh 2011, 32)

Jarnail Singh, in his book, *I Accuse*, brings to light how the slaughter and violence on the Sikh community gets overshadowed by the over-arching intrepid justification of the cause and lamenting the death of Indira Gandhi.

In the Parliament session after the massacre, not a single person referred to the tragedy that had befallen Delhi's Sikh community, though everyone condoled the death of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The fact that the silence on the massacre cut across party lines is remarkable. (J. Singh 2011, 32-33)

Grewal interrogates the attitudes of the government in face of the crisis to humanity in general and the Sikh identity in particular. She interlinks how and why the events transpired beyond the threshold on control and censure and the state's pivotal role in intervention in tacit terms. She questions the conundrum that the people are faced with after the unfortunate pogrom in being denied 'justice' despite the legal and political manoeuvring of the issue in a span of more than 30 years, and ironically similar incidents of communal unrest in the recent time still unsettling the secular fabric of the nation.

So one finds oneself facing a conundrum. Exactly what is it that the Indian state must do to offer the salve for this most obvious of human rights violation? An immediate philosophical response could be that it should ensure that such an event is not repeated. Too late for that, given the horror of Bombay 1993 and Gujarat 2002. Consider the fact that the writing of a 'Place, Date' invokes immediate knowledge of a transpired horror; that is how deep our national shame-wound has gone into our collective psyche. So, it is indeed too late... Perhaps a more through answer lies in first analysing the scope and extent of what the state and its people did do in 1984; then an 'act of contribution' could be commensurate with the crime. In this claim is embedded the assumption that the state/government is culpable due to its complicity. There is no equivocation here: the November 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom was a well-orchestrated, government-sponsored event, making a stellar development in its methodology of exercising communal politics. And that we continue to allow ourselves to be manipulated into destructive socio-politico-religious attitudes makes us complicit in these events. The Indian polity is not passive; attitudinally, we are active participants in these events and crimes. There are answers to 'why did it happen?' The short answer is that the November 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom happened because Indian communalism exists as an active ideology sporadically manifesting itself in extreme violence. Communalism, unfortunately, was, and is, in robust health; its periodic episodic expressions are constant reminders. Communalism and casteism continue to be India's moral Achilles' heel. (Grewal 2007, 151-152)

The case about the youths of Punjab being selectively targeted and subsequently victimized is well portrayed in the socio-historical account of Jyoti Grewal. In contrast to documentary claims, Grewal traces a unique phenomenon in the government's complicity in creating an atmosphere of cynicism and the inter-communal fractures.

People did not wake up on 1 November 1984 and suddenly form mobs, get kerosene and spend three murder-happy days. A few Sikh men did not accidentally stop a bus in Punjab, pull out Hindus and shoot them because it took their fancy. Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale did not crawl out of the woodwork one fine day and become a 'leader' of Jat Sikh peasants, or a symbol for some strange war with Hindus and neither did he, by using hateful rhetoric to incite revolting killing of Punjabis, suddenly become the advocate of a Sikh homeland to be called Khalistan... A plausible explanation could be that the Congress, in order to win the elections, needed to form a monolithic Hindu voting bloc, an unprecedented move since Hindus were typically divided along caste lines. To create a counterpoint to this monolith, the Congress sought to construct a monolithic Sikh community, an oddly myopic ambition for any political authority. Lessons in India's history should have reminded them that it has never been possible to construct such monoliths within this pluralistic entity called South Asia. (Grewal 2007, 33,34,37)

The deliberate and selective appropriation of the riots were not obviously and only inter-communal, but also intra-communal, as the rich and affluent escaped the theatre of death and the poor succumbed to the same.

November 1984 witnessed deliberate mass murders, not accidental death due to street rioting. Unfortunately, the offenders were not prosecuted, because the keepers of the law chose not to take any legal action... The rich and the upper middle classes were not murdered because it would have been hard for the government to explain it away as 'spontaneous anguish.' (Grewal 2007, 176)

The economically stronger section within the Sikh community had access to the higher-ups and hence could escape the conflagration to a considerable extent to save their lives. They also had ways and means to access the legal means to seek appropriate reparations as per law. But the poor did not have the knowledge and the access. They could not speak for themselves as they were in a contextually disadvantageous socio-economic position, a poor Sikh, a meta-minority, a 'subaltern' who does not have a recognized voice of its own and has to be spoken for. (Spivak 1988)

It would have been too obvious as a well-orchestrated communal pogrom had the rich and affluent Sikhs been dragged out of their homes and set alight. Even communally infused cold-blooded strategists have limits. Above all, the real reason the upper class were not touched is that access to justice is classed; and each one of them knows how to make Sections 299, 300 and 307 work for them. The hard-working lower middle classes and the poor desperately attempt to speak for themselves but societies are not structured where they can; they are always spoken for. (Grewal 2007, 176)

The organized nature of the riots is evident in the manner in which the mobs dispersed systematically with the Army's flag marches avoiding any confrontations and arrests.

On 31 October there was some spontaneous public-justice-style behaviour... However, starting on 1 November there were well-armed, well-organized and well-paid mobs that went on rampages in selective areas of the capital... On 4 November, divisions of the army marched through Delhi, restoring order without a single confrontation of the so-called enraged mobs. The mobs disappeared, taking with them their iron rods, their explosives, their bamboo lathis, daggers and kerosene containers. (Grewal 2007, 163)

The movie, *Maachis*, deals with the effect pre and post the Operation and it depends on the perspective from which one gets a view of the rise of militants and underground armed struggle. The movie portrays a justification to the increasing number of youth, despite knowing the dire consequences, are getting attracted to an alternative option to assert their identity in the face of police's hyper-action and indiscriminate violation of human rights in the name of anti-terrorism. It shows sheer helplessness of the youth and their families when they are subjected to arbitrary arrests based on suspicion. What was even more draconian was the fact that to report the matters to higher authority, they were subjected to forceful had confession to crimes that they had not committed. This had fuelled the fire which was already burning in them to take the course of militants to seek justice for the community and draw a line of deterrence in face of crisis that the masses were facing due to police (in)action.

The people in Punjab were not sure who struck more terror in their hearts, the few hundred militants or the tens of thousands of special and regular forces of Punjab Police. After a few months of Gill's inventive butchering, the vote was overwhelmingly for Punjab Police. There was no hue and cry for the thousands of innocents who suffered from police brutalities; if captured, the families prayed for them to die rather than live with the consequences of the torture. (Grewal 2007, 204)

The line from a famous song *Chhod aaye hum, wo galliyan...* symbolically portrays the youth disillusioned in the conundrum of state injustice and societal disorder, finds a hope for renunciation in the ways of the underworld. They tacitly accepted that the government had duped the Sikh community during the partition and continues to do so even now, so they negotiate with the affiliation with their 'imagined community' and reconfigures with the radical call for a confrontation and thereby locate a possibility of assertion of their identity and protect it from being lost into the horizons of oblivion.

Identity is as much about personal choices and behaviours as it is about collectives. The scale of an event like November 1984, followed by state terrorism in Punjab, reformed personal and collective identity... In constructing an exclusively masculinist identity of young Sikh males as inclined towards militarism, (mis)led by religious leaders' interpretation of fundamentalism, *all* Sikh males were defensible targets for the state's counter-terrorism. Here was the equation: Sikh men = religious fundamentalists = militarists = Khalistani identity = secessionists. Therefore, they could be killed with impunity. QED. Ascribed identities can become weapon in the hands of unscrupulous states; if those identities are buttressed by the smallest of acts from the minority community then the ascription is validated and applied to the entire community... But what the state unleashed on Punjab's men has no moral defence either. The scale of tortures and deliberate murders in the now infamously widely used 'police encounters' would fill up reams in any list of human right violations. (Grewal 2007, 203-204)

The two central characters of the movie, Kirpal and Veeran, undergo significant shifts in their respective and relative identities in changing contours of time and space to negotiate with the ever-changing socio-political situations. Kirpal charts a journey from being a simple youth to being an outlaw, as a staunch note of his subversive potential, to challenge the uncanny dominion of state machinery in targeting and victimization of the innocent under obscurantist reasoning behind the need to maintain law and order situation. He is the victim of circumstances who finds it difficult to absolve the human right violation under the aegis of executive free-hand given to police to contain the 'proliferation' of extremism in Punjab. He finds it quite unfortunate for his friend Jaswant to be detained by the police based on suspicion and tortured in custody, thereby violating the legal rights of the accused as enshrined in the constitution. The idea that the movie presses on is the fact that how an innocent is framed by unreasonable high-handedness of the law and to the subsequent fall out in form of the youths rising above odds to find a meaning beyond the threshold of

normativity of social set-up. It materializes the disruptive potential of the youth and their energy, which, if not directed and regulated properly could take a subversive turn to satiate the urge of our essential human nature, which is to avenge injustice. Violence and injustice in form of human right violation under the aegis of maintenance of law and order situation was the 'rule' of the day and to tacitly accept the situation and to remain subservient in the face of brutalities and power operations of the societal forces was the normative domain of the society. In this context, questioning the functioning of the government and its machinery had become almost an act of treason or any other charge amounting to equal amount of propensity under the state's legal penal framework.

Kirpal symbolizes the collective state of distortion and repression of psyche amid a sense of 'loss' of their identity negotiated/compromised, within the normative domain, in the process of accommodation with the socio-political forces. He transgresses the threshold of normativity and breaks away from the complacency of safety and social security, at the critical juncture when his sense of identity got appalled with the air of suspicion and victimization consuming the state of Punjab from within and outside. His transgression into the underworld symbolizes and exemplifies the potential possibilities of transgression of the limit set by society. His journey into the unknown and unexplored, charts a rather unusual circumstance for a simple village boy to brave the adversaries and storm into the underworld of terrorist, symbolizes a quest for a new identity beyond the looming shadows of oblivion.

Jaswant had dealt with the police atrocities and that transforms him from being a simple fun-loving young man to being a subject of post-traumatic stress disorder. His initial arrest and the physical torture in custody is tantamount of his morale being beaten down to dust. He became a victim of situation in the hands of police, as his witty riposte with the name 'Jimmy' was read as insolence and humiliating by the police. So, his suffering was so contemptible that he was pushed beyond the limit of human tolerance into a state of being psychologically reprimanded to a desolate condition of dismal and misery. Past that incident he is a changed man like a survivor of catastrophe, subject to hallucination and psychic shocks. Eventually, he is arrested again to be interrogated fastidiously about the hide-outs of Kirpal. The torture that he undergoes shows how he gets pushed to the limit of tolerance and how in the meantime he chokes under mental pressure to end up committing suicide in custody.

The character of Veeran is symbolic of a victim of socio-political dialectics who is trapped in the cross-roads of loss of her family as well as her beloved. The journey that she charts vis-à-vis the progression of the plot of the movie, is a strong note by Gulzar, the director, about the way one should face the hardships in life, deal with them, find a way through and move ahead. What she does in the movie is phenomenal compared to the women of her times, who were still trapped in the domestic confines of social boundaries. The note that Gulzar gives is profound in terms of how a women should not succumb to situations and rather traverse the threshold of domesticity and social repression to assert one's individuality and identity. She does not give in to the pressures of the society and the perceptions of a single women. She challenged the aspect of vulnerability associated with a single women without a family and debunked the socially set-up gender roles for women. Negotiating with her identity as a girl engaged in domestic pursuits, she steps into the underworld and goes on to become a missile launching expert, thereby subverting the domains of gender-roles and hierarchy set up by social systems.

The character of Sanathan is again set-up as a victim of Indian partition and Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 in Delhi and how such euphoria coupled with paranoia synthesizes to be consumed within the fire of then rising and proliferating extremism in the state of Punjab, aimed at dislodging the power apparatus to find an identity independent of socio-politically detrimental variables and subjective victimization of power relations. As per his claims, he is not looking forward to bring about any kind of fundamental change, but rather wants his identity to be recognized and self-respect to be protected.

The core issue of the fundamentalism that the characters are negotiating here is that of reclaiming an identity trapped in the cross-roads of time and space in the closet of social discrimination in variegated forms of caste, gender and class. The discussion between Sanathan and Kirpal kind of closely hits on the issue. Sanathan begins by saying that the country has not become self-sufficient but certainly certain people have become self-sufficient. He further goes on to claim that no basic amenities are extended to the poor and states that more than sixty percent of the population is marked below poverty line who are not just poor but also unfortunate. He explains that a person continuously suffers injustice and is unable to fight the system then he collects similar people like him on various issues like communalism, regionalism or casteism but his core issue behind of struggles remains to be the original injustice clamped upon him. He also asserts that one can verify it in history to find that this has been happening and will continue to happen.

All of them find themselves at cross-roads entangled in a critical juncture wherein their collective resentment to the unfavourable and vilifying socio-political knee-jerk reaction to the sense of extremism, meets trans-border bolstering to sabotage governmental tactics. The characters question the fixity of the socio-political structure that they are trapped in and works on destabilizing it by re-imagining the veracity behind the fixity by locating the variables therein. When the very essence of democracy was losing ground in their imaginative recollection of socio-political vilification, the ramifications of such abasements is demonstrably hinted by Sanathan in discussing the symbol of *Maachis* or the match-stick. The symbol of the match-stick is very powerful to describe the potential of the spark, which can both give light as well as devastate. It also hints at how the youth of the nations need to be treated as they have the potential to both be enlightened by due channelling of their energies and also to wreak havoc if their energies are channelized in the wrong direction. He retorts that no revolution can happen with contained energies or untapped potentials symbolized in form of the damp match-sticks and also suggests on the need to hit the right chord to undampen the match-sticks to ignite the spark in the right direction.

The movie begins with snapshots of three important and crucial events stated as- ‘Golden Temple stormed’, ‘Indira Gandhi Shot Dead’ and ‘Mobs burn Sikh Alive’ which underlies the genesis of insurgency in Punjab with is symbolized in the four young men leaving their homes and hiking across mountains and rivers with the background song- *Chod aaye hum who galliyan*, which hints at the sense of the youth abandoning the so-called settled lifestyle which is under constant threat, surveillance and scrutiny to be able to find an alternate space for oneself and thereby create a better space by subversion of the designs of current state of affairs.

Veeran’s brother, Jaswant Singh Randhawa’s inexorable targeting by the police based on misinterpreted intelligence inputs and his arrest based on suspicion reflects upon the arbitrariness of the high-handedness of law and order situation at that point of time. When he is set free and returns in a desolate situation, he is none other than a victim of situation and eccentricities of the law and order situations. Upon his return, the villagers discuss the rather unfortunate situations of the state of affairs which may have worsened even beyond the dark times of partition of 1947. The villagers who symbolizes the mass populace discusses that it is wrong to remain silent recipient to state’s repressions and relentlessly agrees that it is such provocation and oddity of the state of affairs which sows the seeds of fundamentalist streaks and hardlines.

The chief of the outlaws tells Kirpal that the missile firing expert will join them soon for an important assignment. The chief also mentions that the expert had gone to the other side of the border for training, which implies Pakistan's complicity in the then rising militancy in Punjab as a fall-out of the Operation Blue Star and Anti-Sikh riots leading to a strained and wounded feeling in the Sikh community in the nation and beyond.

Meanwhile, the situation in Punjab started deteriorating and acts of terrorism increased and some Sikhs from pro-Khalistan groups went to Pakistan for weapon training. After the Sikh massacre in 1984, the sympathy of many in the Sikh community lay with them. No movement can gain ground if the sympathy of the people is not with them. Operation Blue Star and the Sikh massacre created the ground if the sympathy of the people is not with them. Operation Blue Star and the Sikh massacre created the ground for this support. (J. Singh 2011, 33)

While Veeran leaves her home to secure her personal and public identity, she simultaneously finds herself a new social identity independent of conventional and customary social variables. As per the demand of the plot, Veeran meets Kirpal on the other side of normativity, which is symbolic of how their union seemed to be destined despite the social cul-de-sac especially after Kirpal murders ACP Khurana. Veeran and Kirpal seems to compliment the each other's inner void and the recurrent sense of loss. Their respective identities get realized and their union becomes possible only beyond the threshold of normative societal domain. They negotiate with the altered roles as militants, subversive forces to unsettle the hegemony of social systems, albeit in a figurative manner. They reconfigured their identities with the duality, of who they were and what they have become, to find a way out and simultaneously a way through. Did their shift from the normative domains 'enable' them or did it further 'disable' them is the primary question that will largely define the limits of enablement/disablement and how the subtle boundary between the two stifle and blurs with mutability of space and time and how perception towards it also varies correspondingly.

The moment Kirpal gets arrested by police, the loyalist image of Kirpal and Veeran comes under scrutiny by the group led by Sanathan. This represents the unconscious fracture of the sense of collectiveness of the group and how the new-found and new-formed identities lack the stability of a foundation. The fact gets deduced that the identity formed as a synthesis of euphoria and paranoia floats on the trans-mutable shallow waters of delusion and absurdity.

The movie ends with the open question of whether they are absorbed or absolved in their attempt to break away from the customary tenet of society. The act of Veeran going to meet Kirpal in the jail and passing on the cyanide pill is symbolic of *coup de grace*, because she could suitably take into cognizance of the kind of psychological and physical trauma he must have been subjected into in police custody keeping in view the dreaded status of his criminal co-efficient extrapolated out of his perilous history of his alarming enterprising dividend. Veeran's and Kirpal's spontaneous and mutual choice of death is symbolic of the Victorian sense of love where the ethereal factor of creating the atypical space for being united after death, as epitomized by quintessential Victorian narratives like Browning's *Porphyria's Lover* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. This element of ethereality plays a rather important role for things to shape up especially when the world seems to have turned hostile towards the union and their identities of life than stands surrendered into impasse of time and context of being.

One of the members wants to leave the group as he was almost caught by the police and he could not assiduously strike the balance between his exultant ideological mesmerism of being an outlaw and to resist the colossal yoke of the state machinery from such close quarters. In this state of psychological conundrum, he voices out the rather innate willingness to fly abroad to Canada to free himself from the ambiguity of struggle against the state and his self. Canada, unconsciously had become the safe haven from the psychological perspective of a substantial number of Sikh families in Punjab, despite the threat of being forced to forsake their Indian national and socio-cultural identity.

Besides the tortures and murders, Punjab lost a massive number of youth to large-scale emigration. Britain, Canada and the United States were the destinations. Most arrived there illegally, having sold their family property...The peasantry could not leave to go anywhere; they continued to live in Punjab under increasingly difficult economic conditions. Cynics may argue that these young men wanted to migrate to Western countries to begin with and then conveniently used police brutality as a pretext. Perhaps some did. As immigrants in another nation, their identity from personal to national has undergone a radical shift. (Grewal 2007, 205)

The movie *Maachis* in context of rise of Punjab militancy aptly portrays the changing dynamics of social interaction due to the paternalistic trepidation of insecurity seeping into the society at large, where the protectors turn perpetrators of violence and animosity, creating a fault line of suspicion in reference to the fastidious sense of abrogation to the

normative perception of law and order situation in place. It is in this of context that ideological scuffles of whether to choose between appropriation/abrogation of the new social order had been decisive in deriding/admiring the sense of roots and the identity therein. It was for the unfortunate victims to choose whether they should simply succumb to the destined course of socio-political delinquencies and ideological distortions or should they dare to create a counter-hegemonic space with the perennial risk of being averted at any given point of time. Nonetheless, the point that gets deduced here is that to realize the macro-scenario of identity negotiations of the victims of the coup between the state and militants, the micro meta-negotiations and reconfigurations needs to be collated and appropriated to chart the essence of the denied normative existence.

As a retaliation to the assassination of Indira Gandhi, there was indiscriminate violence that threatened the Sikh community with the mindless fundamentalist streak of the common masses who impulsively believed in an unwarranted notion that since the assassins of the then late Prime Minister were Sikhs, hence the whole of Sikh community should face the brunt of the deeds of the perpetrators.

We know that in November 1984, there was an organized massacre of Sikhs. We know that twenty-three years and nine investigative commissions later the guilty have not been brought to book. We know that the massacre left behind widows, orphans, pain, trauma, displaced and subdued Sikhs, and unanswered questions. We know that the Justice Nanavati Commission Report, issued in August 2005, indicted four Congress party leaders but we also know that justice has been compromised since there are no charges against them. The State fails its citizens when it fails to render real its ideals... It might be argued that the violence against the Sikhs in 1984 was a 'one-off', an aberration in terms of what is described as communalism in India (traditionally the code for Hindu- Muslim animosity). One plausible conclusion could be that it was a spontaneous emotional response to the assassination of the then prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, by her Sikh bodyguards...A less visible aspect of the revenge-theory which might have credence is one with a powerful subtext for all minority communities within the nation-state of India. It goes back to 1947 and the Partition which had mediated all communal relationships in the post-Independence era. The unprecedented violence in Delhi of 1984 was defended with the subtext: *'Humne tumhe is mulk mein rehne diya, aur tumhari yeh himmat ki tumne hamari PM ki jaan li.'* (We let you live in our country, and you had the audacity to kill our prime minister.) I give this subtext after reading much about violence in the post-

Independence era. It is very comforting to claim that minorities are protected, even pampered, in India; however, the inequities endured by various religious minorities speak for themselves when sociologists, historians, and social commentators research and analyse the locational and situational realities of their participation within the mainstream. (Grewal 2007)

The Nanavati Inquiry commission finds a related reason that led to the gruesome ferocity perpetrated upon the Sikhs in Delhi during 1984. “After 21 years and nine different commissions and committees to inquire into the killings of Sikhs in November 1984, of which the Nanavati commission report is the last.” (Chakravarti 2005, 3790) It extensively states the genesis of the problem and how it wreaked havoc on humanity altogether:

Smt. Indira Gandhi was a popular leader. She was the Prime Minister of India. It was, therefore, not unusual that on coming to know about her assassination by her Sikh security men, the people reacted angrily. The first sign of such public resentment resulting in an angry outburst in Delhi was at about 2-30 p.m. on 31-10-84 when the public suspected that Smt. Indira Gandhi had succumbed to her injuries and started assaulting passer-by Sikhs. It was again noticed at about 5 p.m., when the cars in the entourage of President Giani Zail Singh was stoned near AIIMS. Soon after the death of Smt. Indira Gandhi was announced on the All India Radio, crowds had gathered in several parts of Delhi and become violent. The Sikhs were beaten and their vehicles were burnt. Till then the attacks were made by persons who had collected on the roads to know what had happened and what was happening. They were stray incidents and the attacks were not at all organized. The mobs till then were not armed with weapons or inflammable materials. With whatever that became handy, they manhandled Sikhs and burnt their vehicles. There were stray incidents of damaging houses or shops of Sikhs. From the morning of 1-11-84 the nature and intensity of the attacks changed. After about 10 a.m. on that day slogans like “Khoon-Ka-Badla-Khoon Se Lenge” were raised by the mobs. Rumours were circulated which had the effect of inciting people against the Sikhs and prompt them to take revenge. There is evidence to show that at some places the mobs indulging in violent attacks had come in DTC buses or vehicles. They either came armed with weapons and inflammable materials like kerosene, petrol and some white powder or were supplied with such materials soon after they were taken to the localities where the Sikhs were to be attacked. There is also evidence on record to show that on 31-10-84 either meetings were held or the persons who could organize attacks were contacted and were given instructions to kill Sikhs and loot their houses and shops. The attacks were made in a systematic manner and without much fear of the

police; almost suggesting that they were assured that they would not be harmed while committing those acts and even thereafter. Male members of the Sikh community were taken out of their houses. They were beaten first and then burnt alive in a systematic manner. In some cases tyres were put around their necks and then they were set on fire by pouring kerosene or petrol over them. In some cases white inflammable powder was thrown on them which immediately caught fire thereafter. This was a common pattern which was followed by the big mobs which had played havoc in certain areas. The shops were identified, looted and then burnt. Thus what had initially started, as an angry outburst became an organized carnage. The cause for the events which had happened on 31-10-84 can be stated to be the spontaneous reaction and anger of the public because their popular leader and the Prime Minister of the Country was killed. The cause for the attacks on Sikhs from 1-11-84 had not remained the same. Taking advantage of the anger of the public, other forces had moved in to exploit the situation. Large number of affidavits indicate that local Congress(I) leaders and workers had either incited or helped the mobs in attacking the Sikhs. But for the backing and help of influential and resourceful persons, killing of Sikhs so swiftly and in large numbers could not have happened. In many places the riotous mobs consisted of outsiders, though there is evidence to show that in certain areas like, Sultanpuri, Yamunapuri where there are large clusters of jhuggis and jhopris, local persons were also seen in the mobs. Outsiders in large numbers could not have been brought by ordinary persons from the public. Bringing them from outside required an organized effort. Supplying them with weapons and inflammable material also required an organized effort. There is evidence to show that outsiders were shown the houses of the Sikhs. Obviously it would have been difficult for them to find out the houses and shops of Sikhs so quickly and easily. There is also evidence to show that in a systematic manner the Sikhs who were found to have collected either at Gurudwara or at some place in their localities for collectively defending themselves were either persuaded or forced to go inside of their houses. There is enough material on record to show that at many places the Police had taken away their arms or other articles with which they could have defended themselves against the attacks by mobs. After they were persuaded to go inside their houses on assurances that they would be well protected, attacks on them had started. All this could not have happened if it was merely a spontaneous reaction of the angry public. The systematic manner in which the Sikhs were thus killed indicate that the attacks on them were organized. It appears that from 1-11-84 another 'cause of exploitation of the situation' had joined the initial 'cause of anger'. The exploitation of the situation was by the anti social elements. The poorer sections of society who are deprived of enjoyment of better things in life saw an opportunity of looting such things without the fear of being

punished for the same. The criminals got an opportunity to show their might and increase their hold. The exploitation of the situation was also by the local political leaders for their political and personal gains like increasing the clout by showing their importance, popularity and hold over the masses. Lack of the fear of the Police force was also one of the causes for the happening of so many incidents within those 3 or 4 days. If the police had taken prompt and affective steps, very probably so many lives would not have been lost and so many properties would not have been looted, destroyed or burnt. (Nanavati 2005, 179-181)

Giani Kirpal Singh views the justification of the government's inaction and gory bloodbath during Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 as utterly baseless and devoid of any value of democracy and criticises the government for the hollowness of violence by drawing analogy to the ruthless Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb's strategy for religious conversion.

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi justified the cold-blooded murders of 10,000 innocent Sikh men, women and children by publically declaring on the Indian Television that "when a big tree falls earth shakes," forgetting that when a big tree fall its branches also collapse. Even Aurangzeb did not dare to touch any Hindu Temple or any Hindu civilian of Delhi to execute his plan of converting India into an Islamic state. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, his advisers and his *Subedars* (Chief Ministers) surpassed even Aurangzeb in persecuting the Sikhs in Delhi. In three days they murdered 10,000 Sikh men, women and children, burned and looted the properties of the Sikhs and set on fire their Shrines. On June 3-6, 1984 and [November] 1-3, 1984, democracy in India was dead and it was replaced by Demoncracy, D+ Mercy, the Sikhs were at the mercy of the political demons, whose so called party workers were indulging in loot, plunder, arson, murders and rapine like licensed dacoits. (G. K. Singh 1999, xix-xx)

The assassination had pan Indian repercussions. *The Times of India*, dated 1st November, 1984 reported that-

Over 100 people were injured in violence across the country as news of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination spread today. Curfew was imposed in Agartala, Jammu and Jabalpur while army was called out in Agartala and Calcutta as angry crowds went on the rampage. Incidents of violence were reported from parts of Tripura, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Madhya Pradesh. Delhi: All over the city, slogan shouting bands of youth roamed the streets pulling out people of one community from buses, cars, scooter-rickshaws and other transport. While a

section beat up the men, others, set fire to the vehicles. The section of Ring Road in South Extension was littered with burning vehicles. Several shops in the market were also gutted. Most of the areas in the Capital were a deserted look as people, on hearing the news about angry mobs, preferred to stay within the safety of their homes. The authorities later imposed prohibitory orders under section 144 of the Cr. P.C. Police patrolling was intensified and reinforcements being rushed to sensitive areas... PATNA: Sporadic incidents of arson and violence were reported from certain areas in the city. A report said several shops had been burnt and members of a particular community attacked... MADRAS: Two school buses were burnt and some shops belonging to a particular community were attacked... KANPUR: Three places of worship and about two dozen business and residential premises were set on fire... JAMMU: Sporadic incidents of violence were also reported from various parts of Jammu resulting in the imposition of curfew... Several hundred unruly persons attacked a three wheeler autorickshaw driver causing grievous injuries on his head.

Incidents of mob violence were reported in Jabalpur and Indore in the wake of the announcement of the assassination [of] Mrs. Indira Gandhi. (*Times of India*, 1 November 1984) (Deora 1992, 509-511)

The nature of violence that was spreading like a wild fire had taken an ugly stand when a close nexus of the mob and the ones controlling them became the ones interpreting the law coupled with police inaction, which in itself was an action of tacit acceptance of the violence.

In 1984 theft – and more – had been permitted selectively by the state; it was fine to steal so long as you stole from the Sikhs... Most of us ‘knew’ that Congress party men were behind the criminality and the killings. But who could produce evidence of such involvement? From those very first days, the Congress-I had been demanding evidence from all of us who were seeing that involvement. In our newsroom, as through the city, we could not instantly produce evidence of the kind that could stand incontrovertibly in court, that would prove the active involvement of a top Congress party leader... The Congress party hand that showed here wasn’t visibly bloody, but it was identifiable. Far more serious allegations arose over other Congress leaders, but these lie trapped in the contested space between accusation and denial. (Suri 2015, 17-18)

The question of involvement of Congress members in the riots were raised by Sanjay Suri to Rajiv Gandhi.

I asked him about the involvement of Congress party leaders in the Delhi killings. ‘In one case there was evidence, and we took action,’ he told me... He had snubbed Shastri as head of the party, he did not order legal action as head of government. What had happened inside that police station was abortion of law induced by political muscle. Shastri had been punished for political misdemeanour, he was not prosecuted for violation of the law that such misdemeanour amounted to... That question has always hovered over the 1984 killings- what Rajiv Gandhi did and didn’t do. Through the muddle of suspicions and denials, the picture to me looks clear.

Congress party leaders have always asked an apparently fair question in defence of Rajiv Gandhi. Where is the evidence that Rajiv Gandhi may have ordered the killings? It’s unlikely there will ever be such an evidence. It’s almost impossible that someone will one day produce some secret note from Rajiv Gandhi ordering a massacre of Sikhs in Delhi. Surely, no such note exists. But there the Congress case for denial does not rest... And yet, I believe Rajiv Gandhi carried prime responsibility for most of the deaths. He simply did not do what it would have taken to prevent them... The difference lies between ordering killings and failing to prevent them... This facts points to a clear responsibility for failing to protect Sikhs, even if they stopped short of any active command to kill. Nothing Rajiv Gandhi said or did can be construed as a command to kill; but so much of what he said, and did, spoke of a passive aggression that encouraged the killings. And this he followed up with decisions that were guaranteed to deny justice later. (Suri 2015, 24-26)

Rajiv Gandhi’s remarks in the killings and outrage that consumed Delhi and his reference to the ‘shake’ when a ‘big tree falls’ was severely criticised. It could be read as an instance where Rajiv Gandhi disproportionate negotiation of his identity as an aggrieved son and his political position as her successor in the office.

Rajiv Gandhi’s metaphor for the killings shook Delhi, it certainly shook the Sikhs of Delhi: when a big tree falls, the earth shakes. The metaphor sought to turn the killings on the streets and in homes into an inevitable, even automatic consequence of the assassination of Indira Gandhi, with no possibility of intervention between cause and consequence, The tree metaphor in effect said this: two assassins who happened to have been Sikhs had assassinated Indira Gandhi; the murder of a few thousand innocent Sikhs was therefore the logical result; the murders were the shaking of the ground, the tree having been felled. (Suri 2015, 26)

The 'tree' metaphor used by Rajiv Gandhi to relate to the assassination of Indira Gandhi as irreconcilable 'justification' behind the Anti-Sikh riots, drew criticism to his political image of the Prime Minister diluting his professional role under personal pretext.

The inevitability suggested by the image of the falling tree would absolve Congress leaders of any hand in the killings, the police of responsibility in preventing them, and finally Rajiv Gandhi himself for failing as head of government to protect his people. The metaphor had of itself announced a view that prevention of the killings was not possible, and that prosecution for them would not be possible either. Tragically, the metaphor did not remain a matter of choice of language. Government conduct had fallen with that metaphor, lethally. ... The tree metaphor that followed suggested that he didn't think he had. It suggested that the Indian prime minister thought that 3,000 murders in Delhi following the failure of his government to prevent them were okay. It suggested, and we saw, that he didn't believe there was any reason to later prosecute those guilty of the murders. The metaphor came with perpetual injustice written into it. Rajiv Gandhi's government governed in line with the injustice in that metaphor. (Suri 2015, 26,28)

Rajiv Gandhi's inaction reflects poorly upon the government machinery in not containing the violence and let it spread like wild fire beyond justifiable and unimaginable proportions. His identity as a leader was debated as he had no justifications to the inaction which is also an action of a certain kind.

The need to provide protection to Sikhs was never remote, it was right before Rajiv Gandhi. Within walking distance of the prime minister's house, Sikhs were being 'necklaced' with burning tyres... Those three days Rajiv Gandhi did not lead. Criminal or not, it turned out to be tragic. He perhaps did not see a need to lead if all he was observing was a cause-and-effect phenomenon of shaking of the earth on which a mighty tree had fallen. The leader reduced himself to an observer, or an incomplete actor. He made appeals for calm, he did little to enforce them. The Sikhs of Delhi did not need to hear speeches on the right thing to do, they needed the right thing done. And that needed government force that did not come, that Rajiv Gandhi did not effectively order.

For a mere citizen to have looked away would be condemnable but perhaps pardonable; for a government and its police to look away was culpable... The arm of the government that could have stopped the killer was the police. The police looked the

other way, and could be seen looking the other way by the government, as much if not more than by anyone else. Just that deliberate police decision to look the other way makes an arguable case for conspiracy or at least abetment to murder- the fact that Delhi Police enabled murders through deliberated decisions they took is a fact that is inescapable, overwhelming and chilling. And if the police was culpable, so was the Congress government that controlled the police. (Suri 2015, 28-29)

The police inaction is highly criticised and was read as a tacit consent of the police in favour of the rioters by majority of Sikhs, including the journalists like Sanjay Suri. Suri, on account of his personal interface with the unfortunate tragedy of the event at Rakab Ganj gurudwara, narrated the event as:

Mourners had been filling past all morning crying ‘khooon ka badla khooon’ (blood for blood). Rakab Ganj gurudwara was the nearest target from Teen Murti Bhavan where the cry for blood could be turned into action... Screaming men were advancing again and again towards the gurudwara - and the policemen just stood there, in a disciplined and very static column.

The policemen were from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). The additional commissioner of police for New Delhi range, Gautam Kaul, stood by the side of the policemen, carrying a bamboo shield to protect himself... Here was an officer who had the command of a police force by his side. In the face of an advancing move by a murderous crowd, he issued no orders to the police, he ducked and ran.

Kaul later denied this; of course he would. Put to it, he could no doubt line up a neat formation of witnesses from the CRPF to ‘confirm’ the ‘denial’. And who among that crowd would come up ever to say they saw the police officer in charge duck to a side the moment they took some steps forward? None of this silence alters the fact that I saw what I saw. (Suri 2015, 46-47)

The inaction was not only from the police but also from the first citizen of the country holding the top-most political office in the country, Giani Zial Singh. “For the Sikh community, the fact that a Sikh was the President of the country and yet not able to save innocent Sikhs from slaughter is something they can never forget.” (J. Singh 2011, 60) His categorical inaction is seen as delinquency of his position as the President.

It is difficult believe that the President of India could not get in touch with the home minister. The former chairman of the Minorities Commission, Tarlochan Singh, was then the personal secretary to Giani Zail Singh. He has said in his statement to the Nanavati Commission that when the President's cavalcade was attacked, the President had asked the Lt. Governor of Delhi P.G. Gavai on the phone, 'If the situation is so out of control then why isn't the army being brought in?' The answer was, 'If the army is called in, the situation is only going to get worse.' When BJP leader Vijay Kumar Malhotra spoke to the President, then too Zail Singh's answer was, 'I am helpless, I can't do anything.' This was also the reply he gave to Sharad Yadav, Karpuri Thakur and Chaudhary Charan Singh. His reply to each one of them was the same and is recorded in the affidavits to both the Ranganath Mishra and Nanavati Commissions. When the well-known journalist Kuldip Nayar met the President, he was told, 'Kuldip, neither am I being informed about the riots nor are any papers coming to me. If I am getting any information at all, it's through friends like you.' After this he became perturbed and said, 'I have no idea how the future generations are going to judge me.' Kuldip Nayar has recorded this in his statement to the Nanavati Commission. (J. Singh 2011, 58-59)

Another important development was how Sikhs fell to a position of minority in the broader picture. The genesis of the riots to be interpolated from the majority-minority nexus and the anguish intricately linked with it.

When power among the groups is unevenly distributed, both parties in the asymmetric relationship may have cause for alarm. The weaker side may fear exploitation and/or resent their position of inferiority. Conversely, the stronger side may fear an inevitable shift in the balance of power in the long run and a challenge to the status quo. (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 747)

Uma Chakravarti and Nandita Haksar through interviews with victims of the Anti-Sikh riots had established a tacit form of injustice is making one feel a minority, as the 'other' beyond the normative domains.

Beginning with Operation Bluestar and culminating with the carnage the Sikhs began to feel like a marked community. Never before had these ten million citizens felt like a minority; in fact they had always been viewed as a dominating community found in all the major walks of life. The carnage dealt a shattering blow to the already battered emotions of the Sikhs following Bluestar and the self-perception of the Sikhs was

severely affected. Many of our Sikh interviewees have spoken feelingly of their deep sense of hurt and humiliation at the November carnage... The shaping of a minority consciousness among the Sikhs was dramatically and painful affected by the sheer horror, brutality, and lawlessness of the first three days of November 1984. The feelings of insecurity and persecution experienced by the community emanated largely from the perception of the Sikhs of the two recent events which had affected them collectively. The assault on the Golden Temple by the Indian army was seen as an invasion of their sacred precincts and the November carnage had meant an invasion into their very home. (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 22)

The delay on the part of the government to act is sending wrong messages to the aggrieved community to be misinterpreted as government apparatuses' complicity in this matter.

The government was also liberally contributing to this sense of alienation by refusing to concede the demands for an enquiry, and by refusing to concede the demands for an enquiry, and by its failure to pursue cases against the killers. But most damaging of all was the election campaign of the ruling party where they used the media to get support on communal lines. Full page advertisements splashed all the major newspapers which visually communicated the message of the Sikhs as saboteurs without explicitly saying so... These development which culminated in making the Sikhs feel like a minority took place alongside the emergence of a self-conscious and confident Hindu identity. (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 25-26)

Failure of the administrative machinery and articulate nexus with the media to spread the episteme of distortions and establish the inevitability of the crisis.

The sense of insecurity has been compounded especially because the Sikhs had never expected that the state would withdraw its protection to them. Many of our interviewees point out that the Sikhs of Trilokpuri and Sultanpuri had been the traditional vote banks of the Congress I and yet they were abandoned by all the agencies of the state: the ruling party, the police, and the administration. This has not only added to their insecurity but also made them angry. The collapse of administration which many of our interviewees talk about is considered by most Sikhs to have been a "contrived collapse" and the state has then, through the media, tried to make the riots look as if they were "natural and inevitable", describing it as an expression of the spontaneous anger of the people. As the months went by their anger was intensified when it became apparent that no action was being taken against those who had been

identified by the victims and despite a widespread demand for an enqui[r]y it was initially rejected on what appeared to them to be utterly spurious grounds. (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 24)

Rising apprehensions due to delay in governmental action and what the Sikh community had suffered is having debilitating repercussions for the state standing the risk of being torn into partisan ignominy.

Also strikingly evident is a newly developed sense of solidarity among a large number of Sikhs (who had not defined themselves as Sikhs earlier) with the rest of the community in the days following the November carnage. The sense of solidarity is being expressed through gestures which have reversed the move towards a non-sectarian identity: one of our interviewees who had considered cutting his hair before November '84 has now decided not to do so because it had become a "question of courage and dignity." (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 30)

The riots seemed to have engineered a split, but one section turning radical and the other turning increasingly silent and desolate with the loss, either of which is uncalled for a citizen of democratic nation.

As against the tendency to turn inward some of our interviewees argue that the only way out of the impasse is through politicisation and unless that takes place half the victims will be driven towards extremism and the others will just be left in tears for the rest of their lives. According to this view there has to be a via media in which there can be a logical and rational expression of the emotions. This is equally true for the community and not just in the case of the direct victims of the carnage. (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987, 30)

Communal violence and the state interventions

Though communalism relies on religion for authenticity it hardly has any religion in it. It is an ideology that grows in the soil of specific material socio-economic realities of any group identified by its religious beliefs. When there are social and economic concerns of a particular group which are not recognized, or which cause cultural and material fractures, the emotional alienation of that group becomes fertile ground for the revival of communal ideology... Ergo, there is no mystery to why 'it' happened. From Bhindranwale to Indira Gandhi to Zail Singh to H.K.L. Bhagat and Jagdish Tytler, all of it was carefully stage-managed. Sikhs and Hindus carried, perhaps subconsciously, a

communal ideology. The economic condition of Jat farmers was shaky enough for them to be used by a maverick saint as ‘mobilizatory potential’. That Punjab’s politics went awry from New Delhi’s plans does not diminish the pre-existence of an ideology which was fanned to serve the interests of the ballot box. The communal fire raged equally in the streets of Punjab as in the corridors of power in New Delhi. This conflagration reached its highest point in Amritsar in June 1984, culminating in 31 October 1984. The November violence, then, became the Hindu answer to all that had gone on before. (Grewal 2007, 155)

The movie *Amu* is set in the backdrop of Anti-Sikh riots which has a non-linear narrative and the protagonist finds the existence that preceded her current essence is to be located in retrospective space-time trajectory. The narrative has been intricately inter-woven with subtle use of psychological inferences in the articulate use of the slum as a potential stimulant to tickle her unconscious in her journey to unravel her past and hence her identity. To start off her journey to unconsciously know herself she wants to know ‘India’. She gets quizzed by Kabir about doing the ‘tourist thing’ about finding the “real India... through the foreign lens[es].”(Konkona Sen Sharma 2005) To which she retorts, “I just want to know India because it is a part of who I am.” (Sen Sharma, Karat, Khanna 2005) On her part to knit the tale of her origin she finds various intersections and junctions, which promised a way ahead but simultaneously also mystified the process with multiple avenues. The narrative progression untangles the climax of the plot in a dexterous pattern by her first encounter of Govind in Balbir Dhaba in Delhi University enclave which opens the floodgates of her tragic family history, but it was done in such an articulate manner that the audience’s interest and connect with the movie and essentially to the character of Kaju, the protagonist, becomes incredibly profound. She is told a different story about her origin to keep the dark reality concealed. Kabir, after being intrigued at her increasing interest in the *jhuggi* ‘area’ with narrow streets, where she feels at home, questions her. His arbitrary conjectures seem to be the igniting point for Kaju to reveal the story of herself that she has been told and then based on that revelation as a reference point the narrative charts out the distance from the reality of who she really is and her truth. She reveals, “I was born poor. I was born in a village that didn’t even have electricity or tubewell. In mean, that’s why I am drawn into the whole poverty thing... My birth parents died in a malaria epidemic which wiped off my entire village. I was adopted from an agency when I was three.” (Sen Sharma, Karat, Khanna 2005) Keya’s sudden arrival adds veracity to the line of the narrative. As the plot further entangles, Keya abruptly reacts on hearing that

Kaju visited a *jhuggi*, with an unconscious apprehension that the visit might be precursor for something hidden to be revealed. She does not verbally respond but her expression and the paralanguage communicated her inner discomfort. This may be read with reference to Auteur theory.

The work of the *auteur* has a semantic dimension, it is not purely formal; the work of the *metteur en scene*, on the other hand, does not go beyond the realm of performance, of transposing into the special complex of cinematic codes and channels a pre-existing text: a scenario, a book or a play... the meaning of films of an *auteur* is constructed *a posteriori*; the meaning- semantic, rather than stylistic or expressive- of the films of a *metteur en scene* exists *a priori*. (Wollen 1979, 682)

Once when Kaju goes to visit Govind they cross some intersecting railway lines, and that event serves as a stimulator of her unconscious psyche to link her present to the past. She hallucinates while she sees an image of a women, which makes her both uncomfortable as well as reaffirming a familiar feeling to the place, to which she claims- "I know this place" (Sen Sharma, Karat, Khanna 2005) She gets a sense of *déjà vu* while visiting places in and around the slums and then finds that the place had witnessed a communal violence, where Sikhs were especially targeted after assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi by her personal security staff who were co-incidentally Sikhs. She tries to trace her identity with the records she knows but is baffled to learn that no malaria epidemic ever happened at the specific space and time that relates to her origins. She eventually learns that her origins remain rooted in the events linked with the Anti-Sikh riots. She finds that the immensity of the violence reflected the deliberated state inaction which was being orchestrated by a close nexus of politicians and bureaucrats to facilitate the buffoonery of law and order situation at that point of time.

This unprecedented association between the state and the violence unleashed upon a particular community crucially shaped the nature of the violence, the manner in which people were hunted down and killed within the precincts of their own homes in one of the most gruesome displays of street power seen in independent India, the dramatic and sudden transformation of a community across the country, but especially in the capital, into a marked group, and the peculiar sense of betrayal experienced by the victims and survivors of the three days of violence in November 1984. (Chakravarti 1994, 2722)

In the movie, during the discussion over lunch at Kabir's place, some interesting point was made in regard to police inaction and the way in which the situation was dealt with and tackled. One of the senior gentlemen tells Kaju, "Why project this ugly part of India? ... It is a very complex history" to which Kaju responds that, "No matter what the deeper causes for this event or the provocation, how come the cops couldn't stop the rioters for three days." The gentlemen replied incisively that, "Our police is not as efficient as your L.A.P.D. [Los Angeles Police Department], they should be trained by the Americans. " To which one of Kaju's friend puts across a convincing point that, "they [police] were completely efficient when they had to arrest 50,000 people under TADA, that's just like the patriot act." (Sen Sharma, Karat, Khanna 2005) Reference to TADA and PATRIOT act, reflects upon the selective action/inaction of the security apparatus at the behest of political articulations and manipulations.

The Nanavati Inquiry commission records such situations of selective appropriation and political interference in police actions. The concluding remarks of the report states that-

The Commission also agrees with the findings recorded by Justice Mishra Commission as regards the delay in calling the army. Therefore, in this respect also the Commission is not inclined to refer to all the evidence and record its own findings so as not to burden this report unnecessarily. The Commission also agrees with these commendations made by Justice Mishra Commission for preventing happening of such events again. The Commission would however, like to recommend that such riots are kept under check and control and there should be an independent police force which is free from the political influence and which is well equipped to take immediate and effective action. It is also necessary and therefore, the Commission recommends that if riots take place on a big scale and if the police is not able to register every offence separately at the time when they are reported, the Government should thereafter at the earliest take steps to see that all complaints are properly recorded and that they are investigated by independent Investigating Officers. Only if such an action is taken by the Government, people would feel that law is allowed to take its own course and the guilty would be punished properly. (Nanavati 2005, 183)

Kabir's father is symbolic of government's inaction and how things were deliberately articulated to wave it off records and pave way to justify the denial or deferral of justice to the victims of the gory bloodbath.

The Nanavati Inquiry Commission states a report in regard to the gross misconduct or selective conduct of the police machinery.

Smt. Gurcharan Kaur had filed an affidavit before Justice Mishra Commission regarding this incident and pointed out inaction of the Police when this and other shops were being looted. Shri Triolok Singh has filed an affidavit before this Commission and stated that when the incident happened two policemen were standing near that shop but they did nothing and merely kept on watching what was going on. One of the policemen was having a stengun with him. Shri Avtar Singh Diwan (W-16) appeared before this Commission and gave evidence regarding this incident. He has stated that while this incident was going on two policemen who were standing nearby just kept on watching the attack and did nothing to disperse the mob or to prevent it from committing such an offence. (Nanavati 2005, 38)

There are interesting references to how the act of violence was perpetrated and how perpetrators were facilitated with voter records and ration lists for specific identification of Sikh households. A sense of distrust and scepticism, towards politicians and government officials at that point of time, seeped in the Sikh community when the 'protectors' of law and order turned perpetrators to the situation, in view of their tacit consent towards the mob violence seemingly both in principle and practice. The violence got explicitly patronized by the state machinery in principle though it got masked by heroics of police officers like Maxwell Pereira.

Keya initially evades the issue but slowly and gradually finds it difficult and unwieldy to mask the fact as the concealed past makes definitive inroads into the present, with a potent threat to blow the cover. Keya finds it onerous to be suspended in a conundrum whether to stick to the request of Kaju's mother of keeping Kaju completely aloof from her origins and the tragic consequences that had befallen on their family, or to tell her the reality so that she does not get into any trouble while on the passionate perusal to locate her origin. After a lot of deliberation with herself and acknowledging the futility at containing the idea any further she narrates the tragedy that had befallen on her family during the Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and how her family like many others fell prey to the mob violence, an archetype of communal juggernaut of animosity and hatred consuming humanity from within. It is in the narrative of revelation that Amu learns about her roots and how her father fell victim to the communal rage. She also learns in detail about her family tragedy

when she gets to know that her brother got burnt down when their house was burnt. Her mother could not deal with the tragedy and on the occasion of his birthday, the burden came clamping upon her to which she unfortunately could not sustain and succumbed to socio-psychological pressures culminating into suicide. The letter written to Keya by her mother, before committing suicide, becomes the objective correlative to the identity ambiguities that Kaju eventually becomes subjected to. Initially, Kaju finds it hard to digest.

Keya's intention at concealment of the fact is demanded as per situation and is clearly stated from the situation that all she did was a genuine call of humanity rather than any vested interest hidden therein. As a testimony to Kaju's mother, she conceals the fact from Amu for all years and takes care of Amu as her own child to ensure that she gets all the motherly care and affection.

Kaju accepts her past with its related tragedy and understands the motive behind why and how Keya, as per Kaju's mother's request, concealed the fact and played the role of a 'mother' with utmost sincerity and dedication. She finds a newer meaning in the way the past tragedy had shaped her present, had given a new definition of family structure wherein she finds her identity being reconfigured vis-à-vis the fostered relations that she got fortunately subjected to and engaged in. She walks the tight rope while maintaining the delicate balance of acceptance of the present reality under the shadow of her unfortunate past, to subjectively persuade herself of the actuality of the situation that she is a subject to the circumstances, like many survivors of the 1984 Anti-Sikh riots.

It is understood as to how people become mere passive onlookers and subjects in the larger game of politics when they are dragged into a situation where their inner conscience of predispositions stands manipulated and articulated as per the astute manoeuvres of political shuttle.

Pali Grewal echoed the sentiments of many an Indian when she said, 'Riots take place when governments want them to happen, not when people want them.' Does it mean that Indians are merely objects whom the governments can act upon, and that we citizens can abdicate all responsibility of participation? No, and no. The politicians/vested political interests/ governments merely access an attitudinal presence- in this case communalist predilections- at the right time when all the material

conditions are perfectly aligned in order to play us off of each other. That we succumb to being played off is our responsibility because it was our internalized prejudices which were manipulated to begin with. In that we are agents in the Indian body politic, not a passive mass of humanity. (Grewal 2007)

A sense of alienation seeped into the collective consciousness of the Sikh community when they were subjected to massive onslaught of detrimental and denominational conflagration with the emerging realities post-1984. The trauma that they had undergone owing to the identity and their identity markers had sowed the seed of exclusion from the larger demographic and socio-political imagination of the nation.

Between the November 1984 violence and the continued violence in Punjab, Sikhs forged an identity which was not the ascribed one of a 'model minority' in a secular nation. This post-1984 version of Sikh identity was self-described within new historical and socio-economic realities- a Neo-Khalsa Panthic identity. As Punjab went quiet with innumerable atrocities committed on young Sikh men who either died or fled the country, the new identity has quietly gained strength; amongst Sikhs outside Punjab, it is present but subdued... [The] development of this new Sikh identity to the experiences of November 1984 and Punjab insurgency, calling to the reader's attention a quiet but strong sense of alienation of a people from the rapidly devolving secular India.

It would be injudicious to imagine that Sikh Panthic identity is theosophically divided, or that it is politically coherent, or that its main construction is liminal, that is, as an expression articulated from the borders, begging relocation within the mainstream of the nation-state, or that it is merely an oppositional identity (that is, in opposition to the dominant Hindu or numerically stronger Muslim identities). Perceiving Sikh identity solely as an oppositional identity would be a singularly simplistic approach to understanding the multiple levels of, first, identifying as a Sikh; second, performing that identity; and third, comprehending a collective common identity which is also multi-layered and often contested. (Grewal 2007)

The case of identity thereby became both enabling as well as disabling aspect for the Sikhs, when viewed from the perspective of being at the receiving end of the entire consequences of tribulation.

Identity is one of the most fluid socio-cultural constructs; it affects material realities and in turn, is continually affected by the ebbs and flows of material processes. (Grewal 2007)

Jyoti Grewal shares an interesting anecdote that she had encountered when she happened to visit certain areas after the riots. She found an interesting identity marker associated to the victims and survivors of 1984 riots as 'chaurasiye'. This tag 'chaurasiye' is not merely an identity marker associated with the victims, it is also pejorative in terms of their exclusion process contained therein from the normative imagination of the community as the 'other'.

I asked a Sardarni bringing her child home from school where the road that would lead me to Tilak Vihar was. Her scornful tones were unmistakable: *'Oh Chaurasiye jithe rende ne? Sare pul deh os pase ne. Gandi ji gali hai, othe chale jao. Baqi menu os ilaqe bare mein kuch nahi pata.'* (Where those 84-ers lives? They all live on the other side of the bridge. It is a dingy looking street, go there. I know nothing more about that area.) A moniker. 'Chaurasiye', which created for the survivor- victims of 1984 a new creed not of their own making. The numerical designation for a year now is a name capturing in it the entire meaning of a series of events, rendering people a new collective identity, one intended to separate the ghettoized transplanted Sikh widows and their children from the established Sikhs. (Grewal 2007)

Their existence gets obliterated into a vicious loop of meta-identification/dis-identification to be identified with a different cultural marker (Chaurasiye) as being different within the same socio-political and cultural group. Their identities get displaced within the perspective framework of individual/society and hence get reconfigured to be equivocated into a space of ambiguity.

Chapter 3:

The Ram-Allah debate: A nation set on fire – Babri Masjid Demolition and its aftermath

Nationalism, communalism, secularism, ‘pseudo-secularism’, terror, ‘Islamist’ terror, ‘saffron’ terror, Hindu Rashtra, riots, blasts- form a spectrum of ideologies and events which continue to dominate the socio-political scenario in this country... The reclaiming of public space through religious processions and public displays of religion marked the beginning of the 20th century. This, [historically] coupled with the electoral reforms, which devolved power to the provinces and the communal award, led to demands for a separate country causing a deep divide right from the grassroots level. (M. Menon 2012, 222-223)

The seed of communalism sowed in the pre-independent past had reaped disaster in the form of Babri Masjid demolition almost four decades after India got independence. “The demolition of the mosque plunged India into the worst out-break of communal violence since partition, with 1,700 dead and 5,500 injured.” (Thakur 1993, 645) The Liberhan Commission of inquiry had intensely investigated the matter ranging from the Centre-state division of power as per the federal set-up and one pushing the blame on to the other. The impasse between the Centre and State governments in regard to the protection of the ‘disputed structure’ in view of intelligence inputs and threat perception is evident as stated in the Report of the Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry, Chapter-4, ‘Sequence of Events’ in the following points :

41.64: In view of the threat perception the Central Government had, by the 24th of November stationed 195 companies of paramilitary forces around Ayodhya anticipating possible deployment by State Government for the security of the disputed structure. The Additional DGP Law and Order inspected the disputed structure and the State Government was accordingly informed. A fax message (CW 13/15 and CW 4/2) was sent to the UP Government informing it that these forces were being stationed at suitable places in UP with an object to make them available at short notice as and when required by the State Government for deployment. The force stationed had been clearly instructed to be available to the state without seeking any further orders. The central forces had started moving to Faizabad on the 19th of November. (Liberhan 2010, 101)

In contravention to the validated apprehension raised by the Central Home Ministry in regard to the inputs received from intelligence agencies, the then Chief Minister's reaction was something ambiguous, especially with the violence that followed thereafter with the inaction exhibited in spirit and practice, contrary to the interventional and administrative capacities guaranteed to his office by the Constitution to respond effectively in such scenarios. His inaction was an action of a certain kind, where the water was allowed to flow down despite the clear possibilities of a flood and definitive destruction that would follow.

41.65: The Chief Minister on the 25th of November objected and protested against the stationing of forces at Ayodhya. Objections and excuses were that there was a possibility of a conflict arising out of dual control. This movement of the paramilitary forces was said to be violative of constitutional federal structure as it had been done without the concurrence of the State Government. The Chief Minister demanded the withdrawal of the paramilitary forces. In a published statement, Kalyan Singh stated that, "*The Centre is out to create civil war like situation in the State by sending Central Forces without our consent. Do they want clash between the Central and State forces?*" (Liberhan 2010, 101-102)

Even though the Chief Minister did not respond to the initial reports, subsequent communications from the Central Home Ministry further accentuated the gravity of the situations complimented with paramilitary troop mobilisation definitely deserved the attention of the Chief Minister.

43.32: The Home Secretary proposed to the Chief Minister to deploy 133 companies of the central forces for security of the structure on the 5th of December, since the number of *Karsevaks* was expected to exceed 2,50,000 on the 6th of December. By articulation of the information available with respect to the potential damage or demolition of the disputed structure by the *Karsevaks*, it was stated that there was information available with respect to extremists and subversive elements likely to cause the damage, and therefore he advised the Chief Minister that the State Government should use the 133 companies of central forces. (Liberhan 2010, 115)

Considerable measures were taken by the Central Home Ministry to ensure that enough security forces were available corresponding to the threat perception as per intelligence inputs. Keeping security as the paramount agenda, the forces were given instructions to

proceed as per the command and requirement of the State government to ensure that the deployment of the forces corresponds with the urgency of the matter and procedural delays in regard to seeking permission from the Central government should not withhold deployment process.

44.9: 195 companies of paramilitary forces were stationed around Ayodhya near Faizabad ready for being deployed to meet any situation. The State Government categorically told in writing as well as orally that forces stationed around Ayodhya near Faizabad were available for deployment at Ayodhya as and when state wants to deploy them. The force stationed had been clearly instructed to be available to the state without seeking any further orders. (Liberhan 2010, 118)

The Union Home Secretary tried hard, within the limits of his office and in due respect to the federal structure of governance as delineated in the constitution, to put matters through the official channels for smooth deployment of forces as and when the need arrives. On the fateful day of 6th December, 1992, the pressing necessity for the forces to be deployed was communicated clearly as reproduced in terms of the fax received on the said matter as prima facia evidence presented before the Liberhan Enquiry Commission.

44.10: On 6th of December, at around 9:30 a.m., the Home Secretary of India, informed the DGP of ITBP to keep the paramilitary forces ready in case of any request for assistance was received from the State Government and to deploy the forces without waiting for the formal orders from Ministry of Home Affairs. The Home Secretary also requested the Principal Home Secretary, Uttar Pradesh present at the residence of the Chief Minister as well as UP DGP to persuade the Chief Minister to utilise the central forces. These facts have been admitted and were not in dispute before the Commission. V.K. Sexena accepted the factum of a fax having been sent to the state by Central Government about the availability of the forces stationed and ready for being used at Ayodhya by the state in the eventuality of need. (Liberhan 2010, 118)

The paranoia of the fundamentalists in their so-called tangibly manifested reality of their belief system saw the Babri Masjid as ‘destabilization’ of their ‘religion’ and hence had euphorically ensured the destabilization of the structure of ‘destabilization’, which is the Babri Masjid, to reinstate psychologically their existence within the myopic parameters to construe a dystopian reality, imagined and kind-off materialised, at the cost of the blood of

millions of citizens within and across the borders of India. “Principled” dogmatism prevailed over expedient pragmatism. The price has been destruction of the mosque in the most consequential way: by a crazed mob taking the law into its own hands.” (Thakur 1993, 663) The karsevaks’ fire and anger exhibited a surprising pattern of being brandished with a blindness of intolerance and fundamentalism caused as an after-effect of systematic brainwashing of the same. The request made by Uma Bharti in consultation with L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi was vacuously and uncomprehendingly turned down by the Karsevaks, who claimed to be determined in their intent and nothing could deter them from their aim even at the cost of their death.

44.25 L K Advani first made requests over the public address system to the *Karsevaks* on dome to come down. When the request fell on deaf ears, then he deputed Uma Bharti, Acharya Dharmendra Dev, Baikunth Lal Sharma ‘Prem’ to go along with his own personal security officer Anju Gupta to the disputed structure to persuade the *Karsevaks* to come down. The *Karsevaks* paid no heed to this request either. Uma Bharti claimed that when persuasion failed, an attempt was made to bring them down by instilling fear of the paramilitary forces, saying there would be firing and bloodshed. The *Karsevaks*’ reaction reportedly was that, “*we have not come here to eat Halwa Puri. We are not of that brand of Karsevaks. We have come from our home to face firing.*” The *Karsevaks* did not react to persuasion nor to fear. (Liberhan 2010, 120)

The former Joint Director of Intelligence Bureau’s assessment reports of the extrapolated fears are mentioned in A.G. Noorani’s book as stated below-

Noorani reproduces certain extracts from Maloy Krishna Dhar’s book *Open Secret: India’s Intelligence Unveiled* which states that:

My interactions with the Sangh Parivar and BJP friends left no doubt that they were determined to use the Ram Janambhoomi card in a decisive manner for electoral benefits, I vehemently opposed the idea of destroying the mosque at Ayodhya and tried to convince them that brinkmanship had its limitations, especially when it played with human sentiments for love and religion...I was afraid that their brinkmanship was sure to whip up uncontrollable emotional tsunami. Would they be able to control the frenzied mob? Yes, they said. I did not feel comfortable with their tightrope-balancing act. It could end in a disaster. (Noorani 2014, 417,419)

After the event, Kalyan Singh's masked his inaction by shifting the goalpost of the blame game to the Central government.

Kalyan Singh's reaction was, "*It was like a badly inflated balloon which burst. All other political parties, particularly Centre are to be blamed for frustration of Karsevaks, who forced them to go desperate. They should arrest me because after all, I fulfilled one of the major objectives of our party and have redeemed the party's election manifesto.*" (Liberhan 2010, 124)

A.G. Noorani in the article titled- 'The 'Cobrapost' Investigative Report about Babri Masjid Demolition Conspiracy' brings to light the long-standing enquiry aimed at holding the guilty accountable to their crime.

Cobrapost brings to light how certain leaders of Ram Janmaboomi movement conspired to and succeeded in razing the sixteenth-century disputed structure to dust on December 6, 1992, a conspiracy even an apex investigation agency like the CBI has not been able to conclusively establish after years of investigation. (Noorani 2014, 446)

He also brings to light the gravity of the situation and extensive nature of the investigation conducting interviews of almost 234 leaders and shows the quagmire type situation where the premier investigative agency has not been able to ascertain definitive and conclusive evidence against the accused.

Of all the recent disclosures on that crime those by *Cobrapost* are the most authentic, based as they are on interviews over time with 234 leaders of the Ram janambhoomi movement... In a major investigation, code-named Operation Janambhoomi, Cobrapost gets to the bottom of the conspiracy and exposes the conspirators behind the demolition of Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, showing them confessing to how they laid out an elaborate plan and executed it with precision of a military operation. The expose establishes beyond doubt that demolition was not an act of frenzied mobs but an act of sabotage by these agents-saboteurs, planned with so much secrecy that no government agency got a wind of it. After many years of investigation, the CBI has not been able to find clinching, corroborative evidence against all those 40 it has made accused in its chargesheet. (Noorani 2014, 446-447)

The impasse in the very foundations of federal structure continues and the flagrant under-utilization of the preventive security apparatus readily available at the State government's disposal hints at the possibility of ulterior motives towards decimation of the 'disputed structure' and overlooking the perils of the impending and well-conceivable communal conflagration.

The question of terming the Babri Masjid as 'disputed structure' in official documents and discourse is questioned, as the identity of a religious site affiliated to a certain ideological belief system stands reconfigured.

Against the systematic conversion of the Babri Masjid into the temple, the Muslims of the country reposed great faith in the system and in the judiciary, and in the process, knocked every door to get justice. The sacrifice by the Muslims for the Babri Masjid was immense in the later years, even in the form of their lives... Question may be asked to the people and the judiciary as to what was the justification of calling Babri Masjid as "disputed structure" unless it was proved otherwise, as, every government document was testifying that the shrine was Babri Masjid and Muslims were offering namaz in that mosque till illegal occupation of the mosque by some local Hindus. The occupation of the masjid for full 421 long years should not be a thing to be ignored by all. (Akhtar 1997, 235)

Post-demolition the problems faced by people across and beyond the nation was grave and debilitating. "Frequent riots, communal outbursts, particularly after the unfortunate events which took place on 6th December, 1992 have tarnished the image of this country throughout the world." (Raza 1997, 21)

The election years 1989-91 were again the witness to some of the worst communal riots in the country. According to the then Minister of State for Home, M.M. Jacob, who informed the Rajya Sabha on 17th July, 1991: "A total of 2,025 people were killed in 62 major communal riots in the country during 1989, 1990 and upto now." ... Some of these riots can be attributed to the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhumi controversy since the mid-1980s which culminated into the demolition of the mosque in December 1992. In reaction to this there was a spate of riots all over the country. Among these, riots in Bombay were perhaps the worst. In Bombay blasts of March 1993 about 260 people had lost their lives, and property and business worth crores of rupees were destroyed. (Jain 1997, 71)

The reaction of the international community towards the riots was serious as it had put India on the radar of human rights violations and communal intolerance that threatened the nation's diplomatic endeavours and strategic global stance on geo-political grounds.

The Muslims all over the world have expressed their shock and anger learning the demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya. They have blamed this misadventure of the Hindu militant organization who openly pre-planned to attack and damage the structure in a publicised and politicised way... the 50-member Supreme Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) condemned the Ayodhya incident as "Shameful". Hindu-owned shops were also damaged by mobs in these countries. In Dubai a temple was damaged. This is for the first time that the Gulf region has protected the demolition of a mosque. (Chanchreek and Prasad 1993, 148)

Various news agencies have reported the dissatisfaction of the global community in general and the Islamic nations in particular.

The Associated Press reports from Saudi Arabia (Jeddah) dated Dec. 7, that the Government was totally responsible for Ayodhya happenings. The Organization of Islamic Conference today accused the Indian Government of what it called allowing Hindu extremists to demolish the Babri Mosque and demanded inquisition to determine and punish the culprits... [As per Secretary –General, OIC] The entire Islamic world was shocked by the heinous and premeditated crime against an Islamic symbol of value not to Muslims in India alone but to Muslims everywhere. (Chanchreek and Prasad 1993, 163)

As reported by Hassan Shahriar, an Indian Express correspondent from Dhaka, on Dec. 10, 1992

At least 100 people were injured and scores of temple and property damaged on Tuesday as Bangladesh observed a general strike to protest the demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya... So far in two days of violence about 400 people were injured across Bangladesh. On Monday mobs attacked and burned down Indian Airlines office and the Indian High Commission library... Though the picture is still not available, reports suggest that mob attacks occurred on temples in many parts of the country. Hundreds of shops owned by Hindus and scores of Hindu houses have been burned down. (Chanchreek and Prasad 1993, 162)

Various editorials on 7th December, 1992, condemned the attack and its diabolic repercussions. The National Press on Ayodhya disaster as in the book, *Crisis in India* reproduces, The Hindu's editorial, dated 7th December, 1992, titled- "Unforgiveable". The editorial states:

It was religious fanaticism at its ugliest in Ayodhya yesterday, with the country's worst fears coming true in the nightmarish spectacle of the brutal destruction of the 450 years old Babri Masjid by thousands of frenzied kar sevaks. The disputed mosque was razed to the ground with a barbaric savagery reminiscent of the crude traditions of settling scores in medieval history. The demolition of the Masjid has delivered a lethal blow to the image of a secular and democratic India. Yesterday's catastrophe underlines the validity of the misgivings that a permissive attitude to the kar seva would have disastrous consequences. Sunday was a dark day for India. The Hindu shares the nation's sense of deep anguish at this painful moment. (Chanchreek and Prasad 1993, 263)

The myopic political stance of the ruling government is a matter of debate: whether or not was it an act of deliberate attempt to remain a mute spectator under the garb of federal structure of the Centre-State relations and thereby police being a state subject. Spread of Violence finds mention in government's White papers as mentioned by Akhtar in his book, *Babri Masjid: A Tale Untold*.

Following the demolition of the Babri Masque by the Kar Sevaks on 6th December, 1992, the communal situation in various parts of the country deteriorated sharply. By 7th December, 1992, communal violence had spread in province of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal and Delhi. Curfew was imposed in many towns in the country as a "precautionary measure as also to control the communal violence."... By 8th December, 1992, the States of Assam, Kerala and Orissa were also affected by communal violence and the communal situation remained disturbed... By 9th December, the States of Meghalaya and Jammu and Kashmir also had become affected by communal incidents. More than 200 columns of Army were deployed in various towns of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Kerala, Assam and Jammu & Kashmir... Situation returned to normalcy in about a fortnight's time. (Akhtar 1997, 242-243)

The incomprehensible mystery that lies hidden here is that despite every possible intelligence inputs received by the central government what was the compelling reason for the then Prime Minister to not advice the President of India to invoke Article 355 and 356 of the Constitution of India, where the Centre could directly intervene with adequate forces to ensure that the karseva as stated will be symbolic and the structure would not be harmed in any form. The article(s) 355 and 356 for State Emergency states-

[Article] 355. It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

[Article] 356. (1) If the President, on receipt of a report from the Governor 1*** of a State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may by Proclamation—

(a) assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State and all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor 2*** or any body or authority in the State other than the Legislature of the State;

(b) declare that the powers of the Legislature of the State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament;

(c) make such incidental and consequential provisions as appear to the President to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation, including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Constitution relating to any body or authority in the State: Provided that nothing in this clause shall authorise the President to assume to himself any of the powers vested in or exercisable by a High Court, or to suspend in whole or in part the operation of any provision of this Constitution relating to High Courts. (The Constitution of India 2015, 228)

The act of inaction which is theoretically an action of its own making sheds light on the shroud of doubt and shadow of oblivion towards the ambiguity that had engulfed the nation within the fire of communal unrest for generations that threatened the secular fabric and the identity of the nation, its rich heritage and corresponding composite culture stands debunked.

Once identity is posited to be a question of exclusive separation, totality defines itself as unification or assimilation of many separate identities. Many separations entail the logic of the 'immediate.' The 'immediate' usually has the cultural form of marginal identities. They find themselves entangled in either crisis or conflict in relation to the larger or assimilating forces. Separation, conflict and encounter alone are the subjects of theoretical considerations if identity becomes a matter of mere exclusion. (Kumar 2003, 56)

The country finds it difficult to accommodate the culture of syncretic assimilation being threatened by the assertions of obsessive behaviour in form of uproars which transgresses the domains of democratic congregation to the anarchic forms as riots etc. The term 'riot' has multiple connotations and Prof. Rajnarain tries to formulate a unique understanding of the same.

In order to understand the popular usage of 'Riot' we have to go back to the history of this term. It is derived from the old French Riote which means debate, dispute, quarrel, from which is derived the verb *rioter* which means to quarrel and which is diminutive of *ruire* which means to make an uproar. It is the element of quarrel that leads to the disturbance and the disturbance is uproarious. Being uproarious it eventuates in violence against person or property. (Rajnarain 1997, 30)

Taslina Nasrin in her seminal work defines 'riots' on a rather socio-philosophical level and sheds light on the darker aspect of the humanity as the monster in us surfaces to redefine our identities as human, devoid of humanity and paternalistic obsession of animosity towards the other.

Riots are not like floods that you can simply be rescued and given some *muri* to survive on temporarily. Nor are they like fires that can be quenched to bring about relief. When a riot is in progress, human beings keep their humanity in check. The worst and the most poisonous aspect of man surfaces during a riot. Riots are not natural calamities, nor disasters, so to speak. They are simply perversion of humanity.... (Nasrin 1994, 165)

The conversation between Sudhamoy and Suranjan sheds light on the nature of riot. According to *American College Dictionary*, 1948, riot is 'a disturbance of the peace by an assembly of persons.' This definition is amplified by a rider about disturbance. (Rajnarain 1997, 29) According to *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 23,

[Riot] is said to be ‘a disturbance of public peace attended with circumstances of disorder and commotion, as where an assembly destroys or in any manner seizes or invades private property or does any injury by actual or threatened violence to persons or individuals. (Rajnarain 1997, 30)

The idea of riots gets even more complicated when the polarity gap between the victim and victimizer is large enough for the victim to equivocate the gradient and to settle the scores becomes a rather towering task.

And did the word riot mean one community’s ruthless victimization of another? No, such a phenomenon could not be dismissed as rioting. What actually happened was that one community had invaded the sanctity and privacy of another community in a cold-blooded, remorseless way. This was nothing short of tyranny and oppression. (Nasrin 1994, 6)

Sudhamoy questions Suranjan, “Riots break out in all countries. Aren’t there riots in India? Aren’t people dying there? Have you kept track of the number of people who’ve died?” To which Suranjan retorts, “If it were riots I’d understand, Baba. These aren’t riots. It is simply a case of Muslims killing Hindus.” (Nasrin 1994, 213) It was kind of a genocide.

The news of the arrest of political leaders accused of their involvement in the demolition reflects upon the functioning of administrative corridors who are trying to make a strong statement of their political will to diligently tackle the situation in view of the constitutional mechanisms and as a response to the global outcry.

Have you heard that Joshi, Advani and eight others have been arrested? They say more than four hundred people have died. UP’s Kalyan Singh will be tried. America, in fact the whole world, has condemned the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Curfew has been declared in Bholra, and the Bangladesh National Party, Awami League and many other parties have stepped out to try and restore communal harmony. There are vivid descriptions here of the turn of events. (Nasrin 1994, 61)

The sense of acrimony between the Hindus and the Muslims as exhibited in the narratives reflect a different story altogether. Some scholars see it as the deep rooted divide and rancour for the other which categorically interpreted as the majority versus the minority debate extending the genesis to the entire episode of Babri Masjid as a deep-seated

animosity between the two communities or rather two parties who found their inner discontent suddenly surfacing out to protect and reinstate their position.

Everyone knows that the Babri Masjid embroglio is not a historical problem. Neither is it a legal or political one. Those who are seeking its solutions through Archaeology or Jurisprudence are wasting their time, either misguidedly or on purpose.

The significant thing is that the 'Hindu' you will find ranting most excitedly and passionately about the destruction of the mosque, is also the last person to talk honestly about solutions. Because he senses that the solution you have in mind are nowhere connected to the real problem in his heart.

If you are sincerely interested in finding out the key to the prevailing confusion, then close the history and geography books on the background of Faizabad. Take another look at this man. You have any number of magazine photographs, accounts and video films at your disposal: he is bewildered and angry. He is brandishing lethal weapons. He is behaving temporarily like a hunter in a blood sport. If you question him about what he is up to, he will give you a slogan or two to inform you, and to reassure himself, that lots of other people are with him in this and he is doing what he must. He cannot give you two coherent sentences about the justification or good sense of what he is doing. He has worked himself up into a wild frenzy and is ready to chase (the Muslims) to punch and lynch without provocation or warning, his actions dictated only by the state of the moon and the moral support available. If you give these symptoms to a psychiatrist he will tell you that the person is suffering from an acute Psychoneurosis. He is no mad, just sick with suppressed anger. And something much more complicated than anger.

Note the fixation of this man: he is paranoid about everything that is "Muslim". Just mention the word, and Bingo! He is activated. Words such as 'mosque', 'personal law', 'Shahabuddin' and 'Saudi' keep recurring in his speech. He however avoids the use of the word 'Islam' so studiously that you would imagine its utterance will reveal something awful.

The December 6 carnage will remain an inexplicable dilemma as long as we do not recognize its psychological dimension. It was not a political or religious assembly, it was a primitive, symbolic catharsis, physical and mental, in which pseudo-religion and real violence were coerced into each other artificially. And the factor that was used for this artificial coercion is the real key to that dilemma... The scenario for this catharsis

was manipulated systematically but the actual demons that made it possible were lurking in the deep, dark zones of the sub-conscious and the Id, the zones that Carl Jung described as the home of the collective unconscious mind of a race, passed on genetically from generation to generation. (Ali 1997, 187-188)

The family of the Duttas in Bangladesh were shown to be settled within their regular life and the demolition acts as kind of a tornado in the settled waters of their simple life. Suranjan seemed to be untouched by the news of the Babri Masjid demolition that happened at a site beyond the geographical and emotional borders of his imagined nationscape. But the communal wave that caught the frenzied fundamentalists to unleash mindless carnage and brutal bloodbath shook the very foundations of his family's identity as Hindus in Bangladesh.

On television, CNN had shown in vivid detail the demolition of the Babri Masjid on 6 December 1992... Suranjan had never been to Ayodhya, nor had he seen the Babri Masjid. How could he have when he had not even stepped out of Bangladesh? Whether the demolished structure was the birthplace of Rama or a sacred mosque was a matter of little significance to Suranjan. But it was evident to him that the demolition of the sixteenth-century edifice had struck a savage blow to the sentiments of Muslims in India and elsewhere. The act of destruction had damaged the Hindu community as well for it had been nothing less than an attack on 'international harmony and the collective conscience of the people' in the words of the newspaper. (Nasrin 1994, 3)

Sudhamoy's stand on out-migration from Bangladesh to India was something unacceptable as he thought it would be foolish of leaving a settled life in Bangladesh to be a refugee in another country. He was absolutely adamant about his perceived sense of loss that would come by if he got distanced from his 'roots'.

I am not leaving the property of my forefathers. Coconut and betel nut plantations, yards and yards of rich paddy fields, a house that stands on over two bighas land.... I cannot leave all this to become a refugee on the platform of Sealdah station... 'Why should I leave my homeland and go somewhere else? If I live it will be on this soil, and if I die it will be in this very same place.' (Nasrin 1994, 7)

Sudhamoy was not ready to accept that the independence that was achieved at the cost of millions of lives to ascertain an identity; with elements of culture and language, cannot simply be homogenized through the lens of communal or religious shade.

Starting from 1947 and stretching upto 1971, the Bengalis witnessed wave upon wave of bloodshed and trouble, all of which culminated in the Freedom movement of 1971. An independence that was earned at the cost of three million Bengali lives, proved that religion could not be the basis of a national identity. Language, culture, and history on the other hand were able to create the foundation on which to build a sense of nationality. (Nasrin 1994, 8)

He had a different view of the sense of perceived togetherness, in which he erroneously imagines himself as one amongst the macro-imagination of the comprehensive Bangladeshi identity, which eventually debunks the subjective illusions in his 'post-truth' reiteration of geo-political imaginations. Benedict Anderson's idea of Nation forms the skeletal framework for perceived nation-space.

[Nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 2006, 6)

Sudhamoy's obstinacy in regard to his connectedness to the roots is evident when his wife, Kironmoyee's sincere appeal fell upon deaf ears despite her earnest attempt to build ground for her case by citing references to many of their friends and families who left the country in face of such hostilities. Sudhamoy's intransigence made things further complex for the Dutta household, as they were caught up in the ambiguity of time and space.

Kironmoyee had [once] said, 'Let's go away to India. All our neighbours are leaving one by one.' This was a fact, for Sudhamoy had himself seen Sukanto Chattopadhyaya, Sudhansu Halder, Nirmalendu Bhowmick and Ranjan Chakraborty leave. The exodus of 1947 was being repeated, and Sudhamoy was furious. He cursed all these people and called them cowards. Some days after this, Nemai said to him, 'Sudha-da, the army is out on the streets. They are catching Hindus and killing them. Come, let's run away.' In 1947 his father, Sukumar Dutta, had been firm in his decision not to leave the country. Sudhamoy assumed the same stance and told Nemai, 'You go if you want to I am not running away from my home.' (Nasrin 1994, 9)

The novel makes an attempt to pitch up a situation, when Sudhamoy's ideal state of affairs faces the reality check when he gets interrogated by Muslim soldiers and is thereby subjected to expletive behaviour amounting to reprehensible humiliation.

The army was out in the streets and no Bengali was safe... Suddenly, three men appeared in front of him and shouted at him to halt. One of them caught him by the scruff of the neck and asked him in Urdu, 'What is your name?' Sudhamoy did not know what name would be appropriate for him to take. He remembered that Kironmoyee's friends had warned her that if she wanted to live she must change her name to something like Fatema Akhtar. Sudhamoy realized his Hindu name would not go down well with his tormentors and he... was shocked to hear his own voice uttering the name, Shirajuddin Hussain. One man said gruffly, 'Open your lungi.' Before Sudhamoy could do anything about it, they yanked his lungi off themselves. With blinding clarity he saw at that moment just why Nemai, Sudhanshu and Ranjan had run away... (Nasrin 1994, 10)

Sudhamoy could then make some sense into the realms of reality in the requests of Kironmoyee and Maya. But, it was Maya's abduction by the frenzied mob that seemed to have forced Sudhamoy to reconsider his obsessive fixation to his homeland and to his pride in being connected to his past. Sudhamoy's stand on migration post Maya's abduction got somewhat diluted, as consciously he had no justifiable reason to defend his argument when their individual rights and identities of as free citizens were thwarted and they had to remain mute and mere spectators to the then prevailing anarchy created by the majority of Muslim fundamentalists in Bangladesh.

'Dada, I don't think it will be possible to stay in this country anymore. Our daughter has come of age, and that makes things all the more frightening...' said Nonigopal. Sudhamoy took his eyes away from the girl and turned to him. 'Don't say anything about going away, I don't want to hear it. I believe Goutam's family next door is also going away. What do you think you are up to? Aren't there any hooligans in the place you plan to escape to? Isn't there any cause for fear in those places? Young girls are insecure everywhere. Don't you know, the grass always seems more lush across the other man's fence? That is your problem.' (Nasrin 1994, 194-195)

Sudhamoy exhibited a dilemma to understand what would be gained by migration with his thought still inclined towards his innate fixation to his homeland. But the idea of committing suicide reflects upon the predicament he is unconsciously going through, and not being able to find a "clear stream of reason" that seemed to have unfortunately "lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit." (Tagore 1997, 51)

[Sudhamoy] could not understand what people hoped to gain by going away. If the total number of Hindus in the country decreased any further, they would only be persecuted the more. In fact, it was a no-win situation in which those who remained and those who left both lost. It was a loss for the poor, a loss for the minorities. Sudhamoy wondered exactly how many more Hindus in this country must suffer and die, to pay for the sins of the Hindus in India, both past and present. If he knew, perhaps he could have committed suicide, so that by doing so some measure of peace could accrue to the Hindus. (Nasrin 1994, 196)

Sudhamoy, in one of the many instances, could realize that though Aleya Begum and Kironmoyee had been good neighbours, an intangible wall with a certain divisive difference existed between the two. It is at this moment that he realized the illusion he was living in and owing to his arrogance could not see thorough what Kironmoyee had always been trying to explain. Kironmoyee's belongingness to the land was suddenly questioned and so was he identity. This instance was evident of the metamorphosed socio-cultural space emanating out of animosity dividend that led to the crucial reconfiguration of the historical relationships. The terms 'there' and 'here' symbolize the fracture that was materialised in terms of the geo-political borders that were created and which eventually got translated into the psychological barriers that drew the definitive line in the socio-cultural and psycho-social realities. This bordering process had struck a thunderbolt in the sense of syncretism that existed erstwhile within the communities, which now stands palpably and manifestly torn apart as 'us' and 'them'.

Aleya Begum took in the destruction in the room and Sudhamoy's semi-paralyzed condition, heard of Maya's abduction, and expressed her sympathy and her concern. At one point, she asked Kironmoyee, 'Boudi, don't you have relatives in India?'

'Yes, we do. Almost all our relatives are there.'

'Then why are you stuck here?'

'Because this is my own country.'

Aleya Begum could not conceal her surprise at Kironmoyee's answer. After all, how could Kironmoyee say as confidently as Aleya herself that this was her country? Sudhamoy understood at that moment that Kironmoyee and Aleya, despite being women and citizens of the same country, could never be regarded in the same light. Somewhere, a fine line of distinction had been drawn. (Nasrin 1994, 197)

Events like this had cast a definitive appeal in the unconsciousness of Sudhamoy to re-access and re-think upon his unwavering tenacity towards his homeland and his inner self. It was such critical junctures that began to drive him to lark upon his obstinate immaturity upon a thoughtful introspection and explore the scope of his self-evaluation.

The loss of place accompanying disestablishment and its effects on the shape of religion is an unsolved problem in modern religion, one which is peculiarly the result of an attempt to disestablish religion legally while at the same time to confine it to a very limited scope in peoples' lives. In each of the communities represented in these papers, religion as a free-floating. (Sullivan 1996, 134)

In a categorical shift from Sudhamoy's ideal concept of identity and belongingness, what drove the others in the family was pragmatism and to address the need of the hour. The polarity of positions are vividly shown in the differing perspectives of Sudhamoy and Maya. While Sudhamoy symbolized idealism, Maya symbolized outright practicality. The two other members of the Dutta household could not ascertain a definitive level of positioning with either of the extremes, but eventually they were trapped into the quagmire of identity and survival dilemma, where the imminent necessity for survival fractured the logic of identity and its associated socio-cultural markers.

Kironmoyee said sternly, 'Where do you think you are going?' Maya, dismissing the threat in her mother's voice, combed out her hair in brisk strokes. 'I am going to Parul's house... I can't help it if you don't want to survive. I don't think Dada intends to leave this place either. 'And what are you going to do with your name? Nilanjana is a dead giveaway.' Sudhamoy said remembering, even as he spoke, the time he had called himself Shirajuddin.

Maya remained unmoved. '*La Ilaha illallahu Muhammadur Rasulullah* is all that you need to say to become a Muslim. That's just what I'll do, and I'll call myself Feroza Begum.' (Nasrin 1994, 12)

Maya's staunch rebuttal to her family's ideal approach in dealing with an emergency situation exhibited her mature acknowledgement of the reality to which Sudhamoy choose to remain ignorant with his mask of idealism and anecdotes of nostalgia further complicated by his euphoric fixation with his 'roots.' The other two members of the Dutta household, Suranjan and Kironmoyee, do not particularly align themselves with either of

the polarized positions. Though Kironmoyee did not have much of a choice, it is evident in the narrative that she did conform to what Maya radically proposed. Suranjan on the other hand, had a liberal perspective towards the reality and differed in looking at the point of violence. Perspective variation between ideal and practicality was symbolised by Suranjan and Maya respectively. She forced him to look into the reality rather than perceive an arbitrary version of it in conjectural proportion.

[Suranjan reads out] In India, the spread of hatred is now limited. The forced occupation of the land in and around the Babri Masjid is entirely the doing of the UP government and the Centre I in no way responsible... ‘You’ve read out the good news only...’ protested Maya sitting cross-legged on the bed. She took the newspaper from him and said, ‘What about the rest of the news? 10,000 families in Bhola have been rendered homeless, seven hundred homes in Chittgong have been burnt to ashes. In Kishoregunj, temples have been destroyed. In Pirozepur, Section 144 has been imposed. In Misari, Sitakunda, seven hundred homes have been torched.’ (Nasrin 1994, 120-121)

Suranjan’s approach towards the violence was rather a philosophical one, until he realizes a strange situation when his perceived friends turned foe with a conspicuous assertive religious tenor coupled with fundamentalist streaks, which threateningly paints the socio-historical connexion between the two communities of mutual respect into a deplorable state of animosity.

As the procession passed by their house, they could clearly hear the voices say, ‘Let us catch a Hindu or two, eat them in the mornings and evenings too...’ Suranjan saw his father shiver. His mother stood back to the window that she had just shut. Suranjan remembered that they had used the same slogan in 1990. Who were *they*? Ironically, they were boys from the neighbourhood! Jabbar, Ramjan, Alamgir, Kabir and Abedin! They were all friends who lived in the same area, met frequently, discussed matters of mutual interest without rancour, and even took joint decisions on issues of significance. And it was the same people who wanted to make a snack of Suranjan! (Nasrin 1994, 17)

The question of ‘us’ and ‘them’ gets further enunciated and problematized with such pejorative identification and intimidation of the communal minorities by the majority. This caused him to introspect upon his identity in cross-roads, as a Hindu in Bangladesh, the

idea which was normative till a recent past but which has become a sudden misfit post-Babri Masjid demolition. “[W]ith “identity disregard,” there is a different kind of reductionism, which we may call “singular affiliation,” which takes the form of assuming that any person preeminently belongs, for all practical purposes, to one collectivity only—no more and no less.” (A. Sen 2006, 20) The sudden outrage and victimization of the Hindus hint at a deep-seated animosity unconsciously present, which, thereby also sheds light on the latent fissures in the communal foundation under the apparent eulogized portrayal of syncretised reality.

Just as Suranjan entered a bigger street, a group of boys shouted out, ‘Catch him, he’s a Hindu.’ The boys were his neighbours. For the last seven years he had been meeting them at least once a day. Suranjan knew a couple of them personally... They were often in his house asking for all sorts of help; and free medical treatment. And it was these very same people who were threatening to beat him up today because he was a Hindu! Suranjan walked briskly in the opposite direction, not out of fear, but out of shame. He was truly ashamed and anguished by the thought of these boys beating him up. And his sense of shame and sadness was not directed towards himself, but aimed at those who would be beating him up. Shame most affected those who inflicted torture, not those who were tortured! (Nasrin 1994, 27)

Such an incident destabilized Suranjan’s ideal perceptions about his belongingness to the country and his overwhelming enthusiasm was caught in the dialectics of idealism and practicality. He could not really understand as to what and how should he appropriate the imminent reality when the people whom he and his family knew, have not only turned cold shoulders on them but also victimized them based on their belongingness to a particular community and overlooked their belongingness to the nation. Suranjan’s deeply inflicted psychological wound incited him to ponder upon the idea of ‘shame’. He felt shameful at the act of their fellow countrymen who looked fraternity, benevolence and most importantly humanity, to be maddeningly consumed by the fire of abhorrence and aversion.

Driven by just one of the many determiners of identity, communalism, and ignoring the other determinants that have substantially contributed to the formation of the ‘collective consciousness’(Jung and Read 1969), demonstrates the level of paranoia that always seemed to have existed behind the apparent veil of cohesion.

‘By the way, Haider,’ Suranjan said, propping himself up on the bed, ‘what right does your country or your parliament have to discriminate between people belonging to different religions? ... When he heard Suranjan’s question, he burst out laughing. ‘What do you mean “your” country? Isn’t this your country too?’... [Haider said] As long as it was Pakistan, none of you had anything to look forward to. After Bangladesh was born, you allowed yourselves to believe that you would be honoured with the rights and facilities that are due to first class citizens, because this is after all a secular State. But when you discovered that your dreams and hopes were far from satisfied, even in the newly-created Bangladesh, then you were really hurt.’ Suranjan burst out laughing. Still chuckling, he said, ‘Even you had to say, “your hopes, your dreams!” Who is this “you”? Hindus, isn’t that so? After all these years of non-believing, you bracket me with Hindus?’ (Nasrin 1994, 87-88)

Suranjan fails to understand the bracketing process, which precipitously detached him from all other identity markers and assigned him with the only marker, which is communal, and that implores upon the questions of selective identification as a surreptitious prodigy of misidentification. The different determinants collectively form the coalesced space of identification with endless meta-identifications. It is this space that forms and serves as the celluloid of identity formation as well as distortions. So, selective identification will distort the macro-identity by arbitrary extrapolation of a micro-unit overshadowing the others.

[Suranjan] thought about what Belal had been repeating over and over again. Something like ‘Why did you break our Babri Masjid.’ Suranjan wondered why the Babri Masjid should be Belal’s. After all, it was in India and the property of the Indians. And could anyone say that Suranjan had broken the mosque? He had never even been to India. Was Belal looking at the Hindus in India and those in Bangladesh in the same light? Just because the Hindus had brought down the mosque, did it necessarily follow that Suranjan had destroyed it? Was Suranjan to be identified with the Hindu fundamentalists in Ayodhya? Wasn’t he like Belal, Kamal and Haider? Or was his only identity that of a Hindu? How strange that he, Suranjan, should be held responsible for the demolition of a mosque in India. Did religion supersede nation and nationality? (Nasrin 1994, 176)

Suranjan in the trail to understand his identity, and especially his religious identity as a Hindu, questions the logic behind the attack on Hindus in Bangladesh as a counter to Babri Masjid demolition. He questions the absurdity of the situation when one person belonging

to a particular community is held accountable and for the deeds of the people of his own community across miles and beyond the political borders.

As the Babri Masjid had been destroyed by Hindu fanatics it would be the Hindus in Bangladesh who would have to suffer. Hindus like Sudhamoy had not been spared by the Muslim fundamentalists in 1990, so why should they be spared in 1992? And so they would have to flee like rats! Just because they were Hindu? Just because the Hindus in India had broken the Babri Masjid? Why should he be held responsible for all this? (Nasrin 1994, 12)

The scenario of his perception changes as and when he realizes that reality and identity is not a coherent stream of truth but a myriad of connotations countering and convoluting the attribute of reality. Questioning the concept of damaging religious institutions, he starts to negotiate on his stand and opens up towards reconfiguring the roots of this identity. In a discussion with Pulok, when they discuss the damage done to the religious structures by mob violence across Bangladesh, Suranjan makes an insightful remark about his reconfigured perspective towards their existence in Bangladesh with the ubiquitous acrimony present between the two communities.

[Pulok said] 'They've burnt the home of Chaitanyadeb in Sylhet. They haven't even spared the old library... At Borhanuddin more than one and a half thousand people have been attacked and at least two thousand homes have been damaged. At Tajmuddin, a total of two thousand two hundred houses have been completely destroyed and two thousand partially. Two hundred and sixty temples were destroyed at Bhola.' (Nasrin 1994, 106)

To which Suranjan retorted that,

The Muslims have done their bit; but it does not become Hindus to seek retribution! I am afraid I cannot sympathize with you, Pulok. I am really sorry... You know something, Pulok? Those whom we think of as non-communal, or as our own people, and as our friends, are highly communal deep down. We have mixed and mingled so much with the Muslims of this country, that we never hesitate to say Assalaam Aleikum, Khuda Hafiz, *paani* instead of *jal*, and *gosol* instead of *snan*. We respect their religious practice, and avoid drinking tea or smoking in public during the month of Ramzan. In fact, we do not even go to their restaurants on those days. But how close are they to us actually? For whom do we make these sacrifices? How many

holidays do we get for pujas? Yet, Hindus are pushed, are expected to work long hours in hospitals, while they enjoy the two Id holidays... They are all the same Pulok.... all the same. The only option left to us now are either suicide or migration. (Nasrin 1994, 107)

The matter now started to take a profounder turn with accentuation leading to a level of paranoia of a different order with the perceived loss to be irreparable and irrevocable. They discussed how the census over the years reflected on a critical demographic appropriation and subsequent homogenization of all communities merged into one. That seemed a grave threat to the existence of their identity as they would be melted down into the colour of the majority.

‘In 1941, the Muslims were 70.3 per cent of the population, while the Hindus were 28.3 per cent... In 1991, the Muslims were 87.4 per cent, and the Hindus approximately 12.6 per cent. What do you understand from this? ... Do you know the latest about the new census? Apparently Hindus and Muslims will not be counted separately... Because, the Hindus are dwindling so rapidly they may as well be clubbed with the Muslims, instead of being considered a separate entity,’ Kajal Debnath said sarcastically.(Nasrin 1994, 189)

The matter of hollow victimization gets blatant with the selective assault on the people like Goutam, who maintained a safe distance from politics and did not harbour any rancour in the society to be dragged into the meddle of violent harassment.

It was indeed ironical that someone like [Goutam] who kept himself busy with his medical course, and had no interest in politics, and what is more had no enemies in the locality, should have been beaten up so ruthlessly because the Babri Masjid had been demolished in India! (Nasrin 1994, 108)

The matter of hollow victimization gets blatant with the selective assault on the people like Goutam, who maintained a safe distance from politics and did not harbour any rancour in the society to be dragged into the meddle of violent harassment. The resentment brewed up an antagonising feeling amongst the Hindus in Bangladesh, whose identity stood in doldrums in regard to the way they were treated and specifically with the selective appropriation of political action tilting in favour of the majority.

They are destroying hundreds of temples, but if we even threw a stone at a mosque can you imagine the consequences! The Pakistanis just reduced the four-hundred-year-old Romona Kalibari to dust, but there was no assurance from any government that it would be rebuilt! Hasina is always talking about the reconstruction of the Babri Masjid, but in Bangladesh even if there is some hope of compensation for the Hindus, nothing is ever mentioned about the rebuilding of the temples. They do not seem to realize that Hindus have not drifted into Bangladesh with the flood waters. We are as much citizens of this country as anyone else. We have the right to live, as also the right to protect our own lives, property and places of worship. (Nasrin 1994, 109)

The assertion of their identity gets vehement and fervent as a counter to the contentions they faced by the majority to subdue them to a subliminal nonentity. Like Suranjan, Hindus reconfigure their thought process from the erstwhile moderate approach to a more belligerent one in the face of a crisis of their identity both as a Hindu and their legitimacy as citizens of Bangladesh. Haider and Suranjan question the idea of nationality and nationhood and their identities associated therein.

Does the country or parliament have the right to favour or patronize any one religion over other religions? ... 'By declaring Islam as the national religion, aren't the citizens of this country who are not Muslim deprived of the nation's support?'... 'Actually, even Jinnah ignored the question of two nations or two races as part of the national framework. He declared, 'From this day onwards, Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Buddhists will not be identified by their respective religions, but by their identity as Pakistanis.' (Nasrin 1994, 86-87)

Suranjan's emotional outburst gets connected to reaction of Babri Masjid demolition, its subsequent riots and the earnest attempt shown by the government to control it being a 'façade'. Suranjan's claim that he had been made a Hindu out of circumstances rather than his outright conviction and belief, presents him as a subject of social bracketing and someone who is being denied a voice.

After the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, the large scale killing and bloodshed that had spread all over India took a while to subside. The number of people dead had now crossed the 1,800 mark. In Bhopal and Kanpur, there was still violence. To maintain law and order the army was out in the streets of Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The political parties that had been banned, continued to remain inoperative. In order to

maintain peace and harmony, all the parties in Dhaka were spontaneously organizing processions. But all this was a façade. Behind the front, it was a different story... Yes, I used to call myself a human being, and I believed in humanism. But these Muslims did not let me stay human. They made me a Hindu. (Nasrin 1994, 160,163)

Suranjan's identity is perceived as Half Hindu and half Muslim, but he questions his inability to be disengaged from communal identities and be associated with one pervasive and universal identity as human. But it is that human identity whose foundations lay shaken and threatened to its very core.

'Suranjan-da, you don't believe in religion, right? I know that you don't pray, and that you eat beef as well. Why don't you tell them you are not a pure Hindu, that you are half Muslim?' [Suranjan responds] 'The fact is that I am a real human being. That is what they object to most of all.' (Nasrin 1994, 111)

Suranjan's emotional outburst led him to lose his balance of thought and his secular conviction that he has always stood for. His structure of belief in value systems stood in shatters.

'What do we gain by pulling down mosques? Will we get back our temples?' Debabrata asked nervously. [Suranjan responded] 'Even if we don't gain anything, we can at least prove that we too can destroy. Shouldn't we make it known that we too are capable of being angry? The Babri Masjid was four hundred and fifty years old, but Chaitanyadeb's house was five hundred years old. Aren't they ruining a five hundred year old monument in this country too? I feel like tearing down the Sobhanbagh mosque...' 'Calm down, Suranjan, calm down. What you are suggesting is not really a solution.' (Nasrin 1994, 164)

Suranjan was brought up with a different bent of mind. He grew up with ideas of cosmopolitanism, theories of democracy and had therefore had a wider worldview of things rather than remain constricted to closed radical perspectives.

At a time, when all Suranjan's friends were interested in were clothes of latest cut, Sudhamoy bought for his son books on the lives of Einstein, Newton, Galileo or books on the French Revolution, the Second World War or the novels of Gorky and Tolstoy. (Nasrin 1994, 61)

But all the ideas and perceptions that he grew up with faced a reality check, when it could not stand the storm of byzantine reality. The books that were symbolic of the prodigious ideas it contained suddenly turned archaic in a close encounter with reality preceding the imminent disillusionment. In the passage of time he became disillusioned with the ideals and ideologies that seemed redundant in the game of life and death. When his survival and his identity was put to question, the ostentatious ideologies lost its ground in regard to its distance from practicality. One could see a clear demarcation between theory and praxis, and Suranjan's outrageous behaviour exhibited in burning his books reflects upon his inner agony that has unsettled the clear waters of his set belief systems in a greater benevolent worldview of things.

[Suranjan] went into the house and brought out all his books and scattered them on the ground. From inside the house Kironmoyee thought he must be sunning the books to drive out the silverfish. *Das Kapital*; the thoughts of Lenin, Engels, Marx and Morgan; Gorky; Dostoevsky; Tolstoy; Jean Paul Sartre, Pavlov, Rabindranath, Manik Bandyopadhyay, Nehru; Azad; books on sociology, economics, politics and history, books [of] the size of bricks and those much smaller When he had gathered them all in the courtyard, he began tearing the pages from them and scattering them on the ground. When he was done, he lit a matchstick, and set fire to the whole bunch. Just as fundamentalist Muslims flare up the moment they see Hindus, so did the fire when it found the paper... He was glad when the flames died down and nothing was left of his books but ashes. In the recent past his books had irritated him a great deal with their spurious ideas and principles. He was sick and tired of these principles. If at all, he would love to kick these principles with all his strength. Why should he alone stick to such belief? Most people sipped from the cup of knowledge, they never drank from it. Why should he alone stupidly drink deep from the well of knowledge? (Nasrin 1994, 209-210)

He became sceptical of what the world could and had in offer for him, and where he faced the dilemma between his ideals of the lofty ideologies vis-à-vis the experiential crisis of reality. Suranjan had a categorical shift from the way his mother had understood him since childhood and the shift brings to fore his disillusionment and dissatisfaction toward himself and the nation. Kironmoyee could see his ideals burning alongside the burning of the books. The imagery is prosaic enough to evoke the sensation of reality turning into an illusion and truth standing on the edge of scrutiny.

‘Yes, Ma. All these days, I was a good boy. Now I’ve decided to become a madman. Unless one is mad, there is no satisfaction.’ Kironmoyee stood at the door and watched Suranjan’s flames of sacrifice. That she should rush to the bathroom and fetch water to douse the flames, did not occur to Kironmoyee. Against the thick dark flames, Suranjan’s body could hardly be seen. It looked, Kironmoyee thought, as though Suranjan himself was on fire. (Nasrin 1994, 209)

Sudhamoy could also sense the agony in his son’s mind and his thoughts exemplified how violence had ravished the heart and mind of people who had instilled their faith in the set categories. Suranjan, in the eyes of Sudhamoy was an ardent believer in a wider worldview ironically remain confined in the narrow limitations of a sectarian and partisan divide.

Inside the house, it dawned to Sudhamoy that his brilliant studious son, who until now had provided the antidote of poison, was now devouring the poison himself. All those long hours of lying in bed, having heated arguments with his friends, abusing Muslims and now burning books.... Sudhamoy realized how wounded and full of pain Suranjan was. He had been hurt by his family, society and above all his country, and today he was burning himself in the flames of an inferiority complex. Suranjan was delighted by the blaze. All over the country, this was how they were burning Hindu homes. But was it only homes and temples they had burnt? Hadn’t they burnt the hearts and minds of the Hindus as well? Suranjan was determined not to cling to Sudhamoy’s idealism anymore. Sudhamoy was a believer in the ideology of the left and Suranjan had grown up on his dogma. But not anymore. (Nasrin 1994, 209-210)

Sudhamoy could perceive the pain Suranjan had undergone as exhibited in the fire that burnt not only the books but also his phenomenal outlook towards the world and humanity at large. Suranjan’s macro-imagination of life suffered a serious setback, which was also a clarion call for Sudhamoy to reconsider his position on migration to India.

The situation implores on the question of destabilization of the protected belief, the structure of illusory edifice of roots-homeland crumbles with Suranjan and Sudhamoy beseeching upon the veracity of the matter.

[Suranjan says] I know you will not accept my suggestion but I’m begging you to. Please, Baba ... please. Come, let’s go away [to] India.’ Sudhamoy looked disgusted... ‘Is India your father’s home or your grandfather’s? From your family,

who the hell stays in India? Do you want to run away from your homeland ... doesn't it make you feel ashamed?'

'What homeland are you talking about, Baba? What has this country given you? What is it giving you? What has this country of yours given Maya? Why does my mother have to cry? Why do you groan all night? Why don't I get any sleep?' (Nasrin 1994, 213)

Suranjan hits the crucial chord to let his father introspect upon his stubbornness and delink himself thereby liberating his family from the captivity of extrapolated nostalgic pangs that may come by in the event of migration. Suranjan raises the most fundamental point questioning the idea of roots.

[Sudhamoy envisions] 'What will we do there?' [Suranjan retorts] 'Anything. What are we doing here? Are we very well off? Are we very happy?'

'It will be rootless existence....'

'What will you do with your roots, Baba? If your roots are so powerful then why are you hiding behind locked doors and windows? Will you stay this way all your life? It has become a habit with them to break into our houses, or to kill us. I feel ashamed to live like a rat, Baba. It tears me apart, but my hands are tied. When I am angry am I able to burn down a couple of their house? Why should we just sit and watch ourselves being humiliated and devastated? If a Muslim slaps me, why don't I have the right to slap him back? No, Baba ... let's get out of here, please let's.' (Nasrin 1994, 214)

Suranjan's practical views get an alternate opinion in Nirmalendu Goon's ideas when he claims that Hindus in Bangladesh needs to fight it out and resist the communal juggernaut that threatens to wipe them out of cognizable demographic estimation. Opposing Suranjan's views on migration of Hindus from Bangladesh, Nirmalendu Goon presents a comparative view of the minority situations in India and Bangladesh and categorically registers the difference in the way both the minorities are dealing with the crisis.

The other day someone was saying there have been no less than four thousand riots in India. Even then the Muslims in India have not left their country. But the Hindus here have one foot in Bangladesh and the other in India. To put it differently, the Muslims in India are fighting for their cause, while the Hindus in Bangladesh are running away. (Nasrin 1994, 81)

Subsequently, Suranjan faces a dilemma of to be or not to be, in his attempts which are now futile to convince his father and to realize that the efforts are going in vain. He was facing an existential crisis to grapple with the predicament of hopelessness and anxiety.

Suranjan had known all along that his efforts would be thwarted. Sudhamoy was so stubborn, so strong in his convictions, that there was no way in which you could shake him. He could be kicked and battered, but he would not uproot himself from the soil of his homeland. The snakes and scorpions of that soil might bite him, but he's still fall back on it.... Suranjan seemed doomed to swim alone up the stream of hopelessness... There was absolutely no one to depend upon. He was an alien in his own country. His own understanding, insights and sense of the world were dwindling to nothing. It seemed as though he had almost come to the end of the road... It was as though everyone was waiting for some awful end to their lives. Now it was no longer Maya, but for his own future that his heart quaked with fear and apprehension. They were all alone, so alone. Sure, acquaintance and Muslim friends visited them once in a while, but no one could give them the reassurance that it was safe to live in this country. (Nasrin 1994, 214-215)

Suranjan's disillusionment towards the country had reconfigured his identity to make him profoundly radical in his approach in the face of ubiquitous crisis of what he is and what he ought to be. His ecclesiastic perception towards the eclectic nature of societal identification gets complicated with the old and young being equally beleaguered along the only identity marker, which is that of being a Hindu.

'They will chop off your heads and fling them into the Buriganga. Haven't you still understood the nature of the people in this country? They'll make a snack out of a Hindu, if they find one. And they won't distinguish between young and old, I can assure you.'

Sudhamoy's forehead wrinkled with frowns of irritation. 'Aren't you one of "the people of this country?"'

'No, I can't think of myself as part of this country anymore. I am trying very hard, but without any success. Earlier when Kajal-da talked of partiality towards Muslims, I used to be upset. I used to tell him, "Let's not waste our time estimating how much Hindus have lost and how they have been deprived. There is much to do in this country, we should think of all that instead." Now I've come to realize that he was right. I am changing. It should not have been like this, Baba...'

Suranjan's voice faltered. (Nasrin 1994, 206)

The imagined idea of a country as a geo-political entity is shattered, as glass shattering off, into pieces irreconcilable and an act irrevocable. The country which is formed with a mutual consensus towards arriving at synthesis of eclectic ideologies and norms, is suddenly turned into an undemocratic monolith of majoritarian forces and mind-set.

‘You should not suspect everyone. Surely there are some good people left?’

‘No ...there aren’t any.’

‘Not necessarily.’

‘What about your friends? All these days you studied communism, joined movements and discussed these subjects with likeminded people Aren’t they good people?’

‘No none of them are. They are all communal.’

‘Are you becoming communal yourself?’

‘I am. This country is making me communal. I am not to be blamed.’

‘This country is making you communal?’ Sudhamoy sounded incredulous.

‘Yes this *country* is’

Suranjan stressed the word *country*. Sudhamoy fell silent. Suranjan looked at the broken things in the room. Bits and pieces of glass were still lying on the floor. Wouldn’t these shards pierce their feet? They had pierced their hearts already. (Nasrin 1994, 208-209)

In this context, the idea of ‘Nationalism’ is debunked further vis-à-vis the traces of fractures and ruptures owing to essentialist and forceful assertions and appropriation of communalism in the history of socio-political modernity.

"Nationalism" is the pathology of modern developmental history, as inescapable as "neurosis" in the individual, with much the same essential ambiguity attaching to it, a similar built-in capacity for descent into dementia, rooted in the dilemmas of helplessness thrust upon most of the world (the equivalent of infantilism for societies) and largely incurable. (Nairn 2003, 347)

In this context, Suranjan symbolises the figure of lost youth’s collective consciousness in the mystified annals of history. He is not being able to make sense of his identity that threatens to thwart his existence. Nasin provides a very powerful symbol of the cat that symbolizes the ideal identity beyond the normative realms of our socio-political interpretations and identifications. The identity of the cat is that alternate neutral identity which is forever ‘deferred’.

Which community did the cat belong to? Was it Hindu? Presumably it was Hindu, since it lived in a Hindu home. It was a black and white cat, and there was a softness about its eyes... [The] cat had no communal identity. In fact only human beings had racial and communal differences and only they had temples and mosques... and [so] he longed to become a cat. (Nasrin 1994, 59)

Another important symbol used by Nasrin is Suranjan's strange dream that is symbolic of his identity facing an imminent crisis of solitude and annihilation emanating out of anxiety of impending doom that seemed to have registered in his collective unconscious.

Suranjan finally slept in the last hours of the night. In his sleep he had a strange dream. He was walking all by himself beside a river. As he walked, a wild wave came and swept him into the depths. He was caught in a whirlpool and kept sinking gradually. He wanted to live, but there was no one to pull him to the shore. As he kept sinking into the fathomless waters, Suranjan found he was sweating. (Nasrin 1994, 216)

Suranjan's attempt to persuade his father trumped over Sudhamoy's obstinacy. Sudhamoy's final agreement to migrate reflects his acknowledgement of the need to reconfigure his stand on the problem that his family has been negotiating upon since the very beginning. Hence, his identity got altered into accommodating a pragmatic rationale behind the necessity to migrate as an answer to the indispensable question of sustenance.

... Sudhamoy said, 'Come, let us go away.'

Suranjan could not conceal his surprise. 'Where will we go Baba?' he asked.

Sudhamoy said, 'India.'

And his voices cracked as the shame swept over him. But he had said it, he had forced it out, he had compelled himself to say that they would go; and he had realized that that was the way it would have to be because the strong mountain that he had built within himself was crumbling day by day. (Nasrin 1994, 216)

But such a realization and transmutation comes with a substantial cost, especially a cost of irreparable loss. It took Sudhamoy to lose his daughter, came upon the verge of losing his son physically, and the psychological distorted states of Suranjan and Kironmoyee. Maya had a unique sense of survival instinct. She was the one who wanted to survive the atrocities of time. But, ironically she is the one who goes missing into a point of no return. Her existence towards the end of the novel is shadowed by a gloomy uncertainty and ambiguity. Her 'absence' becomes the present entity. (Derrida 1978)

Maya, however, knew how to make compromises and survive... Perhaps the desire to survive will compel her to change her name to something like Farida Begum... It is very selfish. (Nasrin 1994, 74)

Maya's abduction apportioned a severe blow on his sense of self-respect and the shame that followed in his inability to 'protect' her from the perpetrators made him feel menial and destitute.

[Suranjan] was ashamed of going into [his parents'] room, as though the shame of Maya's abduction was entirely his responsibility. Perhaps it was, for after all it had been he, more than anyone else, who had wanted to think of this country as non-communal. Naturally it was his shame more than anyone else's. He could not go and show his face to his honest and idealistic father. (Nasrin 1994, 187)

Suranjan's mental proportion could not deal with the severe blow of his sister being victimized by the majority community and that got vented through his disproportionate impulsivity to inflict pain on one of the vulnerable member of the majority community. As a result of Maya's abduction and her unknown whereabouts, he had chosen to sexually abuse someone from the majority community in order to vent out his inner discontent and animosity. "[Shamima] was a poor girl after all ... selling her body to feed herself. She was a victim of a callous social system that ignored whatever talent she may have had, and pushed her into the gutter." (Nasrin 1994, 202) Suranjan's impulsivity and lack of rationale belied his conviction towards humanity at large and towards the other gender in particular.

Suranjan, however, did not look upon Shamima as a whore. To him, she was a girl who belonged to the majority community. He was longing to rape one of them, in revenge for what they had done to his sister... As Suranjan attacked her naked body, the girl moaned in pain [and] Suranjan laughed with savage satisfaction... [He thought,] Where was Maya? Had they tied up her hands and legs to rape her? Were all seven of them raping her together? Poor Maya She must have been in great pain, she must have screamed out aloud too. (Nasrin 1994, 200-201)

Suranjan's course of reconfiguration of his identity expressed his sense of animosity for the Muslims and communal behaviour, post Maya's abduction. Maya's abduction is symbolic of the shattering of the illusion and the idealism that had drawn the Duttas so far into the anarchy of idealism, aloof from the ground reality coupled with a myopic vision of

communal unrest finishing off soon and undoing the socio-psychological fractures that have come by. Suranjan's reconfigured identity did reconcile his distortions and disproportionate impulsive imaginings of the society, but the course did divulge him into the realistic outrage that a common man be a subject to in the face of such anxiety and loss.

Shamima left, Suranjan relaxed... Shamima Begum had come to Suranjan Dutta's house and had been conquered... [He regrets that he] had not mentioned his own name to Shamima. He should have told her that he was Suranjan Dutta. She would then have known that the man who had bitten her and made her bleed was a Hindu. Yes, Hindus also knew how to rape. They, too, had hands, feet and a head full of ideas. Their teeth were sharp and their nails could scratch like claws.... Shamima had been a mild, gentle girl... but a Muslim all the same. If he had been able to so much as slap a Muslim, it would have made him happy. (Nasrin 1994, 202-203)

Nasrin does not exonerate Suranjan for his deeds but gives a realistic picture of the course of his transformation and hints at the destructive potential of an individual when faced with the dilemma of the ideal and survival.

Suranjan's dilemma unconsciously triggers the sinister intention to harm a majority gets materialized in the brazen sexual abuse that he inflicts on Shamima which eventually compels him look down upon himself and walk-down into the trap of shame. The figure that gets invoked here is that of the inward spiral staircase where he gets bogged down into the inner darkness of shame and embarrassment.

Suranjan tossed and turned restlessly for the rest of the night. He seemed to be in trance, but sleep eluded him. All through the night, he was alone in the company of silence, stillness, and a terrible sense of insecurity. Today, he had wanted to take a small revenge, but had failed. He was not capable of taking revenge. All night he was tortured by vivid recollections of Shamima's face. He felt terribly sorry for her. He should have felt angry and empowered but he did not. In that case, what kind of revenge had he taken? One could even say that this was a kind of defeat for him. Was Suranjan in fact defeated? Yes, of, course, he was a loser, because he had not succeeded in tricking Shamima. As it was she was tricked by her social status. To her there was no difference between sexual intercourse and rape. Suranjan cringed in his bed, as he realized this truth. He suffered as his shame swamped him... Was his whole system rotting away? It seemed as though everything inside him had been breaking down gradually, ever since the demolition of the Babri Masjid. He was actually feeling

sorry for the girl whom he had torn apart with his manhood, bitten and caused to bleed her profusely! If only he could have wiped away the blood from her cheeks before she left. Would he ever meet the girl again? He resolved that if he ever saw her again he would ask her forgiveness. (Nasrin 1994, 203)

This is the climactic moment in his identity negotiation as he cannot recuperate his conscience because of the dastardly act that he committed to a helpless girl blurring the line of victim and the victimizer. Suranjan, the victimizer is not a usual one but is a one with conscience and integrity and hence, his introspective journey question his very idea of rectitude and humanity from within.

Part 2: Bombay bomb blast

Srikrishna Commission Report Volume 1, Chapter 1, Preliminary section clause 1.1 states:

1.1 For five days in December 1992 (6th to 10th December 1992) and fifteen days in January 1993 (6th to 20th January 1993), Bombay, urbs prima of this country, was rocked by riots and violence unprecedented in magnitude and ferocity, as though the forces of Satan were let loose, destroying all human values and civilized behaviour. Neighbour killed neighbour; houses were ransacked, looted and burned, all in the name of religion, as if to vindicate painfully the cynical observation of Karl Marx, "Religion ... is the opium of the people". Those fateful fifteen days saw the people on the streets opiated beyond the call of right and wrong. (Srikrishna 1998, 1)

Srikrishna Commission Report Volume 1, Chapter VI, Term No. (VII) states:

Whether the incidents referred to in term (I), have any common link with the incidents referred to in term (VI) above (i)

One common link between the riots of December 1992 and January 1993 and bomb blasts of 12th March 1993 appear to be that the former appear to have been a causative factor for the latter. There does appear to be a cause and effect relationship between the two riots and the serial bomb blasts. ii) Another common link is that some of the accused who were involved in substantive riot-related offences were also accused in the serial bomb blasts case, though their number is only three or four. iii) Tiger Memon, the key figure in the serial bomb blasts case and his family had suffered extensively during the riots and therefore can be said to have had deep rooted motive

for revenge. It would appear that one of his trusted accomplices, Javed Dawood Tailor alias Javed Chikna, had also suffered a bullet injury during the riots and therefore he also had a motive for revenge. Apart from these two specific cases, there was a large amorphous body of angry frustrated and desperate Muslims keen to seek revenge for the perceived injustice done to and atrocities perpetrated on them or to others of their community and it is this sense of revenge which spawned the conspiracy of the serial blasts. This body of angry frustrated and desperate Muslims provided the material upon which the anti-national and criminal elements succeeded in building up their conspiracy for the serial bomb blasts. (Srikrishna 1998, 46)

The identity of the city Bombay as the pride and honour of India gets scarred due to two socio-political earthquakes with epicentres remaining the 'absent center' (Derrida 1978) in orienting the structure of Bombay. As part of the narratives suggest, one of the epicentres was in Ayodhya and the other in Dubai. The tremors from one in the east, Ayodhya, was arguably countered by the other on the west, Dubai, where the city of Bombay oscillated to find its delicate balance and stood torn apart beginning from December, 1992 that culminated in the horrific cataclysm on 12 March, 1993. The city faced the brunt of being home to the eclectic cultures, a mirror of the pluralist imaginations and diverse demography. The event had shaken the very paradigm of the humanity from within and the fractures in the communities became so pronounced that the emerged polarity harvested animosity dividend therein.

Religious extremism accounted for the riots in December 1992 and in January 1993; high-tech terrorism, almost certainly linked to the riots, manifested itself in the bomb blasts of March 12, 1993. By April, however, no one could say where crime merged into religion and when the two together made common cause with terrorism provoked, to some degree at least, by forces outside the country. This nexus made it difficult to govern Bombay and the fear was that India as a whole would become ungovernable. Hence the burgeoning sense of helplessness and anguish. Bombay had experienced a swift and sharp polarisation between religious communities and ethnic groups on a hitherto unprecedented scale. (Padgaonkar 1993, 3)

The monologue of the common man reflects upon the psyche of the nation towards the communal frenzy and how is one to identify or misidentify with the deliberations of newly reconfigured identities where the friends have turned foe, where the people from various community treat each other with mutual respect are now growing anxious about the 'other'

owing to the inscribed and instilled sense of diatribe deeply rooted in their unconscious psyche.

Consider this monologue from a man who has worked as a driver for *The Times of India* for several years ... This is not a Hindu-Muslim question. I am a Hindu myself but I cannot really claim that Muslims alone are to blame... the name of the game is votes. I did not always think so. I gave money for the bricks which were sent to Ayodhya to build the temple. After all, I come from Uttar Pradesh. Most people in my village gave money too. I must tell you that I felt bad when the Babri Masjid was broken down: we should not break any place of worship. Afterwards I told myself let bygones be bygones. Let the Ram temple be built. Let there also be a mosque somewhere in the vicinity. But, sir, how long can they use the name of Ram? Do you know a *bhajjan* where Radha says to Krishna: I will not go to the Ganges or to the Yamuna. I will not go to any place of pilgrimage. I carry in my heart sixty-eight places of pilgrimages. I do not have to go to any other place... This is our tradition. But now everything is mixed up, everything is linked: the need for cash, the search for votes, religion, crime, everything. Who knows now when a two-wheeler will explode? This is not Bombay. Brothers have become strangers. Strangers have become enemies. Enemies have become devils. God alone knows how far the devils will go. The identity of brothers, strangers, enemies and devils in Marathi eyes and in Muslims eyes left no room for ambiguity. (Padgaonkar 1993, 6-7)

The idea of Bombay as the city of dreams and aspiration was put to scrutiny. The city was also the nation's cultural and cosmopolitan currency in the larger global arena. But the tragedy of 1993 had exposed the darker side of reality and debunked the plurality underpinning the nation's demographic fabric.

Could Bombay truly project itself as the future of India, as India's very own idea of modernity, as a successful specimen of "globalisation" and "post-nationalism"? Bombay had imagined itself to be the show piece of Indian capitalism: in December 1992, in January 1993 and again on March 12, 1993 it exposed its flip side. And the flip side was lawlessness, greed and hatred. (Padgaonkar 1993, 10)

The majority-minority debate questions the very secular identity of the nation trapped in the impasse of faith and tradition.

[P]olitical groups which deny the presence of differences that do in fact exist or insist on resolution of these differences by threat, force or violence, or indeed are too impatient to live with differences and therefore opt for obliteration rather than concessive settlement...interest. In general these political groups frequently refuse to acknowledge differences which others believe to be crucial for their identity. When they do recognise the existence of differences, they find it difficult to amicably settle or live with them. They claim to be fully rational and autonomous themselves grant these capacities to others. In brief, they have no culture Groups that possess the culture of rights are virtually incompatible with those bereft. (Bhargava 1990, 56-57)

The identity of being a Hindu and a Muslim is concomitant to the politics that gets played upon in the name of majority and minority by implanting seeds of difference and instilling fear in the minds.

Truth is easily a casualty where matters of faith are concerned. Reason is sidelined when faith is placed above all else: the Constitution, parliament, the courts, the rule of law. Yet, difficult questions persist. Can 'faith' or 'tradition', even if they are exploited for reason of political gain or expediency, be jettisoned altogether? Could the Indian state have been secular had the majority of Indians- the Hindus- wished it to be something else? What is the meaning of 'Hindu'? And what do 'majority' and 'minority' mean in the public domain? These question, many of them of a seminal nature, are not easy to answer, not least because India, together with the rest of the world, is undergoing cataclysmic changes. (Padgaonkar 1993, 10-11)

Majority and minority are essentially relative categories of demographic computations, to chart a comprehensive representation of various parameters. So, majority and minority that gets appropriated in the colloquial discourse is religious, but others parameters that may be referred to this distinction is linguistic, regional, gender etc. The matter with religious component of this distinction of majority and minority relegates upon it the radicalism associated with the religious sentiments and fundamentalism associated therein. "Majoritarianism is best understood as a political idiom in which secularism is subordinated to the nationalism of the Hindu majority." (Upadhyaya 1992, 816) "The majoritarianism, however, has strong alienating and ghettoising impact on the Muslims." (Pannikar 1993, 73) The judgemental attitude of both the communities, across the fault line, accentuates the fractures thereby threatening the very element of secularism as entailed in the Indian constitution.

Secularism as innocence can also spell danger if combined with India's definition of secularism. In India, secularism is not defined as a radical separation between the state and church. The founders argued that in the Indian context, keeping the state equally distant from all religions and not letting it favor any one in public policy was the best solution.

Unlike the clarity entailed in a radical church-state separation, secularism as equidistance is a nebulous concept. *Equal distance* can also be translated as *equal proximity*. If it is alleged that the state is moving towards one particular religion, the state, to equalize the distance, can subsequently move towards other religions. Each such equalizing step may be aimed at soothing the religious communities. But the state gets more embroiled in religion. An unstable equilibrium results, breeding distrust all around. Under Nehru, equidistance was not turned into equiproximity. Under Rajiv Gandhi, it was. (Varshney 1993, 249)

This detrimental attitude and the perceived threat to their communal identity coupled with opinionated instigation is one of the progenitor for communal insurrections. The Volume I, Chapter I, Srikrishna Commission reports states that-

1.13 Communal riots, the bane of this country, are like incurable epileptic seizures, whose symptoms, though dormant over a period of time, manifest themselves over and over again. Measures of various kinds suggested from time to time dealt with symptoms and acted as palliative without effecting a permanent cure of the malaise. This Commission is aware that there are several maladies, which may have no permanent cure, but yet with effective treatment, can be contained within manageable limits. In the view of this Commission, till there is a radical change in social outlook, achieved only by total revamping of social values and widespread education, communal riots must be treated, perhaps, as an incurable disease whose prognosis calls for suitable measures to contain its evil effects. This Commission has no magical nostrum or panacea to offer, but only age-old wisdom conditioned by newer experiences. (Srikrishna 1998, 3)

The movie *Bombay* makes an earnest attempt to locate humanity that seemed threatened within the conundrum of communal disparagement and violence. “The film objectifies the horror of the Hindu-Muslim violence, and renders its survivors passive victims in need of our sympathy and compassion.” (Uraizee 2012, 193) Irrespective of whether the majority or the minority, the Hindus or the Muslim gets killed, the one who succumbs to the fatality

is humanity. It shows a love story of a Hindu boy, Shekhar, falling in love with a Muslim girl, Shaira Bano and how they cross the socio-cultural hurdles thrown at their perceived union. When Mani Ratnam was questioned for his choice of actress from Bollywood, he gave a unique aspect of characterisation.

RANGAN: What about your heroine? She was the first Bombay actress you were using after Kiran Vairale in *Pallavi Anupallavi*. There was Anu Agarwal in *Thiruda Thiruda*, but that character was an exotic creature, from the outside, and so she fit in, whereas the character Manisha plays is from interior Tamil Nadu.

RATNAM: I wanted someone delicate, porcelain, who kind of represented the character. If I'd gone for someone big and popular in Tamil films at the time – I don't remember who it was probably Khusboo or Madhubala – the Tamil audience would have seen it as so-and-so playing this orthodox Muslim girl. We wanted someone relatively unknown who would fit into that mould more clearly, more perfectly. We wanted someone from outside, with no associations, who'd seem more like the character than a star. We were basically looking at a character who is delicate, fragile, and who gets caught in this storm. Manisha fitted that role. (Rangan 2012, 148)

Mani Ratnam by finding the sense of delicate fragility in Manisha Koirala could successfully attempt to flesh out the character of Shaira Bano as being a foil to the character of Shekhar. But the choice of actress to portray the fragility was complimented with the use of close-ups which time and again had shown her as helpless and desolate. When Shekhar leaves the village after the stand-off with his father, Shaira runs towards the bridge to see the train depart and finding herself alienated and helpless, well expressed emotionally in her facial expressions and captured by camera in close-up. Similar situation happens when she arrives at the busy Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Bombay and being new to the urbaneness in general and the city of Bombay in particular she expresses similar dismay in not finding Shekhar.

Close-ups are the pictures expressing the poetic sensibility of the director. They show the faces of things and those expressions on them which are significant because they are reflected expressions on them which are significant because they are reflected expressions of our own subconscious feeling. (Belazs 1979, 289)

The deep seated animosity between the Hindus and Muslims is excellently portrayed by Mani Ratnam in the movie. The movie refers to many instances that reflect upon the

situation brewing up to build the Ram Mandir and it may be inferred that the probability of construction of the temple depended upon the success achieved in the anticipated venture to demolish the then existing Babri Masjid. Interestingly, the movie does not show a time frame, but in one of the instances it shows people from Shakti Samaj seeking donations from Shekhar at Bombay for construction of the Ram Mandir. At this point, it is important to locate that Shekhar and Shaila's sons are shown at an age not less than 2-3 years. It is after that moment that the movie shows newspaper reports of 7th December, 1992 reporting the disaster that happened on the preceding day. So, this needs to be read in correlation with the instance when Narayan Mishra goes to Bashir Ahmed to place an order for a truck-load of bricks to be transported to Ayodhya as symbolic contribution to the construction of the Ram Mandir, which is immediately after Shekhar and Shaila gets married. Consequently it may be deduced, as per references from the movie, that the conspiracy for the demolition was hatched at least 3-4 years before 6th December, 1992. This narrative of Mani Ratnam's *Bombay* may be read in conjunction with the Chapter IV- entitled 'Sequence of Events' of the Liberhan Commission report which states in three crucial points-

- 17.1. The conduct and culpability of the protagonists and the architects of the events of the 6th of December 1992 must be understood and analysed not only from the actual events themselves, but also from their conduct, speeches and acts of commissions as well as acts of omission over a period of time.
- 17.2 It would also be critical to analyse and weigh the invocation of historical occurrences, resort to power politics, attempts to amalgamate religion and politics, attempts to amalgamate religion and politics using selective historical events by various actors. Finally, the conscious effort to polarize the Muslims and the Hindu populace and widen the gap between the communities also needs to be considered.
- 17.3 The facts and events leading up to the 6th of December and of that particular day have to be unravelled from a complicated web; the conclusions and inferences have to be drawn by cutting through the deliberately created haze of obfuscation and seeming chaos. All the more, since power politics knows neither prestige nor honour for which the masses had been trapped in a labyrinth of secularism, pseudo secularism, minoritism, regionalism and casteism. The much vaunted idea of the secular state given in the Constitution was the unfortunate victim in the entire episode. (Liberhan 2010, 63)

The movie using a unique method to portray the demolition in form of the image of the three domes symbolic of the stable structure of the Babri Masjid being zoomed out with subtle superimposition of the images of newspapers stating the news of demolition of the structure, the Babri Masjid with the sense of moan. “The technical development of the motion picture will soon carry the mechanical imitation of nature to an extreme.” (Arnheim 1979, 28) “The visible spectacle always required, and received, an audible accompaniment which, from the beginning, distinguished the film from simple pantomime and rather classed it – *mutatis mutandis* – with the ballet.” (Panofsky 1979, 249) One may infer to the disturbances thrust upon the stability of the structure to be the causality behind igniting the deep seated animosity of sectarian and communal divide in the society which eventually and immediately translate into communal riots.

RANGAN: Is that why the Babri Masjid demolition is shown through newspaper headlines and still photographs?

RATNAM: They didn’t want the actual destruction to be shown. We’d done it in such a way that it was a cry, an ache- what we were trying to picturize was the agony. The music is a wail. We had created a miniature of the dome of the mosque. We just showed them climbing, not breaking the mosque. The breaking was shown from the inside- it was a dark interior into which debris falls through and light comes in. It was done artistically. It was the saddest moment in the film. But they wouldn’t see it that way. They didn’t want this to be shown. So we had to replace this with newspaper cuttings. These newspaper cuttings are a harsher reminder of the incident than what we had shot. Our version was much more emotional, a wail more than anything else. This was like a factual statement. (Rangan 2012, 146)

The movie *Bombay* shows a situation when Shekhar’s father Narayan Mishra is flabbergasted to find that his son has decided upon a match for himself. Now in the quest to identify her his first and foremost question is that- “Does she belong to another community?” to which Shekhar replies that her name is “Shaila Bano, Bashir Ahmed’s daughter”. Heaven breaks loose upon that revelation as Narayan Mishra takes a dig at it as if his honour being disgraced with such probable connection. To all the preposterous contemplation of his father, Shekhar puts across a fundamental question that “Is it wrong to love a Muslim? Are the Muslims our enemies?” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) Narayan Mishra is confounded into the trap of his own making when he clearly cannot find himself an answer, both; to Shekhar’s question and his assertions.

Shekhar becomes subject to similar vilifications when he approaches Shaila's father Bashir Ahmed with the proposal of his marriage. The tone and tenor of the disparagements remained the same with the fracture between the communities getting more evident and pronounced. Bashir Ahmed was equally animated in his response as Narayan Mishra and he too made an improvident statement that, "Who are you? And who are we? Even our blood is different! They can never be one!" (Swamy and Koirala 1995) In such a quandary, Shekhar showed maturity of demeanour and in a vivacious way showed symbolically that the 'difference' in blood, as referred to by Bashir Ahmed, did not hold any ground as he animatedly cuts his hand and Shaila's hands to show that once the blood gets mixed it is impossible to trace the defining line of 'difference' between the two. Shekhar clearly claims that "we will certainly be one."

Hence, the difference in the blood stains may be clinical and pathological but that has no relation to the communal configurations of either 'bodies', if seen medically. Ironically the 'difference' referred to by Bashir Ahmed in terms of 'blood' is not essentially pathological but a socio-cultural construct harboured by our unconscious prejudices for the 'other', in a circumstance of the self-identity being threatened exhibited by the fractured identification of the self and the society with the distorted primordial perception.

After being hassled with polarities of thoughts and the missing node of humanity in their discourse of divide and dissidence, Shekhar finally sought refuge beyond the confines of "narrow domestic walls." (Tagore 1997, 51) His decision to move to Bombay was both practical as well as emotional. It is practical because he cannot fit into the psychological compartmentalisation of polarised perceptions in his village vis-à-vis an accommodating and pluralist outlook in the Bombay and it is emotional because he decides to part ways from his family and his village. He says, "I'm going away to Bombay, father. I will never return." (Swamy and Koirala 1995) In these lines it is important to note the words like 'going away' and 'never return', which signifies detachment from the roots, not because the city of Bombay presents an alluring side of reality, but because of the fact that the roots are not being able to hold on to the crumbling structure any more. As W.B. Yeats puts it in the poem "The Second Coming":

Turning and turning in the widening gyre

The falcon cannot hear the falconer (Finneran 2002, 80)

The contravention of normativity of set standards in the society is engineered by obligations towards those certain archaic set of traditions immortalised with revered antiquity of thought and action. The 'falconer's' perception towards the 'centre' or the tradition is rendered inconsequential with the falcon, both seeking and also finding newer avenues beyond the sphere of falconer's influence.

The words 'never return' signifies upon the irrevocability of such detachment that de-links the newer generation to the older traditions, if the traditions do not cope with changing time. From within the dialectical relation of traditions and beliefs, newer forms will synthesize debasing the conceivability of the erstwhile traditions and beliefs.

He seeks solace beyond the claustrophobic communal polarity of his village into the plural and cosmopolitanism of Bombay that promised to accommodate his ideas. The city captured the very pulse of the progression that the society was going through against the hedonist and stagnancy of thought in his village.

The image of the train crossing the bridge is a strong symbol of Shekhar trying to explore the other side of reality after being disillusioned with normative confines of his native society's ideas and belief. Shaila Bano finds suspended in the ambiguity of time and situation, which is poignantly reflected in her expression when she subtly expresses desolation and anxiousness at seeking Shekhar leave in the train to the other 'side' leaving her all alone. The background score clearly reflects her state of dilemma and angst which states that, "If you truly love me...Come and meet me, or then, render me to dust." (Swamy and Koirala 1995) Later, it is the letters and tickets that she receives from Shekhar through her friends eventually paves way for her to re-join him at Bombay with the hope to live a contented married life.

It is the city Bombay where their union is acknowledged on legal parameters. During their marriage registration at the Marriage Registrar's office, their names- Shekhar Mishra and Shaira Bano is not met with age old dissidence of communal polarity but gets acknowledged as per statutory supports.

In the film, both the love story and the violence are depicted through scenes that show a series that show a series of looks that function in many different ways. The first half of the film tries hard not to suggest that violence is forthcoming. It is concerned with

developing the love story. Looks exchanged between Shekhar and Shaila and between Shaila and the viewers signify the urgency of their relationship and their need to escape to Mumbai to overcome their parents' virulent objections to their inter-religious marriage... Shaila is also stereotyped as Muslim 'other'.(Uraizee 2012, 184-185)

The scene where the document linking Shekhar Mishra and Shaila Bano as married gets stamped is symbolic of their union being approved under the constitutional provisions. Though, their connection is recognised by the statutory mechanisms, the connection between the families are built after the news of Shaila's pregnancy. It is the babies that forge a sense of togetherness in the otherwise disgruntled relationship between Narayan Misha and Bashir Ahmed. Narayan Mishra while delivering the news of Shaila's pregnancy to Bashir clarifies that "just do not drag the baby into our enmity." (Swamy and Koirala 1995) Soon after they again get into a debate as to what religion and tradition will the baby follow or grow up with. Narayan Mishra tells Bashir, "And just remember, the child will follow my religion, [as] it is the father's religion that the children follow!" As a counter to that Bashir claims that "It is the mother's religion the children must follow." The debate then opens the aspect of identity on religious line being marked and framed even before the child is born. So the identity is perceivably materialised and conceptualized with related markers even before the any tangibility to the idea of the child is even conceived. The line- "The child will be a Hindu! Not a Muslim!" preconceives the idea of religion and thereby a communal identity being kept ready to be thrust upon a child even before one is born. Nonetheless, the child is a metaphor of hope and optimism that promises to bridge the gap between Narayan Mishra and Bashir Ahmed, which is eventually symbolises the extrapolated sense to bridge the disconnect and rancour between Hindus and Muslims.

Narayan Mishra's consent on the traditions and beliefs of the Muslims in regard to the baby and hence permitting them to enter Bashir's family at his place shows a hint of resolution of their age-old differences. Bashir's wife along with other women comes to Narayan Mishra's place to perform a ritual, "this is a custom the bride's parents must perform before their daughter delivers the baby." Anticipating some argument from Narayan Mishra his wife asks them to go away stating, "No thank you! You will kick up a storm! Please go away" but Narayan Mishra retorts, "Is it okay to send them away, when they've come to perform a ritual? They are not doing it for us. It is for the baby. Take them inside." (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

The newly born children, symbolic of the newer generations, are at the receiving end of reverberations of communal divide and resentment that precedes their birth. After facing threats of death by the mobs, the children faces psychological issues like fear psychosis, hallucination as a materialisation of post-traumatic stress disorder. They encounter the decisive questions regarding their identity which they later reiterate as “Who am I? A Muslim or a Hindu?” It is this ingenuous yet critical question that unsettles and distorts the axiomatic imaginings of ourselves.

The names of the child reflect upon a metamorphosis of communal identity, reconciliation of the fractures as imagined by the society. The names Kabir Narayan and Kamal Bashir reflects upon colloquial tags generally associated by Hindu and Muslim nomenclatures inter-twined in an unique way to realize an identity that breaks the barriers of socio-cultural divide. The ambiguity of the identity is brushed aside in giving them identifiable tags that connotes a conceivable amalgamation of both the religions, Hindu and Muslim, within in the perceived identity markers. ‘Kabir’ and ‘Kamal’ are the names that gets interestingly intertwined with the name of their grandfathers, conspicuously done to give them a metamorphosed sense of dual identity. The two tags colloquially associated with Hindu and Muslim getting together is oxymoronic, but that has to be read as the credible synthesis of identity in the otherwise dialectical opposition of communal identity.

In an interview with the police regarding the police’s distorted sense of action during the riots, Shekhar stated that “55 per cent of those killed were innocent,” to which he was told that “the riots were triggered off in response to what happened in Ayodhya. And who else will die in riots if not those who participate in it?” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) The police officer was questioned in regard to the police forces’ contravention of statutory mechanism of shooting people below knees to warn them instead of unswervingly shooting them to death. “...more than 95 per cent people had sustained injuries above abdomen which shows that the police fired to kill and not to maim or injure.” (Engineer 1994, 838)The officer responded with a tone of justification that “Who are the police? They are people like you and me! Do you expect them to remain silent when they are attacked by mobs?”, to which Shekhar puts across a sensible question, “How many people have you killed under the pretext? So many innocents have been killed. Have you heard the cries of agony from the families of those dead? Or is the police force insensitive to it all?” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) “The report also has found fault with the police and termed it "biased". The

report says that "The precautionary and preventive measures taken by the police preceding the aforesaid incidents were inadequate..." (Engineer 1998, 2215)

This sense of betrayal and helplessness experienced by blue collar Muslim and Hindu workers is expressed in *Bombay*'s looks of anger and betrayal exchanged between them and Shekhar. Shekhar, at this point, is very disturbed by the riots and, since he is a journalist by profession, he is determined to find out how politicians have been inflaming religious frenzy and inciting both sides to violence. In a series of scenes Shekhar interviews a police officer and some workers in an urban slum who have very different reactions to violence. (Uraizee 2012, 188)

The questions by Shekhar as narrative of the movie reverberates with the findings of Srikrishna Commission as mentioned in Chapter II, Term I,

1.4 December phase of the rioting petered out by 12th December 1992. The police appeared to have regained grip on the law and order situation and peace appeared to have returned. However, behind the surface there was simmering discontent and seething anger amongst the Muslims that unduly excessive police firing had resulted in large number of Muslim casualties. Media had criticized the police for having used unnecessary and excessive fire-power, going so far as to suggest that Muslims were intentionally targeted and selectively killed. This refrain was repeated by political leaders and ministers, past and current. The explanation of the commissioner of police that the aggressive and violent mobs in the initial stages comprised Muslims and, therefore, Muslim casualties were higher, does not appear to be as far-fetched as it has been made out by Muslims, nor can it be dismissed offhand. Despite standing instructions to police that the firing should be effective and directed below the waist, there were number of cases in which the victims, mostly Muslims, appear to have sustained injuries above the waist, leading to death. This per se is not suggestive of deliberate firing and wanton killing on the part of police. The explanation of police is two-fold. Firstly, that rioters in a mob are moving targets and second, firing under attack from a frenzied mob, unlike target practice, is fraught with errors of judgment. Even a fractional error in the angle of ejection could mean drastic change in the trajectory of the projectile and wide variance in the point of impact. This explanation is not so improbable as to be rejected outright. The possibility of some of the rioters ducking to escape becoming targets and in the bargain taking the bullets in the upper regions of their body is not too remote for consideration. (Srikrishna 1998, 12)

As the riots in December is contained by the security apparatuses which was more impulsive, the animosity resurfaced with the strange murder of two workers which saw recommencement of riots on January 1993. In the movie *Bombay*, Shekhar, as a newspaper reporter voices out the concerns of the masses in his series of questions to Muslim and Hindu leaders. He puts across the most fundamental concern in the question to a Muslim cleric, “When will these riots between Hindus and Muslims end?” to which the cleric retorts that “Why are you putting this question to me? Ask those Hindus who are targeting the Muslims! Who sparked off this destruction?” Shekhar poses the same question to the head of Shakti Samaj, a Hindu organization as shown in the movie, that “When will these riots between Hindus and Muslims end?” to which Shekhar gets the reply that – “We are not responsible for the riots. I want the Hindus and Muslims to co-exist in peace. But who hurled the first stone? Now, we will not remain silent!”

The face-off becomes belligerent when the Muslim cleric poses the question that “Who brought the Babri Mosque down in a rubble?” to which the head of Shakti Samaj responds with vindictive assertion that “I am proud, if my boys have indeed demolished the Babri mosque. I am proud of them.” (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

Such vilifications and assertions infuse the detrimental majority-minority dimension in the issue to raise the onus of security and threat to one’s existence and identity. The cleric articulates thereby incites the threat perceived in the collective consciousness of the Muslim community with the clarion call to protect themselves and thereby the community from the ontological and the epistemological onslaught by the majority in the time of imminent crisis. He declares that “there is no one who can protect the Muslims today! We will have to protect ourselves! They have wrought atrocities on Muslims! We will have to take to arms, if we intend to live in this atmosphere!” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) On the other side of the debate, the Shakti Samaj questions the very logic behind the violent assertions in form of telling Shekhar that “let’s not talk of anything else. Just tell me this much. Where do these guys get their arms from? It is from that source, isn’t it?”

In an instance of thorough detailing of violence inflicted on the Muslims the Muslim cleric states that “80% of those dead in the riots were Muslims. They destroyed our mosque and all the police did was to watch! In fact, the police took sides with the mobs and opened fire on Muslims! Why did they do that? Is it because 75% of the policemen belong to the Shakti Samaj?” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) How much of the factual data is true in regard

to his claims are debatable, but barring the data aside reports reflects certain situations that finds distant similitudes with the situation claimed by the cleric.

The chapter III of the Srikrishna Commission in Term No. (II) states that-

Whether any individual or group of individuals, or any other organization, were responsible for such events and circumstances

1.1 December 1992

i) As far as the December 1992 phase of the rioting by the Muslims is concerned, there is no material to show that it was anything other than a spontaneous reaction of leaderless and incensed Muslim mobs, which commenced as peaceful protest, but soon degenerated into riots. The Hindus must share a part of the blame in provoking the Muslims by their celebration rallies, inciting slogans and rasta rokos which were all organised mostly by Shiv Sainiks, and to a marginal extent by BJP activists. 1.2 January 1993

1.2 January 1993

ii) Turning to the events of January 1993, the Commission's view is that though several incidents of violence took place during the period from 15th December 1992 to 5th January 1993, large-scale rioting and violence was commenced from 6th January 1993 by the Hindus brought to fever pitch by communally inciting propaganda unleashed by Hindu communal organizations and writings in newspapers like Saamna and Navaakal. It was taken over by Shiv Sena and its leaders who continued to whip up communal frenzy by their statements and acts and writings and directives issued by the Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray. The attitude of Shiv Sena as reflected in the 'TIME' interview given by Bal Thackeray and its doctrine of 'retaliation', as expounded by Shri Sarpotdar and Shri Manohar Joshi, together with the thinking of Shiv Sainiks that 'Shiv Sena's terror was the true guarantee of the safety of citizens', were responsible for the vigilantism of Shiv Sainiks. Because some criminal Muslims killed innocent Hindus in one corner of the city, the Shiv Sainiks 'retaliated' against several innocent Muslims in other corners of the city.

iii) There is no material on record suggesting that even during this phase any known Muslim individuals or organizations were responsible for the riots, though a number of individual Muslims and Muslim criminal elements appear to have indulged in violence, looting, arson and rioting. (Srikrishna 1998, 23)

Even the leader of Shakti Samaj made inflammatory remarks like- “This nation belongs to Hindus! Those who don’t agree may leave!” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) Such statements reflect the hatred amongst the communities. The one symbolizing the Muslims is triggering revulsion by implanting a sense of paranoia amongst the others in the brethren to retaliate against the threat to their identity. And the one representing Hindus as palpably whimsical in their appropriation of the nation as one belonging only to Hindus and thereby undermining the very secular essence of the nation.

The chapter II of Srikrishna Commission refers to constitution of a committee to study the immediate causes of the riots, as stated-

...Since it was impossible for the Commission itself to undertake a study of these factors it appointed a committee of experts from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, to undertake an analysis of the causative factors for the December 1992 and January 1993 riots from these perspectives (Srikrishna 1998, 19)

As per the submitted report by TISS led committee “[c]lass conflict, economic competition, decline in employment opportunities and changing political discourse are some of the immediate causes for urban riots in different studies undertaken by sociologists.” (Srikrishna 1998, 19)

i) The political discourse has changed over the decades throughout the country. During the early years the themes of parliamentary democracy, respective merits of public versus private sectors used to dominate political discourse. Suddenly, all this has yielded place to communal discourse. Bombay is no exception. On the other hand, it has other aggravating factors like decline of organised sector employment, phenomenal growth of informal sector, presence of vocal Hindutva parties and increasing assertion of Muslim ethnic identity and the like... iv) Thus, over the years various social, political, economic and demographic factors prepared the ground for communal violence and riots. The socio-economic and demographic factors contributed to development of a situation conducive to ethnic violence. The political factors aggravated the cleavages between the ethnic groups, functioning as proximate contributory cause for riots and violence in Bombay. (Srikrishna 1998, 21)

Shekhar voicing out the concern of the masses throws the same question both to the cleric and Shakti Samaj leader, which is – “It’s the ordinary masses who are dying in the clash between you. The masses are being killed; when will the carnage end?” (Swamy and

Koirala 1995) Both the leader are found speechless and compelled to realize their evil designs extorting humanity. “It is not only the question of killing 'the other', but of dehumanisation and desensitisation not only of the killers but also of the community to which they belong.” (Engineer 1993, 507)

Another shade of communal divide is shown when Narayan Mishra encounters a Muslim mob. As soon as his grandson saw the group approaching, he rubs off the vermilion mark on his as well as his grandfather's forehead. This act reflects his acquaintance with the possibility of damage that the mark on the forehead, an identity marker associated with the Hindus, may inflict which can easily make them a prey of grave communal assault. Nonetheless, the absence of the cap on the head, an identity marker associated with the Muslims, marks them as 'other'. “Maintenance of difference and the cultivation of threat perception is therefore often a matter of ideological and political exigency and not experience of analysis.” (Dusche 2010, 53)

So, the vermilion mark and the cap are not innate aspects that one is born with but are more customary and had grown as a signifier of a certain signified socio-cultural norm accepted through conventions in absence of any logical contravention. Conventions exists only till has the currency of mutual consent of concerned parties, however distantly attached, and in not being challenged by logical and rational contraventions.

Since patterns of 'perceiving' the 'other' are cultural constructs, they can be empirically challenged and analytically deconstructed. Thus, while the cultural reference frame includes stereotyped patterns of 'perceiving' the 'other', the system of culture production also provides the means to critique and limit them. (Dusche 2010, 53)

Narayan Mishra is posed different questions, “Where are you coming from? Is it from those street prayers? Why did you come here, old man? What is your name?” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) At this juncture of being threatened Narayan Mishra's sense of assertion of his Hindu identity is confounded with strange manner of resistance. In this state of susceptibility Bashir Ahmed with the necessary identity markers intervenes to save Narayan Mishra.

Bashir intervenes saying that, “What is going on here? What are you doing? He's one of us. Don't you hear me? He's one of us. Go away...” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) The

predilection exhibited caters to the immediacy required in the situation but it also shows the unconscious invisible bonding between Bashir Ahmed and Narayan Mishra which surfaces in the face of crisis. So, it is a group of Muslim attacking a Hindu who is eventually saved by another Muslim. So, who is the enemy, remain the most fundamental query underlying all the identity negotiations and reconfigurations.

Narayan Mishra asks Bashir what he told the mob so that they left and Bashir replied- "I said you are my elder brother." (Swamy and Koirala 1995) Now this is the seminal and pivotal moment in the narrative where the polarity gets diffused to accommodate the overarching call of humanity. The past practice of difference and animosity suddenly disappeared to pave the way for peaceful co-existence. But soon after the incident, the riots commence on January 1993, thereby threatening the compositeness of communal co-existence. During the riots when their house is set ablaze, Narayan reciprocates his newly found belief in the respect for each other's belief system. In the situation of emergency, he forces Bashir to evacuate the house and disrupts his prayers, but as they try to move out together he holds the holy Quran that he collects during Bashir's prayers. The act of holding the holy Quran close to his chest and trying to save Bashir, reflects on his effort to bridge the gap and find a newer possibilities in their relationship. This shows his reconfigured sense of identity more as a human and less as an individual trapped in the orthodoxy of religious customaries and superfluous socio-cultural construct.

The political instigations and engineered aspect of the January riots is well captured in the background score in the movie Bombay which presents a counter to the provocations that is burning the city ablaze and along with it the cosmopolitanism, plurality and the dream that the city offered. "This is our land... our city. Why are we being foe to ourselves? Let's give up hatred and think of our motherland. This violence will devastate us. Stop it, stop it! Be it Muslims or the Hindus that are slayed. It will amount to a murder of humanity. This can lead only to mourning and destruction. Stop it, Stop it! ... You all are the sons of this motherland, then why fight amongst yourselves. Why ruin the garden which you've adorned with so much care! Stop it! Stop all this madness. If we continue fighting like this, we will achieve only destruction. Stop this! Put an end to this insanity." (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

As humanity faced expulsion from the society, the value of life is shown to be exhibited by a transgender who is placed outside the normative acceptance of the society. In a state of

flux, where the society is regressing towards annihilation of humanity and normativity of set conventions is at doldrums then it is a transgender that extends support to the bickering flame of hope in the earnest attempt undertaken to save Kamal's life.

Ratnam [did] leave us in the end with a rather saccharine view of popular culture (the riots in Bombay are stopped by a combination of the entirely invented pangs of conscience of political leaders and the equally fictional intervention of the common people— ordinary men and women, but also an idealised transsexual hijra savant and the always-in-the-right-place-at-the-right-time hero). (Guneratne 1997, 186-187)

The figure of the transgender as meta-minority within the metamorphosed site of various identity markers blurring the communal divide and being the saviour of Kamal, symbolic of the next generation, may be extrapolated to as opening of newer dimension in social setup. This aspect was raised by Rangan in an interview with Mani Ratnam,

RANGAN: During the riots, one of the children is saved by a transgender. An obvious extrapolation is that this 'minority' person would have more compassion for minorities like these kids, who are partly Hindu, partly Muslim.

RATNAM: This, again, is a feature that represents Bombay and its cosmopolitan nature very clearly. The transgender community is all over the streets there, very aggressive, very friendly, interacting with the commuting public, very much part of Bombay life. They are not so open here [in Chennai], but in Bombay, they are a strong community, not a rarity. When you go from here, it's something that strikes you. And they are in a kind of no-man's land, caught between two communities, not knowing which one they belong to. So in a way, all these people are in a limbo, trying to find their feet. (Rangan 2012, 157)

Shekhar finally ratifies his avowal of disagreement with the justifications of either community in a highly animated confrontation beginning with his colleagues and leading into the fellow Hindus. He asks Rafiq, "What is gotten into you? Have you gone mad? Do you know what you are doing?" to which Rafiq retorts and justifies his act of violence in the most preposterous manner stating- "He is a Hindu!" This instance registers the impulsivity of the rioters in their partisan identifications and misguided opinions in selective appropriation of their identity to validate their act of barbarism. Shekhar retorts, "Kill me then! I am Hindu too!" Rafiq continues to justify, "Listen Shekhar, they have been targeting our shops and houses and setting them on fire! They are bent on driving us

out of the country!” Rafiq voices out retaliatory concerns at their existence and identity being threatened. Shekhar questions him, “What do you have against me?” to which Rafiq responds that- “Cut the hypocrisy of brotherhood! A line has been drawn and this can never be joined. This fire cannot be put out now!” Rafiq then accuses one of his fellow Hindu colleague linked with Shakti Samaj to killing Muslims during the riots. To which the colleague retorted “sure, I did kill. Any why not? Why don’t the laws of our country apply to them? They have scared us enough! It is the politicians who appease them. The government gives them concessions for being minorities. But this is India!” Shekhar being exasperated by justifications and counter-justification, he questions both of them, “It won’t be only the Hindus and Muslims who die in the riots! Take a look at the destruction! Why should we suffer and perish when you fight like mad wreaking havoc and destruction. For what fault of ours should we suffer? I am not a Hindu nor me and my children Muslims either. We don’t belong to either community. We are only Indians! Does the Quran advocate the slaying of Hindus? Or does the Gita tell you to kill Muslims? Then, what and why is all this devastation for? I have been separated from my kids for people like you. Should something happen to them, people like you will be responsible!” (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

Kamal flabbergasted with the continual fights between the communities asks the transgender certain innocent yet seminal question- “Why are the Hindus and Muslims fighting each other?” gets an equally honest answer- “Don’t know son. They have lived together like brothers for centuries. But they have now been driven apart.” Kamal continues, “Which communities’ mistake is it?” which is clearly answered as “it is nobody’s mistake. It is the politicians who light the fire of hatred, and it is the common man who dies in the crossfire.” (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

The innocent mind of Kamal unable to grapple with the basic difference between the two communities, finally asks the most fundamental question- “What does Muslim mean and what does Hindu mean?” The transgender in all humility admits- “that’s a difficult question, son. Why ask someone like me? Religion is a way to reach God. The Hindus and the Muslims have their own ways of reaching God.” Kamal tries to understand that if that is the case than why do they fight amongst themselves, to which he is replied that- “That’s one thing I have never been able to understand.” (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

Instances are shown how the Shakti Samaj leader travels through the riot-torn streets and the cleric visits to the affected colonies, where both of them looked apprehensive of the fact that the situation has moved out of control with consequences irreversible in the annals of time and space, to be written with blood and fire in the traumatic anecdote of post-independence Indian history.

The movie ends with the larger sentiments of brotherhood, humanity and fraternity overshadow the communal antagonism and difference. Common people understand the futility of such violence and how their lives are dragged into a state of desolation and uncertainty. The blaze of humanity outshines the shadows of antipathy.

The movie *Bombay* shows many instances towards the end where various agencies; state, political and common people voice out their concern and disgust at the communal conflagration. The call from the communal leaders to stop violence is resounded by the police officer albeit in an exasperating tone asking the razing crowd, "How many more people will you kill?" An old man expresses the weariness at being in the trap of violence, "We have had enough! There has been too much destruction! Allah would never approve of this!" While these lines are said, the camera moves around the seated victim to show the devastation and plight of the sufferers on the background. The video compliments the exasperation expressed in his words.

The movie goes on to show different scenes simultaneously with members from the same community stopping the mobs of that community to protect someone from the other community in the name of humanity. The Hindus and Muslims combined are trying to stop the mobs at various points echoing the futility of such brutality and advocating the need to protect and respect the people from other community to uphold the secular and humanitarian character of the society. Shekhar prevents a Muslim family from being attacked by a Hindu mob and states that, "you are fools to be provoked into killing each other! Politicians are taking advantage of you for their seats of power! Miscreants and criminals have been robbing and killing people, in your name! People of influence have been provoking you. Kill those villains before you kill these innocents!" Another Muslim lady while protecting a Hindu lady asks the Muslim mob, "Drop these weapons! Drop them, I say! This is like my own child. This women is my sister!" (Swamy and Koirala 1995)

All these claims reconfigure the idea of hatred and enmity, which was the genesis of impulsivity mounting to riots. The identities, selectively appropriated only with the communal dimension and clinically separated by the contrived mental and social construct, got merged with a defining consensus for peace and congruence. The effect of resurfacing of the lost bond of socio-communal unison was shown immediately in form of daggers being dropped to the ground and fire-sticks being thrown on water. These gestures symbolically portrays the end of violence with the consensus towards the need to stop as acrimony was built around the erstwhile conjugal socio-communal that existed. Symbolically, it is after this altercation of rationality and subsequent expose of the political gimmick in inciting violence, the riots culminates. Mani Ratnam, the director, infuses an unfaltering element of optimism with the background score, “Let there be dreams of hope, let peace protect us. Even if the nights are long and dreadful, Let’s usher in a new dawn. Let’s cleanse our hearts of the hatred. It will lead to peace. We shall not live in fear and hatred. Let happiness reign. We will spend our lives in happiness and laughter. Even if the gardens are plundered, it will lead to a new spring for the roses. Breaking the shackles of hatred, we shall build a bed of roses. And dream of a better future. So, Let’s usher in a new dawn.” (Swamy and Koirala 1995) The resounding hope for a better future is complimented with Kamal and Kabir re-uniting with their parents is symbolic of the living testimony of the hope of life.

The movie realistically portray helplessness, betrayal and horror include those depicting the misadventures of Kamal and Kabir, the twin sons of Shekhar and Shaila Bano, who gets separated from their parents during the riots and narrowly escape being killed. In those scenes, Kamal exchanges sympathetic glances with a Hindu castrato and Kabir with a little Muslim girl. These looks do show a degree of interaction between and among the survivors. (Uraizee 2012, 189)

The movie also shows the unison in form of the human chain being formed beyond communal lines, which is a metamorphosis of identity and blurring of the communal divide, as an earnest attempt to prevent the mobs from inflicting further damage and stop the riots.

At this point, it is imperative to understand the idea of how multiplicity of identities are compounded with various micro-facets aligning in fluctuating configurations to form the macrostructure. So, the concept of identity is like that of an amoeba, which will change

shape and size, will reconfigure and negotiate itself concurring to the varying coordinates of space and time, but will essentially maintain its core static in its functional fluidity. In context of the Hindu-Muslim identity, the communal facet got played upon and it did take some time for people to recuperate into consciousness to realize that other facets should be a counter or a foil to the one that becomes overbearing and essential, threatening to be the absolute facet overshadowing all other. In context of the interplay of our psychological state of mind, we are only conscious of a miniscule part of the entire repository that lies ingrained in our unconscious, so is the case with identity. The stimulants, like social unrest, spark of a certain facet of our holistic identity at a given point of time and space, coalesced into a form of debilitating singularity to be perceived as our absolute reality in our conscious frame of mind.

The situations shown in the movie in regard to identity negotiations and reconfigurations vis-à-vis the causality of the riots of December 1992 and January 1993 as spontaneous and premeditated respectively may be read in conjunction with the Srikrishna Commission report, Chapter 2 that states its findings of the causes as-

1.26 December 1992 i) The immediate causes of the communal riots on 6th December 1992 were: (a) the demolition of Babri Masjid, (b) the aggravation of Muslim sentiments by the Hindus with their celebration rallies and (c) the insensitive and harsh approach of the police while handling the protesting mobs which initially were not violent.

1.27 January 1993 i) As far as the causes for January 1993 phase of the rioting is concerned, the Commission does not accept the theory that it was merely a backlash of the Hindus because of the stabbings, Mathadi murders incidents and the Radhabai Chawl incident. ii) The events which took place between the period 12th December 1992 and 15th January 1993 indicate that there were attacks going on against the Muslims and their properties in different areas; there were also several stabbing incidents carried out by professional criminals in different areas of the city, with the intention of whipping up communal frenzy, in which the majority of the victims happened to be Hindus (two of the notorious Muslim criminals Salim Rampuri and Feroz Kokani were subsequently identified to be behind the Hindu stabbings); the communal passions of the Hindus were aroused to fever pitch by the inciting writings in print media, particularly Saamna and Navaakal which gave exaggerated accounts of the Mathadi murders and the Radhabai Chawl incident; rumours were floated that

there were imminent attacks by Muslims using sophisticated arms. These factors impelled some of the irresponsible and hot-headed Hindu elements to take to violence. From 8th January 1993 at least there is no doubt that the Shiv Sena and Shiv Sainiks took the lead in organizing attacks on Muslims and their properties under the guidance of several leaders of the Shiv Sena from the level of Shakha Pramukh to the Shiv Sena Pramukh Bal Thackeray who, like a veteran General, commanded his loyal Shiv Sainiks to retaliate by organised attacks against Muslims. The communal violence and rioting triggered off by the Shiv Sena was hijacked by local criminal elements who saw in it an opportunity to make quick gains. By the time the Shiv Sena realized that enough had been done by way of "retaliation", the violence and rioting was beyond the control of its leaders who had to issue an appeal to put an end to it.

1.28 Effete political leadership, vacillation for political reasons and conflicting orders issued to the commissioner of police and percolated downwards created a general sense of confusion in the lower ranks of the police, resulting in the dilemma, 'to shoot, or not to shoot'. Four precious days were lost for the Chief Minister to consider and issue orders as to effective use of army for controlling the riots. (Srikrishna 1998, 21-22)

In the novel, *Black Friday*, the reference to the term 'they' shows the other, the external forces involved in the conspiracy to avenge the damage caused to the Babri Masjid but more importantly a perceived consequent psychological scar on the collective consciousness of the Muslim community altogether. In the state of desolateness, frenzy ideas make more sense to the outrageous minds in the name of protection of one's identity.

'They called,' Dawood said. Shakeel had never asked and Dawood had never explained who 'they' were. It is believed that the term referred to top officials in Pakistan. 'They know about Aslam Bhatti and Dawood Jatt's attacks on us. They say that they want to land some important cargo in Bombay through our landing routes at spots near Shekhadi and Dighi. Tiger and Taufiq will handle the entire operation of landing, paying the doctors and other such things. In exchange, they will arrange total security for our business.' He paused and then continued meditatively, 'I think that the cargo will not be ordinary stuff like gold biscuits or silver ingots. It could be something meant as a retribution for the demolition of the Babri Masjid and the massacre of Muslims. I told them that if it only means using my infrastructure and nothing beyond that then I have no problem. I can seek solace in the fact that the blood of my brothers will be avenged.' (Zaidi 2002, 29)

The unfortunate victimization of the Muslims and selective justice and action of the police in event of such situations evidently portray an unethical and disreputable biasness in their functioning. The selective appropriation of the victim situation and lack of cooperation and support extended to the bereaved members of the minority Muslim community catches special attention of the Srikrishna Commission of Inquiry which traces the genesis of the January riots of 1993 to that of disproportionate management leading to affronted sentiments amongst the Muslims during the December 1992 episode.

Chapter II, Term I, of the Srikrishna Commission Report states-

1.6 The Commission is of the view that there is evidence of police bias against Muslims which has manifested itself in other ways like the harsh treatment given to them, failure to register even cognizable offences by Muslim complainants and the indecent haste shown in classifying offences registered in "A" summary in cases where Muslim complainants had specifically indicated the names and even addresses of the miscreants. That there was a general bias against the Muslims in the minds of the average policemen which was evident in the way they dealt with the Muslims, is accepted by the officer of the rank of Additional Commissioner, V.N. Deshmukh. This general police bias against Muslims crystallizes itself in action during January 1993. (Srikrishna 1998, 12)

The collective resentment of the Muslim community surfaces in form of the tacit support of the macro Muslim community radicalizing the effort to redress the loss, gets materialized by implicit funding to support the assertion of one's identity and community. "The violence of remonstrance culminates from the efforts of a group of demonstrators to bring attention to a particular point of view, usually in the form of a set of perceived or experienced grievances." (Bryjak 1986, 38)

The simmering resentment was not confined to that room in Dubai. It spread like a forest fire. From the *kahwa-khanas* (tea joints) of Iran to the mosques of Jordan and the *maktabs* (religious schools) of Syria, the conversation invariably dwelt on one topic: how to avenge the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Hukumat-Al-Hind (India). The suggestion ranged from the sane- enforcing an oil embargo on India- to the radical, like blowing up vital installations. The continuing riots in India only fuelled the determination of expatriate smugglers... to avenge their *quam*. Plans were chalked out, strategies suggested and discarded in the search for a consensus. Several bank

accounts were opened and slush funds created to fund the *tehrik-e-intequam* (movement of revenge). Millions of dirhams and dollars secretly poured in and many leaders in Islamic nations pledged tacit support, though officially they would not hear of anything subversive against India. Gradually from this haze of theories and plans, a coherent scheme began to emerge. (Zaidi 2002, 30)

People like Tiger Memon who symbolized the man with a threatened identity, wanted more than a mere retaliation to ensure that their manifest retribution should be able to send psychological shock waves across the globe. In retribution he wanted to carve a different idea of the community and its identity. "It is a matter of "we" versus "them" not unlike the stereotypical categorization of members of one racial, language or religious community by members of another." (McPhail 1994, 23)

Tiger said, more to himself than to the gathering, 'Even if Advani and Thackeray can be killed, it will still not solve our problem. The Hindus will turn them into godlike figures and Muslims throughout India will be massacred.'... Tiger spoke up. 'Bombay is the pride of India, its financial nerve centre. It is also the place where Muslims suffered the most during the riots. Why not display our might and power there? Any attack on Bombay will have international repercussions. The government will be shaken. The world leaders will be shocked. Let us plan to take over Bombay. We can capture Mantralaya, the municipal corporation building and the airport, hold political leaders hostage and cripple the economy. We will draw international attention to the downtrodden Muslims of the country.' (Zaidi 2002, 38-39)

People like Badshah Khan symbolizes the youthful energy misdirected and how their gullible minds with blazing agony are prone to systematic brainwashing in making them 'thoughtless automations' to reproduce the evil intentions by their actions. . "As he listened, Maria was [...] amazed at how these youths were brainwashed into agreeing to sacrifice their lives for a cause which had no direct benefits for them. This was not crime for money; they saw it as a larger, nobler cause." (Zaidi 2002, 201) People like them became perfect pawns to hatch the criminal conspiracy.

However, since the time Tiger bhai came and told me, 'Badshah Khan, you and your friends are going for training to Islamabad on 13 February,' I had been excited... We were seven young men bound by a common motive, driven by the same goal and spurred by the consuming fire of revenge. (Zaidi 2002, 54-55)

The instances of their passport being taken away reflects parting off from their identity; past and their roots, and how their respective identities got negotiated and reconfigured as per the situational demands.

We were going to be trained to exact revenge for our martyred brother in the riots of Bombay. I felt weighed down with the responsibility, yet strangely exhilarated. It was a new beginning, and I felt it would change my very being... Jaafar bhai took away our passports and tickets. He said that during our stay in Pakistan, we should use assumed names. I was re-christened Nasir, Javed was Ali... and Taimur became Mujahid. (Zaidi 2002, 56-57)

The bosses have been able to tap onto their inner anguish well enough to ensure that they remain committed to the felonious cause of wreaking havoc in the city of Bombay and thereby avenge the perceived atrocities on the Muslim community. Their unwavering persistence towards the rigorous and demanding training schedule reflected upon two things; firstly their disposition towards the training venture and secondly and most importantly to seek 'revenge'. Their obsession to perceived paranoias was such that their euphoric enthusiasm made them less of militants and more of a monster, capable of causing devastation on a colossal intensity.

In Bombay. I never got up before 11 a.m. But in the jungles, I was made to get up at 6 a.m. It was 15 February. That first day we were made to jog, stretch and do all kinds of exercises. In all my twenty-seven years, I had never exercised. My body was rebelling against such rigorous exertions. At the end of the three-hour session, I felt totally drained. I was so exhausted that I think I would have quit, had the goal not been so important. After all, I had vowed that I would take revenge...I was determined to help my entire community. I had failed to take revenge on one man and his stooges in uniform, but now I was ready to take revenge on the entire nation. (Zaidi 2002, 59)

Tiger Memon made up for the astute protégé of the conspiring criminal macro-apparatus aided with shrewd and Machiavellian tactics executes the conspiracy meticulously to have eclectic connotations and send message both beyond and within the Indian political borders. He wanted the relational communal configurations between the majority and minority be destabilized and subvert the hegemonic structure of power operation. Thereby, he aimed at reconfiguration of the communal identity dynamics after being subjected to decisive negotiations of the same with blatant yet ingenuous showcase of might.

‘Okay, let us cancel the refinery,’ Tiger said reluctantly. ‘I think that car bombs would be the best way of achieving our ends. We will park cars with RDX at the share bazaar, the Air India building, Zaveri Bazaar, the grain market at Masjid Bunder, the Shiv Sena headquarters at Dadar and Plaza Cinema. Those places where car bombs cannot be exploded, we have to storm, like the BJP and Shiv Sena offices.’... Tiger suddenly changed track from the practical to the rousing: ‘Let this city and Advani and Thackeray remember forever what we are capable of doing in the span of hours.’ (Zaidi 2002, 80-81)

He also aimed at sending strong message in the political corridors by the discernible action as a counter to the political inaction or disproportionate action on traumatic events of Babri Masjid demolition and the subsequent riots across Indian targeting the Muslims.

Chapter II, Term I, clause 1.3 of the Srikrishna Commission Report states-

ii) The irresponsible act of the Hindutva parties in celebrating and gloating over the demolition of Babri structure was like twisting a knife in the wound and heightened the anguished ire of the Muslims. The celebration rally organised by Shiv Sena in Dharavi jurisdiction is an example. The Muslims protested, and protested angrily on the streets. Large number of Muslims congregated near Minara Masjid in Pydhonie jurisdiction at about 2320 hours on 6th December 1992 and came out protesting. Even at this stage, if the mobs had been handled tactfully and with sensitivity by the police and accepted leaders of both communities, the protest would have peacefully blown over. The police mishandled the situation and by their aggressive posture turned the peaceful protests into violent demonstrations, during which the first targets of the anger of the mob became the municipal vans and the constabulary, both visible signs of the establishment. (Srikrishna 1998, 9)

The report states the manner in which the anguish and discontent had taken a turbulent loop to enrage the fundamental chord of human connection into a matter of pretention, and how the situation turned violent and anarchic from the 7th December 1992 to be finally contained by the security apparatuses by 12th December 1992.

B) 7th December 1992

i) From 7th December 1992 onwards there was a qualitative transformation in the situation. Large mobs of Muslims came on the streets and there was recourse taken to

violence without doubt. This time the Muslim mobs appear to have come out with the intention of mounting violent attacks as noticed from their preparedness with weapons of offence. There were violent attacks on the policemen in Muslim dominated areas like Bhandi Bazar and its vicinity. The jurisdictional areas affected were mostly Muslim dominated or mixed localities in which the misguided and irresponsible Hindu youths aggravated the situation by engaging the rioting Muslims, leading to a situation where the police found it difficult to restrain both sections; when the police did it by force, the police came to be attacked by both Hindu and Muslim mobs.

ii) By this time the protest had degenerated into a full-scale communal riot between Hindus and Muslims. Eleven temples in different jurisdictions were damaged, demolished or set on fire. The Hindus did not fall behind and damaged mosques and madrassas in different jurisdictions. BEST buses in the Bombay Central Bus Depot and BEST bus stops became easy targets for the Muslim mobs and were damaged and/or set on fire.

iii) Two Constables in Deonar jurisdiction were killed with choppers and swords by the rampaging Muslims. While one lay on the ground bleeding to death, the body of another was dragged and thrown into the garbage heap from where it was recovered seven days later. One constable was done to death in Byculla jurisdiction. Several police officers and policemen who bravely attempted to stem the tide sustained injuries in mob action.

iv) Jogeshwari area, which has been the hotbed of frequent communal riots saw serious riots at the junction of Pascal Colony and Shankar Wadi. A police officer on duty received a bullet injury in his head and died subsequently, though it cannot be said with certitude that it was a case of private firing. The police recovered large number of iron rods, sickles, choppers, knives and soda water bottles from different jurisdictions indicating that there was intention and preparations to carry on the communal riots. (Srikrishna 1998, 10-11)

Tiger's plan to make his aides euphoric about the idea of revenge to trigger the blast and he himself leaving the city on that day indicates some ulterior motives on his part to desert the disillusioned youths after the job gets done. His acknowledgment of the potentialities of riots that might consume the city with fire and blood and the fact that the Muslims may again get targeted and victimized, puts his entire idea of avenging the threat and perceived loss of identity of Muslims post-Babri Masjid demolition stands in the ambit of scrutiny.

Tiger looked at Anwar, Chikna and Irfan, and then at the others and said, ‘Anwar, Javed and Irfan are the best at fixing detonators and pencil timers, so they will supervise that part of the work. The rest of you should work under their direction. I will leave by the early morning flight to Dubai. After you have finished your jobs, I have also made arrangements for your escape. There might be communal riots after this. Either you can use the machineguns and ammunition that we have, or you can give them to other Muslims.’ (Zaidi 2002, 81)

It is rather ironic in the way Tiger and his bosses plan an act of retribution to avenge the threat to the collective psychological identity of Muslims in India which eventually ends up victimizing them further. The facets of identity assertions further complicates the blurring line between act and intent.

Tiger made sure that he escaped, and that everyone in his family had left Bombay by 12th March. He was concerned about his personal safety, but not about ours, though he did leave some money. But he did not make any preparations for us. His family is safe today, while we are suffering. And as a result of what we did so many innocent Muslims have been tortured, women and girls treated horribly. Tiger must have known this would happen, but he did not care about his people, did he? (Zaidi 2002, 215-216)

Badshah’s apprehension was completely correct because in the name of saving the honour of his community, Tiger actually ended up dishonouring his community by attaching with it a tag of trepidation and radicalism. Tiger knew the dire consequences of the blast and the adverse effect it would have on the Muslim community at large, but it was the egotistical attitude of Tiger Memon that drove the city to a state of desolation and fear.

After being arrested and interrogated, Badshah Khan’s justifications of his actions and demeanour show how his sense of disproportionate rationality. But his sense of introspection gets ignited in his arguments with Rakesh Maria. Badshah seems to speak the same fundamental and radical language with the spirit of euphoria misdirected with the systematic brainwashing. Badshah’s assertions of his identity and the pride he felt in retribution of the threat to his identity was implicit in his justifications and valorisations of their heinous crime.

[Badshah] started from the communal riots, the destruction of Tiger Memon’s office, the killings of Muslims, and the rape of the women. He spoke of the community’s

desire for revenge, and out of that desire, the gradual evolution of a plan. ‘Tiger Memon was the only person brave enough to come forward. He began garnering support an manpower for his mission... Thus he built a team of people ready to take revenge, ready to give up our lives for the holy war... Allah helped us and we emerged victorious in our battle against the disbelievers.’(Zaidi 2002, 200-201)

Rakesh Maria intervened to convey the fundamental message that Badshah and his colleagues got played down into the quagmire of hollow rhetoric. The messianic flair with which they were promised of a utopian society with selective articulation and interpretation infused them with assertive impudence and ruthlessness to avenge the ‘loss’, was shattered by the logic put forth by Rakesh Maria which destabilized Badshah’s very faith in his erstwhile foundation of beliefs and convictions.

[Maria said], ‘No, you are wrong. Allah is not biased in favour of Muslims. He always helps those who are righteous and believers of truth. This time he helped us.’

Badshah broke in, ‘No. Impossible. How can you say that? Allah helped us. We managed to kill hundreds. We avenged the blood of innocent Muslims.’

‘Nonsense... Allah will never help in the killing of the innocent helpless people. After all, He is their God as well, and does not discriminate ... And that day I think Allah helped Hindus more than he helped Muslims.’ Maria was yelling at the top of his voice, while part of his mind wondered how he could substantiate this statements. He continued, ‘You had to abandon that Maruti van because Allah wanted to help us and not you. That van gave us our first breakthrough. It was with the help of Allah that we managed to arrest over a hundred people in less than two months. If Allah was on your side then we would not have been able to arrest anybody, we would not have had any clues.’ His conviction grew with every sentence [and] Badshah Khan was silenced. (Zaidi 2002, 201-202)

Badshah Khan’s introspection upon his conversation with Maria had opened a newer dimension in his thinking. Rakesh Maria’s unambiguous assertions with validated reasons was too good for someone like Badshah to re-think upon the articulations of truth that he is a passive subject to. It is at this point of critical juncture that he agreed to become the official police witness for the entire case. Maria’s verbal affirmative proclamation tangentially touches upon our idea of justice which is reformative and not punitive, where Badshah’s was not physically assaulted in custody owing to the insolent affirmations to his

justifications. Badshah was given time to think and introspect, which had eventually helped him tounderstand the larger picture of the overarching scheme and conspiracy.

I think Rakesh Maria is right. It is now August, five months since the blasts and over two weeks now since I met him last, but the more I think about it the more convinced I am by his arguments. I have read the history of Islam. They say that whatever Allah aided the Muslim army, the believers vanquished their foes and overpowered the infidels. Whenever Allah did not help the Muslims for some reason, the Muslim lost. Maria said that Allah did not help us in or mission to destroy Bombay, and so our mission could have been right. If Allah had helped us, we would have totally destroyed the BSE and the Air India building so that nothing of them remained, and killed Bal Thackeray and other Shiv Sena leaders at their Sena Bhavan headquarters. The very fact that we could not succeed despite all or best efforts means that Allah did not help us, that He did not want us to do this. (Zaidi 2002, 215)

Chapter VI, Term No. VI titled, “The circumstances and the immediate cause of the incidents commonly known as the serial bomb blasts of 12th March 1993 which occurred in the Bombay Police Commissionerate area”, states that:

ii) A cumulative reading of the affidavits of the police officers referred to above leads to the following: As a result of the demolition of Babri Masjid and the riots which took place in Bombay during December 1992 and January 1993, there was communal cleavage in Bombay. The Muslims felt a feeling of insecurity, tension and anger on account of their suffering during the two riot periods and they were inclined to blame the State Government and police for their misery. The Muslims perhaps felt that the Government and police, instead protecting their interests, had actually acted against their interests by joining hands with communal elements which took a lead in the riots. A large number of Muslim youths came to entertain this firm belief. This body of angry young men was exploited by anti-national elements, who were desirous of de-stabilizing the situation in this country. Certain anti-national elements aided and abetted by ISI of Pakistan recruited some of the angry young men by brainwashing them that they should take revenge for the humiliation and misery heaped upon them. A grand conspiracy was hatched at the instance of the notorious smuggler, Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar, operating from Dubai, to recruit and train young Muslims to vent their anger and wreak revenge by exploding bombs near vital installations and also in Hindu dominated areas so as to engineer a fresh bout of communal riots.iii) Pursuant to this conspiracy certain brainwashed Muslim youngsters were recruited and taken to

Pakistan for intensive training in the handling of sophisticated weapons and explosives. As a part of this conspiracy, Dawood Ibrahim and smugglers like Mohd. Dossa, aided and abetted by several criminal or similar elements in Bombay, smuggled large consignments of AK-56 rifles, hand grenades, and sophisticated explosives known as RDX. Some of these were landed clandestinely on the coast of Raigad district and some on the coast of Gujarat state. These were then clandestinely transported to be stored at convenient places within and outside Bombay, awaiting the signal for their use. iv) The conspiracy was actually implemented when a series of blasts occurred on 12th March 1992 in Bombay, almost simultaneously, at several places. The serial bomb blasts resulted in loss of life of 257 persons and injuries to 713 persons and caused damage to properties worth about Rs 27 crore. The first of the bomb blasts occurred at about 1330 hours near the Bombay Stock Exchange Building, the next within a few minutes near the Air India building. In all there were ten such explosions at different places, viz. Stock Exchange Building at Fort, Air India Building at Nariman Point, Zaveri Bazar, Katha Bazar, Century Bazar at Worli, Sena Bhavan at Dadar, Hotel Sea Rock at Bandra, Hotel Centaur at Juhu and Hotel Centaur at Santacruz Airport. Apart from these ten explosions, explosives were also set to explode at Naigaum Cross Road, Dhanji Street and Shaikh Memon Street, but the explosives fortunately did not explode. Simultaneously, there was an attack on the Hindu Machhimar colony at Mahim with hand grenades which caused the death of three Hindus and injuries to many. An incipient communal riot at Machhimar colony was immediately put down by police. A similar attack was also launched at the Sahar International Airport where a hand grenade was lobbed towards a parked aircraft. The investigations disclosed that the explosive devices were planted in cars and scooters in specially made cavities. (Srikrishna 1998, 45)

Chapter VI, Term No. VII titled, “Whether the incidents referred to in term (I), have any common link with the incidents referred to in term (VI) above”, states that:

i) One common link between the riots of December 1992 and January 1993 and bomb blasts of 12th March 1993 appear to be that the former appear to have been a causative factor for the latter. There does appear to be a cause and effect relationship between the two riots and the serial bomb blasts. ii) Another common link is that some of the accused who were involved in substantive riot-related offences were also accused in the serial bomb blasts case, though their number is only three or four. iii) Tiger Memon, the key figure in the serial bomb blasts case and his family had suffered extensively during the riots and therefore can be said to have had deep rooted motive

for revenge. It would appear that one of his trusted accomplices, Javed Dawood Tailor alias Javed Chikna, had also suffered a bullet injury during the riots and therefore he also had a motive for revenge. Apart from these two specific cases, there was a large amorphous body of angry frustrated and desperate Muslims keen to seek revenge for the perceived injustice done to and atrocities perpetrated on them or to others of their community and it is this sense of revenge which spawned the conspiracy of the serial blasts. This body of angry frustrated and desperate Muslims provided the material upon which the anti-national and criminal elements succeeded in building up their conspiracy for the serial bomb blasts. (Srikrishna 1998, 46)

The third point can be read in conjunction with Badshah Khan's narrative where he links Tiger's strategy of using their anger to materialize his disguised antipathy as a riot victim of January riots wrapped under fraternal obligation towards his community.

I see now that Tiger Memon used us in his personal vendetta against the Hindus. Tiger bhai was the only one among us who suffered tremendous losses in the riots. Chikna had a bullet wound, but it was minor. But Tiger's Mahim office was burned down; he lost a lot of money. Maybe he thought nothing else could motivate others to join him in his war against Hindus except the name of Islam. We were all just used... (Zaidi 2002, 215)

The movie *Black Friday* shows the same distraught nature of humanity with lesser details due to time constraint. The narrative aspect of the movie differs from the close detailing of a novel. The intervention in the text-reader relationship is singular only in form of the authorial intent, but in case of the movie the intervention of the author's intent is shared with the directorial intent, mostly in unison of thought but different in presentation. The movie presents a non-linear and flashback narrative technique compared to the linearity of narrative progression shown in the novel. The movie, based on the novel, had a stimulating narrative process with conventional cinematic methods complimented with documentary features of video footages and voice-over on scenes depicting various affected places.

The movie uses the footage-voiceover technique to situate the blast and its after-effects in the cinematic narrative on a chronological manner. Later, as a flashback of the December and January riots are shown the same technique is used to portray similar situations.

On certain counts the detailing aspect of novel is unquestionably meticulous, but the visual aspect of movie shows certain situation in a more pronounced and amplified manner without distorting the sense of reality. The interview of the Pakistani diplomat, dated March 20, 1993, is visual reproduction of the simulated real-time interview tape with the necessary visual pixel distortions typical of connectivity and equipment shortcomings as seen in government tapes and documentaries try to lend it some stamp of authority. The non-uniformity of the video resolution lends it a documentary character after all and thereby giving it some sense of representativeness.

Similarly the movie merges tapes and recordings of Babri Masjid demolition that not just refers to the demolition but actually shows footages of the karsevaks climbing atop the domes and demolishing it. Such visual add veracity to the narrative processes.

The helplessness of the victims who are burnt alive, rendered through the visuals give it a much more poignant appeal. The victims of the riots without an agency to speak for themselves or for their plight is voiced out by the omniscient narrator with a hovering auditory presence. "Thus sound may merely duplicate or reinforce what is visible, but it may play an independent structural or narrative role, and may affect the interpretation or emotional tone of what is seen." (Sparshott 1979, 336) Also the Bomb blast, as reproduced in the movie, captures close resemblances to the visual and sensual reality that may be perceived upon estimation of published data and reports. The deafening silence with the shrill in the eardrums immediately after the blast and blowing up of cars and buildings resound a verisimilitude to the extent of death toll recorded and properties destroyed. The psychological trauma conceived as a debilitating effect on the generations to manage up with the loss of not just property but with the sense of social cohesion.

Yakub Memon clearly states initially in the interview and later in the court that none of the members from the Memon family was aware of the conspiracy and that none of them were involved in any manner whatsoever. He clearly cites ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence), Pakistan's intelligence agencies involvement in the plot and more evidently in providing safety and shelter to Tiger Memon in Pakistan.

The movie poignantly build up the situation that justifies Badshah Khan's decision to surrender to police and eventually ended up being the police witness while in custody. After the blasts, the team encounters the crude nature of reality after the veil of euphoria

and ardour faces away. Their emotional debacle is portrayed best in the character of Badshah Khan, who is metamorphosed to represent the rest of the group. They first encounter reality when they get to know that their passports are burnt off. “Badshah was outraged. How could they destroy such a vital document without even asking him? ‘It was my passport! Who were you to destroy it?’” (Zaidi 2002, 143) Thereby disabling them to break the confines set upon them by the actual perpetrators of the blast. Badshah’s repeated movement from one place to another to seek refuge with a bleak hope unconsciously pinned on Tiger to fetch him out of the trap. But soon, upon introspection he realizes his imminent fate with a criminal identity which has become more of a liability than an asset. His helplessness and exasperation is vividly portrayed especially when he faces financial crunch and in his inability to find a way out of the angst. The more he tries to come out, he gets further trapped in the quagmire of desolation and delinquency.

Chapter 4

Mapping the Macro by corroboration of the Micros:

Comparative analysis of genres and events

Part 1: Comparison of the narratives and cross-generic study

The novel and the movie as discrete genres of narration have unique characteristics used to represent and narrate events. Hence, a comparative analysis is intended only in terms of what is represented and how, instead of imploring upon a whole lot of possibilities specific to that genre.

To begin with, both, the novels and the movies, have delved deep into locating the crisis during the Emergency of 1975-1977, Operation Bluestar, Anti-Sikh riots of 1984, the Babri Masjid demolition, the subsequent riots and the Bombay Bomb blast.

Both novel and film are time arts, but whereas the formative principle in the novel is time, the formative principle in the film is space. Where the novel takes its space for granted and forms its narrative in a complex of time values, the film takes its time for granted and forms its narrative in arrangements of space. Both film and novel create the illusion of psychological distorted time and space, but neither destroys time and space. The novel renders the illusion of space by going from point to point in time; the film renders time by going from point from point to point in space. The novel tends to abide by, yet explore, the possibilities of psychological law; the film tends to abide by, yet explore, the possibilities of physical law. (Bluestone 2012, 250)

Any kind of comparative superiority cannot be ascertained to either of the genre as both of them have their constraints and autonomies. The novel can be exhaustive with exquisite details but the movie falls short in this aspect due to time constraints. “The ambiguities of space and time combine to give film motion an endless complexity.” (Sparshott 1979, 333) As the novel develops the plot, it does so in a systematic manner like a slide show where different elements like setting, time and characters are introduced to the context, and then slowly the elements are allowed to intermix. The author and the reader interface allows for a dual control over the pace. The author has a certain pace in the way the plot

progresses and the reader may take his/her own time to let the plot sink in, let the thought and perception develop and then move on.

And *perception*, what does it mean? For the moment, it is enough if we consider it any continuing act of the senses, or better, all of them cooperatively, which grasps something individual. Hence the real world is composed of those things we can see, hear, touch, feel, bump into. Let us call all of this *perception*; and since movies are primarily seen and heard, the *real* of movies then will be what can be seen and heard ... perception and its world of realities is, namely, that these real identities are always taken by perception to be *in a world*. And, for perception, this world is not so much a sum total of things nor an infinite container, as it is a horizon which itself can never be perceived but which expresses the sense in perception that its realities are always somewhere even when not seen by me; that there could be other perceivers besides myself who could see the same things; and that things and persons themselves have perceptible properties even when those properties are not being actually perceived. A reality then for perception is a recognizable identity with its own place in a world of similar identities. (Earle 1979, 34,36)

“The filmmaker is an intermediary between the viewer and the subject, rather than an obstacle, subservient to the script, to preconceived thematic statement, or to plotted narrative.” (Barsam 1979, 590) In case of movie, the filmmaker tries to develop the sense of perception by setting a certain pace of the plot and the viewers’ attend to that progression of set of images infused into a motion where different aspects are discussed in pages of a novel are made to fit into one scene.

The novel has three tenses: the film has only one. From this follows almost everything else one can say about time in both media. By now, we are familiar with Bergson’s distinction between two kinds of time: chronological time measured in more or less discrete units (as in clocks and metronomes); and psychological time, which distends or compresses in consciousness, and presents itself in continuous flux... [C]hronological time in the novel exists on three primary levels: the chronological duration of the reading; the chronological duration of the narrator’s time; and the chronological span of the narrative events. That the three chronologies may harmonize in the fictive world is due entirely to the willingness of the reader to suspend disbelief and accept the authority of convention. As long as the novelist is not troubled by the bargain into which he enters with the readers, the three levels do not come into any serious conflict... The film is spared at least part of this conflict because one of the levels is omitted. Since the camera

is always the narrator, we need concern ourselves only with the chronological duration of the viewing and the time-span of the narrative events. Even when a narrator appears in the film, the basic orientation does not change. (Bluestone 2012, 243)

The reader of a novel is bound to approach the text line by line, hence structurally ensuring a pattern where nothing may be missed but in case of a scene in a movie, a viewer might miss-out something in the background while focusing on the foreground and vice-versa. The time constraints also makes the movie prone to not corresponding to the probable retention rate of the varied viewers with the pace pre-set as per the Bergson's idea of psychological time by the filmmaker.

We speak of psychological time here in at least two roughly defined ways. The first suggests that the human mind is capable of accelerating and collapsing the "feel" of time to the point where each individual may be said to possess his own "time-system." The second suggests, beyond this variability in *rate*, the kind of flux which, being fluid and interpenetrable, and lacking in sharp boundaries, can scarcely be measured at all... It assumes a normative "feel" for chronological time which may be distended or compressed by the stress of the moment, or by memory... Compression and distention of time had its exact equivalent in the film's use of speed-up and slow-motion. (Bluestone 2012, 244-245)

Hence, perception and varied sense responses of diverse viewers derive varied responses for the movie. The film cannot spell out the emotive situations on the psychological realms but can only materialise it.

The film, by arranging external signs for visual perception, or by presenting us with dialogue, can lead us to *infer* thought. But it cannot show us thought directly. It can show characters thinking, feeling, and speaking, but it cannot show us their thoughts and feelings. A film is not thought, it is perceived. That is why pictorial representation of dreams or memory on the screen are almost always disappointing... Acting upon us perceptually, they cannot render the conceptual feel of dreams and memories. The realistic tug of the film is too strong. If, in an effort to bridge the gap between spatial representation and nonspatial experience, we accept such devices at all, we accept them as cinematic conventions, not as renditions of conceptual consciousness. (Bluestone 2012, 242-243)

The cinematic language and its connotations are distinctively different from the use of language in a novel.

The pioneers of “cinematographic language”—Melies, Porter, Griffith—couldn’t care less about the “formal” research conducted for its own sake; what is more (except for occasional naïve and confused attempts), they cared little about the symbolic, philosophical or human “message” of their films. Men of denotation rather than of connotation, they wanted above all to tell a story; they were not content unless they could subject the continuous, analogical material of photographic duplication to the *articulations* – however rudimentary—of a narrative discourse. (Metz 1979, 172)

In the context of this research, the novel *A Fine Balance* and the movie *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aise*, both, the novel and the movie gives shows the aspects of Indian Emergency and explore the lives of four characters in the novel namely Ishvar, Om, Maneck and Dina, and three characters in the movie namely Vikram, Siddharth and Geetha. In both the genres, the excesses of Emergency is vividly portrayed but both of them are catering to the varied audience in the society. “Narrative competence holds our significations in place to give them an order and a thrust.” (Dudley 1984, 76) While the novel has a specific reading public with certain necessary linguistic and comprehensible competence, the movie on the other hand comparatively has a wider reach-out with majority of the public’s innate quality to perceive the non-verbal modes of communication.

The use of ‘Close-up’ technique in movies is a unique way to enable the viewers to have an access to the psychological insight of the characters and develop a deeper and profound meaning implicit in the narrative.

What does the close-up achieve? In showing us, in magnification, either the face of the speaker or the face of the listeners or both in alternation, the camera transforms the human physiognomy into a huge field of action where- given the qualification of the performers- every subtle movement of the features, almost imperceptible from a natural distance, becomes an expressive event in visible space and thereby completely integrates itself with the expressive content of the spoken word. (Panofsky 1979, 249)

Subtle use of close-ups and sound is seen in the manner in which Badshah Khan’s frustration over the entire scheme of Tiger Memon and the how he got trapped into an irrevocable error of judgement. When Badshah Khan runs from pillar to post to find a way

out, but much to his dismay when his perceived saviour, Tiger Memon, ditches him and his aides, he finds himself getting further trapped in the bog of circumstances without a hope of normalcy except for surrendering to police and agreeing to be a police witness.

The close-up may sometimes give the impression of a mere naturalist preoccupation with detail. But good close-ups radiate a tender human attitude in the contemplation of hidden things, a delicate solicitude, a gentle bending over the intimacies of life-in-the-miniature, a warm sensibility. Good close-ups are lyrical; it is the heart, not the eye, that has perceived them. Close-ups are often dramatic revelations of what is really happening under the surface of appearances. You may see a medium shot of someone sitting and conducting a conversation with icy calm. The close-up will show trembling fingers nervously fumbling a small object- sign of an internal storm. (Belazs 1979, 289)

The currency of ‘non-verbal’ enables the movie to have a far wider reach-out as it may connect to people despite linguistic inadequacies. The non-verbals were the only communicative currency in the silent films and they go on to compliment the spoken dialogues in the sound films.

Bela Balazs has shown us how seriously we tend to underestimate the power of the human face to convey subjective emotions and to suggest thoughts. But the film, being a presentational medium (except for its use of dialogue), cannot have direct access to the power of discursive forms. Where the novel discourses the film must picture. From this we ought not to conclude like J.P. Mayer that “our eye is weaker than our mind” because it does not “*hold* sight impressions as our imagination does.” For sense impressions, like word symbols, may be appropriated into common fund of memory. Perceptual knowledge is not necessarily different in strength; it is necessarily different in kind. (Bluestone 2012, 242)

Though the film has certain relative benefits it cannot depict the states of mind. What we get to see in a movie is the physical and external manifestation of the kind of psychological dilemma that one goes through in the time of crisis. In comparison of the novel *Black Friday* and the movie by the same title, the psychological frame of mind and the crisis that Badshah Khan undergoes gets aptly felt in the narrative of the novel, while in the movie the viewer gets to see him moving from one city to another. Even the excitement of the young trainees when they reach Pakistan and is escorted by one of the higher-ups out of the

airport focuses on the complicity of Pakistan in hatching the conspiracy. But in the movie, their training is tangentially touched upon.

Unquestionably, the most frequent and most tiresome discussion of adaptation (and of film and literature relations as well) concerns fidelity and transformation. Here it is assumed that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential about a work, or of an audience expecting to make such comparison. Fidelity of adaptation is conventionally treated in relation to the “letter” and to the “spirit” of the text, as though adaptation were the rendering of an interpretation of a legal precedent. (Andrew 2012, 68)

In case of movies like *Maachis*, with the opening scene depicts four young boys crossing mountains and rivers humming to a song that states that they have left the safe haven of countryside, blossoming fields to join the underground. This is the result of rising extremism in Punjab and youth getting trapped in the allure of the extreme and radical with growing pervasion of the then decaying law and order situation. The point to drive attention here is that in the course of the song, the entire transition of the mind-set rising due to growing scepticism towards society and the state is shown in a span of a song running for five minutes. The similar is seen in the movie *Amu*, when Amu recollects the past in her present visit to the place she was born, creates a definite connect between her present and past. This is possible with the creation of an alternate reality within the cinematic paradigm. The flashes of images of her youth and her mother when the train passes, lets her move back in time to inquiry about her identity and how her identity got negotiated and reconfigured with the passage of time.

From this there develops a new kind of artistic reality, what Pudovkin calls filmic time and filmic space; what Panofsky calls the Dynamization of Space, and the Spatialization of Time... The director, then, creates a new reality, and the most characteristic and important aspect of this process is that laws of space and time which are ordinary invariable or inescapable become “tractable and obedient... Not only is the space liberated, but *because* it is liberated, time is, too. In thirty seconds, we see shoot, stem, bud, and blossom grow gracefully one from the other, a process that takes weeks in ordinary time. Just as space can be moulded, time can be arrested and quickened.” (Bluestone 2012, 245)

Hence, the novel and the movie as different genres, despite their differences, have unique ways to connect with the readers and viewers which are categorically different and equally engaging.

Where the twentieth-century novel has achieved the shock of novelty by explosion of words, the twentieth-century film has achieved a comparable shock by explosions of visual images. And it is a phenomenon which invites detailed investigation that the rise of the film, which pre-empted the picturing of bodies in nature, coincides almost exactly with the rise of the modern novel which pre-empted the rendition of human consciousness... [the] distinct formative principles in our two media is not to forget that time and space are, for artistic purposes, ultimately inseparable... Clearly, spatial effects in the film would be impossible without concepts of time, just as temporal effects in the novel would be impossible without concepts of space... time is prior in the novel, and space prior in the film. (Bluestone 2012, 250)

“The study of narrative, like that of language, has gone through a genetic phase toward a structuralism which, in its turn, has recently given way to what I would term "functional analysis.”” (Dudley 1984, 77) To devise and figure out ways in which the events get narrated, to reflect upon how the identities get negotiated and reconfigured, it is important to understand and analyse how the narratives get perceived. “The nature of narrativity is, to some extent, culture-bound.” (Scholes 1979, 421) Scholes traces a link between narration and narrativity, and undeniable link nascent to the idea of communication; the sender and the receiver and the dynamic aspect of coding and decoding the message, both explicit and implicit, for the audience to be complicit in the entire process of narration and narrativity.

A narration is a process of enactment or recounting which is a common feature of our cultural experience. We all do some of it every day. When this process is sufficiently coherent and developed to detach itself from the flux of cultural interchange, we perceive it as a *narrative*. As a perceived narrative begins to imply a special kind of pointedness or teleology, we recognize that it is a *story*, and we regard it with a certain set of expectations about its expressive patterning and its semantic content. We have a continuum here, like the color spectrum, which our perceptual mechanism breaks into discrete levels. And the level we recognize as “story” is distinguished by certain structural features in presentation which in turn require of the perceiver an active participation which I should like to call “narrativity.” (Scholes 1979, 420)

Since, the narration is for the narrator to narrate, its purpose is achieved only if the narration reaches out to the audience it aims to connect to. Hence, it is important for the narrator to take into account the ‘competence’ of the audience to connect to the narrative, so, the narrator needs to match up with the frequency of the receiver, the audience.

Narrativity involves a number of procedures of interpretive constructing, but one of these may be singled out as the most characterised feature of this activity. Just as the lyric is characterized by the need to simplify its verbal constructions for interpretation, the narrative is characterized by a need to simplify certain elements in narration... In a story it is the order of events that concerns us, more than the order of words. And our primary effort in attending to a narration is to construct a satisfying order of events. To do this we must locate or provide two features: temporality and causality. (Scholes 1979, 423)

In context of the movies and the techniques in discussion, it is imperative to understand that the filmmaker’s vision is integral and indispensable to the overall understanding of the movie, and more importantly his/her subjectivity in what is given to the audience to be interpreted and understood.

Providing the “meaning” of a story by identifying the *kind of story* that has been told is called explanation by emplotment... Emplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind. (White 1973, 7)

The choice of subjects, situations and tone and tenor of the narrative are dependently proportional to the story the narrator wants to create and the message that the filmmaker wants to convey. The “narrative is a metacode, a human universal on the basis of which transcultural messages about the nature of a shared reality can be transmitted.” (White 1980, 6)

Genette draws a distinction between narration (the narrative act of the narrator), *discours* or *récit* proper (narrative as text or utterance) and *histoire* (the story the narrator tells in his/her narrative). The first two levels of narrative can be classed together as the *narrative discourse* (Fr. *Discours* Ger. *Erzählerbericht*) by putting together the narrative act and its product, thus making a binary distinction between them and the third level, the story (Fr. *histoire*; Ger. *Geschichte*). The story is then that which the narrative discourse reports, represents or signifies. (Fludernik 2006, 2)

So, the story is the artistic and subjective articulation of the narrative discourse by the narrator(s), in the case of this study are the novelists and filmmakers, who have presented the socio-political incidents recorded in history from their subjective viewpoints. The real traumatic events juxtaposes with the characters created by the novelist or the filmmaker, to symbolize the pain and agony of the masses in general.

Contrary to popular belief, the facts do not speak for themselves, especially in cinema. They require structure and interpretation, elements that reflect the filmmaker's vision. Unlike the documentary film, the factual film ordinarily lacks a specific message; however, if it has one, it does not necessarily take precedence over the other cinematic aspects of the film. (Barsam 1979, 584)

The aspect of using 'sound' in movies adds to the audio-visual sensual appeal that compliments the non-verbal aspect of the narrative. The sound of the wail as a background score registers the poignancy of the scene depicting desecrated bodies after the riots and bomb-blasts. "Cinema constructs a 'reality' out of selected images and sounds." (Hayward 2000, 1)

The fundamental classification of film sounds is that enunciated by Kracauer. A sound may belong to the world of the film (e.g. the dialogue of its characters) or it may be extraneous (e.g. background music or commentary)... [Though] the use of sound does indeed make sloppy and mindless film-making easier. But sound can be and properly is used not merely to add another dimension to the film experience but to add an extra perspective to the visual experience itself. (Sparshott 1979, 337)

The device of 'sound' and 'close-up' adds a definite vigour to the narrative, be it in terms of psychological dilapidated situation of Geetha, as shown in the movie *Hazaron Khwaishein Aise*, after she was raped in custody, or the sense of loneliness and vulnerability, as depicted in the movie *Maachis*, in case of Veeran which appeals her to join the terrorist group, both to protect her dignity and seek revenge. Even in the case of Amu, the letter being to Keya by Amu's mother did reflect the helplessness of the situation and how Keya had to negotiate with her added role beyond a philanthropist and social worker to being a mother of an orphan. In case of the movie, *Bombay* the demolition of the domes of Babri Masjid was not explicitly shown, but the background score of inflicting damage clearly marked the transition of the initial image of three domes being later reported as being demolished as per newspaper reports. In case of the movie *Black Friday*,

the intensity of the Bomb blast got well captured to present a scenario of verisimilitude with the deafening silence and a monotonous shrill very similar to post-blast scenario.

Another very important aspect is the issue of censorship in the movies as they dealt with the issues of social cataclysms. “Censorship has been part of human society since ancient times. Early on, it was seen as a legitimate method of regulating society and culture, and it is still perceived that way by some.” (Caso 2010, 3)

In some countries censorship is quite benign and limited to a rating system to protect minors and to inform audiences of the content of films. Other countries still pursue a very strong line in censorship, banning films in their entirety or insisting on cuts being made. Censorship tends to be imposed in three main areas: sex, violence and politics. The first two have been of primary concern to groups lobbying for the welfare of minors; the third more clearly has been the concern of state institutions and governments. (Hayward 2000, 54)

It has been a fact that movies face a lot of censorship issues owing to the political dispensation’s interpretation of the norms at a given context of time and space.

The most common postpublication censorship involves the banning of books, newspapers, periodicals, films, and music. A less common form of postpublication censorship is the rewriting of texts in order to delete licentious or politically charged material. This method, popular in the 19th century, is known as bowdlerizing and is named for Thomas Bowdler who first practiced it when he published his *Family Shakespeare*, an abridged edition of Shakespeare’s works that omitted passages Bowdler considered unsuitable for family reading. (Caso 2010, 17)

The e-mail conversation with Shonali Bose, director of the movie *Amu* stated how state intervened in regard to the movie that reflects upon the atrocities on the Sikhs during the Anti-Sikh riots of 1984.

to shonalibose

Respected Shonali ma'am

First of all, I commend your effort that has been put in to make this movie which portrays the sensitive and gory Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984 in an effective way. The multilingual narrative adds a flavour to the authenticity and the cross-hybridity of culture that was the subject of onslaught during the riots.

I have a few questions in regard to this film:

1. What were the Censorship issues that you faced?
2. How did the state agents/ apparatus react to your proposal of making the movie?
3. You mentioned the gory Trilokpuri incident, and you narrated the violence in a subtle way by showing Kaju's (Amu's) reverse trajectory to her origins. Why did you leave out the other incidents like attack in Gurudwara Rakab ganj Sahib with Ministers instigating the riots or Police officers handing over pistols to the mob?
4. No mention of the Nanavati Commission report. Only one of the three sikh women say that justice is delayed for 20 years and is on the brink of denial.

Could you kindly clarify these issues? Could generally give me your insight on the issues and challenges that you faced related to representation of the 1984 Anti-Sikh riots and the dynamics of identity negotiations therein in filming process.

Looking forward to a proactive response from your side

With regards

Pranjal Protim Barua
Ph.D Research Scholar
Center for English Studies
SLL&CS, JNU

shonali <shonalibose@hotmail.com> 5/15/15

to me

hello

censorship:

they gave it an "A" cert and when i asked why as there was no sex and violence they replied "why should young people know a history that is better buried and forgotten."!! they cut out 5 lines all to do with responsibility of government.

2. state agents were never told by me that i was making such a movie. i did it secretly as an indian citizen you don't have to declare your script. only foreigners do.

3 and 4. this is not a documentary film. it is a narrative feature. as such it's not about going into all facts or incidents at all. it was made in a specific style to draw in people who don't know or care about what happened and make them feel and think about it.

i made sure that the most important political point was made which is not the specifics of any incident such as those mentioned by you or any specific commission but the fact

that the indian state carried out this massacre and is fully complicit in it: sarkar, pulis, officer saare shamil the.... as the widow says. (Bose 2015)

The reply from Shonali Bose clearly states that the censor board while issuing 'A' certificate told her that "why should young people know a history that is better buried and forgotten." So, censorship lays bare that fact that histories recorded are concocted and distorted by arbitrary overlapping of fissures in historiography.

She also states that, "they cut out 5 lines all to do with responsibility of government." which may be read in conjunction with Mani Ratnam's revelation of his experience with the Censor board.

In the riot scene, there's an accidental gunshot that kills a woman trying to remove clothes from a clothesline in the balcony of a multi-storeyed chawl. You don't even see her. You just see the clothing, which turns red. They wanted to remove this. They didn't want to show a policemen shooting and killing someone, which happened a lot in real life. Each department that saw the picture looked at things that would affect their department. It was not a broad overall view of what was there in a film. From their side, they did not want to be painted grey in any way. (Rangan 2012, 145-146)

"Motivated by spontaneity, the filmmaker has an obligation to the moment, to presenting as many facets of the actual situation as he or she is able to record with camera and tape recorder." (Barsam 1979, 590) The issues Mani Ratnam faced with the censor board were discussed with Baradwaj Rangan in detail.

BARADWAJ RANGAN: The problems with the censors ended up defining the film for a while. What are your views on censorship?

MANI RATNAM: I think censorship is very old-fashioned. It can't be taken away overnight. I don't think we are responsible enough to take on the burden just now. But I think that's where we should head. What's the practice in other media should come into films too- there should be some kind of self-regulatory mechanism. You can't have acts written long ago by the British stop Indians from making films today. With *Bombay*, it was more a question of not wanting to take responsibility, not wanting to take responsibility, not wanting to be the one who cleared it. The attitude of the board or the chief officer was, 'Why take the risk?' And the film ran head-on into the Maharashtra elections... A commissioner of police promised me that the film would never see light

of day. You can't tell me that. You're doing your job. I'm doing my job. You can't say that there is only one way of doing things, the police way of ensuring law and order. There is another way of dealing with it, laterally, through cinema, through art, through writing. But there were others who were sensible, and the film was cleared just one week after the Maharashtra elections. (Rangan 2012, 145)

The movie *Bombay* had to “undergo all manner of censorship at the hands of the federally controlled Film Censorship Board of India” (Guneratne 1997, 179) and faced scrutiny of the censor board of depicting some social issues, far-fetched from the ‘responsibility of the government’ or being ‘complicit’ to any of the act(s) of violence in form of distorted action on their part in not being able to contain it timely and effectively.

RATNAM: ...I think it's only in this particular film, with this kind of sensitive issue, which is very dramatic in our milieu. When the film came out, the Chairman of the Censor Board of India asked me, ‘How can you show a Hindu and a Muslim marrying each other? It's never been shown before on film.’ I said, ‘Isn't this happening every other day? So many of my classmates have gotten married like this. How long do you want to hide things? That is the level of safe-play we tend to do in cinema. The drama was a function of that, really. Yes, it's a hard way of telling a story. I knew I wouldn't naturally go this way. But because it was a Hindu- Muslim marriage issue in a small village- not in an urban city- it tends to get dramatic. The film can take this style. (Rangan 2012, 155-156)

The most draconian part of censorship is spread of censor in the sphere of interpretation to distort the idea of what is censored and why is it censored.

Censorship of art, be it overtly political or subliminally social, is confirmed, strengthened, and perpetuated by censoring forms of interpretation. In a world where access to writing and other forms of artistic expression is made difficult- by the institutional censors of art- for all individual not conforming to a self-asserting mainstream, making interpretation a privileged form of art-processing subjugates it to the same mechanisms of exclusions. (Bal 2009, 16)

The censorship was not only in case of the narratives, selective appropriation and missing affidavits are also noticed in the manner in which the inquiry of the Anti-Sikh riots passes on from Ranganath Misra Commission to the Nanavati Commission. This has been mentioned by Sanjay Suri in his book in the section- ‘Commissions and Omissions’.

The Nanavati Commission, ordered by the BJP government in May 2000, submitted its report in February 2005. It did take a few steps forward from where the Misra Commission left off... I hardly have the credential to challenge the august status of the judges behind those findings, but in truth I believe that the Nanavati report is still not the last word on the subject. For a start, the shadow of the Misra report fell heavily upon this second inquiry. Justice Nanavati noted in his final report that ‘the full record of Justice Misra Commission did not become available to the Commission’. He had sought it through his officials but it had become clear, he said, from affidavits filed before the commission ‘that in spite of their efforts the remaining record was not traceable’. The Nanavati Commission began its inquiry with one hand tied. (Suri 2015, 230)

Part II: Similarities and differences in the ‘events’

The comparison between the three discrete events has certain points of convergence as well as divergences. In all the three cases there was the case of the victim and the victimizer. The equation of who was the victim and who is the victimizer depended in the nature of conflict. In all the conflicts the victim and the victimizer was decided on the levels of power and assertion of power. So, it was not essentially the demographic minority who were targeted and victimised, but it was the power equation that played its pivotal part in directing violence. In the case of Emergency it was the government clamping the constitutional provisions of National Emergency, as delineated in Article 352 of the constitution, to contain subversion and removal of the ruling government. In the name of crisis, the government initiated various precarious measures to ‘save’ the nation. Of the infamous initiatives the most discernibly detestable were the sterilisation drive in the name of family planning, slum clearance in the name of beautification of the city and MISA, Maintenance of Internal Security Act, in the name of security reinforcement. The common masses were caught in the humdrums of the initiatives and a lot of excesses has been reported in the Shah Commission report. The report which investigated and unremittingly presented the facts and excesses during the emergency has reportedly brushed under the carpet for the issues to remain hidden from the subsequent collective consciousness of the Indian national psyche.

In the introduction by Era Sezhiyan, former Member of Parliament and editor of the published Shah Commission report discusses the sudden and strange disappearance of the report.

When [Era] wanted in the middle of September 2010 some background material about the declaration of June 1975 Emergency, I was astounded by the positive statement in some websites about the disappearance of the Shah Commission Report with assertive conclusion that ‘not a single copy of the Report exists in India’. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 20)

He quotes a lot of media, Wikipedia states “It is now believed that not a single copy of this report exists in India.”, Frontline- April 28-May 11, 2001 states “it is believed that not one copy of its final report has survived within the country.”, Indian Express (Mumbai), July 4, 2000 states, “the Report of the Shah Commission of Inquiry is now a rarely found document”, The Week- July 25, 2010. *Probe The Commission* states “With Indira returning to power in 1980, the Shah Commission report was gradually buried.” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 20-21)

Era Sezhiyan also quotes from two other sources. Firstly, from *Indira- The Life of Indira* by Katherine Frank, Harper Perennial, Edition 2005, which states, “It is not surprising that Indira Gandhi had all the copies of the Report withdrawn as soon as she regained power in 1980” (430) ... “The only existing copies of the three volumes that I am aware of are at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.” (529) Secondly, from Ashok. H. Desai’s, Former Attorney General, foreword to *Citizens’ Rights and the Rule of Law- Essays in Memory of Justice J.C. Shah*, which states that “Unfortunately, it disappeared from Government publication sales depots under a later Government.” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 21)

The assiduous effort of Era Sezhiyan to unearth the report is symbolic of exhuming the traumatic episodes and dark encounters faced by humanity under the conniving façade of the politically pleaded earnest necessity of National emergency proclamations. The diabolism unleashed under the garb of necessity to contain the perceived population explosion is major scar in the otherwise distinguished post-independence politico-historical modernity. The violence recorded in the times of emergency were different from the riots recorded in the subsequent events of the thesis.

The Indian emergency operated through the unidirectional governmental consensus to materialise the initiatives. The officials were given explicit instructions for functioning in objective driven scenario and the necessity dividend of the initiatives was unambiguously communicated, both to be perceived and materialised. This explicitness of the necessity dividend percolated down through proper channels to the grass-roots and many unauthorised agents were roped in to cater to the situations that demanded interventions beyond the constitutional mandates and provisions. This was the genesis of the excess, the excess accorded by the 'emergency necessities' but unfortunately got recorded by the Commission reports to bring to light the picture of the Dark.

Under the uncanny idea of family planning, with due contravention to the concept of voluntary sterilisation for Family Planning programme, many people were subject to forceful sterilisations. This may be read in conjunction with Chapter XXI of Shah Commission's third and final report. The violence as reflected in the narrative of *Fine Balance* proves that in order to achieve targets within the stipulated frame of time, the authorities unleashed callous practices ignoring medical and surgical conventions by using unhygienic scalpels and thereby rendering the victims not only to a state of sterility but virulent malignancy of septic and other infections. Ishvar is a victim of such callousness and his legs had to be amputated, due to spread of the infection in the groin region. In order to meet the targets, the scalpels were not given enough time to be boiled and sanitised before being reused for the next operation. Achievement of targets became the sole criteria for the channel of power to impress their superiors for climbing the social ladder of vested interests.

Under MISA, which is again with due contravention of the MISA's detention provisions, many youths were detained and arrested arbitrarily based on suspicion with the act getting unquestionable authority under the Emergency provisions. The arbitrariness got the tag of legitimacy again in the garb of 'emergency necessity' to reinforce a pronounced security scenario. The arbitrariness factor of MISA made the charges fall in proximity of the draconian sedition law, Article 124 of Indian Penal code (Indian Penal Code 1860, 54) categorically decorated by the British, as the bailout option for the rulers/government, in event of any opposition by the masses against the government due to dwindling faith equation between the government and the masses. The novel, *A Fine Balance*, as well as the movie, *Hazaroon Khwaishein Aise* testifies how people like Avinash and Vikram end

become subjected to such horrific and draconian provisions of diabolic circumventions and misappropriations of law in the name of security. In the novel, *A Fine Balance*, Avinash's sudden disappearance is symbolic of the voice of the alternative being silenced and any possibility to destabilize the higher political order was thwarted. Mistry notes the diabolic acts of the security apparatuses in case of such arbitrariness, when Avinash's mother resounds,

We saw burns on many shameful parts of his body, and when his mother picked up his hand to press it to her forehead, we could see that his fingernails were gone. So we asked them in the morgue, how can this happen in falling from a train? They said anything can happen. Nobody would help us. (Mistry 2004, 573)

Such incidents are poignantly shown in the movie when Siddharth and Geetha are held by the police based on suspicion and high-handedness of law and order. Similar incident happens in the movie, Vikram is held by the police based on suspicion and in lieu of covering up for a missing detainee the police thrashes his skull intending an unrecognizable deformity, but narrowly escapes death with due intervention of a political leader. His life is saved but he loses his mental balance being subject to such inhuman atrocities of the police.

Such arbitrary arrests and custodial atrocities are also shown in the movie *Maachis*, which is symbolic of the youth of the nation being forced into become a terrorist due to compelling circumstances. Jaswant Singh Randhawa's arbitrary arrest and his return in a dilapidated situation is seen as a precursor of the extremist radicalism in Kirpal who simply could not justify such acts of injustice by the apparatuses which is responsible for maintaining justice, thereby shaking its faith in such governmental institutions. Atrocities on people like Jaswant shows the flip-side of law and order when its legality and functioning become an overbearing burden.

The Chapter XIX of the Shah Commission shed light on the MISA, its promulgation and functioning during the Emergency.

19.1 The Maintenance of Internal Security Act was passed by the Parliament in the year 1971. The Statement of Objects and Reasons as presented before the Lok Sabha on June 3, 1971, by the then Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri K.C. Pant read as below:-

“In view of the prevailing situation in the country and development across the border, there is need for urgent and effective preventive action in the interest of national security. It is, therefore, considered essential to have power of preventive detention to deal effectively with the threats to the defence of India, specially from external sources, espionage activities of foreign agents. Since existing laws available to deal with the security have not been found to be adequate, the Maintenance of Internal Security Ordinance, 1971, has been promulgated. It is now proposed to replace the Ordinance by an Act.

19.2 ... Members of almost all Opposition Parties were unanimous in voicing their deep concern against the Government assuming such wide powers through the Bill...

“SHRI ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE (June 16, 1971) translated from Hindi: “This is the beginning of a police State and a blot on democracy. It is the first step towards dictatorship... These powers will not be used against foreign spies but against political opponents.”

“SHRI KRISHNA MENON (June 17, 1971): “... and here we are arming the Executive with every power that is required to exercise quasi-judicial functions without any way of checking it. This is unguided, unrestrained, uncontrolled, undirected arbitrary power. This is the beginning of the fascist rule.” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 39)

The opposition parties’ fear seemed rightly located in the viable extrapolations of the act and its provisions which eventually gets justified in the manner in which it was imposed and undertaken.

19.3 To allay the apprehensions expressed by the Members of Opposition Parties, the Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri K.C. Pant repeatedly gave assurances that MISA will not be used against political parties and enough safeguards had been incorporated in the bill to prevent its misuse. He emphasised that the power of detention by a subordinate authority was limited to 12 days only and thereafter the detention would require confirmation by the Advisory Board. The right of the High Courts to issue writ of *Habeas Corpus* was also not taken away. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 40)

The Constitution of India states the power of the Supreme Court to file 'Habeas Corpus' in the Article 32 (b):

(2) The Supreme Court shall have power to issue directions or orders or writs, including writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari, whichever may be appropriate, for the enforcement of any of the rights conferred by this Part. (The Constitution of India 2015, 18)

In addition, the Constitution of India also refers to the High Court having similar powers in Article 226:

2[226. (1) Notwithstanding anything in article 32 3*** every High Court shall have power, throughout the territories in relation to which it exercises jurisdiction, to issue to any person or authority, including in appropriate cases, any Government, within those territories directions, orders or writs, including 1[writs in the nature of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari, or any of them, for the enforcement of any of the rights conferred by Part III and for any other purpose.] (The Constitution of India 2015, 112-113)

The essential power to file a writ petition, especially *Habeas Corpus*, in case a person is missing, which is a basic right is withdrawn under the ambit of 'emergency necessity'. The assurances given by then Home Minister for passage of the ordinance got repudiated to make way for the element of arbitrariness required as a fuel to run the 'Emergency' engine.

19.4 All these solemn assurances given on behalf of the Government were totally belied. Soon after the declaration of Emergency, District Magistrates were authorised to pass order of detention on satisfaction reached by them. In the States in which the Commissioner of Police was ex-officio a Magistrate, the Commissioner of Police became automatically invested with authority to pass order of detention. After the proclamation of the state of emergency by the President on June 25, 1975, the MISA, 1971 was amended by Presidential Ordinances, dated June 29, 1975 and July 15, 1975. These two Ordinances were converted into Maintenance of Internal Security (Amendment) Act No. 39 of 1975 on August 5, 1975. The main amendment intended to introduce Section 16A and Section 18 in the MISA. The effect of these amendments was that:-

- (i) The new Section 16A contained special provisions for dealing with the emergency. The provisions of the existing MISA regarding communication of grounds of detention to the detenu and functioning of the Advisory Boards (Sections 8 to 12) were made inapplicable to persons detained under Section 16A for effectively dealing with the Emergency. Instead the State Governments were given the powers to review the detentions within 4 months of the date of detention and thereafter at intervals not exceeding 4 months.
- (ii) The new section 18 read “No person (including a foreigner) detained under this Act shall have any right to personal liberty by virtue of natural law or common law, if any.” (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 40)

Chapter XXIV of the third and final findings of the Shah Commission report entitled- ‘General Observations’ stated-

24.1 ... Arbitrariness and reckless disregard of the rights of others and the consequent misery, which characterised a number of actions of the different public servants over a period of nearly 19 months, terrorised the citizens resulting in a complete loss of faith of the people in the fairness and objectivity of the Administration generally. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 228)

The Maintenance of the Internal Security Act became the symbol of growing insecurity amongst the Indians, ironic to the sense of internal security it must have established, with various rights being curtailed and interpreted as per the whims and fancies of the authorities implementing them. Many of the officers in high offices of responsibility were found flouting rules as per vested interest which have been investigated upon and reported in the Shah Commission report. The MISA gave the government and the officers the much needed tool to contain any form of subversion, which is contradictory of any democratic apparatus to subdue and placate the voice of an alternate.

...19.8 These amendments completely metamorphosed the character of MISA. The principal safeguards against the abuse or misuse of the extra-ordinary powers of preventive detention conferred on the Government and its subordinate officers, as enacted in the original Act were (i) scrutiny of the detenu’s case by a quasi-judicial authority, namely, the Advisory Board; (ii) mandatory communication of full grounds of detention to the detenu normally within 5 days of his detention; and in exceptional circumstances within 15 days; (iii) the right of the detenu under natural law or

common law to move the High Court in a writ of Habeas Corpus against the order of detention passed against him. These three main safeguards and other minor ones were totally withdrawn by introduction of Section 16A and Section 18 in the MISA. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 40-41)

Chapter XXIV of the third and final findings of the Shah Commission report entitled- 'General Observations' states the categorical high-handedness of the authorities and how their actions and inactions get masked under the ambit of Maintenance of Internal Security Act. The police officer who thrashes Vikram almost into a state of insanity is not shown as being reprimanded for his dastardly unprofessional act, as such 'excesses' were in fact legitimized in under the socio-political state of Emergency and politico-administrative state of affairs.

24.4 The Commission has also come across officers who having committed excesses at the behest of others- politicians or higher administrative authorities- have sought to defend patently indefensible conduct by suggesting that they had acted in good faith and in due compliance with the provisions of the MISA. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 228)

The Emergency also saw a lot of people being arbitrarily detained and put into jail. In the movie *Hazaron Khwaishein Aise*, Geetha's ex-husband, a powerful IAS officer, gets her released from the prison when she was reprimanded by the police followed by detention. She is shown to be in the same cell in the jail as other detainees thereby blurring the line of difference between convicts and detainees. Hence, the arbitrariness of unscrupulous detention negotiates the identity of the body politic as per the notional (mis)identification of the authorities in power. The identity of people like Geetha who gets arbitrarily arrested, without the timely intervention of her influential ex-husband, would stand the imminent possibility of her identity to be reconfigured as convicts without a judicial decree.

The detainee being given the same punishment as the convicts is a reflection of bypassing the judiciary to ascertain the detainees as convicts without being proven guilty, and this read with the Chapter XX of the third and final report of the Shah Commission gives a viable insight on the conditions of jails and the conditions of the detained and convicts.

20.5 The declaration of emergency aggravated a situation, which was already bad, in terms of capacity for accommodation and the infrastructure for looking after the

prisoners/detenus... In fact, except in the matter of food, some extra clothing and reading material, the detenus under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act were lodged in no better conditions than the other inmates in the jail, completely oblivious of the concept that preventive detention is not punitive detention and the detenus are not to be treated as convicts. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 135)

Slum clearance was another aspect of gross insensitivity in the name of beautification of the city. Poor people were bulldozed overnight which is symbolic of their existence being uprooted from their origins. Chapter XXII of third and final report of the Shah Commission titled- 'Demolitions during Emergency' states-

22.1 In Chapter XIII of the interim Report II, the Commission has dealt with demolitions in Delhi. Complaints regarding excesses and abuse of authority in this matter have been received from other States also... (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 208)

The narratives, both fact and fiction, do not oppose the developmental ideas and essentially to the over-arching idea of beautification of cities, but bludgeoning of the idea with the repressive apparatus of the state (Althusser 2001) under the provisions of National Emergency is uncanny and unethical in the democratic state of affairs. The Shah Commission reports a categorical shift in the manner in which the demolition drive was carried out before and during the Emergency.

22.2 Removal of Slums, unlawful encroachments and beautification of cities, roads and other areas is a problem which had been attracting the attention of Government for some time. However, no ruthlessness was shown in its implementation for achieving these. Attempts were also made to ensure that nobody was shifted unless some arrangement for his rehabilitation was already made. The entire concept in this regard suffered a drastic change after the emergency was imposed and demolitions by bulldozers of slums and the encroachments came to acquire the blessings of the Governments concerned. The speed and the scale of work in this direction surpassed all precedents and dwelling houses, shops, temples, and places of worship and homes of the poor were destroyed. There was a phenomenal increase in the number of demolitions during the period of emergency compared with the number of demolitions in the years preceding it... (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 208)

During the Emergency, the threatening measures resonated to create a fear psychosis amongst the public which got amplified with the imposition of the need to demolish the slum and beautify the city.

22.3 There can be no objection to the basic concept underlying the removal of encroachments on public lands or utility places by unauthorised persons or where by resorting to demolitions the areas may be made more neat and clean, hygienic and beautiful. However, actions on these lines create many ancillary problems and any attempt at demolitions without considering the human problems created by such actions is bound to cause hardship. In such matters, decisions cannot be taken on impulse or in a spirit of competition with a view to showing higher numerical performance. Proper planning not only for undertaking such programmes but also for tackling the problems incidental thereto has to be done before any action on these lines is embarked upon. Taking advantage of the fear psychosis generated by the proclamation of emergency, the programmes for demolition were undertaken which caused considerable hardship and misery to the affected persons. At many places, police forces was freely used in such operations and a number of structures were unlawfully and arbitrarily demolished. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 209)

The report also mentions involvement of certain important political figures and the officers working at their behest to seek favour from them to eventually suit their vested interests.

22.5 The Commission's earlier findings relating to the demolitions in Delhi disclose that a majority of the operations were undertaken under the orders of Shri Sanjay Gandhi. The position in the other States, as subsequent discussions will show, was that they were undertaken to please Sanjay Gandhi. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 209)

So, during the episode of emergency, violence on the masses had a stamp of authority to stampede upon the rights of citizens in a democracy in the most undemocratic manifest reality in post-independence socio-political modernity.

The Punjab crisis of the early 1980s was really part of a larger predicament confronting Indira Gandhi's political present and immediate future. Her declaration of Emergency rule during 1975-77, which can be described only as a period marking total abrogation of democratic principles and at best as a draconian phase of India's

recent history, had made a mockery of any moral authority that the Congress might have claimed. (Grewal 2007, 36-37)

Chapter XIV of the Second Interim report of the Shah Commission also states resorting to the coercive method like firing and forceful assertions upon the official to own up responsibility. It says:

14.8 According to Shri Jagmohan [Vice-Chairman, Delhi Development Authority], tension in Turkman Gate area on April 19, 1976 was entirely due to the intensive Family Planning Programme in Dujana House. He said that the DDA had carried out hundreds of clearance-*cum*- resettlement programmes before and during the emergency and there was no disturbance anywhere and it was only the extraneous factor of Family Planning that had caused the trouble in the Turkman Gate area. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report-II 2010, 120)

The undemocratic behaviour of the state continues in various other medium which is reflected in form of censorship of the media and press and how the people were thereby blinded to the socio-political functioning of the nation.

The Government tried its best to mislead the public by saying that censorship had been imposed only to safeguard the defence of the country and the maintenance of public order. But it did not take very long for the people to realise the real motives of the Government behind press censorship... Newspapers and journals with very few exceptions, fell in line with remarkable alacrity, and abandoning their earlier stridency and following the rigorous censorship rules. (Jai 1996, 47-48)

The government's idea behind the censorship was to contain any kind of communication amongst the masses and was covered in the guise of necessity "that newspapers which were inciting the people and creating a terrible situation." (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 33)

The role of intellectuals in this tragi-comedy is more ambiguous. Though some are perceived as being guilty of complicity, many feature as the emotional sufferers of the Emergency; the men and women burning with indignation but unable to speak out either because they are already in jail or else because they fear arrest. 'For India at that point was a country where mail was opened, phones tapped, movements watched, and dissenting views punished with imprisonment without trial.' Thus wrote Michael

Henderson, a foreign journalist who had tried to publish a critique of what was happening during the Emergency itself, but had been unable to find a foreign publisher willing to accept the manuscript for fear of the damage it might do to their commercial links with India. When, after the Emergency, such critiques became hot commodities, Henderson's newly expanded manuscript joined the growing body of post-Emergency exposes. (Tarlo 2003, 36)

In the Prime Minister's address to the nation on 27th June, 1975, she explains her stand on censoring the press, as reproduced in the document by Samachar Bharti, titled- 'Era of Discipline'.

I have always believed in freedom of the press, and I still do but like all freedoms it has to be exercised with responsibility and restraint. In situations of internal disturbance, whether language or communal riots, grave mischief has been done by irresponsible writing. We had to prevent such a situation. For some time several newspapers have deliberately distorted news and made malicious and provocative comments. The purpose of censorship is to restore a climate of trust. (Gandhi 1976, 73)

The role of intellectuals, within the limited scope of Emergency, and even foreign publishers' inhibitions, beyond the jurisdiction of Indian censorship sphere, shows the larger game of socio-political economy in place. Emma Tarlo refers to the subtlety of censorship in varied collection in the Teenmurti library during and post-emergency.

Rummaging through the shelves marked 'Constitution', it is possible to trace the duration of the Emergency both as an experience and as a written memory. The books, though jumbled together, slip easily into categories: those which welcome the Emergency, generally published between 1975-6, and those which deride it, generally published between 1977-8. The overlap is minimal since censorship had prevented people from openly criticising the Emergency at the time, whilst simultaneously pushing criticism underground from which it re-surfaced after the event. What we have, then, are two alternative narratives, each with its own vision; one which remembers it as a bleak and shameful past. Each narrative creates its own time-scale, re-arranging past and present to suit its future, yet neither dominates for more than 21 months. These are phantom futures and ghostly pasts. By 1979 they are already subsiding. By 1980 their demise is marked by the absence of new addition that year to the Emergency shelf. (Tarlo 2003, 24)

The Chapter VI of the first interim report of the Commission stated the circumstances referred by the government to legitimize the censorship of media and press.

6.5 While explaining the reasons for the imposition of Emergency, Smt. Gandhi has said that it was the newspapers which were inciting the people and creating a terrible situation. According to her, the agitation was only in the newspapers and once the newspapers were placed under censorship there was no agitation...

6.7 The reason for the measures taken against the media in general and the Press in particular was, according to Shri B.G. Verghese [former Editor of the 'Hindustan Times], to keep the public in ignorance and instil fear in them thereby suppressing dissent in every form, individual, political, parliamentary and judicial and that it was used as an instrument of news management aimed at thought control. Shri Raj Mohan Gandhi, Editor of 'Himmat' Bombay has confirmed that censorship was used to eliminate dissent and it vastly exceeded the requirements of the Defence and Internal Security of India Rules. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 33)

The report also goes on to show the autocratic manner of power functioning in form of disconnecting the electricity from the newspaper offices which is like cutting off water supply from agricultural fields.

6.10 Consequent upon the declaration of Emergency on June 25, 1975, control of the media had become necessary... During the 2 or 3 days when the censorship apparatus was being set up, power supply to the newspaper offices in Delhi remained disrupted. The Government disconnected electricity to the newspaper offices on the night of the June 25, 1975 when Emergency was imposed... Two or three days later after the censorship apparatus had been set up, electricity supply was restored to all the newspaper offices. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 34)

The inquiry commission report discusses in details regarding the provisions for censorship rules and goes on to prove how such rules were flouted to accommodate censorship as a tool to render the public defenceless into a state of blindness.

6.11 Censorship was imposed under Rule 48 of Defence and Internal Security of India Rules. This Rule gave authority to the Government to censor or pre-censor matters only in respect of the following subjects :-

- (i) Defence of India;

- (ii) Civil Defence;
- (iii) Public Safety;
- (iv) Maintenance of Public Order; and
- (v) Efficient conduct of Military Operations.

6.12 On June 26, 1975 the Government issued Statutory Order 275 (E) under Rule 48, which listed the subjects which came within the scope of pre-censorship. This order was subsequently expanded to include additional subjects. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 34)

The report under the section of 'Censorship' clearly states that the journalists were subject/victims to unprofessional behaviour and parsimonious red-tapism.

Evading the Censor's scissors an obituary was published in a Bombay newspaper:

"O'Cracy: D.E.M. O'Cracy, beloved husband of T. Ruth, Father of L.I. Berty, father of Faith, Hope and Justicia, on June 28": That means, democracy, truth and liberty have been murdered on 28 June,75. (Jai 1996, 165)

The biasedness shown in what kind of news the government wanted to produce was directly related to the kind of journalists and their production of news in form of reporting gets recognized and subsequently approved.

6.78 To enable the Press to cover the activities of the Government accreditation to Government of India is granted to correspondents and news cameramen based in Delhi...

6.79 During the period following declaration of Emergency, accreditation of a number of correspondents was terminated and a bulk of these decisions was taken as a part of a review which was endorsed by the Central Press Accreditation Committee at its meeting held in February, 1976. At this meeting number of deletions were suggested by the then Principal Information Officer, Dr. A.R. Baji, on the basis of a decision of the Government. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Interim Report- I 2010, 43)

Era Sezhiyan also sought a legal defence to his diligent resurfacing of the Shah Commission reports under the ambit of the Right to Information Act, 2005.

It may be noted here that under Section 8 (j) of The Right to Information Act, 2005, dealing with 'Exemption from Disclosures of Information', it is stated: "Provided that

the information which cannot be denied to the Parliament shall not be denied to any person.” Hence there is nothing illegal in reproducing the information that had already been given to the Parliament. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 23)

“Blanket censorship was imposed on all newspapers. The press was gagged so that it would not raise its voice on behalf of the people against dictatorship and authoritarianism of Government.” (Jai 1996, 47) The idea of blanket censorship is something that raises eyebrows in any democratic set-up and this can be read as both, systematic and schematic pattern in the way Indira Gandhi led her administrative functioning both in the times of Emergency and the famous ‘media blackout’ prior to and during Operation Bluestar.

The blanket censorship on the media and suppression of communication between the people and the Legislature, all of them put together, in the end, recoiled on the Ruling Party at the General Election held after the dark period of 1975-77 Emergency. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 31)

Why Emergency was not claimed during intelligence inputs about the possible damage to Babri Masjid and when state’s inaction was evident. The statement of proclamation ‘grave crisis’ should be read along with the grave warning pre-Babri masjid demolition. When read with the provisions required for proclamation of Emergency, wherein the Home Ministry’s suggestion is required, as mentioned in the introduction of the Shah Commission.

In para 5.60, the Shah Commission Report found that no extraordinary situation existed in India in any conditions, social, economic or in law and order warranting Proclamation of an Internal Emergency. It had gathered the following points from the official records:

- (a) On the economic front, there was nothing alarming;
- (b) The fortnightly reports regarding law and order showed that the situation was under complete control all over the country;
- (c) No reports were received by the Home Ministry from the State Governments indicating any deterioration in the law and order situation in the period immediately preceding the Proclamation of Emergency;

(d) No plans were prepared by the Home Ministry prior to June 25, 1975 with regard to the imposition of Internal Emergency;

(e) The Intelligence Bureau had not submitted any report to the Home Ministry any time between 12th of June and 25th of June, 1975, suggesting that the internal situation in the country warranted imposition of Internal Emergency;

(f) The Home Ministry did not submit any report to the Prime Minister expressing its concern or anxiety about the internal situation in the country. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 57)

The role of the Home Ministry in the need to impose Emergency was bypassed by the Prime Minister.

As already pointed out in para 5.52, the Prime Minister in her Top Secret letter to the President had stated that she had not taken her decision to the Cabinet, by virtue of her powers under Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rule 1961 and that she would 'mention the matter to the Cabinet first thing tomorrow morning.'

In response to the Commission's inquiry, the Cabinet Secretariat brought to the notice of the Commission the full particulars relevant under the Transaction of Business Rules and Allocation of Business Rules, both of which have been promulgated under Article 77 of the Constitution. Under the said Rules, it has been mandatory that "matters relating to the emergency provision of the Constitution (other than financial emergency) are to be dealt in the Home Ministry. This, read with Rule 3 of the Transaction of Business Rules, therefore requires that all business pertaining to the emergency provision shall be transacted in the Home Ministry, with cases relating to the Proclamation of Emergency being brought before the Cabinet." (Sub-para 2 of 5.66)

In Sub-para 4 of 5.66, the Commission Report observed; "This would be particularly so when the Emergency is to be declared on grounds of internal disturbances, as the Home Ministry deals with the Intelligence Bureau, Preventive detention and National Integration. It is the Home Ministry which is in touch with the State Governments on matters relating to law and order. The Cabinet Secretariat did not however receive any proposals from the Home Ministry in respect of the Proclamation issued on the 25th of June." (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Introduction 2010, 58)

Why is it that despite Home Ministry's several warnings to the State Government and deployment of armed forces, Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister, did not see the need to impose National or even State Emergency to contain the imminent violence and riots with wide scale repercussions, if any damage was done to the structure of the Babri Masjid.

The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri masjid controversy played havoc with communal peace in the country... The ruling politicians themselves had surrendered themselves to the communal forces; it came to be termed as 'soft communalism' by some journalists. The role of the prime minister himself came under shadow of doubt. He watched helplessly when the Babri masjid was being demolished. (Engineer 1994, 840)

Chapter 11 of the Liberhan Commission titled- 'President's Rule' states that:

140.2 Narasimha Rao categorically stated that article 355 could not be invoked as a preventive measure; it could be employed as a remedial measure. So was the case with article 356. It could be invoked when a situation had arisen and not when the situation had yet to arise; it could not be invoked in anticipation of a situation. (Liberhan 2010, 395)

Whereas the Article 355 and Article 356 of the constitution states that:

355. It shall be the duty of the Union to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance and to ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. (The Constitution of India 2015, 228)

356. (1) If the President, on receipt of a report from the Governor ^{1***} of a State or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may by Proclamation— (a) assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State and all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by the Governor ^{2***} or any body or authority in the State other than the Legislature of the State; (b) declare that the powers of the Legislature of the State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament; (c) make such incidental and consequential provisions as appear to the President to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation, including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provisions of this Constitution relating to any body or authority in the State: Provided that nothing in this clause shall authorise the President

to assume to himself any of the powers vested in or exercisable by a High Court, or to suspend in whole or in part the operation of any provision of this Constitution relating to High Courts. (Liberhan 2010, 395)

The Article 355 does not mention anything like ‘could not be invoked as a preventive measure; it could be only employed as a remedial measure’ as stated by Narasimha Rao and neither does Article 356 state that ‘it could not be invoked in anticipation of a situation.’ When Narasimha Rao’s statements/declarations before the Commission is read with the constitutional provision, it may be deduced that it was an interpretation of the clauses to justify the inaction.

The Liberhan enquiry Commission has also noted that categorical inaction of the Central Government in this regard. Point 134 in Chapter 11 of the report discusses the matter in detail.

134.3 It was submitted that the Central Government had contributed to the demolition through its omission, inasmuch as it had failed to impose President’s Rule in the state and to take over the administration thereby protecting the disputed structure. The Central Government was blamed for not deploying paramilitary forces to protect the disputed structure on the fateful day or earlier thereto.

134.4 It would therefore be appropriate to succinctly deal with the non-imposition of President Rule in UP and the non deployment of paramilitary forces etc. by the Central Government.

The Liberhan Commission states in clause 136.3 of the enquiry report that ‘The powers of Union of India in the situation of external aggression against the state or armed rebellion are referable to article 352.’ (Liberhan 2010, 390) The Constitution of India states Article 352 as:

352. (1) If the President is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or of any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or 1[armed rebellion], he may, by Proclamation, make a declaration to that effect 2[in respect of the whole of India or of such part of the territory thereof as may be specified in the Proclamation]. 3[Explanation.—A Proclamation of Emergency declaring that the security of India or any part of the territory thereof is threatened by war or by external aggression or by armed rebellion may be made before the actual

occurrence of war or of any such aggression or rebellion, if the President is satisfied that there is imminent danger thereof.] (The Constitution of India 2015, 224)

Liberhan Commission also notices and mentions an interesting aspect as mentioned in clause 136.4

136.4 Another fact which may be noticed at this stage is that while providing for the administrative relationship between the state and union, article 257-A was added to the Constitution to the effect: “(1) *the government of India may deploy any armed forces of union or any other force subject to the control of union for dealing with any grave situation of law and order in any state. (2) any armed force or other force or any contingent unit thereof deployed under clause 1 in any state shall act in accordance with such direction that the government of India may issue and shall not save otherwise provided in such directions is subject to the superintendence or control of the State Government or any other officer or authority subordinate to State Government...*” The Article was however repealed by the 44th constitutional amendment with effect from 20th of June, 1979. (Liberhan 2010, 390)

The current publication of the Constitution in the year 2015, states the Article 257 A as:

257A. [*Assistance to States by deployment of armed forces or other forces of the Union.*] Rep. by the Constitution (Forty fourth Amendment) Act, 1978, s. 33 (w.e.f. 20-6-1979). (The Constitution of India 2015, 163)

Narasimha Rao in the defence of his point of ‘inaction’ states unavailability of Article 257A for the Central government to directly intervene.

140.5 Narasimha Rao after making reference to article 257, 365 and 355 of the constitution concluded that the Union of India could only issue appropriate directions to the state and then grant it time to comply with them. This time could not be measured in hours and had to be reasonable time. He concluded that the only operative article of the constitution dealing with these situation is article 356. However, in addition to article 356, article 257A had earlier been added to meet such a situation, by empowering the Central Government to deploy forces subject to the control of Union of India in the state to deal with law and order situation. However article 257A had been deleted by the 44th amendment of the constitution. (Liberhan 2010, 395)

Reference to Article 365 of the constitution opens a new angle into the event in view of P.V. Narasimha Rao's defence to the Liberhan commission. If he could interpret the provisions of Article 355 then, the government could have interpreted the Article 365 to protect the demolition of the Babri Masjid and contained the subsequent aftermath.

365. Where any State has failed to comply with, or to give effect to, any directions given in the exercise of the executive power of the Union under any of the provisions of this Constitution, it shall be lawful for the President to hold that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution. (The Constitution of India 2015, 241)

The situation of crisis could have been met using Article 365, but why it was not used remains to be shrouded in mystery in the annual of socio-political history. Intelligence agencies report events on probability and anticipation as preventive measures, and do not wait for the event to have occurred for the forces to be authorised to engage.

Narasimha Rao's role as Home Minister in 1984 riots is another episode that may be read in connection to his role as the Prime Minister in 1992.

Home Minister Narasimha Rao was also inactive. When the well-known lawyer Ram Jethmalani went to meet him regarding the Sikh killings, he said little. In Jethmalani's account of the meeting to the Nanavati Commission, he reports that when he (Jethmalani) asked the home minister to do something to stop the killings, he got the answer, 'We shall see'. Narasimha Rao displayed a similar reaction when the Babri Masjid was being demolished. But such inaction was fatal for the Sikhs in 1984. (J. Singh 2011, 60)

The varied approaches of spontaneity and systematic planning is traced in the comparative study of the events. While some events are spontaneous, some are perceivably planned as reflected in its modelling and implementation. Zoya Hasan, in her study about the post-Babri Masjid demolition riots during December 1992 and January 1993 referring to Thomas Blom Hansen and Amnesty International's report, states that-

Muslim demonstrators protesting against the demolition and Hindus leading victory processions sparked the riots. The riots took place in two phases- the December 1992 phases, lasting for five days to a week, and the January 1993 phase, which occurred between January 6 and 20. The first was mainly a Muslim backlash as a result of the

Babri Masjid demolition in the week immediately succeeding demolition. The second phase was by and large a Hindu backlash occurring as a result of the widely reported killing of four Hindu Mathadi Kamdar, allegedly by Muslims, in Dongri (an area of South Mumbai). Over 1,500 people were killed in the riots and thousands were displaced. (Hasan 2007, 201)

The Anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and the communal riots in Bombay in January 1993 reveals it to be politically motivated and planned, wherein the perceived spontaneity is an illusion used to mask the deeper scheming and the larger conspiracy. In both the cases the action of the police, in form of inaction or disproportionate action was highly debated and critiqued. Within the framework of the primary narratives of the thesis, characters like Balbir and Shekhar are trapped in the theatre of blood and death.

The secular character of the Indian state demands its citizens to be moulded and presented in ethnically non-specific terms in all circumstances. This has allowed massacres of minority communities to remain largely unacknowledged in a maze of ‘communal violence’ cases that invariably result from ‘mutual hostilities’ and provocations from the minority groups. To circumvent this familiar pitfall, inter-ethnic violence needs to be understood in fragmented terms of *mobil-isation* of localised social/religious networks to construct and reiterate a community, *organisation* of actual violence through the evocation of these informal networks, and *social/spatial rearrangements* to further isolate the minority groups. (R. Kaur 2005, 28-29)

Ravinder Kaur locates the idea of religious mobilisation and how member of any community unifies with a tacit consent towards the larger involvement of inter-communal politics *inter alia* their visible inaction or vocal repudiation of violence.

It is not suggested that each act of community mobilisation necessarily results in acts of violence, rather that mobilised communities may be invoked to silently approve, or actively aid and sustain violence when it occurs. The often posed puzzle of the ‘silent majority’ or the common tendency ‘to look the other way’ may indicate a degree of consensus that seeks to justify violence... The fact that unlike a political organisation such religious networks do not require any formal membership or fulfilment of obligations from the devotees makes it more attractive a basis of community belonging for individuals who *per se* consider themselves apolitical... The mobilised community, thus, stands outside the frame of political parties and can be relied upon during the episodes of violence as well when the honour of one community is

‘provoked’ by another community and needs to be avenged. The pre-fabricated idea of a community is, therefore, an important requirement in such communal enterprises. (R. Kaur 2005, 31-33)

The manner in which the meta-narrative of loss of ‘birthplace’ was disseminated, the discourse of majority gave it the much compelling legitimacy in the interplay of rhetoric and bereavement of the ‘self.’ “The quest for Janmabhoomi implies a dislocated individual subject, one who seeks to regain his or her old moorings, spatialised in the ‘birthplace.’”(Rajagopal 1994, 1662)The aspect of religious mobilisation is something that holds ground in case of how the temple building issue of Ayodhya did cast a spell across the nation in influencing the collective consciousness of the substantial proportion of the Indian body politic, though it got a mixed reaction of complicity and repugnance, owing to the strange mixture of euphoria and paranoia that threatened the secular fabric of the nation.

The religious fervour aroused by the *rath yatra* was a key factor in increasing the violence, which was clearly the product of sustained mass mobilization and derived from a broader discourse of communalism that was the driving force behind the spurt in violence... This period was witness to a continuous pattern of violence that culminated in the destruction of the Babri Masjid by Hindu mobs, claiming that it was built on the remains of a Hindu temple. (Hasan 2007, 201)

This aspect is also seen in the movie *Bombay*, where Narayan Mishra claims that every Hindu household is supposed to send at least one brick towards building of ‘Ram Mandir’ in Ayodhya. “Projected onto a distant past, both the plausibility and the implausibility of the story could be accommodated together in a dynamic contradiction-this became part of the tragedy of the nation, which had once attained greatness and today was in dereliction.” (Rajagopal 1994, 1662)

The importance of this religious network lies mainly in enabling the creation and ritualised reiteration of a local Hindu community in the city. The temple movement in Ayodhya was popularised through this network as was evident during the 1989 *shilanyas* movement when Hindus were asked to donate a brick each toward the construction of the temple. Some of the biggest processions carrying the sacred bricks were organised by the Hindus in Delhi. Thus, a national movement like Ayodhya found a readymade audience in Delhi who were more receptive to its message in the

late 1980s than in other parts of India where a Hindu community was yet to be mobilised. (R. Kaur 2005, 31)

Such mobilizations and articulated tacit silences is reminiscent in the horrific episode of mass violence on the Sikh community post assassination of Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards.

The silent endorsement, if not actual participation, of the majority population cannot be explained otherwise. The Delhi goddess appears as a unifying factor among the devotees who partake in a common localised Hindu identity irrespective of their political affiliations. During the Delhi riots, the middle class Hindus did not actually perpetrate violence on their Sikh neighbours, but commonly justified the violence as an expression of pent-up Hindu anger. Such articulations would not be possible if common sentiments of anger and frustration were not experienced as a collective entity. (R. Kaur 2005, 36)

It has been noticed that the events that culminated into assassination of Mrs. Indira Gandhi had a definite commonality right from its genesis in the Sikh militancy, rise of Bhindranwale phenomenon, Operation Blue Star and its pan-national and international repercussions.

The events leading to the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi show that it was not an unconnected event. There was progressive deterioration in the situation in Punjab since 1981. Violent activities of the extremists elements in Punjab had increased. Many Hindus were killed by Sikh extremists. Manoeuvrings by the political parties during this period to gain political advantages and exploitation of the tension had led to a smouldering resentment against the Sikh community. Probably, there was a desire on the part of some persons to teach a lesson to the Sikhs. The assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi by her two Sikh security guards appears to have triggered the massive onslaught on the lives and properties of Sikhs in Delhi. (Nanavati 2005, 179)

The idea to seek revenge got magnified within the majority Hindu community with the realisation that the minority Sikh community punctured their demographic superiority. This was tantamount to their social 'space' being threatened that united the mobs into unison to expound their challenged identity in importantly within the cosmopolitanism of the urban socio-cultural reality.

A significant, though often neglected, aspect of religious violence is the rearrangement of urban spaces in favour of the dominant groups. The symbolic or actual physical destruction of sacred spaces, residential and professional sites of community under attack serves as an opportunity to create abstract spaces, to be filled later, as representations of the social and sacred practices of the majority community... This means that space exists in a dynamic mode and transforms itself continuously to represent the social practices of a society. Thus, violence, destruction of property, or sacred symbols, thereby transformation of spatial practices, provides significant insight into social transformations. The sites of violence often become sites of purification where undesirable elements- members of the 'other' community, their property and places of worship- are ritually removed and boxed in ghetto-like locations. In concrete terms, it means the victims of violence seek protection in areas where they are in majority, and thus, get circumscribed in specific identifiable localities. The destruction of mosques, temples and other sacred spaces symbolises the change of spatial usage and therefore the change in community hierarchy. (R. Kaur 2005, 36)

The rudimentary impulses of the majority to sustain their status of being a majority pushed the realms of humanity to the primordial state of barbarity to ethnically cleanse the sanitised urban spaces with the stamp of majoritarian authority. The demographic minorities found themselves in a conundrum of identity, which eventually led them to shift along the religious lines to regions where the shadow of the minority tag left them.

The 1984 anti-Sikh violence in Delhi was followed by a similar spatial transformation through population movement within Delhi and Punjab. While many Sikh chose to move their businesses and residences to Punjabi cities like Ludhiana and Chandigarh, parts of Delhi city became densely populated with Sikh population as many from mixed areas sold or exchanged their properties to move to 'safer localities'. Whether intentionally or not, pockets of religious minorities do emerge in the process which lead to further strengthening of exclusive communal identities. The very concept of 'minority' takes a regrettable grey hue when advanced from a purely numerical aspect to a general social-spatial disassociation from the mainstream society. (R. Kaur 2005, 40)

It has been found that animosity for survival of the fittest was a normative construct to govern the mannerisms of primordial society. But in today's age of cosmopolitan and post-modern reality, it is debilitating for a nation to be divided within varying facets of identity.

There exists in India a discourse of Hindu-Muslim communalism that has corrupted history, penetrated memory, and contributes in the present to the production and perpetuations of communal violence... During the last two decades, the 'memory' of Muslim violence in Indian history has been kept vivid also by the militant Hindu demand to recapture and restore temples allegedly destroyed by Muslim conquerors and replaced by mosques, a movement that led to the destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya on 6 December 1992. (Brass 2005, 46-47)

Our religious identities have become something commensurable to the holistic idea of identity itself in the larger national consciousness. While other variables like linguistic, regional, caste, class identities are strongly imbedded in our perception of ourselves, it is the religion or communal variable or facet of identity that beholds our everyday consciousness and the essentiality in imbibing the euphoria related to it.

"Intersectionality" is a metaphor for complex identities in so far as they are constituted by race, class, ethnicity, gender and social orientation... Thus intersectional identities often subject individuals to clashing self-understandings and conflicting social and political loyalties. Nevertheless, while multiple ascriptions aim at symbolizing an identity that may result in rival allegiances, conflicting desires, and internal divisions, they also bring to the fore "different potentialities and liabilities of such identities." (Naik 2003, 72)

Our sense of identity is formed by a simultaneous process of recognizing who we are and by a systematic elimination of who we are not. "Identity and difference are bound together. It may be impossible to reconstitute the relation to the second without confounding the experience of the first." (Connolly 1991, 44) Now, this process of elimination based on the difference is very crucial as we eliminate not only based on realities but also on perceived notions of reality. So, who we are is always notional and relative and never static, because in the shifting contours of time and space who we are today might not be connected to who were yesterday or would be tomorrow.

[Anthony D Smith] defines national identity as a product of both "natural" continuity and conscious manipulation. Natural continuity emerges from pre-existing ethnic identity and community; conscious manipulation is achieved via commemoration, ideology, and symbolism. Smith compliments this duality with a social psychological

dimension, citing a "need for community" as integral to identity work. (Cerulo 1997, 390-391)

There is a meta-duality in the seminal question(s) of who we are and who we are not, as the process of engagement with who we are and disengagement with who we are not is perceived from a two-way standpoints; the self and the other, which may be singular or plural. "Intersectional identities are culturally defined, socially determined, and politically directed... Therefore, what one is, what one likes and how one thinks and act is significantly influenced by social systems of domination and subordination." (Naik 2003, 72) Hence, what the other identifies is a process of how well the self asserts its identity upon the other and vice-versa. Michael Dusche has an interesting point in this regard.

Symbolic representations of identity are never stable. Instead, they are in constant need for negotiation- in the communicative situation itself, and more generally in the larger framework of society. To be successful in these negotiations, the individual has to walk a fine line between yielding to the expectations of the collective, on one hand, and insisting on its distinctiveness, on the other, Failing to assert itself in an acceptable way the individual becomes vulnerable to identity ascriptions by others. By losing control over its symbolic representation, however, it also partly loses control over its life. Others will represent him/her as *they* wish without any consideration for how she/he would like to be represented. Having to live with an identity imposed by others, the liberty of the individual is severely restricted. (Dusche 2010, 84-85)

So, the process of 'identity' perception is a two-way process, the process of self-realization which is often complimented by other's recognition and often misrecognition if not rationally asserted as per needs. "[The] social dimension of personal and collective identity formation... is based on the insight that human beings normally thrive under conditions of mutual recognition. That is, they cannot form stable personal or collective identities without 'others' recognizing them." (Dusche 2010, 84)

Personality can be defined as the characteristic way in which an individual relates to others, meets his own needs and desires, deals with frustration and stress, and feels or thinks about himself... Every group tends to mould each new generation into dealing with its biological needs in the way the group had devised for itself. It rewards certain behaviour and discourages other behaviour. In other words, the history of personality is, of necessity, a profile of a developing social system—a field of action between

agents, such as a child in a given family, a young man reacting to his military service or to getting married, within a defined socio-cultural climate and norms in space and time... Leaving aside for the moment the important variables of the “defined socio-cultural climate”, many of us now see the growth of personality and maturation of the individual as based on a continuing conflict. Adaptation in this evolutionary ontogenesis is the resultant of a parallelogram of vectors, inner needs and social imperatives, into equilibrium in continuous change. (Dicks 1966, 85-86)

Hence, the dynamicity is the flux of shifting identities and what is particularly realized by the masses at a given point of time is very important.

An identity might have ontological depth because it construes itself as the bearer of an intrinsic truth that it knows to be true, or it might have faith in its truth and look forward to a day when the faith will be translated into knowledge, or it might conclude that it must always be founded on a contestable faith in its truth, or it might conclude that it is crucial to its individual and collective bearers but historically contingent in its formation and inherently relational in its form-contingent not because it alone in the world of identities has no ground but because it treats as true the proposition that no identity reflects being as such; no identity is the true identity because every identity is particular, constructed, and relational. (Connolly 1991, 46)

To make matters more comprehensive it is imperative to acknowledge that the facet of identity that holds prominence is what the masses realize, but in the process the masses are made to realize a given situation, a moment of freeze in the flux as per the needs and requirements of the ones who intangibly and invisibly impose such a ‘moment of freeze’.

Even after the individual has settled questions of personal and collective identity by being or not being part of certain social groups and affirming and conforming to their expectations and established patterns of social behaviour, its problems of maintaining its identity do not end. Still, while largely accepting and behaving in accordance with group norms, individuals are bound to have needs and desires that would lead them into conflict with group expectations if they were to be followed. Thus, individuals constantly negotiate with the group about the *interpretations* and *implications* of norms that they generally accept. In particular circumstances, individuals negotiate the ‘meaning’ of a certain norm. (Dusche 2010, 86)

The idea of culture plays a pivotal role in defining the limits of who we are and who we are not. The normative domains of limits often limit the transgressive and interactive potential of an individual and his/her possibility of self-recognition.

If culture is understood simply as a reflection of human will, then the existence of any particular social organization tends to become its own legitimation. Focused on defending cultural integrity from external encroachment, cultural relativists tend to be much less concerned with the way culture determines or limits the individual's possibilities for self-definition. (Higgins 2001, 116)

So, in the ambit of culture, religion asserts itself as a potent tool to define norms for the collective identification of individual into an assimilative identity. "Identity politics and new social movements suggest a special form of agency- a self-conscious "collective agency." (Cerulo 1997, 393)

The use of religion as a signifier of personal and group identity requires a critical understanding of the concept of religion itself... The works of Durkheim and Bell help explain the idea of religion as a sort of divine social mirror, though no sufficient explanations are offered as to 'who' transforms, designs and orchestrates the beliefs into concrete activities categorised as rituals. Or how sets of rituals get codified, regimented and turned into manifest beliefs and shaped into a religion that can be worn as a 'thing' that defines a community of its bearers. It is this liminally explored conscious *causative* act and its rationale that must distinguish and transform social representations into potentially active political mobilisations. In other words, we need to focus on the *agency* that produces religious forms rather than the product that is presented for worship. (R. Kaur 2005, 29-30)

The sense of identity that an individual internalizes is always relative in terms of the triad: time, space and context. At a particular time, space and context combination, one facet of identity might emerge and on certain others some other situations might emerge. "Identities emerge and movements ensue because collectives consciously coordinate action; group members consciously develop offenses and defenses, consciously insulate, differentiate, and mark, cooperate and compete, persuade and coerce." (Cerulo 1997, 393)

Identity is relational and collective. My personal identity is defined through the collective constituencies with which I identify or am identified by others (as white, male, American, a sports fan, and so on); it is further specified by comparison to a

variety of things I am not. Identity, then, is always connected to a series of differences that help it be what it is. (Connolly 1991, xiv)

Hence, the relativity in individual perception trapped in the conundrum of ambiguity of recognition/misrecognition is bound to shape, orient or disorient the consciousness about the macro-integration of such splintered self.

The conflict between the priorities and demands of different identities can be significant both for contrasting and for non-contrasting categories. It is not so much that a person has to deny one identity to give priority to another, but rather that a person with plural identities has to decide, in case of conflict, on the relative importance of the different identities for the particular decision in question. Reasoning and scrutiny can thus play a major role both in the specification of identities and in thinking through the relative strengths of their respective claims. (A. Sen 2006, 29)

In this context, the communication of various facets of identity integrate to realize the deferred reality of the obsolete in the quest for the 'absolute.'

The social reflections thus captivated in the rituals and traditions must also be subjected to debate over the content of reflection- is it the lived experiences or the idealised desires that eventually gain symbolic representation? It needs to be emphasised that religious cults, traditions, beliefs and outward symbols do not emerge unaided but are actively publicised. The entire process involves individuals or groups that offer membership to religious communities or disciplines and those who seek to join that community. The belief systems, recognisable symbols, behaviour and ritual that enact the sect or cult's ideas must aggregate and articulate the expectations and wishes of the potential community members. (R. Kaur 2005, 30)

The membership of a community is based on the belongingness to a certain intangible set of patterns and beliefs that connects the individual to that community. In situation of perceived threat and crisis to the community's identity, the self-aggrandisement of the community unites the individuals, its micro-entities, in a schematic pattern to derecognize their individual sense of judgement and rationality to recognize the overarching judgement in favour of the community in such a scenario of volatile predicament. "A lived conception of identity that takes itself to be both historically contingent and inherently relational in its definition might create possibilities for the strife and interdependence of identity/difference exceeding the models of conquest, conversion, community, and tolerance." (Connolly 1991, 48)

The concept of social structure generally refers to the specific pattern of the arrangement of the inter-personal relation of individual of a society into status and strata grouping of castes, classes, communities and other types of collectivities. The pattern of arrangement of relation endure and persist under a system of commonly cherished and shared cultural symbols of values and norms. These values and norms accord legitimacy not only to the formation of social grouping in a society but they also generate a whole series of sanctions cementing the relative position of one group in relation to the other. In fact the relative position of one group in relation to other is determined by the relative possession of values such as, property, power, prestige and honour, etc. Some possess more values as opposed to the other. Social groups thus, introduce hierarchy in society. Order and endurance is achieved by a society only after it has arranged the groupings on this essentially inequitarian scale of values, granting access to one group to the majority of values and denying the same to the others. (R. Singh 1988, 29)

The volatility of the predicament is channelized by the instillation of the idea of collectivist identity infused with the seed of difference between one's own community and the other complimented by the incessant necessity to preserve the communal purity and socio-cultural status. "Cultural distance is measurable by differences between individuals and groups in the expressive aspects of their social life, such as language, dress, religion, and art...*Collective violence varies directly with cultural distance.*" (Senechal de la Roche 1996, 108-109)

So long as the regulative norms remain effective on people and groups, legitimacies behind them continue being accepted by the members of society, howsoever oppressive and violent a social structure could be, they have survived in history as an organised society. But when the legitimacies are in shift, are in the process of change, are being questioned for their relevance, for their partisan role in yielding bounties to one and suppressing the other; even snatching away the right to survive, are blamed at, held responsible for injustice by the deprived groups; a social structure howsoever consensual and democratic at the face value it may be, starts suffering from violence and social disorder. (R. Singh 1988, 29-30)

The idea of the threat has dual perceptions with one thing in common, which is to maintain the status of majority/minority. In any given majority-minority situation, the majority feels the need to maintain its position so that their demographic representation does not regress with the anticipated progression of the other and the minority feels that their minimal yet

cognizable demographic representation should not be thwarted and hence a vehement opposition to match up proportionately to the inroads of the majority is observed. Such vehemence of protecting one's identity aided with an external reason for vengeance is the genesis of the bloody blood bath materialised in form of riots. In the case of Anti-Sikh riots of 1984, attack on Indira Gandhi was perceived not only as an attack on the Prime Minister of the nation, but on a Hindu lady by Sikh bodyguards. Here the recognition of the tags of 'Hindu' and 'Sikhs' ignite the threat perception of either of the community eating into each other's space and the majority disembarking upon the legitimacy to unleash collective mindless violence on the minority community as a whole.

A unique phenomenon has been noticed by Zoya Hasan in the comparative nature of violence and in ascertaining certain probable reasons locate the cases of violence against the minorities.

There are at least three major reasons for the abysmal record of justice in cases of mass violence against minorities. The foremost is the lack of political will to stop the violence, and later, to punish its perpetrators. Comparative evidence clearly shows that large-scale rioting does not take place when there is a political will to stop it and the police force is ordered to do so. The complicity of political and administrative personnel remains the primary issue and this needs to be addressed frontally, for without it justice has no chance...The second difficulty arises from the infiltration of communalism into state structures, immobilizing the state and preventing it from being able to provide justice. Adding to the problem is that unlike caste violence, communal violence is not a structural problem, it is an institutional problem which often stems from communal biases and prejudices within society towards religious minorities. Communal prejudice is hard to identify and pinpoint and even harder to deal with. Even though communal violence is one-sided, there is a common perception that it is two-sided; hence, apportioning of blame against any group or set of individuals or pinning responsibility is extremely difficult... The third difficulty relates squarely to the incapacity of a legal system that simply does not work in cases of mass violence. The complication might arise from using obsolete legal concepts to deal with mass killings which have the backing of the state. Injustice is recognized, but a 'nobody-can-really-be-blamed' in mob violence formula disguises the failure of the rule of law, and everyone is let off. (Hasan 2007, 214-216)

The lacunae in the rule of law in not being able to hold the faceless crowd accountable leads to perpetration of violence in an increasing manner and history bears witness to the fact. “[T]here is now a “conflict continuum”- that social conflicts at successive levels are subject to the same laws and strategy.” (Glass, 1966, p. 162) The insanity of aversion coupled with the fire of spontaneity takes the diabolic form of riots, which is not a phenomenon originating or happening in isolation but has certain unique designs and patterns to it.

Riots rarely ever take place spontaneously. This implies that for a riot to happen and last beyond the heat of the moment, the agitators must be implicitly assured of state and administrative support. Before a riot takes place, rioters must be confident that the power equation between them and their intended victim remains asymmetrically in their favour from start to finish. Rioters are not ready to risk their personal selves for they seek gratification only in ‘self indulgent violence’. Most rioters are ready to **kill** for a cause, but not to **die** for one. (D. Gupta 2005, 82)

The psychology of rioters are pointed well by Dipankar Gupta to focus on how the concept of tradition is a superfluous. The riots are read as an apparent veil to cover the individual interest of material loot and also self-aggrandisement of their perceived masculinity.

Rioters, therefore, use tradition very superficially. What really prompts them to take to the streets is not so much the defence of tradition as it is an assurance that they can expect self indulgent violence to be gratified. Loot is one reward of such gratification, but, in addition, the attraction of asserting masculinity in a risk free situation is also very tempting. (D. Gupta 2005, 82)

Conflict in a modern society is not always about survival or the last resort to protect oneself, but with the brink of modernity it is the dialectics of about defining, asserting and channelizing those norms in a society and a viable resistance to such norms. Norms cannot be absolute, both in theory and practice, and hence they are susceptible to be contested upon with the progression of the society.

Conflict, as a form of intense, antagonistic communicative experience, is bounded by the cultural demands and constraints of the particular situation. This set of demands and constraints, in turn, implicitly dictates what are the appropriate and inappropriate ways of behaving and communicating in a given system. (Ting-Toomey 2001, 46)

So, the conflict amongst the communities so bitterly ingrained in our collective psyche is based on the dialectics and dynamics to complicity to the norms on one hand and resistance on the other.

Conflict and change are universal features of contemporary societies and may be considered normal and, within limits, even conducive to their well-being. But the limits are easily transgressed, and hence their members are perennially beset by anxieties about total stagnation on the one hand and endemic disorder on the other. (Beteille 1998, 265)

History has been a testimony to the fact that with conflict comes an enforcement apparatus to repudiate such exigencies. This repudiation has discursive modus operandi depending on the intricate manner of functioning of the agency involved and against whom the action has been aimed at.

Civilised, political institutions of democratic and secular methods of sharing of values and interests, of the impersonal system of law enforcing agencies and of the system of justice suffer threats against their survival. Erosion of major political values and of the neutrality of bureaucratic apparatus initiate another retrograde process. (R. Singh 1988, 30)

The reports of inquiry commissions and the narratives that have focused on violence, maintains an underlining disposition that actions to adjudicate and contain violence was inadequate as the evidenced in the time of crisis. The Indian legal framework is formulated based on minimum use of force in lines of democratic values of the nation. But what is minimum in a given situation is ambiguous and up to the interpretation to the authorities implementing it in practice.

While our law, which restricts or minimizes the use of force is laudable, we must take into account that any assumption that police violence will be curbed by mere rules and laws may not be valid as it ignores the pressures and motives which come into play in dealing with violence on a large scale. What actually occurs in the field is that while the organization is governed by a set of laws for minimization of violence, other forces arise from the situation in which a higher degree of violence is provoked. When the police used violence to counter violence, we must also take into account the potential for excessive violence by the police themselves... Restrictions and instructions regarding handling of violence, restrictions have to be necessarily vague due to the

difficulties in visualizing and spelling out the situations in which counter violence may have to be used or in which it can be avoided. All administrative structures empowered to use violence to control aggressive and agitational situations are aware of the concept of the minimal force, but in practice, find it difficult to determine what is the minimum for a given situation. (Rao 1988, 165)

Here a clear divide of between theory and practice. So, the inquiry commissions and the narratives have a third person view of the situation, while the one accused, the police, encounters the exigent reality and ‘accordingly’ responds. “Timely and effective police action has, therefore, the most crucial role to play in situations that might generate riots.” (S. Sen 1993, 628) The police came under criticism for its manner of functioning in dealing with the riots during December 1992 and January 1993.

The indiscriminate use of lethal force against unarmed demonstrators violates the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which inter alia states: "Law enforcement officials, in carrying out their duty, shall, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms... Whenever the lawful use of force and firearms is unavoidable, law enforcement officials shall: (a) Exercise restraint in such use and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offence and the legitimate object to be achieved; (b) Minimise damage and injury, and respect and preserve humanlife..." The Basic Principles also state: "Governments shall ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offence under their law." Unfortunately, the Maharashtra state government's Guidelines for Dealing with Communal Disturbances 1986 authorise the early use of lethal force in order to quell a communal disturbance, and prohibit firing warning shots in the air in violation of the Basic Principles. (Noorani 1996, 1238)

In the movie *Bombay*, Shekhar questions the police officer for death of more than fifty people in police firing, to which the officer responds that if the police do not fire they will be accused of inaction and if they do so, they will be accused of action in contravention with the law. The officer also says that the police men are not extra-ordinary creatures but same people as others. Hence, a paradox may be deduced that certain human error is plausible in practice but unjustified in theory.

[T]here are situations and circumstances when it is not only justifiable for the state to use force, but when it becomes obligatory and inseparable... While [the] position is

quite clear in the case of an external attack, the responsibility for tasks relating to internal security has become a matter of serious controversy in recent years. Questions may arise whether the civil police can take up these tasks as a natural extension of their enforcement function or should the responsibility be shared by the police and para-military forces or even by the Army. (Rao 1988, 166)

In the movie *Black Friday*, Rakesh Maria's diligent and acquiescent approach to the investigation of Bombay bomb-blasts shows how police works its way into the investigation to successfully file charge-sheets against the accused, barring a few accused whose extradition from foreign shores is a matter beyond the sole jurisdictional domain of the police. The terror attack on Bombay was not essentially a collective violence in the normative manner, but is symbolically proportional to the demographic representation of the victim and the victimizer. Hanah Arendt formulates the sense of rage and revenge as,

Rage is by no means an automatic reaction to misery and suffering as such; no one reacts with rage to an incurable disease or to an earthquake or, for that matter, to social conditions that seem to be unchangeable. Only where there is reason to suspect that conditions could be changed and are not does rage arise. Only when our sense of justice is offended do we react with rage, and this reaction by no means necessarily reflects personal injury, as is demonstrated by the whole history of revolution. (Arendt 1970, 63)

It was done to inflict a sense of terror in the minds, hence had implied psychological ramifications of the affected much beyond the obvious physical consequences. The custodial violence shown in the movie was to mirror the psychological conundrum that the victims of the blast faced and the strategy undertaken by the police to deal with such situation was discernable as per the exigency reported.

The use of extra-legal powers or circumvention of the law has generally aggravated tensions. This problem has arisen particularly in regard to terrorism and extremist activities... Terrorist activities viewed in this light represent a form of collective violence, although they do not always manifest in group violence. From the very nature of this kind of violence, it becomes necessary to adopt new strategies and techniques of dealing with them. (Rao 1988, 166-167)

The police is accused of inaction, distorted or disproportionate action in various inquiry commission reports ranging from the time of National Emergency from 1975-1977 to Anti-

Sikh riots of 1984 and the pre and post Babri Masjid demolition upheavals. Without any intension to defend the police or other security apparatus, it is imperative to trace the inaction and excess as being externally regulated and action in any format being meted by the police. Political intervention cannot be ruled out in regulation of the police's actions, be it an excess or a lack. Especially, in case of communal riots, the police becomes the most visible state apparatus dealing with the situation and hence is subject to avid scrutiny by the public and agencies alike.

THE role of the police in communal riots has always been a highly controversial issue. Riot victims generally complain that: (1) The police did not come to their rescue; (2) police forces were themselves instrumental in the killing; (3) they led the mob in looting and burning; (4) arrested innocent persons and tortured them inside the lock-up and put false charges against --the arrested persons, and (5) encouraged the culprits to do whatever they liked by preventing the members of one community to come out during the curfew and allowing members of another community to do so with impunity. These and some other grave charges are made against the police after every communal riot. During the Bombay riots in December 1992 and January 1993, serious allegations were made against police officials, high and low. (Engineer 1994, 835)

During the Emergency, the excess in police action, which implies of being discriminative, disproportionate and distorted has been reported by Shah Commission report, under the provisions of Maintenance of Internal Security Act. The Shah Commission report also find and thereby mentions the fabrications of truth and thereby the citizens becoming hapless subjects to the anarchy and torment of state machinery.

24.6 In several cases heard by the Commission, responsible officials admitted to the fact of large scale fabrication of records concerning various individuals and matters to subserve the interests of a few. Considering the manner in which the MISA cases were dealt with by the detaining authorities which often involved large-scale fabrication of records, it is but proper that an effort should be made by the authorities at the Centre and in the States to devise means to ensure that these concocted records are not used again to the disadvantage or detriment of the individuals concerned. (Shah, Shah Commission Report: Third and Final Report 2010, 228)

Inaction is also a kind of action and so is the case with distorted and disproportionate action. It is analogous to the famous saying- 'justice delayed is justice denied.' The 'delay'

in justice has connotations of the rising probability of justice being denied. All of these are tacit injustice to the masses as the democratic state of affairs should have intervened to contain situations at its very onset. Lack of preventive steps and political myopia is the reason why such issues blows out of proportion to an uncontainable extent.

[Can] we deal with such manifestations of violence except through impartial, prompt and ruthless exercise of force at the very initial stages? It is because the running sores of the communal virus are not perceived in time, and the requisite element of force is not used in time, that much damage has been done. Quite often, dilatoriness, partisanship, hesitancy, lack of initiative and political intervention have contributed to enormous loss of life and property. (Rao 1988, 168)

Various enquiry commission has reported the failure of preventive order and security apparatuses to contain the violence, which entangles the demographic set-up into a state of disintegration. With the rising sense of disintegration within the communities, violence seems to be the manifest reality of the omnipresent lacunae in Indian social set-up.

A developing democratic system with a continuing history like India is more prone to the threats of violence as its traditional and modern values are yet to be systematised in the contemporary setting. Violence being the consequence of the failure of normative rules to hold people together on a set of major cohesive values, which are in tune with the developmental and modernizing course of our society, is bound to wield more threats of violence in future than is conceivable today. (R. Singh 1988, 31)

Such lack of cohesion in the society enable the political circles to manoeuvre the lacunae in the society to augment their vested interests. The relative affirmations of the shifting status of majority and the minority necessitates an unanimity within the minority with a sense of convalescence to come together into a state of perceivable and discernible cohesion.

In every democracy, there is necessarily a tension between majority rule and minority rights, yet the two are by the same token inextricably bound together. Indeed, democracy is sustained because there is no single, monolithic, and permanent majority, but rather a shifting series of ruling coalitions made up of minorities. The minorities may reflect the cross-cutting social cleavages and overlapping memberships that characterize the idealized model of democratic pluralism, or else may form a mosaic of distinct groups that define their identity in terms of one or more attributes

like religion, language, or caste. In either event, there must be an underlying political culture of mutual respect and trust or, at a minimum, a basic agreement on the rules of the political game among the various groups themselves. Lacking such a consensus, one group, or perhaps a coalition, may seek power and domination over others; if the center cannot hold, the society may find itself torn apart by war and secession. (Hardgrave 1994, 84-85)

Vanguard of collusion of violence and identity

The weapons of violence are varied and it is through these weapons that one can comparatively study the trajectory of violence, locate its similarities and dissimilarities and trace the role of state in such exigencies.

The contaminated scalpel and bulldozers, guns and tanks, chemical powders and tyres, the sword and fire-sticks and the RDX are the instruments of violence in the following events, namely National Emergency, Operation Blue-Star, Anti-Sikh riots, riots after Babri Masjid demolition and Bombay bomb-blast.

To begin with the Emergency, two of government's infamous schemes got appropriated in the interest of the nation and the victimisation in its name got legitimised by the state sanctioning the policies. "In Delhi, the two policies with the most widespread impact were the Resettlement Scheme and the Family Planning Scheme: the former aimed at demolishing all "unauthorized" dwellings and were the easiest to target for family planning." (Tarlo 2000, 242)

These were supposed to be qualitative in principle but ended up with gross quantification in practice. It was 'numbers' that became the fundamental denominator for performance of the concerned authorities. In fact, 'numbers' were similar to loyalty points achieved, which eventually became the strategic currency on assorted parameters like appeasement of the higher-ups, means of promotion and most importantly to escape self-victimisation

The parallels between the sterilization drive and the demolition drive, both of which seemed to function to remove the urban poor, if not obliterate them from the city centre, are impossible to ignore, but we must also recognize that the two policies initially functioned independently, with the latter taking the lead. (Tarlo 2000, 245)

Since, the schemes were sanctioned by the government, the tool to inflict pain and violence was the scalpel in case of sterilisation used for surgical procedures. Under the duress to achieve a set target of sterilisation cases, scalpels were not boiled/sanitised to achieve the target of maximum numbers within a set time frame. Such unethical practices led to permanent or temporary disability of many patients, also amounting to death. “They are both beggars now... You wouldn’t recognize them if you saw them. Ishvar has shrunk, not just because his legs are gone- all of him. And Om has become very chubby. One of the effects of castration.” (Mistry 2004, 698) Similar cases were reported in case of Slum demolition. Bulldozers were used to forcefully evict the dwellers of a slum. In the name of beautification of the city and nation, eviction was forcefully done resorting to violent means.

While the demolition drive intruded deep into the private space of the home, the sterilization drive went one step further, threatening the individual at the level of the body. And although the two policies initially functioned in isolation, it was not long before they began to operate in unison, trapping their victims at the vulnerable point of intersection. For those caught in the middle, the only way to lessen the impact was to divert the effects of one policy by participating in the other. (Tarlo 2000, 242)

The next episode of violence in discussion was Operation Bluestar and the subsequent Anti-Sikh riots, instruments of violence used was bullets and tanks in the first case followed by chemicals and tyres in the second. Here the use of bullets and tanks necessitates a definitive recognition of the state and state’s complicity to the pain inflicted to the common masses, even in cross-fire or otherwise. The justification for the use of tanks in the premises of Golden Temple is a matter of contestation and is discussed in detail in the concerned chapter with Lt. General K.S.Brar’s ingenious yet convincing validation for the same. Nonetheless, the state’s complicity in use of brute force cannot be ignored along the deaths of innocent pilgrims who were caught in the inferno of crisis especially with the substantial gathering on June 4, 1984, martyrdom day of one of the Sikh gurus who had built the Golden Temple.

Same ‘bullets’ were used against somebody who sanctioned the use of bullets on the fateful day of 4th June, 1984. The bullets fired back on 31st October, 1984 is symbolic of the ill-conceived reparations to the sanction of army operation on the Golden Temple, tantamount to blatant dishonour faced by the Sikhs community having a ripple across the

Sikhs worldwide. But such reparation was met with the bloody carnage evident in the gory Anti-Sikh riots especially in the manner in which violence was meted. Since the bodyguards who shot Indira Gandhi were incidentally Sikh men, subsequently the men of the Sikh community were perversely perceived as the traitor or one who should be taught a lesson. Sikh men were selectively picked and burnt alive. Several incidents were recorded of some inflammable chemical powder or liquid being thrown or poured on them and being burnt alive. Another inhuman modus operandi was that the hands were tied, then a tyre was put around the neck and then it would be set to fire. Eventually, the tyre as it burns would constrict thereby asphyxiating as well as burning the victim. It becomes impossible to ascertain by the forensic methods whether one died of asphyxiation or burn. Nanavati Commission reports such incidents, and one of the instances from the report is mentioned from the police Station: Bara Hindu Rao.

Shri K. S. Bedi was the Station House Officer of this Police Station. In this area 2 Sikhs were killed, 1 Gurudwara was partly burnt and about 17 vehicles were damaged. On 1-11-84, at about 1.30 p.m., a big mob of about 3000 to 4000 persons attacked Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Pul Bagash. Jaswinder Singh who was residing in the Gurudwara has stated that the mob was led by Ravi, Tetu Aman and Suresh Panwala who were all local bad characters. The mob hurled petrol bombs and sprinkled kerosene on the Gurudwara and set it on fire. He has further stated that his uncle Sardar Thakur Singh went out of the Gurudwara with folded hands and told them not to indulge in such acts. Ravi who was leading the mob hit his uncle with a heavy iron rod. Thereafter his uncle was dragged to the main road. The mob then threw truck tyres around his neck and poured kerosene on him and burnt him alive. At about 4 p.m., when two wounded Sikhs were being brought to the Gurudwara, the mob caught them and threw them at the place where the body of his uncle Jaswinder Singh was still burning. Some more tyres were thrown into the fire and thus they were also burnt alive. (Nanavati 2005, 45-46)

Even narratives from the texts in discussion focus on victimisation in general, "Some twenty four Sikhs have tyres put round their necks and are burnt to death in broad daylight" (Goswami 2002, 144) and especially how characters like Pappu and Satpal faced the plight of violence. "[T]hey dragged Pappu out into the silent gully. One of the men jammed a car tyre into his body, pinning his arms to his sides, poured kerosene over him and flicked a match, setting them alight." (Badami 2006, 368) Even in the case of Satpal's tragic death, the diverse mob followed almost a similar pattern.

He [Satpal] knelt while one of the men poured kerosene over his head, the acrid smell making him dizzy and nauseous. One man dropped a car tire over his head and jammed it about his shoulders, immobilizing his arms. Another lit a match to his streaming hair, wet with kerosene. The flames ate into his scalp, crept like a dreadful river down his face, licked at his eyebrows, his eyelashes. The heat burned his eyes and his last thought was that he could not even weep. He could not even weep. (Badami 2006, 371)

The pattern finds mention in the section- 'Overall Consideration' of the Nanavati Commission report, Vol-I, which states-

The attacks weremade in a systematic manner and without much fear of the police; almost suggesting thatthey were assured that they would not be harmed while committing those acts and even thereafter. Male members of the Sikh community were taken out of their houses. They were beaten first and then burnt alive in a systematic manner. In some cases tyres were put around their necks and then they were set on fire by pouring kerosene or petrol over them. In some cases white inflammable powder was thrown on them which immediately caught fire thereafter. This was a common pattern which was followed by the big mobs which had played havoc in certain areas. (Nanavati 2005, 180)

Such acts implies a tacit complicity of the macro state apparatuses as such selective attacks and such brazen humiliation of the Sikh community must not have gone unnoticed under the intelligence scanner of the state.

There was a pattern to the carnage. Typically, Sikh boys and men were first beaten mercilessly with sticks and rods, then doused in kerosene or petrol and finally, they were garlanded with burning tyres. Boys were often disguised as girls to escape lynching mobs. Most of the Sikh women in Trilokpuri were raped... The fact that the patterns of violence were so similar throughout the city of Delhi should put paid to the view that it was all but a spontaneous outburst of rage and indignation against the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi. Moreover, as some observers have pointed out, in most riots the number of people injured. The fact that in the pogrom of 1984 the situation was reversed only further establishes the fact the killing were well organized and the assailants were granted adequate time to carry out the orders from above. (Grewal 2007, 145-146)

In case of riots after the Babri Masjid demolition, the case of majority and minority surfaced with the equation of Hindus and Muslims shifting categories of majority and minority across the border. The news of the demolition of the Babri Masjid travelled fast across the nation and also crossed the national borders. It did arouse a lot of international reactions manifesting in an ill-conceived solidarity amongst the radicals to plot the conspiracy to attack Bombay as an act of retribution and retaliation. Swords, iron rods, daggers and fire-sticks were instruments of violence used in the Bombay riots, both in December 1992 and January 1993. Iron-rods and swords wreaked havoc with personal attack on members of the other community and also the police. “Two Constables in Deonar jurisdiction were killed with choppers and swords by the rampaging Muslims” (Srikrishna 1998, 10)

On 2nd January 1993 a number of Muslim hutments in M.P. Mill Compound in Tardeo jurisdiction were set on fire. On the same day there was an incident in Dharavi jurisdiction in which two Muslims were assaulted with iron rods by Hindus. (Srikrishna 1998, 13)

Since, fire-sticks are instrument that is used to lit fire, records of loss of property in Bombay was directly proportional to the probable and potential damage that uncontrolled spread of fire can cause. Srikrishna Inquiry Commission reports the events on 7th December, 1992, the day after the demolition.

By this time the protest had degenerated into a full-scale communal riot between Hindus and Muslims. Eleven temples in different jurisdictions were damaged, demolished or set on fire. The Hindus did not fall behind and damaged mosques and madrassas in different jurisdictions. BEST buses in the Bombay Central Bus Depot and BEST bus stops became easy targets for the Muslim mobs and were damaged and/or set on fire.

On 4th January 1993 a big mob of Hindus led by Shri Gajanan Kirtikar, Shri Ramesh More and other Shiv Sena activists took a morcha to the Jogeshwari Police Station complaining of lack of security for Hindus. Some of the people in the morcha attacked Chacha Nagar Masjid and the Muslims in the vicinity and injured them. Several Muslim huts in Magdum Nagar in Mahim jurisdiction were set on fire by Hindus.

During the wee hours of 8th January 1993, at about 0030 hours, some of the Hindu residences in a chawl popularly known as Radhabai Chawl in Jogeshwari jurisdiction

were locked from outside and set on fire by miscreants. One male and five female members of a Hindu family (Bane) and their neighbours were charred to death and three other Hindus sustained serious burn injuries. (Srikrishna 1998, 14)

The final result of such a theatre of death led to annihilation of such huge proportion of human lives and property.

1.24 The final tally of casualty figures for December 1992 and January 1993 are as under : Dead — 900(575 Muslims, 275 Hindus, 45 unknown and 5 others). The causes for the deaths are police firing (356), stabbing (347), arson (91), mob action (80), private firing (22) and other causes (4). Injured — 2,036 (1105 Muslims, 893 Hindus, and 38 others). (Srikrishna 1998, 18)

All these led to the Hindu-Muslim fracture be magnified and hence led to retaliations from the radical groups to plan an act of retribution. “They act to make their perceptions match their goal of violating-intimidating, assaulting, injuring or killing-another human being.”(McPhail 1994, 23)Finally, the Bombay bomb blast used RDX, one of the most sophisticated chemical used then for mass destruction.

As a result of the demolition of Babri Masjid and the riots which took place in Bombay during December 1992 and January 1993, there was communal cleavage in Bombay. The Muslims felt a feeling of insecurity, tension and anger on account of their suffering during the two riot periods and they were inclined to blame the State Government and police for their misery...Pursuant to this conspiracy certain brainwashed Muslim youngsters were recruited and taken to Pakistan for intensive training in the handling of sophisticated weapons and explosives. As a part of this conspiracy, Dawood Ibrahim and smugglers like Mohd. Dossa, aided and abetted by several criminal or similar elements in Bombay, smuggled large consignments of AK–56 rifles, hand grenades, and sophisticated explosives known as RDX...The conspiracy was actually implemented when a series of blasts occurred on 12th March 1992 in Bombay, almost simultaneously, at several places. The serial bomb blasts resulted in loss of life of 257 persons and injuries to 713 persons and caused damage to properties worth about Rs 27 crore. (Srikrishna 1998, 41)

Use of RDX shows the level of tactical planning and logical support in implementation of the conspiracy, whereby the counter-strategy of the police stands visibly justified to protect the interest of the state.

Aspect of minority and majority gets complex with the attack on minority institutions, which lays bare the ill-conceived communal fracture resurfacing from the sub-conscious. Structurally the Golden temple and the Babri Masjid may be a monument of reverence for the whole of the nation, but it is essentially a symbol of the Sikh and Muslim community respectively. “Centres of worship are the foci of religious identities.” (Deol 2000, 47) So, an attack on such institutions like the Golden Temple and the Babri Masjid is symbolic of an attack on the honour of the relevant community by the majority community with variedly overt and tacit support respectively by the state in terms of hyper-action or inaction.

Whether the spot claimed as his birthplace actually was so, is unimportant. What matters is that a miniscule segment believes that it can whip a frenzy around the issue, hectoring and terrorising the majority into assent ... Within the terms of this idiom, a proud symbol of a medieval Indian dynasty is easily cast as a 'symbol of national shame', which obscures the primordial 'Hindu' solidarity from which the Indian nation derives its identity. (Muralidharan 1990, 27)

Referring to A.T. Embree's book *Utopias in Conflict*, Deol analyses the concept of violence especially from an Indian context-

Violence in India is not, then, senseless and random. It is a way of changing things, of challenging a recalcitrant political order. In India, as elsewhere in the world, towards the end of the twentieth century religions legitimized violence as people struggled for what they regarded as their just claims upon the future. Frustration and fear may have their roots in identifiable economic and social causes that could be ameliorated by secular remedies within the democratic process, but a religious vision can offer a more readily available solution by legitimizing the violence that is born of hatred and despair. (Deol 2000, 53)

The nature of communal riots has been raised is riots in decades immediately after independence saw a spontaneous nature in its functioning compared to an articulated and schematised pattern in its subsequent reiterations.

Whereas the communal riots of the 1950s appear to be more the result of spontaneous and sudden outburst of group violence, the riots of the 1960s and subsequent period appear to be systematically engineered by the vested interests for the acquisition of political and economic power. The November 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi once again

confirm this fact. In the context of communal riots in Delhi it must be pointed out that the role of Indian state more than not happens to be vacillatory, accommodating and compromising. The state intervention in communal riots is not always prompt and impartial. This is so because it has to take care of ruling class politics. In this sense the post-independence Indian state is akin to its colonial predecessor. (Jain 1997, 70)

A.G. Noorani adds to the point how the missing element of spontaneity of riots make it difficult for the police to contain the well-devised and planned moves of the perpetrators of violence.

A riot is generally supposed to be a spontaneous outburst of violence between the two communities. However, it is rarely so. In pre-independence period some major riots belonged to this category. Most of the riots then and almost all the riots now are meticulously planned and executed. It is necessary to make this distinction as the role of the law and order machinery depends very much on whether the riot is planned or is a spontaneous outburst. If it is spontaneous, it is easier to control but if it is well-planned, it assumes a different character and requires more motivation and determination on the part of the police to control it. (Engineer 1994, 835)

The modes of 'collective' violence as reported on the minority was more than riot, where two communities would inflict damage on each other. "[T]he modifier collective here implies a population of units separated in time and space and influencing one another as they act together on the basis of seconhand information and without hierarchical leadership" (Pitcher, Hamblin and Miller 1978, 24) "When violence occurs in riots and other gatherings it may take one or more of several forms; vandalism, looting, arson." (McPhail 1994, 22) But in these cases it was a kind of genocide, much more ubiquitous and discursive, where the minorities are selectively targeted and brutally killed.

Men and boys were killed. Women and girls were raped. The aim evidently, was to utterly insult, humiliate and butcher the Sikhs. Even male children were not spared. Bhagat himself was heard calling to the mob, '*Yeh saap ka bacha hai, isko maro, mat choro, agar chhoroge toh bada dukh dega*' (He is the child of a snake, kill him, don't spare him, if you spare him, he will give a lot of pain.) This is a pogrom, not a riot. (Grewal 2007, 145)

Paul Brass has located three sources behind the rising death toll caught in the cross-fire of Hindu-Muslim animosity and the dangerous designs of the riots.

Deaths in Hindu-Muslim riots have three sources: 'mob action', police killings, and 'isolated incidents'. 'Mob action' may take the form of confrontations between gangs or crowds from different communities or segments of them, armed with sticks, knives, swords, spears, occasionally bombs and small weapons, kerosene, and lately gas containers used as fire bombs. It often also involves armed gangs from one community seeking out defenceless persons or whole families in their homes, slashing and cutting up the male members and sometimes the female members, raping the latter, and burning all alive; the preferred term in the Indian English-language press for the latter type of killing is 'roasting alive'. A second source is police killings, which account for a large percentage of deaths in several major riots for which figures have been provided in inquiry commission reports and which cannot be justified in terms of 'crowd control'. These killings are disproportionately of Muslims. Third, a good part of the killing takes the form of cold-blooded murder of individuals in 'isolated incidents' rather than in killings arising from 'mob frenzy'. Such killings are often the precipitant or perhaps the starting signal for the production of riot. (Brass 2005, 50)

Though 'violence' (Pitcher, Hamblin and Miller 1978) occurred and perpetrated in varied times and forms, it is humanity that is at the receiving end of all the trauma. Ranging from Emergency of 1975 to the Bombay bomb blasts in 1993, one can hear and feel a wail of loss and sorrow in the narratives, both factual and fictional. The loss of individuality and fracture in the communion of the society exemplified by characteristic hatred for the 'other' had been noticed in the trajectory of the narratives.

Struggle of the present and recent past help to dilute earlier experiences, pushing them back in time and intensity and making the casual nature of Emergency reminiscences more comprehensive. Today, it is fresher wounds that are recounted with a sense of pain. In particular the "communal riots" of December 1992 stand out as a scar which is yet to be healed in the colony. During my research from 1995-97, conversations about the Emergency often included reference to this recent violence, particularly in the Muslim-dominated section of the colony, where some thirty people had allegedly lost their lives, and where homes, shops, mosques, and markets had been violated. The "riots" surfaced in people's narratives not only as a time of trauma but also as an event which carried severe social and economic consequences from which people are only now recovering. (Tarlo 2000, 261)

The pain and fear inflicted in the minds, after being a subject and a victim to years of revulsion and communally splintered animosity dividend, bears an incipient form of fratricidal disunity in the perceived unison of the 'imagined community'.

[Nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (Anderson 2006, 6)

The divide amongst the communities gets even more pronounced and is evident with the corollary it extrapolates with its dialectical opposition to the strategic positioning of secularism in Indian socio-political framework.

Anderson approaches national identity as a sociocognitive construct-one both spatially and temporally inclusive, both enabled and shaped by broader social forces. He documents key moments of identity construction, times during which cultural (language) and social factors (capitalism, print technology) convene in a particular historical moment, effectively remaking collective images of the national self. (Cerulo 1997, 390)

“In fact, unpacking the very notion of a uniform, “Indian,” “identity” lays bare the historical and political ordering of this particular political order.” (Rasheed 2003, 185) The plurality of the nation cannot be infused into the suffocative singularity on sectarian lines with partisan perspective. Such singularity obscure the idea of ethnicity with communalism, with the individual’s fundamental ascriptions crippling the ethos of secularism.

Ethnicity has a close cognate in the term communalism, particularly in the way the latter is used in the Indian context. Communalism is about identities which again are ascriptive in nature and has, in addition, a particularly pejorative connotation. Communalism is backward looking in contrast to forward looking secularism. (D. Gupta 2005, 79)

The essence of religion is politically infused with radicalism and fundamentalist connotations belies the tolerance towards other religions and sows the seeds of communalism. “The definition of religion is not raised when religion and culture, while

distinct, are understood as interwoven. The questions then are about boundaries within a particular religion.” (Sullivan 1996, 134)

Though communalism relies on religion for authenticity it hardly has any religion in it. It is an ideology that grows in the soil of specific material socio-economic realities of any group identified by its religious beliefs. When there are social and economic concerns of a particular group which are not recognized, or which cause cultural and material fractures, the emotional alienation of that group becomes fertile ground for the revival of communal ideology. In such a situation, it is imperative that religion be involved, religious ‘leadership’ instated, and religious legitimacy sought. (Grewal 2007, 155)

The split engineered historically explores the phenomenon of communalism with how and when it gets used as a tactical and strategic currency to deliberate upon varied socio-political realities within varying scope of space and time.

There is a widespread belief among the majority of social scientists as well as laymen that the situation of socio-cultural pluralism in a multi-ethnic/multiracial society automatically leads to communal tension and violence. Simplistic and logical as it does sound, this proposition does not hold ground on closer scrutiny empirically or theoretically. Theoretically, such an analysis of communalism is simply tautological and forecloses any further discussion in terms of socio-political and economic factors. Empirically, if the connection between cultural pluralism and communalism were true, human history in general and the Indian history in particular would have been replete with perpetual communal tension and violence. Fortunately, this has not been the case...Communalism is considered a modern phenomenon in the sense that although sectarian and inter-religious tensions and conflicts did take place in ancient and medieval periods of Indian history, their recurrence during the colonial period was frequent and at times deliberate. The colonial State often manipulate ethnic, religious/sectarian sentiments to its own advantage. “Divide and Rule” was in fact the key strategy of the colonial State. (Jain 1997, 59)

Historically, the accommodation of the plurality of Indian society has been recent with the unison being arbitrated and necessitated initially to find a nation of one’s own without the British and subsequently imagine the correlation between the micro elements to comprehend the macro-entity called the nation.

The religious intolerance, persecution and wars that formed the long and sorry prologue to these modern achievements are too often forgotten in the nostalgic calls of religious nationalists for a return to state-sponsored religion as a cure for the perceived evils of the secular society. (Sullivan 1996, 129)

In the disparate events, from Emergency to Bombay bomb blast, there has been a cause and effect equation. Firstly, proclamation of Emergency was the cause for horrific schemes in the 'interest of the nation', like Family Planning Programme and Demolition drive in 1975-1977. Secondly, the Operation Bluestar to contain the secessionist and radicalism of Bhindranwale was seen as an assault on the honour of the Sikh community and Indira Gandhi was shot dead which progressed into the gruesome Anti-Sikh riots in 1984. Thirdly, the failure to protect the historic Babri Masjid instilled a threat and fear amongst the Muslim community of being quashed by the Hindus which led to the minuscule radical proportion of the Muslim community to materialise the act of retribution in form of devastating Bombay Bomb blast of 1993.

A certain fear of the people, one suspects, has become the dark underside of every modern state. In the liberal democratic states this fear takes a special form. Each democracy is an act of faith in the sense that each represents, however imperfectly, a commitment to liberal values and a trust in the political judgment of the people. Yet each is dependent on elaborate institutional arrangements to protect these values from the people. One suspects that behind the act of faith hide age-old fears: fear of the gullibility of the people, seen as all too capable of turning into mobs (note the British elite's anxiety after the French Revolution and during the period of expanding franchise); fear of the volatility and the transient, half-baked preferences of the masses (remember the institutional checks against populism devised by arch populist Charles de Gaulle in France); fear of the emotional vulnerability of the ordinary citizens in international relations, dominated by amoral, conspiratorial powers (Henry Kissinger's fears about nuclear disarmament and the security community's anxiety in Rajiv Gandhi's India); and fear of the people's innocence about and subvertibility to the tinsel glitter of international capitalism (the dominant idiom in India during the radical phase of Indira Gandhi's tenure). Many guesses can be made about the nature of this ambivalence- The mixture of faith and distrust- toward the citizen. It is possible, for instance, to hazard a guess that the modern state, even when it is avowedly liberal-democratic, does draw a line between democracy and freedom and locate freedom in dispassionate, rational perception of reality and in the optimism of a progressivist

theory of history. The commitment to the democratic order becomes then a statement of hope that the populace will ultimately internalize the enlightenment values on which only genuine statecraft can be built and tolerate in the meanwhile the state pursuing these values with a touch of paternalism. In other words, even in an open society, the modern state expects the citizens to prove their commitment to freedom and rationality by accepting and acting according to the meaning of freedom and rationality given to them by the state and by not pushing the state too far toward accepting the diverse versions of freedom and rationality available. (Nandy 1989, 23-24)

It is interesting to note that all the causes were perceived by the ones in power to be in the interest of the nation, but the seminal question arises that whose 'interest' and whose 'nation', much in terms of Partha Chatterjee's analogy of Anderson's work, 'Whose Imagined Communities?' (Chatterjee 1994)

Nationalism is in substantial part a psychological phenomenon, involving felt needs and dispositions, in contrast to the nation-state, which is an institutional phenomenon... The significance of nationalism in the modern world, I think, is quite clearly related to the decline of tradition and to the fragmentary character of the everyday life in which lost traditions are partly refurbished. This applies, I think, both to modernized societies and to those suffering cultural strain or conflict. These circumstances render fragile what Laing calls the "ontological security" upon which day-to-day life is based. Ontological security means the security of taken-for-granted routines, giving a sense of the continuity of being. In traditional cultures the sustaining framework of ontological security is well bolstered by the continuity of practices in the local community. But in large-scale societies, in which routinization has substantially replaced traditions—where moral meaning and self-identity have retreated to the margins of the private and the public—feelings of commonality of language and belongingness in a national community tend to form one strand contributing to the maintenance of ontological security. (Giddens 1984, 171)

In the name of nation and nationalism, it is the powerful, be it in majority or otherwise, devise ways and means to appropriate a definitive strategy to address a perceived exigency to identify with a unanimously accepted norm of solidarity. Most often in Indian socio-political strife, such solidarity has been identified with communalism.

[N]ationalism [is considered] as a psycho-historical phenomenon, as a collective reaction to social and psychological crises produced by periods of transition from a traditional, agrarian to industrial, urban social structure, and by periods of cultural retardation and prolonged political and cultural oppression. The reaction to such crises leads to a highly emotional social solidarity and a highly idealized image of the group. (Babru 1966, 196)

In the issue of Nationalism, instead of realising the need to remain in unison the increasing disintegrative pattern in lines of caste, community and class is abominable. This disintegrative vested concerns will cripple the nation with undue aggression materialised in form of disruption of the social order in form of riots.

[T]he first typical manifestation of violent nationalism, namely, the split in the community between the *patriots* on one side, and the *anti-patriots* on the other. The massacre of political prisoners- that is, of the anti-patriots- is a dramatic illustration of the kind of rationalized aggression normally aroused by nationalism. (Babru 1966, 188)

The events that has witnessed such disruptions of the social order despite the established security and legal mechanisms reflects upon the vacuum in the social order in not being able to contain such disruptions. Another very important aspect in the disruptions discussed is in the factor of immortalizing status of a leader. “The phenomenon of leadership so pervades collective action that it may seem hopeless to devise a strategy for shepherding the net impact in any premeditated direction.” (Lasswell 1966, 210) In this comparative scenario, the first event, during Emergency, the leadership was identified with Indira Gandhi and the opposition from J.P. Narayan. In the second event, Anti-Sikh riots of 1984, the sense of lament for the lost leader was in absent presence of Indira Gandhi after 31st October, 1984. In the third event, the case of Babri Masjid demolition was identified with L.K. Advani and subsequently in the discussion of Bombay riots with Bal Thackeray.

In the context of the chapter, the leader-follower relation has a huge impact in formulating the dynamics in the manner the situations are dealt with. The leader always had a significant and decisive impact upon her/his followers who in a subtle amalgamation of idealism and pragmatism tilts the axis in favour of the former. The leaders have an psychological control over the followers as the followers internalise the line of thought and

thereby the leader exercise proportional influence on them as per their positioning in the sphere of influence.

The perspectives of the leader and the led may be as ephemeral as the streets-crossing or as enduring as a great national figure. The organized or unorganized network that includes a leader and his followers ranges from a single individual to uncounted millions. (Lasswell 1966, 211)

In case of Indira Gandhi, whose leadership after 1971 till her death in 1984, barring a few years after the Emergency ruled by the Janata Dal government, was undisputed across the nation. Such aura had a sphere of influence amongst the masses who eventually gets blindfolded with the illusory reality and gets habituated of her cult figure-hood.

Not only did Indira Gandhi's Emergency evaporate the national ideals spawned during Independence, but she insisted on replacing earlier notions of Indian democracy with her own. Thus, "India is Indira; Indira is India" became her campaign slogan in 1971, and Mrs. Gandhi scripted herself as both mother and nation in speech and image to the extent that the hagiography persisted even after her death in 1984. (Joshi 2015, 78)

Her disappearance from the public life in 1978 was taken as relative and ephemeral with high probability of her bouncing back to power. But, the perceived notion of her permanent disappearance after 31st October, 1984 and the presence of her absence (Derrida 1978) in the subsequent days was the catalyst in the Anti-Sikh rage amongst her followers.

The fundamental characteristic of the leader-follower relation appears to be giving and receiving of orientation. In any collective context leadership is an aggregate activity, since the giving and receiving of orientation is an inseparable part of collective action. An exhaustive, systematic review would enumerate the leader-follower roles in context and describe the perspectives involved on both sides (the identities, demands and expectations), the number of organized and unorganized structure, the base values (assets) available in leader-follower relations, the strategies of management (by both leaders and led) and the flow of outcomes (value indulgences, or advantages, and deprivations) and effects. (Lasswell 1966, 211)

Such 'absent presence' (Derrida 1978) was also perceived by the Sikh and Muslim community after their honour seemed to be absent after the attack on their religious institutions and symbolically deluding the community of its due share of respect and space

in the society, which was eventually seen as a threat to their epistemological rebuttal of their identity and existence.

The point must be explicit that leadership is an inseparable part of all collective action, since the giving and receiving of orientation is always present. The parallel between the flow of collective acts in a group and the flow of individual impulses is worth investigating in detail. Schematically, any completed act of an individual can be described as a sequence of events that passes through three phases: impulse, subjectivity and expression. Acts may facilitate one another, or they may conflict... Collective action in group affairs is a flow of facilitating and conflicting demands whose claims and justifications are put forward by individuals who play leadership roles and compete with one another for support. (Lasswell 1966, 212-213)

In the case of Babri Masjid Demolition, subsequent riots in December 1992 and January 1993, and the Bomb blast in March 1993, all these incidents have some collective leadership, visible or invisible. In case of the demolition many leaders are named including L.K.Advani. In the subsequent riots in Mumbai, reports states the role of Shiv Sena and in the Bomb blast the role of Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon and the ISI is ascertained as per reports. The reports have also examined that though the leader ignited the fire, the euphoria went uncontrolled and beyond the call of the leaders, in some cases to contain the conflagration, as individuals ascribed various other factors to vent out the rage collectively wreaking havoc.

The concept of public violence is surprisingly under-theorised in terms of a comprehensive paradigm of understanding such violence in the context of the notion of power... As the power incumbents and the power subjects clash over their hierarchies on a macrocosmic scale, violence gets enacted in the public space. Consequently, violence can stem from collective notions of deprivation, from individualism or what Durkheim calls 'egoism.' Whatever may be the cause, violence in the public sphere has traditionally been understood as disruptive and chaotic, destroying all order and balance in society. (Nandi and Chatterjee 2012, 7)

The case of misappropriation of the concept of 'identity', is observed in the research. Homogenization of the heterogeneity of identity, lets one be something at the cost of not being many more at the same time, space and context. The undermining of the plural nature of identity is a serious impediment to realisation and recognition of who we are with

a misappropriated and flawed concept of who we are not. With lesser self-assertion and more insinuations about who we are by the ones recognising us, limits the dynamicity of the category of 'identity.'

The singular affiliation view would be hard to justify by the crude presumption that any person belongs to one group and one group only. Each of us patently belong to many. But nor can that view be easily vindicated by claiming that despite the plurality of groups to which any person belongs, there is, in every situation, some one group that is naturally preminent Collectivity for her, and she can have no choice in deciding on the relative importance of her different membership categories. (A. Sen 2006, 25)

We can a lot more or a lot less than what we perceive about ourselves or rather what we are socio-culturally made to perceive about ourselves. By the recognition angle getting stronger, who and what we are is told and we are systematically made to realize. Similarly, our belongingness to various groups and disassociation from other groups is induced. The niche that we tend to create for ourselves is a 'false consciousness' that we get duped into, as it is a space which we are made to create or created for us by the unknown, unseen, intangible but are ubiquitous in our association with the society.

Even when a categorization is arbitrary or capricious, once they are articulated and recognized in terms of dividing lines, the groups thus classified acquire derivative relevance, and this can be a plausible enough basis for identities on both sides of the separating line. (A. Sen 2006, 27)

So, we think that we know who we are and hence, we speak for ourselves, but interestingly we are so intrinsically entrenched by the intangible ubiquitous social forces that we speak or reiterate what has be spoken or foretold. Hence, we what we realise of ourselves and is what 'we realise' but what 'we are made to realise.'

There are a great variety of categories to which we simultaneously belong. I can be, at the same time, an Asian, an Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, an economist, a dabbler in philosophy, an author, a Sanskritist, a strong believer in secularism and democracy, a man... This is just a sample of diverse categories to each of which I may simultaneously belong- there are of course a great many other membership categories too which, depending on circumstances, can move and engage me. (A. Sen 2006, 19)

Hence, the conundrum of singularity that we get trapped into vacillates into the factor of ambiguity of our identity, that gets incessantly denied and forever 'deferred'. (Derrida 1978) "Discourses of national identity constructed by residents of any given state will always contain or imply both cultural and political elements." (Wodak, et al. 2009, 5)

The illusion of singularity draws on the presumption that a person not be seen as an individual with many affiliations, nor as someone who belongs to many affiliations, not as someone who belongs to many different groups, but just as a member of one particular Collectivity, which gives him or her a uniquely important identity. The implicit belief in the overarching power of a singular classification is not just crude as an approach to description and prediction, it is also grossly confrontational in form and implication. A uniquely divisive view of the world population goes not only against the old-fashioned belief that "people are much the same the world over," but also against the important and informed understanding that we are different in many diverse ways. Our differences do not lie on one dimension only. (A. Sen 2006, 45)

Conclusion

The important seminal observation of the research is that 'radicalism' is legitimized under the garb of 'protectionism', which induces fear of threat to one's identity. The radical nature exhibited in actions both by the government and 'others' is legitimized under the garb of self-proclaimed necessity to protect the hierarchy of power and thereby maintain the structure. This may be analysed and understood by consideration of two broad categories in each event taken up for this study.

During the Emergency, the categories were the government and the masses. The government induced the necessity of Family Planning to apparently protect the nation from population explosion, but the voluntary sterilisations got radicalised as forceful sterilisation in concurrence to Indira Gandhi's clarion call to 'act decisively'. So, was the case with slum clearance as the radical approach undertaken to protect the nation from being disarranged without a pattern, hence beautification scheme was imposed as a protectionist agenda. The similar is the case with media censorship, which was indeed a radical step to 'protect' the masses from being fed with distorted news and rumours about policies of 'overarching benefits.' The induced fear was inability to accommodate the space for the 'alternate' which perceivably threatens the identity of the one in power, Indira Gandhi, to forgo the position of unquestionability.

During Operation Bluestar, it was easier to justify the radical decision to deploy the army to flush out the terrorists from the Golden Temple complex. It was definitely done to protect the Indian state from the vile secessionist endeavour of a separatist group. Here, the threat is to the spatial geo-political boundary and the socio-cultural mapping of the heterogeneous yet syncretic imagination of diverse Indian demography. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the non-Sikhs especially took it as an assault on their pride and threat to their identity which materialised in the form of the gory Anti-Sikh riots of 1984. The radicalism with which the Sikhs were victimised was insane, but was legitimized in the then colloquial parlance and collective mind-set to teach the Sikhs a lesson, and thereby protect their community.

The Babri Masjid was in itself a symbol of contestation and tussle between the Hindus and Muslims. While it is interpreted that Babri Masjid was built after demolition of the 'Ram Mandir', which is the birthplace of Lord Rama, some 'Hindus' took it as a historical

assault on their identity and a grave error which has to be undone. The tenacity exhibited to undo the error materialised in the attack on the domes of the Babri Masjid, which was then seen as a symbolic assault by some 'Muslims' on their religious faith and the associated paraphernalia. In order to 'protect' each other's threatened identity, the entire nation was engulfed in fire and especially the city of Bombay was torn apart in December 1992 and January 1993. Since, the riots had registered considerable Muslim deaths, it was again seen as an assault on the collective identity of Muslim community beyond borders. The solidarity in protecting the Muslim identity was materialised in terms of the overseas conspiracy of Bombay's serial bomb blasts in March 1993. Hence, identity as a relational category gets problematized.

"Identity is one of the most fluid socio-cultural constructs; it affects material realities and in turn, is continually affected by the ebbs and flows of material processes." (Grewal 2007, 191) The study locates the fissures in the concept of misappropriated identity. Such myopic and partisan mind-set reflects the inner dystopia of our society, glamorized under the screen of altruistic plurality and democracy. "Foucault's emphasis on discourse is worth some discussion in this regard, because he takes language and difference out of the illusion of power symmetry, revealing the way in which meanings serve particular political interests." (Hammack and Pilecki 2012, 79)

Postmodernists advocate a shift in analytic focus, deemphasizing observation and deduction and elevating concerns with public discourse. In the spirit of Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Jean-Francois Lyotard, the postmodern-identity scholar deconstructs established identity categories and their accompanying rhetoric in an effort to explore the full range of "being." Works in this tradition call into question models that equate discourse with truth; they expose the ways in which discourse objectified as truth both forms and sustains collective definitions, social arrangements, and hierarchies of power. (Cerulo 1997, 391)

Since the idea of identity is better understood in terms of context and in relation to the society and vice-versa, identities of different characters, in the discussed novels and movies, undergo tremendous changes and suffer irreparable losses.

Belonging to each one of the membership groups can be quite important, depending on the particular context. When they compete for attention and priority over each other (they need not always, since there may be no conflict between the demands of

different loyalties), the person has to decide on the relative importance to attach to the respective identities, which will, again, depend on the exact context. There are two distinct issues here. First, the recognition that identities are robustly plural, and that the importance of one identity need not obliterate the importance of others. Second, a person has to make choices- explicitly or by implication- about what relative importance to attach, in a particular context, to the divergent loyalties and priorities that may compete for precedence. (A. Sen 2006, 19)

The characters in discussion undergo a 'shift' in their identities both in space and time. With the shifting contours of time in its essential linearity, the characters shift locations, both physical and psychological. The categories may be sorted into pre-event, during the event and post-event. Pre-event the characters had a different identity and during the event they had to negotiate with their erstwhile identity which eventually necessitated a reconfiguration of their identities as per the changing socio-political scenario, thereby forming a duality, a spatial metaphor of the induced and engineered 'split'. Since the reconfigurations were customarily irrevocable and hence, the post-event identity was not a reconciliation back to the original, or pre-event identity but beyond the duality into the third space which psychologically arbitrates between the unfortunate circumstantial 'new' with the nostalgic 'old'. Hence, the post-event identity in the third space beyond the duality to form the meta-duality. The narratives show a kind of semblance and organicity with which the characters had perceivably made peace with new 'meta-dual' identity in the liminal third space. (Bhabha 1994)

Narratives, both factual and fictional, reflect the identity crisis that the characters go through and the subsequent human rights violation in varying patterns. In the primary texts, the narratives of the characters in discussion reflect the trajectory of trauma that they had suffered with violence emanating out of varying reasons and how their identity got scripted and negotiated in capricious patterns during the episode of the Emergency in 1975-77, Anti-Sikh Riots of 1984, and the December 1992 - January 1993 riots in Bombay. The integration of victims' narratives collaborate to form the larger narrative corpus marking the scars and turbulence in the Indian socio-political history. The micro-narratives of the victims resonate to the recorded social disaster reverberating the sense of 'loss' which may be testified in the national historiography and oral storylines, especially when read in conjunction with the various inquiry commission reports constituted.

The perspectives of James and Erikson remain alive and well among scholars who study narrative identity. A key line of empirical study related to political psychology in which this area of inquiry has flourished has been on the relationship between national identity and personal identity. The emphasis in this work has been on how individuals construct personal narratives of identity that closely mirror larger national storylines, thus providing a sense of personal coherence and group solidarity. (Hammack and Pilecki 2012, 83)

In the case of Emergency, it was violation especially of the poorer sections of society, as they were easy victims to the paltry incentives being given to garner consent for sterilisation in the name of Family Planning Programme. The reports suggests that programme(s) got so viciously draconian that Family Planning got linked with Slum Clearance drive, whereby the poor got evicted, and to get hold of a legal land, situations turned such that it became impossible for one to get land allotted without the dangerous ‘Sterilization’ certificate. So, it was a double-trap for the victims and they had no choice but to succumb to the human right violations under the garb of ‘need for the hour.’

The situation in all the three events had the media silenced and the press censored. Hence, it is through the Inquiry commission reports that the study is done in conjunction with the literary narratives. Media censorship may be read as blinding the public, which is rather an undemocratic exercise in a democratic set-up. This may be strategically essential, as the government justifies, but is subject to outright speculation and consideration by the nation’s body politick.

“The social geometry of each conflict explains whether the pattern of partisanship is strong and unequal and thereby explains collectivization of violence in each case.” (Senechal de la Roche 2001, 129) In case of both the riots, anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and the post-Babri Masjid demolition Bombay riots of December 1992 and January 1993, a unique pattern is noticed. In the both the cases, the conflict lasted for three to seven days. Here, two points are implicit: firstly that riots lasted for more than one day and were controlled in less than a week. This hints at a strategic design employed by the ones in power with vested political interest. The socio-cultural ramifications of these two events have the history of independent India tainted with the scar of communalism. The powerful taps on the spontaneous anger of the public and lets the rage engulf the nation with hatred and revulsion. With the masses coming into their conscious self, they get to realize the

absurdity of their act of animosity, and as the narratives reveal, they stop, as especially in the Bombay riots in January 1992. But it is not similar in case of Anti-Sikh riots of 1984, where the rioters suddenly escape on the 4th of November, 1984 with the introduction of the Army, to prevent any arrest in their hands.

Though preventive and persecution mechanisms are in place, one thing that is common in both the cases of riots, of 1984 and 1992-93, is that despite the option of clamping curfew as a preventive mechanism to prevent further damage, a well-spelled legal mechanism was absent to deal with the collective violence and nullification of political interference in such scenarios. Mechanisms to deal with situations pre and post events are in place, but mechanisms to be used during the event are contextual and relative, subject to interpretation of the commander on-field, whose action is subject to retrospective interpretation by off-field critics. In the absence of a tangible legal framework as standard operating procedure for the security forces to deal with the untoward collective exigencies, their 'actions' will be incessantly subject to retrospective analysis and vituperation on the grounds ranging between inaction or hyper-action. Since, the normativity in this regard is ambiguous, the security forces walk the tight rope of democratic mandate of the use of minimal force and the need to bring the situation under control, on the strategic frontline of being perceived as democratic or autocratic for their actions.

With narratives and events from 1975 to 1993, despite the censorship of media, inexorable violation of human rights, 'action' (Rao 1988) of security apparatus and vested political interest, the secular fabric of the nation is still intact amidst the plurality of civilizational values and multiple cultures. The beauty of democracy is in being able to look into the disastrous past, take it on the chin, debate and deliberate upon it, learn from the mistakes and move on towards the future. The growth of democracy is in its strategic affinity towards change and the changes have been traced in the identity of the individual vis-a-vis the society as reflected in the narratives taken up for this study.

Jawaharlal Nehru's idea of democratic socialism is a watershed contribution in the nation's post-independence socio-political modernity. "He moved with the times and changing circumstances. Yet, he never sacrificed his ideals of democracy, secularism, socialism and his faith in fundamental human freedom." (D. Singh 1991, 29) Building on Nehruvian ideas Shashi Tharoor states-

Democracy is the best system for managing diversity. In a multi-religious, multi-ethnic nation like India, democracy permits its citizens to determine their own way of life under a state which accommodates divergent religious practices without privileging any. This gives citizens the right to grow in an environment which fosters harmony and stability... Democracies allow disagreements to be openly expressed. But the process of free and fair public discussion and contestation gives people the power to be stakeholders in combating social issues of a local nature without the state of suppressing them or coercing them an outcome. Such constructive processes, which play a crucial role in developing the character of a democratic people, are unlikely to occur in an undemocratic state. (Tharoor 2015, 156)

And most importantly to be able to conduct research on these diverse narratives and tumultuous events of our nation's recent history, to have access to various inquiry commission reports and be aided by persons across different strata of the society, from parliamentarians to academicians, is subtle nature, in which democracy should function, and fortunately that is evident in the case of India as a democratic nation. This research reflects upon sad events of the recent past with the hope for a bright future, and getting the scope to deal with matters in such details speaks miles of the vibrancy of the unshakeable democratic ideals of the nation and its educational institutions.

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