

11 Conflict and Violence

11.1 Social Conflict

Ata, Abe: Cross-Religious Misunderstanding or a Clash between Civilisations: An Australian Study. *The Eastern Anthropologist* 60, 1 (2007): 27- 43.

Focusing on the case of immigrants in Australia, this article discusses the failure of dialogue between mainstream Christians and the growing immigrant Muslim communities in Australia, and the reasons for their mutual alienation. Data for the study are drawn mostly from published materials and newspaper reports.

Analyzing the nature of cultural stereotypes and reservations regarding 'the other' prevalent among both communities, the study notes the existence of undifferentiated stereotypes of 'Arabs', 'Muslims' and Middle Eastern Christians, as well as a number of derogatory assumptions propagated through school textbooks in mainstream Australia. In Australia the separation between secular and religious identities is a cultural and political given, though the former may be a result of the values of the latter. On the other hand, for citizens of Muslim countries, their identity is inextricably linked to their religious affiliation. The author contends that the cultural alienation faced by immigrants is inadequately dealt with by the state and media of both groups. Media reports circulating among Muslim immigrant groups tend to concentrate on information relevant to countries other than the host country. The author then goes on to suggest means for fostering a meaningful dialogue between the two communities.

Gangte, T.S.: Struggle for Identity and Land among the Hill Peoples of Manipur. *Eastern Quarterly* 4, 2 (2007): 91-100.

This article analyses the politics of ethnic identity and the struggle for state reorganization on an ethnic basis with special reference to the hill peoples of Manipur. During the colonial period, the hill peoples of Manipur were broadly divided into two categories, the 'Naga' and the 'Kuki', with several smaller tribal communities

belonging to neither the one nor the other. In recent times the logic of nomenclature and classification has been extended to refer to territoriality, leading to movements for ethnic integration and ethnic cleansing. As a result, one sees on the one hand a demand for the creation of a 'Kuki state'; and on the other the idea of Naga 'self-determination' and 'Naga integration', based on the presumption that Naga unity and solidarity are more fundamental than the internal differences among the Naga peoples. These claims and demands led to the ethnic violence of the 1990s where the NSCN-IM (National Socialist Council of Nagalim - Isak Muivah) made strategic attempts to eliminate Kuki from the Naga-dominant areas and to claim a sovereign Naga state based on an exclusive Naga identity.

Based on the data of the 1991 census, this article propounds that there is no hill district or area in Manipur that is exclusively Naga-inhabited. The article concludes that the recent crisis of identity politics is an outcome of the recognition accorded to smaller ethnic groups as separate Scheduled Tribes by the Indian Constitution, and the benefits flowing from this. An independent study of the cultures, customs and linguistic commonalities of the various tribal groups is urgently required, so as to make proper modifications in the lists of Scheduled Tribes and put an end to the ongoing ethnic clashes, rival territorial claims, and regroupings.

Jain, Sushila: Communal Conflict in Rajasthan: A Case Study of Jaipur. *The Eastern Anthropologist* 60, 2 (2007): 233-37.

Policies of cultural pluralism which enable ethnic and minority groups to maintain their social identities require a mutual understanding amongst various communities. While India has been struggling towards this harmony, it has been wracked by successive communal conflicts, especially after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992. According to historians and political scientists, the roots of communalism in India lie in historical circumstances, as well as in the ideology of the social and political elites and the socio-economic order. A 'single cause theory' might not suffice to explain this complex phenomenon.

Since 1989, the state of Rajasthan has changed from a peaceful state to one with major communal tensions and incidents of

communal rioting. There are a number of reasons for this change, including segregated habitations and mutual animosity between the two communities, as well as the major role of political parties and communal organizations in raising emotions and promoting the rise of religious extremism.

Mehta, Shalina: Fragile Peace in Punjab: Sectarian Violence and Global Pressures on Politics and Religion. *Man and Development* 29, 3 (2007): 113-28.

Paradoxically, the recent phase of development and globalization has redefined frontiers not merely at the social, political or economic levels, but also in respect of religion. This article argues that the emerging middle class in both the rural and the urban milieus have not only taken to global food, language and music but also, enthusiastically and often violently, to forms of religious rituals, and ethnic cultural assertion. Moreover, identity struggles are often fuelled by vote bank politics – the building blocks of democratic polity.

Focusing on events in Punjab between 14 and 31 May 2007, this article concludes that identity politics in the state continues to be highly potent. Economic interests of the state as well as global competition contribute significantly to determining its intensity. In contrast to the violent phase of the 1980s, the pressures of global economics compel political strategists to exercise restraint with regard to political mobilisation and strategic participation by the state machinery in channelizing religious sentiments. Since new sects and emerging identities have their own social, economic and political agendas, the state and national politics need to craft adequate instruments of governance to sustain the processes of integration.

Tiwari, Arvind: Human Rights Violations against Dalits: A Case of Failed State? *The Indian Journal of Social Work* 68, 1 (2007): 73-87.

Continued failure on the part of the State and civil society to check human rights violations against the Dalits, despite the existence of stringent laws, raises questions about the role of the Indian state in protecting Dalits' rights. In this article, the author reviews the

constitutional safeguards for Dalits. He points out that bias against the Dalits is in-built within the State machinery, and hence that the State alone cannot be expected to protect the Dalits from human rights violations.

After reviewing untouchability practices of the state machinery and in consumer markets and a range of other human rights violations against Dalits recorded in different parts of the country, the author pays particular attention to the 'triple burden' of caste, class and gender, and the sexual violence routinely suffered by Dalit women. Additionally, the 2006 massacre of a Dalit family in Khairlanji in Maharashtra is taken as a case study to illustrate the inadequate response of the State to Dalit grievances and to cases of atrocity. The author concludes with a number of recommendations to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. A basic attitudinal change in the government and civil society is required to give meaning to the constitutional guarantee of equality and freedom to the 160 million Dalits who have remained at the fringes of Indian society.

See also Robinson (13.1); Xavier (4.2)