

## ROLE OF HATE SPEECH

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### ABSTRACT

We cannot disregard the power of words, which can become the tool for solving difficulty but if it is misused then it will become the creator of crisis. In country like India which is diverse, it is easy to incite immediate breach of peace by using fighting words on the bases of religion and caste and in present era many controversial person for getting unfair advantage have been using their freedom of speech and expression for inciting violence between people belonging to different religion, caste, beliefs and customs. Because of communal hate campaign India has experienced many communal riots in past as well as in present. As we know that media as fourth pillar of the constitution because it is a medium for mass communication but if media allows it to be used as fuel for inciting violence through active propaganda or reporting then there is need to make media understand that it is duty of a media to report communal riot in such a manner that it should harmonize the violence and build people's confidence in the law which exist for solving communal problem. If media understands its capacity of assisting in quelling the effect of hate speech through the responsible and restrained reporting then it will become easy for government to grab those person who is using media as tool for inciting communal riots. In Present era we have different law which tells about how media have to report communal dispute. We have different legal provision which provide punishment for inciting violence through words. At last author and co-author would like to suggest that if we have to solve the problem of hate speech then media has to understand its duty and government should implement the laws in strict sense.

Keyword: Communal riots, Fight word, Role of Media

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## Introduction

Michel Rosenfeld defines 'hate speech' as 'speech designed to promote hatred on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin'. As he notes, the issue of hate speech 'poses vexing and complex problems for contemporary constitutional rights to freedom of expression'

In the Indian context, the contemporary meaning of the term 'hate speech' is inextricable from its origins (as a form of legal action) in colonial attempts 'to assume the role of the rational and neutral arbiter of supposedly endemic and inevitable religious conflicts'. Given this historical context, hate speech has primarily been understood in India as referring to speech intended to promote hatred or violence between India's religious communities. Macaulay, in his commentary upon the Indian Penal Code, explicitly endorsed this interpretation of 'hate speech' under Indian law, observing that the principle underlying Chapter XV (prohibiting 'offences relating to religion and caste') is that 'every man should be suffered to profess his own religion, and... no man should be suffered to insult the religion of another.'

This project provides an overview of legal and historical on 'hate speech' in India. To this end, it provides guidelines for discussion of the following:

- constitutional aspects of hate speech in India;
- legal provisions prohibiting or restricting hate speech in India;
- the historical background of prohibitions on hate speech in India;
- A discussion of critiques of dominant understandings of 'hate speech', presented as an introduction to philosophical debates regarding hate speech.

## HATE SPEECH

*If we cannot eschew hatred, at least let us eschew group hatred.*

*May we see that we could have been born as each other.*<sup>3</sup>

### The fighting word (hate speech)

In the landmark American judgment, Justice Murphy as described the expression 'Hate speech':

'Fighting words – those which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace. It has been observed that such utterances are no essential part of any exposition of ideas, and are of such slight social value as step to truth that any benefit that may be derived from them is clearly outweighed by the social interest in order and morality'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Vikram seth : Two lives, (2005)

The subject of hate speech has gained significance in recent years with the increase in communal conflagration accompanied or caused by communal hate campaigns. Fighting words insult or provoke violence on the basis of race, colour, creed, religion or gender. Powerful, potentially provocation and far reaching, the media has time and again allowed itself to be used to fuel such campaign through active propaganda or reporting. Equally, the media is capable of assisting in quelling the effects of hate speech through responsible and restrained reporting.

### Legal provision about hate speech in India

Hate speech does not find place in Art. 19(2) of the Constitution and therefore, does not constitute a specific exception to the freedom of speech and expression under Art. 19(1) (a). It would have to be read into Article 19(2) under other specified exceptions such as 'sovereignty and integrity of India', 'security of the state', incitement to an offence' and 'defamation'.

A wide range of Indian statutes contains provision that assist in controlling hate propaganda. Some of the provisions are:

(1) The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 requires that all programmes advertisements telecast on television conform to the programmes code and the Advertisement code.

1. Contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes;<sup>5</sup>
2. is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote-anti-national attitudes;<sup>6</sup>
3. Criticizes, maligns or slanders any individual in person or certain groups, segments of social, public and moral life of the country;<sup>7</sup>
4. Contains visuals or words, which reflect a slandering, ironical and snobbish attitude in the portrayal of certain ethnic, linguistic and regional groups.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the advertising code:

1. Advertising carried in the cable service shall be so designed as to conform to the laws of the country and should not offend morality, decency and religious susceptibilities of the subscribers.<sup>9</sup>
2. Which derides any race, caste, colour, creed and nationality<sup>10</sup> or to incite people to crime, cause disorder or violence, or breach of law or glorifies violence or obscenity in any way.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire, 315 US 568 (1942)

<sup>5</sup> The cable Television Networks rules, 1994, rules 6(1) (c)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., rule 6(1) (e).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., rule 6(1) (i)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., rule 6 (1) (m)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., rules 7(1)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., rules 7(2) (i)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., rules 7 (2) (iii)

The Cable Act empowers the authorized officer appointed under the Act to prohibit the transmission of a programme or channel of it is not in conformity with the programme code or the advertisement code or if it is between different religious, racial, linguistic or regional groups or likely to disturb public tranquility.<sup>12</sup>

(2) Under the Cinematograph Act, 1952, a film can be denied certification on various grounds, including on the ground that it is likely to incite the commission of offence or that it is against the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India or Public order.<sup>13</sup>

(3) According to the Information Technology Act, 2000 allow directions of Controller to a subscriber to extend facilities to decrypt information.-

If the Controller is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence, for reasons to be recorded in writing, by order, direct any agency of the Government to intercept any information transmitted through any computer resource.<sup>14</sup>

(4) Norms of journalistic conduct, 1996, guidelines for reporting of communal incidents.

### Covering of communal disputes/clashes.

1) News, views or comments relating to communal or religious disputes/clashes shall be published after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner, which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to communal harmony, amity and peace. Sensational, provocative and alarming headlines are to be avoided. Acts of communal violence or vandalism shall be reported in a manner as may not undermine the people's confidence in the law and order machinery of the State. Giving community-wise figures of the victims of communal riot, or writing about the incident in a style, which is likely to inflame passions, aggravate the tension, or accentuate the strained relations between the communities/religious groups concerned, or which has a potential to exacerbate the trouble, shall be avoided.

### Headings not to be sensational/provocative and must justify the matter printed under them

i) In general and particularly in the context of communal disputes or clashes

a. Provocative and sensational headlines are to be avoided;

b. Headings must reflect and justify the matter printed under them;

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<sup>12</sup> The cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, section 19.

<sup>13</sup> The Cinematograph Act, 1952, Section 5-B.

<sup>14</sup> The Information Technology Act, 2000, Section 69.

c. Headings containing allegations made in statements should either identify the body or the source making it or at least carry quotation marks.

### Caste, religion or community references

i) In general, the caste identification of a person or a particular class should be avoided, particularly when in the context it conveys a sense or attributes a conduct or practice derogatory to that caste.

ii) Newspapers are advised against the use of word 'Scheduled Caste' or 'Harijan', which has been objected to by some.

iii) An accused or a victim shall not be described by his caste or community when the same does not have anything to do with the offence or the crime and plays no part either in the identification of any accused or proceeding, if there be any.

iv) Newspaper should not publish any fictional literature distorting and portraying the religious characters in an adverse light and offending the religious susceptibilities of large sections of society who hold those characters in high esteem, invested with attributes of the virtuous and lofty.

(5) The Indian Penal Code, 1860 contains provisions which prohibit hate propaganda. Section 153-A penalises the promotion of class hatred. Section 295-A penalises insults to religion and to religious beliefs. 505 make it a penal offence to incite any class or community against another.

Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code criminalises the promotion of 'enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language etc,' or 'doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony'. The section prohibits, inter alia: the promotion of 'disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will' between different communities through 'words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise' (section

153A (1) (a)); acts which are 'prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony' between communities, or which 'disturb or are likely to disturb the public tranquility' (section 153A(1)(b)). The broad scope of section 153A is further buttressed by section 153B, which prohibits 'imputations and assertions prejudicial to national-integration'. The section criminalises the use of 'words either spoken or written', signs, 'or by visible representations or otherwise' which, inter alia: ·

- impute to any class of persons (by reason of their membership of a particular community) an inability to 'bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India' or 'uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India' (section 153B(1)(a));
- assert, counsel, advise, propagate or publish that any class of persons, by reason of their membership in any community, shall be denied or deprived of their rights as citizens of India (section 153B(1)(b));
- assert, counsel, advice, plead or appeal concerning the obligations possessed by any class of persons (by reason of their membership in any community), where 'such assertion, counsel,

plea or appeal causes or is likely to cause disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill will between such members and other persons' (section 153B(1)(c)).

These provisions co-exist with other, broader provisions of the Indian Penal Code, with significant implications for 'hate speech'. These provisions include the following:

- section 295, which prohibits 'injuring or defiling any place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class';
- section 295A, which prohibits 'deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings or any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs';
- section 298, which prohibits 'uttering words, etc, with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings';
- section 505(1), which prohibits 'statements conducive to public mischief';
- section 505 (2), which prohibits 'statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes'.

### The History and Purpose of Hate Speech Law

As Rajeev Dhavan notes, India's hate speech offences are largely 'a legacy of the British'. These provisions were viewed, by the British, as a necessary expedient to maintaining security and stability in their colonial territories: 'From the point of view of the British, the purpose of the hate speech provisions was to avoid communal tension, irrespective of who was right or wrong'.

Asad Ali Ahmed further highlights the importance of 'hate speech' laws in legitimating British presence in India, reshaping their role from alien colonial occupiers to neutral arbiters of culture and conflict. In Ahmed's analysis, colonial blasphemy laws 'enabled the colonial state to assume the role of the rational and neutral arbiter of supposedly endemic and inevitable conflicts between what it presumed were its religiously and emotionally excitable subjects.' While this image of Indian colonial subjects as possessing 'especially sensitive religious sensibilities', as Ahmed puts it, was cited by the British to justify the existence of such laws, such laws ironically led to the creation of the state of affairs which supposedly pre-existed and justified their existence: that is to say, 'rather than reflecting primordial religious attachments, the cases before the colonial courts were not only enabled by the law but largely constituted by it.'

The importance of 'hate speech' laws in the British project of maintaining stability in India (necessary for the perpetuation of colonial rule), and the extent to which the British perceived Indian colonial subjects as uniquely vulnerable to religious insults, are made clear by Macaulay's commentary on 'Offences Relating to Religion and Caste' within the Indian Penal Code:

'The question whether insults offered to a religion ought to be visited with punishment, does not appear to us at all to depend on the question whether that religion be true or false... The religion may be false but the pain which such insults give to the professors of that religion...'

Macaulay's notion of 'words that wound' is surprisingly prescient. Similar notions emerge in the work of Judith Butler and Kathleen E. Mahoney, considered in the next section. However, the motives and objects of Macaulay's code, as it related to offences relating to religion and caste, were by no means pure. As he himself admits in his commentary, the principal concern of such offences was ensuring basic social stability and security, in the absence of which British rule could not effectively function:

'We have provided a punishment of great severity for the intentional destroying of or defiling of places of worship, or of objects held sacred by any class of persons. No offence in the whole Code is so likely to lead to tumult, to sanguinary outrage, and even to armed insurrection'(emphasis added). The sentiments expressed in the above extract – the notion of Indians as subject to a unique range of 'prejudices, sensitivities and particularities', to which they were uniquely vulnerable, and incapable of agency beyond an ancient and immutable cultural framework dictating their responses – indicate, as Ahmed puts it, that Macaulay 'shared James Mill's scathing assessment of Indian civilization as despotic, hierarchical, stultifying and mired in superstition.'

What Liang terms the notion of 'emotionally excitable subjects', prone to emotional injury and physical violence' and requiring 'a rational and neutral arbiter (the colonial State)' to govern their relationships, both served to justify the continued presence of the British (as having 'brought peace to, and secured order in, primordial, fractious and antagonistic religious communities' through 'the adjudication of religious disputes') and amounted to a self fulfilling prophecy. As Liang puts it, 'once you have a law that allows for the making of legal claims on the basis of charged emotional states, you begin to see the emergence of cases that steadily cultivate a legal vocabulary of hurt sentiments.' It is in this sense that Ahmed notes that attempts to 'regulate wounded attachments and religious passions' through law may 'conversely constitute them' – the creation of a 'legal category' of hatred, its boundaries and content delineated and defined by the law. Such 'creation' of a 'legal category' of hatred is not solely restricted to the capacity of hate speech litigation to allow 'social groups in organize in order to ensure the state takes cognizance of blasphemous events and practices', as Ahmed puts it. To ascribe such a 'neutral' role to the judiciary, above and outside society, ignores the very real roots of legal discourse and the judicial approach to particular matters in contemporary controversies and the social context of the judiciary. As Liang puts it, 'the judiciary itself is not outside the politics of communal hatred.' Given such, adjudication of cases concerning hate speech may serve not merely to inspire hate speech amongst the public, but may itself 'become the site for the production of hate speech.'

The judicial attitudes on display in *Joseph Bain D'Souza v Bal Thackeray* (1995) are illustrative in this respect. The Court, rather than serving as a neutral arbiter of the meaning and potential consequences of hate speech, align themselves with its perpetrators. The rhetoric of the Court frequently mirrors that of the respondent:

'The Pakistani infiltrators and the anti-national Muslims and Moulvis and Mullahs poured poison in Bhendi Bazar locality. It is pertinent to note that in the said article criticism is only against Pakistani infiltrators and anti-national Muslims and not Muslims as a whole...'

In this manner, the Court endorses the conspiracy theories of the respondent, abjuring judicial neutrality in order to criticise the 'anti-national or traitors section of Muslims and their selfish leaders who are creating rift between Hindus and Muslims'. The Court further endorsed the notion that 'the readers of the editorial are not likely to develop hatred, spite or ill-will against

Muslims as a whole but may develop hatred towards those Muslims indulging in anti-national activities'. In doing so, the Court served to legitimize (rather than prohibit) hatred: the extraordinarily broad definition of 'Muslims indulging in anti-national activities' within the impugned materials allows its authors, painting in such broad brushstrokes and encouraging the broader prejudices of the intended audience, to condemn and incite hatred against an entire community.

Fortunately, as Liang notes, 'the Indian judiciary, at least at the appellate levels, have generally been more careful about how to interpret hate speech provisions.' However, the cautionary example of *Joseph Bain D'Souza v Bal Thackeray* serves to discredit the traditional British perspective upon the role of courts in hate speech cases – a conception of the courts as 'pervasive, prohibitory and omniscient', with the state (and its courts) taking the form of 'an exterior sovereign that stands above and outside society'. This discourse of state power, in Ahmed's view, enabled (in traditional British jurisprudence) 'a hard and fast distinction to be drawn between state and society'. The clear partisanship of the bench in *Joseph Bain D'Souza* on behalf of one community and one side of a broader debate indicates that the courts, far from acting as neutral arbiters of communal harmony, may be appropriated to serve the interests of a dominant discourse through the mechanism of hate speech laws.

## Impact of Hate speech over different part within India

(a) Communal riots due to hate speech in Gujarat.

India has faced many communal riots because of hate speech as happened in Gujarat. More than ever before, the Indian Media came into sharp scrutiny with its coverage of communal violence in Gujarat in 2002. The press came in for some sharp criticism for its provocative reporting in an already incensed and communally charged atmosphere.

- Use of headlines to provoke and Communalise. For instance, the front page in the *Sandesh* or 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2002 carried the headline, 'Avenge Blood with Blood'. This was apparently a quote from a statement issued by a VHP leader. On 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2002, a headline claimed that a 'mini Pakistan' was in a Muslim dominated area of the city. On 6<sup>th</sup> march, 2002, headlines read, 'Hindus Beware: Haj, Pilgrims Return with a Deadly Conspiracy'. On local paper, *Madhyantar* carried an eight column commentary on the front page headlined 'Muslims will have to prove they are fully Indian.'<sup>15</sup>
- Photographs of burnt, mangled bodies were a common features on the front page of several papers. Also, photograph of trishul wielding kar sevaks were splashed across the

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<sup>15</sup> M.L Sondhi & Apratim Mukarji: *The Black Book of Gujarat*, (2002)

front pages. Both kinds of photograph instilled terror and animosity between the communities involved.<sup>16</sup>

- This was the first time that electronic media was used to fuel the fire. Rioter and looters were given direction on mobile phones. SMS Messages were sent out with the rumour that milk supplies had poisoned. E- mail was used to threaten, intimidate and send out hate mail.<sup>17</sup>

On 3<sup>rd</sup> of April , 2002, the Chairman of the Press Council of India , Justice K. Jayachandra reddy noted with anguish that:

A large number of newspapers and news channels in the country and , in particular, a large section of the print and electronic media in Gujarat has , instead of alleviating communal unrest , played an ignoble role in inciting communal passions leading to large scale rioting , arson and pillage in the state concerned.<sup>18</sup>

(b) Impact of hate speech in Communal riot in Jammu & Kashmir.

The 2013 Kishtwar Riots, which claimed three lives and injured eighty more, took place between two communities on the aftermath of Eid festival on 9 August 2013 at kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir.

#### Initial clashes

A procession of Muslims after offering Eid prayers raised Anti-India slogans with Pakistani Flags which led to clashes which later spread to other parts of the district. People involved in the clashes initially started with stone pelting and later shops and houses were gutted. It is reported that more than 80 shops, a petrol pump, an oil tanker, some vehicles of the state police and fire department were torched in addition to government buildings. Home minister of the state of Jammu and Kashmir Sajad Ahmed Kitchloo was suspected to be involved in the beginning of the clashes

#### Aftermath

##### 9th August

- Curfew was immediately imposed on the area and several changes were made in the administrative positions.

##### 10th August

- Clashes continued in Paddar, leaving three injured.

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<sup>16</sup> Siddharth Varadarajan , Gujarat :*The Making of a Tragedy*, (2002)

<sup>17</sup> M.L Sondhi & Apratim Mukarji: *The Black Book of Gujarat*, (2002)

<sup>18</sup> Siddharth Varadarajan: *The Truth Hurts, Gujarat and the Role of the Media in Gujarat: the making of a Tragedy*(2002)

- The state government stopped traffic along the national highway from Lakhanpur to Banihal and towards Doda and Kishtwar in a bid to quell protests.
- Amarnath Yatra was cancelled owing to the tension in the district.
- J&K Government announced ex-gratia relief of 5 lakh to the kin of Aravind Kumar Bhagat.
- Educational Institution remained closed.

#### 11th August

- Mobile phone and Internet communications are snapped.
- Curfew extended to Udhampur, Samba and Kathua along with Bhaderwah town in Doda affecting seven out of 10 districts of Jammu region.
- BJP Leader Arun Jaitley was prevented from entering Kishtwar.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### 12th August

- Fresh violence in Hidyul village of Kishtwar. 10 injured including an ASP.
- Minister of State for Home, Sajad Kitchloo resigned, following his alleged role in the clashes.

#### 14th August

- 150 people, including some local Hurriyat leaders, were arrested as the police cracked down on miscreants responsible for violence in the region. Over 100 people involved in stone pelting and arson also arrested by the police from several parts of Jammu region
- Internet services for mobile phone and wi-fi users remained suspended for the fourth day across Jammu and Kashmir. Internet speeds for broadband services were reduced with a view to checking the upload of objectionable material on social networking sites.

#### 15th August

- Curfew lifted in 7 districts of Jammu region except Kishtwar, where 4-hour morning relaxation was given

#### Arrests

As of 13 August, a total of 141 people have been taken into custody till now in connection with the incidents. Nearly 40 weapons looted from a Kishtwar arms shop also needed to be recovered.

### Administrative Failure

Administrative failure is being cited as the reason for Kishtwar clashes. Central Security establishment raised questions like:

1. Low police strength
2. Wrong assessment of the gravity of situation
3. Failure to call in the two companies of Sashastra Seema Bal deployed in the area as reinforcement.
4. No deployment of CRPF in the district. CRPF, which has 60 companies in the state to maintain law and order, was called into Kishtwar on only the second day of the riots.

The home ministry, meanwhile, has issued an advisory asking J&K government to prevent violence from spreading further by deploying adequate forces in all parts of the state.

### Reactions

Oh that's right they can't because their star PM hopeful waited days to call out the army & has yet to apologise.

Omar Abdullah

During such processions, some hotheaded people always make demands of 'azadi'. It happens virtually every Friday...Since information moves very fast these days, tension spread to other parts of the town. It became difficult for the police to control it. Then, the Army was called. The Army conducted a flag march at 5.30 pm and imposed strict curfews thereby bringing the situation under control,

P. Chidambaram

When the riots occurred in Gujarat in 2002, the Army was not allowed inside. No one from outside was allowed to enter Ahmedabad. And Gujarat is not a property of Modi

Farooq Abdullah

This is not a issue of communal disharmony. Flags of the neighbouring nation are not displayed during a communal clash in India, posters of death row terrorists are not displayed during a skirmish between two religious communities in India. This is an issue of the country's sovereignty,

Arun Jaitley

Intelligence agencies have told the government that Bajrang Dal, an affiliate of Sangh Parivar, was involved in stoking communal violence in Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir. The Cabinet was informed about this on Monday by Union Finance Minister P.Chidambaram.

#### Curfew eased in parts of Jammu, Rajouri

Amidst the backdrop of growing clamour in the state for disbanding the village defence committees (VDCs) that were set up in 1990s to resist the militancy, Union minister Farooq Abdullah reportedly told the Cabinet that many VDCs comprised "communal" elements. When the VDCs were set up, the affiliations and antecedents of the members were not verified, Abdullah reportedly told the Cabinet and called for taking corrective measures, once the normalcy returns to the area.

#### Kishtwar clashes: Supreme Court asks J&K govt to pay upto Rs 2 lakh to victims

Given that there are thousands of VDCs that are heavily armed, the state administration and the Centre have been anxious about the implications of any flare up in the situation.

On Tuesday, J&K Congress president Saifuddin Soz demanded a review and re-examination of the role of the VDCs while maintaining that it was his personal opinion. "I would only say that before the days of militancy, Kishtwar region was an example of communal amity and harmony. Militancy caused disruptions and VDCs was formed. There have been allegations that some of these VDCs are close to the BJP. The institution of the VDC should be reviewed and re-examined. But it is my personal opinion because my party is still assessing the situation," he told The Indian Express.

#### Kishtwar clashes: BJP accuses J-K govt of playing politics

The Cabinet was informed that about a fortnight before the communal riots hit Kishtwar, two men riding on a motorcycle were beaten up when they brushed past a marriage procession of another community. In subsequent days, there were incidents of firing involving some VDCs. On Eid, there was a similar incident involving motorcyclists that led to the flare up Intelligence agencies reportedly informed the government that Bajrang Dal was involved in stoking communal passion during this period.

So here the role of media is important because media have to make public aware about reality. There is requirement to make public aware about truth behind every communal riots so that preventive measure can be taken in future.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that the media played an invaluable role in bringing to citizen the truth behind every wrongful event. If one is relied on country's information system, which dismissed the gruesome riots involving the killing hundreds of innocent people as mere violent disturbances, the public would never have known the extent of violence and destruction. Having said that, in an already surcharged atmosphere, even the best from the press seem to have done little to calm or alleviate the tensions. While there is duty cast upon the media to report accurately and honestly and keep the citizen informed of what the government may choose to hide, there is a corresponding duty to avoid sensation, graphic pictures, strong adjectives and provocative display. Since there is a little or no time to edit or censure instantaneous coverage, there is an onerous burden on the reporter to use his discretion to report the truth but ensure that in doing so he does not fuel or incite further violence. While it is difficult and perhaps undesirable to lay down straitjacketed rules on reporting during communal incident, Gujarat ought to be a grim wake up call for reform and self-regulation in the media.