

**Communalism and the Role of
the State: An Investigation
into the Communal
Violence in Muzaffarnagar
and its Aftermath**

A Report

December, 2013

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Introduction

The rural areas and towns of Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts Uttar Pradesh have recently witnessed severe communal violence. Many Muslims fled their villages and have been accommodated in “camps”. Many of them are refusing to return to their villages even three months later. There have also been continuing incidents of communal attacks even into late October and November 2013. Although there have been other reports of fact finding teams, the factors above led us to tour some of the severest hit areas and some of the camps where Muslim

refugees are living. We also visited Mohammedpur Raisingh and Hussainpur villages where killings occurred on October 30. Even before it appeared in the press we had learnt that the Samajwadi Party government of Uttar Pradesh. was making Muslims sign affidavits forfeiting the right to return to their villages and all legal claim over their immovable property in order to avail of five lakh compensation amount. We found this disturbing and wanted to check the veracity of this.

Objectives of our visit:

1. To investigate the role of state agencies in either preventing or containing violence, in taking appropriate punitive actions against the guilty and also to investigate some incidents of communal violence.
2. To investigate the role of the government. in providing relief and rehabilitating the displaced and the progress made in displaced people going back to their villages and homes.
3. To understand economic, social and political reasons that led to the recent spate of communal violence in this area of Western Uttar Pradesh.

We constituted a team of four persons: Dr. Ish Misra who teaches Political Science in Hindu College, Delhi University, Dr. Mohan Rao, Professor, Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health, JNU Dr. Vikas Bajpai, Ph.D. Scholar, Centre for Social Medicine & Community Health, JNU and Ms. Pragya Singh, Journalist. The team visited the area on November 9th and 10th. Some members of the team also visited earlier and again later on November 27. This team was also assisted by Dr. Subhash Tyagi, Professor of Geography, Machra College, Meerut and Praveen Raj Tyagi, Principal Greenland Public School, Duhai, Ghaziabad.

It is often difficult to piece facts together in a surcharged atmosphere where facts are often buried under the heap of propaganda, with narratives repeated so often and propagated so widely that listeners believe them to be fact. Questions are neither raised nor allowed to be raised. Our task was all the more difficult as the hard evidence of the incidents was difficult to come by; we have therefore refrained from drawing conclusions when such was the case.

Summary of the findings

Who suffered the most

The overwhelming weight of evidence points towards the fact that Muslims have disproportionately been at the receiving end of the communal orgy that swept Muzaffarnagar during the months of September and October 2013 in terms of loss to life and property and displacement of people from their homes and villages. As per the information available from the SSP (Senior Superintendent Police's) office a total of 52 people died in the communal

disturbances of which 37 were Muslims and 15 were Hindus (though we could not get the formal break-up of the Hindu deaths, but there are strong reasons to believe that these were almost exclusively of the Jats). While deaths among the Hindus took place in the violence that ensued the Jat Mahapanchayat at Nangla Mandaur on 8th September, the Muslim deaths have taken place in different villages over a period of time in much more planned attacks. None of the Jat deaths were the result out of violence generally directed against Hindus, but were of the Jats who were returning from the Mahapanchayat and who deliberately provoked the Muslims while passing through their areas / villages. There are no reports of Jats and the Hindus otherwise living in these areas / villages being attacked by Muslims.

As per unofficial sources as many as 100,000 Muslims had been displaced from their homes while by the time of our visit the government acknowledged that 50,955 persons had been displaced who were accommodated in 11 relief camps. A total of 540 FIRs have been registered in riot-related incidents, in which around 6000 people have been named. The police stations include Jansath, Kotwali, Sisauli, Nayi Mandi, Shahpur, Bhudana, Bhopa, Bhaura Kala, Phugana, Meerapur and Mansoorpur. At present a team of 2 SPs, 4 DSPs, 50 Inspectors/Sub Inspectors are involved in the investigation of cases.

Conditions at the relief camps and impact of displacement

The conditions of the relief camps visited by the team were pathetic to say the least. The camps were in the form of tents pitched close to each other either in the local madarasas (as in Bassi Kalan) or empty plots of land (like in Shahpur village) The camps were bereft of any civic amenities worth their name.

- In terms of displacement from their homes in the nearby villages this amounted to loss of security of a roof over their head, leading to increased exposure to anti-social elements especially of the young girls and females. This has led to increased worries for the parents regarding the safety of their children especially the adolescent girls and could in all likelihood be the reason for a number of marriages young girls that have been reported from these camps.
- Displacement has also meant a loss of livelihood for many of the riot affected Muslim families living in the camps. Most of these families are of artisans or petty traders who are finding it difficult to carry on with their trade under the circumstances and are now totally dependent on give a ways. Loss of security of their homes, livelihoods and the insecurity regarding future is cost heavy with respect to the education of the children of affected families, especially of girls.
- Almost all the families interviewed at the camps reported that they did not want to go back to their homes as they feared for their lives. The people responsible for killing their

brethren, looting and destroying their property were still at large and brazenly moving around in the villages, they said.

Role of the state and communal organizations in relief measures

- There is a near total absence of state agencies in the relief efforts mounted for the riot victims. On the face of it the relief camps are being organized by religious / communal (as belonging to a religious community) organizations of the Muslims among which the Jamait Ulema-e-Hind was the most prominent. Whatever, little relief was provided by the state agencies earlier were also routed through the communal organizations of the minority community. The earlier report on Muzaffarnagar riots brought out by the 'Center for Policy Analysis' quotes the district magistrate as saying that the administration was providing relief to the victims through the religious organizations of the minority community as they were better positioned to provide succor and comfort the victims.
- It was said by officials of the administration on November 27 that all displaced persons have either gone back to their homes or have been resettled elsewhere. Hence, neither do any relief camps exist on official records as on date, nor is any relief being provided by the government to the riot-displaced persons. In fact, the camps continue to exist even after withdrawal of state support and, as per statements of residents in the camps, they are being increasingly pressurized to vacate the camps at the earliest, especially if they have accepted government compensation along with its attached conditions.
- The state government has announced a compensation of Rs 12 lakh to the families who lost their kin in communal violence and a compensation of Rs 5 lakh to those displaced from their homes. However, as per the affidavit to be signed by the beneficiaries, the compensation of Rs 5 lakh is conditional to following certain stringent terms which include:
 - That myself and members of my family have come leaving our village and home being terrorized due to violent incidents in village and *we will not now return to our original village and home under any circumstances.*
 - That the lumpsum financial help being given for my family by the government will only be used by me to rehabilitate my family. By this money I will live with my family voluntarily arranging for residence at appropriate place *elsewhere.*
 - That in the condition of receiving lumpsum financial help amount, myself or members of my family *will not demand compensation relating to any damage to any immovable property in my village or elsewhere.*

- The families at the camps reported numerous difficulties in availing of the promised relief such as difficulty in understanding the language of the official documents and the forms required to be filled, arranging identification papers for opening of bank accounts under circumstances when the victims fled from their homes with virtually no belongings and their names being missing in the list of claimants.
 - It was also reported that as much as Rs 20,000 was being collected by the local relief committees from those receiving compensation in lieu of the homes to be built for them.

Role of the police in preventing / abetting communal violence

There are two instances here that are indicative of police's laxity or even complicity in the killing of Muslims that took place in Muzaffarnagar.

- The first incident is that of Qutba village on the September 8, in which eight people were killed by a mob comprising of people from the village itself. These killings took place although police personnel were posted in the very same village at the time of the incident. The police personnel refused to provide any protection to the victims, and in fact, are reported to have locked the Muslims who approached them for help in the village pradhan's house.
- The second incident is of the killing of three Muslim youth on October 30 in Mohammadpur Raisingh village. This incident is the latest major episode of communal killing in Muzaffarnagar after the September rioting. A posse of policemen are reported to have been present in this village too, when the killings took place. The police claims that it was present at the far end of the village, away from where the incident occurred, and so did not know of the incident. However, the fact that the Jats felt free to commit the murders while the police was stationed in the village itself speaks of the kind of restraint that police has been able to ensure.
- Many press reports now say that the Muslims who have gone back to their villages are being pressurized to withdraw complaints against persons they had named in FIRs. The pradhan of Hussainpur village informed in a telephonic conversation on the December 12 that no further arrests have taken place in the murders of three youths from his village that took place on October 30 at Mohammadpur Raisingh. He further informed that police is also accepting bribes to weaken the cases against persons named in FIRs.

Is it Jat versus Muslims or Hindus versus Muslims?

It has been reported that lower caste Hindus also participated in attacks on Muslims along with the Jats in different villages. However, the Muslims whom we interviewed in the relief camps felt that wherever the lower caste Hindus acted against them it was under the pressure of the Jats as the Jats were the dominant Hindu caste in the area and the lower caste Hindus had little option but to follow the diktat of the Jats.

On visiting the villages, the distinct caste hierarchies were observed in the structure of the villages, and also in terms of the involvement of different castes in the decision making processes. For example in the 35 biradari panchayat that was convened in Mohammadpur Raisingh on the November 10, representatives of all the upper castes were invited but none from the lower castes.

It is however noteworthy that no communal violence has been reported from any of the Muslim dominated villages in the district. Simultaneously, there were Jat dominated villages where the Jats took up the responsibility of protecting their Muslim brethren. Some of such villages were Kheda Gani, Garhi Novabad, Garhi Jaitpur and Kurawa.

Attitude of Jats towards Muslims

We could not find any remorse among the Jats for the suffering being faced by the Muslims. They rather heaped insult to the injury of Muslims as reflected by the following:

- Without regard to the miserable conditions in the camps Jats said that Muslims have left the villages lured by the greed of Rs 5 lakh compensation announced by the government for displaced families and that there was no threat to their life or property in the villages.
- The “Muslims were showing even joint families living under one roof as separate families in order to claim more compensation.”
- That Muslims had themselves destroyed their property and inflated the claimed losses to demand more compensation.
- There was no regret even for loss of life on part of Muslims. For example with respect to Kawal incident it was said that “while the involved Hindu family lost their only son but the loss of life of the Muslim boy was inconsequential to the family as he had many siblings.”

These comments were accompanied by the more generic comments reserved for Muslims e.g. that they did not follow family planning and had large families and their loyalties to the country were suspect. “They want to reduce us to minorities in our own country” it was asserted and that - “First they wanted Pakistan, now they want an independent Kashmir and

have driven out all the Hindus from Kashmir. The same thing will happen here in a few years.” It was remarkable that these comments were repeated in almost the same words by all the Jats we met irrespective of the distance that separated their villages. This is probably indicative of a well-organized campaign over a period of time towards communalizing the atmosphere in the entire area.

What Muslims felt

Muslims we spoke to in the camps and in some villages were at a loss to fathom the viciousness with which they had been attacked by the people from their own villages with whom they had lived peacefully for so long. In some villages “they were chased out by Jat boys carrying swords and javelins.” This along with the fact that many of their attackers were roaming free seemed to have convinced them of the futility of ever returning to their villages.

However, some persons in the camps did tell that the atmosphere in the area had been vitiated for past some time – ‘Fiza kharab ke ja rahi thi.’ Some felt that BJP was clearly behind this turn of events and recalled that the BJP president Raj Nath Singh had attended the Jat Panchayat held 6 months back at Kutba village – the village where from maximum number of Muslims were reported killed. Even while going to and while returning from the maha-panchayat held on the 8th of September at Nangla-Mandaur provocative slogans such as – ‘Musalmanon ke do hi sthan – Pakistan ya kabristan’ and ‘Narendra Modi Zindabad’ - were raised while passing through Muslim villages and in front of Madarsas

Detailed findings

The ostensible genesis–killings at Kaval

The eruption of violence between Muslims and Jats in this area ostensibly started with an incident in Kaval village, a Muslim majority village in Muzaffarnagar district. On August 27, 2013, two Jat youth from Malikpura Majra, right next to Kaval, accosted a Muslim youth named Shahnawaz and killed him. These two young men, Sachin Malik and Gaurav Malik, were later killed by the people assembled there. There are conflicting versions regarding the exact course of events which led to these killings. These versions have also appeared in the press. According to one version the entire incident was on account of Shahnawaz “eve teasing” Sachin’s sister and Gaurav’s cousin who hailed from Malikpura Majra. On the other hand the FIR registered by Shahnawaz’s father against the two Jat boys, Sachin and Gaurav, states that the fight was over a motorcycle.

It is also reported in the Minorities Commission report on the Muzaffarnagar riots that the father of Shahnawaz told the Minorities Commission (MC) team on September 19 that the real issue was of a minor accident involving collision of a motorcycle with bicycles. This is also the story

published in *The Statesman*. Shahnawaz's father also told the MC team that his son used to work in Chennai and was only visiting the family. However, what is now commonly stated was that it was revenge for the "eve-teasing" by Shahnawaz.

One of our team members could however meet the girl from Malikpura who is mentioned in the case. The following is her version of the story:

She alleged that Shahnawaz used to "abuse" her ("*gali deta tha*") as and when she passed through Kaval on her way to college, and that this was a regular occurrence. Her brother or father used to accompany her from time to time as a safety precaution. On August 27, the day this fight took place, she was in a bus and her brother was with her. Shahnawaz abused her again as they passed through Kaval. At this moment, her brother Sachin got down from the bus to confront Shahnawaz. Sachin's cousin Gaurav was also standing by (though it is not known whether he was incidentally there or as per a prior plan). The two together accosted Shahnawaz. "I don't know what happened after that," she said.

Her other complaint was that the family is not being permitted to step outside the village. There are three Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) men posted at their house. "The police and administration is being forced not to take the right action against the accused. Till now I was not scared of going to college or outside the house, but now I am," she said.

Given the way things are it is very difficult to comment authoritatively on the exact sequence of events unless there is a through enquiry into the whole incident. However, one thing that emerged from our interaction with people, both the Jats and the Muslims, is that had the administration and the police acted with some wisdom and resoluteness the subsequent turn of events could surely have been prevented.

It should however be noted that the sexual harassment of young women is rampant in the country, and particularly in UP. The Kaval incident was one such incident, but it was effectively propagated and given a communal colour by communal forces themselves deeply patriarchal and not known for their commitment to gender justice.

Moreover, this entire incident should be placed in the context of the fact that this area of UP has recently been known for Jat Khap panchayats endorsing murders of girls from the region and their spouses, should they stray from the "norms" set by the Khaps. Described as "honour killings", they have invited condemnation by the Supreme Court. This area is also known for a steeper rate of sex selective abortions and infanticide, with sex ratios more skewed than both the national and state average. The overall Sex Ratio in this district is 871 females to 1000 males while the average in the state of UP is 898 females to 1000 males. The Child Sex Ratio in this

district is 863 girls to 1000 boys against all India figure of 919 girls to 1000 boys as per the 2011 census.

News of any incident “violating” the caste code supervised and enforced by Khap panchayats gets propagated far and wide and the violators are punished, often with death. Any choice marriage, especially if inter-religious, becomes a scandal and draws condemnation. While the Khaps may be powerless to enforce their “sentences” in some cases, this is not the case when the “offenders” are within reach. Of the total cases of Khap violence recorded in various reports, the issue of intra-gotra or inter-caste marriages dominate the list. While inter-religious relationships are few, news of each such case is propagated widely. The Hindutva organizations have even given it a name—“Love Jihad”—when the girl happens to be a Hindu. Orthodox elements among Muslims are also resentful of Muslim girls going out with Hindu boys/men and attribute this to their poverty.

Feudal patriarchal society has seized the chance in controlling their young women under the slogan of “*bahu beti izzat*” which also fits nicely into the propaganda blitz of Hindutva. The Kaval incident was disseminated widely on social media through a doctored three minute clip with a Punjabi song in the background. The video features people wearing clothes that just not worn in Muzaffarnagar, and has been traced to Punjab province in Pakistan. It is also known to be an over two year old video, not of Sachin and Gaurav Malik. This dissemination was done precisely to inflame communal anxieties and fears and vitiate the atmosphere.

Further events according to the Report of the MC:

28th August: People returning from the cremation of Sachin and Gaurav, set fire to a hutment and to a hut in a brick-kiln and damaged 27 houses in Kaval.

29th August: The Shiv Mandir in village Kaval was damaged following which there was stone throwing between Muslims and Jats.

30th August: A Jan Sabha of Muslims took place at Shaheed Chowk, Muzaffarnagar. There are many versions of what transpired there. The Commission was given a CD to support the claim that the Sabha was an appeal for calm. Another source says Muslims held afternoon prayers at Kaval, where political leaders, including the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Member of Parliament Qadir Rana, were present and where fiery speeches were made.

31st August: During a Shok Sabha for the two Jat boys in village Nangal Mandaur, an Alto car in which Amroha Muslims were travelling, was overturned and burnt and the occupants beaten up. A policeman at Kaval also told us that a Muslim youth was assaulted at Meenakshi Chowk in Muzaffarnagar.

The Nangala Jat Maha Panchayat and Prelude

On September 5, in the Jat majority village of Lisarh (District Shamli, P.S. Phugana) a panchayat of Jats was called by Chaudhry Harkishan Baba of Gathwala Khap, Chaudhry Naresh Tikait of Baliyan Khap and Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) President Rakesh Tikait. The Jat village pradhans of the area attended. This panchayat announced that a Mahapanchayat would be held on September 7 at village Nangla Mandaur. Nangala Mandaur is close to Kaval and en route from Bijnor city to Muzaffarnagar, but closer to Muzaffarnagar. Information of this panchayat was given to our team in Bassi Kalan village, in the two relief camps at Shahpur as also at other places.

Jats from Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Bagpat, Budhana, Ghaziabad, District Bijnor and, some reports say, even Haryana, reached the venue on September 7, by and large in tractor trolleys. The mobilization was mainly of Baliyan Jats (corroborated by the fact that no violence took place North of Muzaffarnagar, where these two Jat communities are not dominant). The tractor trolleys had Jats armed with lathis, ballams (lance), swords, tamanchas (country made pistol). Some Jats told our team on November 9 that the tractors carried large stones at the bottom. While Jats claim that a lakh or more people participated, the Minority Commission Report estimates are of 40,000 and other reports are of 20,000 people attending this panchayat. However names of the speakers are not in dispute. Both the press reports and all non-Jat sources say that the aforementioned speakers were venomous in their speeches. Other speakers included the MLA of Bijnor Sadar, Bharatendu Singh of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Swami Omvesh, BJP MLA Sangeet Som, Suresh Rana, Hukum Singh Neta (BJP), Naresh Tikait and Rakesh Tikait.

On the same day, the BJP had called for a bandh in Muzaffarnagar town. One Muslim boy, Israr, a photographer from village Kandhla was killed near the panchayat. He had been brought there by the organizers (police!) to videograph the proceedings. While this panchayat was still on, the same evening, a riot broke out at Khalapar (a Muslim-dominanted area of Muzaffarnagar) in which two people were killed, one of them a journalist.

On the way to Mandaur, tractor trollies from Lisarh passed through Bassi Kalan, a Muslim majority village near Shahpur. Eyewitnesses in Bassi Kalan told our team that the trolleys from Lisarh stopped outside the Madarsa and raised provocative slogans including “Narender Modi zindabad”, “*Muslamanon ke do sthan, Qabristan ya Pakistan*” (Muslims have two places to go to, either a graveyard or Pakistan). A dog made to wear a burqa was seated in a tempo, and was being beaten with shoes. When some Muslim youth objected, one youth was attacked with a sword resulting in cuts on two-three fingers; a pregnant Muslim woman was attacked with a bhala (spear), and she fell bleeding. The CO police reached the spot along with a force but the Jats continued their activities in front of them. They later left for the Mahapanchayat, where, according to the Minority Commission report, they told other participants that Muslims of Bassi Kalan beat them up.

In Bassi Kalan itself the police did not register any complaint against the Jats, but along with the administration, it prevailed upon the trolley-riders to change their routes for the return journey. Bassi Kalan residents said the situation was very tense on that day.

Similarly, when our team went to Pur Baliyan we learned that the Jat trolleys crossing the village on that day had also provoked the Muslims. Incidentally, a Jat *kabbadi* teacher whom the team met near Kakada village on November 9 told us that the Muslims attacked Jats at ten places while they were on their way to attend the Mahapanchayat, and that the entire subsequent violence was due to this. He also said that if the Jat boys were raising the slogan of “Narendra Modi zindabad,” it hardly mattered as the entire country was doing so. However, Muslims at different places and also a Tyagi pradhan of village Khubbapur whom we met on November 9 and who had volunteered to introduce our team to his acquaintances in Kakada village, told us that Jat trolleys did their utmost to provoke Muslim dominated villages en route, and threw stones at the Madarsas at several places. Ansar, s/o Wakil of village Gadi, district Shamli who had driven a bus of Jats to the Mahapanchayat was beaten to death (recorded in the MC report), though it is not clear where this occurred.

Post Panchayat Mayhem Against Muslims.

On September 7, while the trolleys were returning from the Mahapanchayat at Nangla Mandaur incidents of violence were reported from several places. We investigated the incident that took place at Pur Baliyan which falls on the road to Muzaffarnagar city from Nangla Mandaur.

It is at Pur Baliyan that the maximum casualties among Jats have been reported. It was said that around 20-25 trolleys of Jats returning from the Mahapanchayat stopped at Pur Baliyan at around 6.30 in the evening and began stoning the people offering namaz at the masjid. The Jats also set fire to some structures. Police arrived at the scene and prevailed upon the Jats to leave the spot, whereupon they went to village Bhopada, spent the night there, and left for their own villages at 6 the next morning.

Local eyewitnesses told us that later that evening two more tractor trollies—one belonging to Jats from Sohram village and the other of Jats from Kakada village—crossed Pur Baliyan. Three or four Muley Jat families living along the main road that passes through Pur Baliyan were awaiting the return of the troublemaking sloganeers, and stoned their trollies. (Muley Jats are Jats who converted to Islam). The intention of the Muley Jats was to attack the tractor of Jats from Sohram village. The tractor was ferrying some family members of the pradhan of Sohram.

(It is understood that there was an old rivalry between the Muley Jats and Jats of Sohram. It appears that the Muley Jats of Sohram had planned to attack the trolley of Sohram Jats with the help of Muley Jats of Pur Baliyan.)

However, the evening of this incident, the Jats in the Sohram tractor opened fire from their firearms and sped away. Incidentally, a tractor trolley from Kakada that was following the

Sohram trolley was hit by bullets and burst a tyre. As a result, the Jats of Kakada were attacked by Muley Jats of Pur Baliyan. Three Jat youth of Kakada were killed on the spot by stoning. The postmortem reports of all the three youth, which were accessed by the team, corroborate this method of death. Another elderly person from Kakada, who sustained head injury in this incident, later died in the Medical College Hospital at Meerut.

It needs to be mentioned here that there was no prior dispute between Jats and Muslims of Kakada, or even between the Jats of Kakada and Muslims of Pur Baliyan. This was corroborated by the Jat Pradhan of Kakada whom we met on November 9. The Muley Jat families and other Muslims of Pur Baliyan also did not harm the Jat families living in Pur Baliyan itself. Their problems seem to have been with the Jats of Sohram village. Jats we met maintain that 10 Baliyan Jats were killed on the evening of September 7.

Sanjiv Baliyan (the *kabaddi* teacher at Kakada) said that there were 28 incidents of attacks on Muslims in various parts of the area that night itself. According to the MC report, Jats were attacked while returning at Joli canal bridge (P.S. Bhopa) and at four other places, resulting in six deaths, including two of Muslims. On the night of September 7 itself, curfew was imposed by district authorities in Muzaffarnagar city as well as the *dehat*. In Muzaffarnagar city, shops were burnt at Bhagra Tonga Stand (confirmed by the administration and mentioned in the MC report)

From the night of September 7 itself, attacks on Muslims in the area began. The administration told the MC that these were in villages Qutba, Kutbi, Lankh, Lisarh, Bahawadi, Phugana, Mohammadpur Raisingh, Kakada, Kharad, Mohammadpur Modern and Atali.

On September 8, the Army moved into the towns of Jansath, Bhaura Kalan, Shahpur, Phugana, Budhana, Bhopa, and other places, from where they were withdrawn only on September 17.

Rumours ran rife the whole intervening night of September 7-8: "100 *mar diye*, 500 *mar diye*" (a hundred have been killed, five hundred have been killed). The administration had by night received confirmation of five to six deaths in the entire area but this was not effectively communicated to the people. On September 8, no newspapers were circulated either. Thus rumors ran riot. Though it is difficult to say so authoritatively, yet as is the wont in such situations, the vested interests could have deliberately spread, or allowed rumors to be spread, in order to orchestrate the violence against Muslims that followed.

Whatever the case, the administration certainly failed to remedy the situation.

Of these incidents, we are able to detail the experiences at Qutba and Kutbi, whose refugees we met at refugee camps, Shahpur Camp No 1 and 2 on November 9. These were also referred to by several others (?). We visited Kakada on 9th Nov and met the residents and the pradhan. We also went to Mohammadpur Raisingh on November 10. In addition, refugees at the camps told us of incidents in other villages (Sisauli, Qutba, Kutbi, Kadowli, Bainswara.)

The Story of Qutba and Kutbi Villages:

In Qutba, the village pradhan is a woman, Meena, whose husband Devinder (Pradhanpati) exercises power. This pradhan had been supported in the past three elections by Muslims of the village. Devinder spent the night of September 7 in Bhopada. Muslims of his village called him several times through the night asking him to return, and also asked him if they should leave the village, as they heard the news of the post-Panchayat violence. The refugees state there were 700 Jat families and 300 Muslim families in Qutba-Kutbi. That night, the pradhanpati Devender assured the Muslims that he had made arrangements for them and none of them should leave. The next morning, September 8, at 8 AM, he along with his cousin Upender, alias Babloo, who is a history-sheeter, led hundreds of Jats carrying bhalas (spear) and ballams (lance) to attack Muslims. They entered the Muslim houses, killed seven Muslims with sharp weapons, shot dead one woman. Three men managed to run away. A group of 10-15 policemen led by a daroga were drinking tea at the pradhan's house in Qutba. When the three men ran to them for help, the police told them that they would take action after having tea, and locked up all three in the pradhan's sitting room.

Other Muslims ran out into the sugarcane fields and hid there. They told us that they could see their houses being burnt. They were rescued by "forces" that arrived from the direction of Shahpur at 11:30 AM. When this force came, they were told about the three men in the pradhan's sitting room and they rescued them too. The Muslims who escaped and also those the police rescued were taken to camps 1 and 2 at Shahpur.

The refugees from Qutba-Kutbi at Shahpur say that the mob consisted of Jats of their own village; one said there were also outsiders. One person said all castes of Hindus were involved but added that the others were doing what the Jats told them. In Kutbi there were no deaths but armed Jats roamed with cans of kerosene and Muslims ran away from the village. The Jats burnt Korans and houses and shouted that they would kill all Muslims.

The refugees from these villages whom we met at the two camps of Shahpur and at Bassi Kalan are artisans and factory employees in other cities and are mostly landless. Their children were in school till they were displaced. Some are now studying in Madarsas. They were emphatic about not going back to the village; as their own villagers had turned against them. They stated that in their villages the Muslims were of various castes. In Kutbi the Muslims are mostly Ansari, Teli, Dhobi, and a few Sheikhs.

The Jats of Kutbi told a member of our team that they had made repeated attempts to get the Muslims to return to the village, something that Kutbi refugees deny, adding further that they do not want to go back. Jats say that Devinder Singh (pradhanpati) visited the camps, which Kutbi Muslims deny. In fact, their complaint is that when accused like Devinder and Babloo have not been arrested how can they think of going back? The affected Muslims told us that only two Jats among all those who were accused are in jail--Kanwar Pal and Joginder. Kutbi Jats said that Muslims were refusing to return largely because of the Rs.5 lakh compensation announced by

the state for those who lost a family member in the violence and do not wish to return. The Kutbi Jats say that in the FIRs registered after September 8, even Jats who were not in the village or are “too old” to fight were also falsely named. For example, they brought two local men who say they are in their eighties and have been named in the FIRs for murder. These two said they had retired 10 years earlier, and “could not possibly” have attacked anyone. They laughed off the incident of September 8 as well as the cases registered against them.

Some of the Muslims of Qutba-Kutbi kept livestock, which they have now housed in relatives’ homes. Some others went with the police to their homes, brought back the belongings left and sold animals to relatives in unaffected villages. They also cited the name of Sanjeev Baliyan (not the kabaddi teacher at Kakada village), considered to be the BJP’s candidate in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections, as among those who participated in the violence. Among those who are displaced are Qutba resident Maulvi Yaseen (he had a 21 roomed house in one bigha land, and 2 bigha farmland—property worth around Rs 50 lakh), Mohd Hanif, who owned a two-storey house and property worth Rs40 lakh; Imran s/o Shahbeer, who had ten houses made in little less than 500 yards, Iddu s/o Rahmat, who owned a house and 7 bigha farmland, Imran (s/o Shahbeer had two bigha farm land and also Yakub, Nawab, Yamin and Kayyam each had a house and 2 bigha farmland.

The exodus of Muslims from Kakada village:

Another village where anti-Muslim violence took place is Kakada, which this team visited on November 9 evening. In Kakada, village elders got together on the evening of September 9 and appealed for peace. Despite this, Muslims were severely stoned by the Kakada Jats, forcing them all to flee the village. Some of them are still refugees at Shahpur Camp No 1. One woman said that it was the pradhan of the village who called in the police for assistance when the attacks began.

On the way to Kakada, the team met a Jat school teacher teaching Kabbadi to 25 students. He was Sanjeev Baliyan, head teacher at the primary school at Dinkapur and also teaching in Kakada. He attributed the riots to attacks by Muslims on the processions leaving the Panchayat on September 7. He attributed the attack by Jats of Baliyan Khap in Kakada on Muslims to the Pur Baliyan incident. He feels as a result of these riots everyone is solidly behind BJP, “*Yeh hai Amit Shah ka jadoo.*” (This is the magic of Amit Shah, the BJP in-charge of UP). He feels Muslims want to outbreed Hindus. He stated that when they were in majority, they first wanted Pakistan, now “they want an independent Kashmir and have driven out all Hindus” and that the same thing will happen here in a few years.

Sanjeev Baliyan also informed us that the Pradhan of Soram village had mobilized men and some Jat boys for the Mahapanchayat that was held on September 7. According to him the attacks on the Jats at different places while they were returning from the Mahapanchayat at Nangla Mandaur was the main trigger for the riots.

This chain of events, including the attacks on Muslims at Qutba-Kutbi were unrelated to the incident at Kaval. The events had more to do with the death of Jats from Kakada in the attack at Pur Baliyan, rather than the much-propagated issue of “*bahu beti izzat*”. Sanjeev Baliyan also claimed that at Joli canal bridge, “people in Muslim dress” had attacked Jats with automatic weapons which resulted in six deaths. The police however denied that there had been any use of automatic weapons.

Sanjeev Baliyan connected the situation in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli “one hundred percent” with Amit Shah’s touring the area through the summer months preceding the violence of September. He rued Mulayam Singh’s meeting with Ashok Singhal in Lucknow in late August and, in his view, it was the Congress that was benefitting from the rioting.

Out of the four deaths reported from Kakada, we could confirm the death of at least one old man who had sustained head injury that night at Pur Baliyan. Sixty five year old Mahender died on September 22 at Meerut hospital. This was from his post-mortem report that was obtained by us.

In Kakada village, the team found Muslim houses deserted. Some elders took us around, with a crowd of young men following. The latter alleged that the Muslims had left of their own, taken away valuables and were now blaming the Jats for their losses. Their intention is to claim more possessions than they had (“if they had two cows, they say four to get more compensation”). The houses that the team saw are unplastered brick houses, some with a second storey. Some of the houses bore signs of fire. One team member, who had seen the area four days earlier, found the houses more damaged now with broken boundary walls and evidence of fires etc. The Jat villagers maintain that Muslims set fire to their own homes as they were lured by the compensation that the government had announced for them. However, one pucca Muslim house at the end of the village was found locked and intact and the Jats argued that if they had indeed destroyed the Muslim houses then why not this one too?

In Kakada village the young people and some women were noticeably hostile, accusing the team of favouring Muslims and being interested only in Muslim houses but they did not report any harm in the villages to Jats or their houses.

Of the Muslims who escaped from Kakada and are living in Shahpur Camp No 1, a woman said that the mosque in Kakada had been burnt. She says Jats and others started stoning them, and said that even before the violence took place the village was rife with talk about how “all Hindus have become one”. When she returned with police to pick up her belongings they were found missing, stolen. The police filed an FIR for theft, but did not agree to name some of the people she had identified.

One girl who was present at the camp was a class 7 student of the Government School at Kakada. Her father’s furniture shop in the village was burnt. There were a couple of men who said that when they went to the village with the police, none of the older land-owning Jats tried to stop them, but they were frightened by the Jat youngsters. They said if the pradhan, Ravinder Singh, had “assured us, we would have gone back”. These displaced Muslims are landless and

had worked for landed Jats. Another women from Saifi (blacksmith) community of the village said that the 30-35 families of the blacksmith community would not go back. Referring to the continuing persecution these people told us that someone had set fire to sugarcane fields of the Jats (probably near Bassi Kalan) and the police had picked up three boys from the camp who were totally innocent.

Discussion with Ravinder Baliyan, Pradhan of Kakada

The team had a long talk with Ravinder Baliyan, Pradhan of Kakada at his residence. He said after the violence of Qutba-Kutbi on September 8, Muslims met him and he went to the camps at Muzaffarnagar and at Shahpur. He claimed to have assured those at the camps that: “If you want to live in the village we will ensure that you can return and stay with all security.” Mr Baliyan agreed that Muslims fled because of fear: “It is definite there is terror in the area.”

The pradhan stressed that there had been no incident of violence against Muslims at Kakada. He told us that the Muslim population in the village was around 1500 (“there were approximately 1000 Muslims votes in the village from 265 families”).

Ravinder pradhan felt that the camps had created a perception that Muslims are better off when they stay among Muslims; secondly the free rations etc they got at the camps also convinced them to stay on. Though he agreed that Muslims could be afraid, he also accused that since the government announced the Rs.5 Lakh compensation they had been overcome by greed. This, he said, was the main reason they were not returning to their homes. He complained that state's services and benefits (concessions) are all for Muslims and that the camps will help the Congress and the SP consolidate their vote bank. According to the pradhan, Jats are no longer just another caste among others in UP: “If they are Muslim, we too are Hindu.”

In his long talk, he kept reiterating his perception that Muslims are getting more than others from the state. For example, he said that the benefits of Janani Suraksha Yojna should not be extended beyond two children, which only encourages larger families, especially among Muslims. The government's move to offer financial aid of up to Rs.1 lakh to the displaced families for the marriage of girls had encouraged very young girls being married off in order to claim this money. In his opinion the madarsas should be closed in favour of government schools. Both Hindus and Muslims should have equal right on what the state hands out, and that extremism is propagated by the government's unequal treatment, he stated.

Surprisingly, in the middle of his other opinions, he asserted that both Hindus and Muslims in this region are part of Doab culture and that this culture is being spoilt by politics. But he quickly reverted to his favored theme: “If there are attacks on Hindus, the government takes no action. Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh should not have gone to Muslim relief camps alone but should have visited the bereaved families at Kakada and other villages.” His other complaint against Muslims was that they harass Jat girls. He too asserted that Muslims do not practice family planning and are intent on out-numbering Hindus.

The Pradhan said: “In 1982 there were 2.5 lakh Jats, while now there are only 1.8 lakh, whereas Muslims are 4.5 lakh. The biggest issue facing Jats is that they are dependent on land, which they shouldn’t be and they should leave the area.” (He implies that Jats should move into other professions). On being reminded of the historic Muslim-Jat social and political alliance built by Chaudhary Charan Singh, he said that the Muslim-Jat combination existed since 1971, but broke because of the other factors. On being asked about the possible role of BJP in fanning the latest communal flare up, he said, “Why blame BJP, what wrong have they done? Did they tell the Muslims to harass Jat girls?”

Other villages represented in the Camps

Of the other villages represented in the camps, some experiences could be recorded. In village Dulhera, there were attacks on September 8 and all the Muslims were chased out by young Jat men. Among the Muslim homes, 70 were of “lower caste” landless Muslims while five houses were of land owning Muley Jats, all of whom had gone back as their houses were untouched. This probably is also a reflection of their higher social position in the village as compared to the insecurity of the lower caste Muslims.

The few refugee families from Hadauli village complained that their village’s name did not figure in the Relief and Rehabilitation (RR) list. This was also true of some individual families from the villages that did appear in the RR list. These families claimed that there was an atmosphere of terror due to persistent threat of armed attacks. They mentioned that a 70 year old woman was attacked by a spear. Zumma s/o Deenu Jeli was chased by a mob, and he ran into his house which was set on fire. Only his bones were recovered. Out of 30 to 35 families displaced two families were at Bassi Kalan camp while others were at Shahpur and Loyi camps. These people told us that in Muslim majority villages there have been no riots, no killings and no temples were damaged. They informed us that among the trouble makers, one Rajiv Pratap Saini of Patta village and a supporter of BJP leader Hukum Singh Yadav was one of those distributing weapons in their village.

Talk with AIKMS leader, Shamshad, in Muzaffarnagar:

The team met Mr. Shamshad, leader of the All India Kisan Mazdoor Sabha (AIKMS) who had been among the riot victims for the past few days, on November 9. He was the person who had first located the affidavits that Muslims were being asked to sign for obtaining compensation and in which it was specified that they must give up all claim to immovable property and never go back to the village. He stated that there were 11 camps, all of Muslims and 60,000 people, mostly poor Muslims, had been displaced of whom 20,000 were in camps and others with relatives. As on the date of our visit, the government had claimed that 50,955 persons were displaced, of whom 41,000 had already gone back from the camps and that only 10,000 were left.

By the time of our visit all government provisioning of the camps had stopped and the camps were being run with the help of religious/community organizations. According to Shamshad the official death figure was stated to be 53, of whom 40 were Muslims and 13 Jats. He also informed us that of the five lakh being given to Muslims as compensation (with the corollary that they will never go back to their villages), the Muslim organizations were taking Rs.20,000 deposit to build houses, and that 11 bighas of land had been acquired in Bassi Kalan for this purpose. It is pertinent to point out here that Maulana Nazar, an activist of Jama'at whom we contacted on the phone offered to take us to sites in Muzaffarnagar city where houses are proposed to be constructed under Jamiat supervision.

Further insights into the Muzaffarnagar incidents

As has already been mentioned, the team received help from Sh Devdutt Tyagi, the former pradhan of Khubbapur village in establishing contact with people in Kakada village. En route to Kakada from Shahpur he provided some more valuable insights into the communal disturbances that had jolted the area. His assessment of the situation is that whatever has happened till now “is a mere trailer” of bigger violence that is likely in the Muzaffarnagar-Shamli belt within the next few months. “This violence to come can only be stopped by Modi and not even by BJP” he said. According to him the Jat-Muslim unity carved by Chaudhary Charan Singh died in the Mandal agitation of 1990 itself when the Jats were not included in list of OBCs. Now Jats feel neglected politically. Their social position has been further undermined due to their inability to capitalize on education as a tool of upward mobility. They are stuck in the same jobs like police and army. Now the SP government has introduced OBC reservation in the police, squeezing job opportunities for Jats further. “So you have all those young men, hanging around doing nothing, quick to take to crime, drinking and looting. We are scared to go out here on the roads after dark.”

He believes that the environment was being spoilt much before the events in September, as early as June-July this year, and that the Jats have been arming themselves. “*Fiza kharab ki ja rahi thi*”. He mentioned three incidents in Qutba and Kutbi wherein Jat girls had eloped with Muslim boys, two in July and another in August. These incidents had angered the Jats.

Sh Devdutt mentioned one incident in detail. On August 8 in Sohram, one Muslim girl was “teased” by Jat boys. The girl’s brother and others from the Muley Jat community got together and beat up the boys responsible for the “eve teasing”. The offenders included a relative of the Sohram pradhan. Later, the Jats called the PAC, who lathi-charged the Muslims. Apart from this incident. It appears that since this incident the tensions between Sohram Jats and the Muley Jats of the village kept simmering. The Jat Pradhan of the village also played an active role in the mobilization for the Nangla Mandaur Mahapanchayat that took place on 8th of September. Ostensibly the Muley Jats of Sohram planned their revenge on the Sohram Pradhan at Pur Baliyan in collaboration with the local Muley Jats on the evening of 8th September.

There was another incident at Joli, where the PAC had to be called. In July and August there were incidents at Muzaffarnagar railway station in which Muslims had been dragged from trains and humiliated. He further stated that both Muslims and Jats were arming themselves in anticipation of a bigger showdown in the next six to seven months. He linked this with the 2014 elections, saying that if Modi leads BJP to victory there are chances that peace would prevail, otherwise there would be a bloodbath.

Hussainpur – Mohammadpur Raisingh – site of killings on October 30:

The team visited these twin villages separated by a distance of three kilometers, on the morning of November 10. A meeting of 35 biradaris (communities representing different Jat Khaps and other castes) was to take place that day at Mohammadpur Raisingh. This meeting had once again been called by the Gathwala Khap led by Baba Harkishan.

After driving from Muzaffarnagar to the nearest town of Budhana, where the army had been called on September 8) we drove on rugged, narrow roads through lush sugarcane fields to Mohammadpur Raisingh.

Mohammadpur Raisingh:

At the entrance of the village we witnessed many wall writings equating cow protection with national protection. On entering the village we met a group of young men and asked them about the venue of the meeting and if they would be attending it. They showed us the way to the Jat section of the village and replied in the negative about participation in the meeting as the meeting was that of the “kisans” (i.e. Jats). These youth were landless agricultural labour and belonged to Kashyap (Kumhar caste). People from the other Hindu castes also showed absolute indifference to the meeting and did not want to talk about the incident of the killing of the boys from neighboring Hussainpur.

The venue of the meeting was a big temple compound. By noon, we could see some policemen coming to the village, but people had not reached the meeting place as yet. We then went to the compound of the Pradhan’s house where Jat pradhans of different villages were gathering. There was consensus among the people present here regarding the events of October 30 (when three Muslim boys of the neighboring Hussainpur village had been killed in Mohammadpur Raisingh). Their version was completely divergent to the version we later got from Hussainpur residents.

The story at Mohammadpur Raisingh was that an ex-army Jat, Rajendra Singh from Mohammadpur, was working in his fields in the evening as part of a pact between the two villages to work on their fields at different points of the day. He was brutally attacked by Muslims from Hussainpur, according to the Jats of Mohammadpur Raisingh. Although badly wounded, Rajendra Singh somehow escaped and returned to the village. After this, around 12 Jats from the village accompanied him and chased the boys who were alleged to have attacked him. A fight ensued and in the course of this fight, the PAC allegedly shot the three Muslim

boys. The Jats also talked about Shahpur and how Muslims in those camps are indulging in loot and rampage.

The various pradhans and sarpanchs of Jats from villages across Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts included the fathers of Sachin and Gaurav (the two Jat boys killed at Kaval) gathered at the Mohammadpur Raisingh pradhan's compound. They explained why the Khap has been called that day. "The PAC has orders to let anyone who dies, die. Whether the government says it or not, it cares only for about 25 crore (Muslims). The day before yesterday, Hindus were attacked at Shahpur. The message is clear: We must protect ourselves."

The wife of the pradhan of Mohammadpur corroborated the killing of the boys from Hussainpur and expressed surprise over the audacity of the attackers who, after injuring the army man Rajinder Singh, did not run away but remained there. Another pradhan told us that some goons came and beat up the army man and there was firing from both sides in which the Muslims got killed. During the panchayat proceedings, indignation was expressed that the SP (superintendent of police) entered the village and took Rajender Singh away under pretext of medical examination but arrested him under Sec 302. They saw this as evidence of the "conspiracy" against the Jats. They said that Rajender Singh was 70 years old. One of the speakers stated that he had called 'Babaji' (Baba Harkishan) and 2000-3000 people had collected in Mohammadpur Raisingh in response, on the night of October 30. "We kept our case but instead of justice we only got arrested." They asked whether police found even one weapon in this village, but at the same time expressed a grouse that the SHO "took away our China pistols". Very few young Jat men could be seen in this village. We later learned that they had been sent off to relatives' homes in neighbouring districts, in anticipation of arrests related to the killing of Muslim boys from Hussainpur village.

The team met the fathers of the two Jat boys killed in Kaval. The pradhan who introduced these men said, "Both of them have lost their only sons, whereas the Muslim youth they fought with was one of the nine children in his family; so it doesn't matter to them." It is not true that Sachin and Gaurav were both only sons.

The 35 biradari panchayat:

A crowd of over 350 comprising mainly the Khap leaders, Jat village pradhans, leaders of some other castes such as the Brahmins, Thakurs and Gujjars and some of their supporters had assembled for the panchayat at Mohammadpur Raisingh. They came from different villages of Muzaffarnagar, Shamli and other districts of western UP, as also from Haryana. There were around 15 policemen with three vehicles and two to three officers who kept a watch from outside while one plainclothes man sat inside the hall. The Khap meeting took place in the hall of a Shiva temple in the village. The Khap members, with their splendid turbans, were predominantly middle aged and old men. A few young Jats were helping with the arrangements. While the prominent leaders sat on the makeshift dias in the front, the rest of the crowd sat on the floor.

The Khap meeting was presided over by Baba Harkishan Singh, the chief of Gathwala Khap (reportedly 27 cases are pending against him including one of gang rape). The others present included Naresh Tikait of the Baliyan khap and a leader of Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU), Durga Mal (from Bainswal, one of the villages badly affected by the violence), Udaivir Singh (village Pelkha, Lathiyen Khap), Thakur (Kushwaha Khap), Mange Ram, Khambe Lal (Baliyan Khap), Udham Singh (Balola) and several others whose names could not be noted down.

The general emphasis of the speeches delivered veered around the same themes that had emerged from individual interviews of different Jats mentioned above: That Muslims are not returning to villages due to the greed of compensation; that Jats are being subjected to injustice; about how patriotic Jats are and that they can't compromise with self-respect especially if the issue of *bahu*, *beti* and *izzat* is involved. The introductory speech by the representative of Mohammadpur Raisingh began by saying, "The government is trying to divide the Jats and Thakurs by mentioning them as separate communities. They are trying to isolate us. It is a conspiracy of the government." They said that a clear message has to be given to Muslims and the government through a show of strength. They alleged that the government is indulging in "*ektarfa karyawahi*" (one sided action) by providing compensation to the Muslims and arresting only the Jats in false cases. The panchayat resolved to wage a decisive war against this. They wanted all cases filed to be withdrawn and called for a day's hartal on November 15, to coincide with Moharram. It was very clear they wanted to up the ante.

One of the speakers said (and this we had often heard from pro Jat opinions) that after the Kaval incident, the Muslims responsible for the killings were caught at the insistence of the then DM and SP. However, they were released the very next day at the behest of the Samajwadi Party Minister Azam Khan. Both the DM and SP were instantly transferred. They argued that if this had not happened there would not have been so much mayhem. Commenting on the general talk of BJP being behind the riots, one of the speakers asked if "BJP had told Muslim boys to tease Jat girls or kill the brothers who defended her?" Many others defended the BJP.

It must however be mentioned that at least some of the elderly speakers at the meeting asked for restraint and action that will restore peace and normalcy in the area.

In the informal conversation at the village pradhan's house, one of the pradhans—Pheru Pradhan—told us that the village Mohammadpur Raisingh is surrounded by Muslims who had destroyed tubewells causing financial losses to the tune of lakhs. At the panchayat, the Muslims of Hussainpur village were accused of taking over forest department land and creating residential plots there. They said: they have no weapons now that the police has taken away their licensed arms, and no means of "defending ourselves". They said that this has emboldened the Muslims who were resorting to provocative activities like burning their sugarcane fields. (On November 29, the Gathwala Khap head Baba Harkishan's sugarcane fields were reported as having been burned, at a time when the sugarcane agitation by Jat farmers was at a high pitch.)

The team spoke to the armed police officers standing outside the hall. On being asked as to how the meeting called by the Khaps is being allowed as section 144 is in force in the area, the police officer said that this is a social problem as well and cannot be just tackled by law and order machinery. Moreover, the place of gathering was a private one. They said as both sides were blaming the police, the police must have done something right. The officer lamented that the police forces were not enough to tackle the situation. He also admitted the fact that there was a severe under-representation of Muslims, who formed only about four per cent of the police force. He admitted that police had seized all the licensed weapons in the area, but said this was the standard procedure in riot situations. The fact of the matter is that there were more Jats who had licensed weapons and thus they are saying they have been selectively disarmed.

Conversation at Hussainpur village:

From Mohammadpur Raisingh the team moved to the adjoining Hussainpur village. Hussainpur has a mixed population comprising of about 3000 Muslims and 2000 Hindus of whom 700 are dalits. There are no Jats in this village. The composition consists largely of castes like the Muley Jats, Sheikhs, Sayyads, Faqirs, Telis, Brahmins and Banias. We were told that all households in this village had some land, including the Muslims. Not only has there been no violence in this village, but after the Kaval incident the villagers kept a vigil at nights by forming composite teams including all communities. No damage was reported to the temple or to any of the Hindu houses in the village.

At the time of the visit there were some 2400 Muslim refugees from Mohammadpur Raisingh who were living in the relief camp at Hussainpur village. There had been refugees from other villages such as Khedi Gani whom their Jat co-villagers had brought here for safety at the peak of communal violence, but they had since returned to their villages under the protection of their Jat co-villagers. The President of the Aman Committee of the village, Maulana Imran, informed us that the Mohammadpur people were insisting that refugees from their village be ousted from Hussainpur. In view of the prevailing communal tension, a truce was reached between villagers of the two villages about work timing on the fields that lie between the two villages. The people of Mohammadpur would work in the forenoon and those of Hussainpur in the afternoon to avoid any possible conflict in the prevailing tense atmosphere.

The Muslim families of Hussainpur denied that there was any "incident" involving Rajender Singh the retired army man from Mohammadpur. The team met 27 years old Kaish Khan s/o Abrar Khan and 26 years old Shah Alam s/o Munawwar Khan, survivors of the murderous attack by Jats on October 30. Shah Alam's brother was killed in the attack. These survivors informed us that they went to Kaish Khan's chacha's (father's brother's) field to cut some fresh fodder at 4:30 pm on October 30. With them were three other youth--Amroz Khan s/o Khasreen Khan (22 years), Meherban s/o Abad Khan (28 yrs) and Ajmal Khan s/o Anees Khan (22 yrs).

Of the five, Meherban and Ajmal were long-distance truck drivers who had returned to their village for a holiday. Shah Alam and Kaish Khan were cutting grass while the other three were hanging around chatting, chewing sugarcane.

Suddenly these men heard some noises coming from a distance and then saw a crowd of around 25-30 people who came from the side of Mohammadpur Raisingh. These men were shouting provocative anti-Muslim slogans and soon overpowered the five men from Hussainpur. The men coming from the side of Mohammadpur Raisingh were carrying swords, knives, spears, sickles, farsa (axe) rifles and sticks. They caught hold of the five men from Hussainpur and started beating them up brutally. Of these men from Mohammadpur, Kaish Khan and Shah Alam said they could recognize 16. They escaped alive by managing to free themselves from the captors and then hid in the sugarcane fields. The other three youth—Amroz Khan, Meharban and Ajmal Khan were dragged away by the mob. Kaish Khan and Shah Alam informed us that there was no PAC present while this incident took place. Tha Jats of Mohammedpur had told us that the three young men had been killed by PAC firing.

These two men who had managed to flee rang up their uncle Shahnawaz (the pradhan of Hussainpur village) while hiding in the sugarcane field. The pradhan kept calling the SHO of Bhaura Kalan police station for help. His calls, however, went unattended. Later, on the basis of the call records, the SHO of Bhaura Kalan PS was suspended for dereliction of duty. Meanwhile, the villagers of Hussainpur went to the field at night and rescued the (two stranded?) boys.

According to the people at Hussainpur, they received the bodies of the three youth late next night. We were told that the bodies were badly mutilated and bore signs of severe beating. They had also been shot. This was also confirmed by the postmortem reports of the three men that were procured by the team. As per the post-mortem reports the bodies have one gunshot wound each, though it is not known if the bullets have been sent for further ballistic tests, to ascertain the nature of the weapon.

The post mortem of the three boys was conducted on 31.10.13 at 3:50 AM, 4:30 AM and 5:15 AM i.e. in the early hours of October 31. In all three reports, it is recorded that rigor mortis had developed in the upper part of the body and was developing in lower part. All three post mortems have recorded the cause of death as shock and blood loss due to ante-mortem injuries. While firearm injuries are recorded in post-mortems in the case of Ajmal, the postmortem records “One metallic bullet recovered from abdominal cavity and sealed and handed over to constable.” The constables were Kapil Kumar and Satendra Kumar (996 and 366) of Kotwali thana. Of the sixteen people identified (all Jats), nine have been arrested while seven are still free. Those not arrested yet include Harbir, Harender, Sansarpal and Mange Ram.

Hussainpur Muslims said this was not a Hindu-Muslim fight but was due to the “goondas” next door in Mohammadpur Raisingh. Some called it a “Jat-Muslim” quarrel. The two Hindus sitting around with us at Hussainpur agreed. One among them was on the Aman Committee of the village.

The villagers at Hussainpur said that Muslims from some of the nearby villages who had taken shelter in their village at the time of heightened tension in the district had returned to their villages. The Jats of these villages had themselves taken the responsibility of the security of these Muslims. However, the Muslims from Mohammadpur Raisingh did not want to go back because they feel that once they go back they shall be pressurized to withdraw cases against those Jats who stand accused of the violence against them, or the cases could be closed. Apparently, there are 16 cases against identified persons and 10 against unnamed persons.

Residents of Hussainpur proudly said that there had never been any communal tension there, not in 1947 or in 1992 in the aftermath of demolition of Babri Masjid. They said that all villages, except those dominated by Jats, have Aman committees. They were equally emphatic that if anyone of their religious leaders took any position on their behalf, without consulting them, they would reject it.

Kaish Khan said, and the others agreed, that there are good Jats as well but somehow all troubles have been in Jat dominated villages alone. Jat aggression, especially against Muslims, is a fact of everyday life in the area.

Most of the Hussainpur people say the Mohammadpur Raisingh Jats resent the relative socio-economic success of Muslims here. Many of the local Muslims are working outside the district in Delhi, Jaipur, Modinagar and other parts. They send money back home. Many Muslim families have added one more room, one more floor to their houses. The Pradhan of Hussainpur has bought 8 bighas of agricultural land from a Jat, as have a couple of other Muslims present there. This is deeply resented by the Jats.

The residents complained insightfully that failure of the sugar mills to open at a time when sugarcane crushing should have already been underway was also aggravating the prevailing communal tension, besides causing financial insecurity. They feel that things will become normal if the administration strictly adheres to its duties. If the rates of sugarcane could be fixed and the mills could be started, people would go about their business and not have time for mischief. They also felt that the incidents of violence could be diversionary tactics to prevent farmers from launching a united struggle for better sugarcane prices.

On being asked about the incidents of sugarcane fields being set on fire and the claim of Mohammadpur Jats that Muslims were behind such acts, the Hussainpur villagers informed us of an incident wherein there had been a fire in the sugarcane fields of some Jats recently. They said: "We were informed by a driver, we called the police and helped to put out the fire." They also said that around the 19th or the 20th of October, they had discussions with the Jats of Mohammadpur to fix timings for work in their respective fields. As per the agreement, since the fields of Mohammadpur Raisingh were nearer Hussainpur, the farmers from Mohammadpur would work their fields during the morning hours, while those from Hussainpur would work their fields in the evenings. However, thereafter, there were no further discussions between the two villages and a climate of great fear prevailed.

Voices from the relief camps:

Shamshad (the AIKMS activist) had told us that at present there are 11 camps, all of Muslims. The earlier team of National Minorities Commission which had gone on September 19 had noted 41 camps with 50,180 persons, of which 16,000 were from Shamli and the rest from Muzaffarnagar district, as revealed to them by the administration. They were told that the effort of the administration was to ensure the safety of the camp residents and ensure their return. The camps were predominantly of Muslims, mainly the landless—weavers, self-employed artisans, Lohars, etc. That report recorded that by the time of their visit, 45 deaths had been registered—29 in Muzaffarnagar (9 Hindu, 20 Muslims), 12 in Shamli, 3 in Meerut, 1 in Hapur and 1 in Saharanpur. The camp this Commission visited however was in Kamalpur temple. They were SC families (58) from Bassi Kalan who had fled from there, not because they were subject to violence but because they feared retaliation from refugees from other villages who were sheltered in their Muslim majority village. This camp was well provided for. There was a hand pump, toilet, team of doctors and PHC workers. While the Commission's team was there, the pradhan of Bassi Kalan arrived at the camp to urge the Dalits to return home.

Our team went to two camps, one at Shahpur—Shahpur Camp No. 1, and the other at Bassi Kalan. The Bassi Kalan camp was located in the local madarsa. There were around 150 families living there in tents since September 8. There were no policemen to be seen in the vicinity of the camp in order to ensure the security of the camp. The people who sought shelter here reported they were first given rations in bulk by the government. This was provided through the Madarsa Committee. These lasted 15-20 days and were inadequate. After this, supplies were given to the camp on a per family basis: Every tent got 25 kilos of pulses and wheat, some cooking oil, salt and sugar. The supplies reached them in two installments. At the time of our visit, however, there had been no further supplies from the government. These families were cooking their meals separately and were relying largely on what the madrasa provided to them. The Jamaat was providing the charity.

All the persons we talked to said that they did not want to go back to their villages because of vicious attacks by the Jats of their own village whom they know and recognize. Neither had anyone from the Jat community come to ask them to come back.

They also recounted the enormous problems they faced in claiming compensation: Understanding the language of the documents, the forms required to be filled, arranging identification papers for opening bank accounts when they had fled from their homes with no belongings and missing names from the list of claimants are among the obstacles they face. The lack of documents meant that they have not been able to open bank accounts or arrange for alternate schools for their children.

For claiming the compensation they were required to submit an affidavit that they will never return to the village, and will never claim compensation for their immovable properties. The affidavit reads:

- That myself and members of my family have come leaving our village and home being terrorized due to violent incidents in (name of the village) village and *we will not now return to our original village and home under any circumstances.*
- That the lumpsum financial help being given for my family by the Govt. will only be used by me to rehabilitate my family. By this money I will live with my family voluntarily arranging for residence at appropriate place *elsewhere.*
- That in the condition of receiving lumpsum financial help amount, myself or members of my family *will not demand compensation relating to any damage to any immovable property in my village or elsewhere.*
- That after receiving the financial help from the government for making shelter/residence for myself/ my family, myself and my family shall not again live in any relief camp.

Many of the refugees, while willing to sign the affidavit, were apprehensive of the conditions mentioned. When our team questioned the pradhan of Bassi Kalan (who is over all in-charge of managing the affairs of this camp) about the conditions in the affidavit in light of the apprehensions expressed, he rubbished these apprehensions. We were told that around 25-30 people had gone to District Office, Muzaffarnagar, to discuss this issue.

The physical conditions at the camp

The entrance to the relief camp at Bassi Kalan is guarded by the large grilled gate of the madrasa. Inside, there were pools of dirty water and some chullahs between the tents showing sign of recent cooking. The tents were close to each other and about 6' x 5'. We were told 200 families lived in this camp. The camps were bereft of any civic amenities worth their name. The few mobile toilets that were provided by the administration were without running water or facilities for disposal of the accumulated human waste and hence were not being used by the people any more. People were making do with community taps (if one was available) or taps in nearby houses to get water for daily use. There were no facilities for medical check-ups / first aid at the camps, either arranged by the administration or privately by the Jamaat.

As against the camp at Bassi Kalan, the camps at Shahpur comprised of tents put up on the empty residential plots of land. These new tents had been donated by the Jamaat. While at Bassi Kalan the team met mainly men, at Shahpur the respondents were mainly women. Many of the tents seemed strangely empty. (The residents claimed the menfolk had stepped out to find work, pursue the required paperwork. Some residents of the tents had been sheltered in homes in the village as well.)

Maulana Nazar, an activist of the Jamaat, whom we contacted on the phone, offered to take us to sites in Muzaffarnagar city to show us where houses are proposed to be constructed for the riot displaced families. These alternative arrangements are being supervised by the Jamaat.

In terms of displacement from their homes in the nearby villages this amounted to loss of security of a roof over their head, leading to increased exposure to anti-social elements especially of the young girls and other females. It has been reported in other enquires that there have been instances of rape of young girls in the camps. This has led to increased worries for the parents regarding the safety of their children, especially the adolescent girls. A number of marriages of underage girls have been reported from these camps. This could well be a measure by families to get rid of the responsibility of safety of young girls.

As per the statement of the residents in the camps they are being increasingly pressurized now to vacate the camps at the earliest, especially if they have accepted government compensation along with its attached conditions.

There seemed to be some contradiction in the views expressed by the camp residents regarding the role of the government. A member of the committee managing the camp, Jameel (from village Qutba) said the government had indeed provided help. However, this was contradicted by another young man from the same village, Momin, who severely criticized the apathy of the government towards their condition. No one has returned to work. Many returned to their homes with police to recover what they could of their belongings and animals.

Killing of Irfan kabadi on November 6, 2013:

When the team visited the Shahpur area in the district, a bandh was being observed in the town. There was perceptible tension with a posse of policemen present in the main market along the main road of the town. The tension had built up following the killing of one Irfan from the area. This is the latest in the series of killings in the area since the initial violence at Kaval village. When we visited Shahpur we could see policemen at the crossing and at market places, which were all closed. On talking to people including one policeman we learnt that the supporters of Dr. Harveer Singh, a registered medical practitioner of the area and a known RSS activist, had threatened a bandh till the arrest of 15 Muslims from the refugee camps whom he alleged had burnt his shop in the Shahpur market on November 6. From Shamshad we had learnt that when he went to Shahpur town on November 7 at 11:30 AM, the main street was eerily silent, the entire bazaar was closed and people were standing around talking in groups. Police Special Forces and media were also present.

By putting together the available pieces of information we could construct the following sequence of events: Some boys from the camps had gone to the market in Shahpur where they identified and pointed out one of the Jats accused of violence against Muslims to others present on the spot. A majority of those present were Muslims, as Shahpur is a Muslim majority town. The accused was identified as Yogender who was guilty of violence at Qutba-Kutbi from where many of the refugees at Shahpur had come. The Muslims surrounded Yogender, beat him up and handed him over to the police. In the entire episode Irfan, a scrap merchant, had played an important role. Irfan used to go to different villages to buy scrap and local Muslims told us that earlier in the day Irfan had happened to tell Dr Harveer Singh of his movements during the day.

Irfan was later shot dead between Shahpur and nearby Chandpur. Suspecting that probably Harveer had tipped Irfan's killers of his movement, the local Muslims came to him to protest whereupon they say that Harveer Singh set fire to his own shop and implicated 15 Muslim men from the camp who had earlier been involved in Yogender's arrest.

The administration's take on the events in Muzaffarnagar

Our visit to the District Magistrate's (DM) office on November 27 coincided with a dharna by BKU to demand fixation of appropriate sugarcane prices that was attended by the farmers from across castes and the communities on the basis of the common interest. The gathering was quite militant but non-violent. The DM could not be contacted as he was away from the office. We were able to talk to the ADM (Administration), Indramani Tripathi. According to him, all camps, except the one at Loyi, have been wound up and people have been given Rs.5 lakhs as compensation, deposited in their bank accounts.

On being reminded that the affidavit said that after receiving the compensation the people would forfeit all claims to damages to their immovable property and can never go back to their villages and cannot even build a house in the area, he said that those provisions have been removed and they can go to their villages if they so wished. But he did not show any government order to that effect. "The affidavit only says that those signing up for Rs.5 lakh relief should not ask for any more compensation from the government. They can take other steps," Tripathi told us. This is at variance with the language of the affidavit.

He confirmed the official figures of deaths as 15 Hindus, mostly Jats and 59 Muslims. According to him only 170 families are left to be rehabilitated. They all are at Loyi and they add up to 1078 people. He tried to convince us that out of fear they do not want to go to their homes and are settling down in the neighborhood of Muslim majority areas. On being questioned about danger of further ghettoization of society, he said that some of them are settling in non-Muslim areas also. The government, he said, spent Rs.3 to 3.5 crore on supplying provisions to the camps. A total of 806 families had taken compensation which is 4000 to 4500 people and the money spent on this purpose was Rs.40.3 crores. He echoed the government policy for the distribution of relief through Intezamia committees controlled by religious organizations and Madrasas. The Shivpal Yadav Committee, set up in the immediate aftermath of the riots, recommended to the state that relief be distributed through the "community" organizations of Muslims. This system, however, has extracted a toll on the Muslim refugees, who are increasingly under pressure from the Madarsa Committees not to return to their original villages and continue to stay in the Muslim-dominated villages.

Mr Tripathi also echoed the general Jat narrative that in the greed for compensation Muslims do not want to go back to their villages, He could not, however, explain why this was so if such provisions of the affidavit were no longer relevant.

The ADM said that Muslims will definitely use the compensation to buy land locally, in case they do not want to return to the villages they ran away from. He said this is "natural". "They

will obviously want to live near their own community. “This is but natural—it happens everywhere, even in Delhi.”. He said that composite culture is not affected by this change.

Near the DM office we met two local journalists Madan Baliyan and Dilshad Malik (a Mula Jat). According to them, on September 8, when the rampage began, the army was called and was in the town for more than six hours before being deployed. The Superintendent of Police at the time, Subhash Chandra Dube, was suspended. The DM, Surinder Singh and the SSP Manzil Saini had already been transferred after the Kaval incident. They also told us that it had been converted into a Hindu-Muslim confrontation by vested political interests of BJP and SP. They told us that the maximum number of rapes of Muslim women took place at Lisarh village and that out of over two dozen rapes, only six cases had been reported. According to them a Jat girl had eloped from the village with her Muslim lover earlier.

In November, the state did amend the notification it had issued in October, under which this Rs.5 lakh compensation was to be provided to riot-affected Muslim families. Now the relief is available to all affected people, regardless of their religion, thanks to a Supreme Court order based on a petition filed by a Delhi lawyer. While the ADM says it will be given to people who lost their homes (to arson etc) in the six villages, the SSP HN Singh said it will be given to families that have escaped from villages where there was actual violence. It seemed obvious on November 27, that the district administration was speaking in one voice when it came to insisting that the relief camps have closed down. Both the ADM and SSP insisted that nearly all Muslims, except in Loyi camp, have found alternative residences to stay in, chiefly because they have claimed the Rs.5 lakh compensation. This claim has subsequently been contradicted, and on December 20 the officials admitted that there are over 16,000 Muslims still in camps. Similarly, the local functionaries seemed not to know the exact death toll in the riots either. Ultimately, the SSP provided these numbers, late in the evening.

Meeting with the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP)

In the office of SSP the first thing we noticed was the list of SSPs displayed in the office. In 2013 Mr. Hari Narain Singh is the 5th SSP. On being asked about the complaint of the Jats regarding one-sided action by government and the release of real culprits in Kaval case, the SSP refuted the charge and said the police cannot take action on the basis of just the FIR without investigation. He said investigation of cases was being conducted by a team of two SPs, four DSPs, 50 Inspectors/Sub Inspectors involving the police personnel from all the concerned policestations—Jansath; Sikheda; Mirapur; Kotwali; Nai Mandi; Budhana; Bhaura Kalan and Bhopa—under which the riots occurred.

On the issue of alleged “encounter” of three youth of Hussainpur at Mohammadpur Raisingh as claimed by the speakers at the Mohammadpur panchayat, the SSP denied that the youth had been killed in police encounter, though he did confirm that they had been shot at and also attacked by sharp weapons. He informed us that nine out of the 16 persons named for the murders had been arrested and that a search was on for the others.

The SSP also said that the rehabilitation of all the displaced persons except those of five to six villages is complete. According to him, despite being assured of security by the administration, most of villagers do not feel reassured and are not ready to go back. As most of them are from the labouring classes with no land, perhaps they feel they can settle elsewhere, he argued.

The SSP acknowledged the presence of a large number of illegal weapons in the district and that to the police is continually checking and carrying out raids to find these weapons. The police is launching outreach programs for establishing peace by consulting elders. They now have plans to start programs to interact with the youth. On the question of night training camps by RSS which we had heard about, he joked that they are already well trained. According to the SSP, the number of killed included 37 Muslims and 15 Hindus. The SSP refused to give the break-up of Jats and non-Jats.

The SSP told us that relief was provided to people from villages who fled after serious incidents —“murders”. He also informed that they are working with NGOs and are making efforts to rehabilitate those in the camps to go back to the villages. NGOs are organizing contact meetings and assuring the people of full police assistance and security if they decide to return to their villages.

The SSP claimed that “When both sides accuse us of being partial, surely that means we are doing something right.” He says the police bandobast was quite effective over the last three months, after the riots broke out, Two ASPs, four DSPs and four legal officers, along with 50 inspectors/sub inspectors have been brought into the region. He assured us of “dispassionate investigation”, which can only be done according to the FIRs that have been registered.

540 legal cases in all have been filed. Around 6000 people have been named in them. The police stations include, Jansath, Kotwali, Sisauli, Nayi Mandi, Shahpur, Bhudana, Bhopa, Bhaura Kala, Phugana, Meerapur and Mansoorpur. “When eight people have been killed in Qutba-Kutbi, how can we possibly remove the names (of the Jats) who have been accused and named by the eye-witnesses?” he asked.

He opined that the people of the region, both Jats and Muslims, have tremendous propensity to fight. “They also know very well how to present the case in their favour.” The SHO of Bhaura Kala was suspended after this incident at Mohammadpur Raisingh -Hussainpur. This, the SSP says, was because the SHO was accused by people of Hussainpur that he did not take action in time. He says that there was police (UP Police) present at Mohammadpur Rai Singh at the time of the incident, but they were at the far end of the village and not where the three young men were attacked. He says the suspension of the SHO at Bhauran Kalan has nothing to do with the killing itself. The fact that he did not answer the calls of the Hussainpur boys was (presumably) because of a flood of phone calls to him. There is a lot of “pressure” at such times. “The police went there on hearing of the incident. They received dozens of phone calls. The probe is on.” The investigation is not yet complete into this incident, and nobody can be declared guilty or not guilty yet. “Not just in this case, in any case, if somebody is coming to the police with any evidence/proof, we are registering a case on his behalf. What the guilt or innocence is, the court

will have to establish. If someone is innocent, he can bring the proof, and he will be set free by the court.”

We asked why the Mohammadpur Raisigh Khap panchayat was allowed to meet despite section 144 being declared in the area. He replied - “Khaps keep meeting here. It is a common practice. It was a meeting in the temple. It is an internal matter.”

Regarding the Kaval incident and the accusation of the Jats that the police let the real culprits free after initially arresting them, the SSP said: “Of the people who were arrested at first, only one was found to be involved, so he was the only one kept. If not found involved, then why would he be kept, and how can we catch the others (those not involved).”

The SSP informed that “wherever there was fear among the people because there have been incidents, we have stationed the PAC and the RAF (Rapid Action Force) (as a measure against further violence). People who are mortally afraid are being given protection.”

“Where there have been actual incidents, like in Shahpur, Phugana, Kakada—where the people are in no position to return, that is where the people are liable to avail of compensation. Where there have been murders.” He also says that the people will get either the Rs. five lakh compensation—“*Agar le liya, toh wapas mat jaiye.*” Or, the Muslims will be able to claim actual damages, but not from the government.

He denies that there has been a security failure. “People are (just) afraid to return. They are being ‘persuaded’ to return. They are being told that security will be provided to them. Where they have returned, nothing has happened.” In the beginning, none of the displaced people were returning to their villages. Now, people from only 5-6 villages are left in the camps. “Jaisi bhi stithi banegi...if they feel they can return then they can stay. If they don’t feel that they can stay again in the same place, then they...won’t have to.” The SSP clarified that depending on how the situation evolves, the Muslims who feel comfortable to return can do so, and that the others will not be forced to return. It may be pertinent that the police is in fact being accused of forcing many Muslims to return. Also, the administration’s withdrawal of supplies to the relief camps is a clear indication that they want the Muslims to go away from the camps.

“Around 41,000 to 42,000 people have returned to their homes. But in places, where the memory of what happened is very strong, as they have seen killings, deaths, the people are afraid to return. We are also not applying pressure on them (to return).”

“Sarkar ki taraf se aid band ho gayi hai.”

The SSP opined that most of the people who left their villages were Muslims without land. “If they are healthy and able-bodied, then they tend to think that they may as well stay on where they are (near camps, or elsewhere). They are mostly labourers, or craftsmen, so they feel they can get work anywhere—they still have to make a living the same way.”

“Our officials are going from village to village to explain, re-assure, and talk to the people” and that “we shall do all that we can do. Outreach contact and shanti sadbhavna - both are being done. We are approaching the muezzins, older people. One of the things we have recently started to do is to reach out to the younger people.”

“There are too many arms here. There are just too many—what can we do?”

“There is a lot of rivalry between people as well. We are conducting checks, on the basis of suspicion as well as on the bases of information. We are applying pressure (*dabish*) on people.”

“We cannot call these events purely communal. In most of the cases, the Jats have been involved. In some villages there have been non-Jat Hindus involved, but predominantly, the problem is between Jats, and Muslims.”

On being asked about the representation of Muslims in the police force he said - “A policeman is just a policeman. We do not look at them from the perspective of community or origin.”

The local journalists we had met had told us that the army had been made to wait at the entrance of Muzaffarnagar even as the worst of violence took place in the area. We asked the SSP about the veracity of this statement. Although the present SSP was not in charge of the situation then, he denied that the then DM and SSP allowed the violence to take place. “We did not wait after calling the army. The road to Phugana is very bad, as is the case in Qutba Kutbi. That is what would have taken time” (and thereby the killings).

Regarding the prevailing situation he said that - “I cannot say that the situation is absolutely peaceful but yes now it will be OK. The situation is normalizing in all different ways—no rumours are floating about, incidents are under control and so on...The government aid has been stopped now. The relationships between the Chaudharys and the Maliks, is still intact. Hopefully the problems (of residents in camps) will also be solved very soon.”

Revisit of camps at Shahpur and Bassi Kalan:

During our second visit to the city of Muzaffarnagar and to the camps on which date the intensity of tension that could be felt was perceptibly less as compared to our first visit.

Contrary to the claims of the ADM, camps were still there but government’s signboards announcing their presence were removed. The signboard on the top of the gateway of the Madarsa at Bassi Kalan camp that once said Rahat Shivar had been pulled down. We met Jahoor (65 years of age) from Qutba-Kutbi who had moved out of the camp after receiving the compensation but does not want to go to his village. He wants to settle down in the land organized by the Jamaat near Shahpur. He laments that his son, with his own family, has not been given compensation. People still living in tents told us that while 213 families had left the camps, 200 families still remained in the camps.

Dulehra is a village in the vicinity of Qutba and Kutbi villages that was not directly affected by riots. Muslims from Dulhera fled out of fear and do not want to go back. Their name is not in the RR list. Most of them belong to landless artisan and craftsmen classes. Out of 70 families five were landed Muley Jats who have gone back.

The refugees from Kakada were emphatic about not returning as their houses were still being damaged and looted. From Qutba out of 170 families 142 have taken the compensation. From Kutbi out of 160 families 21 are still left in the camps. The Qutba and Kutbi villagers once again reiterated the role of Devender Singh (husband of the lady pradhan of the village and the de facto head of the village) and a nephew of Mukesh Chaudhari, a minister in Akhilesh Yadav government, in fomenting riots in their villages. Qutba-Kutbi villagers were facing problems in getting documentation done to access compensation. The problems range from lack of necessary documents to refusal by banks and SDM to cooperate. Some of the 213 resettled Muslims have bought land at Shahpur itself at Rs. 4000 per yard, which is about Rs. 2.5 to 3 lakhs per family. Samshad of -Qutba- Kutbi has four bighas of the land in the village and a huge house but is not sure of safety of life and property and does not want to go back. Their attackers were their own neighbours and they are roaming around freely, but are absconding according to the police.

In conclusion, after the revisit to the camps we can state that most have people have taken compensation after signing the affidavit and many of them have left the camps, shifted to relatives and friends or taken rooms on rent in Shahpur and Budhana. Some have moved as far as Loni in the vicinity of Delhi. Most of them are landless laborers, craftsmen and artisans and felt that they can explore the work anywhere. None of them wants to go back.

People have essentially been left to their own devices. They are completely at the mercy of Madrasa committee, or charity of friends and relatives. As a result there are those who continue to face huge problems. Muniba of Kakada village is one such victim. In Kakada, she used to live with her brother-in-law and his family in the same house. Muniba says that her brother in law has “decamped with the relief money”. He also ran off with all of Muniba’s and her husband’s belongings. She, however, cannot claim compensation, which is given on a per-family basis, not per couple.

Despite the genuine problems that people like Muniba might be facing, the administration has stuck to its stand that none of the joint families that earlier shared a house will now get compensation on any other basis. Muniba says around 15 houses of Muslims have been damaged in Kakada, including hers. Her house was near a mosque. She reports that one of the key reasons for not returning is the Jats’ insistence that they do not pray or attend the prayers in the mosque.

The residents at the camp also have to bear pressure from the local Maulana, who suddenly appeared on the scene and started shouting at them while they spoke with us. He said, “In the night you stay with us, and in the day you start talking about going back. What is your problem? Why do you need to leave this place? What is your urgency?”

With winter approaching its peak, the remaining residents, though half the number since our initial visit, face continuing lack of relief and supplies, including blankets and clothes, medicines, food and water. Nawab, s/o Gyasuddin, from Dulheri, escaped with 73 other families. He is a mason. He says the root of the problem is the terror in the minds of the Muslims after the

violence that took place at Qutba. He told us that the people in Dulheri were also asked not to read the namaz by Jats.

Kakada's Rukhsana, d/o Haroon, says she got rations thrice from the government. Her house has been looted and she does not want to return. Shahnaz, also from Kakada, w/o Momin, a mason, says her house too has been looted. She says that her name is not on the rolls of people entitled to claim compensation. Her two children fell sick at the camp. Though they have since recovered, she could not provide them medical care.

Murshida, w/o Umar, also from Kakada, does not want to return to the village on account of fear. She does not expect the police to support Muslims who want to return. Others at the camp also said that they are absolutely not interested in returning, and so they should be paid the compensation. "When we do not want to stay there, why should we be forced to return?," says Irfan.

Zahoor, an old man from Qutba, expressed a lot of pain at having to leave the village. "We used to live together as brothers (i.e. Hindus and Muslims). We never had a fight." His sons and nephews who sit around him say that the Qutba Jats, who were his friends, had a habit of "joking" with them, about how if there was ever a Hindu-Muslim fight, they would first kill their Muslim friends, including him. "They have finally done it," the younger men said. They associate the meeting attended by Rajnath Singh a year ago, on the sugarcane issue, in Qutba, with the communalization of the area.

Encounter en route at a Sugar Crusher:

We stopped on the way at a crusher of a Muslim where he, a few Jats and some other men were having an evening session of chat and refreshment. One of the persons present there introduced himself as Swaraj Singh, the sugar cooperative chairman of Kakra village. He said that there is no conflict between Jats and Muslims but the outsiders, and he hesitantly named the RSS, did everything. He repeated the story that they want them to be back but they are not willing to return due to the compensation that is being offered.

Qutba and Kutbi now do not have a single Muslim family. Similarly the Muslims of Mohammadpur Raisingh have all taken shelter at nearby Hussainpur. Kakada too is devoid of Muslims. The people in the relief camps had made it clear that wherever Pradhans such as from Budhana and Shamli visited the relief camps and took Muslims back home, the Muslims were ready to return. Muniba from Kakada said a fresh survey of affected families was ordered after Jats raised a hue and cry about Muslims getting "excessive benefits". But when the government officials went to conduct fresh survey Kakada villagers did not allow it.

The inferences we draw from the findings

What is actually being witnessed in the Muzaffarnagar-Shamli belt in Western UP is a tearing apart of the social fabric in the villages apparently for electoral ends. While the Hindutva forces

and the BJP are proactive in fomenting trouble, the SP is also out to use the situation for electoral gains. In this process the longstanding composite culture of the area is being irreversibly damaged and there is also an attempt to ensure permanent demographic changes. The following can be inferred from the findings:

1. It is clear that Muslim-Jat electoral combination wrought by Charan Singh has broken down and this happened in the post-Mandal Commission period when Jats were left out of the OBC list. Jats, for long leaders of backward caste consolidation, feel isolated and marginalized.
2. The entire region is an agrarian economy where extensive use of capitalist methods has been superimposed on a feudal base. The dominant culture of the area is feudal patriarchal. Landed community of the area is predominantly Jat. While top less than five per cent(4.78 per cent of the top sections own 26.73 per cent of the land, the lower 60 per cent of the population own about 20 per cent of the land, with land holdings of less than one hectare (Reference Needed). The agrarian crisis and stagnant productivity has led to a crisis in this community. The rate of increase in productivity over last decade has been less than 4.5 per cent while in the state as a whole it has been over 7 per cent (Reference Needed).

Young Jats are not in significant numbers in higher education and usually look for jobs in the police and army. The SP government's policy of reserved posts for OBCs in the UP police, further squeezed the jobs available for youth of this community.

3. The dominant culture is patriarchal and the killings by Jat khaps of their own girls is heinous. The call for "bahu beti izzat" is firstly a patriarchal call for compliance by women of upper castes to patriarchal norms.
4. The Muslims are either landless agricultural labourers but a large number of them live in towns and are artisans, or are employed in jobs in other parts of the country. Even where they live in villages, members of the family work outside and their incomes come back home, helping the families to prosper. In this belt itself, in several villages Muslims were buying lands from Jats.
5. The friction between Jats and Muslims was being built up over months. The Sohram incident of 8th August and other such incidents are examples. A Jat magazine - Rashtriya Jat Kranti Patrika, has been published on Bahu Beit Izzat campaign. The magazine also tries to create a united front of all Hindus and co-opts Sikhs into the 'alliance' in its September, 2013 issue. The magazine is published by former journalists from Jansath. The publisher S Katran claims the magazine is published by taking 'inputs' from people, and that it is funded by the Saraswat Sangathan.

6. The area has been seen intense tours by BJP leaders in the past few months. This communal violence here must be seen in the background of such incidents in the rest of UP since the last assembly elections and particularly since the appointment of Amit Shah as BJP incharge of UP. There have been a number of attempts by Hindutva forces over the past few months to rake up communal atmosphere in the state beginning from renewed talk of Ram Mandir and aborted “Chaurasi Kosi Parikrama” at Ayodhya. More importantly, there have been close to a hundred reported communal disturbances in the state over the past one year that have repeatedly exposed the Akhilesh Yadav led SP Govt.

7. The clashes reflect total breakdown of the governance. There is thorough communalization of the state machinery. The police and administration did little to prevent the violence.

8. Muleyam Singh’s SP has made out an affidavit for ghettoization of Muslims in return for five lakh compensation. The SP government. has virtually routed all relief through Muslim organizations. These organizations are also preparing to build separate residential areas around Muslim localities to resettle the Muslims displaced by the violence.

9. In incidents of killings in Jat dominated villages most of those accused of killing have not been arrested.

10. The fact of the matter is that while elopements and marriages of Jat girls and Muslim boys have occurred, in reality they very few in number. Their numbers have been vastly exaggerated in order to drive a wedge between these two communities. The sustained campaign of communalizing demography has also paid dividends. This general sense of outrage in the feudal families and their need to rein in their own women has been exploited by the Hindutva forces. Interestingly the same logic is being used by Muslim organizations to explain why it is right to uproot the Muslims from the villages of their forefathers and relocate them in Muslim majority areas.

11. Much is being made by the Administration of Muslims refusing to return to their villages. In reality, Muslims from villages whose pradhans are coming to take them back, are going back. For the others the government has not come forward to categorically announce and take measures for protection of those willing to go back to their villages. The government’s affidavit itself speaks of its intentions. The Administration is trying to confuse the reality which is that SP Govt. connives in resettling Muslim in Muslim majority areas within the same electoral constituencies. Despite all the prevarication of the Administration the fact is

that the SP government has not withdrawn the affidavit which stipulates that anyone taking compensation will not return to their villages.

12. Changes in demography have already taken place in some of the rural areas. Several villages have been rendered devoid of Muslims.

13. The Administration talks of giving protection by RAF and PAC. PAC has historically been viewed as a communal force and it does not have any promising record of protecting Muslims during communal flare-ups.

The demands from the government

The following demands acquire top most priority in our opinion under the prevailing circumstances:

1. All the accused named in the FIRs should be arrested.
2. Decommunalize the state apparatus.
3. Restore all villagers back to their homes.
4. Scrap the affidavit which was taken against five lakh compensation amount.