

# Muzaffarnagar: Post Riot Assessment

## *Report of Citizens's Inquiry Team*



A team comprising 13 persons from different organizations across the country, convened by the Centre for Peace Studies, visited riot affected survivors from 8-10<sup>th</sup> of October 2013. The delegation was supported by Action Aid. Prior to the visit the team had studied other fact-finding reports by CPA, Anhad and the preliminary report by Action Aid Lucknow.

The objectives of this team's visit have been the following:

- To understand the underlying reasons for this violence
- To explore ways to counter the impact of this kind of divisive politics in the immediate run-up to elections in the country and towards upholding democracy and secularism
- To probe into cases of violence against women during the riots and assess their present situation as women and children continue to be the worst affected by the violence and very often the special violence suffered by them gets overlooked owing to the scale of emergency
- To assess the immediate and long term solutions to curb violence and communal hatred and uphold harmony and peace in the area
- To explore measures that could be undertaken by the civil society to make the state accountable towards compensation and rehabilitation of survivors, legal justice and punishment to the guilty as well as restoration of peace and harmony in the region

The team interacted with civil society groups on their first day. The second day was spent in the two relief Camps of Kandhla and Malakpur. The team tried to meet the DM , the SSP and other officials on the 10<sup>th</sup> but could not as all of them were on field, and not available in their respective offices. We could however meet the ADM-F Muzaffarnagar on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. Since, we met the Anhad team which was visiting the area the second time to document cases of violence against women, we decided to focus on other aspects that needed attention.

## **The Context**

Our meetings with civil society, with people from different walks of life in Muzaffarnagar revealed that the region where the present incidents occurred has been under the grip of a feudal parallel system of governance. In that this region is unlike most other places in India. Murders, killings and violence are nothing new to this region. All of this is an everyday affair in the region.

But nevertheless, before this a killing or a murder had never taken a communal colour. They narrated how and Jats and Muslims lived peacefully and in brotherhood. On further probing it appeared to us to be more of an economic arrangement to guard the interests of the land owner farmers on both sides. We heard about how the big farmers were kind to the labour who worked in their farms and generally for their needs. It came across clearly how this arrangement was very feudal and patriarchal where the land-owners decide for all. Apparently, this arrangement of consensus has left very little role for any democratic institutions in the region. There seems to be little or no experience with any system of democratic governance laid down by the Constitution. It was obvious from the various stories that the elected representatives and the various agencies of the state have been willingly or unwillingly toeing the line of these land-owners who are a government unto themselves. Equality, justice and rights of women seem not to figure anywhere in this feudal arrangement. We were shocked to hear how in this region a buffalo was valued much more than a woman.

Agriculture is the prime source of income in the area and the entire agricultural land is owned by the Hindu Jat Community and in much smaller degree by Mule Jats [economically better off Muslim community]. For the sake of political bargaining both have a strong alliance called the Bharatiya Kisan Union and they made all important decisions together like deciding on the rates on sugarcane etc for the market. This in many ways depicted Hindu- Muslim unity and was the irritant for many right wing forces. The BJP has been scouting for window to penetrate this area specially after the death of the BKU leader some years ago. In this region in every social and political matter the writ of the BKU prevails. There is a strict code of conduct governing all aspects of life such as marriage and social customs dictated and governed by their own Khap Panchayats. Inter caste and inter Gotra marriages are not allowed in these castes. What is interesting to note is that since most Muslims in the area are poor and non land owning, they work under the Jat landowners, as farmers, domestic help etc, this being one of the reasons according to many as to why the area was not very communally sensitive earlier, as that would disturb this economic arrangement. The victims of the violence are mainly from Teli, Nai, Julahe, Lilgar, Quraishi castes among Muslims. The muslims too are governed by the khaps.

### **Build-up through Politics of Hate**

Rehana Adeeb, from Astitva, a Muzaffarnagar based NGO shared with us that though the recent incidents may seem to have been the driving point behind these riots, right wing politics had been brewing in the area from the past year and a half and the present tragedy is a result of their efforts. She and other activists narrated how incidents involving

criminal actions were being regularly given communal flavour by the media and by the elected local representatives. They narrated how various fronts owing allegiance to the Sangh Parivar were active in the region spreading hate through rumours, leaflets, graffiti and attacks that singled out bearded men. There has been a systematic and devious deployment of the charade around community honour being violated through luring of girls. Sadly, in a feudal society this seems to have been the most vicious method that has reaped dividends of hatred for the hindutva brigade.

In many of our interactions we found that there were a number of versions which people believed led to the present communal violence. The most popularly held being that Shahnawaz, a Muslim youth was killed by Sachin and Gaurav who killed him because he harassed their sister. They in turn were killed by an angry Muslim mob. This however has also been questioned as the girl in question here has denied ever even seeing Shahnawaz.

What is now being said is that Shahnawaz and the two boys belonging to the Jat community died in an incident which had no communal colour. They had a fight in which Shahnawaz died, and as revenge, those people who knew Shahnawaz and were present at the spot, killed the two.

The propaganda about 'Love Jihad' which is being widely spread by VHP in the state also helped fuel the fire.

What caused most damage was a video which was circulated widely on facebook, via MMS etc. The video, which has been now been proved to be fake, very late though, shows two boys being beaten brutally to death by Muslims. This video was doing the rounds after Sachin and Gaurav were killed and was even being shown to passersby on the roads of Muzaffarnagar by unidentified youth on motorbikes. The violence of this scale however cannot be ascribed to a video alone and needs probing at a much greater level.

Of the 70,000 who were displaced, there were some who had fled from adjoining villages because of fear and rumours of suspected violence doing the rounds. They however have returned to their villages now.

The death of the three boys was given a communal colour in a district which is infamous for criminal acts and is in the news for loot, thefts and murders in general. Different activists narrated how murder is very often a means to resolve enmities and hostilities between family members and fellow villagers. (*'..The district has also earned the crown of being the crime capital of the state, with a flourishing illegal arms industry where well-made copies of international firearms are churned out in factories operating with*

*impunity from any place, from nondescript pucca houses to sugarcane fields'' India today, 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.)*

Following the killing of the three boys, after a big meeting of the Muslim community after Friday prayers, on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2013, which was also attended by some political party leaders, the Jat community also called for a Maha Panchayat on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August. What differentiated the two meetings was the numbers, and the fact that the mahapanchayat saw people assembling with weapons, lathis, swords etc, and the presence of Sangeet Som, BJP MLA who was the one responsible for spreading the false video from Sialkot, Pakistan, claiming it was that of Sachin and Gaurav being brutally killed by Muslim Mob, and inciting hatred. The meeting witnessed hate speech and slogans against the Muslim community. Slogans such as 'Bahu beti Bachao', 'Bahu lao beti bachao', beti bachao bahu banao, " Musalmanon ke do sthaan, Pakistan ya kabristaan' were also heard. It was decided during this meet that another Mahapanchayat would be called on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September. It is alleged that when the Jats were returning from the Panchayat of the 7<sup>th</sup> of October they were attacked and many from both the communities were killed in firings etc. It is this incident that triggered the final blow, and saw the Muslim community in the entire district come under siege from the Jat Community and the non responsive state machinery.

### **Role of Media**

As in some other places, here too the vernacular media and one major national electronic news channel seem to have played a key role in inciting violence against the muslims. There seems to be deliberate and mischievous spreading of hate through false and unfounded stories. The representatives of BJP used social media and CDs to incite violence. Facebook, MMS etc were all tools of inciting hatred before and during these riots. Most of the people we met also shared how newspapers in Muzaffarnagar had started to report crimes giving them a communal colour. Thus, a murder for ransom became *Murder of a man belonging to one community by one belonging to another community* only increasing the tension present. Several hindi newspapers and a certain national hindi news channel distorted the news about the happenings on a daily basis. There was an attempt to create a picture of muslims being the slaughterers of hindus and various false stories to this effect were published. Although according to local activists, the leaders at the Friday gathering had called upon the community to maintain peace and not react to violence by violence, the channel reported distorted versions. The result was rumours and raising of passions based on false stories.

Even when our team was in the area, some of the local newspapers were continuing in the spreading of rumours and unfounded stories with communal colour. There was a misreporting about our team although we did not conduct any press conference or issue any statements to the press.

### **Role of Police and administration**

All the survivors we spoke to in the relief camps narrated how inspite of repeated calls for help the police refused to intervene. Women from Lisarh village in both the camps narrated how as they were taking shelter from the mob into some homes the police stood by and refused to act. In one particular case, Khatun narrated how her brother-in-law was shot in the leg by the mob and was unable to flee. Yet, the police patrol standing nearby refused to help. Not only that, we got several accounts of how either the policemen were taunting the muslims and abusing them with *gaalis (Abuses)* referring to them as *suvars(pigs)*. The survivors narrated how their complaints and FIRs were not being registered by the police. Some of the survivors were carrying lists of names of attackers but the police refused to include their names in the FIRs.

The administration failed earlier in providing security to the citizens and is failing yet again in providing relief in the different camps to the displaced men, women and children. In both the camps visited by us, there was a general state of apathy from the administration. There is no allowance for the displaced being paid to the inmates; there is a shortage of food; there is no special supplies such as milk etc for children; there is no provision for pregnant women and mothers with babies; there are no doctors to be seen in the camps. The administration seemed to be taking shelter behind pretexts such as Shamli being a new district and therefore the chaos or raising matters of jurisdiction or simply *there is no need for these people to be in camps; why don't they go back to their villages?* None of the displaced survivors we spoke to had seen any interaction with the administration or received any help. Shockingly, we were told by the organizers in Malakpura that the ADM had visited the camp site some days prior to our visit and threatened the inmates to evict the land soonest as it belonged to the *van vibhag*. Failing this, they would be served legal notices, they were told. When we took this up with the ADM-F, he pleaded helplessness on grounds of jurisdiction. He also, narrated that there was a shortage of doctors and therefore the administration was helpless in treating the survivors.

It is quite clear that it was a combination of all these factors that caused the tragedy where 60 persons got killed and many thousands got displaced from their homes. The forces of hate were given a free rein as the police and administration looked the other way. Passions were allowed to be raised, rumours were allowed to be spread, armed mobs were let free on innocent citizens.

### **Economic loss**

Most of the survivors we met were displaced, forced to flee from their homes on the night of 7<sup>th</sup> September and on 8<sup>th</sup> morning. Many of them were daily wage labourers, farm labourers, petty traders, small vendors etc. None of the survivors we spoke to owned land or big property. But many had homes and small kiosks shops. The survivors complained that they fled to save their lives from the Jat armed mobs. They fled with nothing but the cloths they were wearing. They narrated how their homes were looted, belonging burnt and even shops, cycles and hand-carts were either looted or burnt. Quite a few families had buffaloes and goats which were looted by the Jats. We did not come across a single person who was hopeful of recovering her animals as nearly one and half months had passed without any recovery. The men were clueless as to what work they could do in the present circumstances. They were clear about not being able to return to their villages and had no idea about what occupation they will now engage in. None of them had heard of compensation as a right that they could demand from the state. None of the survivors we spoke to were hopeful that they will receive any compensation. Some of our team members tried asking them about how do they think they would rehabilitate themselves and what role would the government play towards that. We did not come across any survivors who even thought that they could demand rehabilitation from the government. Most lamented that they had lost everything they possessed- home, furniture, livestock, shops, bicycles, items collected for marriageable girls etc.

Meena, from Lisarh village, recounted the abrupt manner in which they fled. “We received news from our Jat sarpanch that there was going to be trouble. We simply fled without changing our clothes, barefoot, leaving everything behind. Thorns pricked our feet and we had to wade through a river. We thought our things would be looted on the way. So we just left them all at home thinking our belongings would be safe. But nothing remained. Everything was looted after we left and then our houses were burnt down,” she says. Khadija had been carefully collecting dowry for her daughter’s wedding. Money, jewels and jewel-encrusted plates were stolen.

This has been the case with almost all those who are staying in the camps now. Whomever we asked, they echoed in the same voice that they have nothing left to call

their home. ‘Our men went back with some police force to bring back our personal belongings but found nothing. Even the utensils have been charred’ shared the women, showing us the charred spoons and plates.

Those who were daily wage earners in the homes and farms of the Jats have nowhere to go. We met many men and women who had been working as tailors, skilled labourers and who had a decent monthly income, now sitting unemployed, on the mercy of organizations like the Jamiat for even their daily intake of food.

It is known that about 252 villages were affected due to riots. It is also imperative to draw attention to losses in urban areas. In Muzaffarnagar, near Shiv Chauk just in front of the BSNL office many shops were set on fire. All the shops belong to the Muslim community.

The question that arises then is that why only shops belonging to Muslims were set on fire and why the guards at BSNL office could not stop the perpetrators? Secondly, the fire station is situated at a very close distance, but why could the water tankers from there not reach in time to help put off the flames?

Despite the Jats and Muslims living together peacefully before the rioting, the women reject the possibility of returning. “We used to live normally with them with civil ties,” says Shabnam’s sister Salma. Shabnam adds: “But they are not our friends. How could they be, since they allowed the looting and burning of our houses when we were away? Even now, nobody has come to see us or asked us to come back. They are not our friends.” “‘Hamein yaheen dafan kar do, lekin jaane ko na kaho’” (Bury us here but don’t ask us to go back) was the refrain we heard from many survivors.

## Relief Camps



We visited two relief camps, both of which were set up and are being managed by private entities without any help or support from government or administration. We visited the camp at Kandla which is managed within the premises of Islamiya Sulemaniya Madarsa with over 1,000 inmates. The madarsa trust is solely managing the needs of the survivors. The second camp we visited was near village Malakpura in Shamli district. We are referring to this location as *relief camp* for want of any other term. As can be seen from the picture it is



a bunch of plastic roofs set up in the open with no bathrooms, no drinking water, no electricity, no sanitation whatsoever! Some 1508 families are taking shelter here in the open land which belongs to the Forest Department. The total number of persons here is around 10,000 which makes it the largest camp as narrated by Haaji Saab, the camp organizer. This camp is being managed solely by Jamiat-Ulema-e-Hind through their own resources and donations. There is a make-shift dispensary where a displaced Unani doctor is trying very hard to attend to the needs of fellow survivors. The Jamiat has set up a plastic roof masjid with an *imam* to teach the Quran to the children.



**A makeshift dispensary at Malakpur camp**

The survivors we met told us about their losses and how they were facing tremendous hardships in the camps. There were complaints about food rations, tea, toilets, medical needs etc. However, the Jamiat representatives narrated how till date only one kilogram team and six quintals of grains was all that was received from the government. He described how milk was received for a few days which had now completely stopped. All of this was highly inadequate for a population of 10,000 women, men and children!

## Condition of Women and Children



A 15 day old child, born in the camp is seen lying in the heat, under a plastic shade.

Women and children have been the worst sufferers in this human tragedy. The camps are a ghastly sight when one sees new born children, lying close to their mothers in plastic tents under the sun, with flies all over them. There is dirt, filth, human excreta everywhere specially in the Malakpur camp where there is a huge population. They have constructed a few makeshift toilets and a few hand pumps. Lack of proper toilets pose a serious threat to the safety of women and young girls specially during the nights. Pregnant women and those

having their menstrual cycle are very vulnerable to diseases. Women were angry for being subjected to this pitiable plight and being reduced to living in camps. Quite a few women said that though they were poor they were happy to be living in their homes and were extremely traumatized living like refugees in camps. But they were also categorical that they cannot return to their villages.

There have been many cases of mass assault and rape although understandably very few survivors are willing to share the ghastly experience. We were told about this in both the camps by different women. They also told us that some mothers had mustered the courage and shared stories of how their daughters were raped and then burnt alive. They said that FIRs have been filed by some but they are still awaiting investigation.

Children in the camps are traumatised. There are some who did not eat for five days when they arrived because of the trauma they were in. Children and their psyche has been greatly affected by the violence. Upon interacting with two children, we asked them if they want to go back home. The kids said they do not want to as there had been a fight in their village. We told them jokingly that we also used to fight when we were their age. Their reply astonished us. Both, aged below 10 years said , ‘you do not know, there has been a Hindu –Muslim fight in our village. There is no way we can go back now’. There is need to start classes and some extra-curricular activities to keep these children gainfully occupied as they are likely to miss schools for many more days.



**Toilets at the Kandhla Camp**



**Children washing hands at Kandhla**

The events in Lisarh are taking a toll of three-year-old Nargis, a severely malnourished child who is unable to walk because her legs lack the strength. An empty dispensary and apathetic dispensary workers increase the gravity of the condition. The workers offer little in terms of support to Nargis' mother, advising her instead to do the rounds of the hospital at Kerana, some distance away. 'Sunvai karo hospital mai', a worker told Nargis' mother and was unwilling to render any further assistance.

Education of most of the children has been affected. In Kandla we met many mothers whose children had to drop out of school as all their books had been burnt and school documents were lying in ashes in their homes. A large number of young girls, many of whom were school going were married off by parents for fear of their safety and security!

Seven year old Sana , whose father was a daily wage labourer shared with us that she was studying in standard 1st in Jaiction Public School situated in Lisarh village and dreamt of becoming a doctor when she grew up. With her studies at a halt, little does she know that her dream to serve the poor villagers around her would not be an easy task!

Women complained about inadequate food and specially no milk for the children. They also complained about how difficult it was for them to spend the day without tea as they were very much used to it.

## 1. Malakpur relief Camp : District Shyamli

Malakpur was the starkest display of the damage and horror that has hit Muzaffarnagar since the riots. Rows and rows of plastic tents provide a flimsy shelter to the thousands who have been displaced. About 8,000 to 10,000 people are living in this particular relief camp in conditions which all indicate a humanitarian crisis. The Jamat e Ulema-i-Hind is running the camp. The camp organizers speak of a great shortage of basic food and amenities for the displaced. The children appeared to be starving. The Camp has 1508 plastic tents, each hosting a family.

Because of the huge number, the entire relief camp has been divided into 6 wards, which to a common person are difficult to decipher. Each ward is looked after a team



Toilet Facility at Malakpur: The pool of human excreta right in the middle of the camp is a breeding ground for diseases.

of ten volunteers of the Jamiat who look after their basic needs. Though food grains and raw materials are provided to each family, which cooks its own food the conditions in which these 10,000 people live are beyond humane. We saw a big hole dug right in the middle of the relief camp, which is

literally under the sun, used as a toilet. Women would either go to the adjoining jungle or would have to manage to use a makeshift four walled tent as one.

For numbers as large as 10,000 we did not see one police van, no government health facility neither any supplies from the administration. For the first three weeks, we were told, they were sent 400 liters of milk every day. 400 liters for 10,000 and more! The unbearable heat, the stench of defecation all around, flies, pregnant women and infants as young as 7 days not well looked after, all marked the malakpur relief camp. The adjoining jungle also posed threats to the safety of the inhabitants, who have even had to face snakes etc at night.



**Thousands of people take refuge under plastic tents in Malakpur**

Case studies from Malakpur:

1. Vaseela from village Laakh narrated her tale to us, crying, telling us how her daughter was brutally gang raped and then burnt alive. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, when the family was fleeing their village, her daughter who was keeping unwell, was caught by four men and gang raped. She was then burnt alive. Vaseela and her family filed an FIR against those from the village they could identify but neither has the family been able to find her body nor has any investigation into the rape and murder seen the light of day.
2. Naseem from village Fugana sat on a *charpai* with his wounded knee as he spoke to us. He was shot in his knee while trying to jump over a wall to save his life. His grandfather was killed by the Jats of his village but he managed to escape with the rest of his family.

3. Naseeba : A young mother with a new born baby at Malakpura camp shared with us how she was struggling to survive at the camp with her children. They passed two rainy days there along with thousands others and are dreading the cold nights. Despite these hardships she is not ready to go back to her village, Lisarh, because of the immense fear and lack of trust owing to the violence she witnessed there while fleeing.
4. Salma from Village Laakh: ‘We heard people shouting in our village. The Jats were screaming and saying that not one Muslim will be spared. My family and i ran for our lives. I saw two women being shot and six others being brutally killed. Two men caught hold of me and tore my clothes. I managed to escape. My little children and i hid in sugarcane fields, for two days we had nothing but water to survive on. Here i am today, it has been over a month now and i have no where to go.’
5. Arif , a five year old boy told us he does not like it in the camp. With a bowl of rice and dal in his hand, in his broken speech he expressed his dislike for the food he was eating. ‘Doodh peyoonga’ (i want to drink milk) said the child who had not had a proper meal for over a month now.
6. Gulshan from Lisarh Village who has been staying in Malakpur camp from 15<sup>th</sup> of September has a 21 day old child and two other children. She delivered her baby in the camp. She told us that there were many pregnant women when she has arrived in the camp, three women gave birth to still born children and also that two infants died in the camps.
7. Shahida: Village Laakh- “I have not slept for more than 3 hours everyday in the past one month. Days are difficult to pass and nights bring with them fear. I have a young daughter, how do i sleep in peace? Who will take responsibility if someone tries to rape her? If i want to pass urine, i do it inside the tent at night. I am too afraid to go to the jungle, or to leave my daughter alone..”

## 2. Kandhla Relief Camp

Located in Shyamli district, Kandla camp operates on the premises of an Idgah. It has been functional for a month, say inmates, approximately since September 8, 2013 when trouble broke out in Muzaffarnagar. The camp is run by a group of men, headed by Haji Sajid who is referred to as 'Chairman' by most. The idgah used to be a shelter for over 11,000 people, most of whom relocated to their relatives etc, however it still houses a large number of men, women and children who are virtually living under a 'Shamiana' or tent day in and day out. We saw a small dispensary in the Idgah which was set up by the administration, but on probing we found out that it did not cater to the needs of special patients. Only pregnant women and those specially



Donated old clothes lie outside the Kandhla Camp, unwanted.

abled slept on 'charpais' the rest have been living under the shamiana, sleeping on the ground for over a month now. Although there are 6 toilets and some water taps, they are not enough. The men and women, live separately, in two different parts of the Idgah. A large number of mass weddings have taken place here, these have

been supported by the organisers of the camp. We suspect from our discussions with the parents that many from among the girls married off are below 18 yrs of age.

Shabana narrates a gory tale of a Muslim woman being gang raped for four hours. Where is the woman now? Burnt and killed, say the women

### Case studies from Kandhla Relief Camp

1. Fehmida: Village:Lisarh- Fehmida shared with us the story that most of her female counterparts have undergone. Her family and she left her home , unlocked, and ran for their lives only to return and see that most of what they had left behind had

turned to ashes, including all the documents , books and marksheets that belonged to her children. Mother of 5, what worries her most is that the education of all her children has been affected. Her son pursuing his BBA is struggling to keep up with his books and documents burnt, and three of the school going children are all in the camp with her with their studies at a complete halt. ‘Hum ghareeb musalmaanon ko vaise hi parhai kahaan naseeb hoti hai, aur ab ye halaat. Kya karein ?Kahaan Jayein” (It is very difficult for us poor, muslims to educate our children,and now this calamity. What do we do? Where do we go? ) she asks us...



**Charred utensils retrieved from homes burnt down**

2. Khatoon: Village Silana: Widow - ‘My son, daughter in law and grand -son are all missing. Its been a month and i have not heard from them’, Khatoon tells us, tears rolling down her wrinkled face. She is one among the many mothers who married their daughters off in a desperate attempt to ensure their safe departure from the camps and believes that her daughter will remain safe in her new home.
3. Meena from Lisarh did not loose her family members in the riots but she and her husband who were tailors in her village, had a three storey house and earned a decent living are now left without a home and any source of income. She has sent her daughters away to her relatives place and cries as she shares that she has not seen them in a month now. They of course have been forced to leave their studies. Insurance papers, property papers and all of the children’s school documents have



been burnt with the house. The health facilities at the idgaah provided by the govt are extremely basic and do not cater to special and specific needs.

4. Md Yaseen Saifi: Village Laakh -“Hum police force to phone karte rahe lekin koi police nahi aai.” (we kept calling the police station but no police came to our rescue) “Zeher khaa ke marjayenge lekin gao wapis nahi jayenge”(we will have poison and die but not return). Such is the fear in thousands like yaseen who refuse to go back to the villages , to the houses they once called home. “My cousin brother was shot and his neck slit. I was in Delhi. I came back as soon as possible only to see no where to go to, no place to call home”.

## **Reccomendations/Appeals**

### **Relief and rehabilitation**

1. These riots depict a clear failure of the administrative machinery. It is a desperate need that relief reaches those most in need and the government needs to play a more proactive role in the same. Though some camps in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts have been provided with food and compensation for the deceased, many like Malakpur have yet to receive help of any kind. There are claims of relief and money flowing in from different quarters, but the living conditions in the camps are a clear indicator of nothing reaching the survivors. Children and women are traumatised and need psycho-social counselling.
2. Immediate relief in terms of food supplies, milk, medical aid, adequate shelter, blankets and other necessities should be immediately provided to all the displaced citizens. It is also suggested that importance be given to children’s nutrition and education. For this purpose the District Supply Offices, health and Education departments should come forward to look after health of the growing kids as well to fulfill their need of elementary education. Though the ADM (finance) told our team that there are only three women gynecologists in district Muzaffarnagar, however the government should arrange more doctors from other districts or private hospitals. There must be PHCs/CHCs or at least conditional health and education centers. For employment for the time being district administration and government should expand MGNREGA around the camp areas until the rehabilitation work is properly concluded.
3. The conditions of the camps are appalling. Putting people in plastic tents is totally inhuman. This needs to be redressed urgently. There is an urgent need to push the

government to look after the basic necessities of the survivors fighting through these challenges daily.

4. Compensation: The efforts in this direction are dismal. There is an urgent need to begin the process of resettling the victims and help them in rehabilitation. Need to ensure that the compensation declared by state and Central Government reaches the victims or their survivors. There should be assistance for rebuilding homes and burnt and destroyed property.
5. Resettlement: Most survivors are afraid to go back to their villages. Adequate measures should be undertaken by the state government to rebuild trust and sense of safety for them to be able to return. There should be assistance for them to be able to resume their livelihood activity at the earliest.

### **Legal Justice**

6. FIRs need to be filed urgently and cases taken up more diligently. People have lost trust in the police. There is a strong demand of effective investigation of the crimes committed, including those of sexual assault and murder. Police officials should visit every camp and note down the details from survivors concerning the names of attackers, losses suffered, sequence of events etc
7. The Government has appointed one judge Commission which has its office in Muzaffarnagar. The victims cannot reach the Commission due to sheer distance and also lack of awareness. It is imperative that Commission needs to appoint officers who can go to refugee camps and register complaints and versions of the victims.

### **Restoring peace and harmony**

8. There is a near absence of secular organizations and even voluntary organizations in the region. We saw help and assistance being rendered only by the Muslim community in the two camps Kandla and Malakpur. The silence of large sections of civil society implies a huge missed opportunity for reconstruction and creating fresh space for communal harmony.

9. There are strong undercurrents of hatred and mistrust in the communities still. There is a dire need to address this or we fear that more violence can be witnessed in the coming days. There is also a need to initiate dialogue between the two communities and promote their interaction on a regular basis.
  
10. Media should be made more responsible and those spreading rumours should be held accountable.

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Rehana Adeeb: Astitva, Muzaffarnagar

S Q Masood: Social Activist, Hyderabad

Urvashi Sarkar: Actionaid

Vaseem Akhter: Actionaid Lucknow

Yogesh Diwan: People's Research Society, Janpahal

Zaheer Jan Mohammad: Writer/Journalist

Zakia Soman, Centre for Peace Studies, Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan