

T. R. NO. 59

Ofc.

Technical Report

WP 1974/59

WP59
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WP
1974
(59)



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AHMEDABAD

AHMEDABAD DISTURBANCES: JULY 1973

by
Pramod Verma

T. R. No. 59
November 1974

Indian Institute of Management
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Title : Ahmedabad Disturbances: July 1973

Author : Pramod Verma

Abstract : This paper, as an exploratory attempt, presents the facts which will provide some insight into the nature of the July 1973 disturbances, makes a preliminary diagnosis of the causes for the disturbances and suggests some possible areas for further research. It was found that the three-day rioting had started as an economic protest but had quickly turned into a communal strife. While socio-economic, political and communal tensions could be held responsible for the riots, it was not possible to assign primacy to anyone of these factors. It is suggested that an intensive research on the socio-economic structure of Ahmedabad population ~~should~~ be undertaken.

Pramod Verma

AHMEDABAD DISTURBANCES: JULY 1973

The three-day disturbances in Ahmedabad in July 1973 started as a protest against economic and political situation in the Gujarat State but quickly turned into communal riots. Since an understanding of the causes for such disturbances is of crucial importance for maintaining social order, academicians, administrators, and social reformers are all equally concerned about them. This paper, as an exploratory attempt, presents the facts¹ which will provide some insight into the nature of the July 1973 disturbances, makes a preliminary diagnosis of the causes for the disturbances, and suggests some possible areas for further research.

I. The Incidents

The Gujarat Nagrik Yuvak Samiti called for a students strike from July 12 to 14. The "Ahmedabad Bandh" call was given for July 14 to protest against the rising prices and the fluid political situation in the state. This samiti consisted of right-wing student leaders and teachers.

Another samiti, the Vidyarthi Madhyastha Samiti, Ahmedabad, whose aims and objects were primarily to solve the students' problems, such as increase in tuition fees and E.B.C. concessions to college students, did not approve of students' participation in the "Ahmedabad Bandh" call which, they felt, had nothing to do with the problems faced by the students. This samiti gave a separate call for observance of "Hartal" in educational institutions on July 14 and declared it "Demands Day", which coincided with the "Ahmedabad Bandh" called by the Gujarat Nagarik Yuvak Samiti.

While the "Ahmedabad Bandh" was a fiasco, the educational institutions in the city were closed. Subsequently, some citizens organized a meeting to protest against the rising prices. This meeting was addressed by, among others, a prominent M.P. from the city. In the meantime, there was a hectic political activity in the city for choosing the leader of the Congress Legislature Party.

¹I am thankful to Mr. P.M. Pant, Inspector General of Police, Gujarat, for a detailed discussion. See also Ghanshyam Shah, "Anatomy of Urban Riots: Ahmedabad, 1973," Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, February 1974, pp.233 - 240.

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Then, in an already tense atmosphere in the city, stray incidents of stone-throwing by people whose primary objective was not to take retaliatory measures against members of the other community, sparked off communal riots. From 9 p.m. on July 14, the following incidents took place one after another.

1. Stone pelting of the AMTS buses near Model cinema as well as on the police when they rushed to the spot.
2. A section of the mob which dispersed from this place burned a milk cabin at Sevekani-Wadi in Khadia and also pelted stones at the police on its arrival.
3. A part of the mob broke open two oil shops, damaged a dispensary of Dr. Bodiwala, and set the Edward Washing Company on fire.

This attack on Edward's acquired a communal colour as it belonged to a member of the minority community and had been the target of attack in 1969 in earlier communal riots.

Thereafter, incidents started happening more or less in quick succession, if not simultaneously, at various places:

1. Nota - Bene and Novex washing companies, situated in Chhabila Hanuman near Raipur Gate and belonging to Muslims, were ransacked and articles were set on fire.
2. A Hindu doctor was stabbed at Dabgarwad.
3. The Garment cleaners laundry near the Oriental Building was ransacked and a bonfire was made of the articles.
4. An attempt was made to loot some shops on the Relief Road.
5. Some Hindu shops at Panchkuva were set ablaze.
6. Some Muslim shops were broken open at Raja Mehta's Pole, and similar incidents of arson were reported from Manek chowk, Akasheth Kuvant-Pol, etc.

The police dealt with these incidents not in an isolated manner. Police contingents were promptly posted at all the vulnerable places in the city and stringent measures were taken right from the beginning to quell the disturbances. The deterrent measures taken by them were as follows:

1. Tear-gas shells were fired on a mob near Raipur.
2. Three rounds were fired on a mob attempting to ransack a government fair price shop at Sarangpur.
3. Firing was resorted to at Vadigam Nagina Pol and at Dabgarwad where a Hindu mob was at the point of killing a Muslim pedestrian.
4. Opened fire when a mob was trying to make a bon-fire of the articles belonging to Garment cleaners near the Oriental Building.
5. Lathi charge was made on a mob attempting to loot shops.

As a result of the police firing, one person was killed and two were seriously injured. This death was the only casualty by the police firing during the disturbance. From July 14/15 midnight curfew was imposed for 24 hours in the walled city.

There were some minor incidents on July 15. The curfew was extended for two days. After the third day, there was hardly any incident and the curfew was gradually lifted. Within a week, the city became normal.

II. A Diagnosis

The incidents which led to the disturbances highlight the following social situation in Ahmedabad:

1. The economic discontent became a focal point for protest.
2. The political instability generated a negative attitude towards the government.
3. The existing inter-communal prejudices turned a general protest into a communal fight.

A sample survey of 80 respondents in four areas in the city was conducted to ascertain the respondents' attitude towards the government, the religious tolerance, and the riots. Although no generalizations can be offered on the basis of this preliminary and limited survey, it is hoped that the survey results will provide some empirical base for discussion. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table.1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<u>1. Area</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>2. Age</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Dhabgarwad minority	20	25.0	Upto 30 years	30	37.50
Dhabgarwad majority	20	25.0	31 - 40 years	17	21.30
Kalapur minority	20	25.0	41 - 50 years	19	23.80
Khadia majority	20	25.0	51 & above	14	17.50
<u>3. Sex</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>4. Education</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Male	43	53.7	Non-education-N.Matric	55	68.75
Female	37	46.3	Matric - College	25	31.25
<u>5. Length of Stay</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>6. Occupation</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Up to 15 years	7	8.75	Business	19	23.75
16 - 25 years	19	23.75	Household	35	43.75
26 - 35 years	26	32.50	Service	11	13.75
36 & above	28	35.00	Miscellaneous	15	18.75
<u>7. Income</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>			
Up to 5000	33	41.3			
6000 - 10,000	25	31.2			
11,000 & above	22	27.5			

Socio-Economic Discontent

Being an industrial and commercial centre, Ahmedabad is subject to several economic and social strains which have been further accentuated by the increasing prices.

The haphazard growth of the city has led to the concentration of 80% population in the eastern side of the city. While there is socio-economic disparity between the eastern and western parts of the city there is even more glaring disparity between one ward and the other within the eastern part itself. The effect of this concentration of population is that almost 50% of the population lives in slum-like conditions. The chawls, in particular, lack even basic social amenities.²

The economic situation in July 1973 was marked by spiralling prices for most commodities. The consumers' price index number had already reached 230 in June. Table 2 shows that for 1973 as a whole there was 31% increase over the average index for 1971. The price level for selected articles are shown in Table 3. This table also brings out the fact that prices had an upward trend for the commodities which are commonly consumed. A perusal of the two tables would clearly suggest that food and clothing prices were on the increase.

²Prmod Verma, Labour in a Textile City, IIMA Technical Report No.15.

Table 2
Consumers' Price Index for the Ahmedabad Working Class, 1973
(1960 = 100)

Month	Food	Pan Supari, etc.	Fuel & Light	Housing	Clothing	Misce- lla- neous	General index
January	231	185	188	118	187	198	211
February	237	186	188	118	188	200	215
March	244	186	188	118	190	197	219
April	246	188	188	118	201	197	222
May	248	188	188	118	202	201	224
June	257	190	190	118	206	202	230
July	267	191	190	118	209	204	236
August	260	190	190	118	213	209	233
September	274	193	195	118	217	210	242
October	281	193	197	118	222	211	247
November	294	197	209	118	231	211	257
December	300	206	218	118	238	212	262
Average for 1973	262	191	194	118	209	204	233
Percentage increase since 1971	41	10	17	2	24	13	31

Source: Indian Labour Journal

Table 3

Prices of Selected Commodities

Articles	Unit of quantity	Year ending	Price per unit of quantity								
			April 75	May 1975	June 1975	July 1975	August 1975				
Rice	K.G.	Rs	0.86	2.23	2.37	3.58	2.70	Rs	2.70	Rs	2.73
Wheat	K.G.		0.61	1.20	1.02	1.04	1.05		1.05		1.03
Arhar dal	500 gms		0.32	1.25	1.22	1.17	1.17		1.17		1.16
Moong dal	500 gms		0.34	1.30	1.56	1.58	1.58		1.58		1.25
Groundnut oil	500 gms		0.90	3.75	3.79	5.79	4.63		4.63		3.76
Milk	Litre		0.64	1.10	1.40	1.52	1.75		1.75		1.75
Potatoes	500 gms		0.24	0.49	0.53	0.30	0.60		0.60		0.59
Sugar	L.G.		1.14	2.40	2.45	2.47	2.45		2.45		2.21
Bidi	Packet of 25		0.19	0.29	0.28	0.28	0.28		0.28		0.28
Kerosene oil	Litre		0.34	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63		0.63		0.63
Dhoti	pair		17.76	42.18	42.18	42.18	42.18		42.18		n.a.
Saree	Each		7.54	11.92	12.69	12.69	12.69		12.69		n.a.
Washing soap	Cake		0.39	0.64	0.64	0.67	0.67		0.67		0.74
Toilet soap	Cake		0.44	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75		0.75		0.89

Source: Labour Commissioner's Office

While the effect of rising prices was felt by all sections of the community, the lower income group had been affected more severely. A study of income and expenditure pattern of textile workers shows that the expenditure in 1973 had been considerably higher than income.³ The data revealed that expenditure on food items alone constituted 61% of the current consumption expenditure. Rising food prices had not only affected the pattern of expenditure but forced the workers to borrow more money for meeting current needs. The wage levels in Ahmedabad industries did not reach the level of need-based wage. The traditional indebtedness of the textile worker was considerably worsened as a result of the rising prices.

Political Situation

At the time when people were experiencing a fall in their real income, the political situation in the state was also in a considerable flux. Several individuals and organizations of different political shades were articulating economic grievances of the common man. Within the ruling party itself, there seemed to be rumblings of the discontent on political grounds. Consequently there was a good deal of dissatisfaction among the public. Both the rising prices and the inability of the government to arrest inflationary situation due to in-fighting within the ruling party had manifested itself in a negative attitude towards the government. The survey data lend support to this view.

The survey attempted to measure the attitude of the respondents towards the government. The responses were classified into three groups -- positive, neutral, and negative attitudes towards the government -- as follows:

<u>Attitude toward government</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Positive	14	17.50
Neutral	37	46.25
Negative	<u>29</u>	<u>36.25</u>
	80	100.00

The data reveal that the respondents had developed a negative attitude towards the government.

³Pranod Verma, "Consumption Expenditure of Ahmedabad Textile workers," under preparation.

This attitude was not, however, evenly distributed over all the areas. The relationship between the attitude towards the government and the geographical distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 4. In minority areas the attitude was somewhat towards the negative side whereas in the majority community areas the respondents were much less negatively inclined towards the government.

Table 4

Attitude Towards Government and Geographical Distribution

Area	Attitude towards the government	Positive upto 25	Neutral 26 - 30	Negative 31 - 35	Total
Dabgarwad (Minority)		2 10%	5 25%	13 65%	20 (25%)
Dabgarwad (Majority)		3 15%	15 75%	2 10%	20 (25%)
Kalapur (Minority)		4 20%	6 30%	10 50%	20 (25%)
Khadia (Majority)		5 25%	11 55%	4 20%	20 (25%)
Total		14 17.50%	37 46.25%	29 36.25%	80 (100%)

$$\chi^2 = 19.29 ; \text{d.f.} = 6$$

significant at 1% level

In the minority community areas 57.5% respondents had negative, 27.5% neutral, and 15% positive attitude towards the government. On the other hand, in the majority community areas, 15% respondents had negative attitude, 65% neutral attitude, and 20% positive attitude. The area-wise distribution and the attitude towards the government were significantly associated. The value of χ^2 was found to be 19.29 at 2 degrees of freedom which was statistically significant at 1% level.

Surprisingly, in a place like Khadia, 25% of the respondents were in favour of the government; 20% were highly critical of it; and 55% were neutral as far as the government was concerned.

Of the demographic characteristics, only the educational level of the respondents seemed to affect their attitude towards the government. Table 5 shows that those who had no education or had read up to matriculation level were more negatively inclined towards the government than those who had acquired education at the post-matric levels. The two variables were closely associated. The value of χ^2 was found to be 6.48 with 2 degrees of freedom which was statistically significant at 5 per cent level.

Table 5

Attitude Towards Government and Level of Education

Education	Attitude towards government			Total
	Positive upto 25	Neutral 26 - 30	Negative 31 - 35	
Upto Matric	8 14.55%	22 40.00%	25 45.45%	55 69%
Matric to College	6 24.00%	15 60.00%	4 16.00%	25 31%
Total	14 17.50%	37 46.25%	29 36.25%	80 100%

$\chi^2 = 6.48; d.f. = 2$

significant at 5% level

Communal Tension

Historically, Ahmedabad has had a mixed population for a long time. The census data presented in Tables 6A and 6B suggest that the proportion of Muslim population to total population of Ahmedabad City had declined. The data also reveal the fact that the proportionate increase in Muslim population has been less than that of Hindus or Jains. The Muslim population increased from 178,398 in 1961 to 231,379 in 1971, registering an increase of 29.69 per cent. But its proportion to total population decreased from 15.51 per cent in 1961 to 14.54 per cent in 1971. On the contrary, the Hindu population increased from 884,756 to 1,244,639 over the same period of time, showing an increase of 40.68 per cent. The proportion of Hindu population to total population also went up from 76.94 per cent to 78.18 per cent. For Ahmedabad city, the total population increased by 38.52 per cent from 1,149,918 to 1,591,832 over the decade.

Communal tension also has a long historical background. There were widespread riots even during 1941, 1946, and 1960's, but these were not as violent as in 1969. The 1969 riots resulted in the loss of more than one thousand lives, the majority of them being Muslims, the loss of 3,969 dwellings and shops by fire and 2,317 more by physical destruction and the loss of belongings and shelter by 6,000 families.⁴ The tensions generated during 1969 were not totally eliminated by 1973. The undercurrent of communal prejudices still existed.

To assess the extent of communal prejudice, the sample survey referred earlier had included a few questions on religious tolerances. The following result was obtained.

<u>Degree of religious tolerance</u>	<u>Respondents</u>	
	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Low	14	17.5
Moderate	47	58.7
High	<u>19</u>	<u>23.8</u>
Total	80	100.0

⁴Ghanshyam Shah, "Communal Riots in Gujarat," Economic and Political Weekly, Annual Number, January 1970, pp.187-200.

Table 6-A

Numerical strength of major religious communities in Ahmedabad City, 1901 to 1971.

Religion	1901 2	1911 3	1921 4	1931 5	1941 6	1951 7	1961 8	1971 9
All Religions	185,389 (100.00)	216,777 (100.00)	274,007 (100.00)	234,265* (100.00)	591,267 (100.00)	788,333** (100.00)	1,149,918 (100.00)	1,591,832 (100.00)
Hindu	129,505 (69.67)	152,102 (70.17)	198,596 (72.48)	161,703 (69.03)	426,493 (72.13)	590,440 (74.90)	884,756 (76.94)	1,244,939 (78.18)
Muslim	38,159 (60.53)	45,282 (20.89)	53,828 (19.64)	62,883 (26.84)	116,301 (19.67)	137,404 (17.43)	178,393 (15.51)	231,379 (14.54)
Sikh	47 (0.03)	8 (N)	5 (N)	71 (0.03)	825 (0.14)	1,669 (0.21)	3,059 (0.27)	4,666 (0.29)
Christian	1,264 (0.68)	1,224 (0.56)	2,405 (0.88)	3,277 (1.40)	8,467 (1.43)	11,207 (1.42)	15,858 (1.38)	20,872 (1.31)
Jain	15,460 (8.31)	16,086 (7.42)	17,312 (6.32)	4,796 (2.05)	30,935 (5.23)	45,370 (5.76)	64,341 (5.60)	86,347 (5.43)
Others	1,444 (0.78)	2,075 (0.96)	1,861 (0.68)	1,535 (0.65)	8,241 (1.40)	2,243 (0.28)	3,511 (0.30)	3,909 (0.25)

* The population of Ahmedabad City for 1931 given in the main Table A-IV is 310,000 which is estimated. The break-up by religion, is however, available for the enumerated population of 234,265 persons.

** The following 5 towns of 1951 have been merged in Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1961:

(1) Acher, (2) Vada, (3) Amraiwadi, (4) Rakhial and (5) Khokhara Mehmedabad.

Since the religious composition of these 5 towns for 1951 is not available, their population is not included in the figures given under Col. 7.

Table 6.B

Percentage variation in the strength of major religious communities in Ahmedabad City
1970-1971

Decade 1	Total 2	Hindus 3	Muslims 4	Sikhs 5	Christians 6	Jains 7	Others 8
1901-1911	+16.62	+17.45	+18.67	-85.97	-3.16	+4.05	+43.70
1911-1921	+26.40	+30.57	+18.87	-37.50	+36.49	+7.62	-10.31
1921-1931*	+13.14	-18.58	+16.82	+1,320.00	+36.26	+72.30	-17.51
1931-1941	+90.73	+163.75	+84.95	+1,061.67	+158.38	+545.02	+436.37
1941-1951**	+41.59	+38.44	+18.15	+102.30	+32.36	+46.66	-72.70
1951-1961	+37.36	+49.85	+19.83	+83.28	+41.46	+41.81	+56.53
1961-1971	+38.52	+40.68	+29.69	+53.19	+31.66	+34.20	+11.42

* The population of Ahmedabad City for 1931 given in the main Table L-IV is 310,000 which is estimated. The break-up by religion is, however, available for the enumerated population of 234,265 persons.

** The following 5 towns of 1951 have been merged in Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1961:

(1) Acher, (2) Vadaj, (3) Amvawadi, (4) Rakhial, and (5) Khokhara Mehmudabad.

The religious composition for these 5 towns for 1951 is not available and so their population is not included in the total population of 1951 given in this table.

The data revealed that the majority of respondents had a moderate degree of tolerance, although there were some respondents characterised by either high or low tolerance. A cross classification of respondents, presented in Table 7, shows that the respondents with moderate tolerance formed the majority for each characteristic. The chi-square values were calculated to test the association between religious tolerance and the socio-economic background of the respondents. These values are presented below:

Age $\chi^2 = 5.370$; d.f. = 6 ; n.s.

Education $\chi^2 = 3.208$; d.f. = 2 ; n.s.

Income $\chi^2 = 4.068$; d.f. = 4 ; n.s.

These results indicate that socio-economic background did not significantly affect a respondent's attitude towards the community other than his own. This could be so because the moderate group was heavily represented in all frequency classes. A correlation analysis was therefore attempted with a view to ascertain the direction of association. The results, shown below, did indicate some direction.

Age Correlation coefficient = -.016

Education Correlation coefficient = .171

Income Correlation coefficient = .140

The coefficients are not sufficiently high to be considered statistically significant, yet the signs of these coefficients are revealing. The religious tolerance and age were found negatively associated implying that the younger respondents had a higher tolerance. Similarly, higher education and higher income seemed to positively influence religious tolerance.

Table 7

Religious Tolerance and Socio-economic Background

	<u>Degree of Religious Tolerance</u>			
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>SEX:</u>	14 (17.5)	47 (58.7)	19 (23.8)	60 (100)
Female	9 (24.3)	20 (54.1)	8 (21.6)	37 (46.3)
Male	5 (11.0)	27 (62.9)	11 (26.3)	43 (53.7)
<u>Age:</u>				
Upto 30 years	4 (13.4)	17 (56.8)	9 (30.8)	30 (37.4)
31 to 40 years	4 (23.5)	8 (47.1)	5 (29.4)	17 (21.3)
41 to 50 years	5 (26.3)	12 (63.2)	2 (10.5)	19 (25.3)
51 and above	1 (7.1)	10 (71.5)	3 (21.4)	14 (17.5)
<u>Education:</u>				
Less than Matric	11 (20.0)	34 (61.8)	10 (18.2)	55 (68.6)
Above Matric	3 (12.0)	13 (52.0)	9 (36.0)	25 (31.2)
<u>Income:</u>				
Upto Rs.5,000	9 (27.3)	17 (51.5)	7 (21.2)	33 (41.3)
6,000 to 10,000	2 (8.0)	16 (64.0)	7 (28.0)	25 (31.2)
11,000 and above	3 (13.7)	14 (63.6)	5 (22.7)	22 (27.5)
<u>Areas:</u>				
Minority	11 (27.5)	24 (60.0)	5 (12.5)	40 (50)
Majority	3 (7.5)	23 (57.5)	14 (35.0)	40 (50)

It will be useful to see if there was some difference between the low tolerance group on one hand and the high tolerance group on the other. The mean, standard deviation and 't' values for the two groups /shown in the following table:

Table 8

Character- istic	<u>Low Tolerance</u> (N=14)		<u>High Tolerance</u> (N=19)		Value of 't' with 31 degrees of freedom	Signi- ficance
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
Age	37.65	11.13	35.21	13.47	.55	n.s.
Education	7.50	5.23	9.58	4.39	-1.24	n.s.
Income	5.63	6.34	8.62	4.89	-1.53	n.s.

The table shows that the mean age differed from one group to another, but the 't' test did not conclusively prove that the groups were independent. Similar inferences could be drawn for education and income. But a reading of the data would support the view that older age, lower education and lower income characterised the low tolerance group.

The survey also included a few unstructured questions on the reasons for the occurrence of the riots in general, and the steps which could have been taken to check communal tension and to avert the July riots.

Respondents belonging to the majority community felt that the major reasons for riots lay in the formation of political parties with communal overtones, the existence of vested interest who could capitalize on disturbed situation, the lack of faith in the other communities, the inability of the government to take a stern action against the culprit, the lack of responsible community leadership, and finally, to some extent, the social injustice. The respondents from the minority community held a similar opinion but with a different emphasis.

The need to check communal tension was uniformly felt by all the respondents. There was, however, some difference of opinion on the ways to check communal tension. The majority community members put their suggestions in the following order of priority: the growth of responsible

leadership, creating an understanding and confidence among the minority groups, banning of political parties with communal overtones, and efficient government administration. The minority community respondents, on the other hand, gave a different priority to the same set of suggestions. In their view the most important factor seemed to be a reliance on efficient police administration, efficient government administration, banning of political parties with communal overtones, the growth of more responsible leadership, and finally efforts to create understanding and confidence between the two communities.

The respondents were also asked to identify the actions which could have checked the July riots. The responses from the majority community showed that the government administration, including the police administration, could have averted the riots from erupting. Some respondents also mentioned the need to form peace parties which could have assuaged the feelings of both communities. In addition to these suggestions, the minority community respondents also suggested the following measures: the development of mutual faith and confidence between the two communities and banning of political parties with communal overtones.

It is obvious from the survey data that the respondents themselves were clearly conscious of the existence of communal prejudices and were also aware of the steps which could be taken to avert communal disturbances. Lack of efficient government administration, absence of efforts to create faith and understanding between the communities, the unavailability of responsible community leadership, and the growth of political parties with communal overtones were the factors mentioned more often by respondents from both communities as being responsible for the occurrence of communal disturbance in Ahmedabad.

Although the survey was restricted to a small sample, the fact that communal prejudices exist cannot be disputed. In addition to such prejudices, some socio-demographic factors relating to Muslims in Ahmedabad should also be considered. These characteristics⁵ may be summarised as follows:

1. The proportion of Muslim population has been on decline since 1931. From 26.4% in 1931, it has gone down to 14% in 1971.
2. About 36% of the Muslim population is constituted by migrants, who came from other states such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and the union territories.

⁵B.K. Roy Burman, "Social Profile", Seminar, Issue on Secularism in Crisis, January 1970.

3. Certain occupations such as winders, weavers, printers, and dyeing trades are still dominated by the Muslims, while Harijans dominate spinning departments.
4. Different communities tend to concentrate in specific "pols" or neighbourhoods. There are identifiable Muslim areas within the walled city.

These characteristics seem to have restricted the inter-action between Muslims and other communities; and, insofar as they reflect the traditional culture of Ahmedabad, they have sustained a degree of intolerance between communities.

III. Conclusions and Research Possibilities

This paper has attempted to provide a holistic view about one specific social problem. The issues raised by even a three-day phenomenon of disturbances in July 1973 remain a matter of concern for the policy maker, the administrator responsible for law and order, and the social reformer. An analysis of the incidents suggests that the disturbances in July 1973 were transformed from an economic protest to communal rioting. While the economic, political and communal tensions have already been identified, it is difficult to assign primacy to any one of these tensions as the critical variable in the situation.

One view about the disturbances is that political instability was the crucial factor since factions in the ruling party as well as in the opposition were keen to demonstrate public resentment against the dominant group in the ruling party. In order to provoke and prolong the agitation, both economic grievances and communal prejudices were exploited by the interested groups. This argument does not adequately explain the incidents which did take place on the night of July 14. While it is true that political instability was keenly felt by people, it is not clear as to what triggered off the attack on Edward's laundry shop. Moreover, this argument also raises the question of identifying the groups which directed the agitation assuming that the disturbances were "planned". In view of the fact that it is difficult to substantiate the assumptions of this argument, it may be considered as a partial hypothesis.

A more convincing view could be built around the concept of "simultaneity" of social variables rather than the primacy of one of them. This view seems to suggest that economic stresses and communal prejudices coupled with political instability led to the disturbances. While the Edward's laundry shop was accidentally attacked, it was perceived by the minority community as an attack on that community. This implies that people were still haunted by the attitudes which led to 1969 riots. But let it also be mentioned that an attempt to protest against deteriorating economic situation was perhaps a forewarning for the widespread agitation which led to the dissolution of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly in early 1974.

The survey data clearly indicated that some religious intolerance did exist. Under exceptional circumstances, as in July 1973, this intolerance may assume bigger proportions. The basic issue, therefore, relates to the extent to which communal tension, as any other manifestation of social conflict, can reasonably be contained. It has been suggested that the traditional culture and industrial pattern has thwarted instead of facilitating the integration of minority community within the fabric of society. The following are some of the indicators:

1. The pattern of education since early childhood, its secular and liberal content, and the availability of educational opportunities to all sections of the society.
2. The pattern of housing which ensures equal opportunities for all sections of society to share a common life style.
3. The pattern of work opportunities which are equally available to all irrespective of traditional occupations of the community.
4. The availability of social institutions which are neither politically oriented nor communally motivated.

While no doubt researches have been conducted on the social indicators mentioned above, there are few published studies which may have a bearing on the question of social integration in Ahmedabad. Consequently, there is a pressing need for undertaking research to ascertain the current trends in the social indicators and to suggest appropriate policies. Unless social scientists provide a systematic analysis of problems, the policy makers and implementors may not be able to take appropriate action.