



DELHI CONFLICT OF SECULARISM AND THE VISIT OF FORMER PRESIDENT TRUMP TO INDIA

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Abstract

The crisis between thousands of protesters and police has turned violent ahead of former US President Trump's arrival to India on Monday, 24th February, 2020 a week of demonstrations opposing the citizenship law has been on course to ease the path for non-Muslims from neighbouring Muslim-majority nations to gain citizenship in India. The law has sparked months of unrest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government. Mr Modi, has been cited that 'the new law would save religious minorities such as Hindus and Christians from persecution in neighbouring Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan by offering them a path to Indian citizenship'. However, many peace researchers was of the view that the area of contention in the Modi statement was that the law does not apply to Muslims, which many critics have cited that this action has weaken India's secular foundations. On the night of 23 February 2020, a series of riots and violent incidents began at North East Delhi in which 42 people were killed and more than 200 people were injured. On the same day, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and former legislator Kapil Mishra demanded that the Delhi Police should clear the roads being occupied by people protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR). He stated that if this demand was not met, he would forcefully end the protests. Shortly after his statement, violent clashes began occurring across North East Delhi, resulting in civilian and police deaths. Three mosques were desecrated and burned by rioters, and several schools, shops, houses and vehicles were torched by rioters. The Delhi police have been accused by many eye witnesses of not doing enough to prevent the violence and in many instances, they are supporting the perpetrators. As at 28 February 2020, the police had registered 123 FIRs and arrested or detained around 600 individuals involved in the violence. However, the primary objective of this paper is to recommend an appropriate actions by government in recognizing public views at any stage of public policy formulation and respect for the fundamental Rights of individuals or groups

equally from various religious background in the process of expressing their view through peaceful means like demonstration, advocacy and write-up.

Keywords: *Peaceful Demonstrations, Protest, Riots and Public Policy.*

Introduction

Protests began across India since December 2019 in response to the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) by both houses of Parliament as a policy discriminating one religion from other. Protesters have agitated not only against the citizenship issues of the CAA, but also against the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR). On the intervening night of 22–23 February 2020, around 500 to 1000 women started a sit-in protest at a stretch of Seelampur–Jaffrabad road in North East Delhi. The protest blocked the entry and exit to the Seelampur metro station. According to the protesters, the sit-in was in solidarity with the Bharat Bandh called by the Bhim Army, which has started on 23 February, 2020. Police and paramilitary personnel were deployed at the site to prevent peoples from demonstration secular spirit of India State (BBC News, 2020)

It was on 12th December 2019, the Parliament of India passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA), which amends the Citizenship Act of 1955 to grant a swifter path to Indian citizenship under the assumption of religious persecution to any individual belonging to the specific religious minorities of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, for those who entered India on or before 31st December 2014. However, the Act does not mention Muslims because non-Muslims were regularly persecuted in these countries and Muslim immigrants or immigrants belonging to other religions or from other countries have to follow the regular process. Muslims can still apply for citizenship but they have to wait for permanent citizenship according the existing laws, such as Sri Lankan Tamil refugees.

According NTDV News, reported on 27th February, 2020 has cited that Rohingya Muslim and Hindu refugees from Myanmar, and Buddhist refugees from Tibet. This information has created fear among those the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which the government plans to implement for India in 2021, could be used to deprive Muslims of Indian citizenship denied the chance of other Muslim refugees from neighboring countries to enjoy the citizenship status in India.

Various literatures has shown how the relatives of the people who died in the violence accused Mishra of inciting the clashes and asked for his immediate

arrest and strict punishment. Father of a victim Rahul Solanki claimed that Mishra instigated the fire and returned his home, while their children are becoming victims of the violence. He added that people will continue losing their children until Mishra gets arrested. BJP's East Delhi MP, Gautam Gambhir, on 25th February, 2020 stated that "Kapil Mishra's speech is not acceptable" and asked for strict action to be taken against the people responsible for violence, regardless of which political party or religious they belonged to.

Research Methodology

This paper has used the relevant literatures wrote on the 2019 amendments of citizenship and registration legislative law in India in order to investigate the causes of India secularism riot during 2019 visit of former President Trump to India.

Research Questions

The paper has the following questions to ask:

- i. What are the causes of Delhi secularism crisis in 2020?
- ii. Does public opinion need to be obtained before making or amending laws?
- iii. What are modern ways of addressing Public Protest?

Research Objectives

This paper has the general objective of assessing the Delhi secularism protest in 2020 which has the following specific objectives:

- i. To find out the causes of Delhi crisis in 2020
- ii. To examine the importance of public opinion during amending or making new laws
- iii. To investigate democratic means of addressing Protest without issues of Human Rights violations.

Timeline Frame for Riots in India

This paper want to give the historical antecedent of the riots incidence in 2020 with dates and the rationale behind the escalations of the crisis which has two basic logical reasons from the permitting Citizens registration of Non-Muslim minorities from the neighboring countries since 2014 while those minorities Muslim are not be considered based on the policy amendment and the nature of socio-economic problems such as higher level of inflation, unemployment and women and children violations by the police during protest.

23 February, 2020

On 23 February, 2020 between 3:30 and 4 pm, Kapil Mishra, along with his supporters, reached the protest site at Jaffarabad and delivered a provocative speech. Around 4 pm protesters reportedly hurled stones at the Pro-CAA gathering at Maujpur Chowk and near a temple. Within an hour's of his speech clashes broke out between the anti-CAA and pro-CAA demonstrators in Maujpur, Karawal Nagar, Maujpur Chowk, Babarpur and Chand Bagh. Police used lathi-charge and tear gas to disperse the crowd and to take situation in control (Pandey, 2020)

The actions of police in places during the clash between the anti-CAA and pro-CAA demonstrators has significantly shows a clear breach of Human Rights violation where peoples are been while other been injured from the clash's parties on the laws and the police.

24 February, 2020

In the morning, a pro-CAA mob came close to an anti-CAA protest site at Jaffrabad and raised slogans. They refused to leave until the anti-CAA protesters left the site.

According to Barton, N (2020) has explained the nature how by the afternoon violent clashes broke out in several areas of North East Delhi. By evening, one such violent clash occurred in the Gokulpuri and Kardampuri areas where a tyre market was set on fire. In the clash one police head constable, Ratan Lal, and a protester were killed. It was initially reported that he died due to head injuries from a stone thrown at him in Gokulpuri. However, according to the autopsy report, Lal had received fatal bullet injuries. The pro-CAA demonstrators and anti-CAA protesters clashed with each other and stones were pelted from both sides. During the violence, several houses, vehicles and shops were been vandalized. The police personnel used tear gas and lath charge against the protesters in the Chand Bagh area to control the clashes. Later, it was reported that six protesters had also died during the violence.

Violence was reported in the areas of Seelampur, Jafrabad, Maujpur, Kardampuri, Babarpur, Gokulpuri and Shivpuri. Section 144 (ban on assembly) was imposed in all the affected areas but the rioters were still active (Delhi Violence, 2020)

Delhi Fire Service stated that it attended 45 calls from areas in northeast Delhi and three firemen were injured, on 24 February. While attending calls, a fire engine was attacked with stones, while another fire engine was set on fire by rioters.

25 February, 2020

On 25 February, 2020 stone pelting was reported from Maujpur, Brahampuri and other neighbouring areas. Rapid Action Force, a specialized police unit, was deployed in the worst affected areas.

In Ashok Nagar, a mosque was vandalized and a Hanuman flag was placed on one of the minarets of the mosque. It was also reported that prayer mats of the mosque were burnt and torn pages from the Quran were strewn outside the mosque. A mob sloganeering "Jai Shri Ram" and "Hinduon ka Hindustan" (India for Hindus) marched around the mosque on fire. Shops and houses near the mosque were looted. According to the locals, the attackers were not the residents and had come to the locality from outside. After the first wave of violence by rioters, the police had evacuated the Muslim residents and had taken them to the police station. While the residents were away, a second mosque in Ashok Nagar and a third in Brijpuri were also desecrated and torched. A three-storey house and eight shops in the vicinity were also torched. According to locals, the rioters were outsiders as they could not be identified.

Bandhari, H (2020) has highlighted that in Brijpuri a mosque, a madarssa and a school was torched using petrol bombs. Around 50 rioters entered into a school in the evening and vandalized and set it on fire. Another mosque was vandalised in Gokulpuri. The mobs from both communities meet face to face and hurled stones, petrol bombs at each other. The mobs from one community shouted slogans of "Jai Shri Ram", while mobs from other community shouted "Allah hu Akbar". As at 3 pm in Durgapuri, both the Hindu and Muslim mobs clashed by pelting stones and shooting. Police was not present initially in the area and arrived an hour later. The rioters had tilak on their foreheads, and shouted "Jai Sri Ram" and "Har Har Mahadev". Shops and vehicles belonging to the Muslims were torched.

At Gamri extension a mob attacked a lane and an 85-year-old woman was burnt to death, when her house was set on fire. In Karawal Nagar, acid was thrown by protesters on the paramilitary personnel who were deployed in the area to maintain law and order (Johari, 2020)

Among the injured during the above stated crisis more than 70 people have gunshot injuries. People wielding sticks and iron rods were reported to be roaming on the streets in the areas of Bhajanpura, Chand Bagh and Karawal Nagar localities. At 10 pm, shoot at sight orders were given to police in the riot affected area. The dead body of Ankit Sharma, a Security Assistant working in the Intelligence Bureau, was found in a drain in Jafrabad, a day after he went missing. The circumstances leading to his death are under investigation.

26 February, 2020

The National Security Advisor of India Ajit Doval visited violence-affected areas of North East Delhi in the evening. However, reports of violence, arson and mob lynching emerged from Karawal Nagar, Maujpur and Bhajanpura later that night (BBC News, 2020)

27 February, 2020

In Shiv Vihar, between 7 am and 9 am clashes were reported. Three injured persons were admitted to hospital, one had bullet wounds. A godown, 2 shops and a motor cycle were torched.

28 February, 2020

The death toll has reached 43 peoples with a lot of injuries from the protesters and the Police (Sharma, 2020)

The above stated violence between the protesters and police was a serious bloodshed between the civilians and armed police as result of protesters demonstrating their unhappiness with new amendment of China National Registration Law.

Attacks on journalists

Several incidents of mobs attacking journalists were reported during the riots. A journalist of *JK 24x7 News* was shot on 25 February, 2020 while reporting in the Maujpur area. Two journalists of NDTV along with a cameraman were thrashed by the mob, when they were recording the torching of a mosque in the area. One of the journalists received severe injuries. A female journalist of the same media team had to intervene and convince the mob that the journalists were "Hindus" to save them from further assault.

On 25 February, 2020 a photojournalist of *The Times of India* was heckled by the Hindu Sena members while taking pictures of a building which had been set on fire. The group tried to put a "tilak on his forehead" claiming that it will "make his job easier" as he could then be identified as a Hindu by the rioters. They questioned his intentions of taking pictures of the building on fire and further threatened him to remove his pants to show that he is not circumcised, as evidence of being a Hindu. The reporter was later approached by another rioter who demanded him to prove his religion. Several journalists shared their experience with the rioters on Twitter. A journalist of the *Times Now* tweeted that she was attacked by pro-CAA and right-wing protesters. She said that she had to plead with the mobs, which were carrying stones and sticks, to escape from the site. Journalists of the Reuters, the India Today, the CNN-News 18 too

expressed their experiences and stated that they were abused and assaulted (Ayyub, 2020)

The *Hindustan Times* reported that a motorcycle, which belonged to one of its photographers who was documenting the violence in Karawal Nagar, was set on fire by a masked mob. After torching the motorcycle, the mob threatened and abused him and seized the memory card in his camera. They asked for his official identity card and took a photograph of it before letting him leave the site. The Editors Guild of India issued a statement on 25 February, 2020 in which the media professional expressed their concern about the attacks on journalists and assault on freedom of the press. They urged the Home Ministry and the Delhi Police to investigate the incidents and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Reaction and response

The Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal on 25 February 2020 stated that the Police despite its efforts was unable to control the violence and asked to bring in the Army to stop violence as the number of deaths climbed to 23 peoples (Bose, 2020)

AAP leader Sanjay Singh, released a video in which BJP MLA from Laxmi Nagar, Abhay Verma was seen leading crowds that raised slogans "*Police ke hatyaaron ko, goli maaro saalon ko* (Means, Shoot the people, who murdered the policeman)", "*Jo Hindu hit ki baat karega, wohi desh pe raj karega* (Means, People who talk about the welfare of Hindus, only they will rule in the country)" and "Jai Shree Ram". Singh accused Home Minister Amit Shah of holding "all-party meeting, pretending to restore peace and their MLA is engaged in inciting riots." Verma meanwhile defended himself claiming the slogans were raised by common public. Congress President Sonia Gandhi held a press conference where she demanded that Amit Shah should resign for failing to stop the violence. She asked for the deployment of adequate number of security forces.

After three days of violence with 20 deaths, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, shared a message on Twitter asking people to maintain peace. On 26 February, 2020 the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) conveyed "grave concern" over the riots and requested the Indian government to provide protection to people, no matter which faith they belonged to. U.S. Senator and 2020 U.S. presidential candidate, Bernie Sanders along with multiple other American politicians also expressed their concern over the events. In response on 27 February 2020, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Raveesh Kumar stated that these remarks were "factually

inaccurate" and "misleading and they were trying to politicize the issue. In response, BJP general secretary, BL Santhosh threatened Bernie Sanders with election interference against him due to his condemnation. The United States issued a travel advisory for its citizens to exercise caution (US Security Alert, 2020) .

On 27 February,2020 UN Human Rights Chief, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet stated "Indians in huge numbers, and from all communities, have expressed - in a mostly peaceful manner - their opposition to the Act, and support for the country's long tradition of secularism," she expressed concern on the citizenship law and reports of "police inaction" during the communal attacks in Delhi. 12 eminent citizens of Bangladesh also expressed grave concern over the communal clashes on that day. They expressed fear that India's failure to handle the situation could create a volatile environment in its neighboring countries, which could destroy peace, democracy, development, and communal harmony in the region.

Response by the union government

On 24 February 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that the violence appeared orchestrated due to the President of the United States Donald Trump's visit to India. The Ministry also refused to bring in the army to control the riots and stated that the number of central forces and policemen on the ground was inadequate. More than 6,000 police and paramilitary personnel were deployed in the area. The Governor of Meghalaya, Tathagata Roy, wanted lessons to be learned from Deng Xiaoping's handling of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests for ways to handle the riots.

Home Ministry's meeting

The National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval was given the responsibility of restoring peace in the region. On 26 February,2020 Doval travelled to the violence-hit regions and talked to locals, assuring them of normalcy (Roy, 2020)

In the morning of 25 February 2020, the Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal chaired an urgent meeting of all party MLAs from the violence-hit areas and senior officials. Several MLAs raised concerns on the lack of deployment of enough policemen. The concerns were raised by Kejriwal in the subsequent meeting chaired by Home Minister, Amit Shah and attended by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor, Anil Bajjal and senior police officials. The meeting concluded with the decision to take all possible steps to contain violence.

Kejriwal stated that Shah had assured the availability of adequate number of policemen.

Delhi Government announcements

On 27 February, CM of the Delhi Government, Arvind Kejriwal announced free treatment for the injured in government as well as private hospitals under Farishta scheme. The government had made arrangements taking the help of NGOs to supply food in areas where curfew had been imposed. He also announced a compensation amount of "10 lakh (US\$14,000) would be extended to affected people, 1 lakh (US\$1,400) ex-gratia. 5 lakh (US\$7,000) would be granted in case of death of a minor. This effort of the Government in Delhi and developmental partners has reduced the suffering of injured victims of the protest in Delhi.

Investigation

On 27 February 2020, Delhi Police informed that two Special Investigation Teams (SIT) were formed to investigate the violence. DCP Joy Tirkey and DCP Rajesh Deo were appointed head of these SITs respectively along with four Assistant Commissioners in each team.

Supreme Court hearing

Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad Ravan, along with former Chief Information Commissioner, Wajahat Habibullah and social activist Syed Bahadur Abbas Naqvi, filed an appeal in the Supreme Court seeking direction to the police to file reports over cases of violence that occurred since the night of 23 February, 2020. His petition also accused Mishra of "inciting and orchestrating the riots". The plea was filed through Advocate Mehmood Pracha, in an intervention in a matter relating to removal of protesters from the public road in Shaheen Bagh and is scheduled for hearing on 26 February (Rautray, 2020)

On 26 February, 2020 while hearing the issue, the Supreme Court criticized Delhi Police for not doing enough to stop the inflammatory speech and the violence. The bench consisted of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and K. M. Joseph slammed the police for lack of "professionalism" and questioned why the police had to take orders to act during such law and order situation. The court added that the violence could have been prevented if the Police had taken the necessary action on the people who incited violence. The Supreme Court did not entertain any plea on the Delhi incidents as the case has been heard in the Delhi High Court, without any further prosecution of the offenders.

High Court hearing

A plea was filed in the Delhi High Court, seeking police reports and arrests of the people involved in the violence. It was to be received for an urgent hearing on 25 February, 2020. However, the court stated that the plea would be heard on 26 February, 2020. The plea filed by activists Harsh Mander and Farah Naqvi also asked for a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate the incident, in addition to compensation for those killed and injured. It also requested for the deployment of the Indian Army to maintain law and order in the affected areas of Delhi.

Court hearing on 26 February, 2020

At midnight on 26 February, 2020 the court bench consisting of justices S. Muralidhar and Talwant Singh, started hearing the plea to provide the safe passage to the riot victims to reach their nearest government or private hospitals. According Gunasekar, A (2020) has put the argument that in the midnight hearing, the court ordered police to safeguard and help all victims to reach their nearest hospitals. The bench has also directed the police to submit a report of compliance which should include information about the injured victims and the treatments offered to them. The same was to be placed before the court for the following hearing date.

In the morning during the hearing, the court asked the DCP of crime branch, Rajesh Deo and the Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta if they had watched the inflammatory speech given by Kapil Mishra. In response DCP, Deo surprised the court by saying he did not watch the video of Mishra but watched videos of Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Verma. Then the Court played the video clip of Kapil Mishra's speech. The court then directed the police to take decide within 24 hours on filing cases related to the hate speeches made by the four BJP leaders Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma and Abhay Verma. The bench had expressed "anguish" on the inability of Delhi Police to control the riots and its failure to file FIRs against the BJP leaders for their hate speeches. It was noted that Delhi could not be allowed to repeat incidents like the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

Transfer of Justice Muralidhar

On the late night of 26 February, 2020 Justice S. Muralidhar who presided over the bench, hearing the plea, was transferred to Punjab and Haryana High Court. He was transferred on the same day, when he condemned the Delhi Police for its failure in controlling the riots or filing cases against BJP leader for hate

speech. However, official sources claimed that this was a routine transfer which had been recommended by the Supreme Court a fortnight before. BBC News reported that his "biting comments could have hastened his transfer". The news of his removal from the case was criticized by many Indians who expressed concern. Congress party called his transfer as a move to protect the accused BJP leaders. The Delhi High Court Bar Association criticized the transfer and asked the Supreme Court collegiums to revoke the transfer.

Shaheen Bagh Protest on 26 January 2020, celebrating the 71st Republic Day of India.

With crowds reaching as high as 100,000, the protest became one of the longest sit-in protests of this magnitude in modern India. Its stages became a prominent platform to voice issues, and gained support from Punjab farmers. A number of protestors cited the 2019 Jamia Milia Islamia attack, in which about 200 student protestors were injured by Delhi police at the primarily Muslim JMI university. CNN reported that a woman named Bahro Nisa quit her job to continue full-time protest, saying "They tried to stifle the voices of our children [...] as mothers, we decided to stand up". An article in Business Standard called the protest "A new kind of satyagraha [English: civil protest]", noting how a girl was allowed to express her doubts on stage by explaining her dilemma of supporting the CAA while not understanding its dangers (Datta, 2020)

Based on the analysis of Abbas, Z (2019) has cited that it was on 31 December 2019, thousands of camping protestors sang the Indian national anthem at midnight, on what was reportedly Delhi's second-coldest night in the previous 100 years. The protest had one of its largest crowds on 12th January 2020. On 26 January, the 71st Republic Day of India, over 100,000 people assembled at the protest site. The flag was hoisted by three local elderly women who became known as "Shaheen Bagh *dadis*" ("grandmother" in Urdu) during the protest and by the mother of Rohith Vemula. That day, Umar Khalid and Jigesh Mevani visited the area and delivered their respective speeches. A health camp has also been set up beside the camped protestors. Doctors and nurses along with medical students from different medical institutes and hospitals voluntarily joined for the purpose. Sikh farmers have also come and set up a *langer* (free community kitchen) in the area.

The barricaded area has been visited by numerous politicians such as Indian National Congress (INC) leaders Mani Shankar Aiyar and Shashi Tharoor, social activist Chandrashekhara Azad and celebrities such as Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub. On 14 February 2020, filmmaker Anurag Kashyap visited Shaheen Bagh and delivered a speech. On the same day, the protestors also paid

homage to the 40 martyred Central Reserve Police Force personnel in the 2019 Pulwama attack, a suicide bombing attack by terrorists.

Using Culture as a tool for Protest in India

Protest art became the voice of resistance and dissent during the event, and the area has been covered in murals, graffiti, posters and banners. Sarfaraz, K (2020) has highlighted that a number of scale models were installed, including one of a detention camp, depicting those used as a consequence of the NRC in Assam. A miniature replica of India Gate bears the names of those killed during the anti-CAA protests across India. Protestors built and erected a 12-metre-high (40 ft) iron welded structure in the shape of India, painted with the message "Hum Bharat ke log CAA-NPR-NRC nahi maante" (English: We the people of India reject CAA-NPR-NRC). Hundreds of paper boats were arranged in the shape of a vast heart facing a small model battle tank; the boats were inscribed with the words of Hum Dekhenge (We will witness), a poem of resistance written by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, with the many small and fragile boats dwarfing the tank which represented state oppression. Posters proclaim that the protesters are "a bouquet, not the lotus" (the symbol of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]), giving the message of unity in diversity.

The protest art has been made by anyone, including students from Delhi University, JMI, Jadavpur University and Hyderabad Central University. A reading area called "Read for Revolution" had been set up with hundreds of crowd-sourced books as well as writing materials, drawing allusions to the JMI attack in which police allegedly ransacked the university's library and assaulted those inside. On 17 January, 2020 a bus stop was converted into the Fatima Sheikh-Savitribai Phule library, which provided material on the country's constitution, revolution, racism, fascism, oppression and various social issues. (Staffs, 2020)

Speeches, lectures and shayari poetry readings had been held every day (as of 31 December). Lines of poetry and nazm of revolutionary poets such as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Pash, Habib Jalib, Muhammad Iqbal and Ramdhari Singh Dinkar were recited. Inter-faith prayers have been held. Scriptures from the Geeta, the Bible, and the Quran have been read, and Gurbani was held. Many street pedlars have come to the site, including balloon vendors and chaatwallas (people cooking chaat from carts), giving the area a "lightness of festivity". Nearby eating establishments in Shaheen Bagh have seen an influx of people

with an increase in political conversations, giving them a "taste of revolution" (Ameen, 2020)

Between 2 and 8 February 2020, a musical and cultural event called Artists against Communalism was held in solidarity with anti-CAA protest. Performers included Hindustani classical singer Shubha Mudgal, Carnatic vocalist T. M. Krishna, Sufi singer Madan Gopal Singh, Ankur Tewari (music director of Gully Boy), singer Prateek Kuhad, Kusha Kapila, and Anushka Manchanda, and musical groups Advaita, Peter Cat Recording Co., Moongphali and Rajasthani folk troupe Kutle Khan. Mudgal performed the song "*Hamari Khwaishon ka Naam Inquilab Hain*" (English: My dream is my revolution) by poet Gorakh Pandey and "*Main nahin janta, main nahin manta*" (I refuse to acknowledge, I refuse to accept) by Habib Jalib. Rapper Sumit Roy performed his viral rap music "*Poorna Swaraj*" (Complete freedom) and poet Amir Aziz recited "*Main Inkaar Karta Hoon*" (I refuse).

Hunger strike

Few protesters were on hunger strike at the Shaheen Bagh. Zainul Abidin, a 29-year-old social activist and businessman from Jamia Nagar, had been on hunger strike since the protest started on 15 December 2019. 50-year-old social activist Mehroon began a hunger strike on 1 January 2020. Both stated that they were motivated by police brutality on the students of JMI along with perceived injustices of CAA-NRC. Abidin stated concern for his two sisters who were studying in Jamia, as police reportedly entered the toilets of the institute and beat the female students. As of 10 February 2020, no government officials had visited the site or met with these hunger-striking protesters. Reportedly, Abidin was hospitalised and ended a 42-day hunger strike on 26 January 2020.

Children at the protest

Since the first day, children have been present alongside parents who have participated in the protest. Chakrabarti, S (2019) has cited most of these children visit school in the morning before joining their parents at the protest site, which has become an art space for many children. They express their thoughts and join in the protest through storytelling, poetry, puppetry, singing and painting. Student volunteers engaged the local children in reading, painting and singing, and held informal reading lessons.

Children have drawn issues such as the Australian wildfires (with a child writing "Shaheen Bagh prays for Australia") and other things such as Deepika Padukone, Spider-Man and Disney Princesses. Some of the children will go to the stage with slogans such as "Hum kagaz nahin dikhayenge" (we won't show

our papers). One of the most common pictures drawn by the children is that of the national flag. Scroll.in has called the area an "open air art gallery". Some children express themselves through sit-in protests holding candles.

On 21 January 2020, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), the top children's-rights body of India, asked authorities to provide counselling for children present at the protests. A complaint was received claiming that the children had been misinformed by their parents about the CAA and detention centers. Children at the site listen to speeches about issues – including CAA-NRC, the Ayodhya dispute, and triple talaq (a.k.a. instant divorce) – which are claimed to have been discriminatory in nature. Some of these children have been seen in viral videos of the protests shouting slogans. NDTV reported that the District Magistrate of South East Delhi was informed of claims of "mental trauma" the children may have undergone due to this violence in Delhi.

Efforts to remove blockade

Counter-protests against the Shaheen Bagh blockade have been held with many locals wanting the roads to reopen. Vincent, P (2020) has make the argument that the Delhi High Court refused a plea on shifting the protesters from Shaheen Bagh; the bench of the court was presided by the Chief Justice, DN Patel. Another petition has been filed by Advocate Amit Sahni "seeking directions to withdraw the closure of Shaheen Bagh stretch" and gives Delhi Police the required assistance in addressing the issue. The blocked road affects more than 100,000 vehicles per day, including 1,800 trucks which are being diverted to other border points.

On 14 January 2020, the Delhi High Court stated that it was a traffic matter to be dealt with by the police according to the larger public interest. The Delhi Police then stated that they would look into the restrictions caused by the protesters, which affect tens of thousands of commuters daily, including senior citizens, school children and office workers. Delhi Police made a statement saying that "Won't use force to evict protesters from Shaheen Bagh" and would use "persuasion". (Notably, police brutality is among the protesters' grievances.) Talks between the protesters and the police failed and the protesters refused to move. The leaderless nature of the protests made it difficult to take any action. (Staff, 2020)

There have been various misleading claims by the media related to the incident. One of such claims was that the Delhi High Court ordered police to clear the protest site. The Times of India debunked a viral video which claimed there was

a failed police crackdown at Shaheen Bagh; the video was from a CAA protest in East Delhi.

On 17 January 2020, Delhi Lt. Governor Anil Bajjal gave the Delhi Police authorization to detain anyone under the National Security Act, for three months beginning on 19 January. This was reportedly clarified by the Home Ministry as a routine order. On 18 January, 2020 another petition was filed by Advocate Amresh Mathur on behalf of the Sarita Vihar resident welfare association (RWA) for opening the road, with concerns regarding the upcoming student board exams in February and March. The High Court accordingly directed the police to look into the reasons for the closure.

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari made a video appeal to the protesters to end the demonstration, noting that the road closure resulted in tens of thousands "completing a 25-minute journey in two-three hours", while stating that the CAA was not against any religion. Protesters responded that they would not budge until CAA is scrapped, but that they will help ease traffic, and said that they have opened the blockade for ambulances and would do so for school buses.

On 21 January, 2020 Bajjal met a group of eight protesters who submitted a memorandum of demands. On 1 February, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said that the Narendra Modi government was ready to negotiate in a structured manner.

Defamation attempts

Kashmiri Pandits' cause

“ We feel the pain of Kashmiri Pandits who left everything back in Kashmir and ran. We the people of Shaheen Bagh Stand in solidarity with them in their agony” (Vaidyanathan, 2020)

It was on 19 January 2020, the protesters at Shaheen Bagh called for a meeting in solidarity with the Kashmiri Pandits, who were the victims of the exodus in Kashmir. This was observed after a controversial tweet by filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri went viral, claiming that the protesters of Shaheen Bagh would organise an event to celebrate "Kashmiri Hindu Genocide day" on that day, which the official twitter handle of Shaheen Bagh debunked. A statement was released which clarified that "malicious elements" were circulating false information on social media, and that the event was not to commemorate the exodus. The protesters also recognized the "injustice done" to the Kashmiri Pandits and invited them to the Shaheen Bagh protest site, where they observed

a two-minute silence in solidarity. Two prominent Kashmiri Pandits, performance artist Inder Salim and theatre personality M. K. Raina, delivered a speech at the gathering.

Inspiration for other similar protests

The Shaheen Bagh protest has inspired several other similar protests in big cities around India. On 7 January 2020, female residents of Park Circus, Kolkata, gathered at Park Circus Maidan to voice their dissent against the CAA. It became one of the most organized protests against CAA-NRC. It has postulated by Ameen, S (2020) has cited that on request from the protesters, the West Bengal state government provided them with tents, bio-toilets, running water and lights so their protest could run continuously. Former Union Minister P. Chidambaram visited the protest and conducted a workshop there on CAA and NRC. Social activist Yogendra Yadav and singer Kabir Suman also visited to extend their support to the protesters.

Protests inspired by Shaheen Bagh in 2020

<i>Location</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Duration</i>
<i>Kolkata, West Bengal</i>	<u>Park Circus</u>	7 January 2020	Yes	30 days on 6 Feb
<i>Parbhani, Maharashtra</i>	Shaheen Bagh, Dharna ground	20 January 2020	Yes	29 days on 18 Feb
<i>Mumbai, Maharashtra</i>	Nagpada	26 January 2020	Yes	13 days on 8 Feb
	YMCA ground, Agripada	17 January 2020	Yes	12 days on 29 Jan
<i>Malerkotla, Punjab</i>	Anaj Mandi	9 January 2020	Yes	42 days on 20 Feb
<i>Ranchi, Jharkhand</i>	Haj House	19/20 January 2020	Yes	31 days on 19 Feb
<i>Deoband, Uttar Pradesh</i>	Idgah ground	27 January 2020	Yes	10 days on 6 Feb
<i>Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh</i>	Mansoor Ali Park	12 January 2020	Yes	13 days on 25 Jan
<i>Gaya, Bihar</i>	Shanti Bagh	29 December 2019	Yes	31 days on 29 Jan
<i>Chennai, Tamil Nadu</i>	Old Washermanpet	14 February 2020	Yes	5 days on 19 Feb
<i>Source: Awasthi (2020)</i>				

However, based on the above citations of the protest in Delhi India there was a demonstration on 11 January, 2020 an all-women sit-in protest started outside Konark Mall in Kondhwa, Pune, organized by Kul Jamaat-e-Tanzeem, an

umbrella body of several organisations. This protest started with a few participants and steadily grew a crowd which reached around 500–600 protesters on 19 January. According to a protester the movement was to save the constitution and the country. Candle light vigils, human chains and speeches were part of the protest. The venue had banners with slogans such as "Tumhari Lathi Se Tej Hamari Awaaz Hai" and "Liar Liar Desh on Fire", as well as "India Needs Education, Jobs, Not CAA, NRC, NPR."

Conclusion

The blockade at Shaheen Bagh became a campaign issue for the Delhi Legislative Assembly election, held on 8 February 2020. Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal (Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Home Minister of India Amit Shah (BJP) fiercely criticized each other over their positions on the protest. On 27 January, 2020 during an election rally, Shah said that the protesters would not listen to the BJP government regarding the removal of the road block. Shah asked Kejriwal whether "he is with the people of Shaheen Bagh or not" as some AAP members had publicly sided with the protesters. Kejriwal accused the BJP of using "dirty politics" and prolonging the road closures to cause a public backlash against the protesters, and noted their promises to reopen the route following the election meant that they could do so at any time. He urged the BJP leadership to visit Shaheen Bagh, talk with the protesters, and open the blockade.

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad (BJP) said that Shaheen Bagh is offering a platform for the "anti-India" gangs. Junior finance minister Parvesh Verma (BJP) made hateful and abusive comments about the Shaheen Bagh protesters and claimed that they would be cleared within an hour of the election results being declared on 11 February. Verma was later penalised by the Election Commission and BJP for his comments. Several other BJP leaders made statements regarding removal of the protesters from Shaheen Bagh. One said that a "surgical strike" would be conducted on the protesters on 11 February, 2020 Hindu Sena stated that they would remove all "Shaheen Bagh Jihadis" at 11 am on 2 February, 2020 this plan was cancelled after consultations with the Delhi Police. Several BJP leaders and politicians made hate speeches against the protesters, including Yogi Adityanath, Anurag Thakur and Parvesh Verma. This was followed by attempts to threaten the protesters. On 28 January 2020, an armed man entered the Shaheen Bagh protest site, climbed the stage, and threatened people to stop the agitation; he was later overpowered by protesters. On 1 February, 2020 a Hindu fundamentalist entered the barricaded area and fired a gun into the air near the stage; he was

taken into police custody. The incident happened two days after a Hindu fundamentalist shot and injured a student protester in the presence of police near Jamia Millia Islamia. The alleged perpetrator of the Jamia incident had made various threatening and hateful social media posts, including one in which he threatened to convert "Shaheen Bagh into Jallianwala Bagh", the site of a massacre. On 2 February 2020, the Election Commission of India transferred Chinmoy Biswal, the then deputy commissioner of police (DCP) for South East Delhi, citing the multiple shooting incidents in the Jamia area, which was an election polling area.

Recommendations

The researcher has the following recommendations for the conduct of effective public policy and peaceful protest in India.

- The new law amendment of 2019 of India needs to offers a path to Indian citizenship for religious minorities in neighbouring countries, need to include Muslims and others religious believers not been restricted to one religion that can clearly indicated religious discrimination and leadership sentiment that can easily causes a public destruction.
- Indian citizens need to adopt the modern ways of public demonstration by experiencing their view without public destruction while should respect their right of lawful assembly and expression
- Mr Trump need to raise and continue discussion the issue of religious freedom in the country with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Indian Government need to provide emerging policies that would address the problem of poverty and other human suffering.

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