

Understanding Riots

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Understanding Riots: Triggers, Patterns, and Responses

Context

Riots pose a **significant challenge to internal security**, disrupting **social harmony, economy, and governance**. According to **NCRB 2021**, India recorded **3,700 cases of rioting**, often triggered by **communal, political, and socio-economic factors**. Social media and **Paul Brass's Institutionalized Riot Systems (IRS)** explain how riots are systematically planned, executed, and justified.

Causes of Riots

- **Communal Polarization** - Deep religious and ethnic divisions fuel violence.
- **Political Triggers** - Elections and political mobilization intensify communal rhetoric.
- **Economic Backwardness** - Poverty and unemployment make youth vulnerable to radicalization.
- **Social Media Influence** - Fake news, deepfakes, and **unchecked hate speech** incite riots.
- **Weak Law & Order** - Delayed police response and slow judicial processes embolden rioters.

Paul Brass's Institutionalized Riot Systems (IRS)

1. **Preparation Phase** - Hate speech and propaganda sustain tensions (**Fire Tenders**).
2. **Activation Phase** - Riots are triggered during political or social unrest (**Conversion Specialists**).
3. **Explanation Phase** - Media and political narratives shape post-riot discourse to shift blame.

Measures to Control Riots

- **Legal Framework** - IPC Sections 141-190 (unlawful assembly), **Section 144, CrPC** (curfew).
- **Police & Disaster Management** - **Rapid Action Force (RAF)**, inclusion in state disaster plans.
- **Social Media Monitoring** - AI-based surveillance, **fact-checking units**.

- **Community Engagement** - Peace committees, interfaith dialogues to de-escalate tensions.
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Challenges in Riot Prevention

- **Unregulated Digital Content** - Hate speech in regional languages, deepfakes.
 - **Judicial Delays** - 3.7 crore pending cases weaken deterrence.
 - **Police Limitations** - 144 police per lakh population (UN recommends 222 per lakh).
 - **Political & Administrative Constraints** - Fear of political backlash, misuse of laws.
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Way Forward

- **AI-driven Monitoring** - Use of Big Data & AI to detect online hate speech.
- **Fast-Track Courts** - Quick trials for riot-related cases.
- **Community Trust-Building** - Strengthening local leadership-police cooperation.
- **Strict Political Accountability** - Penalizing leaders who incite violence.



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