

“Don’t Want to Remember, Can’t Forget”: Unveiling Sticky Memories and Mobile Traumas of Delhi Riots 2020

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This article examines the long-term impact of communal violence and its complex interplay with memory in the aftermath of the Delhi Riots of 2020. Focused against the background of data collected in Delhi, India, during a three-year period from 2020 to 2023, employing a complex method that combines digital and sensory ethnography, the article dives into the experiences of two riot survivor, each of whom experienced horrible occurrences during the riots. The first survivor, a Muslim man who had previously experienced three Hindu-Muslim riots, had to watch his brother be shot and set afire during the Delhi 2020 riots. The second survivor, a Muslim woman, describes the harrowing memory of seeing a man being cut to death with swords, an encounter that resulted in the partial loss of her eyesight. Despite doctors' and counsellors' recommendations to move on, both survivors are still dealing with the long-term effects of their terrible experiences three years after the riots. Their testimonials shed light on the vast complexities of trauma's hold on memory. While both indicate a wish to move on from their violent pasts, the study reveals an irony: their smartphone galleries are filled with gory photographs and videos from the riots, serving as devastating memories of the tragedy they experienced. The research site captures the interaction between personal narratives, collective memory, and the haunting persistence of trauma as revealed through sensory ethnography. This immersive method highlights the complex nuanced ways that memory develops and remains, transcending the boundaries of individual recollections and forming particular identities. This

article provides a thorough analysis of the ways in which survivors' narratives of communal violence become entangled with memory and trauma. The research offers a nuanced view of the effects of community violence by using a variety of approaches. The results reveal the complexity of memory's involvement with violent events, provoking us to think about the wider implications for personal recovery, collective memory, and the transformative use of digital and mobile technologies in memorialising trauma and tragedies. Furthermore, the study delves into the broader implications of such mediatized memories, particularly in a country on the verge of Muslim genocide (Genocide Watch Assessment, 2023), where divisions between Hindus and Muslims are widening with state-supported digital statecraft.

Keywords: mobile traumas, sticky memories, communal violence, delhi riots 2020, social media