

COMMUNALISM IN INDIA CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

Indian society is a diverse society, fragmented society, and a divided society. We can observe caste and subcaste. Indian society is diverse from a religious perspective. Here we find the adherents of all the major religious traditions. Hindus make up the majority of the population and they live in every region of the country. Muslims make up the biggest religious minority. However, the reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims has repeatedly failed, leading to communal riots and violence. During the communal riots at the time of independence, millions became homeless while many others lost their possessions. Commonly recognized, communalism is the competition maintained and exercised by one community or religion against another or among themselves.

Keywords: Communalism, riots, hatredness, communal feeling

INTRODUCTION

Indian society is a diverse society, fragmented society, and divided society. We are able to observe caste and sub-caste. Indian society is diverse from the perspective of its religious systems. Here are the adherents of all the major religious systems. Hindus make up the majority of the population and reside throughout the entire country. Muslims make up the largest religious minority group. However, the reconciliation between Hindus and Muslims has often failed, leading to communal riots and violence. During the communal riots at the time of independence, millions became homeless, while many others lost their possessions. Communalism is typically recognized as the competition maintained and exercised by one community or faith against another or among themselves. Focusing solely on the interests of one's own faith and perceiving the welfare of another group as a danger is a typical trait of communalism. The main characteristic of communalism is that each social development is perceived with skepticism towards one community. Communalism emerges within society when a specific religious or sub-religious group seeks to advance its own interests to the detriment of others. In straightforward language, it can be described as differentiating individuals based on their religion. Communal violence takes place in communities that have a past of communal riots. Aligarh and Hyderabad, along with other cities, are affected by this trend. The existence of a significant number of religious minorities heightens political competition among the elite of both groups, who frequently invoke their communal identity to attract support.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the significance of communalism
2. To examine the reasons for communalism in India
3. To examine the remedies for communalism in India

METHODOLOGY

The focal theory is constructed based on the literature accessible from secondary sources like the World Bank report, RBI bulletin, journals, research papers, and textbooks. The data gathered includes insights from primary sources like personal interviews, phone conversations, and discussions with subject matter experts. The analysis of results is inherently descriptive and exploratory.

MEANING OF COMMUNALISM

Communalism is a political or social ideology centered on a strong allegiance to one's own ethnic, religious, or linguistic community rather than to society as a whole. In a socio-political context—particularly in South Asian regions like India—it refers to the manipulation of religious identities to create divisions, often generating an "us versus them" mentality where the interests of different groups are seen as fundamentally incompatible.

Communalism can be defined as loyalty and commitment to the interest of minority or ethnic group rather than to society as a whole. Communalism refers to a politics that seeks to unify one community around a religious identity in hostile opposition to another community. It seeks to define this community identity as fundamental and fixed. It attempts to consolidate this identity and present it as natural - as if people were born into the identity, as if the identities do not evolve through history over time.

Communalism can be considered an ideology which states that society is divided into religious communities whose interests differ and are at times even opposed to each other. The antagonism practiced by members of one community against the people of other community and religion can be termed communalism. Communalism is associated with tensions and clashes between communities in various religions. Communalism was responsible for the division of the country into India and Pakistan.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNALISM

There are three stages in the development of communalism:

1. Mild : People following the same religion have similar interests
2. Moderate : Dissimilarity of interests between people of different religions
3. Extreme: Interests of people following different religions are antagonistic to each other, based on fear and hatred of other religions.

QUALITIES OF COMMUNALISM

Commonly they have three qualities:

- a) A weak bond with members of other community, little or no contact with them on intimate and equal status basis.
- b) A sense of ethnic dissatisfaction, a feeling that they have no control over events affecting their fortunes.
- c) A feeling that they are treated badly because of their ethnic background. Through violence they not only express their anger but also extend communication and wield control over other groups.

Other crimes they commit in secrecy and isolation, but riots give them the opportunity to come out in the open and indulge in criminal acts without fear or obstruction, condemnation

or interference

Communalism, as we understand it in our country is blind loyalty to one's own religious group. It is described as a tool to mobilize people for or against by raising an appeal on communal lines. Communalism is associated with religious fundamentalism and dogmatism

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNALISM

The following are the some of the characteristics of communalism:

Communalism is an ideological concept,

1. It is a complex process,
2. It has a broader base which encompasses social, economic and political aspects for its manifestation.
3. It causes rivalry, violence and tension among masses,
4. It is used by the higher class people and elites as an instrument for division and exploitation of the communal identities of the poorer sections of their co-religionists.
5. Communalism is simply engineered by opportunistic political and economic interest of contending groups and factions within a political party or by political parties.
6. It strikes at the roots of democracy, secularism and national integration.
7. Its effects are disastrous.
8. It regards the particular religious community as separate from rest of the nation.
9. It regards communal interest as above the national interest.
10. It adopts an attitude of hostility towards other religious communities.
11. It seeks to deal with citizens not as an individual but as a member of a particular community.,
12. It seeks to give to the religious community the right to impose its religious views and social norms on its members and to deny them freedom in religious and social matters.
13. It doesn't believe in separation of religion from politics and seeks to conduct government on the basis of religious dogmas.
14. In its extreme form communalism claims nationhood for the community concern and seeks to raise it to the status of a sovereign state.
15. It believes that the interest of the community can be best promoted by maintain its separate identity and organizing it separately for the promotion of those interests.
16. It believes that not only religious but also secular interest of that community are separate from similar interest of other communities

CAUSES OF COMMUNALISM

There are a number of causes which are responsible for the prevalence of communalism.

A Legacy of Past: On the basis of the "Two Nation" theory of Jinnah, India was partitioned.

Communal politics had played its nasty game during the immediate past of independent India. The “Divide and Rule” policy of the British Government served their colonial interest. The partition of India was the ultimate outcome of their politics. Despite the emergence of Pakistan, a large number of Muslims are staying in India. India has adopted the principles of secularism and equality of the people. But communalism as a legacy of past, is continuing and expressing itself in various form.

Presence of Communal Parties: Religion in India has become an important agency of political socialization and it is also reflected in the ideology of a number of political parties. A number of communal and sectarian political parties and organisations are present in India. Muslim League, Jamaat—Islami, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad are directly or indirectly responsible for the emergence of communalism.

The so called secular political parties also enter into alliance with communal forces for electoral benefit. Candidates are selected by different political parties taking into account the communal composition of the constituency.

Some political leaders preach communalism to attain their immediate political goal. They have become leaders and continue to remain as such only due to the adoption of communal and sectarian interest. When political leaders and their organisations are not away from communalism, obviously this spirit will be promoted in the society.

Isolation of Muslims: Indian Muslims have developed a tendency of isolationism even long after the creation of Pakistan. They remain aloof from the mainstream of national politics. Most of them are not interested to take part in the secular-nationalistic politics of the country. They insist on to be treated as a separate entity.

With their separate culture and different customs, they have a distinct identity. Some orthodox and biotic organisations not only uphold Islamic fundamentalism, they also demand reservation facilities for Muslims. Their isolation creates a psychological separation and misunderstanding which promote communal tensions in the society.

Communalization of Politics: Electoral politics in India has become more expensive and competitive. Different political parties are not hesitating to use any means, fair or foul, for electoral victory. They even create communal tensions and try to take political advantage out of it. Concessions are granted to various minority groups for appeasing them. Each and every party is playing communal card and if situation so demands, is not hesitating to join hands with the communal parties for coming to power. Communalization of politics as a process is supporting the growth of communalism in India.

Cross-Border Factors: Communal tensions in India sometimes are highly intensified due to the rule of two neighbouring theocratic countries. These countries try to create communal problems in the border states. The communal problems of Punjab and Jammu Kashmir are caused due to provocation of Pakistan. So long as this cross-border factor is not removed, communal problems are likely to stay in India.

Tendency of the Minorities: The Muslims fail to be intermingled in the national mainstream. Most of them do not participate in the secular nationalistic politics and insist on maintaining separate identity the elite among the Muslims have failed to generate the appropriate national ethos.

Orthodoxy and Obscurantism: The orthodox members of minorities feel that they have a distinct entity with their own cultural pattern, personal laws and thought. There are strong

elements of conservatism and fundamentalism among the Muslims. Such feeling has prevented them from accepting the concept of secularism and religious tolerance.

Design of the Leaders: Communalism has flourished in India because the communalist leaders of both Hindu and Muslim communities desire to flourish it in the interest of their communities. The demand for separate electorate and the organization of Muslim league were the practical manifestations of this line of thought. The British rule which produced the divide and rule policy feeling of relative deprivation and such feelings contain the seeds of communalism.

Geographical Causes: The territorial settlement of different religious groups especially Hindus Muslims and Christians causes in them wide variation in the mode of life, social standards and belief system. Most of these patterns are contradictory and this may cause communal tension.

Historical Causes: The Muslims, all over the subcontinent, are converts from Hinduism, which was facilitated due to the caste-hate relations and under the compulsions of Muslim rulers. The problems of social segregation, illiteracy and poverty that had set apart the low caste people remain unresolved for them, as the foreign elite that rubbed never shared power with them. Their work ended with the conversion of the Indians and the converts began by imitating the masters in thought, speech and dress. It caused their alienation. Gradually, elements of communalism entered in the Muslim community. The separatist elements in the Muslim community, from the very start of the national resurgence had discouraged others of their community, from associating themselves with it. As a result Muslim league was formed which demanded partition of the country.

Social Causes: Cultural similarity is a powerful factor in fostering amicable relations between any two social groups. But the social institutions, customs and practices of Hindus and Muslims are so divergent that they think themselves to be two distinct communities.

Psychological Causes: Psychological factors play an important role in the development of communalism. The Hindus think that the Muslims are fanatics and fundamentalists. They also believe that Muslims are unpatriotic. On the contrary, the Muslims feel that they are being treated as second rate citizens in India and their religious beliefs and practices are inferior. These feelings lead to communal ill-feeling.

Provocation of Enemy Countries: Some foreign countries try to destabilize our country by setting one community against the other through their agents. Pakistan has played a role in fostering communal feeling among the Muslims of our country. Pakistan has been encouraging and promoting communal riots by instigating the militant sections of Indian Muslim community. Kashmir youths are trained by Pakistan to destabilize India's internal security by spreading communal venom.

Negative Impact of Mass Media: The messages relating to communal tension or riot in any part of the country spread through the mass media. This results in further tension and riots between two rival religious groups.

Ineffective handling of communal rights: sometimes the state governments have been proved ineffective to curb the communal riots in the respective states. It also resulted in spreading the communalism. As the result of the above factors communalism is raising its ugly face in India after the independence and also creating great problems even in the working of Indian political system

Political organization: various political organizations found in India which have created hatred among the people of various religious communities by propagating and here they are the root cause of communalism in India.

Poverty and unemployment: mass poverty and unemployment, scarcity of essential commodities like food, clothing and shelter, ever increasing population, regional imbalance, economic backwardness, economic inequalities. Illiteracy, ignorance and corruption have contributed to the growth of communalism. The unemployed youth is easily drawn by religious preachers towards strongest groups-organizations which are pro or opposed to reservation of jobs also acts as source of communal riots. the continued socio-economic underdevelopment breeds communalism.

CURES OF COMMUNALISM

Abolition of Communal Parties: All the political parties which thrive on religious loyalties should be banned or abolished by the government. Even non-political cultural organizations should always be kept under constant vigil so that they cannot preach communalism.

Transmission of the Past Heritage: Feelings of nationalism should be inculcated in the minds of people by reminding them about the glorious moments of history in Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were combined to safeguard the interest of the country.

Public Opinion: Efforts should be made through mass media for changing the attitude of people towards other communities. People must be aware of the evils of the communalism.

Inter-religious Marriage: Youth organizations and other types of associations should be formed in every locality to give opportunity to people of different communities to come closer and know each other. This may help them to practice inter-religious marriages which will lessen the social distance among the members of different religious groups.

Role of the citizens: Efforts should be made by the enlightened citizens to discourage the communal based forces from the social, political and electoral process in order to make these forces irrelevant. They are to be opposed not to be appeased. Communal carnage should be dealt strictly with new strategies

Role of the education: The role of education and the press is crucial. Paradoxically, the spread of literacy can also have negative consequences in this respect. In simple terms literacy is supposed to be the panacea for all social ills; and spread of literacy is seen as of the highest value

Ideological struggle against the communalism means, the establishment of the legal secular state and ideology was necessary, because when two or more religions already existed it was useless and worse than useless for the state to seek to impose religious uniformity to do so merely lead to civil war or communal riots and thus weaken the state. So secularism opposed to all form of institutionalized religious domination. It challenges not merely inter-religious but also intra-religious domination. Secular state not only keep separation of state and religion but also refused to be theocratic or any formal, legal alliance with any religion.

Strict implementation of rules and regulations: communal carnage should be dealt strictly with new strategies. The government must enact strict rules and regulations and implementation also. Severe punishment must be given and separate force in the police department must be created in order to control and prevent communalism and communal riots. Special training must be imparted to these police personnel. This kind of force must be introduced in every state. This force must act as anti-communalism force.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can say, we must adopt the policy 'Nip in the Bud' especially in curbing and controlling communalism in India. India is known for communalism, communal riots and violence. We should have a strict application of legislation to control communalism and severe punishment must be given to those who provoke and promote communalism. Here the role of the government, people and religious leaders in particular must play an active role in achieving peace and promoting unity, integrity and common brotherhood among all. Though India a pluralistic society it's a duty of each and every individual to contribute in achieving peace and avoidance of communal hatredness. Then only India would become a true secular nation. Promotion of common brotherhood, promotion of oneness and nation first attitude must be cultivated by all.

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