Society Class 09

18th August, 2024 at 9:00 AM

COMMUNALISM (9:06 AM)

- **Concept:**

- **It is an ideology according to which society is divided into different religious communities having different socio, political, and economic interests.**

- **A man of religion is not communal but a man who practices politics by linking with religion is communal.**

- **In short, communalism is referred to as "political trade in religion".**

- **It has the following manifestations:**

- **i. Mild:**

- **People belonging to the same religious community have the same socio, political, and economic interests.**

- **ii. Moderate:**

- **People belonging to different religious communities have different socio, political, and economic interests.**

- **iii. Extreme:**

- **People belonging to different communities not only have different interests but mutually hostile/antagonistic interests.**

Types of Communalism: (9:18 AM)

- **a. Assimilationist:**

- **When a dominant/majority religious group brings within its fold a minority religion then it is referred as assimilationist communalism.**

- **For example, the Hindu Code Bill, or tribes referred as backward Hindus.**

- **b. Welfarist:**

- **When religious communities work towards the welfare or socio-economic development of their members.**

- **For example, scholarships, residential accommodations, education institutions, etc.**

- **c. Retreatist:**

- **It refers to not participating or religious communities keeping themselves away from political activities.**

- For example, the Bahai community forbids its members from participating in politics.

- d. Retaliatory:

- It is based on zero-sum game theory, where religious groups are pitted against each other since they are perceived to have mutually hostile interests.

- *it is always a threat to national integration.*

- e. Separatist:

- When the state demands autonomy on religious lines, however, within the fold of the Indian union.

- Example: Punjab state.

- f. Secessionist:

- When one demands secession based on religious lines (i.e. threatening the internal integrity of India) is referred as secessionist communalism.

- Example: Khalistan.

- The first three types of communalism are not threats to national integration, while the last three types are threats to national integration.

Evolution of Communalism: (9:41 AM)

- **Pre-Independence:**

- *Agricultural distress + lack of emergence of modern industries + lack of job opportunities + rise of middle class due to education opportunities --> discrepancy in demand and supply with respect to opportunities --> nepotism/favouritism (based on religion) --> short-term benefits which gave validation to communal politics.*

- *** Communal bickering did start even prior to the emergence of Britishers.**

- **For example, the destruction of temples forced conversions and imposition of taxes on religious practices of other religions.**

- **However, the genesis could be traced to the British period.**

- **ii. The irony in the Indian context was such that the socio-economic differences coincided with religious differences.**

- **For example, the Zamindar class belonged largely to the Hindu community while the peasants mostly belonged to the Muslim community.**

- **Because of this reality, communalism emerged as a result of conflict between haves and have-nots rather than viewing the economic issues it was seen from the lens of religious differences.**

- **iii. Communalism was also the result of a power struggle between the elite sections of the society.**

- **iv. Communalism was also the result of the divide-and-rule policy of the Britishers.**

- **The policy was adopted to counter growing nationalism and hence, communalism became the main prop of colonialism.**

- **For example, the separate electorate, the partition of Bengal, and the late response to incidences of communal violence, patronage of communal media, etc.**

- **v. Overthrowing of the colonial state was a necessary condition to tackle communalism but not sufficient due to the following reasons.**

- **vi. Failure of national leadership to unify the different sections of society as they indulged in negotiations with religious leaders without making any direct appeal to the masses.**

- **There was an implicit acceptance among the people that they only share political and economic interests but are socially and culturally distinct.**

- **Giving a religious touch to a nationalist agenda.**

- **For example, using religious festivals and symbols to mobilise the masses like Tilak using Ganesh Utsav, taking a dip in the Ganges, etc.**

- **Glorification of a certain period of history to the extent of undermining another historic period generated apprehensions among the educated people of the religious groups, and their alienation from the freedom struggle, etc.**

- Example: Chhatrapati Shivaji is considered as a saviour of Hindus against Islamist Delhi rulers, Muslim rulers were portrayed as outsiders, barbaric, and oppressive, etc.

Post-Independece: (10:19 AM)

- *i. Lack of cultural integration --> generated stereotype -->emotions of anger/hate --> violence manifestation --> minority group to survive resorted to technique of invisibility --> ghettoisation --> lack of cultural integration.*

- ii. Divisive politics:

- Some politicians use religion to achieve political gains.

- For example, manipulation by the leadership for the vote bank or selection of candidates based on the religious composition of the constituency.

- It is also known as communalisation of politics.

- iii. Politics of Appeasement:

- The overturning of Shah Bano's verdict to appease the minority group.

- iv. Psychological factors:

- Lack of trust and understanding among different religious groups which is further aggravated due to media.

- a. Sensitisation of trivial news.

- b. Trivialisation of real news.

- c. Sometimes media disseminates rumour as news.

- v. The situation has further worsened with the penetration of social media.

- vi. Administrative failure to tackle the incidences of communal violence.

- vii. Socio-economic disparity among different religious communities provides fodder for communal politics.

Religious Fundamentalism: (10:45 AM)

- It is a violent offshoot of communalism.

- As per Gabriel Almond:

- It is a visible pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled true believers try to arrest the erosion of religious identity.

- Rationale: people believe due to modernisation and secularisation, the world around them has changed so much that is is difficult for them to protect, preserve, and perpetuate their religious beliefs and practices.

- Causes:

- Necessary: modernisation and secularisation.

- **Sufficient:**

- a. Ideological cohesion (single sacred text).

- b. Supply of potential recruits (relatively deprived section).

- c. Charismatic leader.

- d. Information and technology.

- e. Secular education --> rational and scientific temper --> questions regressive practices --> self-styled true believers think religious identity is declining --> religious fundamentalism.

- **Way Forward:**

- **Short-term:**

- More deployment of a police force and enhanced security through proper barricading.

- Prevent mass gatherings in one place.

- Temporary suspension of the internet to prevent the spread of emotionally charged and divisive content.

- An innovative diffusion framework can be adopted and we can persuade the religious leaders to ensure peace and people do not indulge in violence.

- Providing mobile infrastructure with respect to medical emergencies.

- Patriotic feelings can be generated by playing motivational songs or the power of sports can be explored to address the communal conflicts.

- The police force should be well-equipped to ensure their safety.

- Setting up a peace community to address the issues.

- Drone surveillance can be used to prevent the diffusion of responsibilities.

- Communal outfits should be immediately targeted and their capacity to disrupt law and order must be crippled.

- The administration should make efforts to prevent the politicisation of the issue.

- **Long-term:**

- Eradicate problems of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment.

- Value-based education without any ideological colouration.

- Responsible and restrained journalism.

- Reform in the criminal justice system.

- For example. speedy trials, adequate compensation, fast-track special courts, etc.

- Use of cinema and other cultural platforms to promote communal harmony.

- **In the long run, banning communal outfits.**

- **Proper scrutinisation of domestic and international funding of the organisation.**

- **Proper codified guidelines for administration to tackle the incidences of violence.**

- **Stringent punishments for spreading communal violence.**

- **Creation of units for social media monitoring and fact-checking.**

- **Promoting religious harmony, cultural integration through civil societies, community lunches, celebration of festivals, etc.**

- **Prevent the ghettoisation of communal groups to prevent the feeling of isolation.**

- **Based on the Ranganath Mishra Committee report, proper sensitisation and training of police personnel is required.**

NEXT CLASS: The topic of Regionalismwill be taken up for discussion.