

1. Define religious pluralism and explain with suitable examples (20 Marks).

Religious pluralism can be defined as a phenomena when in a society there exists people belonging to different denominations and denominations doesn't claim the monopoly over truth.

In Traditional societies, there was religious homogeneity in western countries, which in modern times changed due to -

- a) Migration, as a result of wars, more economic opportunities etc. eg. America
- b) Making of political unions → i.e U.K → comprised of England (largely protestant) and Scotland, Ireland (largely Catholic).

- India is also a multireligious society, however it's not a recent phenomena, since 5th c BCE, Jainism and Buddhism emerged against the orthodox vedic religion which later turned into denominations.

Islam, Christianity came in India in medieval times [12th c and 15th c] respectively.

- Followers of Zoroastrianism, also flee from Persia to India in medieval times.

Societies with multiple denominations are characterised by →

- a) no claim over monopoly of Truth.

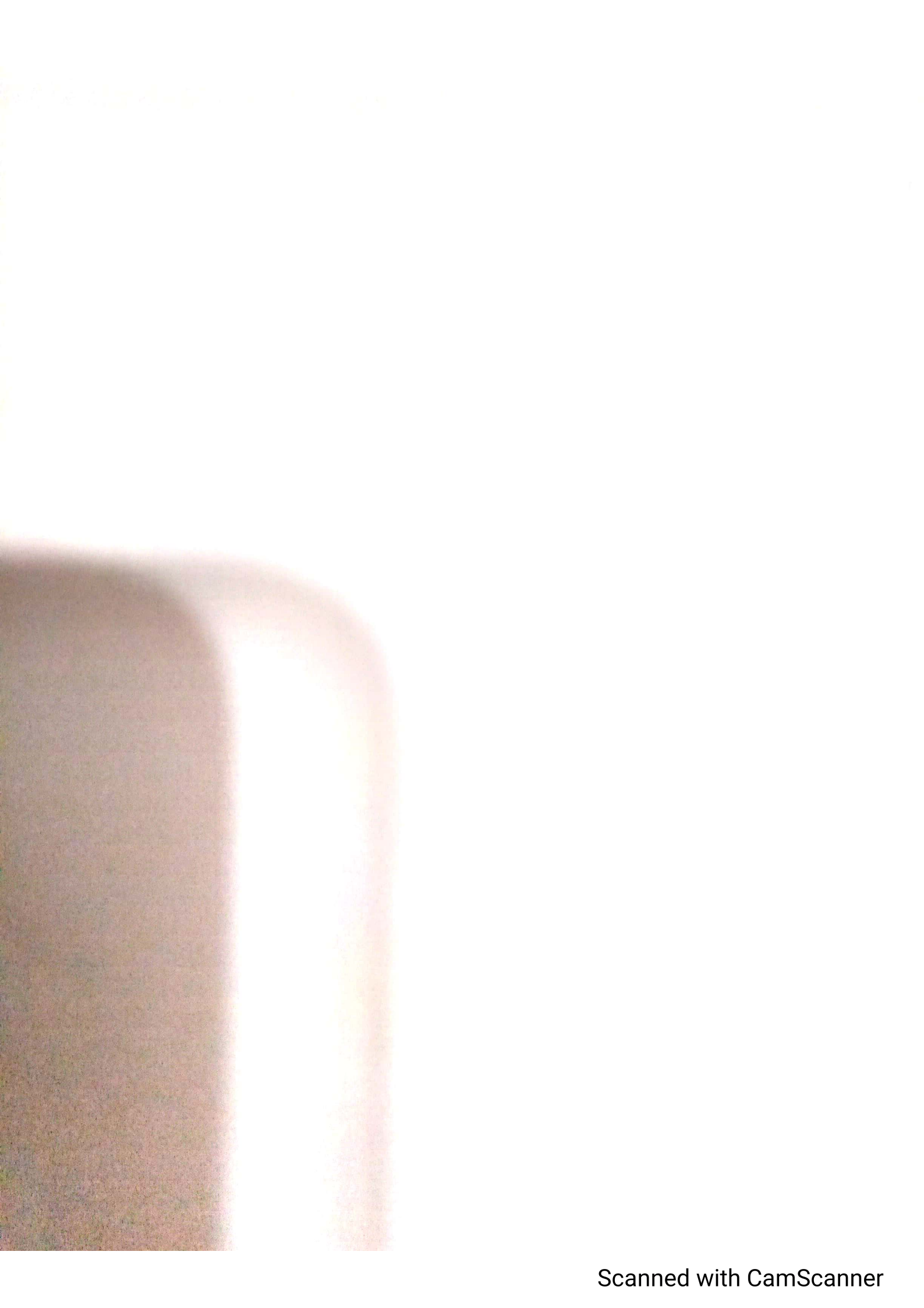
- b) Religion is seen as matter of personal choice.
- c) no interference in state affairs of any religion
→ Steve Bruce.
- d) Society tends to be more tolerant.

Modern societies and Constitution are drawn in such a way, as to safeguard the religious rights of all denominations.

Implications of religious Pluralism →

- a) Durkheim — In Modern society, multiple denominations and their people sees nationalism, national symbols to be new sacred and thus despite being part of multiple religions there is integration.
- b) Religious pluralism also leads to conflict in societies among members of different communities leading to communalism.
- c) Religious Fundamentalism can also emerge due to sense of injustice and threat of subordination for a minority religion by majority religion. eg → Islamic Fundamentalism at India.
- d) Religious Pluralism also implies an open society and thus emergence of sects and cults. — Steve Bruce.

Religious pluralism is indeed a phenomena associated with Modernisation, due to this rationality, tolerance are the reasons that such societies are able to exist. Globalisation is having a homogenising effect and this in turn is integrating people on basis of common value and preference despite being from different denominations.



2. "In Modern advance society religion is a basis of maintaining solidarity" (Comment, 10 Marks)

According to Roland Robertson, Religion is the belief in existence of supernatural beings, that have a governing effect on life.

Functionalist theories like Parsons, Durkheim contends that religion acts as a tool to maintain solidarity in Modern advance society.

According to Durkheim, on the basis of his study of Aranta Tribe (Australia) he contends that world is divided between sacred and profane and all those societal norms that integrates the society and maintains social order are termed as sacred.

In Modern society, unlike Primitive tribes of Australia, [nationalism, national symbols] are seen as sacred, and thus becomes the integrating force in modern society. [Constitution as a sacred symbol] guides the conduct of state, people etc and thus provides a shared morality and any divergence from this would attract restitutive punishment.

Parsons, also in his structural functional theory of religion argued that religion acts as integrating force and binds the society together based on societal norms and values.

However Rik Merton and Marx contends there are dysfunctions associated with religion. Marx even called religion to be "opium of the masses" and legitimises oppression of working class as it is controlled by Bourgeoisie.

Rik Merton also talks about Conflict in multi-religious societies → Communalism, Riots, violence and thus doesnot act as Integrating force.

Although, there are criticisms associated with the religion, but it's integrating factors justifies the order and stability in society on daily basis as Riots are not prevalent all around the year in any society, there can be structural strain in lieu of political, economic, social interests but it's not always there, thus religion as an Integrative force does hold true.