



COMMUNALISM AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN INDIA

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Indian Constitution

- WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:
- **JUSTICE**, social, economic and political;
- **LIBERTY**, of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
- **EQUALITY** of status and of opportunity;
- and to promote among them all
- **FRATERNITY** assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

COMMUNALISM

- Introductory Remarks: National Integration-Problems-Nation-Secular- India is a land of multiple faiths and religions/ethnics/languages
- Indian Society and culture; pluralism and multi culturalism – historical legacy / heritage
- Evolution of composite culture and communal harmony
 - Co-existence of different religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity etc., Popular religion co-existence / cohabitation of Hindu Muslim communities.-

A historical perspective : Advent of Islam- Bhakti and Sufi traditions.

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- Due to fanatical feelings among orthodox sections- often leading to communal violence
- External and Internal factors of cultural fusion
- Manifestations of cultural synthesis ,
- festivals (Moharram, Holi)- art, architecture ,music, fine arts, food and dress.
- Seeds of communalism- Castes Hierarchy and divide and rule theory

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- Communalism essentially leads to violence and conflict as religion which is basically a moral order was used as a main weapon pursued for selfish and narrow political ambitions. Communalism leads to distinctions between communal and religious organizations.
- Meaning of communalism
- Abdul Ahmed says, “Communalism is a social phenomenon characterized by the religion of two communities, often leading to acrimony, tension and even rioting between them”.

COMMUNALISM

- Prabha Dixit writes, “Communalism is a political doctrine which makes use of religious and cultural differences to achieve political ends”. Organization of religious festivals / ceremonies in the public sphere as a provocation for other communities by the political parties / leaders
- Communalism is used in contemporary India to promote certain religious stereotypes between different religious groups and communities and to stimulate violence and hatred between them.

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- According to Asqhar Ali Engineer, Moin Shakir and Abdul Ahmed, “it is an instrument in the hands of the upper Class / Castes to concentrate power by dividing people”. The elites strive to maintain a status quo against transformation by dividing people on communal and religious lines.
- Communalism may be perceived as a total commitment to a set of beliefs and it is far from rationality”. The Politicization of religion and its consequences. Invocation of religious/Cultural symbols for the purpose of political mobilization.

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- Social groups have long been a part of human history. Categorizing people into "us" and "them" helped humans develop tribes, clans, and other early social structures. Deciding who belonged and who didn't also led to conflicts and fighting.
- "Us" and "them" thinking still continues. Like early humans, we tend to stick with people who are similar to us while avoiding people who are different. In many ways, this is understandable.

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- we make judgments about others before we know the full story. These pre-judgments are called prejudices. The other as opposite to the self.
- Prejudices often have two sides. If "they" are lazy and stupid, then "we" must be intelligent and hard-working. Whether it paints people favourably or not, prejudice is typically based on ignorance, misinformation, and/or and fear of differences and social peer groups .

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- No one is born believing stereotypes -- they are learned from media, or parents, peers and many other sources. Social scientists believe that children begin to learn prejudices and stereotypes as early as two or three years old. Even though they don't fully understand what prejudice is, young children may repeat racial slurs or act out stereotypes they see in the media. As they are exposed to more stereotypes, young children tend to form attachments to their own group and develop negative attitudes about other groups. As these attitudes deepen over a person's lifetime, they are difficult to change. As they get older, people tend to see the things that support their views and disregard or ignore experiences that challenge them.

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- Political parties are the prime agencies / movers which play an important role in stimulating, organizing and supporting communal riots.
- In independent India due to economic development and social change particularly in the context of Globalization, an elite section developed among the Hindu and Muslim religious communities.
- To draw support from the masses of their respective communities the dominant political groups encourage communal feelings to strengthen their position.

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- **Characteristics of Communalism:**
- Communalism is an ideological concept, invoking certain cultural and religious symbols with partisan attitude and intention . For example: depiction of Shivaji, Ranapratap etc., as Hindu / National leaders. They were projected as anti-Islamic and the defenders and champions of Hindu faith.
- (i) Communalism is based on orthodoxy and it is exclusive in outlook . Communalists considers his / her religion superior to other religions. A feeling of oneness and solidarity.

COMMUNALISM

- (ii) Communalism is based on intolerance and it propagates intense dislike and hatred of other religions and communities which follow another religions / faith.
- (iii) It stands for and propagates elimination of other religions, values and identities. Communal forces adopt extremists tactics / methods including violence against the other religions
- (iv) It has a broader base which encompasses social, economic and political aspects for its manifestation.

COMMUNALISM

- v) It causes rivalry, violence and tension among masses, Common people's emotions roused for mobilizing against the other religious communities
- vi)) Communalism is frequently engineered by opportunistic political and economic vested interest. communalism was also used as an instrument of power by smugglers, criminal gangs and mafia groups for example in the major cities like Mumbai Ahmadabad, Delhi, etc . Communal violence was also encouraged by factions within a political party are parties like Congress, BJP / MIM, Akalies etc., .

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- vii) It strikes at the roots of democracy and destroys secularism and national integration and causes communal hatred / antagonism
- Viii) **Communalism in India and the sub-continent, the cynical misuse of religion for political ends has been used to mobilize large sections of the people and through this mobilization gain power. Violence is espoused and used by outfits endorsing this brand of politics. Since 1998, with the Bharatiya Janata Party coming to power –dominating the NDA alliance at the Centre and in many States, especially Gujarat—this has assumed fascist dimensions as the Gujarat Genocide 2002 shows.**

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- **Causes of Communalism:**

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

- **Historical Causes:**

- **Social Causes:**

- **Economic Causes:**

- **Psychological Causes:**

- **Orthodoxy and Obscurantism:**

- **Politicization of Religion and the involvement of Religious leaders / Gurus / Sadhus and Sanths**

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- Design of the Political Leaders , BJP, Shiva Sena , MIM, Indian Mujahiddin , Lashkar.
- Provocation of Enemy Countries Diplomatic and foreign relations spread of ultra nationalism / patriotism / Jingoism.
- Use of religious identities for propagating anti-Islamic and anti-Hindu feelings across the borders and giving communal orientation to foreign policy.
- Negative Impact of Mass Media, the coverage of incidents of communal riots and religious strife by the electronic media and the projection of certain communal leaders and their speeches excessive coverage of events relating to the religious ceremonies and religious gurus. For example the religious heads and their activities.

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Suggestions for the Eradication of Communalism:

The following measures may be taken for the eradication of communalism.

- **Transmission of the Past Heritage and the spirit of cultural synthesis and composite culture. The culture of peaceful co-existence**
- **Public Opinion in favour of communal and religious co-existence and curriculum which is secular.**
- **Abolition of Communal Parties that spread fundamentalist ideologies / Programmes**
- **Inter-religious Marriage and propagation of inter religious faith / dialogue**

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- The communal riots started in the 1980s in different parts of the country involving all the major religious communities like Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs etc.,
- There are riots and anti- religious violence Hindu v/s Muslims, and vice-versa. Hindus v/s Christians and vice-versa Muslims V/s Christians
- The Political use of religion cuts across all the Parties (Congress, B.J.P, Akali, Muslim League, North-East parties etc.,
- For example in the 1980s Indira Gandhi encouraged Bhindranwala for Political Interests against Akalies

COMMUNALISM

- The Ideology of Khalistan and separatism
- Arms training by the Bhindranwala, Indian Mujahiddin, Laskar – a- Toiba, RSS, Bajrang Dal, VHP in camps is insidiously, yet publicly arming Indian civil society, creating a public climate of animosity and threat. Verbal abuse is daily flung at Indian minorities making a mockery of secularism as enshrined in the Indian Constitution.
- Quite apart from the real threat faced in some areas by foreign-bred mercenaries, a real and potent threat to the Indian social fabric comes from home-grown terrorists of these outfits who spread terror and venom to silence entire neighbourhoods into silence.

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- 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogrom
- Indira Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984 by two of her bodyguards in retaliation for the storming of the Golden temple. After the assassination the 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms took place in Delhi, and near by towns where government and police officials aided Congress party worker gangs in "methodically and systematically" targeting Sikhs and Sikh homes. As a result of the pogroms 10,000–17,000 were burned alive or otherwise killed, Sikh people suffered massive property damage, and "at least 50,000" Sikhs became displaced persons.

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- To date, the Government of India has not prosecuted any of the assailants. The attack on the Harmandir Sahib and the 1984 Anti-Sikh pogroms led to the increasing popularity of the Khalistan movement led by Bhindranwala. In Panjab From 1987 until 1992, the Indian government dismissed the elected government of the state, banned elections and imposed direct rule

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- The 1984 anti-Sikh riots in which the Congress party played a major active role in the killing of more than 3,000 Sikhs following the assassination of Indira Gandhi.
- 1992 December 2- Babri masjid demolition by Sanghparivar and subsequent communal violence in various parts of India led to massive religious hatred in different parts of India.
- The 1992-1993 Bombay Riots in Bombay more than 200,000 people (both Hindus and Muslims) fled the city or their homes during the time of the riots. Dead – 900 (575 Muslims, 275 Hindus, 45 unknown and 5 others). The causes for the deaths are police firing (356), stabbing (347), arson (91), mob action (80), private firing (22) and other causes (4).

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- The 2002 Gujarat violence, 900-2000 dead, mostly Muslims
- The 2002 Kaluchak massacre, 31 Hindus killed.
- The 2002 Marad massacre, 14 Hindu deaths
- Indian Union Muslim League conspired and executed the massacre.
- The 2006 Kherlanji massacre, lynching of four Dalits.

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- In January 2013, Indian Home Minister Sushil kumar Shinde accused Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Bharatiya Janata Party for setting up camps to train Hindu Terrorism including planting bombs in 2007 Samjhauta Express bombings, Mecca Masjid bombing and 2006 Malegaon blasts.-2007 Ajmer Dargah attack -Saffron Terror

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- **Ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus**
- Since March 1990, estimates of between 300,000 to 500,000 pandits have migrated outside Kashmir due to persecution by Islamic fundamentalists in the largest case of ethnic cleansing since the partition of India. The proportion of Kashmiri Pandits in the Kashmir valley has declined from about 15% in 1947 to, by some estimates, less than 0.1% since the insurgency in Kashmir took on a religious and sectarian flavour.

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- **Religious involvement in North-East India Militancy**
- Religion has begun to play an increasing role in reinforcing ethnic divides among the decades old militant separatist movements in north-east India
- According to The Government of Tripura, the Baptist Church of Tripura is involved in supporting the NLFT and arrested two church officials in 2000, one of them for possessing explosives. In late 2004, the National Liberation Front of Tripura banned all Hindu celebrations of Durga Puja and Saraswati Puja. The Naga insurgency, ethnic separatism reinforced in their identity by Christianity, has been repeatedly involved in violence against Hindus in the region

COMMUNALISM

- **Anti Muslim Violence**
- The history of modern India has many incidents of communal violence. Tensions between Hindu and Muslim started coming to light a few years before the independence of the Indian-sub continent. This thought contrasts with the more widely held **Divide & Rule policy** and **Two Nation Theory** as the main reasons. These riots were supposedly provoked by colonizers and politicians for personal gains and vested interests. India have risen and has led to several major incidences of religious violence such as **Hashimpura massacre** (1987), **Bombay riots, 1993** **Bombay bombings**, and **2002 Gujarat violence**.

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- On 6 December 1992, members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal destroyed the 430-year-old Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, it was claimed by the Hindus that the mosque was built over the birthplace of the ancient deity Rama. This action caused humiliation to the Muslim community. The resulting religious riots caused at least 1200 deaths
- In the aftermath of the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu nationalists on 6 December 1992, riots took place between Hindus and Muslims in the city of Mumbai
- The riots changed the demographics of Mumbai greatly, as Hindus moved to Hindu-majority areas and Muslims moved to Muslim-majority areas.

- The Godhra train burning incident in which Hindus were burned alive allegedly by Muslims by closing door of train, led to the 2002 Gujarat riots in which mostly Muslims were killed in an act of retaliation. According to the death toll given to the parliament on 11 May 2005 by the government, 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus were killed, and another 2,548 injured. 223 people are missing. The report placed the number of riot widows at 919 and 606 children were declared orphaned. According to hone advocacy group, the death tolls were up to 2000.

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- Tens of thousands were displaced from their homes because of the violence. . According to New York Times reporter Celia Williams Dugger, witnesses were dismayed by the lack of intervention from local police, who often watched the events taking place and took no action against the attacks on Muslims and their property. Sangh leaders as well as the Gujarat government maintain that the violence was rioting or inter-communal clashes — spontaneous and uncontrollable reaction to the Godhra train burning.

COMMUNALISM

- Anti-Christian violence in India
- In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in violent attacks on Christians in India, often perpetrated by Hindu Nationalists. Between 1964 and 1996, thirty-eight incidents of violence against Christians were reported. In 1997, twenty-four such incidents were reported. In 1998, it went up to ninety. Between January 1998 and February 1999 alone, one hundred and sixteen attacks against Christians in India were reported by church. Between 1 January and 30 July 2000, more than fifty-seven attacks on Christians were reported. These acts of violence include forcible reconversion of converted Christians to Hinduism, distribution of threatening literature and destruction of Christian cemeteries.

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- In some cases, anti-Christian violence has been co-ordinated, involving multiple attacks. In Orissa, starting December 2007, Christians have been attacked in Kandhamal and other districts, resulting in the deaths of two Hindus and one Christian, and the destruction of houses and churches. Hindu Extremists claim that, Christians first killed a Hindu saint Laxmananand. So the attacks on Christians supposedly were in retaliation. However there was no conclusive proof to support this claim. Twenty people were arrested following the attacks on churches. Similarly, starting 14 September 2008, there were numerous incidents of violence against the Christian community in Karnataka.

COMMUNALISM

- Foreign Christian missionaries have mostly been targets of attacks. In a well-publicised case Graham Staines, an Australian missionary, was burnt to death while he was sleeping with his two sons Timothy (aged 9) and Philip (aged 7) in his station wagon at Manoharpur village in Keonjhar district in Orissa in January 1999. In 2003, Dara Singh was convicted of leading the gang responsible.
- In its annual human rights reports for 1999, the United States Department of State criticised India for "increasing societal violence against Christians." The report listed over 90 incidents of anti-Christian violence, ranging from damage of religious property to violence against Christian pilgrims.

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- In 2007 and 2008 there was a further flare up of tensions in Orissa. Another church was attacked in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, where unidentified persons set two Statues inside St Peter and Paul Church in Jabalpur on fire, and more attacks in Karnataka,. The archbishop, Bernard Moras, met the BJP CM BS Yeddyurappa after he had taken a decision to invoke the provisions of Goonda Act against those nabbed for vandalising churches as part of its strategy to salvage its image and to instill confidence. The Bajrang Dal convenor was arrested after the incidents of church burning in Mangalore.

COMMUNALISM

- **Anti-Hindu violence**
- In Assam, members of the primarily Christian Hmar ethnic group have placed bloodstained crosses in temples and forced Hindus to convert at gunpoint.
- There have been a number of more recent attacks on Hindu temples and Hindus by Muslim militants. Prominent among them are the 1998 Chamba massacre, the 2002 fidayeen attacks on Raghunath temple, the 2002 Akshardham Temple attack allegedly perpetrated by Islamic terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba^[159] and the 2006 Varanasi bombings (supposedly perpetrated by Lashkar-e-Toiba), resulting in many deaths and injuries. Recent attacks on Hindus by Muslim mobs include Marad massacre, Godhra train burning etc.

COMMUNALISM

- In August 2000, Swami Shanti Kali, a popular Hindu priest, was shot to death inside his ashram in the Indian state of Tripura. Police reports regarding the incident identified ten members of the Christian militant organisation, NLFT, as being responsible for the murder. On 4 Dec 2000, nearly three months after his death, an ashram set up by Shanti Kali at Chachu Bazar near the Sidhai police station was raided by Christian militants belonging to the NLFT. Eleven of the priest's ashrams, schools, and orphanages around the state were closed down by the NLFT.

COMMUNALISM

- In September 2008, Swami Laxmanananda, a popular regional Hindu Guru was murdered along with four of his disciples by unknown assailants (though a Maoist organisation later claimed responsibility for that), allegedly due to the Guru's provocative opposition of Christians' conversion activities and Missionary propaganda. Later the police arrested three Christians in connection with the murder. Congress MP Radhakant Nayak has also been named as a suspected person in the murder, with some Hindu leaders calling for his arrest.

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- On 3 and 4 January 2002, three Hindus and two Muslims were killed in Marad, near Kozhikode due to scuffles between two groups that began after a dispute over drinking water. On 2001 three Muslims were killed by Rashtreeys Sevak Sangam. in response of this incident on 2 May 2003, eight Hindus were killed by a Muslim mob, in what is believed to be a sequel to the earlier incident. One of the attackers, Mohammed Ashker was killed during the chaos.

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- The 2007 United States Department of State International Religious Freedom Report noted *The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the National Government generally respected this right in practice. However, some state and local governments limited this freedom in practice.*
- The 2007 Amnesty International report listed several issues concern in India and noted *Justice and rehabilitation continued to evade most victims of the 2002 Gujarat communal violence.*

COMMUNALISM

- The 2007 United States Department of State Human Rights Report–noted that *the government generally respected the rights of its citizens; however, numerous serious problems remained*. The report which has received a lot of controversy internationally,- as it does not include human rights violations of United States and its allies, has generally been rejected by political parties in India as interference in internal affairs, including in the Lower House of Parliament

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- The 2008 Human Rights Watch report notes: *India claims an abiding commitment to human rights, but its record is marred by continuing violations by security forces in counterinsurgency operations and by government failure to rigorously implement laws and policies to protect marginalised communities. A vibrant media and civil society continue to press for improvements, but without tangible signs of success in 2007.*



Thank You Very Much