

Rise of Communalism in India

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Abstract— *The rise and growth of trend of communalism can be traced back to preindependent India attributed to British policy of divide and rule. The imperial leaders used this weapon to raise one community against the other on the basis of Hindu and Muslim religious identity to stay in power. The British rulers always siding the Muslims and opposing the Hindus created a discord between them. This policy ultimately led to the partition of India. The Muslim league under the leadership of Mohd. Ali Jinnah demanded creation of a new nation on the basis of religion; the dream was realized in the year 1947. India had been divided into two, India and Pakistan.*

Index Terms- *Communalism, fundamentalism. Casteism, languish, Hindu, Muslim*

I. INTRODUCTION

As regards the origin of the problem of communalism evolved in three stages namely; 1) Formation stage 2) Institutionalization stage 3) Explosion stage
Since independence the problem of communalism has been the main source of conflict between Hindus and Muslims. The elections held in India have been using communalism as a source of gaining political power. Hence everywhere in India the communal politics is characterized by fundamentalism which has its variants like Hindu Muslim, Christian and Sikh fundamentalism. Fundamentalism in ordinary sense is strict adherence to the particular religious dogma and opposing social changes.

The evil designs of political parties continuously manifested in the major controversies with regards to the communal issues such as Ram Janma Bhoomy-Babri Masjid, Uniform civil code, Controversy of Cow slaughter, and ethnic problems involved the religious sentiments of two major communities (Hindus & Muslims) in India. The adverse effects of communalism at the cost of national unity are due to the perverted role of religion which culminated in the fanaticism and fundamentalism, etc. Since communalism has been closely linked with India's socio political development it has been causing the

social exploitation, economic disparities, persisted political outlook etc. Thus communalism has been responsible for these adverse effects in India.

The cause and consequences of the communalism are dealt in detail.

II. COMMUNALISM IT'S GROWTH IN INDIA.

Communalism is the menace not only for the target communities but also for those in whose name communal politics is played. It is a potential threat to the sovereignty, democracy, integrity, and in short the very existence of India. It is common tendency to identify communalism with pre-independence era especially with the communal forces led by Jinnah. But there is need to unravel the ugly face of communalism in India after Independence.

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Communalism is a perception of other religions and communities as inimical entities arranged with an unfriendly, antagonistic, and belligerent equation to one another. The most glaring manifestation of this is communal violence or riots. It has developed in certain areas and sections of society due to their failure to develop the new national consciousness. It is amongst one of the major developments during the national movement, which ultimately led to the partition of India.

In a multi-religious society like India the secular interests such as social, cultural, economic and political of one religion are dissimilar with the followers of other religions, and communalism raises its head when the interest of different religions are seen as mutually incompatible, hostile and antagonistic.

Bipan Chandra also regards above-mentioned three classifications as three stages in the development of communalism during the glorious national struggle for independence. He opines, "Communal ideology starts when persons or groups believe that people of the same religion have same socio-economic interest. The second stage is reached when a person or a group believes and practices communal politics.

III. RISE OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

The British who came to India knew too well the weaknesses of India's political fabric – internal disunity caused by narrow jealousies, dissensions, greed and communal loyalties that had plagued India at every stage of its history. It is not even wrong to state that the same tendencies and influences had paved the way for the British rule India. The British were consummate in using their policy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule) to use natives against natives.

The British also contaminated education with communal ideas. They invented history to divide Hindus and Muslims. Faruqi comments, "... scores of empire scholars... went on to produce a synthetic Hindu versus Muslim history of India and their lies became history. The goal of this history was to legitimise the British policy of divide and rule" Such biased feeling and attitude of the government resulted in the growth of communalism. Here it will be feasible to quote A.R. Desai, "a modern educated middle class and a bourgeoisie sprang on a substantial scale from the Muslim community rather later from within the Hindu community. By the time they realized this lag, Hindus had already firmly established in government services and key positions in trade, industry and finance.

The formation of Muslim League was a great landmark in the history of Indian politics, for it was

under the aegis of this body that large number of Muslims mostly nawabs, landlords and title holders kept communalism alive and prevented the bulk of the Muslims from falling in line with the national forces in the country. The League realised the hopes of the British by consistently fighting the growth of nationalism and thereby providing a convenient argument to British government for denying independence to India. M. N. Das in his *India under Morley and Minto* asserts, "Minto's policy saw its culmination when the Muslim league fought for the recognition as the sole representative body of the Indian Musalmans and finally it was to split India into two parts." Though "Communalisms" always exist in pairs, the dominant and ocular Communalism in the pre-independence era was "Muslim" Communalism.

In the first half of the 19th century, there were only few notable Muslim organisations but later a change in Muslim attitude became quite discernible. Nawab Abdul Lateef founded the Mohammedan Literary and Scientific Society of Calcutta in 1863 for imparting the English education and European customs to Muslims. In 1878, Syed Ameer Ali and Syed Ameer Hussain established the National Mohammedan Association to promote the well-being of the Muslims by all legitimate means available. However, Syed Ahmed Khan was the most towering of them all who started as innocuous religious reformer but according to many ended as a die-hard communalist

Movements of religious revivalism also accentuated communal politics. It is said that the Wahabi movement left behind a trail of communal consciousness in Muslims. An aggressive form of Hindu revivalism emerged, particularly under the Arya Samaj movement whose sangathan and shuddhi further sharpened communal disharmony between Hindus and Muslims. Tilak, Pal, and Ghosh brothers spearheaded the national movement during the close of the 19th century, drawing inspirations from the Indian past. They cited episodes from the history of the Hindu India, and tried to infuse the national pride and self-respect of the masses by utilising Hindu gods and legends. In a multi-religious society, Hindu nationalism was bound to weaken its secular character. Nationalism thus expressed in religious terms and clothed under mystical forms, had no appeal for the

politically conscious Muslim middle class. It rather alarmed them.

A magnanimous contribution in the evolution of naked communalism was by Hindi-Urdu controversy. It originally started at Benares in 1867, when Hindus organised a movement to replace Urdu by Hindi and the Persian script by the Devnagari script. Immediately after the anti-Urdu campaign, Syed Ahmed Khan told his superior officer Mr. Shakespeare that he was convinced after the anti-Urdu agitation of the pro-Hindi Hindus that there was no hope of any kind of joint action by Hindus and Muslims. Muslims, he said, had to organise themselves on their own to safeguard their heritage. Apparently, the adoption of the Devnagari character and the Hindi language had greatly injured educated Muslims in both official and private life.

CONCLUSION

These are some of the factors, which contributed to the growth of communalism in India. The hostility of Muslims was concretely and shrewdly directed against the Hindus as they thought (wrongly) the government is with them. The Hindus on their part nourished a grievance that the government had abdicated in favour of the Muslims in not firmly implementing its own decisions. All this foreboded a deep rift, which sought to cleave society and culture into two irreconcilable groups.

Historically arguing, Bipin Chandra says, "Basic change from liberal communalism occurred during 1937-38 when both the Hindu and Muslim communalism, in the form of the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS started becoming fascist and irrational in their ideologies and politics." Through communal riots, 'parting of ways' on Nehru report and Jinnah's 14 points, two nations theory, and several other developments (rather negative) – this fascist communalism resulted eventually in the splitting up of India. Did the threat of communalism die out with the creation of Pakistan? If one says yes, he is living in the Shangri-la of fools.

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