



POL SC HELP
UG NEP Series

Communalism

(Colonial India)

Colonialism and nationalism in
India(CNI)

NEP BA HONS. POLITICAL SCIENCE, 1st SEM



Structure of the video lecture

- Meaning and definitions of communalism
- Communalism in Indian context
- Factors leading to rise of communalism in colonial India
- Communalism- Outcomes & Impacts
- How rise of communalism led to negotiation for partisan



Meaning and Definitions of Communalism

- Communalism is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various social, political, and economic dimensions
- Its meaning and connotations are contextual
- In the context of multi cultural society, It refers to a strong allegiance to one's own community, developing antagonistic relationship with other communities
- In this context, Communalism refers to the conflict between different religious, ethnic, or cultural groups within a society/nation
- Individual identify strongly with their community, view members of other communities as 'other' or 'different', and may involve activities furthering interest of its community at the expense of other communities
- This may lead to extreme behaviors towards members of other community or tension, conflict, or violence among communities
- Politically it may denote different communities developing antagonistic interest, and sources of power and fight for political representation and resource distribution



Communalism in Indian context

- Conflictual and antagonistic relationship between communities based on religious identity, specifically the Hindu and Muslim communities
- It also denotes politics based on religious identity, seeking votes on the basis of religion and religious identity
- ✓ • communalism is not merely religion's entry into politics, or politics defined in religious terms. It is manipulative use of religion to fire up the communal sentiments of individuals
- ✓ • It may denote assertion of Hindus as majority community and anxiety and apprehensions of the minority Muslim communities
- ✓ • A social structure (recurrent pattern of social behaviour and relationships) the components of 'othering', exclusion, communal tension & violence, communal politics, etc. Communal ideology sustain the structure
- Communalism is not the result of religious differences. religious differences in themselves do not constitute the essence of communalism; It is only when religious communities develop conflictual and antagonistic relationship harming national unity



Factors for the rise of communalism in colonial India-1/2

- **Historical Legacy**

- **British Colonial Policies**

- Divide & Rule
- Partition of Bengal in 1905
- Separate Electorates
- Communal Award- Round Table Conference
- policy of concession, counterpoise and coercion
- Playing through the conflict between the Congress and Muslim league
- Communal deadlock and the worsening communal situation- justification for continuance of British rule

- **The 'Lag' theory**

- Decades of time lag between the Hindus and Muslims in responding to the forces of modernization and socio-economic development in the 19th century colonial Rule
- bourgeoisies Hindu class becoming early beneficiaries of the new economic opportunities, industrialization, and urbanisation
- Late bourgeoisies class in Muslim Indians; difference in social structure of Hindu and Muslim community
- This alienated the Muslims from both the Hindu community and the colonial rule



Factors for the rise of communalism in colonial India-2/2

- **19th Century Revivalism**

- Resurgence of religious revivalist movements among both Hindus and Muslims
- Wahabi movement(Syed Ahmed Bareilvi), Swadeshi Movement(Lal-Bal-Pal), Khilafat Movement(Ali Brothers), Shuddhi Movement (Dayananda Saraswati), Deoband Movement Darul Uloom Deoband, UP)
- Communal overtones of social reformers poets and ideologues- Syed Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Iqbal

- **Rise of Communal Political Organisations:**

- All India Muslim League (1906)
- All India Hindu Mahasabha (1915)
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh(RSS)—1925
- All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference(1932)
- Political Opportunism

- **Communal Historical Narratives**

- Ancient India as Golden Hindu period vs Mediaeval India as golden Muslim period
- Muslims as attackers and destroyer vs Muslim as victorious, valorous ruler

- **Failure of Nationalist Leadership**

- Dominance of revivalist Nationalists in Congress
- Congress inability to integrate Muslims into the broader nationalist movement



Communalism- Outcomes & Impacts

- **Fear of Hindu majoritarianism- role of ideologues**

- Sir Syed Ahmed: With brute majority, Hindus would dominate the Muslims and override their interests, in the democratic Independent India
- Main themes of Muslim communalism :opposition to the nationalist forces, opposition to the democratic process, and loyalty to the British Government

- **Increasing communalism in the period 1922-27- post Khilafat and Non-cooperation Movement**

- Communal violence erupted at an unprecedented level. In U.P. alone there were as many as 91 riots between 1923-1927
- Issues of cow-slaughter and music before mosques come into prominence
- Rise in popularity and mass base of Muslim league
- In response to Arya Samaj's 'Shuddhi' and 'Sangathan', movements like Tablighi (propaganda) and Tanzim (organization) arose among the Muslims
- Rise of Hindu Mahasabha and RSS



Communal politics and negotiations for partition

- **The Nehru Report-** its rejection by the Muslim League--1928
- **14 points demands** by Muhammad Ali Jinnah –1929
 - Protecting socio-political rights of Muslim as minority in independent India
 - Provincial autonomy, federal structure with residual power to province, separate Electorate, effective representation of Muslims in assemblies and 1/3rd seats for Muslims in all cabinets, veto rights to minorities, etc
- Aloofness of Muslims in the civil disobedience movement—1930-31
- Communal award in the Round Table Conference--1932
- For the rise of communal tension and violence post 1937 elections
- **Two-Nation Theory—1940**
 - Hindus and Muslims-two nations, as they have different culture, history, worldview, heroes- Jinnah and Iqbal
 - Principle of national self determination– Indian Muslims had right of a separate nation-state



The Cabinet mission plan: the last phase of negotiation for partition

- **The Cabinet Mission Plan: 1946**

- United Indian Federation- rejected the two nations theory
 - Provincial Groupings:
 - Group A- Hindu-majority provinces : Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar, and Odisha
 - Group B- Muslim-majority provinces : Punjab, North West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan
 - Group C- Muslim-majority provinces : Bengal and Assam
 - Weak Federal Govt: would look after foreign affairs, defence and communications; provinces having the veto power
 - Constituent Assembly: formation of a Indian Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution for independent India
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- The difference of opinion between the League and the Congress was primarily over whether grouping was optional(Congress view) or compulsory(League view).
 - Ultimately both Congress and League rejected the Cabinet mission plan
 - The Muslim League gave call for '**Direct Action**' --**16th August 1946** ; After this widespread communal violence engulfed the country
 - Mountbatten Plan(**June 3 Plan**)– 2 Dominion States India and Pakistan with their own constituent assembly; 5 July, 1947- British parliament passed Indian Independence Act



Sum- Up

- Communalism is strong affinity and attachment to one's community based on some primordial identity
- In the Indian context communalism means conflictual and antagonistic relationship between Hindu majority and Muslim minority communities ✓
- Factors which led to rise in communalism in colonial India: British colonial policies, the lag theory, Revivalism, communal political organisations, distorted historical narratives, failure of the nationalist movement to curb communalism ✓
- Direct consequence of the communalism was partition of India; The negotiation for partition was political dimension of communalism in colonial India ✓
- partition, though, did not end communalism and communal politics; both continued and have been plaguing Indian society as well as its polity



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