



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Political Science**

**POLITICAL COMMUNALISATION OF RELIGIONS AND THE CRISIS OF COMMUNALISM**

**KEY WORDS:**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Communalism is a term used to denote attempts to construct religious or ethnic identity, incite strife between people identified as different communities, and to stimulate communal violence between those groups. communalism is not unique only to South Asia, but it is also found in Africa, America, Europe, Australia, and Asia. But, it is significant socio-economic and political issue in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc.

**Politics Of Communalism:**

In religious matters, the people are very sensitive and throughout the world, religion has played an important role both in integration and disintegration the societies. If on the hand, "it had the effect of unifying large sections of people who would otherwise have also led to sharp and severe divisions between man and man, group and group, nation and nation"(Bayly, C.a.2001). Religious wars in middle ages in Europe communal riots in India at the time of partition created havoc. Even now in India communalism continues to be a subject of continuing interest to the students of government and politics. With the passage of time the members of the principal communities have increasingly organized themselves on communal lines active. Because of their role, India, though a secular state is not a secular society because "India like some of the other Asian countries is drifting into the morass of obscurantism, religious fundamentalism and communal fanaticism"(Akbar, M.J.2001).

This communal fanaticism has expressed itself. Communal violence, India is a land of minorities where there is an acute problem of communalism which had led to more than nine thousand communal riots in the country since independence 1967-1978, every years there have been more than 170 incidents of communal riots. Sectarian riots, in addition to the communal riots, fthere have been sectarian riots as sell. Destruction and forcible occupation of religious places. Creation of Muslim majority district. Misuse of religious places for political purposes.

**Causes of Communalism:**

thought the problem of communalism is a colonial legacy, it will be a travesty of truth to deny the fact that to a great extent we too are responsible for allowing it to take the present form. This is so because our faith in secularism is skin deep and therefore we have failed to rid the body politics of his deadly virus of communalism in India are historical communal legacy, existence of communal sectarian parties and organization, institutions with communal prefixes, religious fanaticism, social causes, economic causes, political causes and law enforcement agencies with communal outlook.

After independence, the caste, with introduction of the electoral politics, had a new role for itself. Moin Shakir is of the opinion that the caste has a dual role in post-independence ara, positive in democratizing the system, and negative, in hampering the rise of evolutionary class organizations. Caste helps in the mobilization of the people. Rudolph and Rudolph refers to three types of mobilization 1) vertical in marshaling the political support of traditional notables in local societies which are organized and ranked; 2) horizontal in marshaling the political support by class or community leaders and their

specialized organizations; differential in marshaling the direct or indirect political support by political parties through appeal to ideology, sentiments and interest. In both rural and urban India, the caste has been the instrument of mobilization, channel of communication, representation and leadership which links the electorate to the democratic process.

Caste, in the Indian electoral context, has become important, especially the lower caste votes gaining significance during elections. Leaders of all the political parties agree that the crucial Dalit votes make and unmake their fortune because of their number. The formation of Dalit Political Parties, from Republic Party of India (1956) to that of the Bahujan Samaj Party (1982), shoe the emerging strength of the dalit vote. This is true about other castes as well. Exercising franchise on the basis of caste is a normal process of voting in India. Caste has become a source of mobilizing votes. vote banks are created through religious, linguistic, regional and above all caste appeals, polarizing people into one caste group or the other. Example of such polarization are, for instances Brahmins versus non-Brahmin in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, Rajput versus Jat in Rajasthan, Bany-Brahmins versus Patidars in Gujarat, Kayasthas versus Rajput in Bihar, Kamas versus Reddi in Andra Pradesh, and Nairs versus Ezhavas in Kerla, Lingayat versus Vakkaliga in Karnataka such polarization keep emerging with different combinations from time to time in one region or other.

Kothari states that is not politics that gets caste-ridden; it is caste that gets politicized. Caste is not a factor in political mobilization of the voters; it has become a factor in political leadership, both at the party and government levels. Referring to caste as getting politicized, Kothari writes "This is so because the operation of competitive politics has drown caste out of it's political context, and given it a new status and identity such that the "caste system; as hitherto known, has begun to disintegrate. such things as respective numerical strengths of different castes, choice of candidates, factions within castes and economic ties between the castes are calculated as variables in the situation..... anther variable in politics along and with many other variables caste, despite all efforts at legal and constitutional equality, remains and would always remain an important arbiter in contemporary India Politics"(Ralhan, O.P,2002).

The Post-Mandal era clearly indicates that other backward classes (OBCs), in addition to the Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, have a definite role to play in India. In the post-Mandal phase of Indian politics, one can observe a major change in the role of caste. While its influence has been decreasing in socio-economic spheres, it is increasingly gaining a stranglehold over the political system. Through the politics of quotas and its attendant spin offs-the emergence of new caste based organizations, growing polarization along caste lines, cattiest violence and reservation conflicts-the case has become the strongest party in India and has become the real determinant of Indian Politics today. A National consensus for the steady realization of secular determinants of national politics must evolve to eliminate the negative determinants of national political life.

Mr.K.R.Narayan was indeed a poor boy from a backward caste

in the erstwhile Travancore state (Now part of Kerala) in pre-independence India. Though poor, he was diligent and intelligent and others who knew about family background raised their eyebrows when he scored the highest marks in then Travancore University both for History and English. That the boy was able to win such laurels despite the fact he was often asked to stand on a bench or in the corner of the classroom because of his failure to pay fee on time demonstrates the inner resolve of the promising youth. The Dewan of Travancore, Sir, C.P.Ramaswami Iyer summoned him one day and told him that he would send him to Oxford, but later, to the shock of the boy, the Dewan withdraw his offers and offered him a job in the Government.

The Youth was baffled by the sudden change in attitude of the Dewan, but screwed up courage to him "Sir could you give me a job as a lecturer instead? The Dewan was furious, banged the receiver and told him: "In that case leave your address and details with my personal assistant" (Pandey, Gyanendra 2007). It dawned on the young aspirant that the fact he was a Dalit came in his way. It was long journey for him a remove village in Travancore that encountered several whirlpools and eddies until the people of India installed him as the President of India on July 25, 1997. Mr.K.R.Narayan become the President of India not caste label, even politician in India enjoys mentioning the caste label even inf an individual is entitled to a high position by virtue of his sheer ability. Caste is just an accident. Likewise, Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam is the President of India by virtue of being a great scientist. The fact that he is a Muslim is secondary. But the so called 'Secularist' in our country take pride in the fact that "Even our president is a Muslim, our Prime Minister is Sikh", why do we see of eminence through the jaundiced eyes of a kind of politics, tainted by distorted version of religion? Why we do degrade them by our infamous pseudo-secular approach muddying the political waters with an unpardonable distorted image of the great religion of the world?" (Dapdey, Gyanendra 2007). By constant abuse at the hands of politicians the word 'secularism' has become doublethink in hypocrisy. One must wonder whether there are any genuine followers of secularism in our country.

In the last few decades, religion and caste have become the trump cards for politicians to swell their vote banks. Votes are sought unabashedly in the name of religion and caste all over India. None will dare dispute this claims. There is no dearth of caste in India in different communities and politicians have no qualms is seeking votes in name of their caste or religions. Sectarian violence is quite common as in Bihar where caste violence, so common, seldom hits in headlines. There are constituencies where candidates of a particular caste or religion alone can win. Better ask any politician and he will give you a broad grin in approval casteism still rule the roost, with all the modernism you boast of An undercurrent of casteism and canvassing for one community still prevails in certain constituencies.

Beyond doubt, it is the duty of the nation to see that people who are oppressed for centuries because of their birth in castes considered as backwardness needed special care. This was the philosophy behind reservation in education and employment. With the passage of time more communities lobbied for inclusion in the other backwardness classes category. The Mandal Commission recommendations sought to be implemented during the Prime minister, Mr.V.P.Singh' regime created a great uproar among students in India as they feared that this would further limit the legitimate job prospects for the poor students belonging to the so called forward communities.

Rajashekhar Reddy's Congress Government has decided to introduce 5 percentage reservation for Muslim in government jobs and government Institution. The move was criticized by the opposition on the plea that government cannot classify

Muslim as a backwardness class and the creamy layer must be excluded from the benefit. Said the Time of India in its editorial: "It is bad both in principle and a policy. It goes against the principles of secularism enshrined in the constitution. The constitution does not sanction religion-based reservation. It provided reservation for SCs and STs as a special case for a limited period. Instead of phrasing off reservations which militate against merit and put us at a disadvantage in an era of global competition, it is sad that the government should be extending it to new groups. In doing so the Andra Pradesh Government is paying its debt of gratitude to the minority community which has helped it return to power many years". (Laxmikanth, M., 2017)

Politics is game political parties will stoop to any extent go garner votes. And religion comes handy in this regard. There has been reservation for the Muslim community since 1950s in Kerala and this reservation still continues despite a controversial statement made by A.K.Antony, as Chief Minister of a few years ago that Muslim in Kerala are economically better off than Muslim northern India and that Muslim and Christian In Kerala are economically better than the Hindu in the State. This statement stirred up a hornet's nest in certain sections among Christian and Muslim in general and the chief intellectuals endorsed the Chief Minister's view point, the growing clout of the so called minority communities only underscores the need for reservation on the basis of economic backwardness that could help all people in all communities.

### CONCLUSION

Gandhiji visualized an India where there is no division by virtue of religion, caste or language. But his followers, while pretending to be champion of 'secularism', will do everything possible to stroke the fire of hatred as between communities and castes. Kissa kurusa ka! Grabbing power at any cost, if religion, caste and frequent chanting of the mantra 'secularism', are absolutely necessary why not use them every now and then? And use the name of Babu whenever you want to drive home your point. Communalism is a significant social issue in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Communal conflicts between religious communities in India, especially Hindus and Muslims have occurred since the period of British colonial rule, occasionally leading to serious inter-communal violence.

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