

Communal Violence, Its Causes and Solutions

Mohsin Iqbal Najar

*Center of Advanced Study, Department of History
Aligarh Muslim University*

ABSTRACT : *This research is based on the intentions raised in the nation and state due to the overcharging of communal violence. Since the past few decades, all over the India increasing trends towards communal frenzy and rioting has been witnessed. The lives lost go into the thousands and those mildly affected, have been left with a lasting impact. Communal violence is a dangerous and a frightful phenomena and a curse for a society. A not only communal violence ends up in loss of lives and property; it divides and polarizes the society and gives rise to various political debates. Communal Violence is a form of violence which perpetrated across ethnic or communal lines, the violent parties feel solidarity for their respective groups, and victims are chosen based upon group membership. The term includes conflicts, riots, and other forms of violence between communities of different religious faith or ethnic origins.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

The communal violence is problem. Which is facing the entire Indian society? It is a conjectural aspect that sometime it may break out here or there in a virulent form. But in fact, communal violence has been pervading sometime growing sometime receding but still pervading on a large scale in an entire Indian society. So it is a problem that people all over the country are facing. Communal violence in the form of riots or terrorism draws our attention in a dramatic manner but the underlying and long-term cause of violence is spread of communalism. Communal violence in its different form based on extreme communalism and feelings of fear and hatred, it is ultimately the ugly and barbaric expression of and the logical extension of period spread of communalism as an ideology. While communal riots, for example, gave credibility to the basic communal ideological precepts. It is the communal ideology and politics, which the communal politicians and ideologues preach in a normal time. Which form the real basis on which communal tension and violence occurs. In other words communal ideology and politics are the diseases, communal violence only its external symptoms.

So the communal violence is linked to communal ideology. Communal ideology can prevail even without violence, but communal violence cannot exist without communal ideology. Therefore communalism is above all a communal ideology. So the question arise what is communal ideology? A communal ideology consist of three element one succeeding the other. First of all according to communal ideology people who follow the same religion having common secular interest, that is people of same religion have not only common religious belief, but also have common political, economic, social and cultural interest. This is the first bedrock of communal ideology. From this arise the notion of a religious community for secular interest. A person who talk about the Hindu community or Muslim community or the interests of the Muslim community or the Hindu community is all ready taking the first step toward communalism whether he know it or not. The second step is taken when in a multi-religious society the secular interests that are economic, social, political and cultural interests, of the followers of one religion are different from some of the interests of the followers of another religion. E.g. the secular interests of Hindu are different from the interests of Muslim one has taken the second step toward communalism.

The third step is taken when not only the interests of the followers of different “communities” different but are hostile to each other, that is, what is economically, politically, socially or culturally in interests of Hindu is not so in the interests of Muslim, that the two cannot have common economic, social, political, interests that there secular interests are bound to be oppose each other. This last step brings communalism to the stage of what would be describe as extreme communalism. The first stage is beginning of communal ideology. The second stage is what may describe a liberal communalism or moderate communalism. The third stage is reached when secular interests of the followers of one religion are counterpoised to the secular interests of the followers of another in a hostile fashion. we get the last stage of communalism ideology. So the communal violence is only a concrete conjectural manifestation of the communalization of society and politics. Communal ideology leads to politics and psychology differentiation, distance and competition along religious line. Sooner or later it lead to mutual fear and hatred and ultimately to violence.

Once communalism segments politics along religious line, violent conflict became a matter of time. Behind every riot a strong collective communal mentality.

Following are the factors responsible for the growth of Communalism in India: Tracing the roots of communal violence has been a controversial problem. According to some scholars the roots of communalism lay in failure of Hindu and Muslim to fuse their differences and constitute one society. Hewer exponent of this theory insist that the role of divisive forces in Indian society should not be exaggerated. India had powerful cohesive and unifying elements which often held various socio-cultural communities together.

UN Historical Approach : The British use of Indian history to degenerate Indian national character and to prove Indians unfit for independence and democracy produced another distortion in Indian Historgraphy and politic. The Indian counter this unscientific and unhistorical approach with an unhistorical approach of their own. They began to glorify the past. Thus gradually developed several myths, each one of which weakened healthy, secular nationalism and gave an opening to communalism. The first of these myth is the belief that Indian society and culture-Indian civilization-had reached a high watermark, the Golden Age, in ancient India, from which high watermark it gradually sided downward during the medieval period branded the period of decadence and of 'foreign rule' and continued to slide down till the revivalist movement made partial recovery but that real task of reviving the past glory and civilization still remains. The blaming this decay of "Islam" or "Muslim" rule and the alien west, was easily taken. These create hostility between these two religious communities.

Hero myth : All of the major heroes, Rana Pratap, Shivaji, and Guru Gobind Sing, belonged to medieval India and had fought against Mughal authority- have done as much to undermine secularism and national integration as any other ideological factor. These hero myths proved the case for the two nation theory or basic communal approach. By what definition are they national heroes and their struggle a national struggle? Because they were fighting against foreigner? How were the Mughals foreigners? Because they were Muslim. What was the uniting principle in the nationalism of Rana Pratap, Shivaji and Guru Gobin Sing? Their being Hindu or non-Muslim thus the hero myths spontaneously generated communalism.

Divide and Rule Policy of the British: The British rulers adopted the policy of 'Divide and Rule' to strengthen their roots while living in India. They divided the people of various communities of India and spread the feeling of distrust among them and hence they sowed the seeds of communalism in India.

Political Organisations: Different communal organisations are found in India which have created hatred among the people of various religious communities by propagating, and hence they are the root cause of communalism.

Inertia indifferent Government: When the government does not take proper action at the proper time, communalism spreads among the subjects. Sometimes the government favours on the religion and leave others which create differences.

Ineffective Handling of Communal Riots: Sometimes the state governments have been proved ineffective to curb the communal riots in their respective states. It also results in spreading the communalism.As the result of the above factors, communalism is raising its ugly face in India after the Independence and also creating great problems even in the working of Indian political system.

Solution : Communalism is the product of a particular situation of a particular society, economic and polity which creates problems for its people problem of which the people are not able to understand cause. Communalism is often the efforts of the people to come to grips with the solution of their personal and social crisis. Without correctly grasping what the social situation is. Therefore the solution of communalism in a permanent direction lies in righting the social situation or the way out from communalism mean decommunalising ideologically the people of this country.

If the communalism is an ideology, it cannot be suppressed by force. No ideology can be suppressed by force. Ideology has to be fought at the level of ideas.

The ideological struggle against communalism above all mean bringing home to people, masses and intellectual, the falsity of communal assumption, of communal logic, of communal answer; of bringing home to people that what the communalist projects' problem are not the real problem and what the communalist say is the answer is not the real answer; this is the long haul which we have got to undertake, of going to the people and explaining

to them with the help of history, with the help of sociology, with the help of everyday life, with the help of our social struggle.

- [1] The remedy of constitutional safeguards to root out the chronic malaise of communalism shall not have desired effect unless it is tackled by society itself.
- [2] Efforts should be made by the enlightened citizens to discourage the communal based forces from the social, political and electoral process in order to make these forces irrelevant. They are to be opposed not to be appeased.
- [3] Communal carnage should be dealt strictly with new strategies.
- [4] To usher an era of social equity and *sarva dharma sambhava* the people of India should not mix religion with politics to attain the goal of common brotherhood for the unity and integrity of the nation.
- [5] The role of education and the press is crucial. Paradoxically, the spread of literacy can also have negative consequences in this respect. In simple terms literacy is supposed to be the panacea for all social ills; and spread of literacy is seen as of the highest value. It is of course of highest value and literacy is one of the three or four basic developments which all society must achieve. But in this development there also inheres a great danger. The illiterate Russian produce Lenin as their leader; the illiterate Indians have produce Gandhi as their leader; and the country with the highest literacy, with the largest number of Ph.Ds has produce Hitler as their leader; therefore be warned. Literacy makes sense only if it is used to spread the right type of ideas, not if it is used to spread poisonous ideas.
- [6] Ideological struggle against communalism does not at all mean a struggle against religion, religiosity. Communalism is neither inspired by religion nor is religion an object of communal politic. Religion is personal affair. Even though the communalist bases his politic on religious differences, uses religious identity as an organizing principle and in mass phase of communalism uses religion to mobilize the masses.
- [7] Ideological struggle against the communalism mean, the establishment of the legal secular state and ideology was necessity, because when two or more religion already existed it was useless and worse than useless for the state to seek to impose religious uniformity to do so merely lead to civil war or communal riots and thus weaken the state. So secularism opposed to all form of institutionalized religious domination. It challenges not merely inter- religious but also intra-religious domination. Secular state not only keep separation of state and religion but also refused to be theocratic or any formal, legal alliance with any religion.

REFERENCES:

- [1] 1993. Communalism in India. 2d revised ed. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- [2] 1993. Mughal Religious Policies: The Rajputs and Deccan, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- [3] Vanaik, Achin. 1997, The Furies of Indian communalism: Religion, Modernity and Secularization. London, New York: Verso.
- [4] Gautam. Meena, Communalism and Indian Politics, 1928-1935, Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1993.
- [5] Hasan. Mushirul, Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1979.
- [6] Ed. Engineer, Ashgar Ali, Communal riots in Post- Independence India, Hyderabad: Sangam Books India Pvt.Ltd..1991