BLOCK 5
RELIGION AND POLITICS

BLOCK 5 INTRODUCTION

In block 4 you have read units which deal with identities such as caste, gender and tribe, and social classes such as farmers and workers. These are non-religious identities. This block is about the religious identities. It is about religion and politics. The block has two units. Unit 13 is about secularism. It discusses the nature of relationship between religion and the state, of religion with community, individual, and with democratic values such as liberty and equality, and with ethics. Unit 14 explains how communalism has been defined and how it is related to individual rights and the state.

UNIT 13   SECULARISM*

Structure

13.0   OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to acquaint you with some crucial issues about secularism in India. After reading this unit, you will be able:

- To explain the meaning of secularism and secularization;

- To explain the issues related to secularism;

- To streamline main arguments in debate on secularism in India;

- And after comparing this unit with unit 14, to underline differences between secularism and communalism.

13.1   INTRODUCTION

Secularism is one of the most crucial issues in the current political scenario in world. Yuval Noah Harari, the author of *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* includes secularism among 21 most urgent issues of the 21st century. In India too, secularism has also been at the core of academic, popular and political discourse. Some questions are often raised about secularism: about its relationship with religion, state and other institutions, faith, religious communities, place of individual, democratic values such as freedom and equality about religion, and ethical values.

13.2   WHAT IS SECULARISM?

The central issue in secularism is religion. Secularism in a society implies that the religious supremacy of a community does not lead to discrimination and persecution of religious minorities. Meaning of secularism depends on the extent of relationship religion has with the attributes mentioned above, i.e, relationship with religion, state and other institutions, faith, religious communities, place of individual, democratic values such as freedom and equality about religion, and ethical values. There are three meanings of secularism according to different perspectives: one talks about relationship between the religion and the state;

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two, is about the possibility or impossibility of applicability of secularism in India; and the third is about equal respect to all religions or *sarva dharma sambhav*. These perspectives have been reflected in the debate within the Constituent Assembly, popular and academic discourse in India. As you will read in this unit, the debate on secularism in India, in the Constituent Assembly, and academic discourse has involved these three meanings to varying levels. The debate on secularism in the Constituent Assembly, has revolved around all or some of these issues.

According to Rajiv Bhargav success of secularism depends on certain factors. These are democracy and independence of the state from pressure of classes and ethnic groups in society which again depends on presence of state. Democracy depends on pacification of politics, i.e. peaceful competition or competition without violence. In fact, secularism is associated with values which are linked with democracy and equal citizenship. Yuval Noah Harari underlines that in a secular society, people belonging to different faiths – Hindus, Christians, Muslims and atheists follow certain ethical codes. These ethical codes are enshrined in the values or secular ideals such as truth, compassion, equality, freedom, courage and responsibility. For secularists, truth is different from belief, and there is no single source as custodian of truth. Compassion implies a "deep appreciation of suffering", to reduce sufferings in the world in best possible way. Since sufferings are universal, the commitment to truth and compassion result in commitment to equality. The search for truth can be achieved with freedom to think, investigate and experiment. Courage includes value to fight biases and oppressive regimes, to admit ignorance and "venture into unknown". Responsibility means to not rely on higher power to address problems facing societies, no divine power needs to be credited for it. The developments result from knowledge of human beings themselves and their compassion.

Secularism can also prevail in a secular state. What is secular state? In DE Smith's model in *India as a Secular State*, a secular state can be identified by its dealing with three subjects – exclusion of state in relationship between individual and the religion (religious liberty); relations between individual and state in which religion is excluded (individual as citizen); and state neutrality. In Smith's perspective, India had prospects of success of democracy: characteristics of secularism are present in Hinduism. However, there have been challenges in consolidation of secular state in India: caste and community loyalties which could easily turn into communal rivalry and conflict. Gallenter finds Smith's model of Indian secularism unconvincing: countering Smith, he contends that Indian state departs from principles of secularism by giving subsidies to religious schools and bodies, promoting Hinduism and compromising its secular credentials. For him, precondition for a separate state to succeed lies in presupposing a normative conception of religion with capacity to judge and evaluate religion. In his opinion, the compromise in India on secularism, could be visible in the Constituent Assembly the debate on religious liberty (right to religious worship, religious practice, whether the state should recognise only linguistic minorities or linguistic minorities as well); on citizenship (universal civil code, religion-based political reservation); and on state neutrality (whether the state should give instructions in the state aided schools).

Akil Bilgrami contests the notion of secularism as merely state's neutrality and equidistance from different religions. Bilgrami rejects this notion and provides

alternative notion. He argues that secularism does not emerge in all historical contexts. It emerges in some contexts. It emerges where there is a threat of "majoriterianism". It can also emerge in the context which are not fully modernist. Secularism is different from secular and secularisation. Secularism is a *political* doctrine. A person may remain secular simultaneously retaining his/her religious identity.

13.3 SECULARSIM IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Indian constitution did not include the word secularism when it commenced on January 26, 1951. Although secularism was not mentioned in the Constitution, the fact that Independent India became a democracy, secularism was implied in it as a cardinal principle, a fait accompli, not needing its mention. But it was incorporated in the Preamble of the Constitution by 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976. Later, the Supreme Court ruled in the Bhommai judgement that secularism is a basic feature of the Constitution. Besides, provisions in Articles 25-30 protecting the rights of religious minorities in the Constitution emerged from debate in the Constituent Assembly of India: these signify values of secularism. The questions whether word secularism should be included in Indian Constitution, what kind of secular state India needed to become ("a secular state in a religious country"), whether separation of state from religion was a testimony for secularism, whether a secular state was contingent on a secular society or whether state that respects all religions equally meant presence of secularism in India, were discussed in the Constituent Assembly on October 17, 1949. The opinions on these questions were divided in the Constituent Assembly. Finally, the assembly decided to not include the word secular in the Preamble. However, there was an agreement among all members to establish India as a secular state. And most of them agreed that separation of religion and state was related to democratisation of society.

Shefali Jha identifies three alternative arguments on secularism which were debated in the Constituent Assembly. She terms the first argument as "no concern theory of secularism". The proponents of this argument argued that religion should not be concern of the state. Religion is a private affair and there should be separation between religion as a private affair and the state (public affair). People have liberty to practice religion as a private affair. The state should recognise an individual as a citizen not as a person from a religion. The principal representative of this argument were K.T. Shah, Tajamul Husain and M. Masani. The second line of argument also suggested that religion and state should be separated. But their argument was just opposite to first alternative. While the first kind of argument contended religion was a personal matter for the state to intervene, this argument suggested that religion was a system of absolute truth. Association of religion would not weaken the state but would demean religion. Whims of the majorities which keep changing should not be allowed to have a say in a democratic state. The third theory which Shefali Jha describes as "Equal Respect Theory of Secularism" argues that since in India religion was the most important part of people's life, the state should respect all religions equally along with maintaining a distance from religions. The most vocal advocate of this argument was K.M. Munshi. He argued "we had to evolve a characteristically Indian Secularism". In his opinion, India can not have a state religion; nor can a rigid line be drawn between the religion and the state. In this view, a people's state can not be founded on a kind of secularism that is contemptuous of religion. Since

most religions preach tolerance, if the state allows public sphere to religion it would not lead to inter-sectarian strife. Jaya Prakash Narayan argued that it was not religion but use of religion for social, economic and political purposes that leads to communal violence.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

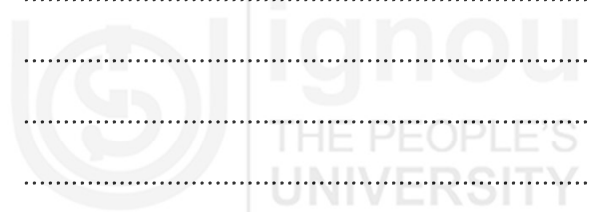**Note:** i)   Use the space below for your answers.

ii)   Check your answers with the answers given at the end of the unit.

1)   What is secularism?

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2)   What were main points in debate on secularism in the Constituent Assembly?

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13.4   "ANTI-SECULARISM"

The points in debate on secularism which were discussed in the Constituent Assembly and in the 1950s were discussed in the debate on the theme which occurred later. One such debate represented a term which came to be alluded to as "anti-secularism". Like an argument given in the Constituent Assembly, advocates of "anti-secularism" are not opposed to secularism per se. What they are opposed to is the notion of secularism which suggests separation between religion and the state. They are critical of both communal-fundamentalist (Hindutva) and secularists. According to the advocates of "anti-secularism", since India is a religious society, religion and the state can not be separated. They consider the separation of religion and the state a western notion, which is not applicable to a religious society like India. Roots of real secularism can be traced in Indian traditions, which have been tolerant. Secularism can be achieved by equal respect for all religions (*Sarva Dharma Sambhava*). The main advocates of anti-secularist perspective are Bhikhu T Parekh, T.N. Madan and Ashis Nandi. Especially, Madan considers secularism as a "gift of Christianity", and Nandi has "an anti-secularist agenda" to critique secularism. According to Achin Vanaik, they focus on six general themes regarding Indian society: modernity, understanding of culture, civilisation, religion and Hinduism, past and present; secularism and secularisation; particularism and universalism, individualism and communitarianism; and neo-Gandhianism. While they share common point that

state should respect all religions equally and Indian tradition has been a tolerant tradition, they have differences.

Rajiv Bhargava argues that the notion of secularism needs to be reconceptualised or re-imagined. Instead of focusing on state-church relationship the following is needed: (i) secularism should be focused as a response to deep religious diversity; (ii) diversity must be understood as enmeshed in power relations; hidden potential of religion-related domination must be understood; (iii) the two moves can help us to view secularism as a response to institutionalised religion (inter-and intra-religious) domination: secularism is not against religion, it is opposed to institutionalised religion-based domination; (iv) only by maintaining principle distance a secular state can show critical respect to all religions and philosophical world views. He explains Indian secularism in terms of the notion of principled distance. He states "the idea of principled distance entails a flexible approach to the issue of state's inclusion or exclusion of religions, and to the issue of engagement with or disengagement from religion, which at the level of law and order depends on the context." He classifies secularism into two kinds: political and secular.

According to some scholars (Smith, Tambia), secularism in India is facing crisis. There are external and internal factors responsible for this. External factors include - breakdown of Congress, increasing centralisation of power of the state, secession in Punjab and Kashmir and implementation of Mandal Commission Report. Internal factors include – totalising world-view of which secularism is a part (Madan and Nandi), and demand for equidistance which can not be met by any state (Chatterjee). For Tambiah, crisis lies in ambiguity about Nandi and Madan imply that secularism lacks legitimacy.

13.5 SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Secularism and secularisation are two inter-related concepts. But in the academic and political discourse, it is the former which has received more attention. Several articles published in *Economic and Political Weekly* (Vol. 58, No. 50 Dec. 14, 2013) discuss the notion of secularisation and its relationship with secularism, and several related aspects with reference to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is about the nature of relationship about democratic rights of religious groups and individuals within them. It is also about ethics or morality.

Secularisation means absence of influence of religion on public policies and social relations. But it does not negate religion itself. It is how religion is the basis of favour or discrimination. It is about modernisation and modernity. Secularisation must be "collective normative project"; whereas secularism in Europe was not "launched as a programme of collective action" (Rajiv Bhargava). Using notion of secularisation, Joya Chatterjee explains that following partition, both India and Pakistan followed policy of secularisation, which was partial. Both got busy in addressing non-religious issues of partition-affected families: rehabilitation of the refugees. However, it was a limited secularisation which did not permeate lower parts of state machinery. The top level bureaucrats were encouraging secularisation. After the policy of neutrality or secular approach to settlement of people affected by migration of people was stopped and religion became an effective factor in this regard.

13.6 LET US SUM UP

Secularism has broadly two meanings: one, separation of religion from the state; and two, equal respect to all religions by the state or *sarva dharm sambhav*. Originally, the Preamble of Indian Constitution did not mention the word secularism. It was inserted into the Preamble by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. The Constituent Assembly discussed whether secularism should be mentioned in the Constitution. There were three broad arguments in the Constituent Assembly: One argument suggested that since religion was a personal affair, there was no need to discuss it; Second argument contended that there should be separation between religion and the state; and the third argument stated that the state should respect all religions equally or there should be *sarva dharma sambhav*.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i)   Use the space below for your answers.

ii)   Check your answers with the answers given at the end of the unit.

1)   What are the main arguments of "anti-secularists"?

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2)   What is the difference between secularism and secularization?

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3)   What is meant by the notion of principled distance?

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13.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Secularism denotes relationship between religion, state, institutions, social groups and individual. There two notions of it: One, suggests a distance between religion and the state or equal distance or request to all religions by the state; another, talks about the relationship of religion with communities and individuals, about democratic values such as freedom and equality, and morality.

2) In the Constituent Assembly, there were three types of arguments on secularism: One, the state should not interfere in religious matter; two, state and religion should be separate because religion is higher than the state/ beyond the scope of the state; and three, the state should pay equal respect to all religions.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1) The anti-secularists argue that secularism which preaches distance between religion and state is a western concept. In a country like India where religion is an essential aspect of life, religion and state can not be delinked. The real secularism can be traced in Indian traditions, which is marked by tolerance. True secularism can be achieved by following the principle of *sarva dharma sambhav* (equal respect for all religions).

2) Secularism denotes distance between religion and the state or equal respect to all religions. Secularisation denotes absence of the impact of religion on the state policies about social groups. It is also about how moral or ethical values shape attitudes about followers of different religions.

3) The idea of principled distance is propounded by Rajeev Bhargava. It denotes a flexible approach to state's engagement or disengagements with religions, and to their inclusion or exclusion of religions by the state. The level of engagement, exclusion or inclusion depends on context, nature, and current state of religions.

UNIT 14 COMMUNALISM*

Structure

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of communalism;

- Trace the growth of communalism in India;

- Discuss relationship between media and communalism; and

- Analyse the relationship between the state and communalism.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Identity forms an important aspect of life of an individual or group in a society. In a diverse society, there are multiple factors that shape identities. Such factors are culture, language, religion, customs, history, region, economy, etc. In shaping an identity, the numbers of these factors vary. The numbers and effectiveness of the factors depend on the context in which identities are formed. Even though multiple factors shape an identity, sometime a single or some of them plays more dominant role than the other factors. This is true of the role of religion also in shaping an identity. As India is a multi-religious society, it is relevant to understand how religion helps in shaping identities of people, in building harmonious or conflictual relations between people following different religions.

14.2 WHAT IS COMMUNALISM?

Communalism is an ideology which shapes the vision of members of a community, formed on the basis of common religion, about themselves, other religious communities, nationalism and the state. In their book *India's Struggle for Freedom*, Bipan Chandra and others, underline that communal ideology consists of three elements. The first element underlines the belief that people from similar religion community have similar secular interests such as political, economic, social and cultural interests. The authors of the book term it as "the first bedrock of communal

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ideology". The second element denotes that the people belonging to different religious communities do not have common secular interests – social, economic, cultural or political interest. The third element or phase of communalism shows a stage in which the relations between different religious communities are seen as mutually incompatible, hostile and antagonistic.

Communalism is linked to another concept, e.g. communal violence. Both are different but inter-related. Communalism is a consciousness and when this consciousness gets expressed in terms of violence between two different religious communities it is called communal violence. Different religious communities do not become communal own their own. Nor do their relations turn into communal violence automatically. Religious communities are turned into communal communities by certain sections of society, and they can convert relations between such communities into communal riots. Such sections can be political leaders, activists, middle classes or community leaders. They explain to the members of their respective communities that the other community is responsible for their problems. In certain politically suitable situation or context they are able to mobilise their respective communities into communal violence.

There have been different approaches to the way communalism can be studied. First has been the approach which may be called empirical approach used by various scholars like Ashgar Ali, where different communal riots were studied and general conclusion have been drawn. A large number of scholars like Amrita Basu, Paul Brass, Asutosh Varsheya etc. can be seen to have followed this approach to test their theories

The second approach has been Materialist approach which argues for foregrouding the study and understanding the social conditions which included the role and nature of the state, material conditions in which community formations are taking place etc., to understand the formation of ideology of communalism. The episodes of communal violence are studied as a reflection of these fundamental situations. K.T. Shah, Bipan Chandra, Achin Vnaik, C.P. Bhambhri, Aditya Mukherjee can be seen as the practioner of this approach. A third approach has been the essentialist approach where the communities are already seen to be different living across Faultlines with essentially separate and defined mutual relationship . Huntington, the American political scientist in his very celebrated book *Clash of Civilisations'* has presented an outline of such approach.

14.3   ORIGINS OF COMMUNALISM

Communalism as a belief or an ideology has been the product of the colonial rule in India. In this sense it is product of modern times in India. Earlier also, there were large number of instances of inter-sect or inter-cult or religious conflicts and violence. But they were not communal in the sense it came to be understood from the mid-nineteenth century. The communalism in India largely was product of the colonial policies towards different communities, especially after the 1857 revolt. The challenges faced by the colonial rulers in the latter half of the nineteenth century became the reasons for them to devise policies that promoted communalism. Among these challenges included criticism of the colonial administration by a new intelligentsia, which had emerged in India by mid-nineteenth century. This intelligentsia, most often, was the product of new English education. This intelligentsia began to realize that people of India were suffering

due to the colonial rule. Transcending linguistic, caste, sectarianism or cultic identities the new intelligentsia sought to generate national consciousness against the colonial administration. Thus, the new intelligentsia, trained in both traditional knowledge and the new western knowledge through English Medium wanted an Indian people to emerge as a nation. This consciousness led them to attempt to constitute a 'national community' consisting of Indians of different sections of society. This was to contest the colonial constructs of a society and polity.

The colonial authorities responded to the challenge of growing national consciousness being generated by the efforts of the new intelligentsia through the following strategies: debunking the notion that Indians who had multiple diversities could be united as a nation, by creating a colonial knowledge, and by highlighting differences among people which existed on the basis of religion, caste, language, etc. and by introducing religion-based representation in the legislative/political bodies. As a part of such knowledge, James Mill wrote a book *The History of British India*, in which he argued that history of India can be divided on the basis of religion into three periods: ancient, medieval and modern. Mill conteded that ancient period in India's history symbolized India's golden period when she was the ruled by the Hindus; in medieval period, the Muslim invaders destroyed the glorious ancient Indian history and established Muslim rule; and the modern period denoted the end of the Mughal rule and establishment of the British rule in India. Such periodization of Indian history has been used by the communal historians and the colonial authorities to divide the society on communal lines. As most of the intelligentsia came from the upper crust of the Hindu society, its growth and ideas could be shown to be detrimental to the interest of Muslims by the Muslim intelligentsia and traditional elite. Syed Ahmad Khan was one such personality. In 1987, Dufferin (Viceroy) and A. Colvin, Lt-Governor of UP attacked Congress for being anti-imperialism. Syed Ahmad Khan joined the attack thinking that it would increase Muslims' share in administrative and professional positions. He believed that with the growth of Hindu intelligentsia and middle classes, the dominance of Muslims declined. Solution to Muslims dominance lay in enabling Muslims to get English education. For this purpose, he founded Anglo Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College in 1875 which later became AMU (Aligarh Muslim University). Meanwhile, a new Muslim middle class too was emerging at that time. However, its late arrival witnessed an already entrenched Hindu middle class since 1870s which was quite vocal and anti-colonial in its approach. One of the strategies of the traditional Muslim elite and new middle class was to demand that they should be given preferences of representation in public institutions. The demand for reservation in jobs and educational institutions by the Middle class soon got converged with the demand of the Muslim elite for more political power via statutory reservations in the legislative and other bodies. This led to the formation of the Muslim League in 1906 which was also encouraged by the British colonial government. In other areas, for example, the British encouraged sections from among the Hindus too with certain favours which seemed to divide the emerging national unity created by the Indian National Congress. The demand for reservation in government jobs and representation of legislative bodies to the Muslims resulted in similar demands from some sections of the Hindus. And a competition between some sections of Hindu and Muslim intelligentsia ensued for reservation in government jobs and legislative bodies. Later, these demands views were voiced by the Muslim League. In fact, the earlier Muslim intelligentsia and later Muslim League represented sections of Muslim landlords and middle classes and their vision and demands were common.

For some historians, Hindus had all the glory which was destroyed by the Muslim invaders while some historians saw the British as destroyer the glory of Islam. According to them the Islamic glory had to be restored once again. This could be done by establishing an Islamic rule. These two versions represented two-nation theory. The policy level intervention to divide the Indians on communal lines included introduction of separate electorate in 1909 (Morley-Minto Reform). According to the policy of separate electorate, in 1909 municipal elections, Hindu and Muslims contested from separate constituencies, where candidates and the electorate belong to the same religion. Separate electorate was political manifestation of communal divide. From the 1920s, the demands for more representation in the councils widened and so was popular participation. The 1920s saw the emergence of Khilafat movement which for the first time brought many Muslim into the larger political fold. This meant that there were seeds of separate identities based on non-religious interests but along the religious lines planted. The Colonial government however organized the Round Table Conference in 1930-32 in which representatives of all conceivable groups and sectional interest were invited.

In comparison to Hindus, the rise of Muslim educated in English was limited. Educated Hindus and Muslims competed for government jobs. It gave a feeling among some sections of the new elite/middle class from both communities that because of the other community, they were not getting jobs and representation in political institutions. The Hindus viewed that their interests were antagonistic to Muslims' interests and vice-versa. As you have read above, in communalism the secular interests of different religions communities are antagonistic. Thus, communalism in India grew between the late nineteenth century and partition of the country.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with the answers give at the end of the unit.

1) What is communalism?

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2) What is the relationship between communalism and communal violence?

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3) Briefly narrate the origin of communalism in India.

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14.4   COMMUNALISM AND THE STATE

Communalism often leads to communal violence between different religious communities. There are several examples of communal violence in India. Communal violence is also result of intermingling of religion and politics. In the post-Independent India, communalism has become part of the competitive electoral politics. According to K.N. Pannikar (1990), politics and communalism have become complementary, reinforcing each other in the post-Independence period. It can devise policies which can either stop or encourage communalism. It can also play partisan role in communal politics. The nature of state's role on communalism depends on the nature of pressure of social groups on it, and composition of the personnel in the state institutions, and political context. Thus, the state functions under the pressure of different social groups and classes. These also include religious communities. As you have read above, the colonial rule promoted religious divisions: the policy was based on preferential treatment and discrimination. According to C.P. Bhambhri, the post-Independence period inherited the legacy of religious backwardness and religious conflict. The context of pre-Independence period – the state attitude of preference and discrimination, mediation by the British in the 1940s between the separatists and nationalists became the context of the post-Independence state in India. The state in India is placed in paradoxical situation: on the one hand it has to act through rules and regulations, new technology; on the other hand, it has to deal with the society where symbols, rituals and inherited social regulatory mechanisms exist. Indian state loses loyalty of the masses if it is perceived to be acting against traditional practices – Muslim personal law (1985), Operation Blue Star (1984), Sabrimala (2019). In a democratic society such as India, the state functions under pressure of different social forces.It becomes a site of multiple ideologies and tendencies – including secularists and communalists. Like the space in the society, the state also becomes site of contests between different ideologies such as communalism and secularism. In the post-Independence period, the Indian state has followed the strategy for managing conflicts – of oppression and cooptation: it makes compromises with communalism and casteism. And the exploiting classes have exploited religious sentiments to legitimize exploitation in the society. Zoya Hasan (1990) argues that the state has surrendered to the pressure of religious fundamentalist in Muslim Women's Bill and Ram Janma Bhumi case.

14.5   COMMUNALISM AND MEDIA

Media, in both its traditional and newer forms, helped ideologies and ideas to spread. As has been discussed in the rise of public sphere by Jurgen Habermas in the context of Europe, the public associations, clubs, public gatherings and later on print media which included newspapers, novels, textbooks, etc., have all helped

many ideas to spread. Benedict Anderson, for example, called nation as an *Imagined Community* because it was created because of spread of imagined ideas of nation by the print media since the 18th century onwards. While media plays a decisive role in generating awareness among the people, on several occasions it has contributed to the spread of communal divide in the country. In relation to communalism in India, the media plays an influential role in creation and spread of communalism. Its role becomes crucial in reporting, explaining and commenting on communal riots or violence; about the reasons for occurrence of communal violence, role of leaders of different communities and politicians. The media includes print media – newspapers, magazines, and electronic media (television channels), and social media (WhatsApp, face book, tweeter, email). In the recent past, fake news, have become quite frequent to arouse communal passion in the society. Many reports in the media are based on rumours and unverified facts. The social media for example has a reach which very few previous media had in the past. It is also not controlled through censorship and other ways and therefore any news or information, which may cause violence or animosity among different groups of people travels rapidly.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i)   Use the space below for your answers.

   ii)   Check your answers with the answers give at the end of the unit.

1)   How does the state play a role in communalism?

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2)   Briefly describe the nature of relationship between communalism and media.

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14.6   LET US SUM UP

Communalism is an ideology which preaches that communities are formed on religious lines. And members of a community share common interests which are incompatible with the interests of other religious communities. In certain political contexts, communalism can lead to communal violence. This happens because of the role of political or community leaders. The communal riots and large scale violence that India has witnessed over the last two centuries has been the reminder of the divisive politics that the colonial rule could create for its purpose. Communal violence which the post-independent India has seen can thus be traced to the colonial period. Sometimes communalism gets expressed in the form of

communal voilence. This can happen when some sections of leaders or political activists convert relations between religious communities into conflict. In past few years social media have also become source of communal divide.

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14.8   ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1)   Communalism is an ideology which share the visions of members a community formed on the basis of religion about themselves, other communities and nationalism. It has three elements: first, members of a religious community share common interests; two, people from two different religious communities do not share common interests; and three, relations between different religious communities are incompatible and hostile.

2)   Communalism and communal violence are different but inter-related. The former is an ideology which preaches that people from a religious community share common social, economic, political and other kinds of interests which are incompatible with the interests of other communities. Communal violence is violent expression of the differences between different religious communities.

3)   It emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century, the colonial period. It was product of the divide and rule policy of the British. The policy was reaction to critique of colonial policies by the newly emergent intelligentsia. The colonial state responded to the critique of colonial rule by encouraging the intelligentsia and middle classes to make demands for reservation in jobs and representation in political institution on religious lines. They introduced separate electorates through Morley-Minto reforms in 1909. Consequently, it resulted in genesis of communalism in India.

Check Your Progress 2

1)   The state can play an effective role in communalism in two ways: One, by devising policies which can either encourage or impede communalism; two, by taking action against people or agencies involved in spread of communalism or communal violence. The role of state depends on political

ideologies of those who control the state and on its capacity to manage pressures of different communities.

2) Media and communalism are related. Media not only plays role in either creating and spread or combatting it. During the second decade of the twenty first century, social media has become more decisive in shaping communalism in India. Quite often, media spread fake news and unverified information which contribute to communalism.