

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS - HISTORY

SEMESTER-IV

HISTORY OF IDEAS (MODERN)

SOFT CORE 402

BLOCK – 1

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FOREWORD

The Self-Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

HISTORY OF IDEAS (MODERN)

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BLOCK-1 HISTORY OF IDEAS (MODERN)

Introduction to the Block

In this block we will go through Colonialism and the emergence of new Political Ideas,

Democracy, Nationalism and Socialism, Communalism and Secularism, Reform and Revivalism, Ideas of Religious Universalism and Fundamentalism, Fundamentalism in Modern India

Unit 1 focuses on Colonialism and the emergence of new Political Ideas

Unit 2 focuses on Democracy

Unit 3 focuses on Nationalism and Socialism

Unit 4 focuses on Communalism and Secularism

Unit 5 focuses on Reform and Revivalism

Unit 6 focuses on Ideas of Religious Universalism and Fundamentalism

Unit 7 focuses on Fundamentalism in Modern India

UNIT 1: COLONIALISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF NEW POLITICAL IDEAS

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Colonialism: Various View Points
 - 1.2.1 Nature of Colonialism
 - 1.2.2 Impact of Colony
- 1.3 Stages of Colonialism
 - 1.3.1 1st stage
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- 1.6 Positivism
- 1.8 Let us sum up
- 1.9 Keywords
- 1.10 Questions For Review
- 1.11 Suggested Readings And References
- 1.12 Answers To Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand the Colonialism
- Know the Utilitarianism
- Able to understand Liberalism and Positivism

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The formation of state was another major problem. Both Prime Minister Nehru and Deputy Prime Minister Vallabh bhai Patel were against the creation of linguistic states. Nehru clearly said that he had to check disruptionist tendencies caused due to partition and make the nation strong and united.

This caused a great disappointment among the Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, and Telugu speakers. They began to protest. The strongest protest came from the Telugu speaking district of the Madras presidency. Imperialism refers to the process of capitalist development which leads the capitalist countries to conquer and dominate pre-capitalist countries of the world. Under this head, we deal with the development of capitalism in advanced capitalist countries, the mutual relations among advanced capitalist countries, and the subjugation of pre-capitalist countries by a capitalist country (also described here as metropolis or metropolitan country). More narrowly, the term imperialism is used to denote or describe the relations of political and economic domination between metropolis and the country it subjugates or dominates.

The country which is so subjugated by a metropolitan capitalist country is described as a colony, and what happens in a colony is colonialism. The total system of imperialist domination of a pre-capitalist country is colonialism. The study of imperialism and colonialism is closely correlated and, in a way, we shall be discussing both. But here we shall concentrate more on the study of colonialism while leaving major aspects of imperialism to be taken up in the study of development of capitalism.

1.2 COLONIALISM: VARIOUS VIEW POINTS

What does colonialism mean! Is it merely the political control by one country or another, or does it indicate a process of economic subordination of one country to another? The understanding of colonialism has varied from one scholar to another. In

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In this section we will introduce you to various view points on colonialism as well as other related aspects:

i) One view represented by a large number of sociologists, political scientists and economists is that colonial society was basically a traditional society or, in other words colonialism retained basic socio-economic elements and structures of pre-colonial society. Post-colonial societies then begin the task of modernisation from a traditional 'socio-economic structure. Many others see colonialism as representing a transitional society, that is, a society which was being transformed economically, socially and politically from a traditional, pre-colonial society into a modern capitalist society. They believe that, given enough time, colonialism would have succeeded in the task if it had not been overthrown.

ii) Still other writers hold that colonialism produces a dualistic society in which the sector is modern and capitalist while another sector is traditional and pre-capitalist. The two sectors exist side-by-side without either being strong enough to overwhelm or overthrow the other. Some writers have followed a more radical version of the dualistic model. According to them colonialism begins the task of modernisation but fails to complete it giving up the effort half-way. This leads to 'arrested growth' of the colonial economy and society. Thus the semi-feudal features of agriculture are seen as remnants of the pre-colonial period. Colonialism is accused of preserving these semi-feudal features or, at least, of failing to uproot them.

iii) Many writers see colonialism as nothing more than political domination or foreign political rule. The weaknesses of colonialism are seen as weaknesses of policies followed by individual colonial administrators.

1.2.1 Nature of Colonialism

Colonialism produced a society which was neither capitalist as in Britain nor was it pre-colonial or pre-capitalist. Thus, for example, India under British rule neither resembled capitalist Britain nor was it basically similar to Mughal India. The development of agrarian relations in the

colonies- in India, or Egypt, or Indonesia makes this aspect quite clear. For example, landlordism in both **zamindari** and ryotwari areas of British India was something new; it did not exist in Mughal India. It was the creation of British rule. It was the result of the colonial rulers' efforts to transform Indian agriculture. Indian agriculture was not capitalist but it had many capitalist elements; for example, property relations were capitalist; land was now a private property which was freely bought and sold on a large scale.

Infact, we can say that the colonial societies under-went a fundamental transformation under colonialism. They were made an integral part of the world capitalist system. For example, colonialism in India was as modern a phenomenon as industrial capitalism in Britain -the two had developed together since the middle of the 18th century.

Capitalism was, by its very nature, a world-system -that is, it must cover the entire world; but it does not cover the entire world in the same way:

It has one face in the metropolis and another in the colonies. It develops the metropolis as a modern industrially developed country, it underdevelops the colony.

The same capitalist process which produces economic development in the metropolis and makes it an advanced capitalist country produces and maintains underdevelopment in the colonies and transforms them into colonial societies.

Colonialism uproots old society and economy, but the new colonial society and economy are as much a barrier to modern economic development as are the old, precapitalist economy and society.

A colony is integrated into-or made a part of -world capitalist system, but without taking part in industrial revolution or the development of capitalist production.

Colonialism in fact blocks the development of modern capitalism in the colonies.

1.2.2 Impact on Colony

You would like to know the essential features of Colonialism. Basic to colonialism are

two features:

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- i) One is the complete subordination of the colony to the needs of the metropolis or the imperialist power and,
- ii) Second is economic exploitation of the colony or the appropriation of the colony's economic surplus by the metropolis.

The economic surplus in the colony is produced in many different ways. from traditional agriculture to plantations to modern mining and factory production. But the essence of colonialism is appropriation of this surplus by various classes of the imperialist country.

Subordination means that the basic issues of the colony's economy and social and political development are not determined by the colony's own needs but by the needs and interests of the metropolitan economy and of the metropolitan capitalist class.

Colonialism is thus much more than political control or colonial policies. It is best seen as a structure. Colonial interests and policies, colonial state and administrative institutions, colonial culture and society. Colonial ideas and ideologies, all function within the framework of colonial structure.

1.3 STAGES OF COLONIALISM

Colonialism is not one continuous phenomenon or unified structure. Colonialism goes through several stages. The subordination of the colonial country and its exploitation remain constant but the forms of subordination and exploitation undergo changes over time from one stage to another. These changes are linked to several factors. For example: the historical development of capitalism as a world system, the changing patterns of the individual metropolitan (or imperialist) country's economic, social and political development, the changing position it occupies in the world system, and the colony's own historical development.

Colonialism may be divided into three distinct stages which were related to distinct forms of exploitation or surplus appropriation. Consequently, each stage represented a different pattern of subordination of colonial economy, society and polity and therefore, different colonial policies, political and administrative institutions, ideologies and impact as also

different responses by the colonial people. Stages of colonialism for different colonies are not bound by the same time horizons.

Different stages occur in different colonies at different times, that is, different stages occupy different periods in different countries. But the content of a stage remains broadly the same whenever and wherever it may occur. We should also note that the stage of colonialism does not occur in a pure form, nor is there a sharp and complete break between one stage and another. Forms of surplus appropriation or exploitation and other features of colonialism from earlier stages continue into the later stages. Different stages are, however, marked by distinct dominant features - there is a qualitative change from one stage to another.

Basic features of colonialism and its different stages can be illustrated from the history of colonialism in modern India. This is especially so because historians agree on treating India as a classic colony. The basic character of British rule did not remain the same through its long history of nearly 200 years. The changing pattern of Britain's position

in the developing world capitalist economy led to changes in the nature of British colonialism in India, that is changes in forms of exploitation and consequently in colonial policies, impact and Indian response. The last two aspects, that is, impact of colonialism on India and the response of the Indian people will be discussed in other units. Colonial policies will also be discussed at length later in other units. But we will now discuss the basic features of colonialism in India during different stages as also the reasons for transition or change from one stage of colonialism to another.

1.3.1 First Stage

This is described as the Period of Monopoly Trade and Direct Appropriation (or the Period of East India Company's Domination, 1757-1813). During the last half of the 18th century, India was conquered by a monopoly trading corporation - the East India Company. The Company had two basic objectives at this stage.

i) The first was to acquire a monopoly of trade with India. This meant that other English or European merchants or trading companies should

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not compete with it in purchase and sale of Indian products. Nor should the Indian merchants do so. This would enable the East India Company to buy Indian products as cheaply as possible and sell them in World markets at as high a price as possible. Thus Indian economic surplus was to be appropriated through monopoly trade.

The English competitors were kept out by persuading the British Government to grant the East India Company through a Royal Charter a monopoly of the right to trade with India and the East. Against the European rivals the Company had to wage long and fierce wars on land and the sea. To acquire monopoly against Indian traders and to prevent Indian rulers from interfering with its trade, the Company took advantage of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire to acquire increasing political domination and control over different parts of the country. After political conquest, Indian weavers were also employed directly by the Company. In that case, they were forced to produce cloth at below market prices.

ii) The second major objective of colonialism at this stage was to directly appropriate or take over governmental revenues through control over state power. The East India Company required large financial resources to wage wars in India and on the seas against European rivals and Indian rulers and to maintain naval forces, forts and armies around their trading posts, etc. East India Company did not possess such resources and the British Government neither possessed nor was it willing to use them to promote the Company's interests. The much needed financial resources had, therefore, to be raised in India from the Indian people. This provided another incentive to make territorial conquests in India.

Financial resources had to be raised in India for another reason. Indian money was needed to purchase Indian goods. This could be acquired either by sale of British goods in India or by export of gold and silver to India. The first method was barred because the British produced hardly any goods which could be sold in India in competition with Indian products. British industrial products could not compete with Indian handicraft products till the beginning of the 19th century. British Government, heavily influenced by **mercantilist** theories, was also unhappy with the export of gold and silver from Britain. Appropriation of government revenue would also, of course, increase the profits of the

East India Company and dividends of its share holders. Both the objectives-the monopoly of trade and appropriation of government revenues - were rapidly fulfilled with the conquest first of Bengal and parts of South India and then over the year of the rest of India. The East India Company now used its political power to acquire monopolistic control over Indian trade and handicraft products. Indian traders were gradually replaced and ruined, while the weavers and other craftsmen were compelled either to sell their products at uneconomic rates or to work for the Company at low wages. It is important to note that at this stage there was no large scale import of british manufactures into India; rather the reverse occurred, that is, there was increase in export of Indian textiles, etc. The weavers were, for example, not ruined at this stage by British imports but because of the Company's monopoly and their exploitation by being forced to produce for the Company under uneconomic conditions.

With political conquest, the East India Company acquired direct control over the revenues of the Indian states. Moreover, both Company and its servants extorted illegally immense wealth from Indian merchants, officials, nobles, rulers and zamindars. In fact, this element of plunder and direct seizure of surplus was very strong in the first stage of colonialism. Gradually, large number of highly paid British officials were appointed in India and their salaries and pensions became a form of surplus appropriation. There was intense struggle within Britain, especially among the aristocracy and the landed gentry, for British appointments in India.

An important feature of colonialism during this period was that no basic changes were introduced in the colony in administration, judicial system, transport and communication, methods of agricultural or industrial production, forms of business management or economic organisation (except for the Permanent Settlement in Bengal which really belonged to the second stage of colonialism). Nor were any changes made in education or intellectual field,' culture or social organisation. Only two new educational institutions were started -one at Banaras for Sanskrit learning and other at Calcutta for Persian and Arabic learning. Even the

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Christian Missionaries and British capitalists, who might have acted as a channel for the import of modern Western ideas, were kept out of British possessions in India. The only changes made were:

i) in military organisation and technology which contemporary independent Indian rulers were also introducing in their armed forces, and ii) in administration at the top of the structure of revenue collection so that it could be made more efficient and diverted to the Company.

At this stage, British rule was not very different from traditional Indian empires which too relied on land revenue collection.

Why was this so? Why were so few changes introduced? Because the two basic objectives of colonialism at this stage did not require basic socio-economic administrative changes in India. Colonialism of the first stage could be superimposed over its existing economic, cultural, social and political structure. Also the British rulers did not feel the need to penetrate the villages deeper than their indigenous Indian predecessors had done so long as land revenue was successfully sucked out through the traditional machinery of revenue collection. There was therefore no need to disturb India's existing economic or political structure, or administrative and social organisation, or cultural and ideological framework.

This lack of change was also reflected in the ideology of the rulers. No need was felt to criticise traditional Indian civilisation, religions, laws, caste system, family structure, etc. for they were not seen as obstacles at that stage of colonial exploitation. The need was to understand them sympathetically so that political control and economic exploitation could proceed smoothly without arousing opposition from Indians on religious, social or cultural grounds.

This period witnessed large scale drain of wealth from India. This wealth played an important role in financing Britain's industrial revolution. Drain of Wealth from India constituted 2 to 3 per cent of Britain's national income at the time.

1.3.2 Second Stage

This was a period of exploitation through trade and is also termed as Colonialism of Free Trade during the 19th century. Immediately after the

East India company became the ruler over most parts of India, an intense struggle broke out in Britain to determine whose interests would the newly acquired colony serve. Britain was after

1750 undergoing the Industrial Revolution. The newly developing industrial capitalists began to attack the East India Company and the forms of its exploitation of India. They demanded that colonial administration and policy in India should now serve their interests which were very different from those of the East India Company. They did not gain much from a monopoly trade in Indian products or from the Company's control over Indian revenues. They wanted India to serve as a market for their ever-increasing output of manufactured goods, especially textiles. They also needed from India exports

of raw materials, especially cotton, and foodgrains. Moreover, India could buy more British goods only if it earned foreign exchange by increasing its exports. Increasing exports were also needed to enable dividends of the East India Company and profits of British merchants and earnings and pensions of British officials to be transferred to Britain.

But what was India to export? Since the British were for years not willing to let India's textiles be imported into Britain and later their export was no longer economic, these exports from India could consist only of agricultural raw materials and other non manufactured goods. In other words, to suit the convenience of British industrial capitalists, British colonialism in India must enter its second stage. India must become a subordinate trading partner of Britain, as a market to be exploited and as a dependent colony to produce and supply the raw materials and food-stuffs Britain needed. India's economic surplus was to be appropriated through trade based on unequal exchange. As

a result, Britain increasingly produced and exported goods which were produced in factories using advanced technology and less labour, and in which level of productivity and wages was high. On the other hand, India produced agricultural raw materials through backward methods of production using great deal of labour leading to low productivity and low wages. This international division of labour was, moreover, not only highly unfavourable to India but was unnatural and artificial and was introduced and maintained forcibly through colonial domination.

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The beginnings of the change occurred with the passing of the Regulating Act of 1773 and Pitt's India Act of 1784 which were primarily the result of intense struggle within the British ruling classes. The East India Company was saved and given a reprieve by the French Revolutionary Wars after 1789. But the Company gradually lost ground. By 1813, when another Charter Act was passed, the Company had lost most of its political and economic power in India; the real power being wielded by the British Government which ruled India in the interests of the British capitalist class as a whole. India could not be exploited in the new way within its existing economic, political, administrative and socio-cultural setting. This setting, therefore, had to be shattered and transformed all along the line. The British Indian Government set out to do so after 1813. In the economic field this meant integrating India's colonial economy with the British and world capitalist economy. The chief instrument of this was the introduction of free trade. All import duties in India were either totally removed or drastically reduced to nominal rates. Thus India was thrown open to British manufactures. Free entry was also now given to British capitalists to develop tea, coffee and indigo plantations, trade, transport, mining and modern industries in India. The British Indian Government gave active state help to these capitalists.

The agrarian structure of India was sought to be transformed in a capitalist direction through the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari systems. The large-scale imports and their sale in land and even more the large-scale export of the bulky raw materials and their gathering at the ports from long distances inside the country required a cheap and easy system of transport and communications. Without such a system India could not be opened to large-scale foreign trade. The Government, therefore, improved rivers and canals, encouraged the introduction of steamships on the rivers and improved the roads. Above all, during latter half of the 19th century, it encouraged and financed a large network of railways linking India's major cities and markets to its ports. By 1905 nearly 45,000 kms. of railways had been built. Similarly, a modern postal and telegraph system was introduced to facilitate economic transactions.

Many changes were now brought about in the administrative field. Administration was made more elaborate and comprehensive and it reached down to the villages and out-lying areas of the country so that British goods could reach, and agricultural products drawn from, its interior villages and remotest parts. Legal and judicial structure of India was overhauled to promote capitalist commercial relations and maintain law and order. The changes, however, related to criminal law, law of contract and legal procedures. Personal law, including that relating to marriage and inheritance, was largely left untouched since it did not in any way affect colonial transformation of the economy. Further more it was in the 1830s and 1840s, that English replaced Persian as the official language in India. Lord William Bentinck's resolution dated March 7, 1835 stated that 'the funds appropriated to education would be best employed in English education alone'.

Modern education was now introduced basically with the objective to man the new, vastly expanded administration. But it was also expected to help transform India's society and culture. This transformation was needed for two reasons; it was expected to,

- i) create an overall climate of change and development and,
- ii) generate a culture of loyalty to the rulers.

It is to be noted that it was around this period that many Indian intellectuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy began to work for social and cultural modernisation for different reasons, mainly as part of national regeneration.

The second stage of colonialism generated a liberal imperialist ideology among many British statesmen and administrators. They talked of training the Indian people in the arts of democracy and self Government. Britain was at this time, the workshop of the world -it was the only rapidly industrialising country. Consequently, many in Britain believed that the pattern of trade with India could be maintained even if Britain was to withdraw its direct political and administrative control over India, so long as law and I order, free trade and sanctity of business contract were maintained there. But even the liberal imperialists believed that it would take Indians a hundred years or more to acquire these virtues, and therefore, British rule should be maintained and

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strengthened for centuries to come.

If India's socio-economic structure was to be radically transformed, its existing culture and social organisation had to be declared unsuitable and decadent. Indian culture and society were now subjected to sharp criticism. No racialism was, however involved in this criticism for it was simultaneously maintained that Indians could gradually be raised to the level of Europeans. The earlier forms of surplus extraction continued during this phase. This, plus the costly administration, plus the efforts at economic transformation led to a steep rise in taxation and in the burden on the peasant. Because of the constant needs of colonial administration for funds to maintain military and civil administration and for construction of railways, and its large reliance on taxation of land, which had its own limits, colonial administration suffered from constant financial constraint. India played a crucial role in the development of British capitalism during this stage. British industries, especially textiles, were heavily dependent on exports. India absorbed 10 to 12 per cent of British exports and nearly 20 per cent of Britain's textile exports during 1860 to 1880. After 1850, India was also a major importer of engine coaches, rail lines and other railway stores. Moreover, Indian army played an important role in extending British colonialism in Asia and Africa. Throughout this stage Indian wealth and capital continued to be drained to Britain.

1.3.3 Third Stage

This is described as the Era of Foreign Investments and International Competition for Colonies. A new stage of colonialism was ushered in India from about 1860s. This was the result of several major changes in the world economy:

- i) Spread of industrialisation to several countries of Europe, the United States and Japan with the result that Britain's industrial supremacy in the world came to an end.
- ii) There was intensification of industrialisation as a result of the application of scientific knowledge to industry. Modern chemical industries, the use of petroleum as fuel for the internal combustion

engine and the use of electricity for industrial purposes developed during this period.

iii) There was further unification of the world market because of revolution in the means of international transport.

The new industries in many industrialised countries consumed immense quantities of raw materials. Rapid industrial development also led to continuous expansion of urban population which needed more and more food. There now occurred an intense struggle for new, secure and exclusive markets and sources of agricultural and mineral raw materials and foodstuffs. Moreover, the development of trade and industry at home and extended exploitation of colonies and semi-colonies produced large accumulations of capital in the capitalist countries. Simultaneously there occurred concentration of capital in fewer and fewer corporations, trusts and cartels and merger of banking capital with industrial capital.

Outlets had to be found for this capital. This led to large scale export of capital. Once again the developed capitalist countries began a search and compete for areas where they could acquire the exclusive right to invest their surplus capital. Thus in their search for markets, raw materials and fields for capital investment the capitalistic countries began to divide and re-divide the world among themselves. Colonialism at this stage also served important political and ideological purpose in the metropolitan, that is, imperialist countries. Chauvinism or aggressive nationalism based on the glorification of empire could be used to tone down social divisions at home by stressing the common interests in empire. The British, for example, raised the slogan that "The Sun never sets on the British Empire" to spread pride and a sense of contentment among workers on whose slum-houses the Sun seldom shone in real life.

The French talked of their "Civilising Mission", while Japan talked of Pan-Asianism and claimed to be the champion of the Asian people.

During this stage, Britain's position in the world was constantly challenged and weakened by the rival capitalistic countries. It now made vigorous efforts to consolidate its control over India. Reactionary imperialist policies now replaced liberal imperialist policies. This was reflected in the viceroynalties of Lytton, Dufferin, Lansdowne and

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Curzon. The strengthening of colonial rule over India was essential to keep out the rivals, to attract British capital to India and to provide it security. After 1850, a very large amount of British capital was invested in railways, loans to the Government of India, trade and to a lesser extent in plantations, coal mining, jute mills, shipping and banking in India.

India also performed another important role for Britain. Its army -men and financial resources - could be used to fight Britain's rivals in the struggle for the division and re-division of the world. In fact, the Indian army was the chief instrument for the defence, expansion and consolidation of British empire in Africa and Asia. The result was a costly standing army that absorbed nearly 52 per cent of the Indian revenues in 1904.

Politically and administratively the third stage of colonialism meant renewed and more intensive control over India. Moreover, it was now even more important than ever before that colonial administration should reach out to every nook and corner of India. The administration now became more bureaucratically tight, efficient and extensive than earlier. Railways were built at even a faster rate. A major change now occurred in the ideology of colonialism. All talk of training the Indian people for self-government died out. (It was revived in the 20th century after 1918 as a result of pressure from the Indian national movement). Instead, the aim of British rule was declared to be permanent 'trusteeship' over the Indian people. Indian people were declared to be a permanently immature, a 'child' people, needing British control and trusteeship. Geography, 'race', climate, history, religion, culture and social organisation were cited as factors which made Indians permanently unfit for self government or democracy. Britain had, therefore, to exercise benevolent despotism over them for centuries to come. Efforts at the transformation of India continued during this stage, though once again with meagre results. This was partly because of the financial constraints discussed earlier and also because of the rise of the national movement. Even the limited changes produced an intelligentsia which began to oppose colonialism and analyse the mechanism of colonial exploitation. The British administrators increasingly assumed a neutral stand on social and cultural questions, and then began to support social and

cultural reactionaries in the name of preserving indigenous institutions.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the Impact of Colony.

2. Discuss the Third Stage of Colonialism.

1.4 LIBERALISM

Political doctrine that takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to be the central problem of politics. Liberals typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty. As the revolutionary American pamphleteer Thomas Paine expressed it in *Common Sense* (1776), government is at best “a necessary evil.” Laws, judges, and police are needed to secure the individual’s life and liberty, but their coercive power may also be turned against him. The problem, then, is to devise a system that gives government the power necessary to protect individual liberty but also prevents those who govern from abusing that power.

The problem is compounded when one asks whether this is all that government can or should do on behalf of individual freedom. Some liberals—the so-called neoclassical liberals, or libertarians—answer that it is. Since the late 19th century, however, most liberals have insisted that the powers of government can promote as well as protect the freedom of the individual. According to modern liberalism, the chief task of government is to remove obstacles that prevent individuals from living freely or from fully realizing their potential. Such obstacles include

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poverty, disease, discrimination, and ignorance. The disagreement among liberals over whether government should promote individual freedom rather than merely protect it is reflected to some extent in the different prevailing conceptions of liberalism in the United States and Europe since the late 20th century. In the United States liberalism is associated with the welfare-state policies of the New Deal program of the Democratic administration of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, whereas in Europe it is more commonly associated with a commitment to limited government and laissez-faire economic policies .

This article discusses the political foundations and history of liberalism from the 17th century to the present. For coverage of classical and contemporary philosophical liberalism, see political philosophy. For biographies of individual philosophers, see John Locke; John Stuart Mill; John Rawls.

1.4.1 General Characteristics

Liberalism is derived from two related features of Western culture. The first is the West's preoccupation with individuality, as compared to the emphasis in other civilizations on status, caste, and tradition. Throughout much of history, the individual has been submerged in and subordinate to his clan, tribe, ethnic group, or kingdom. Liberalism is the culmination of developments in Western society that produced a sense of the importance of human individuality, a liberation of the individual from complete subservience to the group, and a relaxation of the tight hold of custom, law, and authority. In this respect, liberalism stands for the emancipation of the individual. See also individualism.

Liberalism also derives from the practice of adversariality in European political and economic life, a process in which institutionalized competition—such as the competition between different political parties in electoral contests, between prosecution and defense in adversary procedure, or between different producers in a market economy (see monopoly and competition)—generates a dynamic social order. Adversarial systems have always been precarious, however, and it took a long time for the belief in adversariality to emerge from the more traditional view, traceable at least to Plato, that the state should be an

organic structure, like a beehive, in which the different social classes cooperate by performing distinct yet complementary roles. The belief that competition is an essential part of a political system and that good government requires a vigorous opposition was still considered strange in most European countries in the early 19th century.

Underlying the liberal belief in adversariality is the conviction that human beings are essentially rational creatures capable of settling their political disputes through dialogue and compromise. This aspect of liberalism became particularly prominent in 20th-century projects aimed at eliminating war and resolving disagreements between states through organizations such as the League of Nations, the United Nations, and the International Court of Justice (World Court).

Liberalism has a close but sometimes uneasy relationship with democracy. At the centre of democratic doctrine is the belief that governments derive their authority from popular election; liberalism, on the other hand, is primarily concerned with the scope of governmental activity. Liberals often have been wary of democracy, then, because of fears that it might generate a tyranny by the majority. One might briskly say, therefore, that democracy looks after majorities and liberalism after unpopular minorities.

Like other political doctrines, liberalism is highly sensitive to time and circumstance. Each country's liberalism is different, and it changes in each generation. The historical development of liberalism over recent centuries has been a movement from mistrust of the state's power on the ground that it tends to be misused, to a willingness to use the power of government to correct perceived inequities in the distribution of wealth resulting from economic competition—inequities that purportedly deprive some people of an equal opportunity to live freely. The expansion of governmental power and responsibility sought by liberals in the 20th century was clearly opposed to the contraction of government advocated by liberals a century earlier. In the 19th century liberals generally formed the party of business and the entrepreneurial middle class; for much of the 20th century they were more likely to work to restrict and regulate business in order to provide greater opportunities for

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labourers and consumers. In each case, however, the liberals' inspiration was the same: a hostility to concentrations of power that threaten the freedom of the individual and prevent him from realizing his full potential, along with a willingness to reexamine and reform social institutions in the light of new needs. This willingness is tempered by an aversion to sudden, cataclysmic change, which is what sets off the liberal from the radical. It is this very eagerness to welcome and encourage useful change, however, that distinguishes the liberal from the conservative, who believes that change is at least as likely to result in loss as in gain.

1.5 THE UTILITARIANISM

The utilitarians too believed in the vision of civilizing and improving India like the evangelicalisms and liberals. The utilitarians were radicals and humanists and had a strong faith in reason. The most important advocate of utilitarian philosophy was James Mill, the author of *History of India* published in 1817. Though, his book was studied by the employees of the British East India Company as a Bible, it caused immense harm to Indian society by laying the seeds of communalist approach to the study of Indian history and civilization.

They advocated that introducing reforms into the problem of law and landed property they could attain the Benthamite principle of the 'greatest good of the greatest number'. They believed that law could be an instrument of change and through enactment of laws; Indian society could be transformed into a modern society from that of superstitious society.

With the joining of James Mill in the East India Company's London office, a systematic attempt began to give a concrete shape to a vision of political reform in the philosophical premises of utilitarianism. Resultantly, a series of laws and penal codes were enacted to make India

civilized and improved. The utilitarians opposed any form of representative government in India at that time as well as in near future.

The utilitarian philosophy also influenced the views of Dalhousie in creating all-India departments with single heads. What we notice was the decline of the overall spirit of reform and the British administration was now dominated by the outlook of pragmatism and rationality.

In the span of a hundred years (1757-1857) in this process of expansion and consolidation of the British power, the mission of the British was to civilize and improve India from a society of historical unchanging barbarian image by providing a unity of action in spite of differences in the perception of the orientalist, evangelicalism and the utilitarians led by Sir William Jones, Charles Grant and James Mill respectively. An objective analysis of the process reveals that these ideological bases and advocates of these ideologies were responsible in building the British Empire in India.

1.6 POSITIVISM

Positivism is a philosophical system deeply rooted in science and mathematics. It's based on the view that whatever exists can be verified through experiments, observation, and mathematical/logical proof. Everything else is nonexistent. In addition, positivists usually believe that scientific progress will eradicate, or at least sharply reduce, the problems facing mankind. Positivists are almost always strong realists – that is, they believe that what we experience as reality is really out there in the world. In other words, they believe in objective truth. They also tend to deny the influence of things like theoretical and cultural biases that get in the way of science. Positivism divides all statements into three categories: true, false, and meaningless (neither true nor false). A meaningless statement is one that isn't clear enough to be tested through positivistic means. For example, "The color green sleeps angrily" is a meaningless statement. There's no way you could test whether or not it's true, which means it isn't true or false. It's just nonsense. This is an

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extreme example, of course, but many other sentences fall into this category when their terms are not clearly defined.

If a statement does have a meaning, then it must be either true or false. But that doesn't mean we necessarily know which one it is. For example, "There are exactly 23.8762 billion domestic cats in the world" has a definite meaning, but no one can say for sure whether it's true or not. It would be impossible to count all the domestic cats one by one, so no one can verify the statement. In principle, though, it could be verified through scientific observation – which just don't have the actual means to carry out the study.

Check your progress-2

3. Discuss the concept of Liberalism.

4. Discuss the Positivism.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

Colonialism is not one continuous phenomenon or unified structure. Colonialism goes through several stages. The subordination of the colonial country and its exploitation remain constant but the forms of subordination and exploitation undergo changes over time from one stage to another. These changes are linked to several factors. For example: the historical development of capitalism as a world system, the changing patterns of the individual metropolitan (or imperialist) country's economic, social and political development, the changing position it occupies in the world system, and the colony's own historical development. Colonialism may be divided into three distinct stages which were related to distinct forms of exploitation or surplus

appropriation. Consequently, each stage represented a different pattern of subordination of colonial economy, society and polity and therefore, different colonial policies, political and administrative institutions, ideologies and impact as also different responses by the colonial people. political doctrine that takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to be the central problem of politics. Liberals typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty. As the revolutionary American pamphleteer Thomas Paine expressed it in *Common Sense* (1776), government is at best “a necessary evil.” Laws, judges, and police are needed to secure the individual’s life and liberty, but their coercive power may also be turned against him. The problem, then, is to devise a system that gives government the power necessary to protect individual liberty but also prevents those who govern from abusing that power. Positivism is a philosophical system deeply rooted in science and mathematics. It’s based on the view that whatever exists can be verified through experiments, observation, and mathematical/logical proof. Everything else is nonexistent. In addition, positivists usually believe that scientific progress will eradicate, or at least sharply reduce, the problems facing mankind. Positivists are almost always strong realists – that is, they believe that what we experience as reality is really out there in the world. In other words, they believe in objective truth.

1.8 KEYWORDS

- **Colonialism:** Colonialism is not one continuous phenomenon or unified structure.
- **Liberalism:** . Liberals typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty.
- **Positivism:** Positivism is a philosophical system deeply rooted in science and mathematics.

1.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Impact of Colony.
2. Discuss the Third Stage of Colonialism.
3. Discuss the concept of Liberalism.
4. Discuss the Positivism.

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1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. **Impact on Colony**

You would like to know the essential features of Colonialism. Basic to colonialism are two features:

- i). One is the complete subordination of the colony to the needs of the metropolis or the imperialist power and,
- ii) Second is economic exploitation of the colony or the appropriation of the colony's economic surplus by the metropolis.

The economic surplus in the colony is produced in many different ways. from traditional agriculture to plantations to modern mining and factory production. But the essence of colonialism is appropriation of this surplus by various classes of the imperialist country.

Subordination means that the basic issues of the colony's economy and social and political development are not determined by the colony's own needs but by the needs and interests of the metropolitan economy and of the metropolitan capitalist class. Colonialism is thus much more than political control or colonial policies. It is best seen as a structure. Colonial interests and policies, colonial state and administrative institutions, colonial culture and society. colonial ideas and ideologies, all function within the framework of colonial structure.

2. Third Stage

This is described as the Era of Foreign Investments and International Competition for Colonies. A new stage of colonialism was ushered in India from about 1860s. This was the result of several major changes in the world economy:

- i) Spread of industrialisation to several countries of Europe, the United States and Japan with the result that Britain's industrial supremacy in the world came to an end.
- ii) There was intensification of industrialisation as a result of the application of scientific knowledge to industry. Modern chemical industries, the use of petroleum as fuel for the internal combustion engine and the use of electricity for industrial purposes developed during this period.

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iii) There was further unification of the world market because of revolution in the means of international transport. The new industries in many industrialised countries consumed immense quantities of raw materials. Rapid industrial development also led to continuous expansion of urban population which needed more and more food. There now occurred an intense struggle for new, secure and exclusive markets and sources of agricultural and mineral raw materials and foodstuffs. Moreover, the development of trade and industry at home and extended exploitation of colonies and semi-colonies produced large accumulations of capital in the capitalist countries. Simultaneously there occurred concentration of capital in fewer and fewer corporations, trusts and cartels and merger of banking capital with industrial capital.

Outlets had to be found for this capital. This led to large scale export of capital. Once again the developed capitalist countries began a search and compete for areas where they could acquire the exclusive right to invest their surplus capital.

Thus in their search for markets, raw materials and fields for capital investment the capitalistic countries began to divide and re-divide the world among themselves.

Colonialism at this stage also served important political and ideological purpose in the metropolitan, that is, imperialist countries. Chauvinism or aggressive nationalism based on the glorification of empire could be used to tone down social divisions at home by stressing the common interests in empire. The British, for example, raised the slogan that "The Sun never sets on the British Empire" to spread pride and a sense of contentment among workers on whose slum-houses the Sun seldom shone in real life. The French talked of their "Civilising Mission", while Japan talked of Pan-Asianism and claimed to be the champion of the Asian people.

During this stage, Britain's position in the world was constantly challenged and weakened by the rival capitalistic countries. It now made vigorous efforts to consolidate its control over India. Reactionary imperialist policies now replaced liberal imperialist policies. This was reflected in the viceroalties of Lytton, Dufferin, Lansdowne and

Curzon. The strengthening of colonial rule over India was essential to keep out the rivals, to attract British capital to India and to provide it security. After 1850, a very large amount of British capital was invested in railways, loans to the Government of India, trade and to a lesser extent in plantations, coal mining, jute mills, shipping and banking in India.

India also performed another important role for Britain. Its army -men and financial resources - could be used to fight Britain's rivals in the struggle for the division and re-division of the world. In fact, the Indian army was the chief instrument for the defence, expansion and consolidation of British empire in Africa and Asia. The result

was a costly standing army that absorbed nearly 52 per cent of the Indian revenues in 1904. Politically and administratively the third stage of colonialism meant renewed and more intensive control over India. Moreover, it was now even more important than ever before that colonial administration should reach out to every nook and corner of India.

The administration now became more bureaucratically tight, efficient and extensive than earlier. Railways were built at even a faster rate.

A major change now occurred in the ideology of colonialism. All talk of training the⁴⁴ Indian people for self-government died out. (It was revived in the 20th century after 1918 as a result of pressure from the Indian national movement). Instead, the aim of British rule was declared to be permanent 'trusteeship' over the Indian people. Indian people were declared to be a permanently immature, a 'child' people, needing British control and trusteeship. Geography, 'race', climate, history, religion, culture and social organization were cited as factors which made Indians permanently unfit for self-government or democracy. Britain had, therefore, to exercise benevolent despotism over them for centuries to come.

3. Political doctrine that takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to be the central problem of politics. Liberals typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognize that government itself can pose a threat to liberty. As the revolutionary American pamphleteer Thomas Paine expressed it in *Common Sense* (1776), government is at best “a

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necessary evil.” Laws, judges, and police are needed to secure the individual’s life and liberty, but their coercive power may also be turned against him. The problem, then, is to devise a system that gives government the power necessary to protect individual liberty but also prevents those who govern from abusing that power.

The problem is compounded when one asks whether this is all that government can or should do on behalf of individual freedom. Some liberals—the so-called neoclassical liberals, or libertarians—answer that it is. Since the late 19th century, however, most liberals have insisted that the powers of government can promote as well as protect the freedom of the individual. According to modern liberalism, the chief task of government is to remove obstacles that prevent individuals from living freely or from fully realizing their potential. Such obstacles include poverty, disease, discrimination, and ignorance. The disagreement among liberals over whether government should promote individual freedom rather than merely protect it is reflected to some extent in the different prevailing conceptions of liberalism in the United States and Europe since the late 20th century. In the United States liberalism is associated with the welfare-state policies of the New Deal program of the Democratic administration of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, whereas in Europe it is more commonly associated with a commitment to limited government and *laissez-faire* economic policies (see below Contemporary liberalism).

4. Positivism is a philosophical system deeply rooted in science and mathematics. It’s based on the view that whatever exists can be verified through experiments, observation, and mathematical/logical proof. Everything else is nonexistent. In addition, positivists usually believe that scientific progress will eradicate, or at least sharply reduce, the problems facing mankind. Positivists are almost always strong realists – that is, they believe that what we experience as reality is really out there in the world. In other words, they believe in objective truth. They also tend to deny the influence of things like theoretical and cultural biases that get in the way of science. Positivism divides all statements into three categories: true, false, and meaningless (neither true nor false). A meaningless statement is one that isn’t clear enough to be tested through

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UNIT- 2 DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

STRUCTURE:

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Concept of Parliamentary Democracy in India

2.3 History of Parliamentary Democracy

2.4 Characteristics

2.5 Roll of opposition parties in a Democracy in India

2.6 Working of Democracy in India

2.7 Major obstacles in the smooth functioning of Democracy in India

2.7.1 India Parliamentary Democracy is just in name?

2.8 Let us sum up

2.9 Key words

2.10 Questions for review

2.11 Suggested readings and references

2.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of Parliamentary Democracy
- Learn about the characteristics of Parliamentary Democracy
- Learn about the Advantages and Disadvantages of Parliamentary Democracy

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Parliamentary system, democratic form of government in which the party (or a coalition of parties) with the greatest representation in the parliament (legislature) forms the government, its leader becoming prime minister or chancellor. Executive functions are exercised by members of the parliament appointed by the prime minister to the cabinet. The parties in the minority serve in opposition to the majority and have the duty to challenge it regularly. Prime ministers may be removed from power whenever they lose the confidence of a majority of the ruling party or of the parliament. The parliamentary system originated in Britain (Parliament) and was adopted in several of its former colonies.

2.2 CONCEPT OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

A **parliamentary system** or **parliamentary democracy** is a system of democratic governance of a state (or subordinate entity) where the executive derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislature, typically a parliament, and is also held accountable to that parliament. In a parliamentary system, the head of state is usually a person distinct from the head of government. This is in contrast to a presidential system, where the head of state often is also the head of government and, most importantly, the executive does not derive its democratic legitimacy from the legislature.

Countries with parliamentary democracies may be constitutional monarchies, where a monarch is the head of state while the head of government is almost always a member of parliament (such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, and Japan), or parliamentary republics, where a mostly ceremonial president is the head of state while the head of government is regularly from the legislature (such as Ireland, Germany, India, and Italy). In a few parliamentary republics, such as Botswana, South Africa, and Suriname, among some others, the head of government is also head of state, but is elected by and is answerable to

parliament. In bicameral parliaments, the head of government is generally, though not always, a member of the lower house.

2.3 HISTORY OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Parliamentary democracy in India has become a farce. For the proper working of parliamentary democracy many pre-requisites are needed; till the leaders are responsible and conscious of their duties and responsive to the public opinion. Democracy itself will not be stable. But it is more so in the case of parliamentary democracy because the Council of Ministers should be responsible to the Parliament and should also take into consideration the voice of the people. If they start ignoring what the people want the Government will become dictatorial in its behaviour.

Moreover, Parliamentary democracy also demands that there should be two-party system. If there are many political parties they can join hands and be in the majority to form their own Government, after sometime, there may be some new alignment and some other coalition Government may be formed. In other words, there are certain norms of Parliamentary democracy.

Unfortunately, in India Parliamentary democracy seems to be; just in name the Ruling Party has so much majority that it can get anything done so there is no check upon the Ruling Party. If the members of the opposition ask questions and try to embarrass the people in power by bringing some or the other facts to light they are ignored because their numerical strength is negligible. Moreover,, opposition parties have no prominent leader who may be acceptable as an alternative to the leader of the majority party. The recent alignment of the different opposition parties has started showing, some serious cracks in it. Such an Opposition makes Parliamentary democracy just a farce.

The party whip is used so effectively because the leader of the majority party reduces other leaders to unimportant place. As a result of it they are dominated by one group of men. Such an organization is bound to become dictatorial and decision will be taken at the higher level. The

virtual working of the ruling party becomes monolithic. This contrary to the spirit of parliamentary democracy, because the decisions should be broad based.

One of the saving graces is that many a time the Prime Minister calls a meeting of the opposition parties in order to take some important decisions. This helps the ruling party to know the: different shades of opinions of the different classes of people and different regions. In fact important decisions in a democratic set-up and particularly so when it is parliamentary democracy should be taken by taking all the parties into confidence.

Another point which makes our parliamentary democracy somewhat chaste is that the ruling party is not prepared to dictate its terms to the opposition and other sections of the people. The spirit of democracy demands that there should be 'give and take'. The Assam problem has been solved through negotiations so is the case with Tripura problem. The Prime Minister has also withdrawn the Defamation Bill because only the public opinion was against it. Similarly he has recently revealed that he is going to call an all party meeting in order to resolve the Punjab problem. In parliamentary democracy it is more important because in the Presidential type many a time the President can have his own say by one or the other method. It is wrong to think that our Parliamentary democracy is a farce.

In fact the political consciousness among the people has not gone deep and so opposition party has not been able to become strong in the Parliament. We are hero-worshippers by nature and so they respect the time-honoured walls. This conservative nature has made them to elect the same political party to power. When the people become politically awake and organize themselves this will not happen. So we can say that at present parliamentary democracy has not acquired its true character. It will take some time more for it to become proper type of parliamentary, democracy.

2.4 CHARACTERISTICS

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The essence of Parliamentary democracy is party government. And a party government cannot succeed without an organised party system. To maintain the democratic character of a party government, there should be continuous and responsible criticism both within the legislature and elsewhere.

In the absence of such criticism, the Government would soon become an autocracy and later, a tyranny. But criticism cannot be effective if it is only sporadic, and it becomes even useless when it is only casual. To make it sustained and effective, it should be organised.

Hence the necessity for deliberately organised political parties whose business it is to oppose the Government, to expose its defects and depose it when the time is ripe.

It is true that the Constitution does not give expression to parties except in an oblique manner. The only provision which has anything directly to do with this is Article 75(3) which ensures the collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers to the House of the People.

But the spirit that underlies the fundamentals of the Constitution envisages a party system which implies all the above principles. To a great extent, even legal sanction has been given to them, by the Election Commission of India officially recognising political parties in India on an all-India or regional basis for the purposes of conducting elections.

The Commission had in 1962 given recognition of an all-India status to five parties, the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Swatantra Party and the All India Jan Sangh.

In 1977 by the time the Sixth General Elections took place, the number of recognised all-India parties came down to four because of the emergence of the Janata Party consisting of the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh, the B.L.D. and the Old Congress. The four all-India parties so recognised were: Indian National Congress, Janata Party, Communist Party of India and Communist Party (Marxist).

With the elections to the Seventh Lok Sabha in 1980 the party picture had again undergone considerable change mainly because of the split in

the Janata Party. In the 1989 General Elections, according to the Election Commission of India, 117 political parties participated. Of these, eight were National Parties; twenty were State Parties and 89 unrecognised registered parties.

The same position continued to exist in 1991 when the country went to polls in a mid-term election to elect the tenth Lok Sabha and at the end of the General Elections of 1996 which elected the eleventh Lok Sabha.

The leading national parties at the Tenth Lok Sabha Elections were: Indian National Congress, Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party Marxist (CPM).

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the concept of Parliamentary Democracy.

2. Discuss the characteristics of Parliamentary Democracy.

2.5 ROLE OF OPPOSITION PARTIES IN A DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

In India, there is a parliamentary system of government, according to which the party with the highest majority through a general election is entitled to form the government and its leader becomes the Prime Minister of the country.

The second largest party becomes the opposition party and its leader enjoys the status of the leader of opposition. The ruling party (the government) during its tenure is free to determine the policies and programmes and make decisions for the welfare of the common people.

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The opposition parties have a very significant role in a democracy, because they are the representatives of the people to safeguard their interests. Time to time, they criticize the government in case it fails to keep its promises.

The opposition parties also warn the government if they think it necessary. Sometimes they show their protest too against the government. Thus they try to keep the government aware of all the issues so that everything may be on the right path and all round development may be seen in the country.

The most dominant role of the opposition in a democracy is that of a 'watch dog' of the system. In a country where there is a two party system, the opposition party forms a 'shadow cabinet' and remains vigilant over the performance of the government. This is truer when we talk of United Kingdom.

But in a country like India where there is a multi-party system of governance, the very purpose of the opposition is marred. No doubt the opposition parties try to co-operate among themselves over particular issues but most of the time they waste their time in blaming each other instead of playing the role of check and balance to correct democratic practices in the interest of the entire public.

In India there are many parties and the sad truth is that nearly every party is built not around ideology but around the personality of a single leader or a family dynasty. One party hates another and criticizes its activities. As a result they fail to raise such issues that are more relevant to the cause of public. They fail to compel the government to do welfare works. And thus the government very easily overlooks them and conceals the facts related to them.

In a democratic set of a country the Prime Minister has been invested with so many powers that he/she can easily become a dictator. India has already witnessed such an incident when in 1975 the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, after the defeat at Allahabad High Court, declared the state of Emergency in India and turned to be a dictator.

It was unconstitutional, still she did it. In such a moment the vote of opposition becomes more prominent, because only a responsible opposition party can spread a mass consciousness against such unconstitutional move of the ruling party. Unfortunately, in our country the opposition parties have completely forgotten their positive contribution and responsibility to the nation.

They never try to extend their support to the ruling party in their welfare measures. Instead they only oppose the government, which is in no way a healthy atmosphere for the progress of the country. All the parties think only for the next election not for the next generation. The opposition must realise their responsibility and work for the country. Only a responsible opposition party can bring success to the ideals of our constitution.

2.6 WORKING OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

The Parliament of India (commonly referred to as the Indian Parliament) is the supreme legislative body in India. The Parliament alone possesses legislative supremacy and thereby ultimate power over all political bodies in India. The Parliament of India consists of the two houses and the President of India.

The parliament is bicameral, with an upper house called as Rajya Sabha, and a lower house called as Lok Sabha. The two Houses meet in separate chambers in the Sansad Bhawan (commonly known as- the Sansad Marg), in New Delhi. The Members of either house are commonly referred to as Member of Parliament or MP.

The MPs of Lok Sabha are elected by direct election and the MPs of Rajya Sabha are elected by the members of the State Legislative Assemblies in accordance with proportional voting. The Parliament is composed of 802 MPs, who serve the largest democratic electorate in the world and the largest trans-national democratic electorate in the world (714 million eligible voters in 2009)

Of the 552 members of the House of People, 530 members represent the territorial Constituencies in the States, 20 represent the Union territories,

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chosen in such manner as Parliament may by law provide. These members serve a 5 year term until the next General Election is held. 2 members are chosen by the president. House seats are apportioned among the states by population in such a manner that the ratio between that number and the population of the State is, so far as practicable, the same for all States.

The 250 Members of the Council of States serve a staggered six-year term. 12 of these members are nominated by the President and shall consist of persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as the following, namely literature, science, art and social service. The 238 members are representatives of the States shall be elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of the State in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. Every two years, approximately one-third of the Council is elected at a time.

The Indian Parliament consists of two houses called as Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha respectively and the President of India. Concurrence of all the three is required to pass any legislative business.

Lok Sabha : Lok Sabha (in Hindi) is also known as the “House of the People” or the lower house. Almost all of its members are directly elected by citizens of India. Every citizen who is over 18 years of age, irrespective of gender, caste, religion or race, who is otherwise not disqualified, is eligible to vote. The Lok Sabha can have up to 552 members as envisaged in the Constitution of India. It has a term of five years. To be eligible for membership in the Lok Sabha, a person must be a citizen of India and must be 25 years of age or older, mentally sound, should not be bankrupt and has no criminal procedures against him/her. Up to 530 members can be elected from the states in single member districts, up to 20 members from the Union territories and no more than two members from the community can be nominated by the President of India if the president feels that the Anglo-Indian community is not adequately represented. The Lok Sabha has 545 members; some seats are reserved for representatives of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Rajya Sabha:The Rajya Sabha is also known as “Council of States” or the upper house. Its members are indirectly elected by members of legislative bodies of the States.The Rajya Sabha has 250 members in all. Elections to it are scheduled and the chamber cannot be dissolved. Each member has a term of 6 years and elections are held for one-third of the seats after every 2 years.

i. Representatives of States are elected by the elected members of the Legislative Assembly of the State in accordance with system of proportional representation by means of single transferable vote.

ii. Representatives of Union Territories are indirectly elected by members of an electoral college for that territory in accordance with system of proportional representation.

The Council of States is designed to maintain the federal character of the country. The number of members from a state depends on the population of the state (e.g. 31 from Uttar Pradesh and one from Nagaland).

The minimum age for a person to become a member of Rajya Sabha is 30 years. President of India

The President is elected, from a group of nominees, by the elected members of the Parliament of India (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) as well as of the state legislatures (Vidhan Sabhas), and serves for a term of five years. Historically, ruling party (majority in the Lok Sabha) nominees have been elected and run largely uncontested.

Incumbents are permitted to stand for re-election. A formula is used to allocate votes so there is a balance between the population of each state and the number of votes assembly members from a state can cast, and to give an equal balance between State Assembly members and National Parliament members. If no candidate receives a majority of votes there is a system by which losing candidates are eliminated from the contest and votes for them transferred to other candidates, until one gains a majority.

Working, Procedures and Committees:The Parliament consists of the President of Republic of India and both the Chambers. The House and the Council are equal partners in the legislative process; however, the

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Constitution grants the House of People some unique powers. Revenue-raising or “Money” bills must originate in the House of People. The Council of States can only make recommendations suggestions over these bills to the House, within a period of fourteen days-lapse of which the bill is assumed to have been passed by both the Chambers.

Lawmaking Procedures: Lawmaking procedures in India are modeled after, and are thus very similar to, those followed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

Parliamentary Committees : Parliamentary committees play a vital role in the Parliamentary System. They are a vibrant link between the Parliament, the Executive and the general public. The need for Committees arises out of two factors, the first one being the need for vigilance on the part of the Legislature over the actions of the Executive, while the second one is that the modern Legislature these days is overburdened with heavy volume of work with limited time at its disposal. It thus becomes impossible that every matter should be thoroughly and systematically scrutinised and considered on the floor of the House. If the work is to be done with reasonable care, naturally some Parliamentary responsibility has to be entrusted to an agency in which the whole House has confidence. Entrusting certain functions of the House to the Committees has, therefore, become a normal practice. This has become all the more necessary as a Committee provides the expertise on a matter which is referred to it. In a Committee, the matter is deliberated at length, views are expressed freely, and the matter is considered in depth, in a business-like manner and in a calmer atmosphere. In most of the Committees, public is directly or indirectly associated when memoranda containing suggestions are received, on-the-spot studies are conducted and oral evidence is taken which helps the Committees in arriving at the conclusions. Parliamentary Committees are of two kinds: Ad hoc Committees and the Standing Committees most powerful of all is public accounts committee which is headed by the leader of the opposition.

Standing Committees : Each House of Parliament has standing committees like the Business Advisory Committee, the Committee on Petitions, the Committee of Privileges and the Rules Committee,

etc. Standing committees are permanent and regular committees which are constituted from time-to-time in pursuance of the provisions of an Act of Parliament or Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Parliament. The work of these committees is on continuous nature. The Financial Committees, DRSCs and some other Committees come under the category of Standing Committees. These are the Committees on Subordinate Legislation, the Committee on Government Assurances, the Committee on Estimates, the Committee on Public Accounts and the Committee on Public Undertaking and Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs). Ad hoc committees are appointed for a specific purpose and they cease to exist when they finish the task assigned to them and submit a report. The principal ad hoc committees are the Select and Joint Committees on Bills. Others like the Railway Convention Committee, the Committees on the Draft Five Year Plans and the Hindi Equivalents Committee were appointed for specific purposes. Joint Committee on Food Management in Parliament House Complex etc. also comes under the category of ad hoc committees.

2.7 MAJOR OBSTACLES IN THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Many political thinkers and observers believe that without social and economic prerequisites, the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy in India cannot be achieved. They suggest that before a society or state decides to be governed democratically, it is essential for it to have a minimum level of social and economic development. Many others, however, believe that democracy itself provides a better and successful means for attainment of social and economic development. The framers of Indian Constitution were fully committed to this view. However, Indian democracy is flawed in many respects. India has not been able to acquire a stable national unity and the political system has not been able to fulfil the aspirations of all groups, sections and classes. A vast majority of the Indian people are caught in the situation of abject poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. More than 60 per cent of

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the Indian population does not have access to basic sanitation. There is almost a collapse of public health. The population has increased more than three times since independence. Of course, the Gross National Products (GNP) has increased fourfold and in the last decade alone per capita GDP has doubled. But in view of increase in population and concentration of benefits in few hands this increase remains insufficient. Result is about 50 per cent of all children below 5 years of age are under weight and malnourished. Another obstacle of parliamentary democracy has been the practice of discrimination based on exploitation. Politicians wanting their votes have played up this feeling but have taken no concrete caution to see that the weaker sections were given a participatory and effective role in the socio-economic development of the country. Consequently, people are getting alienated from the system and losing faith in the electoral system. To keep them in the game of elections, ambitious individuals have started counting on caste base, communal, linguistic and regional loyalties. Elections, as such, have become ends in themselves, instruments of the status quo and of self promotion rather than change. With this another serious factor has emerged; it is politicisation of crime and criminalisation of politics. During the last 58 years of India's independence, India has witnessed failures in running the democratic processes.

2.7.1 India Parliamentary Democracy is Just in Name?

Arguments for : One of the basic principles of Parliamentary democracy is that the Council of Ministers should be properly bridled by the Parliament because they are responsible to the latter. But in India the ruling party has so overwhelming majority that the council of Ministers can get anything approved by the Parliament. In this manner Parliament is indirectly subordinated to the council of ministers and the Government has become dictatorship of the majority. In parliamentary democracy there must be a very healthy opposition so that they may be able to keep the ruling party on their heels. The opposition should be led by some popular leader. It should be numerically strong and able to replace the party in power. In India the opposition party is conspicuous

by its absence in the parliament : it is so weak that its voice is drowned in the decisions of the majority. In parliamentary democracy the Prime-minister is one who is like an elder brother among the council of ministers, he is the first among equals. So he should listen to the dissenting opinions of the other members patiently and try to prevail upon them with arguments. But in India the Prime-minister has been shuffling his ministry from time to time : upgrading some, pulling down others and dropping out the rest. In this manner he has been dominating the members of council of ministers which is contrary to concept the parliamentary system.

Arguments against :

1. If the ruling party has overwhelming majority it does not make a Government different from the parliamentary type. In all the countries where parliamentary democracy exists the ruling party tries to win over the maximum number of members of the parliament so that vote of no-confidence may not be passed against them. In that case also it would mean dictatorship of the majority.
2. It is the prerogative of the Prime-minister to take any person who is the member of the parliament into his ministry and to drop anyone. So shuffling of the ministry is not contrary to parliamentary democracy.
3. The council of ministers not only bows to the wishes of the people. Prime-minister Rajiv Gandhi withdrew the Defamation Bill because the people, the opposition parties and the press wanted it. Similarly, he has been able to solve the problems of Assam, Tripura and Gorkhaland by acceding to the demands of the people. This is one of the essential features of parliamentary democracy.

Check your progress-2

1. Discuss the roll of opposition parties in a democracy in India.

4. Discuss the major obstacles of democracy in India.

2.8 LET S SUM UP

A **parliamentary system** or **parliamentary democracy** is a system of democratic governance of a state (or subordinate entity) where the executive derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislature, typically a parliament, and is also held accountable to that parliament. In a parliamentary system, the head of state is usually a person distinct from the head of government. The essence of Parliamentary democracy is party government. And a party government cannot succeed without an organised party system. To maintain the democratic character of a party government, there should be continuous and responsible criticism both within the legislature and elsewhere. The Parliament of India (commonly referred to as the Indian Parliament) is the supreme legislative body in India. The Parliament alone possesses legislative supremacy and thereby ultimate power over all political bodies in India. The Parliament of India consists of the two houses and the President of India. Many political thinkers and observers believe that without social and economic prerequisites, the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy in India cannot be achieved. They suggest that before a society or state decides to be governed democratically, it is essential for it to have a minimum level of social and economic development. Many others, however, believe that democracy itself provides a better and successful means for attainment of social and economic development. The framers of Indian Constitution were fully committed to this view.

2.9 KEYWORDS

➤ Parliamentary Democracy: A **parliamentary system** or **parliamentary democracy** is a system of democratic governance of a state (or subordinate entity) where the executive derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to

command the confidence of the legislature, typically a parliament, and is also held accountable to that parliament.

- Opposition Parties: The opposition parties have a very significant role in a democracy, because they are the representatives of the people to safeguard their interests. Time to time, they criticize the government in case it fails to keep its promises.
- Major obstacles: Many political thinkers and observers believe that without social and economic prerequisites, the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy in India cannot be achieved.

2.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the concept of Parliamentary Democracy.
2. Discuss the characteristics of Parliamentary Democracy .
3. Discuss the roll of opposition parties in a democracy in India.
4. Discuss the major obstacles of parliamentary democracy in India.

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2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. A **parliamentary system** or **parliamentary democracy** is a system of democratic governance of a state (or subordinate entity) where the executive derives its democratic legitimacy from its ability to command the confidence of the legislature, typically a parliament, and is also held accountable to that parliament. In a parliamentary system, the head of state is usually a person distinct from the head of government. This is in contrast to a presidential system, where the head of state often is also the head of government and, most importantly, the executive does not derive its democratic legitimacy from the legislature.

Countries with parliamentary democracies may be constitutional monarchies, where a monarch is the head of state while the head of government is almost always a member of parliament (such as the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, and Japan), or parliamentary republics, where a mostly ceremonial president is the head of state while the head of government is regularly from the legislature (such as Ireland, Germany, India, and Italy). In a few parliamentary republics, such as Botswana, South Africa, and Suriname, among some others, the head of government is also head of state, but is elected by and is answerable to parliament. In bicameral parliaments, the head of government is generally, though not always, a member of the lower house.

2. The essence of Parliamentary democracy is party government. And a party government cannot succeed without an organised party system. To maintain the democratic character of a party government, there should be continuous and responsible criticism both within the legislature and elsewhere.

In the absence of such criticism, the Government would soon become an autocracy and later, a tyranny. But criticism cannot be effective if it is only sporadic, and it becomes even useless when it is only casual. To make it sustained and effective, it should be organised.

Hence the necessity for deliberately organised political parties whose business it is to oppose the Government, to expose its defects and depose it when the time is ripe.

It is true that the Constitution does not give expression to parties except in an oblique manner. The only provision which has anything directly to do with this is Article 75(3) which ensures the collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers to the House of the People.

But the spirit that underlies the fundamentals of the Constitution envisages a party system which implies all the above principles. To a great extent, even legal sanction has been given to them, by the Election Commission of India officially recognising political parties in India on an all-India or regional basis for the purposes of conducting elections.

The Commission had in 1962 given recognition of an all-India status to five parties, the Indian National Congress, the Praja Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the Swatantra Party and the All India Jan Sangh.

In 1977 by the time the Sixth General Elections took place, the number of recognised all-India parties came down to four because of the emergence of the Janata Party consisting of the Socialist Party, the Jan Sangh, the B.L.D. and the Old Congress. The four all-India parties so recognised were: Indian National Congress, Janata Party, Communist Party of India and Communist Party (Marxist).

With the elections to the Seventh Lok Sabha in 1980 the party picture had again undergone considerable change mainly because of the split in the Janata Party. In the 1989 General Elections, according to the Election Commission of India, 117 political parties participated. Of these, eight were National Parties; twenty were State Parties and 89 unrecognised registered parties.

The same position continued to exist in 1991 when the country went to polls in a mid-term election to elect the tenth Lok Sabha and at the end of the General Elections of 1996 which elected the eleventh Lok Sabha.

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The leading national parties at the Tenth Lok Sabha Elections were: Indian National Congress, Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party Marxist (CPM).

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The leading national parties at the Tenth Lok Sabha Elections were: Indian National Congress, Janata Dal, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Communist Party of India (CPI) and Communist Party Marxist (CPM).

3. In India, there is a parliamentary system of government, according to which the party with the highest majority through a general election is entitled to form the government and its leader becomes the Prime Minister of the country.

The second largest party becomes the opposition party and its leader enjoys the status of the leader of opposition. The ruling party (the government) during its tenure is free to determine the policies and programmes and make decisions for the welfare of the common people.

The opposition parties have a very significant role in a democracy, because they are the representatives of the people to safeguard their interests. Time to time, they criticize the government in case it fails to keep its promises.

The opposition parties also warn the government if they think it necessary. Sometimes they show their protest too against the government. Thus they try to keep the government aware of all the issues so that everything may be on the right path and all round development may be seen in the country.

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The most dominant role of the opposition in a democracy is that of a 'watch dog' of the system. In a country where there is a two party system, the opposition party forms a 'shadow cabinet' and remains vigilant over the performance of the government. This is truer when we talk of United Kingdom.

But in a country like India where there is a multi-party system of governance, the very purpose of the opposition is marred. No doubt the opposition parties try to co-operate among themselves over particular issues but most of the time they waste their time in blaming each other instead of playing the role of check and balance to correct democratic practices in the interest of the entire public.

4. Many political thinkers and observers believe that without social and economic prerequisites, the smooth functioning of parliamentary democracy in India cannot be achieved. They suggest that before a society or state decides to be governed democratically, it is essential for it to have a minimum level of social and economic development. Many others, however, believe that democracy itself provides a better and successful means for attainment of social and economic development. The framers of Indian Constitution were fully committed to this view. However, Indian democracy is flawed in many respects. India has not been able to acquire a stable national unity and the political system has not been able to fulfil the aspirations of all groups, sections and classes. A vast majority of the Indian people are caught in the situation of abject poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. More than 60 per cent of the Indian population does not have access to basic sanitation. There is almost a collapse of public health. The population has increased more than three times since independence. Of course, the Gross National Products (GNP) has increased fourfold and in the last decade alone per capita GDP has doubled. But in view of increase in population and concentration of benefits in few hands this increase remains insufficient. Result is about 50 per cent of all children below 5 years of age are under weight and malnourished. Another obstacle of parliamentary democracy has been the practice of discrimination based on exploitation. Politicians wanting their votes have played up this feeling but have taken no concrete caution to see that the weaker sections

were given a participatory and effective role in the socio-economic development of the country. Consequently, people are getting alienated from the system and losing faith in the electoral system. To keep them in the game of elections, ambitious individuals have started counting on caste base, communal, linguistic and regional loyalties. Elections, as such, have become ends in themselves, instruments of the status quo and of self-promotion rather than change. With this another serious factor has emerged; it is politicisation of crime and criminalisation of politics. During the last 58 years of India's independence, India has witnessed failures in running the democratic processes.

UNIT-3 NATIONALISM AND SOCIALISM

STRUCTURE

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Social and Economic bases of Nationalism

3.2.1 Understanding of Contradiction in Indian and Colonial Interests:

3.2.2 Political, Administrative and Economic Unification of the Country:

3.2.3 Western Thought and Education:

3.2.4 Rediscovery of India's Past.

3.2.5 Progressive Character of Socio-Religious Reform Movements.

3.2.6 Role of Press and Literature.

3.2.7 Reactionary Policies and Racial Arrangement of Rulers.

3.3 Factors responsible for growth of Indian Nationalism

3.3.1 Social unity for Indian Nationalism

3.3.2 Cultural unity for Indian Nationalism

3.3.3 Political unity for Indian Nationalism

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3.3.6 Socio-Religious Reform Movements:

3.3.7 Ilbert Bill Controversy:

3.3.8 Economic exploitation:

3.4 Socialism

3.4.1 Origins of Socialism

3.5 Let us sum up

3.6 Keywords

3.7 Questions For Review

3.8 Suggested Readings And References

3.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand the social and economic bases of Nationalism
- Able to understand the factors for growth of Indian Nationalism
- Able to understand Socialism

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 19th century witnessed the full flowering of national political consciousness and the growth of an organised national movement in India.

The year 1885 marks the beginning of a new epoch in Indian History.

Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two political workers. It was the first organised expression of Indian Nationalism on an all-India scale.

The rise and growth of Indian nationalism has been traditionally explained in terms of Indian response to the stimulus generated by the British Raj through creation of new institutions, new opportunities, etc. In other words Indian Nationalism grew partly as a result of colonial policies and partly as a reaction to colonial policies in fact, it would be more correct to see Indian nationalism as a product of a mix of various factors.

3.2 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASES OF NATIONALISM

3.2.1. Understanding of Contradiction in Indian and Colonial Interests:

People came to realise that colonial rule was the major cause of India's economic backwardness and that the interests of the Indians involved the interests of all sections and classes. The very condition of British rule helped the growth of national sentiment among the Indian people.

3.2.2. Political, Administrative and Economic Unification of the Country:

Nationalist sentiments grew easily among the people because India was unified and welded into a nation during the 19th and 20th centuries. The introduction of a uniform and modern system of government by the British throughout the country unified it administratively.

The destruction of the rural and local self-sufficient economy and the introduction of modern trade and industries on an all- India scale had increasingly made India's economic life a single whole and interlinked the economic fate of people living in different parts of the country. Furthermore, the introduction of the railways, telegraph and unified postal systems had brought the different parts of the country together and promoted mutual contact among the people, especially among the leaders.

3.2.3. Western Thought and Education:

As a result of the spread of modern western education and thought during the 19th century, a large number of Indians imbibed a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist political outlook. The spread and popularity of the English language helped nationalist leaders of different linguistic regions to communicate with each other.

Modern education also created a certain uniformity and community of outlook and interests among the educated Indians. This English-educated intelligentsia formed the nucleus for the newly-arising political unrest, and it was this section of the society which provided leadership to the Indian political associations.

3.2.4. Rediscovery of India's Past.

The historical researches by Europeans scholars, such as Max Mueller, Monier Williams, Roth, Sassoon, and by Indian scholars such as R.G. Bhandarkar, R.L. Mitra and later Swami Vivekananda created an entirely new picture of India's past glory and greatness.

The theory put forward by European scholars that the Indo-Aryans belonged to the same ethnic group of mankind from which stemmed all

the nations of Europe gave a psychological boost to educated Indians. All these inspired the educated Indians with a new spirit of patriotism and nationalism.

3.2.5. Role of Press and Literature.

With the emergence of the modern press, both English and Vernacular, the latter half of the 19th century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and Vernacular newspapers. The Indian Press played a notable role in mobilising public opinion, organising political movements, fighting out public opinions and promoting nationalism.

3.2.6. Progressive Character of Socio-Religious Reform Movements.

These reform movements sought to remove social evils which divided the Indian society; this had the effect of bringing different sections of the society together. Since many reform movements drew their inspiration from India's rich cultural heritage, these promoted pan-Indian feelings and spirit of nationalism.

3.2.7 Reactionary Policies and Racial Arrongance of Rulers.

An important factor in the growth of national sentiments in India was the tone of racial superiority adopted by many Englishmen in their dealings with Indians. The reactionary policies of the British government were also responsible for the growth of political associations.

3.3 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR GROWTH OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

The British rule in India was at its strongest grip between 1858 and 1905. England had become the centre of an empire that included one quarter of the world area and population.

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India became the most valuable possession. During this period, a current of national feeling was generated in the minds of the people.

The completeness of the Britain's empire helped generate the flow of national consciousness.

After the establishment of a common administration by the British, Indians could inhale the fragrance of unity and nationalism—a concept new to India in its modern perspective. The very concept of nationalism arose to meet the challenge of the foreign rule. It was, however, during the dark period of India's history, when the Indians failed miserably to accumulate strength against the mighty-power in the great Indian revolt, India saw the dawn of a new era.

The idea of nationhood grew stronger. A certain dislike was felt even by the great admirers of the British achievements. The process was very slow but the undercurrent elements cumulatively led to the politicization of certain groups and ultimately created an arena of nationalist politics in India.

3.3.1 Social Unity for Indian Nationalism:

Since the earliest past, the sages and seers of India accepted the whole country as the common motherland of all people. From Himalayas down to the seas they gave one name to the country Bharatavarsha. The people were described as Bharati santati or children of Bharata. There remained many ancient kingdoms within the geographical boundaries of India yet the people were taught by their non-heritage to regard the whole land as one.

Religion always plays a significant role in shaping the social unity. Likewise Indians developed the sense of love to their motherland through religious beliefs. The mountains like Himalaya, the rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna and Godavari were regarded as sacred and holy. Places of pilgrimage were situated within the boundaries of this holy land. People went to these places through ages far outside their local kingdoms.

Social customs attached with religious sentiments took common shape all over India. In habit and manner Indians exposed the feelings of oneness always. Thus the traditional Indian society projected the background of unity for the rise of nationalism.

The social unity became viable through the economic life of the people. The improvement in the means of transport and communication also quickened the process of social unity. The woolen goods of Kashmir and Punjab, the silk sarees of Banaras and Mysore were required by the people everywhere. Local products of special attraction found wide markets all over the country.

Every region of India depended on other regions for these types of goods that prompted an Indian for a better social understanding. This fellow-feelings was exhibited during the darkest period of the British rule when millions and millions of people died of famine. Food-grains of surplus region were supplied to the areas of distress without any hesitation. Closer economic relations thus developed a greater sense of social unity that ultimately resulted in the national unity.

3.3.2 Cultural Unity for Indian Nationalism:

India to her credit possessed one of the oldest civilizations of mankind. Her history has maintained the continuity through ages. The cultural heritage endowed with the richness in literature, philosophy, art and architecture enabled India to occupy a unique place in the history of civilized races.

Indians felt proud to remember their ancestors like Valmiki, Vyasa, Buddha, Mahavir, Kautilya, Asoka, Kalidasa, Harsha, Kharavela and many others. Similarly the Vedas and the puranas, epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata worked as supreme lessons to every Indian throughout the length and breadth of India.

Countless temples and other movements reminded the people of their glorious past. These elements of a rich cultural heritage inspired everyone to be very proud of their motherland.

During 19th century, eminent scholars depicted the real picture of India. Many forgotten chapters of the past came to light, that Buddha was the light of Asia, that Chandragupta Mauraya defeated the Greeks, that Asoka was the greatest monarch of human history and that Akbar the

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great was cosmopolitan in his religious outlook, created a sense of pride in the minds of the educated Indians who ultimately tuned the social unity into Indian nationalism.

The youthful patriots began to wonder how their great country was ruled by the inhabitants of that small Island who had nothing to be proud of except their sharp edged sword of divide and rule. The discovery of the lost and forgotten places of art and architecture naturally enriched the pride of the nation that provided the very concept of modern Indian nationalism.

No doubt, India was a vast sub-continent yet the people used a common language at all times. Three hundred years before the Christian era the Prakrit language served the purpose of a linguistic unity. Sanskrit became the common language of the learned class everywhere and gradually Sanskrit remained the mother of all languages in India.

During the Muslim rule Persian was used as the Court language. After the British rule English language spread rapidly. Educated Indians felt attracted towards this language and used it as a national language. This national language could cultivate the idea of nationalism among the educated elite class.

3.3.3 Political Unity for Indian Nationalism:

From the remote past, the rulers, poets, philosophers and political thinkers of India thought the political unity. The very name Bharatavarsha symbolized the land of King Bharata, land laying between the ocean in the south and snowy mountains in the north, inhabited by the descendants of Bharata.

He was called as Chakravarti. Inspired by such ideas powerful rulers like Chandragupta Mauraya. Ashoka, Samudragupta, Chandragupta Vikramaditya, Harshavardhan, Allauddin Khilji and Akbar all tried their best to bring the political unity of India under one administration. Vast empires were created in different times.

Finally, it was during the British rule the whole of India was conquered and brought under one sovereign authority. British Raj started to grow very rapidly. The British domination enabled the Indians to think and act as one nation. Before the coming of the British, the people of South remained separated from the rest of India except for short intervals. British imperialism helped the process of unification of the country.

Introduction of modern trade policy, establishment of different industries, construction of good roads. Construction of railway lines and establishment of Post Offices at nook and corners of the country had increasingly made India's economic life a single whole and bridged the gap between the people living in different parts of this country.

Along with the political unity the British gave Indians administrative unity. A uniform law and judicial system were introduced on the whole of the empire. The British administration was proud of their Rule of Law which provided no distinction between man and man, the Brahmin and the Sudra, the Hindu and the Muslim, the Gujarati and the Kerali in the eyes of law.

3.3.4 Western Impact:

As a result of the spread of modern western education and western thought during the 19th century, a large number of Indians imbibed a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist political outlook. They infused new ideas among Indians which ultimately resulted in the growth of national consciousness. Rouseall Paine, John Stuart Mill and other while Mazzine, Garibaldi, and Irish nationalist leaders became their political heroes.

Modern education also created a certain uniformity and community of outlook and interest among educated Indians. Opening of the Universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras accelerated the process of

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unity among the educated Indian youths who have tried their best to move the common Indian acquainted with the Western way of life.

These helped in spreading an awareness of the problem of Indian society among the people. The Western educated group was steadily growing in number which spearheaded the cause of Indian nationalism. These educated Indians translated European works into Indian languages.

This group included stalwarts like Pherozshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naroji, Vidyasagar, Surendranath Banerjee, and Debendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen etc. In addition to this there were journalists. There came up sizeable number of newspapers both in English and vernacular languages.

The newspapers worked as major channels of communication in the country and provided the forum for the educated to express their views and organize support for their various agitations and movements. Raja Rammohan Roy was one of the founders of Indian Press. Gradually large number of nationalist newspapers made their appearance during the second half of 19th Century.

In the columns the official policies of British administration were constantly criticized and the legitimate demands of the Indians put forward. The Press also enabled nationalist workers living in different parts of the country to exchange their views freely with one another. The prominent nationalist newspapers like The Hindu Patriots,

The Amrit Bazar Patrika, The Indian Mirror, The Bengalee, The Som Prakash, The Hindu, The Swadeshmitram, The Andhra Prakashika, The Hindustani, The Azad in U.P., The Tribune and the Akhbar-i-Am etc. could able to educate Indians to fight against British atrocities and callousness. They could wake the British administration up the sleep.

The geographical distribution of the members of this western- educated group is very significant. Some of them selected careers beneficial to the

process of social mobility. A very few who managed to enter into exclusive Indian Civil Service moved even further to synthesize the feelings of the people of the localities where they served. Sri Satyendranath Tagore, a member of a famous Bengali family and the first Indian to enter ICS in 1860 was posted in Gujarat in Western India. He could work as a symbol of unity among the people of Eastern and Western regions of India.

There were also some movements of advocates, lawyers, and journalists from metropolis who could go into interiors to influence the ignorant people about nationalism. Thus outside cities in the smaller towns of the Presidencies cells of educated youths gradually developed. They gradually became responsible for the spread of political ideas which resulted in the establishment of political organisations.

They further tried to bring interaction between different castes and communities of India. During the process of their attempts for social changes, they faced oppositions from their conservative elders but in the long run they could establish their supremacy over the millions and turned the society to the direction of nationalism.

The educated Indians championed the grievances of different communities in the platforms organised by different Associations and Political organisations. Even the nationalistic ideas were voiced by a small group of Indians in England on the tour for business or study. Thus, on the Indian mind, was just timely which represented a new upsurge towards modern there generated the idea of nationalism.

3.3.5 Racial Arrogance:

An important factor in the process of the growth of national sentiment was the tone of racial superiority of many Englishmen in their dealings with Indians. Many Englishmen openly insulted even educated Indians and sometimes they did not resist their temptation of assaulting Indians. There was the failure of justice whenever an Englishman was involved in dispute with Indians.

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There were instances where Englishmen had hit and killed Indians but escaped from adequate punishments except mere fines. To cite an instance, a British Major at Sialkot travelling with his wife without valid tickets entered a railway compartment occupied by some Indian first class passengers and forced them to leave.

Racial arrogance branded all Indians irrespective of their caste, religion, province, or class with the identity cards of inferior a race. Indians for this were kept out of exclusively European clubs and were often not permitted to travel in same compartment of a train with the European passengers. This type of behaviour of the English hurt every Indian which resulted in the formation of nationalistic feeling among the Indian mass.

3.3.6 Socio-Religious Reform Movements:

The new consciousness of India in 19th Century was further hastened by social and religious movements. These movements helped the growth of national consciousness with a new zeal. The reformers preached against social events like caste system, child marriage, social injustice to women, and social inequalities among men.

They also discarded the religious superstitions. Among all the reformers Raja Rammohan Ray, Dayananda Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and his disciple Swami Vivekananda and Mrs. Annie Besant were prominent. The preaching's of all these exponents provided a reformative background to germinate the seeds of Indian nationalism.

3.3.7 Ilbert Bill Controversy:

After the departure of Lord Lytton, Lord Ripon became very much sympathetic towards Indian aspirations. He not only stopped the costly Afgan war but also encouraged Local Self Government, repealed the Vernacular Press Act of Lytton and carried out other measures of educational and political reforms.

He also tried to eliminate one of the most unfair privileges that Europeans then enjoyed. In 1883, he asked C.P. Ilbert, the law member

of his council to draft a Bill modifying the Criminal Procedure Code so as to allow Indian Judges to take up cases of European criminals for trial. This Bill, the moment it was published, welcomed a storm of protest from the British Community both in the cities as well as in the countryside. In Bengal racial feelings and prejudice reached unprecedentedly in bitter heights. An Anglo-Indian Defence Association was formed to agitate against the Bill and to create public opinion against Ripon in England. Against this attitude of the Britishers there was overwhelming support for Ripon throughout the country.

Meetings were organised in the Presidency towns and country sides in support of the Ilbert Bill. The Ilbert Bill had done much to provoke nationalist feelings in response against British racialism. Indians became more conscious of the degradation to which foreign rule had reduced them. This agitation united people from different classes and sections of the society against a common enemy.

3.3.8 Economic exploitation:

The growing poverty of Indians was the greatest evil of the British rule. Before the establishment of the British Empire, India was a very prosperous country, endowed with high quality agricultural products and raw materials for the growth of industries. The Indian village economy rested both on agriculture and industry. All types of skilled workers were getting their annual subsistence from the village cottage industries. On the whole, pre-British India was economically rich.

But this picture began to change with the rise of British power. There began a regular process to drain the Indian wealth to England. English traders carried raw materials in huge quantities from India and in return flooded the Indian markets with machine made finished goods. This led to the decline of the village and indigenous industries. Thus India became an agricultural colony of industrial Britain which resulted in the growth of unemployment problem in India. Millions turned landless labourers.

In 1876, a great famine visited India and devastated a large part including Madras, Mysore, Bombay and Hyderabad. About five millions of people died in this famine. During that tragic time, Lord Lytton, the

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viceroys, held a grand Durbar in Delhi in 1877 to proclaim Queen Victoria as the Empress of India. This led people to believe that their rulers cared very little even for their lives and were busy to spend for their own pleasure and glory.

The very attitude of the British people shocked the conscious Indians deeply. To the rising generation of educated Indians, the poverty of the people appeared as the worst curse of the British rule. Indians were no longer prepared to withstand such type of economic exploitations. Indian nationalists like Dadabai Naoroji exposed the naked character of British Government in writings. Hostility against the Government began to grow.

This hostile feeling against the British became a potential cause for the growth of national spirit. Thus, utter poverty not only forced Indians to migrate to Fiji, West Indies, Mauritius as slaves but also generated the spark of nationalism all over the country.

Lord Lytton passed an Arms Act in 1878 which made distinction between Indians and Europeans in regard to the possession of arms for self-defence. Such a measure angered the Indians as they were put to lose their self-respect. The Arms Act which disarmed the Indians appeared for them as an effort of the British administration to castrate the entire nation.

The need for a political Association for the Indians to redress their grievances became evident. Early in 1883, the Indian Association put forward the idea. An Englishman, named Allan Octavian Hume, a former I.C.S. officer addressed the graduates of Calcutta University in an open letter encouraging them to form an association to regenerate the nation.

Grounds were prepared in the International Exhibition in Calcutta in 1884 and in the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Madras by the young nationalist leaders. The Indian Association sponsored an All Indian National Conference at Calcutta in December 1883. It adopted a programme to establish the Indian National Congress.

Hume thought it wise to inform the Government about the feelings of the Indians and met the Viceroy Lord Dufferin in 1885. Hume's idea worked as a 'safety valve' and finally Dufferin consented to the proposal. On 28th December 1885, the proposed Conference met at Bombay in

Gokuldas Jaipal Sanskrit College, under the banner of Indian National Congress. Seventy-two invited delegates from different parts of India assembled in the meeting under the chairmanship of a Calcutta barrister Woomesh Chandra Banerjee. President W.C. Banerjee analyzed the aims and objectives of the Congress. Allan Octavian Hume was elected the first Secretary of the Indian National Congress.

In that meeting nine resolutions were passed. Such was the humble beginning of the organisation. The second and the third sessions were held at Calcutta and Madras under the presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji and Badruddin Tyabji respectively. This Congress gradually developed into a powerful political forum for Indians to demand for their independence.

Thus with the foundation of the National Congress, the struggle for India's freedom from foreign rule was launched in an organised manner, for the first time in the history of India as a political party, with some political ideology representing the whole country and the nation came into existence to represent the hope and aspirations of the people irrespective of caste, creed, language and religion. It symbolized the unity of Indians and thus stood to develop Indian nationalism in a new perspective.

The Congress at its birth pledged for a constitutional agitation. The early nationalists demand for a large share in the Government of their own country under the principles of democracy.

From 1885 to 1892, the Congress leaders demanded the expansion and reform of the Legislative Councils. Virtually, the Congress had no powers, it could only make suggestions. The petitions to the Government were worded in very polite language that to-day seems very shockingly submissive.

On the other hand, the British authorities were from the beginning exhibited a hostile attitude to this organisation for its nationalistic outlook and became suspicious on it. In 1887, Lord Dufferin even attacked the National Congress in a public meeting and ridiculed it by saying that the Congress represents only a microscopic minority of the people. Whether big or small, good or bad the national congress was

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born in a right time to work as a supreme force on the national movement.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the Western Thought and Education and Role of Press and Literature.

2. Discuss the social unity for Indian Nationalism.

3.4 SOCIALISM

Socialism, social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership or control of property and natural resources. According to the socialist view, individuals do not live or work in isolation but live in cooperation with one another. Furthermore, everything that people produce is in some sense a social product, and everyone who contributes to the production of a good is entitled to a share in it. Society as a whole, therefore, should own or at least control property for the benefit of all its members.

This conviction puts socialism in opposition to capitalism, which is based on private ownership of the means of production and allows individual choices in a free market to determine how goods and services are distributed. Socialists complain that capitalism necessarily leads to unfair and exploitative concentrations of wealth and power in the hands of the relative few who emerge victorious from free-market competition—people who then use their wealth and power to reinforce their dominance in society. Because such people are rich, they may

choose where and how to live, and their choices in turn limit the options of the poor. As a result, terms such as individual freedom and equality of opportunity may be meaningful for capitalists but can only ring hollow for working people, who must do the capitalists' bidding if they are to survive. As socialists see it, true freedom and true equality require social control of the resources that provide the basis for prosperity in any society. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels made this point in Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848) when they proclaimed that in a socialist society "the condition for the free development of each is the free development of all."

This fundamental conviction nevertheless leaves room for socialists to disagree among themselves with regard to two key points. The first concerns the extent and the kind of property that society should own or control. Some socialists have thought that almost everything except personal items such as clothing should be public property; this is true, for example, of the society envisioned by the English humanist Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia* (1516). Other socialists, however, have been willing to accept or even welcome private ownership of farms, shops, and other small or medium-sized businesses.

The second disagreement concerns the way in which society is to exercise its control of property and other resources. In this case the main camps consist of loosely defined groups of centralists and decentralists. On the centralist side are socialists who want to invest public control of property in some central authority, such as the state—or the state under the guidance of a political party, as was the case in the Soviet Union. Those in the decentralist camp believe that decisions about the use of public property and resources should be made at the local, or lowest-possible, level by the people who will be most directly affected by those decisions. This conflict has persisted throughout the history of socialism as a political movement.

3.4.1 Origins

The origins of socialism as a political movement lie in the Industrial Revolution. Its intellectual roots, however, reach back almost as far as recorded thought—even as far as Moses, according to one history of the

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subject. Socialist or communist ideas certainly play an important part in the ideas of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, whose Republic depicts an austere society in which men and women of the “guardian” class share with each other not only their few material goods but also their spouses and children. Early Christian communities also practiced the sharing of goods and labour, a simple form of socialism subsequently followed in certain forms of monasticism. Several monastic orders continue these practices today.

Christianity and Platonism were combined in More’s Utopia, which apparently recommends communal ownership as a way of controlling the sins of pride, envy, and greed. Land and houses are common property on More’s imaginary island of Utopia, where everyone works for at least two years on the communal farms and people change houses every 10 years so that no one develops pride of possession. Money has been abolished, and people are free to take what they need from common storehouses. All the Utopians live simply, moreover, so that they are able to meet their needs with only a few hours of work a day, leaving the rest for leisure.

More’s Utopia is not so much a blueprint for a socialist society as it is a commentary on the failings he perceived in the supposedly Christian societies of his day. Religious and political turmoil, however, soon inspired others to try to put utopian ideas into practice. Common ownership was one of the aims of the brief Anabaptist regime in the Westphalian city of Munster during the Protestant Reformation, and several communist or socialist sects sprang up in England in the wake of the Civil Wars (1642–51). Chief among them was the Diggers, whose members claimed that God had created the world for people to share, not to divide and exploit for private profit. When they acted on this belief by digging and planting on land that was not legally theirs, they ran afoul of Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate, which forcibly disbanded them.

Check your progress-2

3. Discuss the Origins of Socialism.

4. Discuss the Cultural unity for Indian Nationalism.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

People came to realise that colonial rule was the major cause of India's economic backwardness and that the interests of the Indians involved the interests of all sections and classes. The very condition of British rule helped the growth of national sentiment among the Indian people. The British rule in India was at its strongest grip between 1858 and 1905. England had become the centre of an empire that included one quarter of the world area and population.

India became the most valuable possession. During this period, a current of national feeling was generated in the minds of the people.

The completeness of the Britain's empire helped generate the flow of national consciousness.

After the establishment of a common administration by the British, Indians could inhale the fragrance of unity and nationalism—a concept new to India in its modern perspective. It was only from the end of the eighteenth century that nationalism received the sense in which it is in use today. Hans Kohn defines nationalism as a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due the nation-state. Every nation possesses certain objective factors distinguishing them from other nationalities like common descent, language, territory, political entity, customs and traditions, or religion. Though the blend of these objective elements may vary from nation to nation, Kohn opines that the most essential and common element of nationalism is the living and active corporate will of the people.

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India dreamed by Gandhiji was universal and pluralistic in nature. Mahatma looked forward to seeing India as a pluralistic country where men of different creeds and castes would live in brotherhood and harmony.

3.6 KEYWORDS

- **Nationalism:** Indian National Congress was founded in December 1885 by seventy-two political workers. It was the first organised expression of Indian Nationalism on an all-India scale.
- **Gandhian Nationalism:** India dreamed by Gandhiji was universal and pluralistic in nature. Mahatma looked forward to seeing India as a pluralistic country where men of different creeds and castes would live in brotherhood and harmony.

3.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Western Thought and Education and Role of Press and Literature.
2. Discuss the social unity for Indian Nationalism.
3. Discuss the Origins of Socialism
4. Discuss the Cultural unity for Indian Nationalism.

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3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Western Thought and Education:

As a result of the spread of modern western education and thought during the 19th century, a large number of Indians imbibed a modern rational, secular, democratic and nationalist political outlook. The spread and popularity of the English language helped nationalist leaders of different linguistic regions to communicate with each other.

Modern education also created a certain uniformity and community of outlook and interests among the educated Indians. This English-educated intelligentsia formed the nucleus for the newly-arising political unrest, and it was this section of the society which provided leadership to the Indian political associations.

Role of Press and Literature.

With the emergence of the modern press, both English and Vernacular, the latter half of the 19th century saw an unprecedented growth of Indian-owned English and Vernacular newspapers. The Indian Press played a notable role in mobilising public opinion, organising political movements, fighting out public opinions and promoting nationalism.

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2. Since the earliest past, the sages and seers of India accepted the whole country as the common motherland of all people. From Himalayas down to the seas they gave one name to the country Bharatavarsha. The people were described as Bharati santati or children of Bharata. There remained many ancient kingdoms within the geographical boundaries of India yet the people were taught by their non-heritage to regard the whole land as one.

Religion always plays a significant role in shaping the social unity. Likewise Indians developed the sense of love to their motherland through religious beliefs. The mountains like Himalaya, the rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna and Godavari were regarded as sacred and holy. Places of pilgrimage were situated within the boundaries of this holy land. People went to these places through ages far outside their local kingdoms.

Social customs attached with religious sentiments took common shape all over India. In habit and manner Indians exposed the feelings of oneness always. Thus the traditional Indian society projected the background of unity for the rise of nationalism.

The social unity became viable through the economic life of the people. The improvement in the means of transport and communication also quickened the process of social unity. The woolen goods of Kashmir and Punjab, the silk sarees of Banaras and Mysore were required by the people everywhere. Local products of special attraction found wide markets all over the country.

Every region of India depended on other regions for these types of goods that prompted an Indian for a better social understanding. This fellow-felineness was exhibited during the darkest period of the British rule when millions and millions of people died of famine. Food-grains of surplus region were supplied to the areas of distress without any hesitation. Closer economic relations thus developed a greater sense of social unity that ultimately resulted in the national unity.

3. The origins of socialism as a political movement lie in the Industrial Revolution. Its intellectual roots, however, reach back almost as far as recorded thought—even as far as Moses, according to one history of the subject. Socialist or communist ideas certainly play an important part in

the ideas of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, whose Republic depicts an austere society in which men and women of the “guardian” class share with each other not only their few material goods but also their spouses and children. Early Christian communities also practiced the sharing of goods and labour, a simple form of socialism subsequently followed in certain forms of monasticism. Several monastic orders continue these practices today.

Christianity and Platonism were combined in More’s Utopia, which apparently recommends communal ownership as a way of controlling the sins of pride, envy, and greed. Land and houses are common property on More’s imaginary island of Utopia, where everyone works for at least two years on the communal farms and people change houses every 10 years so that no one develops pride of possession. Money has been abolished, and people are free to take what they need from common storehouses. All the Utopians live simply, moreover, so that they are able to meet their needs with only a few hours of work a day, leaving the rest for leisure.

More’s Utopia is not so much a blueprint for a socialist society as it is a commentary on the failings he perceived in the supposedly Christian societies of his day. Religious and political turmoil, however, soon inspired others to try to put utopian ideas into practice. Common ownership was one of the aims of the brief Anabaptist regime in the Westphalian city of Munster during the Protestant Reformation, and several communist or socialist sects sprang up in England in the wake of the Civil Wars (1642–51). Chief among them was the Diggers, whose members claimed that God had created the world for people to share, not to divide and exploit for private profit. When they acted on this belief by digging and planting on land that was not legally theirs, they ran afoul of Oliver Cromwell’s Protectorate, which forcibly disbanded them.

4. India to her credit possessed one of the oldest civilizations of mankind. Her history has maintained the continuity through ages. The cultural heritage endowed with the richness in literature, philosophy, art and architecture enabled India to occupy a unique place in the history of civilized races.

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Indians felt proud to remember their ancestors like Valmiki, Vyasa, Buddha, Mahavir, Kautilya, Asoka, Kalidasa, Harsha, Kharavela and many others. Similarly the Vedas and the puranas, epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata worked as supreme lessons to every Indian throughout the length and breadth of India.

Countless temples and other movements reminded the people of their glorious past. These elements of a rich cultural heritage inspired everyone to be very proud of their motherland.

During 19th century, eminent scholars depicted the real picture of India. Many forgotten chapters of the past came to light, that Buddha was the light of Asia, that Chandragupta Mauraya defeated the Greeks, that Asoka was the greatest monarch of human history and that Akbar the great was cosmopolitan in his religious outlook, created a sense of pride in the minds of the educated Indians who ultimately tuned the social unity into Indian nationalism.

The youthful patriots began to wonder how their great country was ruled by the inhabitants of that small Island who had nothing to be proud of except their sharp edged sword of divide and rule. The discovery of the lost and forgotten places of art and architecture naturally enriched the pride of the nation that provided the very concept of modern Indian nationalism.

No doubt, India was a vast sub-continent yet the people used a common language at all times. Three hundred years before the Christian era the Prakrit language served the purpose of a linguistic unity. Sanskrit became the common language of the learned class everywhere and gradually Sanskrit remained the mother of all languages in India.

During the Muslim rule Persian was used as the Court language. After the British rule English language spread rapidly. Educated Indians felt attracted towards this language and used it as a national language. This national language could cultivate the idea of nationalism among the educated elite class.

UNIT-4 COMMUNALISM AND SECULARISM

STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Meaning of Communalism
- 4.3 9 Major causes of Communalism in India
- 4.4 The Growth of Communalism in India
- 4.5 Secularism
- 4.6 Let us sum up
- 4.7 Keywords
- 4.8 Questions For Review
- 4.9 Suggested Readings And References
- 4.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand meaning of Communalism
- Able to understand the growth of Communalism
- Able to understand Secularism

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Communalism is referred in the western world as a “theory or system of government in which virtually autonomous local communities are loosely in federation”. Communalism is a political philosophy, which proposes that market and money be abolished and that land and enterprises to be placed in the custody of community. But in the Indian sub-continent context, communalism has come to be associated with tensions and clashes between different religious communities in various regions.

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Development of communalism as political philosophy, has roots in the ethnic and cultural diversity of Africa. It is characterized as, People from different ethnic groups or community, who do not interact much or at all and this has somewhere acted as hindrance in the economic growth and prosperity of Africa.

Communalism in South Asia is used to denote the differences between the various religious groups and difference among the people of different community. And generally it is used to catalyse communal violence between those groups.

Communalism is not unique only to South Asia, but 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 e.t.c

India does partially separate religion and state. For example, it does not have an official state religion and state-owned educational institutions cannot impart religious instructions. In matters of law in modern India, however, the applicable code of law is unequal, and India's personal laws – on matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, alimony – varies with an individual's religion. Muslim Indians have Sharia-based Muslim Personal Law, while Hindu, Christian and Sikh Indians live under common law.

4.2 MEANING OF COMMUNALISM

It is basically an ideology which consists of three elements:-

A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. they have same political, economic and social interests. So, here socio- political communalities arises.

A notion that, in a multi-religious society like India, these common secular interests of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the follower of another religion.

The interests of the follower of the different religion or of different 'communities' are seen to be completely incompatible, antagonist and hostile.

Communalism is political trade in religion. It is an ideology on which communal politics is based. And communal violence are conjectural consequences of communal ideology.

4.3 9 MAJOR CAUSES OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

Some of the major causes of communalism in India are as follows: (1) A Legacy of Past (2) Presence of Communal Parties (3) Isolation of Muslims (4) Poverty (5) Hindu Chauvinism (6) The Social Cause (7) Communalization of Politics (8) Cross-Border Factors (9) Failure of Government.

Communalism in India has not emerged due to a single factor. Several causes can be identified for the growth of it.

(1) A Legacy of Past:

On the basis of the "Two Nation" theory of Jinnah, India was partitioned. Communal politics had played its nasty game during the immediate past of independent India. The "Divide and Rule" policy of the British Government served their colonial interest. The partition of India was the ultimate outcome of their politics. Despite the emergence of Pakistan, a large number of Muslims are staying in India. India has adopted the principles of secularism and equality of the people. But communalism as a legacy of past, is continuing and expressing itself in various form.

(2) Presence of Communal Parties:

Religion in India has become an important agency of political socialization and it is also reflected in the ideology of a number of political parties. A number of communal and sectarian political parties and organisations are present in India. Muslim League, Jamaat—Islami, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad are directly or indirectly responsible for the emergence of communalism.

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The so called secular political parties also enter into alliance with communal forces for electoral benefit. Candidates are selected by different political parties taking into account the communal composition of the constituency.

Some political leaders preach communalism to attain their immediate political goal. They have become leaders and continue to remain as such only due to the adoption of communal and sectarian interest. When political leaders and their organisations are not away from communalism, obviously this spirit will be promoted in the society.

(3) Isolation of Muslims:

Indian Muslims have developed a tendency of isolationism even long after the creation of Pakistan. They remain aloof from the mainstream of national politics. Most of them are not interested to take part in the secular-nationalistic politics of the country. They insist on to be treated as a separate entity.

With their separate culture and different customs, they have a distinct identity. Some orthodox and biotic organisations not only uphold Islamic fundamentalism, they also demand reservation facilities for Muslims. Their isolation creates a psychological separation and misunderstanding which promote communal tensions in the society.

(4) Poverty:

Mass poverty and unemployment create a sense of frustration among the people. It generates backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, etc. The unemployed youth of both the communities can be easily trapped by religious fundamentalists and fanatics. They are used by them to cause communal riots. Moreover, in comparison with the Muslims, Hindus are better placed in service, industry and trade which cause a sense of contempt among them. The weak economic status often breeds communalism.

(5) Hindu Chauvinism:

The growths of Hindu chauvinistic attitudes have further strengthened the communal tensions in India. The Hindu religious groups like Shiv

Sena, Hindu Mahasabha, Viswa Hindu Parisad often pressurize the government to take steps suitable to the interest of Hindus. They consider each Muslim as pro-Pakistani and anti-national. To face the possible challenge of other communal forces, they encourage the growth of Hindu communalism.

They oppose the minority protection policies of the government and treat it as appeasement policy. The controversy over the Ayodhya issue and the demolition of “Babri Masjid” was nothing but a manifestation of Hindu Chauvinism.

(6) The Social Cause:

The two major communities of India have been suspicious towards each other. The Muslims complain of the threat of Hindu cultural invasion upon their lives and have become more assertive of their rights. Either due to ignorance or insecurity, they do not fully accept the need of family planning and help in increasing population.

The recent controversy over the Census Report shows how the Hindu Chauvinists react towards the growing population of Muslims. Moreover, another social cause of communalism is conversion. Every Indian has the right to follow whatever religion he/she likes. But when conversion from one religion to another is made by offering some facilities like money, education, service etc. it creates negative reactions.

(7) Communalization of Politics:

Electoral politics in India has become more expensive and competitive. Different political parties are not hesitating to use any means, fair or foul, for electoral victory. They even create communal tensions and try to take political advantage out of it. Concessions are granted to various minority groups for appeasing them.

Each and every party is playing communal card and if situation so demands, is not hesitating to join hands with the communal parties for coming to power. Communalization of politics as a process is supporting the growth of communalism in India.

(8) Cross-Border Factors:

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Communal tensions in India sometimes are highly intensified due to the rule of two neighbouring theocratic countries. These countries try to create communal problems in the border states. The communal problems of Punjab and Jammu Kashmir are caused due to provocation of Pakistan. So long as this cross-border factor is not removed, communal problems are likely to stay in India.

(9) Failure of Government:

Both the Union and the State Governments often fail to prevent communalism in the country. Due to lack of prior information, they fail to take any preventive measures. So the communal violence can easily take innocent lives and destroys property. The post-Godhra riot in Gujarat shows the inefficiency of the government to control the communal riot. Failure of immediate and effective steps has been a cause of the continuance of communalism.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the Concept of Communalism.

2. Identify 5 causes of Communalism in India.

4.4 THE GROWTH OF COMMUNALISM IN INDIA

Along with the rise of nationalism, communalism too made its appearance around the end of the nineteenth century and posed the biggest threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement. Before we discuss the emergence and growth of communalism, it is perhaps necessary to define the term.

Communalism is basically an ideology. Communal riots are only one consequence of the spread of this ideology. Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common secular, that is, social, political and economic interests.

It is the belief that in India religious groups like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form different and distinct communities; that all the followers of a religion share not only a commonality of religious interests but also common secular interests; that there is, and can be, no such thing as an Indian nation, but only a Hindu nation, or a Muslim nation and so on; that India can, therefore, only be a mere confederation of religious communities.

Inherent in communalism is the second notion that the social, cultural, economic and political interests of the followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion.

The third stage of communalism is reached when the interests of the followers of different religions or of different religious 'communities' are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile. Thus, at this stage, the communalists assert that Hindus and Muslims cannot have common secular interests, and that their secular interests are bound to be opposed.

It is not true that communalism was a remnant of, or survival from, the medieval period. Though religion was an important part of people's lives and they did sometimes quarrel over religion, there was hardly any communal ideology or communal politics before the 1870s. Communalism is a modern phenomenon. It had its roots in the modern colonial socio-economic political structure.

Communalism emerged as a result of the emergence of new, modern politics based on the people and on popular participation and mobilisation. It made it necessary to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to form new identities. This process was bound to be difficult, gradual and complex. This process required the birth and spread of modern ideas of nation, class and cultural-linguistic identity.

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These identities, being new and unfamiliar, arose and grew slowly and in a zigzag fashion. Quite often people used the old, familiar pre-modern identity of caste, locality, sect and religion to grasp the new reality, to make wider connections and to evolve new identities. This has happened all over the world. But gradually the new, modern and historically-necessary identities of nation, nationality and class have prevailed.

Unfortunately, in India this process has remained incomplete for decades, for India has been for the last 150 years or more a nation-in-the-making. In particular, religious consciousness was transformed into communal consciousness in some parts of the country and among some sections of the people. The question is why did this happen?

In particular, modern political consciousness was late in developing among the Muslims. As nationalism spread among the Hindus and Parsis of the lower-middle class, it failed to grow equally rapidly among the Muslims of the same class.

Hindus and Muslims had fought shoulder to shoulder during the Revolt of 1857. In fact, after the suppression of the Revolt, British officials had taken a particularly vindictive attitude towards the Muslims, hanging 27,000 Muslims in Delhi alone. From now on the Muslims were in general looked upon with suspicion.

But this attitude changed in the 1870s. With the rise of the nationalist movement the British statesmen grew apprehensive about the safety and stability of their empire in India.

To check the growth of a united national feeling in the country, they decided to follow more actively the policy of 'divide and rule' and to divide the people along religious lines, in other words, to encourage communal and separatist tendencies in Indian politics.

For this purpose they decided to come out as 'champions' of the Muslims and to win over to their side Muslim zamindars, landlords and the newly educated. They also fostered other divisions in Indian society. They promoted provincialism by talking of Bengali domination. They tried to utilise the caste structure to turn non-Brahmins against Brahmins and the lower castes against the higher castes.

In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where Hindus and Muslims had always lived in peace, they actively encouraged the movement to replace Urdu as the court language by Hindi. In other words, they tried to use even the legitimate demands of different sections of Indian society to create divisions among the Indian people. The colonial government treated Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as separate communities.

It readily accepted communal leaders as authentic representatives of all their co-religionists. It permitted the propagation of virulent communal ideas and communal hatred through the press, pamphlets, posters, literature and other public platforms. This was in sharp contrast with its frequent suppression of the nationalist newspapers, writers, etc.

In the rise of the separatist tendency along communal lines, Sayyid Ahmad Khan played an important role. Though a great educationist and social reformer, Sayyid Ahmad Khan became towards the end of his life a conservative in politics.

He laid the foundations of Muslim communalism when in the 1880s he gave up his earlier views and declared that the political interests of Hindus and Muslims were not the same but different and even divergent.

He also preached complete obedience to British rule. When the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885, he decided to oppose it and tried to organise along with Raja Shiva Prasad of Varanasi a movement of loyalty to the British rule.

He also began to preach that, since the Hindus formed the larger part of the Indian population, they would dominate the Muslims in case of the weakening or withdrawal of British rule. He urged the Muslims not to listen to Badruddin Tyabji's appeal to them to join the National Congress.

These views were, of course, unscientific and without any basis in reality. Even though Hindus and Muslims followed different religions, their economic and political interests were not different for that reason. Hindus were divided from fellow Hindus, and Muslims from fellow Muslims, by language, culture, caste, class, social status, food and dress habits, social practices and so on.

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Even socially and culturally the Hindu and the Muslim masses had developed common ways of life. A Bengali Muslim and a Bengali Hindu had much more in common than a Bengali Muslim and a Punjabi Muslim had. Moreover, Hindus and the Muslims were being equally and jointly oppressed and exploited by British imperialism. Even Sayyid Ahmad Khan had said in 1884:

Do you not inhabit the same land? Are you not burned and buried on the same soil? Do you not tread the same ground and live upon the same soil? Remember that the words Hindu and Mohammedan are only meant for religious distinction—otherwise all persons, whether Hindu or Mohammedan, even the Christians who reside in this country, are all in this particular respect belonging to one and the same nation.

When all these different sects can be described as one nation, they must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all.

The question then arises: how could the communal and separatist trend of thinking grow among the Muslims?

This was to some extent due to the relative backwardness of the Muslims in education and in trade and industry. Muslim upper classes consisted mostly of zamindars and aristocrats. Because the upper-class Muslims during the first 70 years of the nineteenth century was very anti-British, conservative and hostile to modern education, the number of educated Muslims in the country remained very small.

Consequently, modern Western thought with its emphasis on science, democracy and nationalism did not spread among Muslim intellectuals, who remained traditional and backward. Later, as a result of the efforts of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif, Badruddin Tyabji and others, modern education spread among Muslims.

But the proportion of the educated was far lower among Muslims than among Hindus, Parsis or Christians. Similarly, the Muslims had also taken little part in the growth of trade and industry. The small number of educated persons and men of trade and industry among the Muslims made it possible for the reactionary big landlords to maintain their influence over the Muslim masses.

Landlords and zamindars, whether Hindu or Muslim, supported the British rule out of self-interest. But, among the Hindus, the modern intellectuals and the rising commercial and industrialist class had pushed out the landlords from leadership. Unfortunately, the opposite remained the case with the Muslims.

The educational backwardness of the Muslims had another harmful consequence. Since modern education was essential for entry into government service or the professions, the Muslims had also lagged behind non-Muslims in this respect. Moreover, the government had consciously discriminated against the Muslims after 1858, holding them largely responsible for the Revolt of 1857.

When modern education did spread among the Muslims, the educated Muslim found few opportunities in business or the professions. He inevitably looked for government employment. And, in any case, India being a backward colony, there were very few opportunities of employment for its people.

In these circumstances, it was easy for the British officials and the loyalist Muslim leaders to incite the educated Muslims against the educated Hindus. Sayyid Ahmad Khan and others raised the demand for special treatment for the Muslims in the matter of government service.

They declared that if the educated Muslims remained loyal to the British, the latter would reward them with government jobs and other special favours. Some loyalist Hindus and Parsis too tried to argue in this manner, but they remained a small minority.

The result was that while in the country as a whole, independent and nationalist lawyers, journalists, students, merchants and industrialists were becoming political leaders, among the Muslims loyalist landlords and retired government servants still influenced political opinion.

Bombay was the only province where the Muslims had taken to commerce and education quite early; and there the National Congress included in its ranks such brilliant Muslims as Badruddin Tyabji, R.M. Sayani, A Bhimji and, the young barrister, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. We

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can sum up this aspect of the problem with a quotation from Jawaharlal Nehru's *The Discovery of India*-.

There has been a difference of a generation or more in the development of the Hindu and the Muslim middle classes, and that difference continues to show itself in many directions, political, economic, and other. It is this lag which produces a psychology of fear among the Muslims.

As students of history we should also know that the manner in which Indian history was taught in schools and colleges in those days also contributed to the growth of communalist feelings among the educated Hindus and Muslims.

British historians and, following them, Indian historians described the medieval period of Indian history as the Muslim period. The rule of Turk, Afghan and Mughal rulers was called Muslim rule.

Even though the Muslim masses were as poor and oppressed by taxes as the Hindu masses, and even though both were looked down upon by the rulers, nobles, chiefs and zamindars, whether Hindu or Muslim, with contempt and regarded as low creatures, yet these writers declared that all Muslims were rulers in medieval India and all non-Muslims were the ruled.

They failed to bring out the fact that ancient and medieval politics in India, as politics everywhere else, were based on economic and political interests and not on religious considerations. Rulers as well as rebels used religious appeals as an outer colouring to disguise the play of material interests and ambitions. Moreover, the British and communal historians attacked the notion of a composite culture in India.

The Hindu communal view of history also relied on the myth that Indian society and culture had reached great, ideal heights in the ancient period from which they fell into permanent and continuous decay during the medieval period because of 'Muslim' rule and domination.

The basic contribution of the medieval period to the development of Indian economy and technology, religion and philosophy, arts and

literature, culture and society, and fruits, vegetables and dress was denied.

In addition, the communal view of history was spread widely through poetry, drama, historical novels and short stories, newspapers and popular magazines, children's magazines, pamphlets and, above all, orally through the public platform, classroom teaching, socialisation through the family and private conversation.

4.5 SECULARISM

With the Forty-second Amendment of the Constitution of India enacted in 1976, the Preamble to the Constitution asserted that India is a secular nation. Officially, secularism has always inspired modern India. In practice, unlike Western notions of secularism, India's secularism does not separate religion and state. The Indian Constitution has allowed extensive interference of the state in religious affairs.

India does partially separate religion and state. For example, it does not have an official state religion and state-owned educational institutions cannot impart religious instructions. In matters of law in modern India, however, the applicable code of law is unequal, and India's personal laws – on matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, alimony – varies with an individual's religion. Muslim Indians have Sharia-based Muslim Personal Law, while Hindu, Christian and Sikh Indians live under common law. The Indian Constitution permits partial financial support for religious schools, as well as the financing of religious buildings and infrastructure by the state. The Islamic Central Wakf Council and many Hindu temples of great religious significance are administered and managed by the Indian government. The attempt to respect unequal, religious law has created a number of issues in India such as acceptability of child marriage, polygamy, unequal inheritance rights, extra judicial unilateral divorce rights favorable to some males, and conflicting interpretations of religious books.

Secularism as practiced in India, with its marked differences with Western practice of secularism, is a controversial topic in India.

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Supporters of the Indian concept of secularism claim it respects "minorities and pluralism". Critics claim the Indian form of secularism as "pseudo-secularism". Supporters state that any attempt to introduce a uniform civil code, that is equal laws for every citizen irrespective of his or her religion, would impose majoritarian Hindu sensibilities and ideals. Critics state that India's acceptance of Sharia and religious laws violates the principle of Equality before the law.

Check your progress-2

3. Discuss the Growth of Communalism.

4. Discuss the concept of Secularism.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. they have same political, economic and social interests. So, here socio- political communalities arises.

A notion that, in a multi-religious society like India, these common secular interests of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the follower of another religion.

Some of the major causes of communalism in India are as follows: (1) A Legacy of Past (2) Presence of Communal Parties (3) Isolation of Muslims (4) Poverty (5) Hindu Chauvinism (6) The Social Cause (7) Communalization of Politics (8) Cross-Border Factors (9) Failure of Government.

Along with the rise of nationalism, communalism too made its appearance around the end of the nineteenth century and posed the

biggest threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement. Before we discuss the emergence and growth of communalism, it is perhaps necessary to define the term. Communalism is basically an ideology. Communal riots are only one consequence of the spread of this ideology. Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common secular, that is, social, political and economic interests. It is the belief that in India religious groups like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form different and distinct communities; that all the followers of a religion share not only a commonality of religious interests but also common secular interests; that there is, and can be, no such thing as an Indian nation, but only a Hindu nation, or a Muslim nation and so on; that India can, therefore, only be a mere confederation of religious communities. After partition, millions of population were forced to move from both sides of the border. Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India were killed in masses, women were raped, and many children lost their parents. There was hatred everywhere, violence didn't see anything except bloodshed. Later, it turned in the problem of refugees and their rehabilitation became one of the biggest challenge for independent India. India does partially separate religion and state. For example, it does not have an official state religion and state-owned educational institutions cannot impart religious instructions. In matters of law in modern India, however, the applicable code of law is unequal, and India's personal laws – on matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, alimony – varies with an individual's religion. Muslim Indians have Sharia-based Muslim Personal Law, while Hindu, Christian and Sikh Indians live under common law.

4.7 KEYWORDS

- **Communalism:** A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. they have same political, economic and social interests. So, here socio-political communalities arises
- **Partition:** After partition, millions of population were forced to move from both sides of the border.

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- **Secularism:** India does partially separate religion and state. For example, it does not have an official state religion and state-owned educational institutions cannot impart religious instructions.

4.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Concept of Communalism.
2. Identify 5 causes of Communalism in India.
3. Discuss the Growth of Communalism.
4. Discuss the concept of Secularism.

4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. It is basically an ideology which consists of three elements:-

A belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e. they have same political, economic and social interests. So, here socio-political communalities arise.

A notion that, in a multi-religious society like India, these common secular interests of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the follower of another religion.

The interests of the follower of the different religion or of different 'communities' are seen to be completely incompatible, antagonist and hostile.

Communalism is political trade in religion. It is an ideology on which communal politics is based. And communal violence are conjectural consequences of communal ideology.

2. Some of the major causes of communalism in India are as follows: (1) A Legacy of Past (2) Presence of Communal Parties (3) Isolation of Muslims (4) Poverty (5) Hindu Chauvinism (6) The Social Cause (7) Communalization of Politics (8) Cross-Border Factors (9) Failure of Government.

Communalism in India has not emerged due to a single factor. Several causes can be identified for the growth of it.

(1) A Legacy of Past:

On the basis of the "Two Nation" theory of Jinnah, India was partitioned. Communal politics had played its nasty game during the immediate past of independent India. The "Divide and Rule" policy of the British Government served their colonial interest. The partition of India was the ultimate outcome of their politics. Despite the emergence of Pakistan, a large number of Muslims are staying in India. India has adopted the principles of secularism and equality of the people. But communalism as a legacy of past, is continuing and expressing itself in various form.

(2) Presence of Communal Parties:

Religion in India has become an important agency of political socialization and it is also reflected in the ideology of a number of

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political parties. A number of communal and sectarian political parties and organisations are present in India. Muslim League, Jamaat—Islami, Hindu Mahasabha, Akali Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad are directly or indirectly responsible for the emergence of communalism.

The so called secular political parties also enter into alliance with communal forces for electoral benefit. Candidates are selected by different political parties taking into account the communal composition of the constituency.

Some political leaders preach communalism to attain their immediate political goal. They have become leaders and continue to remain as such only due to the adoption of communal and sectarian interest. When political leaders and their organisations are not away from communalism, obviously this spirit will be promoted in the society.

(3) Isolation of Muslims:

Indian Muslims have developed a tendency of isolationism even long after the creation of Pakistan. They remain aloof from the mainstream of national politics. Most of them are not interested to take part in the secular-nationalistic politics of the country. They insist on to be treated as a separate entity.

With their separate culture and different customs, they have a distinct identity. Some orthodox and biotic organisations not only uphold Islamic fundamentalism, they also demand reservation facilities for Muslims. Their isolation creates a psychological separation and misunderstanding which promote communal tensions in the society.

(4) Poverty:

Mass poverty and unemployment create a sense of frustration among the people. It generates backwardness, illiteracy, ignorance, etc. The unemployed youth of both the communities can be easily trapped by religious fundamentalists and fanatics. They are used by them to cause communal riots. Moreover, in comparison with the Muslims, Hindus are better placed in service, industry and trade which cause a sense of

contempt among them. The weak economic status often breeds communalism.

(5) Hindu Chauvinism:

The growths of Hindu chauvinistic attitudes have further strengthened the communal tensions in India. The Hindu religious groups like Shiv Sena, Hindu Mahasabha, Viswa Hindu Parisad often pressurize the government to take steps suitable to the interest of Hindus. They consider each Muslim as pro-Pakistani and anti-national. To face the possible challenge of other communal forces, they encourage the growth of Hindu communalism.

They oppose the minority protection policies of the government and treat it as appeasement policy. The controversy over the Ayodhya issue and the demolition of “Babri Masjid” was nothing but a manifestation of Hindu Chauvinism.

3. Along with the rise of nationalism, communalism too made its appearance around the end of the nineteenth century and posed the biggest threat to the unity of the Indian people and the national movement. Before we discuss the emergence and growth of communalism, it is perhaps necessary to define the term.

Communalism is basically an ideology. Communal riots are only one consequence of the spread of this ideology. Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common secular, that is, social, political and economic interests.

It is the belief that in India religious groups like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians form different and distinct communities; that all the followers of a religion share not only a commonality of religious interests but also common secular interests; that there is, and can be, no such thing as an Indian nation, but only a Hindu nation, or a Muslim nation and so on; that India can, therefore, only be a mere confederation of religious communities.

Inherent in communalism is the second notion that the social, cultural, economic and political interests of the followers of one religion are

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dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion.

The third stage of communalism is reached when the interests of the followers of different religions or of different religious 'communities' are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile. Thus, at this stage, the communalists assert that Hindus and Muslims cannot have common secular interests, and that their secular interests are bound to be opposed.

It is not true that communalism was a remnant of, or survival from, the medieval period. Though religion was an important part of people's lives and they did sometimes quarrel over religion, there was hardly any communal ideology or communal politics before the 1870s. Communalism is a modern phenomenon. It had its roots in the modern colonial socio-economic political structure.

Communalism emerged as a result of the emergence of new, modern politics based on the people and on popular participation and mobilisation. It made it necessary to have wider links and loyalties among the people and to form new identities. This process was bound to be difficult, gradual and complex. This process required the birth and spread of modern ideas of nation, class and cultural-linguistic identity.

4. With the Forty-second Amendment of the Constitution of India enacted in 1976, the Preamble to the Constitution asserted that India is a secular nation. Officially, secularism has always inspired modern India. In practice, unlike Western notions of secularism, India's secularism does not separate religion and state. The Indian Constitution has allowed extensive interference of the state in religious affairs.

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Secularism as practiced in India, with its marked differences with Western practice of secularism, is a controversial topic in India. Supporters of the Indian concept of secularism claim it respects "minorities and pluralism". Critics claim the Indian form of secularism as "pseudo-secularism". Supporters state that any attempt to introduce a uniform civil code, that is equal laws for every citizen irrespective of his or her religion, would impose majoritarian Hindu sensibilities and ideals. Critics state that India's acceptance of Sharia and religious laws violates the principle of Equality before the law.

UNIT-5 REFORMS AND REVIVALS

STRUCTURE

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Social Reform Movements

5.2.1 Vishwa Hindu Parishad

5.3 Religious Movements

5.3.1 Brahma Samaj

5.3.2 Arya Samaj

5.4 Hindu Revival Movement

5.5 The major Reformist and Revivalist Movements

5.6 Let us sum up

5.7 Keywords

5.8 Questions For Review

5.9 Suggested Readings And References

5.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Social Reform Movements
- Able to understand Religious Movements
- Able to understand Hindu Revival Movements

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Several contemporary groups, collectively termed Hindu reform movements or Hindu revivalism, strive to introduce regeneration and reform to Hinduism, both in a religious or spiritual and in a societal sense. The movements started appearing during the Bengali Renaissance.

The religious aspect mostly emphasizes Vedanta tradition and mystical interpretations of Hinduism ("Neo-Vedanta"), and the societal aspect was an important element in the Indian independence movement, aiming at a "Hindu" character of the society of the eventual Republic of India. A

well-financed Hindu revival movement, with strong political implications, was started here last month by religious and lay leaders whose efforts were spurred by the recent wave of conversions to Islam by communities of Hindu untouchables.

"There is no doubt that the conversions were the catalysts that triggered our movement," said Karan Singh, the president of the Greater Hindu Society, which is coordinating and financing the drive. Some major reformist movements were Brahma Samaj; Prarthana Samaj; Satya Sodhak Samaj; Aligarh movement; Young Bengal Movement and Ramakrishna mission. Some major revivalist movements were Arya Samaj; Deoband movement etc. The key similarity between these movements was that *all of them wanted to change the status quo* in the society wherein several deformities had crept in. All of them, in some way or other, attacked on inhuman practices such as sati, female infanticide, child marriage etc.

Some major reformist movements were Brahma Samaj; Prarthana Samaj; Satya Sodhak Samaj; Aligarh movement; Young Bengal Movement and Ramakrishna mission. Some major revivalist movements were Arya Samaj; Deoband movement etc. The key similarity between these movements was that *all of them wanted to change the status quo* in the society wherein several deformities had crept in. All of them, in some way or other, attacked on inhuman practices such as sati, female infanticide, child marriage etc. along with superstitions, complex rituals and so on.

5.2 SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

From the 18th century onward India was being colonised by the British. In contrast to the Muslim ruled areas, this colonisation had a huge impact on Indian society, where social and religious leaders tried to assimilate the western culture and modernise Hindu culture. During the 19th century, Hinduism developed a large number of new religious movements, partly inspired by the European Romanticism, nationalism, and esotericism (Theosophy) popular at the time. Conversely and contemporaneously, India had a similar effect on European

culture with Orientalism "Hindu style" architecture, reception of Buddhism in the West and similar.

In social work, Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Baba Amte and Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar have been most important. Sunderlal Bahuguna created the chipko movement for the preservation of forestlands according to the Hindu ecological ideas.

One of the foremost movements in breaking the caste system and educating the downtrodden was the Lingayat movement spearheaded by Basavanna in the 12th century in Anubhava Mantapa in Kalyani of Karnataka.[3] The less accessible Vedas were rejected and parallel Vachanas were compiled.

5.2.1 Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, or VHP, was founded in 1964 by the second sarsanghachalak (chief) of the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh, Shri Madhav Golwalkar, with the core objective of consolidating and strengthening Hindu society and also to eradicate the caste system among Hindus, which they claim had "crept in during medieval times" and to unite Hindus. The VHP has openly advocated appointing Dalits (lowest strata in Hindu society) as priests in temples and also runs several medical camps, hospitals, schools and hostels in remote regions of India, primarily inhabited by Dalits and tribals.

In recent years the VHP has emerged as one of the most active Hindu missionary organisations and has organised several mass conversion programs of Christians and Muslims who, they claim, were Hindus once upon a time back to Hinduism.

5.3 RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

The Brahma Samaj is a social and religious movement founded in Kolkata in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Brahma Samaj movement thereafter resulted in the Brahma religion in 1850 founded by Debendranath Tagore — better known as the father of Rabindranath Tagore.

5.3.1 Brahma Samaj

The faith and Principles of Brahma Samaj had spread to South Indian states like Andrapradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Kerala with a large number of followers.

In Kerala the faith and principles of Brahmosamaj and Raja Ram Mohun Roy had been propagated by DR. Ayyathan Gopalan, and reform activities had been led by establishing Brahmosamaj in 1898 in the Calicut (now Kozhikode) region. Gopalan was a doctor by profession, but dedicated his life to Brahmosamaj, and was an active executive member of the Calcutta Sadharan Brahmosamaj until his death.

The Calicut (Kerala) branch of Brahmomandir (Hall for conducting prayer meetings) was opened to public in the year 1900 (Now Ayathan School which runs under the patronage of Brahmosamaj at Jail road, Calicut). Second Branch of Brahmosamaj at Kerala was established at Alappuzha (South Kerala) in the year 1924 with a Brahmomandir(Hall for conducting prayer meeting's) established at Poonthoppu ,Kommady (now Grihalakshmi Gandhi Smaraka seva sangam).

DR.Ayyathan Gopalan was a great social reformer of Kerala and was also the founder of Sugunavardhini movement which was established in order to foster human values in children and to protect the rights of women, children, and the downtrodden sections such as the Harijan communities (Dalits) and to educate them. He established the Lady Chandawarkar Elementary School with the aim of educating girls and the underprivileged.

DR. Ayyathan Gopalan translated the "Bible of Brahmosamaj" or "Brahmodarma written by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore into Malayalam in 1910.

5.3.2 Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj is a monotheistic Hindu reform movement founded in India by Swami Dayananda in 1875 at Bombay. He was a sannyasin (ascetic) who believed in the infallible authority of the Vedas.[6] Members of the Arya Samaj believe in one God and reject the worship of

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idols. Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas was both unique and radical; for example, he taught that the Vedas unambiguously advocate monotheism. He stressed that the Vedas do not contain any mention of idol worship, because they teach that God is a nonmaterial, formless and metaphysical spirit and, further, emphasise the doctrine of karma and reincarnation, the ideals of brahmacharya (chastity) and sanyasa (renunciation). Dayananda claimed that the Veda is the only true scripture because God reveals His true word at the outset of creation (otherwise He would be imperfect by having deprived many human generations of true knowledge until the inception of today's various religions) and that, most definitely, there is no place in it of a discriminatory or hereditary caste system.

It aimed to be a universal structure based on the authority of the Vedas. Dayananda stated that he wanted 'to make the whole world Aryan', he wanted to develop missionary Hinduism based on the universality of the Vedas. To this end, the Arya Samaj started Shuddhi movement in early 20th century to bring back Hinduism to people converted to Islam and Christianity, set up schools and missionary organisations, and extended its activities outside India. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India in his book, *The Discovery of India* credits Arya Samaj in introducing proselytization in Hinduism.

The Samaj has branches around the world and has a significant number of adherents among people of Indian ancestry in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, the Caribbean, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Swami Vivekananda was a central personality in the development of neo-Hinduism (also called Neo-Vedanta) in late 19th century and the early 20th century. His ideals and sayings have inspired numerous Indians as well as non-Indians, Hindus as well as non-Hindus. Among the prominent figures whose ideals were very much influenced by them were Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi, Subhas Bose, Satyendranath Bose, Megh Nad Saha, and Sister Nivedita.

In Indonesia several movements favour a return to Hinduism in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. Balinese Hinduism, known as

Agama Hindu Dharma, has witnessed great resurgence in recent years. Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (founder of Ananda Marga) initiated a new renaissance in the Indian world of sangeet.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

2. Discuss the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj.

5.4 HINDU REVIVAL MOVEMENT

A well-financed Hindu revival movement, with strong political implications, was started here last month by religious and lay leaders whose efforts were spurred by the recent wave of conversions to Islam by communities of Hindu untouchables.

"There is no doubt that the conversions were the catalysts that triggered our movement," said Karan Singh, the president of the Greater Hindu Society, which is coordinating and financing the drive.

"What we want to do is to cleanse Hinduism of the last remnants of untouchability," continued Mr. Singh, referring to the lowest class of people in India, whose touch was regarded as defiling to higher caste Hindus, "but we also want to reassert the validity of the dominant culture of India, which is Hindu." Population Is 80% Hindu

In India, where 80 percent of the population is Hindu, a succession of governments since independence in 1947 has sought to curb religious nationalism in the name of secular or more worldly development. As with previous attempts, Mr. Singh's movement is both widely appealing and highly explosive.

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The scope of the movement's appeal was apparent last month when more than 300,000 people gathered in New Delhi for a rally to inaugurate the Greater Hindu Society, a coalition of existing religious and cultural groups.

Even by New Delhi standards, where multitudes are often assembled to promote any number of causes, the turnout was impressive. The participants were disciplined and committed people who had paid their own way to hear successive speakers uphold the value of Hindu teachings in a modern world.

But if the central message was one of religious pride and a reaffirmation of Hinduism, the tactical emphasis was on eliminating prejudice against untouchables. Discrimination against untouchables has been banned by Indian laws since 1955, but it is still pervasive against a group that comprises 18 percent of the population. Gandhi Supported Them

Untouchables are called harijans, or children of God, a name coined by Mohandas K. Gandhi in his campaign 50 years ago to remove the stigma of untouchability through religious changes and the nationalist struggle.

The vulnerability of untouchables was underscored last week when details emerged of the slaughter of 24 of them in the town of Deoli, 300 miles from New Delhi. The victims, including women and children, were shot dead by upper-caste landowners who were incensed that some of their untouchable field laborers had testified in a court case against them.

Although the outrage at Deoli was particularly horrifying, it was by no means a rare occurrence. Murders, beatings and gang rapes of untouchables are reported several hundred times a year, and less newsworthy humiliations are everyday happenings. The worst attacks have often come when groups of prospering untouchables have been emboldened enough to challenge the authority of locally dominant castes.

In an interview at his art-filled home here, Mr. Singh said that Hinduism, which he described as an "absorptive and nondogmatic religion," had been able to shed practices that had lost their economic or symbolic rationale.

He cited the former Hindu custom of suttee, in which widows committed suicide by throwing themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands. Mr. Singh said untouchability now served no useful purpose, because the division of labor in India no longer demanded a reservoir of people for those jobs -among them shoemakers, handlers of the dead and toilet cleaners - that were the usual tasks of the untouchables. No Other Modifications Sought

Mr. Singh, a Member of Parliament and a former Cabinet minister, said that while he was eager to bring an end to untouchability, he was not seeking any other modification of the caste system, which arrays thousands of groups in a hierarchy that has far more impact on social relations here than does the Constitution or the laws of India. Caste, Mr. Singh said, is too much a part of Indian consciousness to be eliminated.

"It is on harijans that we want to change attitudes," he said. "Harijans must not only be tolerated but must be actively accepted and assimilated into the Hindu social structure."

Mr. Singh said he was proud that his father, Hari Singh, the last reigning Maharajah of Kashmir, had opened the temples of his state to untouchables 50 years ago. Mr. Singh is currently advocating regular contact between influential high-caste figures and untouchable communities, and he spends part of his weekends visiting harijan communities to join them in prayers and in meals.

Many untouchables are openly suspicious of the revival movement and its professed goal of embracing them. "They want to save us from Islam, not from atrocities," said Ram Dhan, a former Member of Parliament who heads a social action committee that defends the interests of what are called the depressed castes.

Benwari Singh, an untouchable who said that he supported the Dalit Panthers, a moderately militant harijan group, likened the participation of some Hindu fundamentalists in the New Delhi rally to "having the Ku Klux Klan joining in a call for racial tolerance."

In addition to complaints that the Greater Hindu Society is patronizing in its approach, there is also considerable anxiety that by fostering Hindu

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identity, the revival movement may exacerbate religious tensions and erode the national commitment to secularism. 'People Have Become Ashamed'

Mr. Singh said it was not his intent to curb trends toward a more worldly outlook, but he added that "it is almost as if people have become ashamed to call themselves Hindu." He said that developments in neighboring countries, where there has been a resurgence of Islam, "has also had an effect here."

For several decades, some political scientists, both Indian and foreign, have argued that Hinduism and its symbols might effectively be exploited for political ends. There have been political parties that raised uniformed youth divisions who marched eagerly and energetically sang religious hymns. There have been political leaders who have projected India as something of a Hindu mirror image of Pakistan, which is about 97 percent Islamic.

Still, since independence and despite the predictions of the social scientists, those calculations of Hinduism as opposed to Indian nationalism have sputtered.

Mr. Singh, asked whether he thought that the diffuseness of Hinduism made it difficult to use as a mobilizing ideology, acknowledged that this amorphousness was both a strength and a weakness. But he insisted that movements to effect change had been successful in the past, listing the medieval revival led by Shankar Acharya that effectively repelled Buddhism. He also mentioned the turn-of-the-century religious changes by Aurobindo Ghose, or Sri Aurobindo, and Vivekananda, which nurtured the independence struggle.

There was also Gandhi's crusade, which while drawing ecumenical support relied heavily on Hindu symbolism. Mr. Singh said that in all those cases a charismatic figure was at the center, and he conceded that none was currently in sight.

5.5 THE MAJOR REFORMIST AND REVIVALIST MOVEMENTS

Some major reformist movements were Brahmo Samaj; Prarthana Samaj; Satya Sodhak Samaj; Aligarh movement; Young Bengal Movement and Ramakrishna mission. Some major revivalist movements were Arya Samaj; Deoband movement etc. The key similarity between these movements was that all of them wanted to change the status quo in the society wherein several deformities had crept in. All of them, in some way or other, attacked on inhuman practices such as sati, female infanticide, child marriage etc. along with superstitions, complex rituals and so on. While the reformist movements strived to change the fundamental system and structures of the society through gradual changes within the existing institutions; revivalist movements tended to revive former customs or practices and thus take the society back to the glorious past. The reformist movements responded with the time and scientific temper of the modern era. The spread of western education and liberal ideas were the main reasons for emergence of reform movements In India. One example of such movement is Brahmo Samaj. Revivalist movements believed that the western thinking and missionary propaganda would ruin Indian culture and ethos, and thus there was a need to protect the religion. They were also influenced by the rich cultural heritage of India brought to light by the western scholars, and found that it was even superior to the western culture. The Arya Samaj followed the motto “Go Back to Vedas” and the Suddhi movement started by it aimed reconversion of those Hindus who had once been willingly or forcibly converted into other religions, but were now willing to come back into the fold of Hinduism also it prevented further conversion.

Check your progress-2

3. Write a short note on Hindu Revival Movement.

4. Identify the major Reformist and Revivalist.

5.6 LET US SUM UP

From the 18th century onward India was being colonised by the British. In contrast to the Muslim ruled areas, this colonisation had a huge impact on Indian society, where social and religious leaders tried to assimilate the western culture and modernise Hindu culture. During the 19th century, Hinduism developed a large number of new religious movements, partly inspired by the European Romanticism, nationalism, and esotericism (Theosophy) popular at the time. Conversely and contemporaneously, India had a similar effect on European culture with Orientalism "Hindu style" architecture, reception of Buddhism in the West and similar. The faith and Principles of Brahma Samaj had spread to South Indian states like Andrapradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Kerala with a large number of followers. In Kerala the faith and principles of Brahmosamaj and Raja Ram Mohun Roy had been propagated by DR. Ayyathan Gopalan, and reform activities had been led by establishing Brahmosamaj in 1898 in the Calicut (now Kozhikode) region. Gopalan was a doctor by profession, but dedicated his life to Brahmosamaj, and was an active executive member of the Calcutta Sadharan Brahmosamaj until his death. A well-financed Hindu revival movement, with strong political implications, was started here last month by religious and lay leaders whose efforts were spurred by the recent wave of conversions to Islam by communities of Hindu untouchables.

"There is no doubt that the conversions were the catalysts that triggered our movement," said Karan Singh, the president of the Greater Hindu Society, which is coordinating and financing the drive. "What we want to do is to cleanse Hinduism of the last remnants of untouchability," continued Mr. Singh, referring to the lowest class of people in India, whose touch was regarded as defiling to higher caste Hindus, "but we also want to reassert the validity of the dominant culture of India, which is Hindu." Population Is 80% Hindu

5.7 KEYWORDS

- **Social reform movements:** From the 18th century onward India was being colonised by the British. In contrast to the Muslim ruled areas, this colonisation had a huge impact on Indian society, where social and religious leaders tried to assimilate the western culture and modernise Hindu culture.
- **Religious Movements:** The Brahmo Samaj is a social and religious movement founded in Kolkata in 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- **Revival Movements:** A well-financed Hindu revival movement, with strong political implications, was started here last month by religious and lay leaders whose efforts were spurred by the recent wave of conversions to Islam by communities of Hindu untouchables.

5.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.
2. Discuss the Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj
3. Write a short note on Hindu Revival Movement.
4. Identify the major Reformist and Revivalist.

5.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

Notes

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5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, or VHP, was founded in 1964 by the second sarsanghachalak (chief) of the Rashtriya Svayamsevak Sangh, Shri Madhav Golwalkar, with the core objective of consolidating and strengthening Hindu society and also to eradicate the caste system among Hindus, which they claim had "crept in during medieval times" and to unite Hindus. The VHP has openly advocated appointing Dalits (lowest strata in Hindu society) as priests in temples and also runs several

medical camps, hospitals, schools and hostels in remote regions of India, primarily inhabited by Dalits and tribals.

In recent years the VHP has emerged as one of the most active Hindu missionary organisations and has organised several mass conversion programs of Christians and Muslims who, they claim, were Hindus once upon a time back to Hinduism.

2. Brahma Samaj

The faith and Principles of Brahma Samaj had spread to South Indian states like Andrapradesh, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Kerala with a large number of followers.

In Kerala the faith and principles of Brahmosamaj and Raja Ram Mohun Roy had been propagated by DR. Ayyathan Gopalan, and reform activities had been led by establishing Brahmosamaj in 1898 in the Calicut (now Kozhikode) region. Gopalan was a doctor by profession, but dedicated his life to Brahmosamaj, and was an active executive member of the Calcutta Sadharan Brahmosamaj until his death.

The Calicut (Kerala) branch of Brahmomandir (Hall for conducting prayer meetings) was opened to public in the year 1900 (Now Ayathan School which runs under the patronage of Brahmosamaj at Jail road, Calicut). Second Branch of Brahmosamaj at Kerala was established at Alappuzha (South Kerala) in the year 1924 with a Brahmomandir(Hall for conducting prayer meeting's) established at Poonthoppu ,Kommady (now Grihalakshmi Gandhi Smaraka seva sangam).

DR.Ayyathan Gopalan was a great social reformer of Kerala and was also the founder of Sugunavardhini movement which was established in order to foster human values in children and to protect the rights of women, children, and the downtrodden sections such as the Harijan communities (Dalits) and to educate them. He established the Lady Chandawarkar Elementary School with the aim of educating girls and the underprivileged.

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DR. Ayyathan Gopalan translated the "Bible of Brahmosamaj" or "Brahmodarma" written by Maharshi Debendranath Tagore into Malayalam in 1910.

Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj is a monotheistic Hindu reform movement founded in India by Swami Dayananda in 1875 at Bombay. He was a sannyasin (ascetic) who believed in the infallible authority of the Vedas.[6] Members of the Arya Samaj believe in one God and reject the worship of idols. Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas was both unique and radical; for example, he taught that the Vedas unambiguously advocate monotheism. He stressed that the Vedas do not contain any mention of idol worship, because they teach that God is a nonmaterial, formless and metaphysical spirit and, further, emphasise the doctrine of karma and reincarnation, the ideals of brahmacharya (chastity) and sanyasa (renunciation). Dayananda claimed that the Veda is the only true scripture because God reveals His true word at the outset of creation (otherwise He would be imperfect by having deprived many human generations of true knowledge until the inception of today's various religions) and that, most definitely, there is no place in it of a discriminatory or hereditary caste system.

It aimed to be a universal structure based on the authority of the Vedas. Dayananda stated that he wanted 'to make the whole world Aryan', he wanted to develop missionary Hinduism based on the universality of the Vedas. To this end, the Arya Samaj started Shuddhi movement in early 20th century to bring back Hinduism to people converted to Islam and Christianity, set up schools and missionary organisations, and extended its activities outside India. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India in his book, *The Discovery of India* credits Arya Samaj in introducing proselytization in Hinduism.

The Samaj has branches around the world and has a significant number of adherents among people of Indian ancestry in Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, the Caribbean, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

3. A well-financed Hindu revival movement, with strong political implications, was started here last month by religious and lay leaders whose efforts were spurred by the recent wave of conversions to Islam by communities of Hindu untouchables.

"There is no doubt that the conversions were the catalysts that triggered our movement," said Karan Singh, the president of the Greater Hindu Society, which is coordinating and financing the drive.

"What we want to do is to cleanse Hinduism of the last remnants of untouchability," continued Mr. Singh, referring to the lowest class of people in India, whose touch was regarded as defiling to higher caste Hindus, "but we also want to reassert the validity of the dominant culture of India, which is Hindu." Population Is 80% Hindu

In India, where 80 percent of the population is Hindu, a succession of governments since independence in 1947 has sought to curb religious nationalism in the name of secular or more worldly development. As with previous attempts, Mr. Singh's movement is both widely appealing and highly explosive.

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4. Some major reformist movements were Brahma Samaj; Prarthana Samaj; Satya Sodhak Samaj; Aligarh movement; Young Bengal Movement and Ramakrishna mission. Some major revivalist movements were Arya Samaj; Deoband movement etc. The key similarity between these movements was that *all of them wanted*

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UNIT-6 IDEAS OF RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALISM AND FUNDAMENTALISM

STRUCTURE

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Concept of Universalism

6.3 Religious Universalism

6.3.1 Buddhism

6.3.2 Christianity

6.3.3 Hinduism

6.3.4 Islam

6.3.5 Islam

6.3.6 Judaism

6.3.7 Sikhism

6.4 Unitarian Universalism

6.5 Religious Fundamentalism in India

6.6 Let us sum up

6.7 Keywords

6.8 Questions For Review

6.9 Suggested Readings And References

6.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Universalism
- Able to understand Religious Fundamentalism

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Universalism is the philosophical and theological concept that some ideas have universal application or applicability.

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A belief in one fundamental truth is another important tenet in Universalism. The living truth is seen as more far-reaching than the national, cultural, or religious boundaries or interpretations of that one truth. As the Rig Veda states, "Truth is one; sages call it by various names." A community that calls itself universalist may emphasize the universal principles of most religions, and accept others in an inclusive manner.

Universalism has had an influence on modern day Hinduism, in turn influencing western modern spirituality.

Unitarian Universalism emphasizes that religion is a universal human quality, and also focuses on the universal principles of most religions. It accepts all religions in an inclusive manner, this approach to religion being called religious pluralism.

Christian universalism refers to the idea that every human will be saved in a religious or spiritual sense. This specific idea being called universal reconciliation.

6.2 CONCEPT OF UNIVERSALISM

In philosophy, universality is the notion that universal facts can be discovered and is therefore understood as being in opposition to relativism.

In certain religions, universalism is the quality ascribed to an entity whose existence is consistent throughout the univers.

Moral universalism is the meta-ethical position that some system of ethics applies universally. That system is inclusive of all individuals, regardless of culture, race, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or any other distinguishing feature. Moral universalism is opposed to moral nihilism and moral relativism. However, not all forms of moral universalism are absolutist, nor do they necessarily value monism. Many forms of universalism, such as utilitarianism, are non-absolutist. Other forms such as those theorized by Isaiah Berlin, may value pluralist ideals.

6.3 RELIGIOUS UNIVERSALISM

6.3.1 Buddhism

The idea of Universal Salvation is key to the Mahayana school of Buddhism. All practitioners of this school of Buddhism aspire to become fully enlightened, so as to save other beings. There are many such vows or sentiments that people on this path focus on, the most famous being "Beings are numberless. I vow to save them all."

Adherents to Pure Land Buddhism point to Amitabha Buddha as a Universal Savior. Before becoming a Buddha Amitabha vowed that he would save all beings.

6.3.2 Christianity

The fundamental idea of Christian universalism is universal reconciliation – that all humans will eventually be saved. They will eventually enter God's kingdom in Heaven, through the grace and works of the lord Jesus Christ. Christian universalism teaches that an eternal Hell does not exist, and that it was not what Jesus had taught. They point to historical evidence showing that some early fathers of the church were universalists, and attribute the origin of the idea of hell as eternal to mistranslation.

Universalists cite numerous Biblical passages which reference the salvation of all beings. In addition, they argue that an eternal hell is both unjust, and against the nature and attributes of a loving God.

The remaining beliefs of Christian universalism are generally compatible with the fundamentals of Christianity

God is the loving Parent of all peoples, see Love of God.

Jesus Christ reveals the nature and character of God, and is the spiritual leader of humankind.

Humankind is created with an immortal soul, which death can not end— or a mortal soul that shall be resurrected and preserved by God. A soul which God will not wholly destroy.

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Sin has negative consequences for the sinner either in this life or the afterlife. All of God's punishments for sin are corrective and remedial. None of such punishments will last forever, or result in the permanent destruction of a soul. Some Christian Universalists believe in the idea of a Purgatorial Hell, or a temporary place of purification that some must undergo before their entrance into Heaven.

In 1899 the Universalist General Convention, later called the Universalist Church of America, adopted the Five Principles: the belief in God, Jesus Christ, the immortality of the human soul, the reality of sin and universal reconciliation.

6.3.3 Hinduism

Author David Frawley says that Hinduism has a "background universalism" and its teachings contain a "universal relevance." Hinduism is also naturally religiously pluralistic. A well-known Rig Vedic hymn says: "Truth is One, though the sages know it variously." Similarly, in the Bhagavad Gita God, manifesting as an incarnation, states: "As people approach me, so I receive them. All paths lead to me." The Hindu religion has no theological difficulties in accepting degrees of truth in other religions. Hinduism emphasizes that everyone actually worships the same God, whether one knows it or not.

While Hinduism has an openness and tolerance towards other religions, it also has a wide range of diversity within it. There are considered to be six orthodox Hindu schools of philosophy/theology, as well as multiple unorthodox or "heterodox" traditions called darshanas.

Hindu universalism, also called Neo-Vedanta and neo-Hinduism, is a modern interpretation of Hinduism which developed in response to western colonialism and orientalism. It denotes the ideology that all religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect.

It is a modern interpretation that aims to present Hinduism as a "homogenized ideal of Hinduism" with Advaita Vedanta as its central doctrine. For example, it presents that: an imagined "integral unity" that was probably little more than an "imagined" view of the religious life that pertained only to a cultural elite and that empirically speaking had

very little reality "on the ground," as it were, throughout the centuries of cultural development in the South Asian region.

Hinduism embraces universalism by conceiving the whole world as a single family that deifies the one truth, and therefore it accepts all forms of beliefs and dismisses labels of distinct religions which would imply a division of identity.

This modernised re-interpretation has become a broad current in Indian culture, extending far beyond the Dashanami Sampradaya, the Advaita Vedanta Sampradaya founded by Adi Shankara. An early exponent of Hindu Universalism was Ram Mohan Roy, who established the Brahmo Samaj. Hindu Universalism was popularised in the 20th century in both India and the west by Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Veneration for all other religions was articulated by Gandhi:

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that all religions are true; all religions have some error in them; all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible.

Western orientalist played an important role in this popularisation, regarding Vedanta to be the "central theology of Hinduism". Oriental scholarship portrayed Hinduism as a "single world religion", and denigrated the heterogeneity of Hindu beliefs and practices as 'distortions' of the basic teachings of Vedanta.

6.3.4 Islam

Islam recognizes to a certain extent the validity of the Abrahamic religions, the Quran identifying Jews, Christians, as "people of the Book" (ahl al-kitab). Later Islamic theologians expanded this definition to include Zoroastrians, and later even Hindus, as the early Islamic empire brought many people professing these religions under its dominion, but the Qur'an explicitly identifies only Jews, Christians, and Sabians as People of the Book. The relation between Islam and

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universalism has assumed crucial importance in the context of political Islam or Islamism, particularly in reference to Sayyid Qutb, a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, and one of the key contemporary philosophers of Islam.

There are several views within Islam with respect to Universalism. According to the most inclusive teachings, common among the liberal Muslim movements, all monotheistic religions or people of the book have a chance of salvation.

The interpretation of all of these passages are hotly contested amongst various schools of thought, traditionalist and reform-minded, and branches of Islam, from the reforming Quranism and Ahmadiyya to the ultra-traditionalist Salafi, as is the doctrine of abrogation (naskh) which is used to determine which verses take precedence, based on reconstructed chronology, with later verses superseding earlier ones. Depending on the level of acceptance or rejection of certain traditions, the interpretation of the Koran can be changed immensely, from the Qur'anists and Ahmadiyya who reject the ahadith, to the Salafi, or ahl al-hadith, who hold the entirety of the traditional collections in great reverence.

Traditional Islam views the world as bipartite, consisting of the House of Islam, that is, where people live under the Sharia; and the House of War, that is, where the people do not live under Sharia, which must be proselytized using whatever resources available, including, in some traditionalist and conservative interpretations, the use of violence, as holy struggle in the path of God, to either convert its inhabitants to Islam, or to rule them under the Shariah.

6.3.5 Judaism

Judaism teaches that God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant with God, and one of their beliefs is that Jewish people were charged by the Torah with a specific mission—to be a light unto the nations, and to exemplify the covenant with God as described in the Torah to other nations. This view does not preclude a belief that God also has a relationship with other peoples—rather, Judaism holds that God

had entered into a covenant with all humanity as Noachides, and that Jews and non-Jews alike have a relationship with God, as well as being universal in the sense that it is open to all mankind.

Modern Jews such as Emmanuel Levinas advocate a universalist mindset that is performed through particularist behavior. An on-line organization, the Jewish Spiritual Leaders Institute founded and led by Steven Blane, who calls himself an "American Jewish Universalist Rabbi", believes in a more inclusive version of Jewish Universalism, stating that "God equally chose all nations to be lights unto the world, and we have much to learn and share with each other. We can only accomplish Tikkun Olam by our unconditional acceptance of each other's peaceful doctrines.

6.3.6 Sikhism

In Sikhism, all the religions of the world are compared to rivers flowing into a single ocean. Although the Sikh gurus did not agree with the practices of fasting, idolatry and pilgrimage during their times, they stressed that all religions should be tolerated and considered on equal footing. The Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, contains the writings of not just the Sikh guru themselves, but the writings of several Hindu and Muslim saints, known as the Bhagats.

The very first word of the Sikh scripture is "Ik", followed by "Oh-ang-kar". This literally means that there is only one god, and that one is wholesome, inclusive of the whole universe. It further goes on to state that all of creation, and all energy is part of this primordial being. As such, it is described in scripture over and over again, that all that occurs is part of the divine will, and as such, has to be accepted. It occurs for a reason, even if its beyond the grasp of one person to understand.

Although Sikhism does not teach that men are created as an image of God, it states that the essence of the One is to be found throughout all of its creation. As was said by Yogi Bhanjan, the man who is credited with having brought Sikhism to the West:

"If you can't see God in all, you can't see God at all".

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The First Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak said himself:

“There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim”.

By this, Guru Nanak meant that there is no distinction between religion in God's eyes, whether polytheist, monotheist, pantheist, or even atheist, all that one needs to gain salvation is purity of heart, tolerance of all beings, compassion and kindness. Unlike many of the major world religions, Sikhism does not have missionaries, instead it believes men have the freedom to find their own path to salvation.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the Concept of Universalism.

2. Discuss the Hinduism and Sikhism.

6.4 UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

Universalism is not only a set of values, but a worldview to which any can subscribe if they observe and believe in the universality of the human experience—and that of all sentient life—and work to uphold the principles, ethics, and actions that safeguard these fundamental things.

Indeed, many Universalists may be attracted to the logic of universally applicable principles, rather than any belief or dogma. Human unity, solidarity, and the perceived need for a sustainable and socially conscious global order are among the tendencies of non-religious Universalist thought.

Unitarian Universalism (UU) is a theologically liberal religion characterized by a "free and responsible search for truth and meaning".Unitarian Universalists do not share a creed; rather, they are

unified by their shared search for spiritual growth and by the understanding that an individual's theology is a result of that search and not a result of obedience to an authoritarian requirement. Unitarian Universalists draw from all major world religions and many different theological sources and have a wide range of beliefs and practices.

While having its origins in Christianity, UU is no longer a Christian church. As of 2006, fewer than about 20% of Unitarian Universalists identified themselves as Christian. Contemporary Unitarian Universalism espouses a pluralist approach to religious belief, whereby members may describe themselves as humanist, agnostic, deist, atheist, pagan, Christian, monotheist, pantheist, polytheist, or assume no label at all.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) was formed in 1961, a consolidation of the American Unitarian Association, established in 1825, and the Universalist Church of America, established in 1866. It is headquartered in Boston, and mainly serves churches in the United States. The Canadian Unitarian Council became an independent body in 2002.

6.5 RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDIA

The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways. In response to the demands of linguistic minorities, the whole political map was redrawn and reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was undertaken following an inquiry by States Reorganisation Commission. Indubitably despite its sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory. The founding fathers were cognisant of the maze of socio-religious framework of India

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and so they envisioned India as a secular polity. Jawaharlal Nehru, referring to secularism, stated, "What exactly does it mean? It means free play of religions, subject only to their not interfering with each other or with the basic conception of our state." Dr B R Ambedker was of the view that a secular state meant "that this Parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion on the rest of the people." But the Hindu chauvinistic factions and parties-BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party), Shev Sina , RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh), VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) - have missed no opportunity to communalise national politics aimed at capitalising on Hindu votes. The RSS was established in early 20th Century by Dr Keshave Baliram which coincided with Hindu-Muslim riots at Malabar in 1921. After Vajpayee was elected the President of BJP, he unhesitatingly declared, "We are very proud of our association with RSS." The Congress party remained committed to secular values till Nehru's premiership lasted and his successors did not shy away from pandering to communal differences. The Ramjanambhoomi controversy and the subsequent demolition of Babri Mosque fuelled the militant sentiments in the community. This controversy dates back to late 18th Century but the English rulers did not let the dispute escalate into street brawls and resorted to freezing the status quo in so far as the possession of the mosque was concerned. Two years after independence a fanatic additional district magistrate unlocked the gates and allowed the installation of makeshift idols in the disputed part of structure. Later Rajiv Gandhi's government went a step further and performed a foundation-laying ceremony of Ram Temple at the disputed site. The demolition of Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 could not have been the outcome of a spontaneous outburst of Hindu anger against assumed desecration of sacred site. Rather it was a methodical build-up to the climax involving Rath-yatras, provocative rhetoric, circulation of fundamentalist literature and the intrigues of obscurantist politicians. Both the Congress government in Delhi and the BJP government in UP did not take note of the fast pace of developments in the run-up to the incident entailing communal violence and overlooked the meticulous preparations by the Hindu fundamentalist group in Ayodhya. The Coimbatore riots of 1997 were the first major clash

between Hindus and Muslims in Southern India which had remained generally free from such conflicts in the past. In 2002 the western Indian State of Gujarat witnessed a deadly carnage. A train was attacked in Godhra allegedly by Muslims in which a large number of Hindus lost their lives. The Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, an RSS ideologue termed the incident as pre-planned, violent act of terrorism and justified the retaliatory violence in Ahmadabad by quoting Newton's 'third law of motion'. The policy personnel clumsily handled the orgy of killings, lootings, rape and other atrocious acts against Muslims by Hindu mobs, reportedly led by the ruling party leaders and legislators. The bloody battle in Gujarat presented how large parts of rural areas got seriously affected by the communal poison, hitherto an essentially urban occurrence. Likewise the states of Orissa, Assam, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have remained vulnerable to eruption of Hindu-Christian conflicts. According to one estimate, the number of cases involving violence against Christians between 1964 and 1996, a period of 32 years, was only 38 but this number touched a high of 136 in just one year in 1998. The violent incidents included disruption of prayer meetings and gospel readings, damage to Bibles, holy crosses and church buildings. Nowadays the Christians in India have once again become victims of provocative Hindus' aggressive feelings against other communities inhabiting the country. The recent clashes have been triggered by the issue of religious conversions in Orissa's poor tribal region that is home to a number of Christian missionary groups. Hundreds of Christians in the Indian State of Orissa have been forced to renounce their religion and become Hindus. The lynch mobs offer the innocent hapless Christians a stark ultimatum: convert or die. During the conversion ceremony they are given cow dung to eat exhibiting their loyalty towards Hinduism. The state of Karnataka too has come under siege and its secular and progressive fabric is tearing apart under demonic activities of Hindu fundamentalists. The latter sanction the violence by extending arguments of 'cultural protection' against conversions to Christianity. But such arguments are naive as no case of forced conversion by Christians has come into limelight. The noteworthy fact is that the Hindu right wing groups have long been stirring up religious resentment as a way to shore

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up its voter base. All these incidents depict a gloomy picture of future of 'secular India' unless immediate efforts are undertaken to staunch the rising tide of Hindu fundamentalism and purge Indian politics of its vicious influence. There is a dire need to revitalise Nehru's secular ideals and Gandhi's satyagraha. The powers that be in Delhi must remove all blinkers and confront the danger to India's democratic pluralism.

Check your progress-2

3. Discuss the Unitarian Universalism.

4. Discuss the Religious Fundamentalism in India.

6.6 LET US SUM UP

In philosophy, universality is the notion that universal facts can be discovered and is therefore understood as being in opposition to relativism.

In certain religions, universalism is the quality ascribed to an entity whose existence is consistent throughout the univers. Moral universalism is the meta-ethical position that some system of ethics applies universally. That system is inclusive of all individuals, regardless of culture, race, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or any other distinguishing feature. Moral universalism is opposed to moral nihilism and moral relativism. However, not all forms of moral universalism are absolutist, nor do they necessarily value monism. Many forms of universalism, such as utilitarianism, are non-absolutist. Other forms such as those theorized by Isaiah Berlin, may value pluralist ideals. Universalism is not only a set of values, but a worldview to which any can subscribe if they observe and believe in the universality of the

human experience—and that of all sentient life—and work to uphold the principles, ethics, and actions that safeguard these fundamental things.

Indeed, many Universalists may be attracted to the logic of universally applicable principles, rather than any belief or dogma. Human unity, solidarity, and the perceived need for a sustainable and socially conscious global order are among the tendencies of non-religious Universalist thought. The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways. In response to the demands of linguistic minorities, the whole political map was redrawn and reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was undertaken following an inquiry by States Reorganisation Commission. Indubitably despite its sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory.

6.7 KEYWORDS

- **Universalism:** In certain religions, universalism is the quality ascribed to an entity whose existence is consistent throughout the universes. Moral universalism is the meta-ethical position that some system of ethics applies universally.
- **Fundamentalism:** Indubitably despite its sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory.

6.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Discuss the Concept of Universalism.
2. Discuss the Hinduism and Sikhism.
3. Discuss the Unitarian Universalism.
4. Discuss the Religious Fundamentalism in India.

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6.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. In philosophy, universality is the notion that universal facts can be discovered and is therefore understood as being in opposition to relativism.

In certain religions, universalism is the quality ascribed to an entity whose existence is consistent throughout the univers.

Moral universalism is the meta-ethical position that some system of ethics applies universally. That system is inclusive of all individuals, regardless of culture, race, sex, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or any other distinguishing feature. Moral universalism is opposed to moral nihilism and moral relativism. However, not all forms of moral universalism are absolutist, nor do they necessarily value monism. Many forms of universalism, such as utilitarianism, are non-absolutist. Other forms such as those theorized by Isaiah Berlin, may value pluralist ideals.

2. Hinduism

Author David Frawley says that Hinduism has a "background universalism" and its teachings contain a "universal relevance." Hinduism is also naturally religiously pluralistic. A well-known Rig Vedic hymn says: "Truth is One, though the sages know it variously." Similarly, in the Bhagavad Gita God, manifesting as an incarnation, states: "As people approach me, so I receive them. All paths lead to me." The Hindu religion has no theological difficulties in accepting degrees of truth in other religions. Hinduism emphasizes that everyone actually worships the same God, whether one knows it or not.

While Hinduism has an openness and tolerance towards other religions, it also has a wide range of diversity within it. There are considered to be six orthodox Hindu schools of philosophy/theology, as well as multiple unorthodox or "heterodox" traditions called darshanas.

Hindu universalism, also called Neo-Vedanta and neo-Hinduism, is a modern interpretation of Hinduism which developed in response to western colonialism and orientalism. It denotes the ideology that all religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect.

It is a modern interpretation that aims to present Hinduism as a "homogenized ideal of Hinduism" with Advaita Vedanta as its central doctrine. For example, it presents that: an imagined "integral unity" that was probably little more than an "imagined" view of the religious life that pertained only to a cultural elite and that empirically speaking had

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very little reality "on the ground," as it were, throughout the centuries of cultural development in the South Asian region.

Hinduism embraces universalism by conceiving the whole world as a single family that deifies the one truth, and therefore it accepts all forms of beliefs and dismisses labels of distinct religions which would imply a division of identity.

This modernised re-interpretation has become a broad current in Indian culture, extending far beyond the Dashanami Sampradaya, the Advaita Vedanta Sampradaya founded by Adi Shankara. An early exponent of Hindu Universalism was Ram Mohan Roy, who established the Brahmo Samaj. Hindu Universalism was popularised in the 20th century in both India and the west by Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Veneration for all other religions was articulated by Gandhi:

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that all religions are true; all religions have some error in them; all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible.

Western orientalist played an important role in this popularisation, regarding Vedanta to be the "central theology of Hinduism". Oriental scholarship portrayed Hinduism as a "single world religion", and denigrated the heterogeneity of Hindu beliefs and practices as 'distortions' of the basic teachings of Vedanta.

Sikhism

In Sikhism, all the religions of the world are compared to rivers flowing into a single ocean. Although the Sikh gurus did not agree with the practices of fasting, idolatry and pilgrimage during their times, they stressed that all religions should be tolerated and considered on equal footing. The Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, contains the writings of not just the Sikh guru themselves, but the writings of several Hindu and Muslim saints, known as the Bhagats.

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3. Universalism is not only a set of values, but a worldview to which any can subscribe if they observe and believe in the universality of the human experience—and that of all sentient life—and work to uphold the principles, ethics, and actions that safeguard these fundamental things.

Indeed, many Universalists may be attracted to the logic of universally applicable principles, rather than any belief or dogma. Human unity, solidarity, and the perceived need for a sustainable and socially conscious global order are among the tendencies of non-religious Universalist thought.

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unified by their shared search for spiritual growth and by the understanding that an individual's theology is a result of that search and not a result of obedience to an authoritarian requirement. Unitarian Universalists draw from all major world religions and many different theological sources and have a wide range of beliefs and practices.

5. The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways. In response to the demands of linguistic minorities, the whole political map was redrawn and reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was undertaken following an inquiry by States Reorganisation Commission. Indubitably despite its sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory. The founding fathers were cognisant of the maze of socio-religious framework of India and so they envisioned India as a secular polity. Jawaharlal Nehru, referring to secularism, stated, "What exactly does it mean? It means free play of religions, subject only to their not interfering with each other or with the basic conception of our state." Dr B R Ambedker was of the view that a secular state meant "that this Parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion on the rest of the people." But the Hindu chauvinistic factions and parties-BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party), Shev Sina , RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh), VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) - have missed no opportunity to communalise national politics aimed at capitalising on Hindu votes. The RSS was established in early 20th Century by Dr Keshave Baliram which coincided with Hindu-Muslim riots at Malabar in 1921. After Vajpayee was elected the President of BJP, he unhesitatingly declared, "We are very proud of our association with RSS." The Congress party remained committed to secular values till

Nehru's premiership lasted and his successors did not shy away from pandering to communal differences. The Ramjanambhoomi controversy and the subsequent demolition of Babri Mosque fuelled the militant sentiments in the community. This controversy dates back to late 18th Century but the English rulers did not let the dispute escalate into street brawls and resorted to freezing the status quo in so far as the possession of the mosque was concerned. Two years after independence a fanatic additional district magistrate unlocked the gates and allowed the installation of makeshift idols in the disputed part of structure. Later Rajiv Gandhi's government went a step further and performed a foundation-laying ceremony of Ram Temple at the disputed site. The demolition of Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 could not have been the outcome of a spontaneous outburst of Hindu anger against assumed desecration of sacred site. Rather it was a methodical build-up to the climax involving Rath-yatras, provocative rhetoric, circulation of fundamentalist literature and the intrigues of obscurantist politicians. Both the Congress government in Delhi and the BJP government in UP did not take note of the fast pace of developments in the run-up to the incident entailing communal violence and overlooked the meticulous preparations by the Hindu fundamentalist group in Ayodhya. The Coimbatore riots of 1997 were the first major clash between Hindus and Muslims in Southern India which had remained generally free from such conflicts in the past. In 2002 the western Indian State of Gujarat witnessed a deadly carnage. A train was attacked in Godhra allegedly by Muslims in which a large number of Hindus lost their lives. The Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, an RSS ideologue termed the incident as pre-planned, violent act of terrorism and justified the retaliatory violence in Ahmadabad by quoting Newton's 'third law of motion'. The policy personnel clumsily handled the orgy of killings, lootings, rape and other atrocious acts against Muslims by Hindu mobs, reportedly led by the ruling party leaders and legislators. The bloody battle in Gujarat presented how large parts of rural areas got seriously affected by the communal poison, hitherto an essentially urban occurrence. Likewise the states of Orissa, Assam, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh

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have remained vulnerable to eruption of Hindu-Christian conflicts. According to one estimate, the number of cases involving violence against Christians between 1964 and 1996, a period of 32 years, was only 38 but this number touched a high of 136 in just one year in 1998. The violent incidents included disruption of prayer meetings and gospel readings, damage to Bibles, holy crosses and church buildings. Nowadays the Christians in India have once again become victims of provocative Hindus' aggressive feelings against other communities inhabiting the country.

UNIT-7 FUNDAMENTALISM IN MODERN INDIA

STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Concept of Fundamentalism
- 7.3 Ideology and Fundamentalism
- 6.4 Core Characteristics of Fundamentalism
- 6.5 Identity of Religious Fundamentalism in India
- 6.6 Let us sum up
- 6.7 Keywords
- 6.8 Questions For Review
- 6.9 Suggested Readings And References
- 6.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Able to understand Fundamentalism
- Able to understand Religious Fundamentalism
- Able to understand Ideology
- Able to understand Core Characteristics of Fundamentalism

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Fundamentalism usually has a religious connotation that indicates unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs. However, fundamentalism has come to be applied to a tendency among certain groups—mainly, although not exclusively, in religion—that is characterized by a markedly strict literalism as it is applied to certain specific scriptures, dogmas, or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining ingroup and outgroup distinctions, leading to an emphasis on purity and the desire to return to a previous ideal from which advocates believe members have strayed. Rejection of diversity of

opinion as applied to these established "fundamentals" and their accepted interpretation within the group often results from this tendency.

Depending upon the context, the label "fundamentalism" can be a pejorative rather than a neutral characterization, similar to the ways that calling political perspectives "right-wing" or "left-wing" can have for some negative connotations.

7.2 CONCEPT OF FUNDAMENTALISM

The term 'fundamentalism' refers to adherence to earlier accepted religious doctrines and is often accompanied by a literal application of historical beliefs and scriptures to today's world. It is also defined as a movement or belief called for a return to the basic texts or 'fundamentals' of revealed religion. It encourages 'fixed identities' where 'slippages are suppressed' and 'sameness is prized'.

It is commonly associated with the attempt to revive archaic modes of conduct and belief from the past. It is usually contrasted with modernism and liberalism in religion. It emphasizes the absolute truth of essential or 'fundamental' aspects of faith, especially those rooted in sacred texts such as the Christian Bible or the Islamic Koran or Vedas of Hindus.

The term has been applied to Protestant trends within Christianity since the 1920s, recently in Hinduism after the demolition of Babri Masjid. These new trends in religion are sometimes termed as 'resurgent fundamentalism', meaning the revival of a conservative approach to religion.

Christian fundamentalism believes the Bible to be word of God, who is responsible for all creation. Although humanity has sinned and therefore fallen from grace, salvation from punishment has been made possibly by God's mercy in sending a saviour—Jesus Christ.

Biblical religion introduced the conception of God as transcendent—as a 'Thou' utterly above the world—and of the world as 'desacralized', means, no longer a sacred entity to be responded to with emotional involvement.

In Islam, however, it is believed that its holy texts are the Koran (the word of God as revealed to Prophet Muhammad by an angel) and the Hadith or sayings of the Prophet. It is the sacred duty of every believer to accept and practice the principles enshrined in the Koran and Hadith.

Fundamentalism is sociologically important not only because of its unique place among religions, but because it easily extends itself into political realm. There is an increasing entanglement of religion in politics around the globe. Despite its theological character, it is usually linked to projects of social reform and the acquisition of political power.

In Middle East (Iran), Iraq, Afghanistan and more recently Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, many countries of Europe and even the most modernized the United States of America and to some extent India, religious fundamentalism has affected the political process and has given rise to conservative political movements and blind faith in nationalism.

Religious fundamentalists oppose secularization of society on one or the other basis. They sometimes even question about the removal of certain chapters from educational books. In recent years, there has been increasing efforts by fundamentalists and others to censor books used in school curricula.

In Islam, fundamentalists issue fatwa against those who go against the principles of Islam (e.g., Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued one such fatwa against Salman Rushdie, the writer of *The Satanic Verses* in 1989.) There have been several deaths apparently related to the fatwa at many places. In Britain and in some European countries, male Sikhs had come into conflict for wearing turban in public. Recently, in France, girls were banned to wear burka in the school premises.

Fundamentalism is associated with a militant and sometimes violent attitude to enforcing 'moral purity' as defined by the fundamentalists. Frequently, fundamentalists seek to use the state to establish and enforce what they see as morality as we had seen in Taliban and Al Qaeda (fundamentalist organizations) controlled Afghanistan a few years back. Recently, some fundamentalist organizations banned yoga exercises in Far East countries like Indonesia.

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In Pakistan, its north-east part where a girl of sixteen years Malala was attacked by the fundamentalists for attending school (Swat) is under the full control of the fundamentalist organizations which compel the people to act according to Shariat law rather than the state laws.

It is very interesting and striking that fundamentalists are using latest modern communication technology—TV, radio, Internet, etc., to disseminate their ideas. While religious leaders directly attack many core values of the secular world, they are nevertheless willing to use its artifacts in their spiritual campaigns. Sociologist James Hunter (1983) argues that fundamentalists see ‘technology as either neutral and thus not challenging to their faith or positive—as a gift of God to further his work on earth—and thus, an enhancement to faith’.

Why is religious fundamentalism on the rise all over the world, even in modern societies of Europe and America? Is religiosity (intensity of religious feelings) is increasing? So far as ‘religiosity’ is concerned, it is a qualitative factor which is difficult to measure accurately

Some studies have been made in western countries to assess church attendance which may provide some indication of religiosity. But this measurement cannot be regarded as a true measurement of religiosity because people go to church (or religious places) for many reasons—to worship, meet friends and relatives, participate in weddings, and sometimes even with an objective of thieving or pick-pocketing, and so on. Although a few people go regularly to church or temple or mosque, the vast majority believe in ‘something’ even if no more than a vague force behind the universe.

An important development in religious life has been the dramatic rise of religious programming (performance of many religious ceremonies, delivering religious discourse or sermons, prayers, chanting mantras, playing religious music, performing dance and drama on religious theme, etc.) in the electronic media.

Organizing religious rallies and performing religious functions in public have increased tremendously. Religious personalities and groups have

realized that the mass media represents an effective means of spreading religions values.

Technological advances, such as TV, cable television and satellite transmission, have facilitated the rise of 'e-religion'. People who do not or cannot attend places of worship or listen discourses of religious personalities, regularly watch such programmes on TV and sometimes chant mantras and recite prayers with the preacher relayed on TV.

Many people are seen kneeling to the images of God shown on TV. Aastha and Samaskar are the two most popular TV channels which relay such religious programmes regularly at appointed times. These channels are most popular among Hindus. Besides these, there are many other TV channels which relay religious programmes of different faiths.

The audience for these religious programmes is increasing day by day. Besides elderly people, many adults have also included watching and listening to these programmes in their daily routine. Increasing this type of religions consciousness may be said to be the by-product of modern life which is full of stress and strains, pulls and pressures, great competitiveness and uncertainty.

Modern religious activities and observances give some solace to the people torn by the exigencies of modern life. People visit temples for getting fast blessings like fast food. To use the phrase of Thorstein Veblen 'conspicuous consumption', we may call the modern religiousness as 'conspicuous religiosity'.

7.3 IDEOLOGY AND FUNDAMENTALISM

Scholars used to dismiss fundamentalism as a fossilized form of old-time religion, destined to dissolve in the acids of science and skepticism.

But from the Iranian revolution and the rise of the religious right in the United States to the militancy of Jewish settlers on the West Bank and the riots that followed a Hindu-led destruction of a mosque in India, events of the past two decades make it clear that religious fundamentalism has done anything but dissolve. As one scholar recently

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put it, fundamentalism is "dynamic, adaptive and modern," perhaps the last great ideological upsurge of the 20th century.

What were once viewed as unrelated religious movements -- indeed, often condemning one another's doctrines -- are increasingly recognized as sharing a set of fundamentalist "family resemblances" that cut across religious traditions. Scholars and policy makers hope that by comparing fundamentalist movements, a new field of study will afford insights into the dynamics that spark militant religious revivals, drive them into politics, fuel their growth or brake their influence.

No one expects these studies to yield neat "laws" of fundamentalism, and scholars insist that the specific traits of movements as different as Pentecostal Christians in Central America and Muslim guerrillas in Afghanistan should not get lost in a stretch for common denominators.

But when 35 political scientists, sociologists of religion and specialists in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America gathered in Chicago in March for the final session of a five-year examination of fundamentalism, most agreed that there were common threads. Unlike traditional believers, the scholars said, fundamentalists are consciously counterattacking against the threats of secularism and modernity, threats often identified with outsiders.

Most fundamentalists do not reject modernity in principle. Often they embrace the most up-to-date techniques of communications and organization to spread their message. But they may well seize on minor elements of a religious tradition, like a specific way of dressing, to symbolically distinguish the faithful from the uncommitted.

These conclusions emerged from the Fundamentalism Project, a broad effort sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences that enlisted more than 200 scholars since 1988 to examine fundamentalist movements in seven major religions and across five continents.

Other "family resemblances" outlined by the group, which met at the University of Chicago Divinity School, included moral dualism -- a view of the world as sharply divided between embattled camps of good and evil -- in which fundamentalists see themselves as a divinely called

group, set apart from others, bound to a strict code of behavior and frequently subject to a charismatic leader.

The scholars said the "Abrahamic" forms of fundamentalism -- Jewish, Christian and Muslim -- constantly affirm the absolute truth of a sacred text or authoritative tradition. These fundamentalisms also emphasize messianic or millennial beliefs in a miraculous culmination of history, with good reigning triumphantly.

Check your progress-1

1. Discuss the concept of Fundamentalism.

2. Discuss the Ideology and Fundamentalism.

7.4 CORE CHARACTERISTICS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

Fundamentalism, though used so frequently in the present day world, has never been clear in the minds of the people so far as its meaning is concerned. The word means different things to different people. At times, it is used in a deprecatory sense without assigning any clear-cut connotation. The word first received currency from a series of publications entitled, 'The Fundamentals' published in the United States in 1909. Originally it indicated a belief that the Bible or for that matter any holy book of any religion is infallible as it contains the words of God. A fundamentalist regards his own creed or religion or a system of belief to be necessary, sufficient and eternally/completely valid.

One of the basic characteristics of fundamentalism is that it goes back to the original and to the definite sources and interprets them in its own words, asserting in the correctness of what the interpreter is saying. A

fundamentalist's position, in this regard, is that what he is saying is the correct interpretation of the original or that the source meant what his interpretation is; a fundamentalist would not accept the opposite interpretation nor would he like to change what he thinks to be correct. In his attitude, a fundamentalist is uncompromising in his nature, he is aggressive; in his conviction, he is a fanatic. Ideology too has these features: a Hitlerite is a Hitlerite whatever be the circumstance; a liberal is a liberal whatever be at stake; a communist is a communist whatever be the temptations. Doctrinal conformity is another characteristic feature of all fundamentalism. The fundamentalist's conviction in the doctrine is unassailable, its principles are inviolable, indefeasible, literal and absolutely binding. and thus self-sufficient and incommensurate with other philosophies or ideologies. Ganguly writes: "We can clearly comprehend why 'revisianism' is a deadly crime in communism and why apostasy is punishable by death in fundamentalist Islam."

Fundamentalism is always without a base. It starts with a conclusion and, thereafter, searches for evidence of support for the conclusion and if the fundamentalist does not find any, he creates one. It is an evidence-less exercise. This sort of methodology is not exclusive to Christianity. but can be seen in other religions too: the Christian fundamentalists are as non scientific as other fundamentalists: Islamic, Hindu and the like.

7.5 IDENTITY OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN INDIA

The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways. In response to the demands of linguistic minorities, the whole political map was redrawn and reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was undertaken following an inquiry by States Reorganisation Commission. Indubitably despite its

sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory. The founding fathers were cognisant of the maze of socio-religious framework of India and so they envisioned India as a secular polity. Jawaharlal Nehru, referring to secularism, stated, "What exactly does it mean? It means free play of religions, subject only to their not interfering with each other or with the basic conception of our state." Dr B R Ambedker was of the view that a secular state meant "that this Parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion on the rest of the people." But the Hindu chauvinistic factions and parties-BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party), Shev Sina , RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Singh), VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad) - have missed no opportunity to communalise national politics aimed at capitalising on Hindu votes. The RSS was established in early 20th Century by Dr Keshave Baliram which coincided with Hindu-Muslim riots at Malabar in 1921. After Vajpayee was elected the President of BJP, he unhesitatingly declared, "We are very proud of our association with RSS." The Congress party remained committed to secular values till Nehru's premiership lasted and his successors did not shy away from pandering to communal differences. The Ramjanambhoomi controversy and the subsequent demolition of Babri Mosque fuelled the militant sentiments in the community. This controversy dates back to late 18th Century but the English rulers did not let the dispute escalate into street brawls and resorted to freezing the status quo in so far as the possession of the mosque was concerned. Two years after independence a fanatic additional district magistrate unlocked the gates and allowed the installation of makeshift idols in the disputed part of structure. Later Rajiv Gandhi's government went a step further and performed a foundation-laying ceremony of Ram Temple at the disputed site. The demolition of Babri Mosque on December 6, 1992 could not have been the outcome of a spontaneous outburst of Hindu anger against assumed desecration of sacred site. Rather it was a methodical build-up to the climax involving Rath-yatras, provocative rhetoric, circulation of fundamentalist literature and the intrigues of obscurantist politicians. Both the Congress government in Delhi and the

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BJP government in UP did not take note of the fast pace of developments in the run-up to the incident entailing communal violence and overlooked the meticulous preparations by the Hindu fundamentalist group in Ayodhya. The Coimbatore riots of 1997 were the first major clash between Hindus and Muslims in Southern India which had remained generally free from such conflicts in the past. In 2002 the western Indian State of Gujarat witnessed a deadly carnage. A train was attacked in Godhra allegedly by Muslims in which a large number of Hindus lost their lives. The Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, an RSS ideologue termed the incident as pre-planned, violent act of terrorism and justified the retaliatory violence in Ahmadabad by quoting Newton's 'third law of motion'. The policy personnel clumsily handled the orgy of killings, lootings, rape and other atrocious acts against Muslims by Hindu mobs, reportedly led by the ruling party leaders and legislators. The bloody battle in Gujarat presented how large parts of rural areas got seriously affected by the communal poison, hitherto an essentially urban occurrence. Likewise the states of Orissa, Assam, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh have remained vulnerable to eruption of Hindu-Christian conflicts. According to one estimate, the number of cases involving violence against Christians between 1964 and 1996, a period of 32 years, was only 38 but this number touched a high of 136 in just one year in 1998. The violent incidents included disruption of prayer meetings and gospel readings, damage to Bibles, holy crosses and church buildings. Nowadays the Christians in India have once again become victims of provocative Hindus' aggressive feelings against other communities inhabiting the country. The recent clashes have been triggered by the issue of religious conversions in Orissa's poor tribal region that is home to a number of Christian missionary groups. Hundreds of Christians in the Indian State of Orissa have been forced to renounce their religion and become Hindus. The lynch mobs offer the innocent hapless Christians a stark ultimatum: convert or die. During the conversion ceremony they are given cow dung to eat exhibiting their loyalty towards Hinduism. The state of Karnataka too has come under siege and its secular and progressive fabric is tearing apart under demonic activities of Hindu fundamentalists. The latter sanction the violence by extending arguments

of 'cultural protection' against conversions to Christianity. But such arguments are naive as no case of forced conversion by Christians has come into limelight. The noteworthy fact is that the Hindu right wing groups have long been stirring up religious resentment as a way to shore up its voter base. All these incidents depict a gloomy picture of future of 'secular India' unless immediate efforts are undertaken to staunch the rising tide of Hindu fundamentalism and purge Indian politics of its vicious influence. There is a dire need to revitalise Nehru's secular ideals and Gandhi's satyagraha. The powers that be in Delhi must remove all blinkers and confront the danger to India's democratic pluralism.

Check your progress-2

3. Discuss the Characteristics of fundamentalism.

4. Discuss the Religious Fundamentalism in India.

7.6 LET US SUM UP

It is commonly associated with the attempt to revive archaic modes of conduct and belief from the past. It is usually contrasted with modernism and liberalism in religion. It emphasizes the absolute truth of essential or 'fundamental' aspects of faith, especially those rooted in sacred texts such as the Christian Bible or the Islamic Koran or Vedas of Hindus.

The term has been applied to Protestant trends within Christianity since the 1920s, recently in Hinduism after the demolition of Babri Masjid. These new trends in religion are sometimes termed as 'resurgent fundamentalism', meaning the revival of a conservative approach to religion. What were once viewed as unrelated religious movements -- indeed, often condemning one another's doctrines -- are increasingly

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recognized as sharing a set of fundamentalist "family resemblances" that cut across religious traditions. Scholars and policy makers hope that by comparing fundamentalist movements, a new field of study will afford insights into the dynamics that spark militant religious revivals, drive them into politics, fuel their growth or brake their influence. Fundamentalism, though used so frequently in the present day world, has never been clear in the minds of the people so far as its meaning is concerned. The word means different things to different people. At times, it is used in a deprecatory sense without assigning any clear-cut connotation. The word first received currency from a series of publications entitled, 'The Fundamentals' published in the United States in 1909. Originally it indicated a belief that the Bible or for that matter any holy book of any religion is infallible as it contains the words of God. A fundamentalist regards his own creed or religion or a system of belief to be necessary, sufficient and eternally/completely valid. The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways.

7.7 KEYWORDS

- **Fundamentalism:** It emphasizes the absolute truth of essential or 'fundamental' aspects of faith, especially those rooted in sacred texts such as the Christian Bible or the Islamic Koran or Vedas of Hindus.

- **Ideology:** No one expects these studies to yield neat "laws" of fundamentalism, and scholars insist that the specific traits of movements as different as Pentecostal Christians in Central America and Muslim guerrillas in Afghanistan should not get lost in a stretch for common denominators.

- **Religious Fundamentalism:** A fundamentalist regards his own creed or religion or a system of belief to be necessary, sufficient and eternally/completely valid.

7.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the concept of Fundamentalism.
2. Discuss the Ideology and Fundamentalism.
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4. Discuss the Religious Fundamentalism in India

7.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The term 'fundamentalism' refers to adherence to earlier accepted religious doctrines and is often accompanied by a literal application of historical beliefs and scriptures to today's world. It is also defined as a movement or belief called for a return to the basic texts or 'fundamentals' of revealed religion. It encourages 'fixed identities' where 'slippages are suppressed' and 'sameness is prized'.

It is commonly associated with the attempt to revive archaic modes of conduct and belief from the past. It is usually contrasted with modernism and liberalism in religion. It emphasizes the absolute truth of essential or 'fundamental' aspects of faith, especially those rooted in sacred texts such as the Christian Bible or the Islamic Koran or Vedas of Hindus.

The term has been applied to Protestant trends within Christianity since the 1920s, recently in Hinduism after the demolition of Babri Masjid. These new trends in religion are sometimes termed as 'resurgent fundamentalism', meaning the revival of a conservative approach to religion.

Fundamentalism is sociologically important not only because of its unique place among religions, but because it easily extends itself into political realm. There is an increasing entanglement of religion in politics around the globe. Despite its theological character, it is usually linked to projects of social reform and the acquisition of political power.

In Middle East (Iran), Iraq, Afghanistan and more recently Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Pakistan, many countries of Europe and even the most modernized the United States of America and to some extent India,

religious fundamentalism has affected the political process and has given rise to conservative political movements and blind faith in nationalism.

2. Scholars used to dismiss fundamentalism as a fossilized form of old-time religion, destined to dissolve in the acids of science and skepticism.

But from the Iranian revolution and the rise of the religious right in the United States to the militancy of Jewish settlers on the West Bank and the riots that followed a Hindu-led destruction of a mosque in India, events of the past two decades make it clear that religious fundamentalism has done anything but dissolve. As one scholar recently put it, fundamentalism is "dynamic, adaptive and modern," perhaps the last great ideological upsurge of the 20th century.

What were once viewed as unrelated religious movements -- indeed, often condemning one another's doctrines -- are increasingly recognized as sharing a set of fundamentalist "family resemblances" that cut across religious traditions. Scholars and policy makers hope that by comparing fundamentalist movements, a new field of study will afford insights into the dynamics that spark militant religious revivals, drive them into politics, fuel their growth or brake their influence.

No one expects these studies to yield neat "laws" of fundamentalism, and scholars insist that the specific traits of movements as different as Pentecostal Christians in Central America and Muslim guerrillas in Afghanistan should not get lost in a stretch for common denominators.

But when 35 political scientists, sociologists of religion and specialists in Asia, the Middle East and Latin America gathered in Chicago in March for the final session of a five-year examination of fundamentalism, most agreed that there were common threads. Unlike traditional believers, the scholars said, fundamentalists are consciously counterattacking against the threats of secularism and modernity, threats often identified with outsiders.

Most fundamentalists do not reject modernity in principle. Often they embrace the most up-to-date techniques of communications and organization to spread their message. But they may well seize on minor

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elements of a religious tradition, like a specific way of dressing, to symbolically distinguish the faithful from the uncommitted.

These conclusions emerged from the Fundamentalism Project, a broad effort sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences that enlisted more than 200 scholars since 1988 to examine fundamentalist movements in seven major religions and across five continents.

Other "family resemblances" outlined by the group, which met at the University of Chicago Divinity School, included moral dualism -- a view of the world as sharply divided between embattled camps of good and evil -- in which fundamentalists see themselves as a divinely called group, set apart from others, bound to a strict code of behavior and frequently subject to a charismatic leader.

The scholars said the "Abrahamic" forms of fundamentalism -- Jewish, Christian and Muslim -- constantly affirm the absolute truth of a sacred text or authoritative tradition. These fundamentalisms also emphasize messianic or millennial beliefs in a miraculous culmination of history, with good reigning triumphantly.

3. Fundamentalism, though used so frequently in the present day world, has never been clear in the minds of the people so far as its meaning is concerned. The word means different things to different people. At times, it is used in a deprecatory sense without assigning any clear-cut connotation. The word first received currency from a series of publications entitled, 'The Fundamentals' published in the United States in 1909. Originally it indicated a belief that the Bible or for that matter any holy book of any religion is infallible as it contains the words of God. A fundamentalist regards his own creed or religion or a system of belief to be necessary, sufficient and eternally/completely valid.

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4. The Indian subcontinent had had a chequered history of communal conflicts and inter-religious dissensions have characterised its socio-political landscape. In pre-partition era, the British policy of 'divide and rule' was in large measure considered to be responsible for interfaith divide. After the partition India emerged as a heterogeneous society with strong divisive influences. The Indian government dealt with divisive internal pulls and urges in different ways. In response to the demands of linguistic minorities, the whole political map was redrawn and reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was undertaken following an inquiry by States Reorganisation Commission. Indubitably despite its sinister dimensions, no serious effort has been made to quell religious fundamentalism and the orthodox Hindu politicians have often advanced their Hindutva agenda in order to gain electoral victory. The founding fathers were cognisant of the maze of socio-religious framework of India and so they envisioned India as a secular polity. Jawaharlal Nehru,

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