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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Communalism is one of the most serious problems that India faces today. Critically examine the factors responsible and suggest ways to deal with it. (250 words)

26 Oct, 2020 GS Paper 1 Indian Society

Approach

- Introduce by briefly writing some of the recent incidents of communal violence in India and their impact on the society.
- Examine the various factors responsible for communalism.
- Suggest ways to deal with the problems of communalism.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

- Communalism, in a broad sense, means a strong attachment to one's own community. In popular discourse in India, it is understood as an unhealthy attachment to one's own religion.
- The anti-Sikh riots-1984, the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi controversy-1992, Gujarat communal riots-2002, Uttar Pradesh worst violence -2013 and recently Delhi communal riots-2020 broke out.
- Violation of Human Rights, economic loss, social dissonance and erosion of Constitutional values are some of the worst impacts aftermath of riots.

Body

Factors responsible for communalism:

- **Divisive Politics:** Communalism is often defined as a political doctrine that makes use of religious and cultural differences in achieving political gains.
- **Economic Causes:** Uneven development, class divisions, poverty and unemployment aggravates insecurity in the common men which make them vulnerable to political manipulation.
- **Politics of Appeasement:** Prompted by political considerations, and guided by their vested interests, political parties take decisions which promote communal violence.
- **Isolation and Economic Backwardness of Muslim Community:** The failure to adopt the scientific and technological education and thus, insufficient representation in the public service, industry and trade etc has led to the feeling of relative deprivation among Muslims.
The resurgence of **Hindu-Muslim economic competition**, especially among the lower and middle class strata has fuelled the communal ideology.
- **Administrative Failure:** A weak law and order is one of the causes of communal violence.

- **Psychological Factors:** The lack of interpersonal trust and mutual understanding between two communities often result in perception of threat, harassment, fear and danger in one community against the members of the other community, which in turn leads to fight, hatred and anger phobia.
- **Social Media:** It is often accused of sensationalism and disseminates rumours as "news" which sometimes resulted into further tension and riots between two rival religious groups.

Measures to Deal with Communalism

- There is a need to reform in the present **criminal justice system**, speedy trials and adequate compensation to the victims, may act as a deterrent.
- Increase in **representation of minority communities** and weaker sections in all wings of law-enforcement, training of forces in human rights, especially in the use of firearms in accordance with UN code of conduct.
- Codified guidelines for the administration, specialised training for the police force to handle communal riots and setting up special investigating and prosecuting agencies can help in damping major communal disgruntlement.
- Emphasis on **value-oriented education** with focus on the values of peace, non-violence, compassion, secularism and humanism as well as developing scientific temper (enshrined as a fundamental duty) and rationalism as core values in children both in schools and colleges/universities, can prove vital in preventing communal feelings.
- The Hong Kong model of combating communalism by setting up a "Race Relation Unit" to promote racial harmony and facilitate integration of ethnic minorities, can be emulated by India.
- Government can encourage and support civil society and NGOs to run projects that help create communal awareness, build stronger community relations and cultivate values of communal harmony in the next generation.
- There is a need for minority welfare schemes to be launched and implemented efficiently by administration to address the challenges and various forms of discrimination faced by them in jobs, housing and daily life.
- A legislation is required to curb the communal violence. Communal Violence (Prevention, Control and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005 must be enacted soon.

Conclusion

- Maintaining communal harmony and respecting pluralism in a country as diverse as India can be a challenge. However, it is important to address the collective conscience of people of the country to uphold the constitutional values like fraternity and secularism.
- A strong nation, which is built by the contribution of communities working together for its prosperity can further contribute to the maintenance of global peace and harmony.