

**CULTURE, RELIGION AND POLITICS IN
URBAN INDIA : AN ANALYSIS.**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "CULTURE, RELIGION AND POLITICS IN URBAN INDIA : AN ANALYSIS" submitted by NIRAKAR MALLICK, in partial fulfilment of the Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY at Jawaharlal Nehru University, has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is an original work.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Dedicated

*To that irreproachable fighter, who
struggled ceaselessly till the end
of his life to materialize the human
liberation from the trap of
exploitative capitalism, raised RED
SWORD to curb inequality and led the
proletarian movement to overthrow
the regime of bourgeoisie, the great
uncompromised Indian Marxist, the
founder of SUCI, SHIBDAS GHOSH.*

C O N T E N T S

	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	
	PREFACE	i-iii
CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION: CONCEPTS AND THEORIES (i) CULTURE (ii) RELIGION (iii) POLITICS	1-28
CHAPTER II	RELIGION AS A SOCIAL BASIS IN URBAN INDIA: REVIEW OF SOME STUDIES	29-47
CHAPTER III	IDEOLOGIES IN URBAN CENTRE: SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS	48-74
CHAPTER IV	CULTURE, RELIGION AND POLITICS IN URBAN INDIA: TRENDS AND ISSUES	75-98
CHAPTER V	CONCLUSION	99-102
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	103-113

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Mallick
Nirakar Mallick

PREFACE

Culture, religion and politics are the integral parts of human society. These are inseparable from Indian society and immeasurable in nature.

These three elements are playing very decisive role not in rural area but are more active and assertive in urban India. They are ardently guiding our daily behaviour.

Religion is the code of conduct. It is the way of life. It teaches every human being to maintain cordial and cooperative life. The eternal character of religion is enshrined in the sacred Gita, Bible, and Koran.

But, presently religion is directed and perceived in different trend. The holy meaning of religion being integrative has legibly misinterpreted and misunderstood and this ultimately helped to build the pillars of communalism. Religious orthodoxy has channelized to rehabilitated the hostilitis between various communities. Secularism has failed to control communal holocausts. The role of culture and politics have undeniably adhered to add fuel in fire. The neo-modernism, the role of culture religion and politics in urban India has vigilantly acknowledged that the forces

of secular democracy have failed to ensure pan-Indian character.

The first chapter carries the theories of culture religion and politics in general. Special emphasis is given to study them in urban India.

The second chapter envisages 'Religion as a social basis in urban India'. In this chapter more attention have been paid to review the studies of the three anthropologists like Milton Singer, M.S.A. Rao and S.M. Michael, who are studies at Madras, Kerala and Bombay. In their view, religion plays very important role to unite the people. Justifying religion as a Social factor which promotes solidarity is explained. The Car-Festival of Puri(Orissa) and the Bombay (Maharashtra) Ganapati festival undertakes integration. Ayodhya and other incidents produced communalism.

The third chapter takes special care to allocate the role of secular and religious ideologies in urban India. To initiate the secular movements the activities of PUCL, PUDR and some left parties (CPI, CPM, SUCI & IPF) are preferred.

Religious movements led by B.J.P., V.H.P., Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal are also discussed.

The fourth chapter discussed the trends and issues relating to culture, religion and politics in urban India. That chapter shows the interactional pattern between the three-culture, religion and politics. On religion and politics the works and contributions of Arun Shourie, V.R. Krishna Iyer and Asghar Ali Engineer have been mentioned.

In conclusion the given works are discussed. The summary of the chapter are represented properly. In the end, I have suggested a proposal to keep social solidarity among the various communities. For communal harmony it is the best possible method to detach religion from politics, which can ensure the peaceful existence in the diversified social, economy and religious mechanism.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: CONCEPTS AND
THEORIES

(i) CULTURE

(ii) RELIGION

(iii) POLITICS

CULTURE

E.B. Taylor is the first anthropologist who delivers and makes extensive use of the term culture. He states, "culture or civilization taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities, and habits acquired by man as a member of society."¹ What is emphasized in this definition is that, culture is a social heritage; it is the gift of the Society to the individuals. Others including Malinowski have also emphasized this. Malinowski points out that social heritage may be said to consist of a material part and a non-material intangible, imponderable part. In other words, culture stands for a total way of life which secures for the individuals, and satisfaction of his bio-psychic drives and the fulfilment of other wants and cravings and ultimately invests him with freedom .²

Culture is being defined by Marett as communicable intelligence. Robert Redfield defines it as the sum total of

¹ E.B. Taylor, Primitive culture, London, 1871, p.1.

² Bronislaw Malinowski, A Scientific Study of Culture and Other Essays, 1949 North California Press, p.36.

conventional meanings embodied in artifacts, social structures and symbols.

Ruth Benedict defines culture not so much in terms of content of social life as in terms of its form and organization. She says that integration in a culture is brought about by its content being arranged into a permanent or semi permanent design which is called pattern. Within a culture there would be the style of each large segment and these segmental styles would come together into superstyle which would be the design of the culture as a whole. This is called configuration. Configurations are dominant underlying premises, values and goals which permeate the various aspects of a culture and give it a characteristic wholeness. Radcliffe-Brown is more concerned with the survival of society than that of the individual only. He points out that integration within a culture being the only way to secure the survival of society, such integration is both on ideal and reality. In the absence of integration there will be no society. Thus for A.R. Radcliffe-Brown culture is essentially a set of rules. Talcott Parsons and his collaborators in the 'Theory of Action' school regard culture as essentially symbolic and evaluative. Parsons advocates that the motivating force of action in every

culture comes from the unifying values of that culture. The values of culture influence the behaviour of members of a society and stimulate activity. These values are the key to the character, structure and direction of every culture.³

There has recently been a revival of interest in the evolution of culture-though not in terms of a search for origins.⁴ It takes its stand on the plane of the subjective nature of human understanding. Linton says that way of life of the people is one thing, and what we study and write about is another. The first is to be called culture and the latter may be called only a culture construct.⁵ In the words of Clyde Kluckhohn "culture refers to the distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design of living. He describes it as a way of thinking, feeling and action."⁶

³ Talcott Parsons, Towards a General Theory of Social Action, Cambridge and Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

⁴ G.Duncan Mitchell (eds)- A New Dictionary of Sociology, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, p.47.

⁵ Majumdar & Madan, An introduction to Social Anthropology, National Publishing House, New Delhi, p.15.

⁶ Clyde Kluckhohn, Mirror of Man. The Relation of Anthropology to Modern Life, New York 1949, p.17.

A.L.Kroeber explains culture in terms two aspects which he calls eidos and ethos. Eidos is the formal appearance of a culture derived from its constituents, while ethos refers to its particular constituent. Further he says that cultural configuration is also defined in terms of world view.⁷

Although there are approaches varieties of approaches, each lends its own interpretation and logic to enrich our understanding of culture.

Culture as symbolic system approach is given by Clifford Geertz, for whom more meaning can be derived from symbolic phenomena if they are once examined in the broader context of social life. According to him People express through symbolic acts the various themes in their social life. Geertz proposes that culture be viewed as 'an ordered system of meaning and symbols in terms of which social action takes place" and that society refers to the pattern of social interaction itself.⁸ Viewed in this fashion, religion and culture become more less interchangeable.

⁷ A.L. Kroeber and C.Kluckhohn, "Culture : A Critical Review of Concepts and Definition", in International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, MacMillan, New York, 1948.

⁸ Clifford Geertz, American Anthropologist 1957, no.59, p.33

Systematic studies in the sociology of Indian culture have not been undertaken so far. In the view of T.K.N Unnithan, Indra Deva and Yogendra Singh, the whole field of sociology of culture in modern scientific sense is so nebulous and unexplored that even in the west a comprehensive treatise on the Sociology of culture of a complex civilization is not available although works in specific areas with limited coverage are substantial.⁹ Further they go on saying that most of the works done in the field of sociology of culture are confined to analytical discussions of theoretical problems substantiating argument here and there with facts drawn in a scattered manner from a socio-cultural history of a nation culture and civilization. In India some studies of similar nature have been conducted although not always with deliberate awareness of contribution to sociology of culture as a systematic proposition.¹⁰ Among the Indian sociologists, the pioneer in this field is D.P. Mukerji who tries to analyze the relationship between social structure and intellectual professional culture in his study of Indian Middle Classes, and consequences of interaction between socio-cultural

⁹ Unnithan Deva and Singh, Towards a Sociology of Culture in India, Prentice Hall, New Delhi, 1965, p-14.

¹⁰ op.cit., p.15.

streams and art forms as in Indian music. In many of his essays, Mukerji offers analytical concepts and historical perspectives for the study of relationship between Indian culture and social structure.¹¹ From a theoretical point of view, Radhakamal Mukerjee has made a series of attempts to synthesize the relativistic concept of morals and culture forms within the matrix of traditional Indian theory of values and culture.

The difficulty in the growth of such study of Indian culture has been perhaps because of the lack of a comprehensive and workable conceptual scheme through which the diverse strands and streams of Indian culture could be studied in togetherness and changes therein could be analyzed in a historical perspective. In the absence of such a conceptual framework studies have generally remained micro-cosmic. Most of the studies in Indian culture, excluding purely historical works have been confined to tribes and village communities. These early studies had been sponsored in India by British administrators whose interest in Indian society was not purely academic or scientifically broad based. The methodological trends that developed in Indian sociology and cultural anthropology for historical

¹¹ Ibid., pp.15-16

expedient reasons became the heritage of successive generations of Indian sociologist and anthropologist. Another factor which further stabilised this trend in Indian sociology was the greater impact of classical functionalism of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown over most of the Indian Sociologists of new generation who conducted field studies in tribal and rural culture and society. Only a few among senior generation of Indian sociologist could be considered to have an acute awareness of the integral nature of Indian society and its culture irrespective of the apparent sub-structures or culture-streams. D.P. Mukerji, G.S. Ghurye and RadhaKamal Mukerjee belong to this category of sociologists. For the study of some aspects of change in Indian culture-concepts of Sanskritization-westernization and parochialization and universalization have been used by M.N. Srinivas¹² and Mckim Marriott.¹³

The studies at first glance appear to be parochial, but one finds common characteristics which could be considered as Pan-Indian. Without taking into account history the

¹² M.N. Srinivas, Religion and Society Among the Coorgs of South India, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952, pp.1-100.

¹³ MacKim Marriott, Village India, University of Chicago, 1955, p.53-77.

dichotomy between universal and parochial cannot be ascertained.¹⁴ N.K.Bose is of the view that institutions are crystallized manifestations of the behaviour of the communities.¹⁵

RELIGION

It is not an easy task to give a precise definition of religion which will satisfy everyone. The principal difficulty is that many people take the word to mean their own religion. There are three main approaches to signify its meaning. The three approaches are the following.

(1) Anthropological study

by Clifford Geertz.

(2) Sociological study

by R.N.Bellah.

(3) Psychological study

by James. E. Dittes.¹⁶

¹⁴ Unnithan Deva and Singh, op.cit., pp.16-32.

¹⁵ N.K.Bose, Culture and Society in India, Asia Publishing House, 1977, p.9.

¹⁶ International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, MacMillan, New York, 1948, p.398

In Anthropological study, evolutionary theory focuses on two components: beliefs and ritual. Lewis reveals that there is a third ingredient - spiritual experience that has been ignored in most studies.¹⁷ Religious beliefs differ from other types of belief in their assertions about supernatural powers or forces. These two supernatural forces are mana and animism. Mana refers to any power that increases one's natural abilities and thereby allows one to perform otherwise impossible tasks and feats. The Dobuans of Eastern New Guinea holds such belief. Animism refers to the belief in many spirit beings. These spirits have personalities and like human beings exhibit desires and purposes of their own. The minimal definition of religion was "a belief in spiritual beings". Monotheism refers to religious system characterized by the belief in one god, while in polytheism.¹⁸

This intellectualistic "up from darkness" strain has run through most evolutionist thought about religion. Advocates of this evolutionary method include Frazer, Durkheim and Max They all conceive the evolution of Religion

¹⁷ I.M.Lewis, Estatic Religion, Penguin, Baltimore, 1971, p.11.

¹⁸ E.S.Miller and C.A. Weitz, Anthropology, Prentice Hall, Inc., Engle Wodd Cliffs, New Jeresy, p.549.

as a process of cultural differentiation, the diffuse, all embracing but rather unsystematic and uncritical religious practices of primitive people are transformed into the more regularised, less comprehensively authoritative practices of the more advanced citizen. ¹⁹ Ritual is also the demonstration of religious belief through performance of specific acts by members of a society. Leach argues that it is the status of the actor that is at stake in ritual. According to him rituals have primary functions; successfully they reinforce the society's beliefs and they raise the status of their performers. Rituals may occur for the precise purpose of exalting the status of the performer. ²⁰

In Anthropological study of religion we, across influence of sociological approach. For Durkheim the extraordinary atmosphere surrounding sacred acts and objects are symbolic of a hidden reality, a social not a psychological one: the moral force of the human community. Durkheim believes that the integrity of the social order is the primary requisite for human survival. The means by which

¹⁹ "Religion - Anthropological Study", Int. Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Macmillan, New York, p.400.

²⁰ E.R.Leach, "Ritual", Int. Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Macmillan, New York, vol.13 p. 526.

the integrity is superseded individual egocentricity is primary concern about sociological analysis. Radcliffe-Brown agrees with Durkheim's idea that the main role of religion is to celebrate and sustain the norms upon which the integration of society depends. But unlike Durkheim, Radcliffe Brown is concerned with the content of sacred symbols and particularly with reasons why one object rather than another is used in rite or woven into myth? More recently structuralist attempt to show how given sets of religious practices (ancestor worship, animal sacrifice, witchcraft and sorcery regeneration rites) express and reinforce the moral values underlying social process. Levi-Strauss, Evans Pritchard, R.G. Lienhardt, W.E.H. Stanner, Victor W. Turner, Garmaine, Dieterlen, Mayor Fortes, E.R. Leach Charles O. Frake, R. Needham, and S.K. Langer demonstrate that analysis of symbolic forms is becoming a major tradition in the study of primitive religion.²¹

Durkheim recognised that religion is a reality *suigeneris* means that religious representation or symbols are not decisions, but are constructive of society. Religion

²¹ Clifford Geertz, "Anthropological Study on Religion", op.cit., pp.402-406.

is sacred and magic is profane. Studying among the Australian Arunta tribes he says that religion exists in the mind of individuals and to discipline the individuals so that he can deal objectively with external reality.²² Max Weber's emphasis is on two points in which he gives the essence of his thinking of religion. He emphasise on the (a) Meaning and (b)Charisma of the individual; that places him above normal expectations and endows with him the authority to alter new commandments. Max Weber wrote on the importance of religion in social action on the ground of closeness to powerful non- rational motivational forces and its capacity to give form and pattern to those forces, including its new capacity to create radically new forms and patterns. He says that in practice religion means that it helps those who help themselves.²³ Freud's main stress is on religious symbolism; in his work 'Totem and Taboo' he traced religion to the Oedipus complex which according to him gives rise to the problem of religious symbolism.²⁴

²² Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, 1965, New York, Free Press, pp.1-2.

²³ Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, Boston Beacon Press, 1964, pp.1-2.

²⁴ Sigmund Freud, Totem and Taboo, vol.13, 1959, pp.x-162

Psychologists have paid attention to Indian's attachment with religion. Survival and reformatory measures in religion have by Erick H. Erikson (1969,1970), Moris Carstairs (1971), Sudhir Kakar (1978,1979,1982,1989) and Ashis Nandy (1972,1983) to characterise the evolution of psychology of India's religion as follows.

Erikson stresses that Psychoanalytic method is essentially a historical method. In his book "Childhood and Society" (1969), he exemplifies that trust born of care is, in fact the touch stone of the actuality of a given religion. However, Erikson holds that all religions have in common the periodical childlike surrender to a provider or providers who dispense earthly fortune as well as spiritual health.²⁵ His book "Gandhi's Truth"²⁶ pinpoints that how a man comes to live with the fact and thinks that death can fathom the spirit of religiosity. Which gives all humanity a joint identity. Religiosity is the consciousness of death or mortality. He claims that religion is universal and he uses a particular word "Homo religious" and also calls Gandhi a "Religious actualist".

²⁵ Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, Penguin Books, 1969, p.13.

²⁶ Erik H. Erikson, Gandhi's Truth, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1970,

According to Erickson religious actualists, however inevitably becomes a religious innovator.²⁷

Morris Carstairs in his book 'The Twice Born' ²⁸ focuses on the high castes or superior castes of a village in Udaipur of Rajasthan. In his analysis Carstairs explains that several levels are apparent in the villager's conception of the super-natural. The first consisted of an attribution of magical powers, beneficent or - harmful - or both to certain individuals. Associated with this value is the unquestioned belief in malevolent witchcraft. Next came the belief in minor local gods, described in anthropomorphic terms. Morris Carstairs analyses shows that religion is a major part of the people, without which the social mechanism cannot be upheld. He further says that serious application to religion invariably demands in addition, first severe restraints eventually the complete suppression of sexual and emotional desires. The accomplishment of this rigorous suppression of sexuality was believed to impart super

²⁷ op.cit., p.299.

²⁸ Morris Carstairs, The Twice Born, Allied Publication, 1971.

natural powers, leading eventually to release individuals from human existence.²⁹

The main thrust of Sudhir Kakar's³⁰ analysis is that the themes of shared psychological experiences pervade and govern Indian's childhood. He relates these themes to the manifest traditions and institutions of culture and society in India. Sudhir Kakar stresses the interplay between universal processes of human development and the Indian cultural milieu. The milieu includes the religious ideals and historical traditions as well as the social institutions which are specific to Indian society. Primary theme of his study is individual development in India. His anthropological accounts, sociological studies, mythology and folk tales, clinical impressions and historical reflections have all provided grist to a common will.³¹ In his book 'Shamans, mystics and doctors', he deals with the fact that the people are still dependent upon gurus of

²⁹ Morris Carstairs, The Twice Born, The Allied Publication, 1971, p.105.

³⁰ Sudhir Kakar's four volumes viz (1978, 1979, 1982, 1989).

³¹ Sudhir Kakar, The Inner World, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978, p.1-3.

mystical cults, Shamans and the practitioners of ancient systems of medicine.³²

Sudhir Kakar's other two volumes 'Indian childhood' and 'Intimate relations' are psychological studies of various human behaviour. It is quite clear that the contributions of Sudhir Kakar undoubtedly explain human problems and prospects of Indian's in psychoanalytical terms.³³

Ashis Nandy in his article 'Defiance and conformity in Science : The identity of Jagdish Chandra Bose', and his book 'Intimate Enemy' clearly reveal distinction and determination of the culture of science. He has enquired into the psychological structures and cultural forces which supported or resisted the various human needs. Moreover, Nandy's elaboration stress on the interrelationship between religion and politics from a socio-psychological perspective.³⁴

³² Sudhir Kakar, Shamans, Mystics and Doctors, OUP, Delhi, 1982, p.3.

³³ Sudhir Kakar's two volumes (a) Indian Childhood and (b) Intimate Relations, are better known.

³⁴ Ashis Nandy's two volumes (1) The Intimate Enemy and The Article in Science Studies, are referred.

POLITICS

In our times there are three main views on politics.

1. Power view
2. Liberal view
3. Marxian view

Power view of politics undertakes politics as political activity, power and ideology. Politics is regarded as inherently dependent and subsidiary social activity and is rarely credited with a life and character of its own. In brief it may be said that in the modern age of mass democracies the ruling class rules not by the repressive force alone but by restitutive measures controlling public opinion. Ideological power helps the ruling class in maintaining the legitimacy of its political power.³⁵

Liberal view enforces politics as a conciliation of interest. According to the view, politics has two dimensions - first it brings about orderly change in society and secondly it serves the common good or general interest of society as a whole. The classical liberal view is stated by Bentham, Adam Smith and James Stuart Mill who emphasized the

³⁵ E. Asirvathan, Political Theory, S.Chand and Company, New Delhi, 1936, pp.20-29.

individual as the basic unit in social behaviour and state was required to promote the greatest good of the greatest number by permitting individuals to maximise their private good under conditions of laissez-faire. In short, politics enables the organised power of society to evolve a legitimate and just solution of their problems and controversies. Thus, politics is an instrument of securing order and justice in society. It is clear that politics and state do not belong to any single class. It is for unity in diversity and social stability.³⁶

Marxist view - politics is considered as a form of class struggle. Politics is looked from the point of view of social change, which is a dialectical process - a movement determined by mode of production constantly interacting with its super structural elements such as politics, culture and human nature etc. On the most general level the Marxist view of politics asserts that the separation between, the economic, political, cultural and psychological aspects of the social whole is arbitrary and artificial. Marxist's regard political institutions and activities as an outgrowth of the prevailing economic system. Politics is an instrument

³⁶ O.P. Gauba, An Introduction to Political Theory, MacMillan, 1981, pp.13-15.

of class dominion. Class interests are irreconcilable. The division of society into antagonistic classes give rise to class-conflict or class struggle. Politics does not resolve this conflict on the contrary, it is used by the dominant class to suppress the conflict. So long as society remains divided into classes, state and politics will continue to be used as tools of the dominant class for suppression of the dependent class. Revolutionary transformation will bring about classless society. Thus the Marxian view of politics is based on such concepts as the mode of production class struggle and revolutionary transformation of society.³⁷

In modern view of politics, Huntington states that political order is a goal not a reality. The contemporary societies are full of violence, instability and disorder. He is of the view that in changing context social and economic modernisation upsets the pattern of authority and destroys the traditional political institution.³⁸ David E. Apter applies functional method to study politics of modernisation and stresses that all modernising societies are in the process of transition and becoming. He reiterates

³⁷ Ray and Bhattacharya, Political Theory : Ideas and Illustration, Calcutta, pp.33-35.

³⁸ S.P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, Yale Univ. Press, 1966, pp.460-61.

that fear creates serious political problems in modernising societies.³⁹ Rudolph and Rudolph is of the view that not only the sacred Hindus but all communities, classes and all the state in all circumstance are in the pursuit of Lakshmi. That means every section of the sociocity is after making wealth. Due to this in India in socio-economic, political and religious life are determined by Lakshmi. That means every one is trying or adopting capitalistic means to improve their conditions, as a result class struggle is aborted.⁴⁰

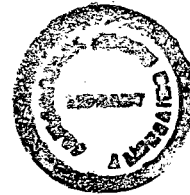
Rudolph and Rudolph further state that modernity and tradition are more opposed in law than they are in social reality. They criticise India's dual legal system based on three legal cultures like (a) Parochial System (b) National System (c) Brahmin high-culture law.⁴¹ Myron Weiner lends his support to the view that the underdevelopment is related to political instability and people's goal remains

³⁹ David E. Apter, Politics of Modernisation Chicago, 1965, pp.vii-xiii..

⁴⁰ L.I. Rudolph and S. Rudolph, A Pursuit of Lakshmi, Orientlongman, Hyderabd, p.2.

⁴¹ op.cit., Modernity of Tradition, Chicago, 1967, pp.12-284.

uncertain. Growth is also imbalanced.⁴² He reiterates that understanding of the Indian political system depends upon people's assessment of patterns of development. It is the people who perceives the different modes of politics and its coercive power. Indian states have to contend with the politics of microcosm and macrocosm.⁴³ Undeniably politics has been characterised as the study of power or decision making. So David Easton stresses that two institutional approaches may be undertaken for the study of politics. First one is Institutional criteria which includes governmental institutions and the state. Second approach is Functional criteria which exhibits power for political affiliation and decision-making. Precisely his main thrust to focus on politics is that (a) Universalism (b) Legalism (c) Realism (D) Behaviouralism.⁴⁴



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- ⁴² Myron Weiner, Politics of Society, Asia, 1963, p.255.
- ⁴³ L.I. Rudolph and S. Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition, Chicago, 1967, pp.12-254.
- ⁴⁴ David Easton, Politics' in Int Encyclopedia of Social Science, Vol.12, MacMillan, New York, pp.283-291.

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II

Over the ages, culture, religion and politics have remained not decisive in rural like but they have moved forward to stabilize their position in urban centre. The population in the urban centres of India have been increasing in the recent times though bulk of our population continue to live in the rural areas. The attempts of Sociologists and Social anthropologists to demarcate between the rural and urban have faced unsurmountable difficulties. They were incapable due to various limitations which include (a) they were outsiders (b) inadequate theoretical construction.⁴⁵ However culture, religion and politics in urban India do not succumb to specify the characteristics of rural-urban hierarchy.

Theodorson defines urban community "as a community with high population density, a predominance of non-agricultural occupations, complex division of labour and formalized system of local government."⁴⁶ According to Robert Redfield "Urban Society is characterized by a large heterogeneous

⁴⁵ Unnithan, Deva & Singh (ed), Towards a Sociology of Culture in India, Prentice Hall of India, New Delhi, 1965, pp.14-15.

⁴⁶ G.A. Theodorson and A.Q. Theodorson, A Modern Dictionary Sociology", Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1969, p.451.

population, close contact with other Societies. (through trade communication etc.), a complex division of labour, prevalence of secular over sacred concerns and the desire to organize behaviour rationally toward given goals, as opposed to traditional standards and norms.⁴⁷

Even in the past, urban centre consisted of numerous beliefs, caste associations and colour integration. Y.Singh states that as we are passing from relatively simple structure of the village communities to that of the cities, and townships, the pattern of the persistence of Great Tradition changes but the process continues. His main assumption is that there are changes in values beliefs and social sanctions in urban centres while the tradition continues to influence.⁴⁸ The process of modernisation have not always been in conflict with the tradition. For instance L.P. Vidyarthi in his study of Gaya has mentioned that while about 20 thousand pilgrims visited the city during the closing years of 18th century, now due to the modern means of transport and communication every year the

⁴⁷ Robert Redfield's idea in American Journal of Sociology, 1942.

⁴⁸ Y.Singh, Modernization of Indian Tradition, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1986. p.48.

number of pilgrims are more than 300 thousand.⁴⁹ E.Kathleen Gough finds that in Tanjore there still prevails the Brahminical dominance in Kumbakonam another town, a richly endowed monastery is maintained for Brahman ascetics. She remarks that the city's population never would proclaim itself as secular, discarding their religious practice and rituals, rather they are attached with sacredness and purity pollution.⁵⁰

It is thus evident that the process of urbanization should not unilaterally be associated with forces of modernization or secularization, even though in some limited sense as stated by Milton Singer and Robert Redfield, in metropolitan urban centres, as growth occurs from the stage of primary (orthogenetic) to secondary (heterogenetic) urbanization, traditional literati may be transformed into professional intelligentsia; whose function in the changed circumstances may be to mediate between traditions and modernity. In their views urban centre is witnessing change. But, despite the impact of modernisation and secularisation,

⁴⁹ L.P. Vidyarthi, The Sacred Complex in Hindu Gava, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961.

⁵⁰ E.Kathleen Gough, "The Social Structure in Tanjore Village" in Village India (ed.) by Mckim Marriott, p.38.

the people continue to pursue their religious ideologies and have compassion for tradition which in many ways influences the socio-political and economic life⁵¹ So Urbanisation in the Secondary Phases (heterogenetic) may strengthen the position of the culture, religion and politics because the communication channels, which otherwise could be used for transmission of modern values, such as modern means of transport, press,, radio, sound amplifiers etc, are used to further the diffusion of the value system of the great tradition . Every step in the intensification of communication thus not only means a benefit to modernity but equally or more than equally, a benefit to the course of reinforcement of the great tradition. So the contribution of science, technology and investigations never replace and overthrow the impact of traditional beliefs and ideas of rural-urban culture , but the changed beliefs are merged with tradition.

So culture, religion and politics in urban India have been jolted by orthogenetic as well as heterogenetic transcendence, but the orthogenetic elements of the great tradition continue through the cultural structure. The urban

⁵¹ Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of cities" Economic Development and Cultural Change, vol.III, no.1, 1954, pp.53-73.

culture never overrides the rural faith, sentiment and purity-pollution attachment of any substrata of the people and they facilitate social solidarity. M.S.A.Rao now argues in his book, 'Urban Sociology in India' that rural and urban life can not at any context be divided, and a dividing pillar may not exist between the two.⁵²

Further, he mentions that the rural-urban question continuously poses hardships to the Sociologists and Social anthropologists to reach at a particular conclusion. So to explain this he has put forward four characteristics on rural and urban understanding which are as follows:

(1) It is necessary to examine whether nature of urbanization in India is coterminous with westernization.

(2) An authentic and valid distinction can not be worked out between urban and rural sociologies because both cities and villages having the same structural features of caste and Kinship which are part of the same civilization. Here, neither dichotomy nor continuum is meaningful.

⁵² M.S.A.Rao (ed.), Urban Sociology in India, Orientlongman, 1974, p.16.

and on this basis, present empirical transformation is associated with urbanization because upto now in urban area, caste associations, religious associations and purity pollution continue to exist.

(4) It is evident that urbanization has meant emergence of new forms of Social Organisation and association.

M.S.A.Rao criticising David Pocock's idea, says that cities in India existed well before the British rule, and Urbanization and Westernization are not identical. Rao further points out that where cities and villages are elements of the same civilization (indigenous) the question of either continuity or dichotomy does not arise.

M.S.A.Rao reviewed the approach of R.K.Mukerji, on the controversial question of rural-urban relationship. Here he pinpoints that Mukerji was unable to distinguish between rural urban continuity or rural-urban dichotomy. Owen M Lynch while studying among the Chamars of Agra city, has highlighted that urban setting does not account for different kind of organised behaviour. He understands that for the people settled in urban centres, change has occurred

in their dress, lifestyle and earning but they do not neglect their rural practices and beliefs.⁵³

M.S.A. Rao has very clearly mentioned that the urban-rural continuity and their dichotomous relationships are formed mainly in wider theoretical context in practice both are proceeding further to assimilate and do not create any distinction between their identities.

Thus, India being a hierarchical, diversified pluralistic and stratified Society, the image and impact of these, three elements (culture, religion and politics) have been creating more incongruity and disorder in the Social mechanism. Many Sociologists and social anthropologists have accepted that culture, religion and politics have undeniably engendered social problems in urban India.

⁵³ M.S.A. Rao, op.cit., pp.17-18

CHAPTER II RELIGION AS A SOCIAL BASIS
IN URBAN INDIA: REVIEW OF
SOME STUDIES

In India a number of studies are conducted by Social Anthropologists and Sociologists and most of them have said that religion has a social base. It keeps intact the people invariably. Religion is the bedrock of Indian society. Keeping this in mind, Milton Singer explains that in India religion is understood not only as a creed, but also as an important source of values, mental attitudes and practices of daily life. He has particularly singled out India as one of those countries beset by a religious syndrome of 'backwardness' due to sacred cows, wandering ascetics, caste system, passive and otherworldly attitude to life. According to him in India religion influences daily conduct and quoting the Indian philosopher K. Sachitananda Murty's ideas Milton Singer says that the most of the people of modern India cares more for their religion than the average christian or Jew of England or the U.S.A.¹

Milton Singer, who has observed the transformation in Great Traditions in the city of Madras says that religious consciousness among the people are still very strong. His primary emphasis is that India had an indigenous civilization, enriched with pre-existing folk and regional cultures and its Great Traditions Culturally continued with

¹ Milton Singer, When A Great Tradition Modernizes, Vikas Publishing House, 1972, pp.39-41.

Little Tradition. This is seen in the light of diverse regions, villages, castes and tribes. The cultural continuity was both the product and cause of common cultural consciousness shared by most Indians and expressed in essential similarities of mental outlook and ethos. He understood that cultural consciousness has been formed in India with the assistance of certain processes and factors like sacred books, Brahmans, professional story tellers, temples, pilgrim places and shrines. This cultural continuity has helped the traditionalisation of modern innovations. This can be seen in the growth of modern cities which grew up around the historic temple, towns like Mylapore and Triplicane where large Siva and Vishnu temples, respectively continued to be actively patronized by religious preachers, and the continuity of historical cultural associations in the city with the neighbouring religious and cultural centres like Kanchipuram (now Shankaronath), Sri Perumbudur, and Tirupati and modern temples in the city, example Ramakrishna Mission, the Divine life Society, a Siva-Vishnu temple, and a Sai Baba temple, where the people of Madras are meeting for religious performance.

To Milton Singer, Indian society is accelerating or leading towards change which is adaptive in nature. The effect of urbanization in Madras has actively changed the traditional mind of the people from ritual observances and sacred learning to the fields of popular culture and arts. Thus religious interpretations of popular culture are not limited to the verbalization of religious leaders. These urban Brahmans have taken an increasing interest in popular religious culture and changed the traditionally designed role for lower castes, women and children. The lower castes form bhajan groups, listen to recitations of the hymns of Tamil Saints, organize and attend puranic recitations, devotional plays and movies, and discourses in English or Tamil on the Upanishad's, delivered by nonbrahmins. These cultural programmes are increasingly held at public halls and theatres because the temples are meant for 'twice born' castes and entrance is restricted for the inferior caste.²

Milton Singer who has studied religion as an associational activity demonstrates that these cultural-religious activities give the city some measure of

² Milton Singer, "The Great Tradition in a Metropolitan Centre" in his (ed.) Traditional India, Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 1975, p.141-181.

integration. Sanskritik Hinduism dominated by Brahmins is changing as the priest does not want his son to be a priest, because the impact of modernisation have brought changes to some people as they want to leave their traditional practices and beliefs. Ritual orthodoxy gave way to a devotional type of religion. For him in India religion includes culture and culture includes religion. Religious culture is being democratized rather than secularized in the city and urban culture is de-ritualized.³

M.S.A. Rao provides an emic view (native's approach) for the study of various movements which were cropping up before and after independence and causing overwhelming problems in the society. In the beginning of the movement which was rural based, but in subsequent levels due to the emergence of various political parties and leadership, the movement has spread to the urban areas. Analyzing the genesis, growth, internal dynamism and social and cultural consequences of the SNDP (Sri Narayan Dharma Paripalana) movement among the Izhavas of Kerala. M.S.A. Rao reveals the range, magnitude and diverse kind of relative deprivation.

³ Milton Singer, When A Great Tradition Modernises, op.cit., pp.148-241.

The ideology of the movement was mainly forwarded by Sri Narayan Guru Swamy who launched the SNDP yogam.⁴

Though there were important leaders like Dr. Palpu and others, who were part of the movement, it was Sri Narayan Guru Swamy who transformed their outlook by giving them a new philosophy, a new religion, a code of conduct and programme of action, which formed the basis of ideology of the SNDP movement.

Born in a poor family on 28th August 1855 in Chembazhanti, a village situated six miles from Trivandrum, Sri Narayan Guru Swamy learned in the Vedas and emerged as a Charismatic leader by 1890. His ideology started in a cryptic form, as belief in one God, one religion and one caste.

He made a direct attack on caste system, especially on the supremacy of Brahmans. He was the first untouchable to have shown an intellectual ability in interpreting the Brahman sastras. In order to make religious changes effective, Swamy realized the importance of having temples,

⁴ M.S.A. Rao, Social Movements and Social Transformation, Manohar, 1987, pp.viii-xxii.

monasteries (mutts), hermitages (ashrams) and a category of celibate monks, priests and missionaries. By this way he created a set of religious institutions, which were parallel to the Brahmanical ones and this gave the Izhavas an opportunity to participate in Brahmanical Hinduism which had been denied to them for centuries. Hence he established separate institutions which gave them a sense of achievement and fulfilment and in some respects of doing things better than the Brahmins. He believed that man himself was God, and by serving human beings one realised God. Swamy gave women equal religious rights and established a separate monastery for ladies in Parur. Acceptance of one religion which he called Sanatan Dharma was the only basis of religion. His religion was the religion of humanness, which preached universal brotherhood and followed one God. Against caste his slogan was 'Don't ask, tell or think of caste'. Swamy attempted to transform the society as a whole and lift up the Izhavas by working out a spiritual regeneration of Hinduism. He arrested the tide of conversion to Christianity.⁶

SNDP Yogam and collective mobilization was geared up for a powerful central organization to propagate the

⁶ op.cit., pp.22-47.

philosophy of Swamy. The object of the Yogam was to promote and to encourage religious secular education and industrious habits among the Elava community. In 1905 at a temple festival in a village Quilon, the Izhava women dressed like Nayar women and participated in the procession. Fight against inapproachability also in the meantime intensified. T.K. Madhavan led the next phase of SNDP movement and gained access to roads which ran near the caste Hindu temples ⁶.

Some charismatic leaders like Dr. Palpu assumed the leadership to fight the injustice done to Izhavas in the field of modern education and government employment. Another reformer Velu, who had literary interest translated several books from English into Malayalam. The leaders systematically worked for development of Public Schools, recruitment to government employment, entry into temple, use of public roads and political representation. M.S.A. Rao discusses two types of ideologies here which are crucial in the movement. First one is based on divergent ideological differences such as leftist ideology that introduced a wedged in the movement and the second one is based on the complementary differences that arose among the leaders of the movement which splinted the spiritual movement.

⁶ op.cit., p.57.

The general impact of the SNDP movement was its successful struggle against deprivation of the lower castes in the field of education, employment, politics and religion. Its transformation into a political party changed the traditional power dominance and power relations. Now the Izhavas have access to power, which was basically upper caste dominated urban phenomena. So the higher order of the Hindu society realised that they have to accept the lower class as partners in power sharing. This changed their outlook of the caste Hindus who could no more practice caste restrictions because intermingling is a part and parcel of urban culture.⁷

S.M. Michael studying the migrants of Bombay, says that the Tamilians and Keralites or Malayalies are the two dominating communities in the Goregaon region. They both tend to be different from each other in their culture, life style, and religious practices. In a deeper investigation of Bombay city he looks for an interdisciplinary approach and evolves a truly integrated approach to the study of the city. Quoting Zachariah's view Michael explains that 63% of the population of the Greater Bombay is born outside the city, which shows predominantly immigrant nature of its

⁷ op.cit., pp.79-122.

population. The cosmopolitan nature of the city's population is reflected in its constituent religious and linguistic groups. His study is useful in reducing the tensions which inevitably arise in the multi-cultural context of the city. Since the migrants belong to various traditional cultural patterns, values, orientations, goals and patterns of behaviour, their way of life have come in conflict with that of other cultural groups. But Michael shows that despite conflicts in urban culture there is amity, congruity and assimilation between various groups and communities. He further explains that Urban culture does not retard growth development and progress though diversified in religion, language and ethnicity.⁸

Though urban studies in India have been undertaken by sociologists and social anthropologists, S.M. Michael has devoted special enthusiasm for the empirical studies and provided data Goregaon, where the Tamil and Kerala migrants have formed their own associations to cater the various needs of the members of their community. In his book, 'Culture and Urbanisation', refers that the studies of Syviavatuk (1972), V. Punekar (1974) K.L. Mythily (1974),

⁸ S.M. Michael, Culture and Urbanization, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi, 1989, pp.21-29.

Andrea M. Singh (1976), D'souza (1977), K.S. Nair (1978) L. Caplan (1976), Susan Lewandowski, (1980), Madhav Sadhshiv Gore (1970), H.C. Upreti (1981) and M.S.A. Rao (1981) indicate that migrants who belong to particular regions, languages, religious affiliations, castes and tribes tend to cluster together in certain areas of the city. The migrant groups recreate the cultural patterns of their origin in the city which results in cultural pluralism.⁹ Michael further elaborates that in Goregaon there are religious associations and places of worship to provide spiritual needs, education, cultural and recreational associations as well as literary societies for moral and aesthetic fulfilment. These associations are open only to the people of same caste, religion and region. In every association the Brahmins are more active than non brahmins. Specially at the associations of Tamil migrants, the Tamil Brahmins, and among the Malyalees the patter Brahmins of Kerala have set up a number of religious cultural and educational associations and allow only those who belong to their caste. The entry of nonbrahmins to these places are very much restricted. Various organisations like, RamaKrishna Bhajan Samaj, an organisation promoting the ancient Vedic religion, the Gana Kala Vidya Nilayam, for preservation and promotion of music,

⁹ S.M.Michael, op.cit., p.31.

Navbharati, a group of young artists for theatre and drama, Amirtha Vani Prachar Sabha to preserve the old Prachna language, Bangur Nagar Satya Sai Bhajan group to spread the teachings of Satya Sai Baba, Bangur Nagar women's satsang for teaching vedas, marriage counsel for helping parents and guardians, Young Men's Recreational Club (YMRC) for sports and recreational facilities etc. are active in Goregaon to promote socio-cultural programmes and festivals. All these associations are dominated by Brahmins. But other castes are also allowed to participate and perform some rituals in those associations.¹⁰

Besides these, there are some Christian associations of the Tamil peoples like Devganga Chettiyar Welfare association, St. Roque Tamil Catholic Association and St. Sebastian Tamil Catholic Association. There are also some associations where both Christians and Hindus intermingle for the Philanthropic purposes such as Kamraj Rahivasi Sangam, a defunct association over caste and religious questions, and Shree Murugan Devasthanam where Pujas were being conducted twice, though its members are both christians and Hindus.¹¹

¹⁰ op.cit., pp.316-331.

¹¹ op.cit., pp.335-345.

Like Tamils of Bombay, where they carry their life with great cultural emancipation and religious participation, the Keralites have also set up a number of religious, cultural and educational organisations in the same city. The organisations are Ayyapa Seva Sangam, Goregaon Malayalee Samaj, for rendering welfare services, Shree Guru Vayurappan Sankeerthan Samithi for Kerala Hindus and Sree Narayan Guru Seva Sangam. All these organisations are spearheaded by Hindus all ranks. There are some Christian Associations like Goregaon Kerala catholic union, which sponsors higher studies for poor peoples by providing scholarship and St. Mary's youth league for social services.¹²

In addition to these Tamilian and Keralite associations are formed separately for their religious, cultural purposes, there are some associations where both the communities get together for education and marriage purposes. These institutions are run by the members of their communities. The Vivek education society plays an important role to keep solidarity among the people. It also celebrates important Hindu festivals according to Tamil and Malayalam Calender. Cultural and religious programmes are arranged on

¹² S.M. Michael, Culture and Urbanisation, 1989, pp.332-335.

those occasions to foster the religious and cultural sentiments of the Tamil and Kerala migrants, specially of the Brahmin community. Other Hindu welfare associations also promote arrangement of marriages and participation in other activities. The Kerala and Tamil associations bring to our knowledge that the Tamil associations are more caste-oriented than those of the Keralites. The Tamil Brahmins have more number of associations compare to nonbrahmins. But the Keralites are trying for economic upliftment of their members through job oriented educational institutions. Lewandowski has observed that while the Tamils are mainly concerned with fostering traditional cultural and religious ceremonies, the Malayalis organise for economic pursuit.¹³

The analysis from Singer to Michael shows that religion plays an important role in integrating the community as well as in uplifting the masses. Though, their studies are limited to the urban areas, religious festivals to have played a dominant role in uniting the masses irrespective of caste and economic status. The best instance of this is Car Festival of Lord Jagannath in Puri (Orissa) and Ganapati Festival in Maharashtra.

¹³ Susan, Lewandowski, Migration and Ethnicity in Urban India, Manohar, New Delhi, 1980, pp.80-82.

Despite, the fact that Orissa's economy remains relatively underdeveloped, it continues to be an important centre of religious activity. The important feature of Orissa Culture is that it still finds its lasting manifestation in the Jagannath cult of Puri.¹⁴

For the Orissa people religion is more than a mere system of rites and symbols. Bhubaneswar which is enriched with its traditional culture, the sacred world of temples and priests constitute an important part of it.¹⁵

The people of Orissa most of whom are Hindus and subscribe to Jagannath culture centred in Puri township. Once in twelve years the old wooden images are replaced by new wooden images which is called Navakalevara (the new body) has been taken place. This is considered that the old deities die and the new ones are born. These three deities are replaced simultaneously. There are separate car for each deity; for Jagannath 'Nandighosh' Rath; for Balbhadra 'Taldhwaj' Rath and for Subhadra 'Devidalan' Rath. The three

¹⁴ India 1992, Govt. of India Publication, pp.769-764.

¹⁵ James, J. Preston, Cult of the Goddess, Vikas Publishing House, 1980, pp.1-7.

Raths contain sixteen, fourteen and twelve wheels respectively.

Before the Car festival many rituals like the bathing festival (Snana Purnima), the period of illness (Anasar), the pilgrimage journey (Tirth Yatra), the stay in Gundicha temple and the return journey (Bahuda Yatra) would be performed according to the Jagannath calender.¹⁶

This great annual festival which takes place during June-July brings together to every category of people. They are eager to celebrate the festival with full devotion and sacrifice. For Orissa people a visit to holy town brings devout, personal happiness and spiritual strength. Lord Jagannath is the age less deity for the Hindus.¹⁷

The Ganapati festival of Maharashtra and specially at Bombay also initiated social cohesion in the society. The advent of British and subsequently the missionary attack on Hindu religion provided impetus to those Hindus who valued

¹⁶ F.A. Marglin, Wives of the God King : The Rituals of the Devdasis of Puri, Oxford, 1985, pp.243-63.

¹⁷ G.C. Tripathy, "Jagannath : The Ageless Deity of the Hindu's" in Eschmann, Kalkey and Tripathy (ed.), The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa, Manohar, 1986, pp.477-490.

their inherited faith and protested against foreign encroachment. The cry of religion had awakened a responsive chord of millions. The primary initiative of Ganesh Puja was taken by Vinayak Ramachandra Patvardhan alias Annsahib. Now this gala ten day celebration commemorating the birth of Ganesh was revived and got public acclaim. Annasahib provided the inspiration and publicity to the festival was given by many political leaders. One among them who was more concerned was Bal Gangdhar Tilak. By his efforts he had succeeded in building a militant Hindu party in Maharashtra to counter the British and Muslim autocracy. In 1897 Tilak also succeeded in transforming the Ganapati worship from a domestic festival to a public celebration. In this way he inserted politics into a religious festival in order to bridge the gap between the Brahmans and the non-brahmans and between the elites and the masses. He initiated Hindu revivalism and pioneered the Hindu nationalism. His way of mobilization was liked by the people and for that reason the Ganapati festival in Maharashtra is still very popular.¹⁸

While Tilak used Pune as the venue of his revivalism, today Bombay city has become the major theater for the

¹⁸ S.A.Wolepert, Tilak and Gokhle, Univ. California Press, 1962, pp.62-129.

celebration of Ganapati festival. Thousands of different groups displaying their Ganapati models in public to accompaniment of music, bhajans and street dances.¹⁹

Believing in Tilak's advice the people accepted the god is syncretistic figure combing the elements of high Hinduism, ascetism, and wisdom. Ganapati had linked with the three broad tradition of Indian philosophy : devotion, asceticism and action. Tilak by various means popularized the Ganesh festival for the awakening of Hindu community. It is a popular festival in Maharashtra because Ganapati had much devotion for his father and best wisdom.²⁰ Also again some people believe that Ganeshji is the deity of auspicious beginnings, receives first invitation from the people to enlighten the society.²¹

If religion had played an integrative role, today there are some burning problems in the country which have attracted the attention of all. Ayodhya issue is the most

¹⁹ R.I.Cashman, The Myth of Lokmanya, Uni. of California Press, 1975, pp.75-97.

²⁰ K.S.Mathur, "Hindu Values of Life" in T.N. Madan's (ed.), Religion in Inida, OUP, 1991, pp.63-67.

²¹ A.G.Gold, "Sinking Hours at Haridwar", in T.N.Madan's (ed.), pp.127-137.

important one. . This issue which is centred around the mosque, supposed to have been constructed by demolishing the temple of Lord Rama by Babar.²² This issue began with the opening of the lock of Babri Masjid by Congress Party in 1986, which was closed since 1949. This was used by certain political parties for their narrow political ends. Political mobilisation in the name of Rama has laid loose series of communal riots, killing hundreds of people and destroying property with the crores of rupees. This has only bought misery to minority community. For these communal violence major role is playing by political party like BJP and its saffron bridges are also adding fuel to the communal fire.²³

The politicisation of religion by these communal forces left no option to create cordial relationship between Hindus and Muslims. The role of secular democracy has failed. The 6th December, 1992 incident at Ayodhya instigated the communal holocausts and created a communal pillar between the two communities.

²² Asghar Ali Engineer, Mainstream, March 10, 1990, p.7.

²³ A.G.Noorani, Mainstream, Oct.13, 1990, p.7.

Use of religion for political purposes has only helped to divide the people in the society. Recurring riots are indicator to show that religion has penetrated the minds of urban people as a divisive instrument. Though sociological studies show that religion plays an important role in integrating the people, the politicisation of religion is endangering this integrative role. The sacredness of religion is now the handiwork of political parties.

CHAPTER III

IDEOLOGIES IN URBAN
CENTRE:
SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS

The vital aspect of our analysis deals with political affiliation that encourages secular as well as religious traced in urban culture. Firstly, my focus will be on the ideologies of some secular organizations namely. PUCL, PUDR and some left parties who are fighting for social justice and striving for strengthening democratic and secular ethos in a pluralistic diversified and hierarchical society like India, where in every stage of life there are lots of communal holocausts, ethnicity and racial discriminations. Secondly, my focus will be on the political parties which use religion to gain popular support in urban centres.

Now I will discuss some secular trends in urban India. Primarily, It is essential to understand the meaning of secularism. For Western Sociologists, Secularism is a fertile ground for research. The research in political sociology conducted on Indian society on secularization had been mainly by western scholars. The term secularism is derived from the Latin 'Saeculum' which means an age, an infinite period of time for or the present age. Hence derivatively speaking, secular could mean this present or this world. The distinction between the sacred and the

secular originated in the Christian Church.¹ Thus to be secular, is to be concerned with one's present time and by extension it will stand for interest and involvement in this worldly affairs.² Luthra writes: "the term secular indicates a state of being not connected with and separated from religion."³

Again Secularism has to be distinguished from super-mundane nontemporal or external interests. It may be called secularism as a closed system of belief and secularization as a social process. Secularism is a code of conduct. It builds of rationalist movement. But secularisation is the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domain of religious institutions and symbols. The doctrine of secularism had its origins in the 19th century. George Jacob Holyoake coined the term 'secularism' in 1851 and led a rationalist movement of protest in England.

¹ Eric S. Waterhouse, "Secularism in James Hartings (ed.) Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1962, 5th impression, B. Groethuysen, "Secularism" in Edwin R.A. Seale (ed.) International Encyclopedia of Social Science, vol.13, New York, Macmillan, 1948, p.631-35.

² A.K.Saran, "Secular Sacred Confrontation : A Historical Analysis" in Religion and Society, vol.xviii, no.3, Sept.1971, p.9.

³ V.P.Luthra, "The Concept of Secular State in India", OUP, Calcuta, p.15.

According to him Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life founded on considerations for human welfare and intended mainly for those who find theology inadequate or unbelievable.⁴ A.K. Saran defines that Secularism as a doctrine denies the existence of a sacred order approximated more to intellectual antagonism. So secularism is considered with a purely naturalistic view without adherence to any religion or spirituality. This is an interpretation of life that includes only natural order of things. Therefore a radical understanding of secularism rejects sacred mythological transcendent world view and hierarchical social system and substitutes for it the promises of relativistic, immanentistic evolutionary world view and open equalitarian social system.⁵ After discussing many ideas on secularism Setavald arrives at a conclusion that systematic formation of secularism in this sense can be found in Marx.⁶

It may also be mentioned that there are two other stands which defines secularism in a much more open way.

⁴ G.J. Holyoake, The Origin and Nature of Secularism, London, Watlad Co., 1886, p.41, also his Sixty Years of An Age Tutors Life, vol.2, London, T. Fishere, part.2, p.210-294.

⁵ A.K. Saran, op.cit., p.15.

⁶ M.C. Setavald, 1965, Secularization, p.3.

(a) Emphasis on moralistic behaviour with a guidance of morality and some religious principles.

(b) stress on spiritualism guided by non-religious morality.⁷

Secularism as a process is being used in sociology to denote a shift from the sacred to the secular, from its traditional religious metaphysical moorings to a rational ordering of social economic and political institutions. The sociological literature looks at secularization as social process.⁸ Also Mathew speaks that if the basis of defining religion varied the process of secularization also would concomitantly vary. For him secularization includes the following four process.

- (1) Decline of religion
- (2) Rationalization of religious organization.
- (3) Differentiation.
- (4) Disengagement.⁹

⁷ George Mathew, Secularization and Communalization in Kerala, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, J.N.U. CSSS/SSS, 1980, p.4.

⁸ Ibid., p.4.

⁹ Ibid, p.5.

According to Ratna Dutta values and norms are important in the study of secularization and she points out four attributes of secularization.

- (1) Generalising.
- (2) Transformation.
- (3) De-secularization.
- (4) Secularism.¹⁰

Secularism at its place is scientifically explained by T.N.Madan has suggested that the only way secularism in South West Asia can set up and understood if we establish interreligious understanding and all the religions will be given equal priority. His elaborations reveal that secularism would have to imply that those who profess no religion have a place in society equal to that of others not higher or lower.¹¹ A.B. Shah also enlightens us on the problems faced by secularism in India. For him, secularism in inter-religious relations presupposes secularism in

¹⁰ Ratna Dutta, Values in Modes of Modernization, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1971, p.34.

¹¹ T.N. Madan, "Secularism in its Place", The Journal of Asian Studies, 1987, vol.46, no.4, November, p.747-58 and in his (ed.) Religion in India, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991, pp.394-409.

intra-religious relations. India should adopt a secular approach to ethics in the place of morality based on religion.¹²

But now an active role is played by various secular organizations to uphold the banner of secularism and teach the people to be liberal and kind in nature. Here in this analyses some major secular organizations are referred.

People Union For Civil Liberties (PUCL) which was founded by J.P. Narayan, has been playing an important and active role to strengthen secularism in our country generally, and in urban centre particularly. Every month PUCL brings out its own bulletin emphasising the burning problems facing by India and other countries. It also stresses that human rights are getting violated in this present crisis ridden society.

The prolific explanation of the writers give wider idea to combat the anti secular forces and to stabilize universal brotherhood for peace and amity, they usually organize various seminars, debates and public discussions in many

¹² A.B. Shah, "Secularism in India" in V.K. Sinha's (ed.), Secularism in India (1968).

parts of the world to give broader outlook to the common people. Their motto is to fight communalism, casteism, untouchability and social discrimination. They are also agitating for women's liberation, opposing dowry and child labour in India. They are mobilising protest against communal holocausts and also criticising communal parties, which are basically standing for political pursuit and exploiting the people in the name of religious values. All the writers are raising their voice to fight against injustice and gather public opinion for a peaceful existence. They give priority to people's liberty, equality and enhance fraternity, What are enshrined in our constitution? Many PUCL state and national level conventions carry the tirade against anti people policies initiated by any government and express great concern over the government proposed human right commission and the rights of women.¹³

It moves and prepares the strategy of fight for civil liberties which are to be created within the political economic and social and cultural ethos of our country. Its crusade against caste, child labour and disharmony is well

¹³ Nissim Ezekiel, PUCL Bulletin, December 1992, vol.xii, no.3, p.2-3.

acknowledged.¹⁴ For PUCL civil liberties are important and they should be carried out in all stages of life of every human being. For over a decade and a half PUCL and many other Civil Liberties group and human right groups have been engaged in defending and expanding the rights guaranteed to other citizens under the constitution and infusing a new content into the struggles for human rights. To this end the human rights groups have documented numerous cases of human rights violation, organised campaigns against the promulgation and extension of draconian laws infringing the rights and liberties of Indian citizens. They have tried to constructively highlight lacunas in our institutional systems of redressal and justice and above all it sought to sensitivize the mass of our citizenry to the constant need for vigilance in maintaining and expanding rights for a more humane and social order and for civil and democratic governance. All the problems highlighted by PUCL have arisen on account of pervasive erosion of the institutional structure of democratic governance in our

¹⁴ R.M. Pal's article 'Caste System and Human Rights' in October 1992, PUCL Bulletin, vol.xii, no.10, and Praful Bidwai's article 'Abolishing Untouchability', also views of Justice Pandian on Caste Rights in PUCL Bulletin, vol.xii, no.12, December 1992, and R.M. Pal's The Child and J. Gatha's article Child Rape in India, November 1992, vol.xii, no.17, p.9-10 and January 1993, PUCL Bulletin for Communalism.

country. It is all more because the soft state has become less democratic and more oppressive. But still then the Human rights organizations today clearly are on the defensive. Though PUCL has taken many decisions to curb various social problems and unlawful activities, still it is confined to very small pockets of this country. PUCL is playing an instructive role in selected metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Hyderabad.

The People's Union For Democratic Rights (PUDR) is also involve in the political drama of modern age to strengthen secularism and democratic values. During 1977 emergency period it has broken away from a group of organizations, which were working together for democratic rights. It's objectives are many, but primarily it educates the people through various propaganda and seminars about democratic values and understanding of secularism. Like PUCL, PUDR also champions and advocates for the rights of women, child and against caste. It also raises slogans against divisive forces and communal groups who are always playing with the innocent lives of this society. The PUDR is fighting for the rights of the common citizens of India and its activist are being appreciated by the people. From its inception, it has been vigorous and enthusiastic to fight for equality

among genders, against dowry and sexual harassment. It genuinely deals with other problems which are crippling and deviating the youths from nuisance, disturbance and distortion in our society. PUDR especially appeals for larger solidarity and is to be abided by the advice of secular and democratic machinery. It attacks anti-people policies and measures formulated by government and protests against man-killing and communal carnage. It also keeps aloof itself from irrational and inhuman mobilization for dirty political purposes.¹⁵ PUDR has made major breakthrough to establish interreligious relationship and avoids undemocratic and anti secular activities. This is also playing very important role in urban centres to mobilize the people for a smooth and secular society.

For the PUDR activists there is no difference between authoritarianism and commercialism. In their view 'A state which has neither moral authority nor political will is being permitted to selectively invoke authoritarian instruments to fight communalism what is disconcerting is that even some of the independent minded secular forces, perhaps reflecting a sense of helplessness, egg on the state

¹⁵ PUDR Booklet, on Inside the Family and 1984 Carnage in Delhi, pp.1-35 and pp.1-14.

to become authoritarian'. PUDR also condemns the ban on the five righting organisations and the dismissal of the four BJP governments (Madhya Pradesh, Utter Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan) because, to the activists democracy never permits to act like autocrats¹⁶ and the very inner meaning of democracy never allows punitive against popular justice and freedom. Thus for PUDR, with all its infirmities democracy has been the best guarantee we have had in a society ridden with caste, class, communal and ethnic tensions. It has been repeatedly assaulted or subverted from within. No doubt this is the reality but it has also survived many crises.¹⁷ PUDR calls for mass participation on any issue that is detrimental for the society. The most efficient and responsible work of PUDR is that it takes up immediately issues relating to infringement on democratic rights, social instability and problems in culture.

Various LEFT PARTIES are also playing very decisive role to strengthen the secular and democratic values in India. Major Left Parties are the Communist Party of India

¹⁶ PUDR Bulletin, Ayodhya 6 December 1992, Cry the Beloved Country, Delhi, pp.6-7, and also PUCL Bulletin, April 1993, vol.xiii, no.4, p.8.

¹⁷ PUDR Bulletin, April 1993, op.cit., p.11.

(CPI), the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM), the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) and the Indian People's Front (IPF). Along with these left four political parties, some other parties are also committed to the secular ideas.¹⁸

They are not only against communalism but also opposing ethnicity, terrorism and the lingual provinces. Presently all the left parties whole heatedly criticize the dividing role of communal parties like B.J.P, V.H.P, R.S.S, Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal. According to these parties demolition of the Babri-Masjid is a national shame and the country has failed to enforce secularism. They condemned all these Saffron Shirts in for having played with people's emotional in the name of Hindutva. They are of the opinion that the sacred nature of Hinduism has been hijacked by the Saffron Brigades. These left parties are emerging in rural areas and also have very good base in the urban centres.

¹⁸ All these PUDR Party's Bulletin.

For Communist party of India (CPI) secularism is the only basis on which unity and integrity of our country can be maintained.¹⁹

CPI(M) also clarifies its stand on secularism and combating communalism. In its view democracy and secularism are inseparable. It thinks that secularism can move progressively with humanistic policies. It defines secularism as the separation of religion from politics and from the state. Unless this is ensured no democracy would be able to carry out its benevolent policies. CPI(M) holds that BJP exercises undemocratic rights, attacks secularism and propagates communalism of the worst order, undermining the foundations of modern India. However, in its speeches and writings CPI (M) appeals to all the democratic and secular minded people to rise to this occasion and defend India and its democratic-secular ethos.²⁰

Fighting for secularism and combating anti-secular forces and communalism is the major preoccupation of

¹⁹ CPI Publication by A.B. Bardhan's article 'Sangh Parivars Hindutava versus the Real Hindu Ethos, pp.1-13.

²⁰ CPI(M) Publication article Pseudo Hinduism Exposed by Sitaram Yechury, Delhi, pp.1-20.

Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI). Its founding father Shibdas Ghosh long ago has highlighted that the communal problems are the handiwork of various communal parties, who would gain from disintegration and destabilization. He appeals to the peace loving people to come forward to safeguard the democratic values and meaning of secularism. The correct process of solving the communal problem in our country, therefore lies in democratising the society through the completion of social and cultural revolutions. To him the root cause of communalism lies, undoubtedly in the present socio-economic structure of India. Unless social and cultural revolution tasks are completed and our people are freed from the bondage of social and religious prejudices, conventions and institutions, communalism cannot be done away with in reality and secularism cannot be wished. This movement bases itself on equality and freedom of both believers and non-believers. Thus to Shibdas Ghosh, religion will certainly continue to exist but it will be purely the private affairs of the individual, having no relation with the affairs of the state and no influence on the social activities of the individual. Because if state will sponsor religious activities then there would be conflict, confrontation and quarrel amongst various communities and

that will ultimately lead communal tension.²¹ Had not Gods of our freedom movement, no less figures than Gandhiji, Deshbandhu and Netaji Subhash condemned communalism and communal violence and appealed to the people for peace and unity? These leaders enjoyed unquestionable confidence of the Indian people, but they failed to root out communalism by a whit, even failed to prevent recurrence of communal violence.²²

India's People Front (IPF) which claims itself as a party of CPI(M-L), is against injustice and inequality. It pioneers movements to avert communalism and reconcile secularism in India. It has a strong base in Bihar and eastern U.P. and in some parts of West Bengal and adjacent areas. Generally it is known as a party of NAXALITES group. Its activists are struggling a lot to change the present political set off by bringing an end of this bourgeois regime. IPF also shares its shoulder with other left parties to curb communalism and promote secularism. Through various approaches it condemns the anti-secular and anti-democratic spirits which are being whipped up by communal parties like B.J.P., V.H.P., Shiv Sena, R.S.S. and Bajrang Dal. It

²¹ Shibdas Ghosh, 'On Communal Problem', SUCI Party Bulletin, pp.1-15.

²² Nihar Mukherjee, 'Ayodhya Episode and Tasks Ahead', SUCI Party Bulletin, p.5.

believes in justice through violence and struggle against bourgeoisies. According to it, if fundamentalist forces make any further gains than they have already made, they will plunge India into civil war. To prevent this attack identifiable forces of fundamentalism must be opposed and isolated. IPF thinks that it and its allied left brethren do have the strength and capacity to organise and win this life and death battle and could ensure the emergence and consolidation of modern secular, democratic India, which would guarantee equality to all its citizens and do away with all forms of political, economic and social integrity.²³ In a special booklet of AISA, (All India Students Association) student wing of IPF, mentions and ridicules B.J.P's argument of Hindu Revivalism and Hindu Rashtra. The short booklet in Hindi 'Bhajapa ka Andhayug' (Dark age of B.J.P.) states that B.J.P. has ashamed this sub-continent in the name of religion and communalism. Secularism and Democracy in B.J.P.'s outlook is that, assertion of the authority of the majority religious community, that is the Hindu religious predominance in India.²⁴

²³ The CPI(M-L) Bulletin, Liberation, April '93, pp.7-13.

²⁴ All India Students Association (AISA) - Hindi Booklet, Bhajapa ka Andhayug, pp.1-64.

However it is clear in our mind that a major role is played by these left parties to curb and put an end of communalism and secessionism. The following are some of the organisations have also come forward to uphold secularism and democracy in India.

- (a) Secular Morcha
- (b) Secular Action Force (SAF)
- (c) Sadhbhavna Mission

Support is also extended by All India Revolutionary Students Federation (AIRSF) and other student organisation to fight communalism.

RELIGIOUS TRENDS

The present religious denomination has replaced the past or previous meaning of religion. In India stands for cordiality, tolerance and for universal brotherhood. Ideologies of Nanak, Kabir, Ramanuja and Chaitanya are stood for the establishment of peace and amity among all the religions. Tenets of modern reformers and thinkers such as Vivekanand, Tagore, and Mahatma Gandhi have shown a way to mankind to come out of its prejudice, agony and injustice. In contemporary India some politics like B.J.P, V.H.P, R.S.S, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena have openly taken stance on

religious line which has unleashed divisive forces in the country. The B.J.P and its saffron family are trying to restore Hindu past glory, culture and civilization. Ideologies for all these parties are purely symbolising Swadesh and Swa-dharm. B.J.P proclaims that the main goal of Hindu religion is promotion of consensus and co-operation, and not for contrariety and conflict. So it calls itself as the party which uphold for Nationalism, Holism and Integral humanism and offers an alternative to the current dismal scene.²⁵ It seeks the restoration of Ramjanambhumi at Ayodhya only as a symbol of setting aside a historic wrong, so that the old unhappy chapter of acrimony could be ended, and a ground for rational reconciliation can be taken up. B.J.P asserts that India being a Hindu-dominated country its national culture could only be upheld by its ideologies and programmes. Their party symbol Lotus initiates universal brotherhood. They think that Ram Rajya only would be able to enforce clean political, social and economic system. It wants India to be a theocratic state with a particular state religion. According to B.J.P ideology God creates man and man can be happy in the blessings of God and it is all determining, unseen powerful force who guides the civilization and mankind in proper way to proceed. The 'Bunch of Thoughts' a book written by M.S.

²⁵ B.J.P.'s 1991, May Election Manifesto, p.1.

Golwalkar who was the chief of R.S.S, an ally of B.J.P encompasses many solid points and advice for the development of this civilization and culture.²⁶ All the B.J.P. Saints, Mahants and Gurus have openly declared that the temple will be constructed for national prestige, national culture and Hinduism has to be strengthened. Because Hindu religion believes in sympathy, love and affection for all people of the world to maintain peace and solidarity.²⁷ For B.J.P. Ayodhya is a place where all religions flourished as Rama was a Charismatic personality who treated every religion as a sacred benevolence. So the negligence of Rama temple is a negligence to India's national heritage.²⁸ For B.J.P the Hindu religion is liberal and more secular.²⁹

The religiously and politically organised groups which have all gathered around the B.J.P are known as R.S.S., V.H.P., Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena are advocating that non-Hindu groups should join

²⁶ M.S. Golwalkar, Bunch of Thoughts, Bangalore Jaiganara Prakashan, 1980, p.v.

²⁷ India Today, December 15 1992, p.45.

²⁸ Frontline, January 16-29, 1993, vol.10, no.2, pp.4-134.

²⁹ B.J.P.'s Election Manifesto, p.7.

in the mainstream of Hindu nationalism. Only this measure can produce and provide peace and content in the mind of the people. The founder of RSS-Doctor Keshav Baliram Hedgewar and then Golwalkar, showed light for Hindu revivalism and Indian way of life.³⁰ At present Ashok Singhal of VHP and Bal Thackeray of Shiv Sena are taking major interest in propagating a political ideology used on Hindu religion. Emphasizing Hindu interests, Vishwa Hindu Parishad also seeks social harmony but as 'harmful' the advice from outsiders and non-Hindus. For them India, the motherland of its inhabitants should be highly esteemed, and Hindu majority should be given special privileges and importance for their religious thoughts and ideologies. Bal Thackeray's call for Hindus and Shiv Sainiks to throw out outsiders exemplifies the revivalism of Hindu religion. Studies of K.K.Gangadharan (1970)³¹ and Dipanker Gupta (1982)³² make us aware about the active participation of Maharashtrians in the movement to protect the interests of Hindu majority. Now even Bal Thackeray openly says that only Hindus could be true patriots.

³⁰ M.S. Gowalkar, op.cit., p.xii.

³¹ K.K. Gangadharan, Sociology of Revivalism, Kalamkar Prakashan, New Delhi, 1982, p.v.

³² Dipankar Gupta, Nativism in a Metropolis, Manohar, 1982, p.40.

In other word according to the above parties the iconoclast Muslims are anti-nationals. Religion for all these political parties is a means to organize the people for reminiscence and opposing anti-nationals. Bajrang Dal upholds the banner of indigenous culture, expresses love for the motherland and accords sanctity to ritual process. It thinks that only Hindu spirit can endorse purity and successfully reach at the door of God. To make Indian Society more strong and stable, adopting a Hindu way of life can bring out a substantial change and thereby benefit the future generations. B.J.P, V.H.P, R.S.S, Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal are motivating the people to accept Hindu religion as it is the only alternative for peace and political stability.³³ While all these revivalist groups have been cropping up in urban areas, other sectarian reform movements have also been active in urban centres. These sectarian movement were particularly led by some religious leaders to give a new direction for religious reform in India. Two such sects (a) Radha Soami Satsang and (b) Nirankari Baba, Sects are considered for discussion.

³³ India Today, December 1992 and December, 31 1992, p.2-48 and p.26-57.

Radha Soami Satsang

The word Satsang seems to come from the Sikhs, among whom it means 'a company of pious people', J.N. Farquhar has done his study amongst the Radha Soamists and explains that 'Radha Soami faith derives its name from its original founder, the supreme being Radha Soami who appeared in this world in human form and designated himself Saint Satguru or Perfect Saint and preached holy doctrines to sincere enquirers of truth for the deliverance of their spirit from the bondage of body and its surroundings. The holy name Radha Soami has been given by the supreme being himself. The sect recognises no temples, shrines or sacred places, except those sanctified by the presence of the Guru or his relics. The practice of sect can be carried out anywhere.³⁴ J.B. Pratt says that there are centres of Radha Soami Faith at Agra, Allahabad, and Benaras. Twice a day the faithful gather in the hall for public-service at morning and evening.³⁵

The Radha Soamis are told that there is no need for them to give up their family life and become monks. Radha Soamis keep pace with modern movements and social change.

³⁴ J.N. Farquhar, Modern Religious Movements in India, New Delhi, 1967, Mastiram Manoharlal, p.169.

³⁵ J.B. Pratte, India and Its Faith, SBW Publishers, New Delhi, 1987, p.219.

The Guru encourages study on economic prospects and educational progress. Those people who are under this sect accept the pure way of life to give this present world a new order and understanding.³⁶

In Radha Soami Satsang men of all castes interact and mix freely together and even on occasion dine together in secret, and there is no strict separation of men and women. Membership in the sect does not involve any breach with one's own religion. People are taught that all religions are same, true and the Radha Soami Faith is complementary to other Indian religions. Membership to this sect is made quite easy. But in true analysis most of the teachings are based on Hindu ideology. It also stands nearer to vaishnavism than to any other part of Hinduism and is perhaps more closely allied to the teachings of Kabir. Although the Radha Soamis profess to find all truth in the books of their own Gurus, yet use the writings of certain Hindu and Mohammedian saints, and amongst these they give the works of Kabir the highest place. The ideology of Radha Soamis is grounded in faith and charity, the spirit of service and prayers.³⁷

³⁶ op.cit., pp.170-171.

³⁷ J.B. Pratt, op.cit., p.172.

J.B. Pratt says that Radha Soami is purely religious in nature and it disapproves caste restrictions, it recognises one God and no idols. It regards its founders and leaders as incarnation of the divine, and aims at freeing the soul from flesh. Radha Soami sects founder a government employee named Shiva Dayal Singh in 1861 discovered that he was an incarnation of Supreme being.³⁸ The Radha Soami Faith is not built on the basis of scriptures pertaining to Hindu or any other religion, but on the percepts or instruction of the supreme being. An important point is made by J.B. Pratt that the Radha Soamis are of the view that the Sikhs and the followers of Kabir have degenerated because they have so long been without a living Guru. Moreover, according to the Radha Soamis there are three methods by which the soul can begin its ascent towards the upper regions, (1) utterance of spiritual man, (2) contemplation of spiritual man and (3) attentively listening to the spiritual sounds.³⁹

Nirankaris are another religious sect which works for religious tolerance and cooperative living among people of all faiths. John C.B. Webster, during his study of Punjab reveals that there are two separate and very different

³⁸ Ibid, p.213.

³⁹ J.B. Pratt, op.cit., pp.215-217.

groups who use the name Nirankari. The first one is (a) Nirankari Sikhs founded by Baba Dayal in the 19th century and second one is (b) Sant Nirankari in 20th century by Baba Avtar Singh. To be more clear Nirankarism is a religious movement which has sought to change certain religious institutions or the entire religious order. It is also true that the Nirankaris are interested in changing Sikh religious ceremonials.⁴⁰ Balwant Gargi in his book 'Nirankari Baba' says that Baba's religious tenets are widely accepted by the Sikhs as well as non-sikhs.⁴¹

In the last few years it has vastly increased its influence and by now standardized certain procedures - the daily and weekly sangars. Sangat are the essence of the whole Nirankari movement. Devotees can attend these bare headed and with shoes on. The Sangars have gay, relaxed, fair atmosphere, inspite of their orderliness.

We have observed above that Urban India witnesses and shelters not only secular and democratic movements but also the religious movements. Urban culture is an aggregate of various categories of people who foster these movements. In

⁴⁰ John C.B. Webster, The Nirankari Sikhs, Moenaka, 1979, pp.1-176.

⁴¹ Balwant Gargi, Nirankari Baba, Thompson Press, 1973, pp.1-176.

Urban centres we also come across other religious sect like Prajapati Brahma Kumari and Anand Marg. Religion has its image, sanctions and position - that cannot be provided by any other means. Though it is difficult to distinguish between rural and urban culture clearly, it is quite obvious that cultural-religious life is more innovative life in the urban centres. Ram Ratan's analysis among the Bhangis of Delhi describes that there are a lot of change among them. Due to urban development there is also a change in the life of the Bhangis who are now differentiated in various sects like Gorakh Panth, Kabir Panth, Dattatreya Panth and Nanak Panth etc.⁴²

It is acknowledged that urban culture witnessed change which has been engineered by secular and religious ideologies. The leaders of the secular movements say that religious orthodoxy is a part of communalism and the religious preachers say that religious movements are integrating the society irrespective of caste, creed, colour and religion. The religious reformers from Gandhi to Nehru did not advocate and synthesize the purity and sacredness of religion. For them communalism is different and religion is

⁴² Ram Ratan, "The Changing Religion of the Bhangis of Delhi : A Case of Sanskritization" in L.P. Vidyarthi's Aspects of Religion in Indian Society, Meerut, pp.172-73.

also different. On this particular statement Imtiaz Ahmed is of the opinion that communalism may not be a by product of religion but it is a product of our infrastructure. The competitions for economic development is fully responsible for the growth of communal carnage in India. He means to argue that the imbalances in the Indian economy facilitate the various social problems and communalism in India is the by product of unequal adjustment in the society.⁴³

⁴³ Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Dynamics of Recent Communal Riots", in THINK India, vol.3, January-March 91, pp.35-39.

CHAPTER IV

CULTURE, RELIGION AND
POLITICS IN URBAN INDIA:
TRENDS AND ISSUES

The categories employed for the analysis of culture, religion and politics have been constantly changing in Indian Society, which itself is a conglomeration of various ethnic, religious, linguistic, and caste and regional collectivities. These changes have come about as a result of increased application of systematic logico-empirical methods, employed for understanding of social phenomena in response to the changing background of intellectual milieu. Mobility or change may be defined from socio-economic and psychological perspectives. Vertical mobility is measured by the numbers and variety of stimulation received and change in social and economic status, where as ecological or horizontal mobility is measured by movement in space from one definite location to another like change in residence. Social mobility is viewed as a transition from one social position to another in respect of occupation, prestige income wealth and powers.¹ According to Inkle and Smith modernity is primarily a state of mind. It is a

¹ Pitirim A. Sorokin, 'Social Mobility', in Structural Social Inequality: A Reader in Comparative Social Stratification, (ed.) by C.S. Heller, 1969, Collins-Macmillan Ltd., London, 1969.

psychic mobility.² Daniel Liner suggests that mobility is one of the initial mechanisms for achieving modernization. People must be ready, willing, and able to move from where they are. Physical and social mobility have always interacted closely in societies is now regarded as modernized.³ Moreover, in industrial societies an activist outlook is more conducive to competitive success than a passive approach to life approach to life. Since innovation or mobility is positively correlated with modernization, the idea of culture, religion and politics has also in the same way become differentiated or changed. The development of a comprehensive model for the study of Indian culture religion and politics and their dynamic role, however, is confronted with many irregular features. T.K.N. Unnithan, Indra Deva and Yogendra Singh⁴ in their edited work 'Towards a Sociology of culture in India' have elucidated two difficulties in the study of India's pluralism and diversity; they are -

² A. Inkles and D. Smith, "The OM Scale : The Comparative Socio-Psychological measure of individual modernity", in Sociometry, 1966, no.294, p.353.

³ Daniel Liner, "The passing of Traditional Society", Collier-Macmillan, London, 1966, p.43.

⁴ TKN Unnithan, Indra Deva and Yogendra Singh, "Towards a Sociology of Culture in India", Prentice Hall of India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1965, pp.1617.

- (1) Lack of historical records to study Indian cultural traditions and sub-cultures.
- (2) Negligence of modern social scientists to develop a comprehensive approach.

They further say that even the attempts of George M Foster and Robert Redfield have certain limitations and these only represent the beginning. Attempts of Milton Singer Kathleen Gough, Dumont and Pocock also fall in the same trap. Their contributions are insufficient and disjunct.⁵

We, however, cannot avoid the change that has been seen in Indian society. Till recently, it has been an agricultural society and 72 percent of its population is dependent on agrarian economy; yet changes are taking place in India. The detailed information may be cited.⁶

⁵ op.cited., p.17.

⁶ Census of India, 1991.

Table - 4.1

TRENDS OF URBANIZATION IN INDIA

Census Year	Total Population	Urban Population	Percent of Urban Population
1	2	3	4
1901	232,967,285	25,616,051	11.00
1911	245,952,238	25,580,199	10.40
1921	244,259,874	27,691,306	11.34
1931	270,746,659	32,976,018	12.18
1941	309,019,062	43,558,685	14.10
1951	349,805,382	61,629,646	17.62
1961	424,836,466	77,562,000	18.26
1971	528,917,868	106,966,534	20.22
1981	658,140,676	156,188,507	23.73
1991	844,324,222	217,611,012	25.72

N.B. - This excludes Assam and J & K.

Source : Census of India 1991

The foregoing analysis indicate that though there is a marginal change of urban population from 1901 to 1991,

still the bulk of our people are staying in rural areas. The pace of change is very slow. Even, the urban population of 1911 had decreased upto 2 percent and after that not any major change has occurred in urban centres.

Change within culture, thus has been minimal; however, one has to take into consideration the actual changes that have taken place. A subtle transformation has been going on within culture itself; emergence of community associations, new statuses and roles and new forms of socializations are signs of this process. The interpretation of several influences has been described in concepts like enculturation, acculturation and transculturation.

While the real difficulty of conceptualising and categorising the entire spectrum of Indian-culture within a single matrix is there, still some useful efforts have been made. For example Indian culture has been seen as (a) Elite, (b) Folk, (c) Tribal.⁷

Here one should not expect to find any of these cultural structures represented in its pure form by a distinct section of the society. It will often be that a

⁷ Unnithan, Deva and Singh, op.cit., p.18.

group has some characteristics of the tribal culture and some others of the folk. In the context of present culture-change, the trichotomy of elite, folk and tribal offers a fairly reliable conceptual tool for analysis of emerging phenomena like leadership, democratic values and working and interaction of one sub-culture with another as a result of change in Indian Economics, Constitutional and educational structure. Along with this religion and politics too are undergoing some changes and find their newer forms of expressions.⁸

As we have shown above, culture, religion and politics are interdependent and interrelated. Change is the process of their very essence as we are moving forwards strengthening of social stability. 'Urbanism is a way of life' is not mistaken by Louis Wirth and he characterizes FOUR points of urbanism are:

- (a) Transiency
- (b) Superficiality
- (c) Anonymity
- (d) Individualism⁹

⁸ Unnithan, Deva and Singh, 1965, op.cit., pp.18-19.

⁹ Louis Wirth, 'Urbanism as a way of Life', American Journal of Sociology, 1938, vol.44, p.49.

Now we graphically represent the growth of urban population in India from 1901 to 1991.¹⁰ (See the appendix in back)

Though the urban population is always moving upward and initiates change, the speed of the change is very slow. This slow change also carries undeniably the great tradition of India. While the millions of people are struck by change specially during 1971 to 1981 still most of the people are keeping and upholding the values of the little and great traditions. So, to say in India continuance of tradition is discernible among people of villages as well as towns and cities.

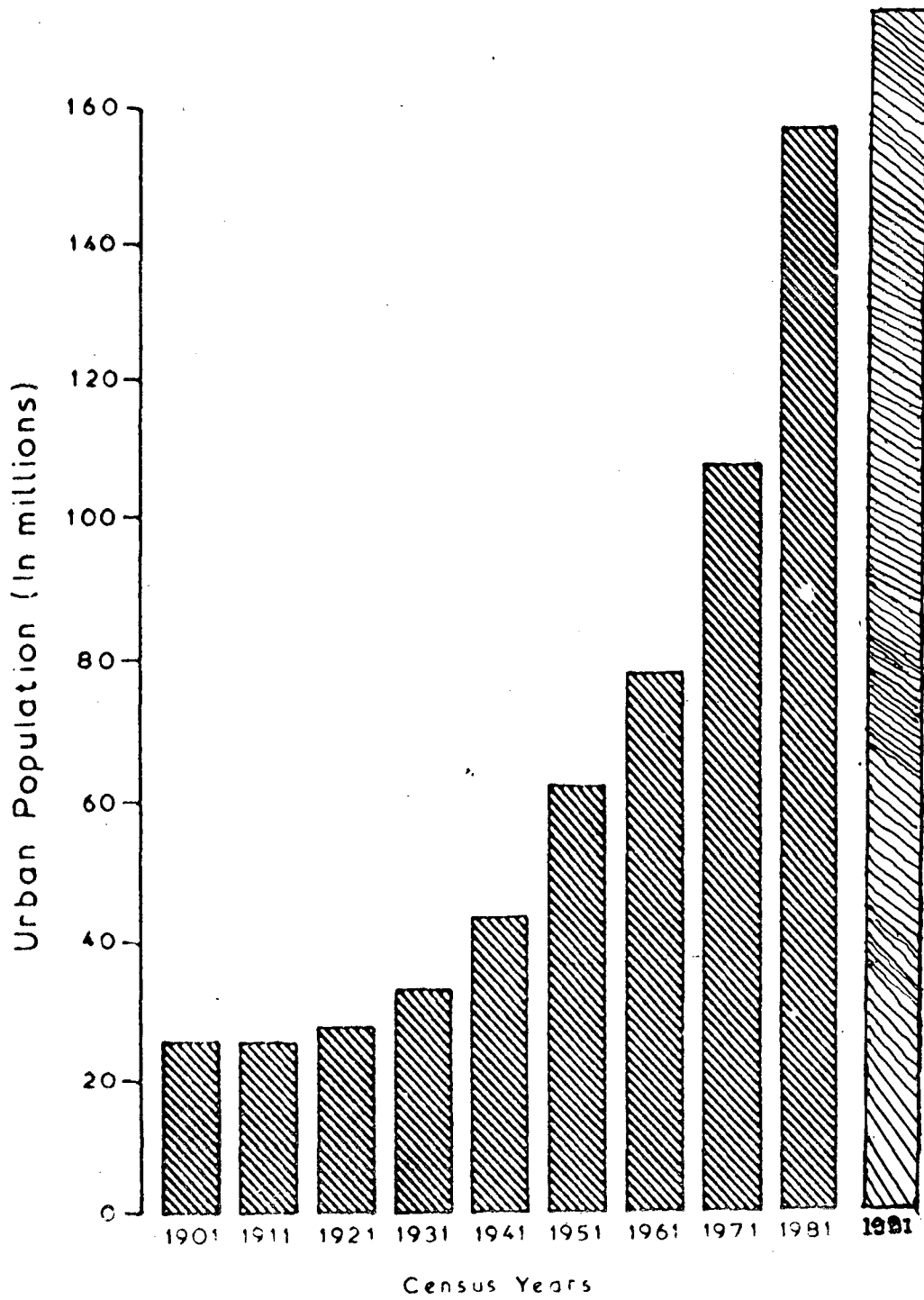
So to conclude, we can easily claim that the great tradition of India which has been existing since more than 2,500 years may be called as sastric, Brahmanic or sanskritic. There has been change in this but on the whole continuity has asserted itself.

On changes within traditions, there are innumerable arguments and counter-arguments on continuity and change - above all interpretation of the Sociologists, Historians and Social Scientists in the conduciveness of their approach. On

¹⁰ Census of India, 1981 and 1991.

INDIA

GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATION 1901-91



[Fig.1]

this Yogendra Singh says that modernization does not mean discarding tradition and old way of life, but the same has merged with the latter¹¹; that is to say has incorporated tradition. Now even India being traditional modernity enters. The modalities of tradition are imbibed modernity.¹² Thus, the elite sub-culture of the traditional Indian culture which merged with modernity does show remarkable creativity in various directions, with adapting and integrating within itself elements derived from the folk and the tribal traditions. This culture also worked out special rules for religion and politics which are inseparable elements in any society, that too in a society like India whose culture is more complex.

The folk sub-culture may be called an oral tradition - it is carried on by word of mouth and does not depend on written word. And the folk tradition always interacts with the elite tradition. A comparative study of the folk literature of various parts of India also upholds the view that the folk tradition is wide spread - it is almost pan-Indian like the elite tradition and now it is mingled with

¹¹ Y. Singh, "Modernization of Tradition", Rawat Publication, Jaipur, 1986, pp.191.

¹² Rudolph and Rudolph, "The Modernity of Tradition", University of Chicago, 1967, pp.12.

urban life, as Sankritization, among the 'untouchables' and inferior castes, and de-sanskritization among 'twice born' castes, observed change not in rural areas or tribal belts but in urban cultures, where the tribes are now leaving their old way of life and emerging into caste. That is why G.S. Ghurye calls the tribes as the 'backward Hindus'. So the social mobility includes both the change in the little tradition and in the great traditions, both in castes and tribes. For the change the impact of urban culture is more essential.

The life and culture of the folk is shaped by historical currents and cross currents. Again in folk tradition there was hardly any specialized training in religion, politics, meta-physics, literature and music etc but all these criteria are qualitatively re-shaped now in urban set-up. In folk tradition people were binded in mechanical solidarity but in urban culture people are tie up with organic solidarity. So the urban society is necessarily keeping relation with the folk tradition.¹³

Tribal groups in India have been undergoing change but their beliefs and practices are somewhat static. While

¹³ Unnithan, Deva & Singh, op.cit., pp-24-29.

Indian society is witnessing change-both upward and downward there is also mobility within the tribal life as they are coming up to modern age. Now the flows of de-tribalization are very frequent, because many tribes are turned into castes. While the tribes are moving to urban centres and metropolitan centres they have changed their life style and imitating higher and better form of life and their partial exclusion from traditional life signifies that the impact of modernization and urbanization have brought out the change. Instead of all these changes most of the tribal cultures are relatively homogenous¹⁴ In the Jharkhand area the tribals have been fighting to establish a different identity. So, for themselves it can be said that the forces of urbanisation have provided an impetus to these tribes to fight against the outsiders and exploitators.¹⁵ Due to their social and political awareness they were able to brought some change in their life.

However, with the impact of modern social forces the relationship between culture , religion and politics has been vitally disturbed and transformed. The interpretation

¹⁴ Ibid, pp.29-30.

¹⁵ V.Elwin, A Philosophy of NEFA, Shillong, 1964, pp.66-70.

of culture, religion and politics within the unevenly emerging urban context in India has been viewed as positive and unifying by several writers. N.K. Bose's *Culture and Society* brings the idea that despite regional heterogeneity there are certain festivals and one of that festival is like spring festival which binds the society for greater emancipation and enhances universal brotherhood. This celebration teaches the people to be more liberal, and enriches the Indian social heritage and unique tradition.¹⁶ M.N. Srinivas' *Religion and Society among the coorgs of South India* also exemplifies the sacred nature of 'Mangala Festival' to keep everybody under its shadow and enhances mutual interaction between families and neighbours.¹⁷ S. Radhakrishnan also, supporting the sacredness of religion says that spiritual life is the genius of India. India is rich with the holy sages, the rishis, who embody spirituality at its finest and purest. By their lives, they teach us the pride and power, wealth and glory. He outrightly advocates that religion is a matter of experience. It is rather Brahma darshana - insight into reality-a direct awareness of the world of values. Religious

¹⁶ N.K. Bose, Culture and Society in India, Asia Publishing House, 1977. pp.36-39.

¹⁷ M.N. Srinivas -Religion and Society among the coorgs of South India Asia Publishing House, 1965, p.17.

experience is not to be confused with the pursuit of truth, beauty or goodness. Religion means awe more than service, holiness more than virtue. Suggesting and quoting number of examples Radha Krishnan speaks that we worship not what we can, but what we cannot understand. So religion is spiritual discovery not creation.¹⁸ Next the attempts of Vishva Bandhu and Sunit Kumar Chatterjee to consider the real value of culture and religion for humankind and the stability of the social mechanism in the blessings of God and Super Power. Both the writers make the point that real religious life can and does evolve in the human heart everywhere and at all times, a uniformity in its general aspect, even though it may vary in the degree of intensity or outward expression.¹⁹

Moreover the urban culture of India is enriched in the contributions of the rural or folk tradition. Though all these writers have emphasized that culture, religion and politics are inseparable in nature now we will provide the

¹⁸ S. Radhakrishnan, "The Genius of India" in M. Kulsrestha (ed.) Aspects of Indian Culture -VVR Institute, Hoshiarpur, 1961, p.4.

¹⁹ Vishva Bandhu and Sunit Kumar Chatterjee, in M. Kulasestra (ed.), Aspect of Indian Culture, VVR Institute, Hoshiarpur, 1961, pp.11-19.

arguments of some other contemporary writers to discuss on religion and politics in detail.

It may be pointed out that religion in modern India is not a static and unstable one. It keeps on changing its face, role and action in due course. To strengthen this argument, as it is an idea of many people, we can provide the exact calculation of various religious groups and their percentage in India. Article 25 says that right to freedom of religion is guaranteed and one can easily change and also profess the religion he/she prefers. Here in India, one should not violate the fundamental rights which is enshrined in our constitution. So for this India is a liberal and the biggest democratic country in the world, where no discrimination is created in the name of caste, creed and religion.

However, religion in our society is an inseparable and unreplacble identtly. But despite differences in belief and practice. The presentation of the data can exemplify the percentage of religious group in India. Now we shall highlighted the Indian population by religion²⁰.

²⁰ Census of India -1981.

Table - 4.2

Religious group	1961		1971		1981	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	(mil)	total	(mil)	total	(mil)	total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hindus	366.5	83.5	453.3	82.7	549.8	82.6
Muslims	46.9	10.7	61.4	11.2	75.5	11.4
Christians	10.7	2.4	14.2	2.6	16.2	2.4
Sikhs	7.8	1.8	10.4	1.9	13.1	2.0
Buddhists	3.2	0.7	3.8	0.7	4.7	0.7
Jains	2.0	0.5	2.6	0.5	3.2	0.5
Others	1.5	0.3	2.2	0.4	2.8	0.4
Total	439.2	100.0	548.2	100.0	665.3	100.0

Source : Census of India - 1981

Note : This data do not include Assam.

So this above data have given us clear focus that except Muslims all most all religions are loosing in terms of percentages. The Muslim population is cumulatively

increasing as percentage of population in 1961 was 10.7 and by 1981 that is 11.4 per cent, but on otherhand other religions Hindus are decreased. The Hindu religion of 1961 was 83.5 per cent and now in 1981 its population is 82.6 per cent so also other religions like Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists are invariably neglected by growth.

It is evident that the deeper we proceed the more we come across problems in culture, religion and politics. Problem occurs because while the demographic change is perceived negative as India being a Hindu dominated country some never tolerate the growth in Muslim population and they can divert anything like economic, politics and culture to communalism. The Hindu view of life as they think is being overtaken neglected by Muslims. So now we are in a very unstable and awkward position to evaluate our social problems owing to the new meaning of culture, religion and politics.

We, however proceed to adhere that culture and religion are inseparable also indispensable for social solidarity. These two elements are over the years keeping relationship intact one cannot live without another. They have been trying to integrate forces like spirits and beliefs. But now

culture necessitates all this and religion suitably adopting into it. Religion gives culture many new directions and diversions. That is why culture is being proud of, and it creates a new system of ideology and usefulness. But while we are forced to discuss politics, exclusively at present moment and we are ambiguously reaching at a point where no conclusion can be drawn. Culture and religion have their blood link with politics. Politics can easily overtly and covertly change the socio-economic environment. Nothing is beyond doubt that the major active participation of some communal elements who are more responsible for the spreading of politics of religion a fast spreading epidemic. Even the mass media and biased public opinions are in the favour of the slow poisonous politics they are eroding social harmony and congregating for communal politics. Could we say that politics of B.J.P., V.H.P., R.S.S., Shiv Sena and Bajrang Dal are out of religious propaganda and the role of Islamic Sevak Sangh and Jamait-I-Islami are disapproving religion based politics?? Quite often one will be mistaken and erroneous if his/her ideological banner will reject the politics of religion. We have closely witnessed the happenings of 'Black Sunday' on the 6th December 1992, Where communal virus had captured the minds of secular people. Politics of present society re-activated the history of

great traditions and killed some innocent people to strengthen the religious culture. The long hitherto historic structure of the masjid was demolished by some fundamentalist forces and the so called liberal Hinduism had glorified the religious sanctity. For that the history long national identity, loyalty and sacred nature of Indian secularism was massacred in the strength of Hindu-Muslim communal identity.

Undeniably politics has multiple face, numerous role to play and succinctly attaches value based ideologies for India in particular and world society in general. Politics is a day to day concern and without the symbol of politics it would be quite impossible to carry out the conjectural life in society. Politics awakens the people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion to enter into the field of rationality. Policy making and administration would be meaningless without the support of politics. Whosoever has mentioned-keep all the ideas to highlight the modalities of politics and political structure to enhance social awareness.

Arun Shorie and V.R. Krishna Iyer explain the exact nature of politics and religion. Both the writers campaign

further to justify that religion does not have any dubious and non-sacred role to play in any society. In their mind religion stands for social privilege to enhance the quilibrium model to attain peace. Arun Shorie explains that the defects in the Indian Constitution and points out a lot of inconsistencies in every community and particularly more problematic in the provisions of appeasment to the minorities. Hindu religion for him gives philosophical advice to uphold the banner of universal brotherhood. According to him Hindu religion is the most liberal and humanistic that paves the way to fight against parochialization and approaches for universal orientation. For him " the Indian Society could only succeed if the Hinduism gets highest priority. " For the sake of religious sanctity he criticised the role of modern politics. In his mind Indian meaning of religion is fostering equality for all mankind. His historical analysis points out that politics has certainly misguiding and misunderstanding religion. .But the India meaning of religion is to foster equality for all mankind.²¹

²¹ Arun Shorie, Religion and Politics, Roli Books Ltd., 1989, pp.9-10.

Arun Shorie's book 'Religion and Politics' clearly shows that religion is relentlessly moving forward to attach values for pure and sacred life. He says that the tenets of Buddhism to Gandhism that enables us to avoid social crisis. Further moment he has proceeded to explain that the organised religion-the religion of the Book or the Church and the religion of the politician are altogether different things. Criticising politics he says that politics is an instrument of dominion, a device and nothing but that - in the pursuit of power and nothing but power. The interaction of religion and politics in this sense in our public life has vitiated the national life. It has once again become the fuel for violence and succession. Politics as he understands put perversion and the politicians portray the consequences of inflaming the people with religion. His idea is that secularism in politics cannot be sustained set forth if the people of India will be mired in communalism. Accusing various religious communities Arun Shourie says that none calls oneself Indian, but only Hindu, Muslim or Christian. This attitude is dividing the country on communal line.²² According to him "The laws of land are liberal in nature which cause greater problems in every policy." Again he says that the picture of Indian polity, economy and

²² Arun Shorie, op.cit., p.287.

society cannot move up with the spirit of harassment to some people and appeasement to others²³.

Besides Arun Shorie's approach to understand this social phenomenon V.R. Krishna Iyer takes some measures to highlight the meaning of religion and politics. Although he is a Marxist, he never supports atheistic secularism which aims at discarding religion. Krishna Iyer never rejects religion completely nor considers it as the opium, nor does he approve the conservative and sectarian religion which refuses to transcend the medieval framework of thought. He takes a liberal and rational view of religion. He does not subscribe to the view that religion is irrelevant or invalid in modern time. Politics should be based on secular principles and values only. Further Krishna Iyer says that religion is a moral idea and also as a means of relating the individuals to the society. Religion should not be stereotyped as conservative, sectarian or superstitious way of thinking. And every religion has made a powerful challenge to the status quo.²⁴ He says that through religion we can experience the truth through science we can investigate the

²³ op.cit., p.462.

²⁴ V.R.Krishna Iyer, Religion and politics, Konark Publisher, 1991, p.42.

truth. He further says that values like non-violence (Hinduism), compassion (Buddhism), love (Christians), justice and equality (Islam) are eternal and complementary. So religion as an ennobling phenomenon will always remain relevant necessary and cannot be done away with²⁵.

Although Krishna Iyer's main thrust is on religion he holds that the the need of this hour is to build secularism, whose dynamism is social and economic justice. It is our fundamental duty to be secular in politics and avoid communal politics which is not going to generate social coherence and peaceful progress. Politics may show interest in keeping relation with culture and religion but due to its concern with the pursuit of power it distorts the later. That is why today's politics is not like yesterdays politics nor like Greek nor Spartan politics. The aim of politics is to perturb- rather goal attainment is special selfish character of politics²⁶.

Asghar Ali Engineer has attempted to prove that unlike past where there was violence for religious practice now communal riots are recent phenomena. He extends his

²⁵ Ibid, p.99.

²⁶ Ibid., 1991, p.205.

argument that communal violence since the early sixties and caste violence since the late sixties have become, a part of our life in India. We are enthusiastically supporting communal violence and our conscience is not shocked nor do we ask for any solution."²⁷

He further asserts that India which is a being a developing country, among other things the electoral politics creates an ethnic consciousness among the people. Besides the haves of warring communities successfully exploit the sense of ethnic or communal identities of their respective communities to serve their narrow political ends. So politicisation of caste and inclusion of religion into that results in violence and finally that will be transformed into communalism.

Another feature of his analysis is that bulk of India's population are still under the burden of colonial legacy. Moreover in a tardily going economy religio-cultural, linguistic diversities become handy for creating divisive tendencies. Because the Indian social structure is nebulous

²⁷ Asghar Ali Engineer, Communal Riots in Post Independence India, Sangam Book, 1984, p.1.

and powerful with caste, class, ethnicity and religion and the communal holocausts are depending on them.²⁸

According to Asghar Ali Engineer not only communal parties are coming forward to instigate the whole problems and issues but secular parties like Congress (I) are also playing politics on the communal line behind the scenes.²⁹

So he means to highlight that in a developing economy with slow rate of development in ideas, beliefs and formation the social violence is endemic in nature. Unless we root out the communal seeds then it will be very difficult to hope for a smooth social order and peaceful existence. His key argument is that India cannot be a secular state with the potent of religion mixed with politics, and Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi Controversy is an out come of politics of Religion.³⁰

On consideration of the plurality and hierarchy within Indian society and the extremely limited nature of social mobility on the one hand and a review of observation of

²⁸ Ibid, p.2.

²⁹ Asghar Ali Engineer, (ed.) Babri Masjid -Ramjanam Bhoomi Controversy, Ajanta Publishing House, pp.1-10.

³⁰ Asghar Ali Engineer, op.cit., p.14.

contemporary authors on the theme of coalescence of culture, religion and politics, on the other. We can conclude thus :

In modern urban-Indian context the mixture of religions and politics has tended to completely distort the nature of both religion and politics. Within society, such a mixture is playing havoc with the fragile social harmony, unleashing forces of brutality, violence and extreme form of disorder and disturbance: whatever one might say about the unifying aspects of religion theoretically considered, within the concrete situation of minimal urban India, it has increasingly proved divisive and disturbing. The secular solution, though limited, the corrective is not in abandoning it but to search for non-dominant forms of religion as a new basis for urban culture and civic life.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

In the introductory chapter, the concepts and theories of the three elements, Culture, Religion and Politics are reviewed, where most of the theorists have supported that these three elements are closer to each other and essential for human life, because culture is the way of life, religion is a code of conduct and politics teaches to be vigilant. They are omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

In the second chapter my basic analysis is on the role of religion in urban centre and their impact upon general people.

Third chapter carries, the secular and religious movements by left parties and right parties. In that chapter I have explained that religion as an instrument that takes social cohesion. These three elements (culture, religion, politics) being inseparable from each other have also been producing communal violence. The root of all these disturbances are politics of religion. Some voluntary and secular organizations are wholeheartedly fighting communalism. These two trends are important in urban centre.

In the fourth chapter I have explained the issues and trends of culture, religion and politics in urban India. The

major analysis after reviewing the present socio-economic and political scenario.

The fifth chapter is conclusion. Summary of the chapters have worked out and I have suggested: separate religion from politics.

This is an analysis of urban culture. Special attention has been paid to enquire into the three aspects of our urban life i.e. culture, religion and politics. These three elements play some specific roles in urban centres. The cities with its housing shortages, slums, unemployment, poverty, pollution, noise, inadequate means of communication and transport and unmanageable traffic are breeding grounds of crime, delinquency, alcoholism, drug abuse and prostitution. Cities are also centres of activity, creativity and innovative which gives the renewed figure and strengthen the civilization.

Taylor describes culture as a social heritage. It is the gift of the society to an individual. Radcliffe-Brown is concerned with the survival of society rather than that of individual only. Clifford Geertz describes culture as a symbolic system. Eventually systematic interpretation of

culture by others have modified the theories of the pioneers to acknowledge social life and relationship.

Religion is also a part of social reality and has been playing an decisive role. Functionalists are of the view that religion is for order and unity in the society while Marx consider religion as the opium of the masses. The social of religion is variously undertaken and interpreted. From Durkheim to Talcott Parsons, different thinkers have tried to relate religion with culture. For Durkheim religion is a unified set of beliefs and practices related to sacred things. That is to say things set apart from profane or forbidden elements. For Parsons the integrity function of religion in the society takes social cohesion and co-operation.

Politics is influenced by culture and religion that prevails in the urban centre. The goal of politics is to maintain order. Now the order is at crisis because the interest of different sections clash. Religion is also used to maintain sectional interests to override the interests of other sections. It results in reactions and counter reactions which leads to provoke communal crisis. The urban

centre being the grounds of fierce economic competition are more likely to perpetuate and foment of crisis.

The Religion and politics are at present the integral parts of our social life. That is why India is unique in its social structure, it encompasses sacred religion and secular politics. We are marching ahead with the banner of law, liberty, equality and fraternity that is enshrined in our constitution.

Now I have a burden to search for an alternative in this crisis ridden society. Since we have built the secular democracy in India, it is our duty to preserve that. We should not come out with discriminatory policies, patronisation to one religion and prejudice to others. It is not the nature of democratic secularism. So I may suggest an idea, that is detachment of religion from politics, and no state sponsorship to patronise or promote to any religion. The communal parties like B.J.P., V.H.P., Shiv Sena and Bajarang Dal should be banned unconditionally as they are exploiting the people in the name of religion, if not I am suffocated with the perversion understanding of religion.

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