CASUATIVE FACTORS OF COMMUNAL CONFLICT

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Abstract:

Communal Conflict is the curse for Tamil Society. Bipan Chandra describes the nature and course of the Communal Conflicts in India. This study will help to analyse the real factors for the Communal Conflict. Here the work concentrates to explain about the role of society and its conditions in the social problems. It gives valuable guidance to eradicate the roots of Communal clashes from the minds of the people. It strengthens the unity among the people. It will use to build a peace building in society.

Key Words : Attitudinal Aberration, Communal, Disparity, Prejudice, Upheaval.

1.Introduction:

A wave of communal riots swept across the country. They spread like wild fire from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Kutch. [1]While defining community in the Indian context, Robert Hardgrave Jr. says, that in India, community usually refers to a racial, caste, linguistic or religious group rather than a locality as in the United States.[2]Bipan Chandra describes communalism as the product of a particular situation of a particular society, economy and polity which creates problems. The people are keen to understand the causes of these problems.[3]This study highlights the major and general causes for the Communal Conflict in India and particularly in Tamil Nadu. Generally Communal Conflict is one of the hurdles to the social, economic, political and cultural development. Some social, economic, political and cultural factors are responsible for the Communal Conflict.

1.1SOCIAL DISPARITIES :

The age old practice of caste system and untouchability has created social barriers and inequalities in the Tamil society.[4] There are four varnas and every respective varna has its own norms and values from birth to death. Caste is also responsible for division of labour in the rural areas. A study that was conducted in the village of Sripuram in the Tanjore district reveals the "Brahmins, non-Brahmins and Adi-Dravidas not only live in different parts of the village, historically they have occupied different position in the economic structure of the village, with Brahmin as land owners, non-Brahmins mainly a tenants and Adi-Dravida's as agricultural

labourer. This set-up have paved the way communal conflict. Suppression by the dominant group over the subordinate race, caste minority religion is also a cause for conflict between the groups.[5] Sometime the untouchables were denied certain basic privileges of living. Socially they are lappers; economically they are workers than slave. Religiously they are denied to enter the temple. They are denied to use public well, public school, public hospital, public tap, Public Park and the like.[6]

There were three major non-Brahmins group in Tamil Nadu. 1. The non-Brahmin Caste Hindus, 2. The Muslims 3. The Christians. These were apart from the untouchables. The majority community of non-Brahmins felt that opportunities for government service were unduly denied to them and to the same extent unduly great opportunities were given to the Brahmins. In India there were a number of dominations going on: Britain over India, the paramount of the crown over the autonomy of the Indian States, the majority Hindu over the minority Muslim, The minority Brahmin over the majority non-Brahmin in Tamil Nadu and so on. All these constituted fairly valid sources of social irritation. But the Brahmin dominating a rather dumb non-Brahmin majority could not be satisfactorily explained by any of the concerned parties. To the Brahmins and the British each was an opportunity to the other and they exploited each other. The British, especially the administrators resented their having to be dependent on the Brahmin for the successful administration of the state; the non-Brahmin resented the absence of opportunities for his community to occupy important positions in Government service[7]

1.2. ECONOMIC IMBALANCE

The disabilities of the Harijans were not restricted only to the social sphere but there were extended into the economic sphere too. The very minority position of the Brahmin and the awareness of surrounding hostility made him suspect the internet dangers in the environment and set about consolidating himself as best he could. He was from ancient time religious by tradition, philosophical temperament, clever by necessity, aloof by choice and anything by profession. He had resided in a false world of myth created by him, thinking that fragile shell would protect him forever. But there were two contemporaneously prevailing conditions which enables and encouraged the non-Brahmins to create new and opposite myths to discount the Brahmin and to push him out of positions of vantage which he was found occupying the first place, the new education which he was no receiving told him about the revolutionary dogmas of equality, liberty and fraternity and the democratic theory of the validity of majority decision and rule.

The Brahmins did occupy a disproportionately large number of official positions during the six decades between the mutiny and Gandhi, on the emergence into office of the Justice party in madras. Some data will be revealing. It has been estimated that the Brahmins occupied 55, 82.3 and 72.6 percent of the posts of Deputy Collector, Sub-judge and District munsif in 1912, and that between 1870 and 1918 the Brahmin graduates of the Madras University ranged between 64% and 71% of the total number of graduates while for the non-Brahmins the percentage varied between 18 and 22. The non-Brahmins set themselves to rectify this situation[8].

The agrarian society gradually changes its nature because of westernization, urbanization and industrialization. The migrated people from rural areas have a chance to work in the cities, here the economic dependency state is facing a change. Economic independence of one group is also another cause for conflict. According to Karlmarx, "conflict is a natural consequence of economic contradiction between classes occupying different positions in the means of production in the stage of capitalism. This contradiction is recognized by the working class who will wage a class war against the earliest class thus resulting in conflict.

The economic prosperity of the social groups involved in a conflict is another factor. The people who have enough money to mobilize radicals and criminals for militant activities matter a lot. Even for the purchase of legal and illegal weaponry and for preparing for violence, the property of people plays a role. It people are prosperous; they are able to sustain the cost of violence. Then the economically sound section plays a major role in providing the instruments of violence the economic status gives a feeling of potency in terms of handling problems involved in such disasters. The people who are fanatic and wealthy enough to spend money for this type of engagement consider it a crusade to damage the other community, not only to destabilize it economically but also to cause a social and political injury to it[9].

1.3 POLITICAL UPHEAVEL:

The British Government was prevented to Brahmin domination in the political field. They thought that the Brahmin influence was threat to this supremacy here. Justifies who assumed ministerial office had to manage only the transferred subjects like education, rural development, etc. The Executive council had mostly a majority of Brahmin members till very late. Distinguished members of the Executive council like sir P.S. SivaswamiIyer, C.P. RamaswamyIyer were note worthy administrations and a majority judges of the Madras High Court again were Brahmin. But the government orders which regulated the recruitment to public serve slowly reduced the number of Brahmin employees in the secretariat and in the subordinate civil service. It was a slow but sure process.[10]

Discriminatory policies and programmes, favoring and disfavoring certain group is one of the causes for caste conflict. Constitutional (or) legal measures to prevent the incidents of communal violence have not become successful as they were anticipated rules of law and order degrees and others could curb the violence only temporarily. The book Harijan-upper class conflicts reveals the fact that, "The constitutional safeguards, provide to the Harijans (or) at least as section of them to achieve higher education, better condition of living public employment, political representation and so on raised the general level of consciousness and awareness of Harijans, they also might have led them to demand for various things like equal say in the community affairs equal opportunities in economic and political affairs, better condition of living assertion of their basic and democratic rights and 80 on. The caste Hindus, who on the other hand have enjoyed a superior status all the time, may have disliked and therefore recent the progress achieved by the Harijan, developed Harijan might pose a threat to their dominance. They may work against granting the Harijan, their rights and privileges create obstacles in the way of development[11].

1.4 RELIGIOUS PREJUDICES:

Religion plays a vital role in human life, each religious has its own value and worshipping practices, though all the religions tell the similar principles. It has a different means to practice. The religious and racial fanaticism leads to conflicting situation. In India the Harijans were subjected to various religious disabilities in the society. They were prevented from entering temples, monasteries and cremation grounds and were not permitted to make we of them because it was believed that these places would become impure by their touching them. In this way the Harijans could not worship in the temple. Their presence was considered sufficient to defile to gods, left alone their worshippers.[12]

1.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL TENSION:

Psychological attitude such as hatred, envy, enmity also somehow leads to conflicting situation.[13] The factors or the basis which determine the frame of mind and psyche of a person involved in a communal fight. The word 'communal' is drawn from the word 'commune' means living together or sharing communality of the commune. The term signifies feeling of oneness with one's own people. We can define 'communal' people as those who share a common ideology and a set of values as propounded by their leaders. Their commitment to these beliefs is steadfast. They perceive each and everything from the interests of their groups as opposed to the larger interests of a plural society. They own responsibility to their group and beyond that they do not really feel themselves responsible or duty-bound to others as members of a larger society, humanity or mankind. Hence, the rest is 'not self'. Communication, as anidoeology, exists in the basic crucial characterizations .It is a total commitment of a certain set of beliefs and faith leaving no scope for rationality.It is related to those with whom such communality is shared and with whom such oneness is identified. To this extent, it is limiting of self to the community alone.It exists unwillingness to examine other faiths and beliefs propounded by other credible leaders.It is indicative in dedication and application of such thinking to promote and faster personal or collective interests in social, religious, political and economic fields to the extent of transgressing the bounds of law at times. Hence, it amounts to closing of self and being highly emotional about it.[14]

1.6 ATTITUDINAL ABERRATION:

Conflict has been defined in many ways depending upon the suitability focus and the group interest. Communal conflict is a struggle of values or claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain desired values but also to neutralize or injure or eliminate their rivals. It is viewed as the active striving for one's own preferred outcome which it attained, precludes the attainment by others of their own preferred outcome, there by producing hostility. [15] In many cases the local issue plays a key role in the eruption of communal violence. The local issue is called as the micro factors. As in pre-independence days, the local issues are no longer confined to playing of music before the mosque or slaughter of

a low, although, even today, they have by no means lost their validity. But many new factors, in keeping with the changing socio-economic pattern have spring upon the communal scene. Some of these factors are competition between rival traders or small manufactures of the two communities, competition between two gangs of hoodlums dealing either in smuggling, illicit arms or liquor or similar other anti-social activities, scheming by local industrial magnates to weaken trade union by raising some communal issues, elections to local bodies or contest over some assembly or parliamentary seats, etc. Most of the riots tend to occur in medium sized towns (as in such towns petty bourgeois elements who are usually quite conservative and often tend to be communal predominate). All these factors must be taken into account for developing a comprehensive theory of communal conflict in the contemporary Indian society. [16]

General factors influencing clashes such as Denial of rights public and private sphere,Castehierarchy,Absence of land holdings,Customs and rituals,Division of Labor,Inter dependence for economic, social and spiritual needs,Illiteracy,Powerlessness,Ideas of purity and pollution,Maintenance of power relationship,Less political participation and Traditional stereotyped roles.[7]

1.7THE PARADIGM OF POLARIZATION:

Polarization is the state of concentration among two opposite conflicting or contrasting positions. It can be explained as the heightened sense of belongingness and identify resulting in emotional, mental and physical mobilization of an individual or individuals or a group, to cause cohesion [18].

It is improper to cover the whole dynamics of s problem by only one factor, as it is a configuration of several factors which jointly provoke violence. Such factors could be religious, economic, social, and political. The communal disturbances constitute a unique social reality of two social groups in antagonism. Hence the position of two groups with regard to their (1) State of mind and psyche, and (2) physical situations which are around become greatly significant in explaining the communal disturbances.

The polarities are of two types-permanent and temporal. The permanent polarities are of ideology, religion, race, region, caste, colour and sex. These are historical in their characteristics. The temporal polarities are of occupation, profession and functions based on vested interests. These do not carry a permanent –status as compared to the permanent polarities.

Polarization, based on deep prejudices, throws the public into a cauldron of malicious and obstreperous mass upheaval [19].

The clashes between various castes and religious groups were neither a strange nor new phenomenon in Tamil Nadu. With a wide variety of casts, sub-casts, some being treated as not being human groups at all, friction was bound to arise with the war of attrition quick on its heels. Many religious and caste clashes took place in the state and had been wiped away by the waves of time. But the clashes, that took place after the India attained independence, have left deep scars, some of which had not totally been erased, with scabs some of them still sticking on [20].

Conclusion:

Communal riot was a sudden and spasmodic incident. It was an aspect of social pathology and its causation either in prevalence of a communal atmosphere generated by religious feelings or caste feelings. It could be effectively handled by efficient administrative or police action and secular public opinion. Communal conflict is a struggle of values of claims to status, power and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain desired values but also to establish their power.

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