

Topic – Stages of Communalism

Bipin Chandra has described the Communalism with three stages. The first stage he calls is Communal Consciousness; the second stage is Liberal Communalism and the third stage to be Extreme Communalism. These three stages are important to be read as they make the important part of [Communalism](#), an important topic in Mains GS-I and Essay too.

This article will provide you with relevant facts about stages of communalism for [IAS Exam](#).

Basic Facts about Communalism

There are various questions that cross an aspirant's mind while reading about Communalism and those are:

- How to define communalism?
- Factors responsible for the rise and growth of communalism in India
- Which organization and individuals in pre-independent and post-independent India are called communal?
- What is majority and minority communalism and what are its consequences?
- What are the trends noticed in the recent past especially after independence as far as the trend for communalism is concerned?

According to Bipin Chandra, in his book, “India since Independence”, “Communalism is an ideology based on the belief that Indian society is divided into religious communities, whose economic, political, social and cultural interests diverge and are even hostile to each other because of their religious differences.”

However, it is important for us to be sensitive towards certain distinctions regarding communalism. For example, someone making efforts towards promoting his/her own community, religion, social group cannot be treated as communalism. It is only when their thoughts, writings, actions, etc. are directed against a particular community- be it religious, linguistic, or any other identity, is referred to as communalism.

In this context, it is important to be aware of the three important phrases which the great historian, Bipin Chandra, mentioned in his book, “Communalism in Modern India”.

First Stage of Communalism - Communal Consciousness

The 1st stage of communalism, according to Bipin Chandra, originated mainly in the second half of the 19th Century, due to the social religious reform movement. But, if we closely look at the social religious

reform movement- this was not aimed against a particular community. These reform movements were brought about to bring certain positive changes in their respective communities. But, except for the 'Shuddhi Movement' launched by Swami Dayanand Saraswati which was controversial, the social religious reform movement was not directed against a particular community as such.

This 'communal consciousness' can be explained through the basis of the below example. When a Hindu begins to think of himself as 'Hindu' and a Muslim begins to think of himself as 'Muslim'. When a peasant for example starts recognizing himself as a 'peasant', or a worker in a mill starts recognizing himself as a 'mill-worker', then this is referred to as the beginning of a 'class consciousness'.

Second Stage of Communalism - Liberal Communalism

This stage is marked by the development where a particular group of people or community starts believing that their political, economical, social and religious interests are different from the other community. For instance, when a group of Hindus start believing that their political, economical and socio-cultural interests are different, from say, that of Muslims and vice-versa we call it the 2nd stage of communalism.

Third Stage of Communalism - Extreme Communalism

The third stage of communalism is when a group of people, start believing that their interests are not only divergent but also begin to clash, or are contradictory. It is this that leads to violence. Thus the 2nd stage is the result of the 1st stage of communalism, and the 3rd, the result of the 2nd stage of communalism, according to Bipan Chandra. By and large this theory has been accepted by Historians.