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Q19

Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has got transformed into the latter in independent India. (250 words).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · GS I · 15 marks · Social Empowerment, Communalism and Secularism
Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism and secularism.

Core demand of the question

- Distinguish religiousness or religiosity from communalism
- Give one clear example from independent India of how the first was turned into the second

Revision summary

Religiosity is lived faith and rite; communalism is religion as a political bloc against an other.

- **The two can share symbols, but they differ in aim:** salvation or worship versus power and exclusion.
- **Ayodhya shows the turn:** old Rama devotion organised into a campaign that demolished the Babri Masjid in 1992.

Riots and polarised voting completed the shift from pilgrimage to communal identity.

Protecting worship while punishing hate keeps the distinction real.

Flow diagram

Religiosity prayer pilgrimage -> Rama bhakti Ayodhya
Rama bhakti Ayodhya -> Political campaign rath yatra
Political campaign rath yatra -> Communalism bloc vs Muslim other
Communalism bloc vs Muslim other -> 6 Dec 1992 riots polarisation
Law equal citizenship -> Religiosity prayer pilgrimage
Law equal citizenship -> Checks Communalism bloc vs Muslim other

Conclusion

- Protect pilgrimage and prayer; prosecute hate, rumour, and riot. Mixed civic life, not a ban on faith, is the reply to communalism.

Religiosity is devotion; communalism is the political use of a religious bloc against another community. In independent India, Rama bhakti at Ayodhya was transformed, through campaign and the 1992 demolition, into communal mobilisation. The distinction stands only if the state defends faith as a right and refuses that transformation.

Facts & figures

Articles 25-28

Constitutional protection of religious freedom, which covers religiosity, not communal violence.

Rath yatra, 1990

Political-religious procession that scaled Ayodhya devotion into a national communal campaign.

Babri Masjid demolition, 6 December 1992

Destruction of the mosque at Ayodhya that marked the transformation into open communal rupture.

Kar seva

Volunteer sacred labour frame used to mobilise cadres at the disputed site as if politics were pilgrimage.

Shah Bano, 1985

Maintenance case after which personal-law religiosity was pulled into communal and vote-bank contest; a supporting, not the main, example.

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