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Q20

Discuss the impact of post-liberal economy on ethnic identity and communalism.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · GS I · 15 marks · Social Empowerment, Communalism and Secularism
Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism and secularism.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the impact of post-liberal economy on ethnic identity and communalism
- Treat 1991 as the opening, and keep ethnic identity and communalism as two related effects

Revision summary

After 1991, markets, private jobs, and mass media grew together.

Ethnic claims for language, tribe, and new states continued inside that growth.

Communal mobilisation used television, rumour, and later social media.

Riots and polarising politics showed that GDP does not cancel religious conflict.

The market can mix people at work and still sell identity at home and at the vote.

Flow diagram

1991 market media cities -> Middle class inequality

Middle class inequality -> Ethnic statehood diaspora claims

Middle class inequality -> Communal news riots vote

Ethnic statehood diaspora claims -> Identity re-tooled

Communal news riots vote -> Identity re-tooled

Conclusion

- Enforce the rule of law after riots as strictly as after a tax default, or the market will treat communal peace as optional.
- Reduce inequality and informal insecurity so ethnic entrepreneurs find fewer angry customers.
- Keep public culture, textbooks, and platform rules from turning every economic rumour into a communal story.

The post-liberal economy enriched a consumer India and did not automatically secularise it. Ethnic identity and communalism gained media, money, and grievance; the way forward is equal law and less economic fear, not a hope that growth alone will cool identity.

Facts & figures

1991 reforms

Liberalisation of trade, industry, and finance that defines the post-liberal economy in this question.

Babri Masjid, 1992

Demolition in Ayodhya that set a communal timeline overlapping the reform decade.

New states, 2000

Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, and Jharkhand, showing ethnic-regional claims after liberalisation began.

Private satellite news

1990s-2000s media that nationalised both consumer desire and communal frames.

Gujarat 2002

Major communal violence in a state that also marketed itself as an investment destination.

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