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Q1(e)

Discuss the growth of religious sects in India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Religion and Society

Religion and Society: Religious communities in India; Problems of religious minorities.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the growth of religious sects in India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Sects are organised religious paths that multiply inside Indian faiths.

Print, gurus, and cities help them grow.

Sanskritization, Dalit exit, and purification drives all feed sects.

They offer community and can become political blocs.

Ghurye's single Hindu whole underplays this fission.

Introduction

Religious sects in India grow as organised paths inside and beside the large faiths. Growth is not a simple return of tradition. Print, gurus, caste mobility, and the market make new fellowships that promise purity, healing, or dignity.

Body**Why sects grow**

- **Yogendra Singh's modernisation of tradition:** bhakti and reform recast as associations with membership, media, and campuses.
- **Sanskritization and anti-Brahmin or Dalit assertion both produce sects:** some copy higher ritual, some exit, as in **Navayana** Buddhism.
- Urban anonymity and illness send people to gurus who offer a portable community.

Patterns

- Hindu sampradayas, Sikh reform streams, Christian denominations, and Islamic reform groups all branch.
- Syncretic dargah piety competes with purifying sects that police boundaries.
- G. S. Ghurye's civilisational Hinduism is too smooth; sects are how that civilisation actually splits.

Social functions

- Sects can equalise inside the fellowship and still keep caste at marriage.
- They can be welfare machines or political blocs.

Flow diagram

Need healing dignity mobility -> Sects grow
Media urban guru -> Sects grow
Caste reform exit -> Sects grow

Conclusion

Sects grow because large religions do not meet every honour, healing, and mobility need. In India they multiply through media and migration. Growth is organisational and political, not only theological.

Facts & figures

Bhakti-reform lineage

Older Indian pattern of sect formation that modern associations continue.

Navayana

Ambedkarite Buddhist fellowship as sectarian exit from caste Hinduism.

Guru-media

Televised and urban fellowships that recruit beyond the village temple.

Yogendra Singh

Sects as modern organisational forms of tradition.