COMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND STATE POLITICS: ELECTORAL PROCESS IN UTTAR PRADESH SINCE 1989

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
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NAZIA KHALEEQE

UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF
DR. IQBALUR REHMAN
(Associate Professor)

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
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(U.P) INDIA
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ABSTRACT

Communalism refers to a politics that seeks to unify one community around a religious identity in hostile opposition to another community. It seeks to define this community identity as fundamentally primary and fixed. It attempts to consolidate this identity and present it as natural – as if people were born into the identity. In order to unify and consolidate the community, communalism suppresses distinctions within the community and over emphasizes the essential unity of the community against other communities. It nurtures a politics of hatred for an identified other community. Their enter-personal relations continue to be shaped on communal lines. Individuals, communal organisations, political parties in some form or the other play a role in communalising the Indian society the expressions of which, among many, are most often Communal Violence. The state of Uttar Pradesh is the hot bed of communalism. The politics in this state since 1990s has been characterised by the interplay of Communal Violence, communal politics and caste politics.

The communal violence is the focus of study. It tries to analyse what Communal Violence is? Is it really a political tactic? Is it spontaneous or organised? What affects it has on electoral politics? Does it affect the electoral results? Various other questions related to the issue are undertaken for analysis. For this study the major communal incidents of Uttar Pradesh particularly happening emerging at/before the time of elections are analysed. The proceeding electoral outcomes are looked into to understand the relationship between Communal Violence and electoral outcomes. The basic position of analysis in this study is that the communalisation and Communal Violence, far from being relatively impulsive, is deliberately planned by different vested forces/politicians for an electoral gain/purpose.

In order to make a comparative study, the history of Communal Violence and communal politics of pre and post colonial period is discussed in detail in this work. This study observes that the communalism and its various shapes is not a new phenomenon for India. India is basically a multi-cultural society from thousands of years. The feature of clash or conflict is the common thing in this kind of society. But the history of peaceful co-existence communally represented differently to paint conflict in the inter-communal
relations of the Indian communities. The conflicts prior to the 19th century were infrequent, localised and short lived because people of India were having the nature to avoid such kind of conflicts. The politics of the time was not communalised. In colonial era, the British communal policies and different kinds of policies and activities carried out by both Hindu - Muslims organisations increased the fever of communalism resulting into number of Communal Violence incidents in the country. Finally the partition of British India laid the foundations of communalism for the future politics of India and the subcontinent. In order to analyse Communal Violence in post-Independent India the instances of growing communalism may be referred for the purpose. During the first decade after Independence, there was no large scale inter-community violence. But the inter-community tensions between communities began to resurface in the beginning of the 1960s and the 1990s witnessed the most riots in the last five decades. Basically from the 1980s to 1990s, the Hindu-Muslim hostility and collective violence began to take “political centre stage.” Growing forces like as the Hindu nationalism focusing particularly on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi issue, demand for the abolition of Muslim Personal Law (MPL) and Article 370 on Jammu and Kashmir, Hindu Rashtra etcetera are the interconnected issues, around which communalism have developed. On the basis of these issues, the communal organisations, political leaders and political parties mobilises the people more at the time of the elections in the name of religion, caste etcetera.

For this aim, the study tries to identify the communal ideologies under the head of Hindu-Muslim Communalism. The Hindu communalism has been running its communal stance under the umbrella of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) with the guideline of Hindutva ideology. Hindutva, it is learnt, is a phenomenon that shapes and colours everything in communalised fashion from national security to identities: every aspect of Indian life. Violence is a core aspect of it. The agenda of the followers of this ideology is to make the “Hindu Rashtra (Hindu nation).” Simultaneously, for the radical Muslim the ideal remained an “Islamic state” and universal Islamic revolution. During 1980s they mobilises certain Muslim issues on communal line and shows agitation towards it by connected themselves in a different identity of community and due to their communal attitude they affected/reacted the Hindu communalists simultaneously.
The communal attitudes of both the community, particularly in Uttar Pradesh have been found at great level. Because the state of Uttar Pradesh which having a diverse culture with most populous and substantial variation in socio-religious cleavages most often associated with intra-and inter caste and community conflicts and for politicians it’s a political tool. Analytical study examines that they never miss to politically mobiles the conflicts and communal issues. Communal Violence, communal state politics and low castes politics in the 1990s, is the common feature of this state politics.

The communal political fertility of Uttar Pradesh examines in the context of 1989 - 2014 general elections with core relatively to the assembly elections. In this state, political parties like Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Samajwadi Party (SP), Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and various other communal groups play/played a dominant role in the communal state politics. We collected in chronological order or in a systematic way each and every Communal Violence incident, near to the each and every assembly and general elections of Uttar Pradesh. Researcher tried to extract the data empirically in regarding the communal issues/propagandas which mobilised by the politicians on the name of religion but proved to be a political interest/purpose of the communal organisations/political parties at the time of elections. The qualitative and quantitative evidence also shows that politicians and political parties did act in the way in which Communal Violence laid impact on the behaviour of voters, victims and the result of elections that is the vote share and seats especially from the communal conflict zones/constituencies.

This is the game of political parties, particularly the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) directly and indirectly has been playing an important role in communalising Indian politics from this land. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) occupies a specific space in this game of “politics and Hindutva.” The party held sway over the state winning 50-plus seats from the there in the general elections of 1991, 1996 and 1998 and in 1998 it formed a coalition government at the centre. In 2014 general elections also, communal political propaganda helped victory to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).

Simultaneously the findings of this study also show that the game of Communal - Caste Politics, is not particularly attached to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) alone, but other parties also played/playing a role in the enhancing of communal politics in the land of
Uttar Pradesh. This state because its religious and political importance has become a permanent communal political stage/ground for the, act/play of communal state politics drama/game.

The Western Uttar Pradesh faced the sustained communal propaganda that helped victory to the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014. There are conscious and deliberate ways in which prejudices among Hindus and Muslims were not only allowed to exist and grow but strengthened to cause the movement of Indian society towards the deepening of communalization. Communalism during elections is a recurrent problem which affects India especially the state of Uttar Pradesh in North. Political manifestoes of many parties thrive on the sentiments of religious and ethnic identities and infest them with a sense of divisiveness and hatred. They create electoral segregation and then eventually move in on their chosen electorates to garner their respective votes. Voters are motivated to vote on communal lines by the political parties completely forgetting the ideal of Indian secularism. Communal Violence and the individualised act of violence against Muslims are justifiably being projected as revenge for the supposedly Muslim atrocities of the last 1,000 years.

Communalism has become normal and gained credible acceptability in Indian society. It has spread all across in all walks of life. It displays itself in different forms, shapes and connotations. It is on the rise. Elections and Communalism have become contributory to each other. Their fusion has taken place. This helps the Hindutva agenda. The state of India instead of promoting constitutional values often becomes subservient to it. Therefore communalism not only survives but thrives. India as a secular state is threatened. Its capacity to face the challenges of communalism head on right from the days of independence was under question. All attempts made by Indian state to control communalism dealt with its symptoms: Communal Violence therefore failed. Coping with symptoms is not going to de-communalised India and occurrence of Communal Violence. In contemporary times the tentacles of communalism have overpowered the capacity of state to defeat it.