Jawaharlal Nehru once stated "one must never forget that communalism in India is a latter-day phenomenon which has grown up before our eyes". According to Humayun Kabir, "there is a talk about the 'rising tide of communalism' that I think, is not historically true... As a matter of fact, communal differences have been there as a canker in Indian polity only from the beginnings of the modern period". Even as early as 1931, the contemporary perception of communalism was that, it was of recent origin. The Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee Report of 1931 states, "Our retrospect of the Muslim period shows that the Hindu-Muslim problem in its present form is really of recent birth."
The Indian National Congress was the foremost national political organization in the country, before the Independence and after. And this organization had always taken a public posture of being non-communal. One of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress, Surendra Nath Banerjee once stated "that the Congress movement was for building a united India of Hindus and Muslims, of Parsis and Sikhs... Here we stand upon a common platform... Here, we have all agreed to bury our differences".

However, despite these assurances, the congress was often drawn into the activities or movements pioneered by the Hindu revivalists. In Punjab, for example, the cow protectionists were the congressmen. In the central provinces, the activities of the Gaurakshi Sabha (Cow Protection Society) founded by Gopalrao Hari Bhide were backed by the Mahratta Brahmin pleaders, the same men were the chief supporters of the Congress. In the United Provinces (UP) the heartland of India, several prominent congressmen, supported by traders, bankers and some landowners actively campaigned for outlawing cow slaughter and for the recognition of Devanagari as the official script in courts and government offices. Many of them were also the pioneers of the Hindu Sabha founded in December 1915 with headquarters at Allahabad. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was one among them. He was also a patron and a keen supporter of the Prayag Hindu Samaj, the Sanatan Dharam Maha sammelan and the Suddhi Sabha, the organization which triggered religious antagonism and contributed to the idea of separate communal
identification. In fact, he personified Hindu revivalism as opposed to the secular traditions of the Nehru, Kunzru and Sapru families.

In the early years, the Congress faced a dilemma. Its identification with Hindu revivalism resulted in a gradual alienation of the already skeptic Muslims. Some of the other leaders of the congress such as Balgangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and Lajpath Rai maintained that the Hindu masses could be roused through the use of religious pre-dispositions, the popularization of national myths and the celebration of Hindu festivals. In fact Tilak resolved the dilemma of the congress by blending Hinduism with nationalism. He invoked the spirit of resurgent Hinduism to rouse the masses. He also resuscitated the tales of the past Maratha greatness and the memory of Shivaji. These became the expressions of nationalism and a means of eliciting, activating and canalizing the dormant political energies. All this was done at the cost of alienating the Muslims from the Indian National Congress and the national mainstream.

Even the Swadeshi movement, which was a best weapon against colonialism which was dumping cheap finished products in the Indian markets had a communal overtone at some stage. The nationalism of men like Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal was closely identified with the religious symbols of Hinduism. The worship of Ganesha on a mass scale, the fervent appeals to the “grim goddess” Kali - all invoked a religious identity, which gave the Swadeshi movement a degree of communal colouring. But
these did not appeal\textsuperscript{11} to the Muslims of Bengal. Infact, the combined effect of religious conservation and political extremism had the effect of heightening communal tension and fostering the growth of Muslim separatism. The symbols meant to\textsuperscript{12} unite all the people of Bengal proved to be divisive.

The influence of religion was so pervasive that it was convenient to use religious links for political mobilization. As the sphere of Congress actively gradually extended, the so-called nationalists forged tactical alliances with religious – communal groups and institutions in order to secure their adherence to the congress movement. Mahatma Gandhi had used it in the case of the \textit{Khilafat} movement. Others however used religious networks to gain sufficient leeway for political manoeuvres at the provincial and national levels. Madan Mohan Malaviya for example used the\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Hindu Mahasabha} and its satellite organizations to carve out his own sphere of influence within the Congress. Infact, during the 1925-26 election campaign he wooed various communal elements and exploited religious issues to defeat his formidable rival, Motilal Nehru.\textsuperscript{14}

Infact the election results in the united provinces marked the triumph of the communalists, headed by Malaviya and financed by G.D.Birla. There was a great degree of Hindu-Muslim tension during the election period. The strength of the \textit{Swarajists} who fought on a non-communal plank, was reduced to 16 in 1926 from 31 in 1923.\textsuperscript{15}
On similar lines, there were revivalist and communal integration within the Muslims. As Banaras and Allahabad were to the Hindus, so were Delhi, Lucknow, Aligarh and Deoband the centres of Orthodox Islamic revivalism. But there was one difference. The communalists and the extremists in the Congress were isolated from the main stream national politics. Although they were very vehement in making demands, they failed to evoke any response from the congress except during the Khilafat movement. But this was not the case with their Hindu counterparts in the congress. They were able to wield greater influence on communal lines within the congress. Most communal minded Hindu leader could conveniently assume the nationalist garb and freely sail between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress. Many a congressmen were communalists under this national cloak. Infact, the Belgaum session of the Hindu Maha sabha in January 1925 was attended by Congress stalwarts like Rajendra Prasad, S.Satyamurti, Lajpat Rai, Malaviya and Jairamidas Doulatram. At a time when communal feelings were running high in the country; the presence of such men at the Hindu Maha sabha meeting could only serve to estrange many Muslims from the congress and the eventual formation of the Muslim League.

Defining Communalism:

According to Bipan Chandra, communal antagonism was not inherited from the past. It was not an inevitable product of our history. Communalism is not only in the present; it is of the present. “Thus the social roots of commuanism as also its social economic and political
objectives were modern in the present and of the present”. According to Bipan Chandra, communalism starts with the assumption that in India people can be organized, grouped together, for secular, that is, economic, political, social and cultural purposes, around their religious identities. In other words, Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians form distinct communities not only for religious but also for non-religious purposes, because they follow the same religion.

After 1937 came an extreme or fascist communalism. The extreme communalists argued that not only were the interests of Hindus and Muslims divergent, they were mutually antagonistic and therefore irreconcilable. And so the phase of mutual hatred and separatism came. Jinnah and the Muslim League now argued that India consisted of two nations, which could not coexist inside the same state. On the other hand, V.D.Savarkar, RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha argued that India consisted of one nation, the Hindu nation. With this theory, the Muslims and the minorities in general were to be treated as ‘outsiders’.

“The former would divide the country formally into two states, the latter would create a state in which the religious minorities would lead a subordinate, subservient, second class existence.”

According to Bipan Chandra, in India even the term secularism has another specific feature, peculiar to India. In Europe, secularism arose and
developed in general to separate state from religion and in particular to keep religion out of education. But in India the colonial state, because of its intrusion into a society whose people did not and could not share the religion of the dominating ruling class, was basically a secular state and it was not based on any religion, especially after the lessons of the revolt of 1857 were learnt. The colonial state also, largely separated state-directed part of education from religion. Therefore secularism did not arise in India in the same manner and on the same issues as in Europe.  

"In India, it arose as the ideology of uniting the Indian people vis-à-vis colonialism. The imperative of the Indian national movement was the unity of the Indian people in the struggle against the colonial state."

Other Dimensions:

Communalism has different dimensions. Communalism has as its causes many and intricate factors like economic, religious, psychological and so on, the question as to which of these factors is the most important presumably means which is the most accessible to change.

There has been over the years, a strong view which interpreted communalism on economic terms. For example, Rajni Palme Dutt, in his book 'India Today' tries to analyse the communal problem in relation to the socio-economic rivalry which affects the rising middle classes.
“Behind the communal antagonisms ... lie social and economic questions.”

This is obvious in the case of the middle class communalist competing for positions and jobs. It is no less true where communal conflicts reach the masses. In Bengal and the Punjab, the Hindus include the richer land lord, trading and money lending interests; the Muslims are often the poor peasants and debtors. In other cases, big Muslim landlords will be found among the Hindu peasants.

The main focus of the thesis is not non-Brahmin movement, but communalism. Subramanian’s work

‘Ethnicity and Populist Mobilisation’ (1999) and V. Geeta and S.V. Rajadurai’s ‘Towards a Non-Brahmin Millenium’ (1998) are significant works. But they do not contribute directly to the major focus of the current thesis.

Dick Kooiman’s work, ‘Communalism and Indian Princely states: Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s’ (2002) accepts the definition of communalism given by Bipan Chandra (Communalism in Modern India, 1984). Dick Kooiman further states in his footnote that more recent research by Ghanshyam Shah confirms the validity and usefulness of Bipan Chandra’s definition given in 1984. Bipan Chandra himself has elaborated on some of these questions in his book ‘Essays on Contemporary India’ (New Delhi, 1993.)
The great contrast between the Muslims and the Hindus becomes glaring manifest when one studies the economic decline of the Muslim upper class against the background of the rise of new classes among the Hindus. The new situation favoured certain Hindu castes and communities who not only exploited it fully, but were so solidly entrenched in the new economy at all strategic points that all competitions from late comers were ruled out. According to P.C.Joshi the trading, financial and manufacturing classes on the one hand and the peasant, artisan and labouring class on the other belonged to different sets of castes and communities. This peculiar feature of India's economic revolution during the British period was also responsible for some peculiar features of her social evolution. That the conflict over economic interests most often found expression through communal, caste or regional tensions was one such feature.

After the trauma of partition and the communal conflict during the fifties, the communal conflicts in India were comparatively less at the all India level as well as in Karnataka. This was mainly due to the fact that people were generally diverting their attention to struggles for land reforms and struggles on other major issues. However, from the sixties onwards we come across increasing number of communal conflicts, which had a clear-cut method of planning. In the seventies there was further increase in the number of communal eruptions in various parts of India including Karnataka. These conflicts were often engineered by those forces who ultimately wanted to strengthen the statusquo and their control over the rest of the society.
In the field of communal relationships, some concepts are often used, sometimes vaguely and sometimes very specifically. These include, the terms communal, communal organization, communal riots, communal harmony, communalism etc. The term “communal” is derived from “commune” which was a small territorial division of self government of France. It meant a group of people living as a community. It also implied living as a self-governing body for certain limited local purposes, sharing certain common objects of living together as organisms within a larger national entity. In India, the word ‘communal’ has been used for those who are united by religious bonds. It has acquired, the meaning of an ‘objectionable activity’ by trying to benefit from some communal bond, especially religion, to gain an unfair advantage over and even at the cost of others, similarly organized on the strength of communal or religious bonds. Every organization which purports to exploit any common bond, such as that of creed, caste, locality, language or culture for the purpose of gaining unfair advantage for the members of the organization could be called a ‘communal organization’.

A communal organization may also be defined as follows :-

“A communal organization is one intended to facilitate the pursuit of or actually pursuing the objects of exploiting a difference of caste, community, religion, race, language, culture or religion for the purpose of obtaining unfair advantages at the expenses of other communities or
propagating hatred or hostility against other communities, who are not sharing the same organizational basis any activity pursuant to such an object will constitute an objectionable activity.\textsuperscript{30}

Communal riot is an unrestrained disturbance or tumult or disorder that takes place between different religious groups. Therefore, communalism refers to the doctrine that upholds the activities of the religiously united people for obtaining their advantages. Communal harmony, on the contrary means solidarity between the communities. (In the Indian context, religious communities). “Solidarity” also cannot be meant for total identification of the communities with each other. In real life, one may find a solidarity between the communities ranging from tolerant attitude towards each other to mutual integration.

A Survey of Literature:

Buchanan’s ‘A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar’, (London 1808) is highly informative work on the pre-modern and early colonial Mysore. Shama Rao has mainly concentrated on the narration of general political and administrative history of Mysore with occasional references to social or economic questions.

R.R.Diwakar has edited a general history of Myosre, titled, ‘Karnataka through the Ages’ (Bangalore, 1970). G.S.Halappa has published a pioneering work, ‘The History of the Freedom Movement in Karnataka’, Vol I and II (Bangalore 1964). Halappa’s work lacks depth on the deeper issues involving the nationalist movement or freedom struggle in Karnataka. The peasants, workers and students are not given deserving attention in the work, let alone the intricacies of communalism or other questions vis-à-vis nationalism.

On the economic history and economic development of modern Mysore, we have a few works such as ‘Economic Development of the Mysore State’ by V.L. D’Souza (Bangalore, 1937). ‘Gold, sport and coffee planting in My sore’ by R.H.Elliot (London, 1894), ‘Industrial Development in My sore’ by R.Balakrishna (Bangalore, 1940), ‘The Finances of the Mysore State 1799-1831’, by M.H.Gopal (Mysore 1960), ‘Tipu Sultan’s Mysore - An Economic Study’ by M.H.Gopal (Mysore 1971) and’ Economic Development of Karnataka’ (2 Vols) by K.Puttaswamiah (Lucknow, 1980).
On the question of individual Dewans and their relationship with the popular movements we have a few works which are either biographical or auto-biographical. Sir Mirza Ismail who was the Dewan of Mysore, during the crisis days of the communal disturbances has contributed an autobiographical work titled, 'My Public Life, Recollections and Reflections' (London, 1954).

On the 19th century colonial History of Mysore, ‘Karnataka History 1800-1900’, Vol. VI (Hampi, 1997) by Sebastian Joseph deserves attention. The work concentrates mainly on the economic and social situation, peasant struggles etc. Bjorn Hettne’s major work, ‘Political Economy of Indirect Rule – Mysore 1881-1947’, (New Delhi 1978) deals not only with the developmental questions within the limited autonomy, but also the major political and socio-economic changes.


Among the unpublished dissertations, mention may be made of Lelah Dushkin, ‘Non-Brahmin Movement in Princely Mysore’ (Pennsylvania 1974) Meera Rao, 'British Colonial Policies in Mysore – an
Economic Study' (Bangalore University 1982) and Gustafson Donald Rudolph, 'Making of a Model State – Mysore 1881-1902'.

'Report of the Bangalore Disturbances Enquiry Committee 1929' (Karnataka State Archives Bangalore) is the most important source material for the core chapters. The committee was headed by Sir. M. Visveswarayya, a former Dewan of Mysore. Visveswarayya was a great technocrat-cum-administrator, who was known for his upright behaviour and personal integrity.

Visveswarayya belonged to the Brahmin community and he did not have much sympathy towards the causes espoused by the non-Brahmin movement. The implementation of the Miller committee recommendations for job reservation was not liked by Sir. Visveswarayya and he had even expressed his views against it.

Although Visveswarayya was not sharing the non-Brahmin cause the report submitted by him did not highlight anything specifically against Sir. Mirza Ismail, who was considered as a non-Brahmin Dewan or against his associate Abbas Khan. The committee did not agree with some of the specific charges levelled against Mr. Abbaskhan by the Hindu agitators and the Bangalore Press, after going through the evidences.
After 1881, the state was under the indirect colonial rule with some degree of freedom in the internal administration. The British did not interfere with the day to day administration. Therefore, the question of British fishing in the troubled waters under the ‘divide and rule’ scheme did not arise. As far as we are concerned, we have not only the Report but also the evidences taken by the committee before us for cross checking. This enhances the reliability of the Report for our study on the Ganapati disturbances.

Many of the contemporary newspapers could not be relied, not only due to the nature of their editorial contents, but also due to the biased news items. Most of these newspapers in the twenties and the thirties had not matured from the level of propaganda tabloids.

Balanced and matured writing was absent so far as several newspapers are concerned. The ownership of the majority of these newspapers was in the hands of Brahmin community and the Fourth Estate used its pages for its campaign against Miller committee recommendations. The same newspapers did not express any self-restraint when communal passions were let loose in the highest degree. The newspapers were not merely reporting on the incident, but they in fact became participants and torch-bearers of the communal divide for those tragic days.
Hence, the contemporary newspapers which otherwise should have become a reliable source of information could not be depended upon. They only remain relevant to show the level of unrestrained writings when the society was divided communally.

The Present Study:

The present thesis entitled “Communal Situation in Princely Mysore” focuses on the political, social and economic situation in the first three decades of the 20th century in order to examine the roots of the communal disturbances of Mysore with special emphasis on the Bangalore Disturbances of 1928. Communalism has been, an issue closely related to the nature of state politics and power equations of different groups in India. That is why, in the present thesis, the emergence of communalism has been studied in the overall context of socio-economic situation and the political scenario.

Introductory chapter includes among other things, the explanation of the theme, its scope and objectives. The introductory chapter also includes a theoretical discussion and review of the existing literature. Since the thesis has depended heavily on archival sources, a discussion on these sources as well as on methodology has been included in the chapter.
The Second chapter has dealt with basically the social situation in princely Mysore during the first three decades of the 20th century. The position of the Muslims and the other minority groups has been discussed in the socio-economic context. That apart, the relative position of the Brahmin, non-Brahmins and the depressed castes has been dealt with, analyzing historical data.

The British colonialism, while leading to exploitation and deprivation also opened up new vistas for the educated middle class in the service sector. Along with this, the state sponsored industrialization and the educational programmes under the indirect colonial rule also led to changing caste and community equations and competitions. The third chapter probes into these complex issues.

As a corollary to the changing socio-economic scenario, the Backward Class Movement emerged in the Princely State of Mysore. The chapter discusses among other things, the ideological background of the movement, leadership and the struggle for new opportunities. The Miller Committee Report, its implementation and the impact have been dealt with in the fourth chapter.
Ganapathi Disturbances or Bangalore Disturbances of July 1928 began with the school boys and joined by the adults belonging to two communities. The disturbances were created over wide areas including public offices, central jail and main entrances to the city. By nightfall, serious riots took place involving Hindus and Muslims. Although the riots were suppressed with the intervention of the army, it created panic and tension. The fifth chapter has examined the circumstances leading to the struggle, involvement of various groups and also the role of the state machinery in quelling the disturbances.

The communal cleavage and the eventful conflict was viewed differently by both the Hindus and Muslims. Who had appeared before the enquiry committee to give evidences. While the Hindu witness talked more about the Ganesha statue removal in the school as the major cause of the disturbances, the Muslims talked more about the political scenario, in the state and the conspiracy to over throw Sir. Mirza Ismail, the non-Brahmin Dewan of Mysore. The sixth chapter discusses the details of these issues and the overall impact of them on the socio-political situation in the state.

The concluding chapter gives details of the findings of the thesis, ‘Communal situation in Princely Mysore’.
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