Communal Violence

For Prelims: [Definition of communal violence](), [Key incidents of communal violence in India, Major causes of communal violence, Role of state in communal harmony]().

For Mains: Communal Violence, Impacts of communal violence on society and economy, Institutional measures to combat communal violence, Importance of inter-community dialogue.

[Source: TH]()

Why in News?

Recently, **[communal violence]()** erupted in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, during a religious procession, leading to death and multiple injuries. The situation has prompted increased police presence and actions to maintain order.

What is Communal Violence?

- **About:**
  - The **[Indian Penal Code (IPC)]()** defines **[communal violence]()** as any act that promotes enmity between different groups on grounds of **religion, race, place of birth, residence, language**, etc., and does acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony.
- **BNS Provisions on Communal Violence:**
  - **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 196** aims to **prevent and punish actions that promote enmity and hatred** between different groups based on various grounds.
  - It seeks to maintain social harmony by penalizing such acts with imprisonment and fines, especially when these actions occur in places of worship or during religious gatherings.

What are the Causes of Communal Violence in India?

- **Political Factors**:
  - Political parties often exploit communal sentiments to gain **[electoral advantages,]()** using **[communal polarization]()** as a strategy to retain power.
  - Ineffective political institutions exacerbate this issue by failing to prevent or address communal conflicts, leading to a culture of impunity for offenders.
- **Social Dynamics**:
  - Deep-rooted prejudices and stereotypes hinder **[inter-community trust.]()**
  - The influence of **[extremist groups]()** exacerbates communal tensions.
  - Religious symbols are manipulated to incite communal hatred.
- **Economic Factors**:
  - Competition for limited resources fosters conflict between communities.
  - **[Marginalized groups]()** often perceive systemic discrimination.
- **Cultural Conflicts**:
  - Divergent values and lifestyles contribute to friction. Cultural pluralism faces challenges from rising religious conservatism.

- Sacred sites often become flashpoints for cultural appropriation or desecration.
  - **Lack of Education and Awareness**:
    - Widespread misinformation breeds mistrust, making communities susceptible to violence.

What is the Role of Government in Maintaining Communal Harmony?

- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in India has several initiatives related to communal harmony, including the **National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH)** and the **National Communal Harmony Award**:
  - **National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH):** An autonomous organization that promotes communal harmony and national integration. The NFCH's activities include:
    - Providing financial support to rehabilitate child victims of violence
    - Encouraging interfaith dialogue
    - Promoting awareness programs
  - **National Communal Harmony Award**
    - An award is given annually to individuals, student unions, and organizations that contribute to communal harmony and national integration.
    - The award is announced on **January 26th** every year. The jury for the award includes the **Vice-President of India, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary**, and two eminent people nominated by the Union Home Minister.
  - **Communal harmony guidelines**
    - The MHA has guidelines on **communal harmony** that include information on managing information and assigning nodal responsibilities.

What are the Impacts of Communal Violence in India?

- **Loss of Human Lives**: Communal violence results in significant loss of life, tearing apart families and communities. This loss creates enduring scars that affect social dynamics for generations.
- **Destruction of Property**: Homes, businesses, and places of worship are often destroyed, leading to substantial economic losses. Such destruction disrupts livelihoods and damages community infrastructure.
- **Social Disintegration**: Communal violence weakens social cohesion, eroding trust and unity among communities. Long-standing relationships can become strained or severed, resulting in divided societies.
- **Economic Setbacks**: Violence leads to resource diversion and creates an unfavorable investment climate. Economic activities are disrupted, hindering growth and development.
- **Psychological and Political Impact**: Survivors experience trauma, anxiety, and depression, affecting their mental well-being. Politically, communal violence undermines democracy, the rule of law, and can contribute to authoritarianism and increased corruption.

Note

- **The Communal Violence (Prevention, Control, and Rehabilitation of Victims) Bill, 2005:**
  - The Bill aims to prevent communal violence, ensure swift action during conflicts, and rehabilitate victims.
  - It empowers both central and state governments to intervene and control communal disturbances.
  - Public officials can be held accountable for failure to control violence or for negligence.
  - Special courts may be established to expedite trials.
  - Provides legal provisions for the compensation and rehabilitation of victims.

What Are the Solution to Prevent Communal Violence?

- **Strengthening Legal Frameworks**: Enhance laws to address hate speech and communal violence, ensuring strict enforcement and accountability for perpetrators.
  - The **State Level Integration Committee,** along with **district administration**, plays a crucial role in maintaining communal harmony by monitoring potential communal tensions and ensuring timely intervention.
- **Promoting Inter-Community Dialogue**: Facilitate discussions between different communities to foster understanding, trust, and collaboration, reducing misconceptions.
  - Interfaith marriages can promote social harmony by bridging cultural, religious, and societal divides.
- **Community Engagement Initiatives**: Involve local communities in **peacebuilding efforts** through awareness programs and community-driven conflict resolution strategies.
- **Proactive Monitoring and Response**: Establish State Level Integration Committees to monitor tensions and coordinate timely interventions by district administration.
- **Awareness Programs**: Implement educational initiatives to promote secular values and tolerance, targeting schools and community organizations.

Read More: [What are the Causes of Communal Violence in India?](#)

Drishti Mains Question

Analyze the causes of communal violence in India and assess the effectiveness of government measures to address it, including the roles of state-level integration committees and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

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