



Mains Practice Question

Q. “Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics”. Elaborate. (150 words)

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Approach

- Define religion and politics
- Discuss the relation between religion and politics
- Argument how religion is a personal matter
- Conclude

Ans.

Introduction:

Sociologist Emile Durkheim defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, while Max Weber defines politics as the activity of striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state.

Body

The resurgence of religion, as well as politics, has become key to world affairs. Initially few sociologists like Max Weber believed that modernity would eventually lead to a general decline of religious faith and the role of religion in the public/political sphere. However, the word ‘twin tolerations’ has been used often to define the relationship between religion and politics. Modern states brought the concept of secularism to avoid the influence of religion in politics. Arguments in favor of the separation of politics and religion are as follows:

- The idea of religion concerns the private sphere what pertains to individual faith and believe, in contrast politics in the public sphere pertains to a wider community e.g. nation at large.
- The intrusion of religion into politics can monopolize some specific ideology which in turn will cause a rift in the society. E.g. the foundation of partition was laid on the name of religion itself.
- Religious ideologies when perpetuates deeper into the political sphere may turn into mass hysteria leading to the indoctrination of the people. For e.g. Anti Semitism of Nazi in Germany prior to the second world war for Jews
- In politics it promotes vote bank politics on the name of religion and diminishes the ideals of secularism.
- Intermixing of religion with politics may promote favoritism for a particular community.

Conclusion

Religion in politics needs to be value-oriented not power-oriented as we can learn from the legacy of Ashoka policy of Dhamma and Akbar’s Din-e-Ilahi. Further, In India secularism was defined in a comprehensive manner which meant the separation of religion from politics and the state, the treatment of religion as a private matter for the individual, state neutrality towards or equal respect for all religions, absence of discrimination between followers of different religions, and active opposition to communalism.

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