Society & Social Justice · GS - I

Distinguish between religiousness/religiosity and communalism giving one example of how the former has got transformed into the latter in independent India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2017	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Personal faith; religious pluralism; political mobilisation; group identity; communal polarisation; constitutional secularism

Model Answer

Introduction

Religion has historically shaped India's values, rituals and community life. However, religiosity and communalism are distinct: the former concerns religious belief and practice, while the latter involves treating religious communities as antagonistic political or social groups.

Religiosity and Communalism: Key Differences

1. Nature

Religiosity refers to faith, worship, rituals and spiritual commitment. Communalism views the interests of one religious community as opposed to those of other communities.

2. Social Orientation

Religiosity can encourage compassion, charity, self-discipline and social service. Communalism promotes group superiority, distrust and exclusion.

3. Political Role

Religious practice may remain a personal or community activity. Communalism politicises religious identity to mobilise support, consolidate power or justify discrimination.

4. Attitude Towards Other Communities

Religiosity does not necessarily imply hostility towards other faiths. Communalism portrays religious differences as fundamental and often irreconcilable.

Example from Independent India

The demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 illustrates how religious symbolism and mobilisation can become entangled with communal politics. A religiously significant dispute became a source of intense inter-community polarisation and violence.

Preventing the Transformation

- Promote constitutional secularism and equal treatment of all religions.
- Take impartial action against hate speech and communal violence.
- Encourage interfaith dialogue and critical civic education.
- Ensure that political mobilisation does not legitimise discrimination.

Conclusion

Religiosity is compatible with pluralism and mutual respect, whereas communalism undermines social harmony by politicising religious differences. Protecting religious freedom alongside constitutional equality is essential for India's unity.