

# COMMUNALISM, SECULARISM AND REGIONALISM

## Communalism

- A simple definition of communalism is the organization of communities on political grounds.
- However, it can also be construed as owing allegiance to one's community more than the wider society.
- For example, one may be a Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh and be proud of it. However, the moment he/she begins to denigrate other cultures, he/she begins to endorse communalism.
- Communalism as a concept is dangerous for the wellbeing of any nation.
- This sort of hatred towards other communities can manifest in different ways. It may start with some sort of hatred, progress towards active discrimination which may culminate in riots and then in some cases, may even lead to mass killings or genocide.

### Types of communalism (according to Bipin Chandra):

1. **Communal Nationalism:** It is the belief that people who follow the same religion have common secular interests i.e., common political, social and cultural interests.
2. **Liberal Communalism:** In a multi-religious society like India, the secular interests of followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion.
3. **Extreme Communalism:** Interests of different religious communities are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.

## Difference between Religiosity and Communalism:

- Religiosity is concerned with the worship of God. It is as old as the religion and civilization itself.
- It is associated with prayers (petition direct at a supernatural power) and rituals (symbolic series of actions to appeal the aid supernatural power).
- It is generally not associated with violence.
- Communalism is a newer phenomenon compared to religiosity. It is a belief system and a social phenomenon wherein history is interpreted for mobilization of people.
- It involves the use of sacred symbols, emotional appeal and plain fear by religious leaders in order to bring the followers of one religion together in the political arena.
- In Communalism the religious identity overrides everything else. Anyone who doesn't share this identity can be attacked verbally or physically. When communalism escalates into communal riots, people become faceless members of their respective communities.



IMAGE 2.1: KEDARNATH TEMPLE, UTTARAKHAND