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Review of Religious Practice on Politics with Special Reference to Chhattisgarh State, India

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Abstract: *The relation between religion and politics continues to be an important theme in political philosophy, in terms of political theorists and in practical political contexts. One reason for the importance of this topic is that religions often make strong claims on people's allegiance in a particular community. In the new democracies, the role of youth is of special importance. Young people always ready to face the challenge of fitting into an established political system or making changes. Hence these all issues related to religious politics motivated the author to select this topic for review and hoping to explore the maximum of negative and positive aspect in the work. Moreover, the study will focus how religious exercise in politics will influence effect the present youth with special reference to state Chhattisgarh, India.*

Keywords: *Religion and Politics.*

INTRODUCTION

Politics is defined as the science of government; that part of ethics which has to do with the regulation and governance of a nation or state, the preservation of its safety, peace, and prosperity, the defense of its existence and rights against foreign control or conquest, the augmentation of its strength and resources, and the protection of its citizens in their rights, with the preservation and improvement of their morals. The constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally respected religious freedom; however, some state-level laws and policies restricted this freedom. India is a secular republic, with all religions offered equality under the law. Political science comprises main areas of study i.e. comparative politics examines the political influence on the societies particularly youth of that country, which includes the cast, religion, race etc. and focus on their comparisons and contrasts. Religion plays an important role in Indian Politics. Religion and Politics co-exist in India. Religion can guide a politician but a politician biased in favor of one religion can never be good for all. A politician is the representative of the general people of India, and they use the spirit of religion to promote communal harmony [1-8]. This review work provides a general overview of what is argued in the thesis and its importance to scholarship in legal and political theory. This review work is primarily concerned with developing a new understanding of religious practice in politics and its effects on the young generation with special reference to Chhattisgarh state, India.

Subjected to India and its various states/ union territory religion plays a very important role in the politics. Typically, when people think of "religion and politics," they think of social issues such as abortion and contraceptives. While that's not a bad place to start, it does, in fact, start at the group level rather than focusing on individuals. Wanting instead to see how religion can affect political beliefs at the individual level and group level mainly focusing on youth. More specifically, investigates how religion can lead to political conversion and vice-versa on the individual level. As much as secular governments strive for a clean break between religion and politics, argues that the two do in reality mix, and they mix in complex ways. On the political end, religion can strongly influence which party a person votes for, and even campaigns for, and on the religious end, political views can play a major role in religious conversion, in other words, people not uncommonly change religions or denominations in order to find a fit for their political beliefs. In the first field belong dogmas that sculpt attitudes toward the state, political power, political legitimacy, political sovereignty, political authority, democracy, political organizations, views of peace and war, religious tolerance, human rights, religious fundamentalism, religious extremism, religious terrorism, the role of secularism etc. In the second field belong religious practices which are on the face of it purely theological without any political intention, but which provoke political consequences. For example, ways of worship, religious propaganda, construction of temples, impact on politics of pilgrimages. India is a country of many

religions which have coexisted for several centuries. This coexistence could be generally characterized as peaceful, but also has some historical and ideological clashes, which have generated problems in both the past and present time. The nationalism and its ideology have brought new troubles to the political and common life of many religious communities in many parts of India. The identity of Indians with the Indian state has been eroded by these clashes and the Indian political systems, as well as the main political parties, have to cope with these challenges. As like any other democracy, political parties represent different sections of the Indian society and regions, and their core values play a major role in the politics of India. Both the executive and legislative branch of the government is run by the representatives of the political parties who have been elected through the elections. Since India has a multi-party system there are a number of national and regional parties. Some regional parties are deeply aligned to the ideologies of the region unlike the national parties and thus the relationship between the central government and the state government in various states has not always been free of rancor. The disparity between the ideologies of the political parties ruling the center and the state leads to severely skewed allocation of resources between the states. The third field examines the relationship between religious communities and the state, such as constitutional solutions, degrees of secularism or theocracy, and the presence of religious freedoms in state laws, relations of political parties, religious lobbies and pressure groups. The fourth feature: social and political acts which have not any visible connection with religion, but which provoke religious-political consequences. For example, tenders for jobs or services have no connection with religions in general, but if it happens that in one multi-religious state all contractors belong to a specific religion, that can provoke a reaction of other religious communities and lead to political consequences [9-17].

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Religion has been increasingly acknowledged in recent years as an important aspect of national and international politics, a pervasive and contentious cultural force, and a subject of significant public concern. Through a range of projects, the Council's Program on Religion and the Public Sphere seeks to foster engagement and cooperation among social scientists and others working on religion, secularism, and related topics, to support new and innovative scholarship in this critical area of study, and to elevate the quality of both academic and public discussion.

Ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions are often thought to cause conflicts. This claim rests uneasily with the realization that individuals have multiple identities resulting in many cultural differences, only a few of which become socially and politically salient, and even fewer of which become cleavages around which conflicts arise. This particular circle is squared by scholars in a variety of ways. Some argue that the cultural differences that become politically salient are those that have been given hegemonic power by history. Others argue that important identities are the ones that people have the deepest attachment to. Most common is the belief that ethnic identities become salient when they serve instrumental goals. One mechanism is that political entrepreneurs, responding to political incentives and bound by strategic constraints, convince people that a given identity is important. Some researcher argues that in the context of low information patronage-democracies, politicians can induce individuals to count heads based on a particular identity. Some argues that the identity people choose to highlight is the one that gives them the greatest share of political power and economic resources. Theories about the instrumental selection of identities seek to explain when an ethnic conflict arises. These theories leave largely unexplained exactly how given identities are politicized. Many argue that the organizational basis of identities influences how they are deployed in politics. This may be easiest to see with religions as their social structures are easier to observe and have been well studied. Many researcher had stated that Hindu and Muslim identities behave differently because of the contrasting ways these religions are organized and practiced, at least in contemporary India. Many concerns could be raised about our interpretation of the results. It is important to keep in mind; however, that these objections do not challenge our finding that there is an asymmetry in how Muslims and Hindus respond to religious cues. There are, however, many open questions about exactly why and how this asymmetry arises. One concern about our findings is that Muslim identity is more salient because Muslims are a minority. In India and many state of India, the Hindu-Muslim divide is a master narrative for the organization of political life. To fully engage this concern, further work will be required on the attitudes and behaviour of Muslims and Hindus in Muslim-majority countries, such as Bangladesh. There is, however, secondary literature on Hindu religious practices and mobilization in countries where they are a minority. In Trinidad, for example, the mobilization of Hindus was through homes, settlement clusters, and villages and through a political body the Hindu Mahasabha not the temple. Although there are fewer Muslims than Hindus, there are still about 160 million Muslims in India. It is difficult to see how a group of that size faces an easier collective action problem than one larger than it. A related argument is that since Hindus are a supra-majority, they cannot maintain a coalition as Hindus. Therefore, the role of religion for Hindus is more limited than it is for Muslims. Like the more general concern about Muslims being the minority, it is difficult to evaluate the importance of this factor without studying another country where Hindus are a minority and Muslims the majority. Finally, it could be claimed that when a religious identity becomes partisan, as the Hindu identity has become through the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) and now the BJP, Hindu priests should lose influence. That argument assumes that Hindu temple priests once influenced the mobilization of Hindus in electoral politics and with the rise of the BJS in 1951 their influence waned. There is no historical evidence to suggest that Hindu priests were important politically in the elections held in British India or the first mass elections held in independent India in 1952 when the Jana Sangh won only 3 seats to the lower house of the Parliament. It is important to keep in mind that Muslims responded more to the religious prompts than Hindus, this does not mean that Hindus never respond to subtle religious appeals when it comes to political mobilization, or unfortunately when it comes to violent action. Such violence has been well documented. But this joint history of communal violence hides an asymmetry in how Hindus and Muslims respond to religious political cues. The organizational basis of an identity shapes how it can and will be politically mobilized. There are other social cleavages, aside from religion, where this phenomenon is at work. Take, for example, the role of caste in Indian politics. By all accounts, caste is a salient cultural distinction (most Indians still marry within their caste) and political identity in India. If a politician travels to an archetypal village, she cannot avoid the question of caste,

even if she wanted to. Where she sits or eats sends important signals to the castes in the village. Because members of 25 castes have a self-conscious awareness of themselves as a meaningful social group, subtle signals are often sufficient for these particular castes to respond to political entrepreneurs signaling caste. The same cannot be said, however, of the larger caste agglomerations like Scheduled Castes/ Dalit and Other Backward Classes. People do report possessing these larger caste identities when they are expressly asked to do so in surveys. However, when you ask respondents to self-identify their caste they rarely use the words Scheduled Caste/ Dalit or Other Backward Classes. This is not surprising since the latter do not have the same social reality as measured by social segregation or marriage behaviour. The incentives to form larger caste groups for electoral purposes are clear given that each sub-caste is usually too small numerically to have an impact on the outcome of an election. Therefore, policies such as reservations and quotas have been enacted a long larger caste groups in an attempt to concatenate various castes into larger identity groups that can be directly mobilized. The social reality on the ground, however, is still fractured, and this has implications for how different caste groups are politically mobilized.²⁰ For example, take the case of the BSP in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, which is widely reported to represent Scheduled Castes. The bedrock of the party is the Jatav sub-caste, and the party has little difficulty directly mobilizing this identity and most Jatavs vote for the BSP. The same cannot be said for the larger Dalit community because the other 65 subcastes that comprise the Scheduled Castes have distinct marriage behaviour. This asymmetry has political consequences. The support of the now Jatav Scheduled castes has to earn by the BSP. The party despite continuously stressing its Dalit roots needs a very different political strategy to gain the support of the entire Scheduled Caste community than it does to get the Jatavs to vote for it. Our argument has implications for different types of identities, such as ethnicity, caste, and class. Some identities may have social organizations that are easier for political entrepreneurs to work with while others may not have any. To take an example that has been much studied economic class may be more or less difficult to mobilize in a given country depending on what kind of social and organizational structure class has. Politicians, if they are deciding whether to focus on class identities or religion, are likely to consider which is easier to mobilize for organizational, cultural, and logistical reasons in addition to the usual considerations about head counts.

Hinduism is the major religion in Chhattisgarh though Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists also form a sizeable group in Chhattisgarh. People belonging to the Gond tribe follow Hinduism and it is believed that they influence other people as well. To avoid the stringent caste system, many tribes follow alternative religions and do not believe in deity worshipping. Instead, they believe in nature worship. They consider Mother Nature as God and are superstitious in their beliefs. Jainism and Christianity are other two religions that are followed by people here. It is believed, that religion influences the political system of the place. Satnami, Ramnami Samaj and Kabirpanth are some of the religious sects that have emerged from caste-based Hinduism.

Religion in Chhattisgarh is of prime importance in the life of the people. The state of Chhattisgarh is largely populated by the tribals who follow various religions. The region was mainly influenced by traditional Hindu culture but with the increasing oppression of caste system and social hierarchy, many of them have accepted other forms of religion. A large proportion of them do follow Hindu religion in Chhattisgarh like the Gond tribe and in turn, they influence other tribes. A sizeable population of Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists also exists in Chhattisgarh. The various missionaries working in Chhattisgarh have resulted in the conversion of many people to Christianity. The influence of Jain religion is evident in the several Jain memorials in Aarang, Malhar, Maheshpur and Sirpur. For the Hindus, Lord Rama is the most popular figure even today. Chhattisgarh has undergone many tribal rebellions due to which various alternative religions have gained preference at times. Followers of Satnam Panth, Rae Das Panth, Ramnami Panth and Kabir Panth gained importance and followers, especially among the poor and outcasts because they abhorred caste system and deity worshipping. Religion in Chhattisgarh is often also mixed with superstition and sorcery. The tribes believe in various totems, and, nature worship in varying forms is common. Mother Nature sustains human beings and so it is considered as God by various communities. Such folk Gods and Goddesses unique to the communities have gained importance. In fact, religion in Chhattisgarh is so strong that it even influences and defines the political loyalty of the people of the state. The idea of the interface or mixing of religion and politics being problematic and potentially dangerous is a by-product of the rise of secularism, often regarded as one of the hallmarks of modern society. But where did the assumptions and expectations associated with secularism come from, and how have they come to play such an important role in mediating our understanding of how (and whether) religion matters in politics? There is an almost total absence of references to religion in books about politics. It is as if scholars were blind to religion as a force in affairs, or did not find it to be helpful in explaining politics. Because of the religious variety and existing large minorities, religion continued to remain as a factor, contributing to the segmentation of state/ Indian society. Religious segmentation as a basic factor to other political functions of religion, on one hand, provided a ground for conflicts and it led to political disorders. The politicians used religious minorities as the symbolic internal enemy and religious conflict. So, in the context of state/ Indian politics, the function of religion has had the positive aspect, when it led to unity and cohesion and negative when it led to violence and disorders. Indeed, the existence of weakened religious cleavages has been in favour of state politics because it has been used to cover other important social cleavages. Religion is everywhere and politics is no exception. Many politicians speak openly about their religion and you see many people that work in politics reference religion a lot. Religion is very much in politics and it is here to stay. To get rid of it, you would have to get rid of religion altogether and that is not happening anytime soon.

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