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Date of notification no. 584/2025

Department of History and Culture

Date of notification- 18/08/2025

Research topic- Communalism in Bihar: The role of Hindu revivalist movements, 1908-1947.

Key word: Hindu Revivalism, Communalism, Bihar, communal riots, cow protection movement.

Finding

The Hindu revivalism, did not have deeper roots than Muslim revivalism, nevertheless, it was more apparent mainly because of the relatively larger population of the Hindus. However, efforts by the Hindus to construct a “United Hindu community” attracted rather less scholarly attention. In recent historical investigations, scholars have written at some length on the Urdu-Hindi controversy, the cow-protection movement, and the Shuddhi and Sangathan movements as part of an effort to mobilize Hindu community on a large front in northern India.

- The Arya Samaj, founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, spread into Bihar in the late 19th century. It sought to revive Vedic traditions, reform Hindu society, and defend Hindu practices against Christian missionaries and Muslim reformers.
- By asserting a distinct Hindu identity, Arya Samaj emphasized cultural pride but also alienated Muslims, who began to perceive it as a militant Hindu movement.
- The Hindu Mahasabha (founded in 1915) went further, openly advocating Hindu nationalism. In Bihar, its influence grew significantly during the interwar years, particularly in response to the Muslim League’s growing appeal. The Mahasabha stressed Hindu unity, presenting Hindus as a single political community in opposition to Muslims.
- The cow protection movement became a major mobilizing force in Bihar from the late 19th century. Organizations and activists portrayed the cow as a sacred symbol of Hinduism, demanding its protection from slaughter by Muslims.
- These campaigns often resulted in violent clashes in towns such as Gaya, Shahabad, and Patna, where Hindu and Muslim populations lived in close quarters.
- The Shuddhi (reconversion) campaigns of the Arya Samaj also intensified divisions. By attempting to bring back Muslims (especially lower-caste converts) into the Hindu

fold, the movement provoked strong reactions from Muslim leaders, who saw this as a direct attack on their community and religious identity.

Chapterization

Apart from introduction and conclusion chapters these are major chapters in this regard. The first chapter '**Emergence of Nationalist and Communal Politics in Bihar in the early 20th century,**'

" **Hindu Revivalist Movement and the growth of Communalism, 1908-1922,"** the second chapter,

The third chapter, '**Hindu Revivalist Movement, 1923-1937: Responses of the Congress and Muslim leaders**'

In the fourth chapter "**The Communal situation in the 1940s.**"

Major research findings

1. Hindu revivalist movements like Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha significantly contributed to the rise of communalism in Bihar by promoting exclusive religious identity.
2. Campaigns such as cow protection and Shuddhi (reconversion) intensified Hindu-Muslim tensions and provoked community-oriented conciseness and conflicts.
3. Public Hindu festivals and processions became political tools that often-triggered communal riots in mixed-populated areas.
4. The vernacular press and literature spread revivalist propaganda, deepening communal divisions across urban and rural society in Bihar.
5. Hindu Mahasabha's growing influence, especially at the grassroots level, capitalized on fears of Muslim political representation and filled the ideological vacuum left by the Congress.