The Communal Edge To Plural Societies, India And Malaysia

Ratna Naidu

A plural society is defined by Fredrik Barth as a society combining ethnic contrasts: the economic interdependence of those groups, and their ecological specialization (i.e., use of different environmental resources by each ethnic group). The ecological interdependence, or the lack of competition, between ethnic groups may be based on the different activities in the same region or on long-term occupation of different regions in the Defined by J S Furnivall as a medley of peoples - European, Chinese Evolution of communalism in Indian society. If we discuss about Indian society, we will find that, ancient India was united and no such communal feelings were there. People lived peacefully together, there was acceptance for each other’s culture and tradition. For example, Ashoka followed religious tolerance and focussed mainly on Dhamma. In Medieval period, we have examples such as Akbar, who was epitome of secular practises and believed in propagating such values by abolishing Jajhiya tax and starting of Din-i- ilahi and Ibadat Khana. In these societies, the domain of intercultural relations is ripe for social psychological research. Such research can provide a knowledge basis for the development and implementation of policies and programmes in plural societies. There are three hypotheses bearing on intercultural relations being examined in much current psychological research: the multiculturalism hypothesis; the integration hypothesis; and the contact hypothesis.