

Region and Religion: Issues & Challenges of Marginality

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Abstract

Religion is the way of life. How do we pray, how do we lead our life? Religion is also a strong pillar on which human being's life depend. During this digital era when we are talking about digital citizen, digital relation, digital revolution & about digital revolution don't you think that religion is also becoming a reason of discrimination, a reason to exercise power, a reason to fulfill our ill will, a reason to deviate from the real issues of food, shelter, security and employment.

Apart from religious difference, clash and conflict due to regional differences, and discrimination are also making the people marginalized. We witness regional difference on the basis of language, culture, custom & at the same time regional marginalization also exists because development has not reached to the places. We are having the example of various remote villages and area where the people are deprived of the necessary resources like: - Proper shelter, employment, recognition from the authority. In the absence of development, the people are not getting the facility of education, health, employment. Thus, these people lead their life with a great struggle. For the survival they are not getting clean water, women are not getting proper education and equal status. At one side kerla is India's fully literate state on the other hand Bihar is having the lowest literacy rate. This difference is not only the result of state's performance, but behind the performance difference social, cultural and religious factor also affect the performance.

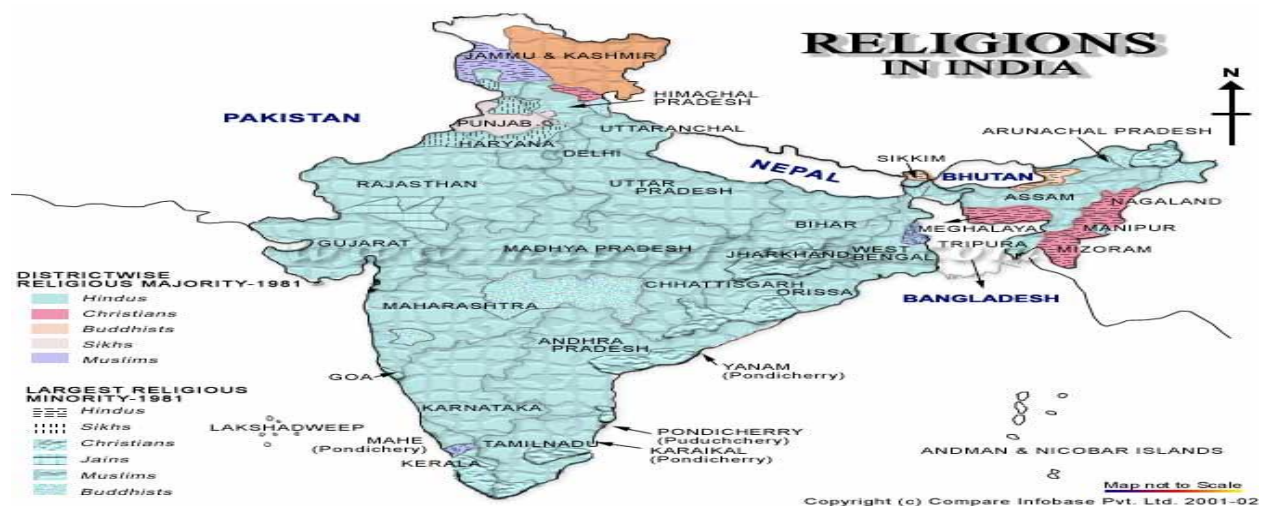
Keeping in all these factors related with marginality, in this chapter we would know about the issues and challenges which are leading towards region and religion-based marginality.

Key Words: - Marginality, Region and Religion, communication and marginality, media & marginality

Introduction: -Religion is the way of life. How do we pray, how do we lead our life? Religion is also a strong pillar on which human being's life depend. During this digital era when we are talking about digital citizen, digital relation, digital revolution & about digital revolution don't you think that religion is also becoming a reason of discrimination, a

reason to exercise power, a reason to fulfill our ill will, a reason to deviate from the real issues of food, shelter, security and employment.

As I am talking about this digital era in which the people are supposed to be rational in behavior because they are having access towards the information. They are having a platform of digital media where they can raise their voice against discrimination and against any kind of prejudice. Once Karl Marx told that "Religion is just like an opium". This term was understood as a negative term but don't you think that religion is good but the way religion is being taken many times it happens that there is not any rational view or logical thinking. Religion creates faith, honesty value in human being. The people started worshipping the things and nature because of fear of almighty. Any religion of the world talks about truth, good deed and making us away from bad practices. Covid 19 pandemic came and at one side people become more religious on the other hand, COVID-19 has deepened existing inequalities, hitting the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest. It has put a spotlight on economic inequalities and fragile social safety nets that leave vulnerable communities to bear the brunt of the crisis. At the same time, social, political, and economic inequalities have amplified the impacts of the pandemic. (UNO,2022). The inequality in terms of region and religion is mostly leading toward marginality. Before discussing it further about marginality let us have look on religion-based map of India.



The above map of India is showing religion distribution of India. Apart from this Marginality on the basis of region is also one of the major problems of the India. Regional imbalances or disparities means wide differences in per capita income, literacy rates,

health and education services, levels of industrialization, etc. between different regions. Regions may be either States or regions within a State. In India there are enormous imbalances on various accounts. The exploitative nature of British colonial rule either created or accentuated regional disparities. Apart from religious difference, clash and conflict region and regional differences, discrimination is also making the people marginalized in manner. We witness regional difference on the basis of language, culture, custom & at the same time regional marginalization also exists because development has not reached to the places. We are having the example of various remote villages and area where the people are deprived of the necessary resources like: - Proper shelter, employment, recognition from the authority. In the absence of development, the people are not getting the facility of education, health, employment. Thus, these people lead their life with a great struggle. For the survival they are not getting clean water, women are not getting proper education and equal status. At one side Kerala is India's fully literate state on the other hand Bihar is having the lowest literacy rate. This difference is not only the result of state's performance, but behind the performance difference social, cultural, and religious factor also affect the performance. Bihar is least performer in literacy the students are brilliant performer in different competitive examination. The fact is that a lot of cases daily we listen about regional discrimination which is the main reason of marginality. Slum area and the poor infrastructure create a gap in the form of have and have not.

After the militant's attack on twin tower a lot of cases in USA happened in which Sikh community people of India were badly treated due to the identity which was resembling them as Arabian people. After any religious riot or conflict of militant attack the whole community is facing the problem of marginalization. Marginalized people are not getting admission in good school, they are not able to find out a home in a good area, they are not getting proper employment or various restrictions are imposed on them.

The Population of different religious communities in India are as follows: -

Hindu 79.8

Muslim 14.2

Others 2%

Christian 2.3

Sikh 1.7

Others include Buddhist 0.7% Jain 0.4% Other Religions and Persuasions 0.7% Religion not stated 0.2%

Source: Census of India, 2011

There is the study which shows that the religious profile of the world is changing at a very fast pace, basically fertility rate and percentage of youth population is regulating the population of any country. According to the study conducted by Pew Research Center- If current trends continue Christians will remain the largest religious group by 2060 (32 percent of the world's population), but Islam will experience the fastest growth with an expected increase from 24 percent to 31 percent of the global population over the next four decades. the number of Muslims will in fact nearly equal the number of Christians around the world by 2060.

Therefore, there is possibility that these kinds of changes will be deciding factors for all the policies and issues related with marginality. There is a possibility of paradigm shift. The concept of marginality can be varying from country to country because in one particular country the religious group could be a part of majority group but in other country they could belong to minority. Even difference within religion is found which is based on regional difference. At world stage there are the countries like Pakistan in which there are the cases of marginality on the basis or region. Thus the factors which are responsible for marginality are numerous like:- the stereotype of image projected by media majority groups, religion centric politics at world level is also creating a threats for other religious groups, insufficient participation in administration and legislative assemblies are also triggering towards marginality. When the world is boasting about information revolution and global world at the same time the problem of marginality is increasing day by day. It is not only centered to any specific county but at the same time this problem exists in different countries. Therefore this is the right time to formulate a policy and consensus on empowering every citizen of the country which are facing the problem of marginality, in the form of equal opportunity, funding and changing outlook of the society through proper communication mechanism.



Marginality of Region & Religion Issues and Challenges: - as we discussed earlier about region & regional marginality. Here we are going to discuss about different issues that are related with it. These issues are the issues on which society should put proper

emphasis to solve the problem of region & regional marginality. Following are the issues related with region & regional marginality: -

Stereotype image: - Stereotype image is also one factor which make the people marginalized for a long time. In North Indian states there are some pre-conceived notions about south Indians. In different these characters were used only for the purpose of creating humor. In the same manner in south Indian states there might be a feeling against north Indian people. Behind these feeling main idea is idea that we are not aware about different groups of different regions. In different states a person from a particular state becomes minority and due to this discrimination starts based on region. In the study Ain Simpson (Ph.D. Miami University, Hamilton) said that, religion is believed (stereotyped) to embody both moral virtue and an orientation toward moral behavior and socio-moral order.

Use of religion in politics: -For political survival using religion as a tool is also one of the important issues today. The purpose of these kinds of politics are to create enmity among different groups based on religion and convert the sentiments of people in the form of favorable vote. In this regard new trend is that this religious enmity and differences are visible on international stage also. Even in USA, Australia & Russia religious marginalization is becoming a major issue. No country of the world can say that it is isolated from the problem of migration and legal and illegal immigration. Different countries like Myanmar Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, Pakistan are facing the problem of migration. In above mentioned countries Rohingya Muslims are living like a refugee. Kashmiri Pandits were also forced to migrate from Kashmir to other parts of India. This is the example of the marginality based on region & religion. The following book discuss about the correlation of global resurgence with religion.

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the product page for the book "The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century" by Thomas S. The page includes a book cover, a "Free Preview" button, and a "Buy this book" section with pricing for eBook (€63.06), Hardcover (€109.19), and Softcover (€77.99). The "Table of contents" section is partially visible, showing "Introduction: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First".

Less Participation in administration: - Behind religion based and region-based marginalization, administration is also responsible, because of biased approach of the administration many times it happens that welfare schemes are not properly implemented hence it is unable to uplift the targeted community. For the community participation, it is required that the people of different religion and region should have equal opportunity of education. Keeping in view the condition of Muslims, Sachar Committee was commissioned in 2005 and after the study this committee submitted its report for the purpose improving condition of Muslims. This is not only applicable at national level but there are international agencies and organization which used to plan and implement various policies, therefore participation at different levels of administration is also need of the hour.

Regional disparities in terms of resources: - Regional disparities occur because these regions become marginalized due to the fact that the regions are situated somewhere at the edge or the margins of a system and are not part of the traditional centre periphery. The centre periphery is privileged with all the facilities and resources, therefore who are living in this area are getting all sorts of facility like- quality education, health, employment, and safety. The person who living in Bhuj, Vidarbha, Bundelkhan, Bastar region know very well about the regional disparities. At international level also, different African countries are facing the problem of regional disparities. If there are the natural resources but it is not being properly utilized for different welfare schemes and plans, then it is also going to exceed the problem only. There are allegations even on media that media are only highlighting the issues which are happening in metro of big cities, many times it happens that media is not going to cover the news and information which

is related with remote areas or underdeveloped area. The National media hardly highlight the things and problems that are related with Northeast region. The same thing is happening with tribal class people who are living in forest areas and at faraway places.

Less allocation of fund: -The Government used to allocate fund for the removal of region and religion-based disparities. Despite the allocation if the budget is not properly utilized then it is going to marginalize the society and area. In the process the people are not able to improve their status and they are remained as marginalized. Tactical allocation of the fund is need of the hour for improving overall situation of the region & religion. Generally developed states and regions are more privileged with a lot of initiatives related with investment and employment generation in that area.

Discriminative policy of the Government: - Irrespective of any country many times it happens that the ruling Government is implementing a discriminative policy through which they try to divide and rule. The long-term discrimination converts into marginality of different groups & regions. There was the tendency that wherever ruling government of the region and center are same then they were getting benefit of it, otherwise there were allegations of negligence of the region and religion. Several communities have expressed concern about asserting ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural identity and autonomy. Only majoritarian groups gain from the modernization process as a result of the majoritarian system of administration, and they make up the bulk of the socio-political fabric. Minority groups are still marginalized, underprivileged, and on the outskirts of society ([Preeti Oza](#), July 2021).

Mindset of the society: - Behind Regional and religion-based marginalization mindset of the society is also important. The mindset of the society depends on the society from which they belong, openness in the society, interaction with the rest of the part and at the same time message that is being received from media. Equal access of Information and communication technology and quality education are the key factors behind influencing the mindset of the different person.

Backwardness of religious groups and regions: -Backwardness of the region is also a reason of marginalization. This marginality is common in so called third world countries. The lack quality education is also one of the important factors which is leading towards marginality. There are the people and government who are trying to combine religious

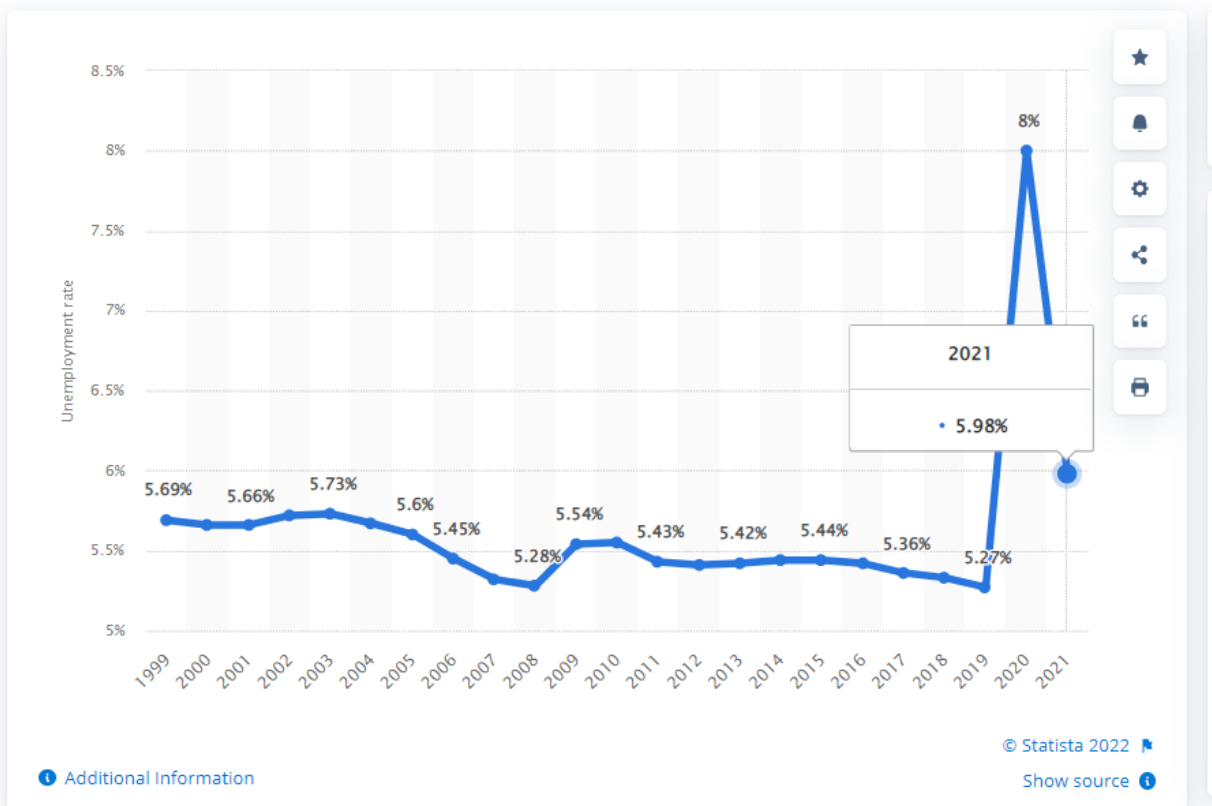
education with skill-based courses. Corruption is also one of the reasons of backwardness. There are the religious gurus who are more focusing on religious aspect rather than enhancing the skill of different religious groups.

Agenda setting by the media related with different religious groups: - When and how does a terrible social condition become an addressable, even solvable, problem? Agenda setting is the process by which issues gain position on the public or political agenda while others go comparatively unnoticed. Many complex factors influence agenda, but for marginalized groups, the road is especially arduous. Negative constructions of marginalized populations are often circulated, and their needs viewed as impervious to government action; alternatively, they are just ignored (Baird, Karen2010). Media used to set various agenda for us. The agenda may be positive or negative. If the regional emotions are provoked by media, then it creates problem but if media is giving a message for inclusiveness, then it can really bring a positive change for the society. Therefore, the message is very important for religion-based inclusion.

Developmental of the region & religion: -Transport and media used to connect the people. With the help of media different person from different region and religion used to share their idea & information. Due to poor infrastructure and transportation facility If the region is underdeveloped and not properly connected then the people are bound to live in marginality. On the other hand, exchange of information related with religion & religion is also important so that one can stop the prejudices among the individuals.

Opportunity for Education & Employment: - Opportunity for education and employment is also very important. There is a strong relation of employment with quality education. In India we also witness religion-based participation, therefore any problem with that small industry also affect badly to those groups and they are being marginalized, because they were in small scale industry like: - Silk work of Varanasi, Lock industry of Aligarh carpet industry of Bhadohi are the examples in this regard. According to the Census data of 2001

India: Unemployment rate from 1999 to 2021



Literacy per cent Rate by Religion, 2001

Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Sikhs	Buddhists	Jains		
65	59	80	70	73	94		

From the above table we know that Muslims are having lower literacy rate on the other hand Jains are at the top. On the other hand, emphasis on employment generation is also required because during COVID-19 pandemic many workers in unorganized sector lost their job.

Regional Conflict: - Regional conflict is also one of the reasons of regional marginalization. The conflict among different regions also leads to marginalization of different groups. There are a lot of suffer of the conflict between Karnataka & Tamil Nadu on the distribution of Kaveri River. The people of these states suffer a lot in other state due to the conflict. The politics which are based on creating regional difference is also a reason of marginalization. Different states are also coming with the policy that is putting

more emphasis on the concept of their own region and people first that could also trigger marginality in different states. Regional politics is also creating tensions among different groups.

Development Vs Marginalization: - Right now there are two thoughts, one is with the development of industry, dam & project marginality can be minimized. On the other hand, according to another thought because of big developmental project the people are marginalized & migrated from one region to another. Tihari in Uttarakhand is an example of this. For making Tihari Dam the existence of Tihari was compromised. Therefore, proper research and plan is required in this regard. Another example of Bhopal City that suffered a lot due to leak of gas which resulted in the death of thousands of the person.

Insurgency or war in different countries & states: -No country in the world is free from insurgency. It is a big stigma on the world civilization. There are different regional & religious sentiments which is making different groups marginalized. There are recent examples of countries like: - Ukraine & Afghanistan in which war like situation & insurgency marginalized a lot of people of that region. Long term insurgency leads to marginality of the society.

Influence of opinion leaders: - In the acceptance of new thought or Idea opinion leaders are very important for us. The Personality, impact and power of opinion leader influence the followers to behave in a certain way or a certain direction. If the impact of opinion leader is in a wrong direction, then it can also create problem for the country and society. As we know that these opinion leaders could be various person, like- prominent family person, celebrity, any political or religious Guru or any role model. There are the countries in which opinion leaders are communicating in such a manner which is creating tensions among different groups and at the same time religious conflicts and tension are also increasing. That is why even the Government is also not able to concentrate on developmental issues and some time they used to deviate because religion become more important factor.

Less Religious Knowledge amongst Journalist: - Journalists' Knowledge/Familiarity with the Subject Matter Religious illiteracy among journalists is an acknowledged problem, excerpt from Peter Jennings' commentary suggests. The statement is not a criticism of journalists because often they are not given the time or resources to cultivate the appropriate knowledge. Religion has hardly been a prior the reporting of news by mass

media. Among major television networks is the only network with a full-time religion reporter who is a specialist (Stuart A. Wright, Dec 1997). Even in India the journalists are having their own preconceived notions while writing a news story, basically they are not familiar with different religious groups and the people. Therefore, Media person also require some sorts of training and orientation regarding religion based knowledge so that while presenting a news story they can do justice.

Role of Communication in breaching the gap of region & religion: - Till now we have talked about marginality and its cause. Marginality is continuous result of discrimination and deprivation based on region and religion. But we should not forget that During Britisher's regime Indians were also marginalized. In this regard welcoming the Objectives Resolution introduced by Jawaharlal Nehru, N.G. Ranga said: Sir, there is a lot of talk about minorities. Who are the real minorities? Not the Hindus in the so-called Pakistan provinces, not the Sikhs, not even the Muslims. No, the real minorities are the masses of this country. These people are so depressed and oppressed and suppressed till now that they are not able to take advantage of the ordinary civil rights. What is the position? You go to the tribal areas. According to law, their own traditional law, their tribal law, their lands cannot be alienated. Yet our merchants go there, and in the so-called free market they can snatch their lands. Thus, even though the law goes against this snatching away of their lands, still the merchants can turn the tribal people into veritable slaves by various kinds of bonds and make them hereditary bond-slaves. Let us go to the ordinary villagers. There goes the moneylender with his money, and he can get the villagers in his pocket. There is the landlord himself, the zamindar, and the malguzar and there are the various other people who can exploit these poor villagers. There is no elementary education even among these people. These are the real minorities that need protection and assurances of protection. In order to give them the necessary protection, we will need much more than this Resolution ... CAD, VOL.II. Therefore, let us discuss about role of communication in breaching the gap between the person that is based on region and religion are found: -

In providing region specific information: - With the use of different communication channels region specific information can be provided to the Government, administrator & Policy makers. This information is very helpful in making various kind of policy. We cannot deny the importance of communication because with the proper Government and

planning agencies can make an effective developmental plan. Apart from this we can even manage various kinds of crisis if we are getting information timely.

In abolishing pre-conceived notion about a region or religion: -Without proper and specific information we form a pre-conceived notion based on their prevailing mindset. Even in the developed and modern country like USA there were the incidents of false identity which was the result of lack of interaction amongst different religious groups. Therefore, democratization of information and equal access can bring a lot of changes in the world. Once it was said that next war will be war of civilization the possibility of the occurrence can be minimized only through providing proper information and establishing a strong communication channel. Ultimately the use of information and communication technology is helpful in creating awareness about different groups and society not only limited to specific area of the country but for the whole world.

In providing awareness about a religion: - We are living in the era of convergence. When everything is being converged, then why not culture. With the proper cultural communication, we learn from different religious groups and at the same time they also learn new things. After a certain time, frame, we realize that we have also started using the language, non-verbal communication which was the part of any other religion. In this regard we should not forget about "Sufism". The concept of "Sufism" was on the combination and harmony of Hinduism & Islam.

In Creating a pressure on the administration: - Continuous information, communication and news create a pressure on administration and they are also bound to take a step regarding the welfare of different marginalized section of the society.

Media Advocacy: - In media advocacy media advocate for a particular welfare or cause. Media also used to decide about the right way. There are the schemes that are also result of healthy media advocacy.

In providing global coverage and interaction: Marginality is becoming a global issue. International communication and global media provide a platform to work globally for the welfare of marginalized. Global media is also transferring the information at the world level. Minorities condition in different countries like: - Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iraq other parts of the world was conveyed by global media.

In providing factual stories: -Factual stories are impactful in nature because of fact the people believe on the story. There were the stories related with Jews in India and about their population which attracted the attention of the people a lot.

In promoting inclusive policies of the Government: - Inclusive policies are made for the marginalized or excluded people of the society. While planning the Government also used to take feedback from different stake holder. As the marginalized people are voiceless, therefore media become a voice for them.

In motivating the people to come forward to help the marginalized: - It's a very difficult task for a Government or individual to change the status of marginalized section of the society. But media can involve a lot of person in the welfare of marginalized. During the earth quake of BHUJ (Gujrat) media motivated different persons to work for the residents of Bhuj. People came forward and they contributed money and involved themselves also.

In becoming a connecting tool: - Communication channel or media is basically connecting the marginalized people with the rest of the world. After a certain time, people feel stressed, marginalized and hopeless. But with proper information and entertainment media is able to solve various problem and region and religion-based marginality is minimized.

In empowering Socially: - Media can provide different facts, information and stories which can empower these marginalized sections of the society. The feel of empowerment also come when the Government used to make favorable rules and regulation for region and religion based marginalized. Media used to provide different facts and information to the Government also in this regard.

Conclusion: -Thus, we can say that region-based marginalization and religion related marginality is also a result of our ignorance and false perception that we make in our mind due to lake of connectivity and exchange of information. Inter- cultural communication is good in this regard because it is capable of changing the long term and perceived behavior and perception of the people. There are the people who are facing region based marginality in the world. Inspite of Governments attempt to connect North East region & the people with rest of India, the north-eastern states are seeking more initiatives on different fronts at the same time. False recognition creates a lot of problem for them also, when they are vesting to rest of the parts of India. On the other hand, we are rarely

getting information from our national media about the real problem, issues and culture of these area. National media is giving more importance to the states which are near to the capital region. This region-based discrimination resulted a lot of problem to the state. But the Government's look east policy is again winning the heart of the people who are living in that region. Just to abolish out preconceived notion about the northeast people. The Central Government organized various cultural event which breach the gap or region & religion. Regional and Religious marginality is dangerous for any nation because of this the people are not able to contribute for the building of the nation. India knows about the religion-based marginality because during independence time India had to suffer the pain of crores of marginalized people who lost their all things because of their religion. The nation suffered the problem of refugee. Therefore, Inter-cultural communication and constructive use of social media can solve the problem of region & religion-based marginality. Indian movie makers are also making such kind of movies which is not only creating a patriotic feeling for the nation but at the same time showing the pain of marginality. The movies in this regard are: - Refugee, Batwara, Train to Pakistan, Pinjar etc. These movies are bringing the people in old memory lane and in this way the people used to learn several essential things, like: - respecting the sentiments of other. The communication through movies is strong because it helps in creating a larger-than-life image. At last, we can say that in this globalized world the interdisciplinary aspect of globalization and religion can be seen in the increasing use of communications technologies to bring religious values either into harmony or direct clashes. A few years back CNN broadcast a story of an American Jew who "prayed" at the Wailing Wall through a cell phone held up to the wall. Satellite has revolutionized the overall content of television in the form of live telecasting of the information to the whole world. Therefore, it is not only the duty of media houses but also of different citizen journalists who are very punctual to give opinion and providing content on various issues to rethink their role and responsibility in eradicating the problem of marginality due to the region and religion of the person. Therefore, in this information age there is a need to forget misconception and come forward to deal with real problem that the world is facing. On the other hand, a correlation between economic development and secularization is evident in that countries that are highly religious tend to be the poorest (R Inglehart, C Welzel, 2005). Thus, inducive religious environment also helps in strengthening economy of the country and eradicating the problem of marginality.

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