

## SECULARISM IN INDIA: PRESENT SCENARIO

Parmar Sunil G.\* & Dr. Hitesh R. Patel\*\*

\*Research Scholar (Ph.D), Reg. No. 8839, Dept. of Political science, Gujarat university, Ahmedabad.

\*\*Assit. Professor, Dept. of Political science, Gujarat university, Ahmedabad.

Received: December 02, 2019

Accepted: January 02, 2020

*India is a secular country as per its many constitutional provisions and word "Secular" was added to "Preamble" by 42<sup>nd</sup> Constitutional amendment act 1976.*

*In Keshwanand Bharti case Supreme court also declared "Preamble" as a basic structure of Indian constitution.*

*But at present when one is talking about "Secularism" is termed as Anti-National, why such condition is arisen?*

*Before finding solution to this, we come to understanding of "Secularism"*

*In layman terms, **Western understanding**, They meant to "Secularism" that there will be complete disregard for religion when it comes to Politics or literally there will be no appeal for votes on grounds of religion and religion will not influence the policy making function of the government while in "**Indian Understanding**", it is meant that Government will respect every religion equally irrespective of religious denomination and will not prioritize any religion.*

*Secularism defined as the belief that religion should not be involved with the ordinary social and political activities of a country or indifference to or rejection or exclusion of religion and religious considerations.*

*Secularism has these features –*

- 1. **Separation** of religious institutions from state institutions and a public sphere where religion may participate, but not dominate.*
- 2. **Freedom** to practice one's faith or belief without harming others, or to change it or not have one, according to one's own conscience.*
- 3. **Equality** so that our religious beliefs or lack of them doesn't put any of us at an advantage or a disadvantage.*

***Constitutional Secularism** (Indian Context) has two features –*

- 1. **Critical respect for all religions**, In India we are not blindly anti-religious but respects Religion not one but all religion. In India , it is impossible to distinguish religion from social So Dr. B.R. Ambedkar observed "Every aspect of religious doctrine or practice cannot be respected and respect for religion must be accompanied by Critique.*
- 2. **Constitutional Secularism follows that State must respectfully leave religion alone but intervene whenever religious groups promote communal disharmony and discrimination on grounds of religion (an inter-religious matter) or are unable to protect their own members from the oppressions. Indian state abandons strict separation but keeps a principled distance from all religions.***  
*Eg. Article 15, Article 17, Article 25 to Article 30 and Article 44.*

*As we know India is a melting pot of Civilizations (Harappa, Vedic, Jain, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian) from where India inherited its Composite structure and inclusiveness of society. The past legacy in India contributed to composite culture – **Composite Culture** is a heterogeneous mixture of multiple cultures meeting and co-existing in one single region.*

***Inclusive Society** – is a society that over-rides differences of race, gender, class, generation, and geography, and ensures inclusion, equality of opportunity as well as capability of all members of the society to determine an agreed set of social institutions that govern social interaction.*

*But during the reign of Britishers, the seeds of communalism were sown so they can preserve their Empire which led to communal discord between Hindus and Muslim. Afterwards there is development of parties on religious lines which ultimately resulted in the creation of Pakistan on religious ground.*

*Here we look for understanding of communalism – Indian and western.*

*Western Understanding of Communalism- It is referred as a "theory or system of government in which virtually autonomous local communities are loosely in federation". Communalism is a political philosophy, which proposes that market and money be abolished and that land and enterprise to be placed in the custody of community. The English understanding is neutral.*

*Indian Understanding of Communalism – in Indian subcontinent, Communalism is associated with tensions and clashes between different religious communities in various regions and it is significant socio-economic and Political issue in the region. It refers chauvinism and chauvinism itself is an attitude that sees one's own group as the only legitimate or worthy group. With other groups being seen as inferior, illegitimate and opposed. Thus communalism is an aggressive political ideology linked to religion.*

*After the Independence, the constitution framers want to preserve India's Composite and inclusive culture so they added the values **Secularism** and Freedom of belief, faith and to choose whatever religion individual likes. But what we see today is – being Secular is termed as Anti – national, now we come to factors that transformed "being secular" is equal to anti - India are*

### **1. Government Policy:**

*Congress government developed its own kind of Secularism which fit its Political ambition. Congress secularism has three elements:*

*offering (fictional) protection against the Hindu "majority" who actually pose little threat to Muslims as the former are busy fighting among themselves*

*Appeasement of the most rabid elements in Muslim society in order to bring in the bulk vote;*

*And treating Muslims as Muslims only and not ordinary citizens whose religious identity is a personal matter.*

*And past governments followed this blindly and didn't contribute for the development of Muslims but they are vocal for Muslim rights and for their concern simultaneously they are silent on Hindu and other religious denominations rights and concern E.g Kashmir issue and Migration of Hindu Population, On Ram Mandir Issue and issue of Adam's Bridge or Ram Setu (Congress Government filed affidavit in Supreme court that It is Natural and not man made)*

*The last one hurt the sentiments of Population which constitute eighty percent of the country and at that time Government is equally vocal on Muslim rights.*

### **2. Negative Portrayal of Symbols of Hinduism in Bollywood:**

*In Bollywood, the religious practices and symbols of Hinduism portrayed in negative character and that portrayal created hatred among the masses to adopt these symbols that hurt the sentiments of majority.*

### **3. Cases of Violation of Fundamental rights of Individuals:**

*Our Constitution grants freedom to choose and practice religion but when a individual consummated a inter faith marriage, there is pressure to adopt the religious practices and thus violation of rights guaranteed by constitution and if they rebel and not surrender then Lady is given "Talaak"*

*This kind of Practice took form of Love – Jihad and make majority apprehensive of consequences of inter-faith marriage*

### **4. Muslim leadership hate speech and role in protest movements :**

*Hate Speech by Muslim Leadership during gathering and their participation in protest movements without knowledge of Bill or Policy they just wanted to protest.*

*Now, we come to what may be possible solution to this so the Word " Secular" does not connote anti-India meaning.*

### **1. Government Policy:**

*Present BJP Government won election on the agenda of Hindutva or appealing to Hindu masses against emerging Radicalism of Muslim youth and their apprehensions for Islamphobia.*

*Both BJP and Congress contested their respective election on Hindutva and Congress Brand of Secularism which resulted in emergence of Jinnah like minded Muslim leadership who are not integrative and have belief in Syncretism.*

*E.g.. In Assembly Elections- Because of BJP's Hindutva Politics, there is rise in number of Muslim leaders who do hate politics and this also led to polarization of both communities because parties do appeal on religious lines indirectly that led to Emergence of one such leader(Chief of AIMIM) whose party members contesting elections everywhere on the name of Religion. This kind of development is against the secular fabric of India.*

*Citing all these developments, Government should vocal for all religious denominations equally and should not prioritize any single religion for political gain. Government should be vocal for composite and Inclusive culture of India and that aims at Unity and Integrity of India.*

*Government should through its machinery aware Citizens about its Policies and action.*

**2. Mutual respect:**

Muslims should respect religious practices of other religious denominations and should not see through the prism of its religious strictness.  
If they can, they should visit to the shrines of other religious denomination so it can lead to communal harmony.

**3. Ban to portrayal of Hindu symbols in negative character in bollywood:**

Bollywood should stop to produce any film or movie that portray Hindu practices in negative character while in reality it may not be adopted by negative character.

**4. Muslim leadership should come forward:**

Clergy Class and Muslim Leadership should come forward and appeal to Muslim community and tell them what Secularism stand for and about Composite and Inclusive culture and character of India.  
All religious community should exchange their dialogue in peaceful way so it can preserve the diversity of India.

**5. Preservation of Individual rights that are guaranteed by Constitution:**

When a inter-faith marriage is consummated, Spouse and family should not pressurize the bride to change her faith, belief and practices.

At last to preserve the Integrity and Unity of India, we must accept the similarity and differences of ours and not to fight over them. It will again make the word "**Secular**" relevant and significant.

**REFERENCE:**

1. [www.secularism.org.uk](http://www.secularism.org.uk)
2. <https://www.insightsonindia.com/2014/11/07/communalism-meaning-and-issues/>
3. <https://ncert.nic.in/ncerts/l/lesy106.pdf>
4. <http://hstpost.com/bollywood/sorry-aamir-despite-all-the-denials-pk-has-an-anti-hindu-undertone-2041285.htm><https://www.fir>
5. [Drishti IAS](#)
6. [Constitution of India](#)
7. [Youtube Channel: Study IQ, Only IAS and Rajya Sabha TV](#)
8. [Newspaper: The Hindu and Indian Express](#)