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# SECULARISM: THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Secularization is one of the important topic of today's world. Sociologist from Max Weber to Peter Berger were convinced that secularization was one fact of the powerful monolith called 'Modernization', and trusted that secularization would come along bundled with a comprehensive package of modernizing forces.

The word 'Secularization' was used first in 1648; it marked the transfer of church properties to the control of the king. Later in 1851 when Jacob Holyoake coined the term 'Secularism' and led on rationalist movement of protest in England, Secularization became an inalienable part of the ideology of progress.

The meaning of the word 'Secularism' in its political context can and has assumed different meanings in different countries, depending broadly on historical and social circumstances, the political philosophy and the existential needs of a particular country. In one country secularism may mean an actively negative attitude to all religions; in another it may mean a strict 'Wall of separation' between the state and religion and religious institutions.

In general Secularization is opposed to religionism. In other words, as secularization grows, religionism decreases. Many religious practices and ceremonial rituals which once marked the individual and social life of the Indian people, have now been abandoned by them. It is not only the cities wherein Secularization may be seen at work, the villages too are getting Secularized. In India the state is Secular in the sense that there is no official religion. The constitution does envisage the involvement of the state in matters associated with religion and religious institutions and even indeed with and propagation of religion in its most limited and refined sense. Although the idea of Secularism may have been borrowed in the Indian constitution from the west, it has developed its own unique brand of Secularism based on its particular history.

Causes of Secularization:-

Among the causes of secularization the following ones deserve mention:

- (i) Modern Education. The foremost causes of secularization in India is the western education which brought in western culture and diminished the influence of Indian culture. It may be said that the process of secularization in India started with the advent of Britishers in the country. The modern education encouraged scientific attitude towards human problems. The educated youth tried to find out scientific

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explanations to the numerous traditional beliefs regarding women's role in society. A secular attitude was adopted towards marriage, occupations and others human activities.

(ii) **Social and Religious Reform Movements.** - The various social and religious reform movements started by Indian leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Keshav Chandra Sen, Swami Dayananda, Devendranath Tegore and Mahatma Gandhi also encouraged the process of secularization in India.

(iii) **Urbanization.** Secularization is more prominent in urban life than rural life. The housing shortage, the multiplicity of the means of transport and communication, the economic problems, fashion, education, urban, political and social structure, influence of western culture on urban life, individualism all these factors have secularized the urban outlook.

(iv) **Legislation.** The Britishers enacted various laws like the Widow Remarriage Act, 1856, Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850, Special Marriage Act, 1872 which attacked the orthodox beliefs of the Indian people. In modern times the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, the Adoption of Children Act have led to the secularization of the Hindu institutions of marriage and family.

(v) **Western Culture.** The influence of western culture has secularized the Indian life. The western culture lays emphasis on materialism, individualism, sensualism, non-religionism, and licence. It has influenced the outlook and family relations of the people in India. Religion does not now solely determine their economic pursuits or matters regarding marriage, education, sex and family life. The Indian culture under the influence of western culture has assimilated new ideas. The religious interpretation of cultural activities has given place to secular interpretation.

#### **Conclusion:-**

Secularism one of the best features of Indian constitution and it is the duty of every Indian to stand by and believe in this declarations. And yet recent political and social events have questioned this declaration. Is India a secular country on paper or does Secularism actually exist in India. Secularism has to play a decisive role at present stage of Indian democracy. It is so because today when Indian democracy seems to face the challenge of narrow divisive trends and tendencies, a rational and scientific approach which is the basis of Secularism has become a matter of utmost importance. Communal disturbances which have distinguished the public life in the recent past, as well the birth and growth of narrow and divisive trends and obscurantist theories are mainly the result of ignorance and can be fought not by legislation alone, but by education and in the process of educating the traditional Indian mind, Secularism and all that it stands for the political leaders have to play a major role.

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# পাঁচ দশকৰ চিন্তন

বহা মহাবিদ্যালয়ৰ  
স্বর্ণ জয়ন্তী তমর্ঘ্য



মুখ্য সম্পাদক  
কেশব চন্দ্র ভাগবতী

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