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## **SECULARISM, 'INDIAN SECULARISM' AND POST-SECULAR DISCOURSES IN INDIA**

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### **Introduction**

The concept of secularism is generally allied with modernity. This came as part of the social revolutions of the eighteenth century in the West. The revolutions altered the conventional knowledge system in the society and brought forth a new school of thought. In modernity, the idea of secularism maintains that knowledge should be derived from the human capacity for reason rather than from the sermons of the prophets or from a holy text. Moreover in that way secularism proposes the world is governed by natural processes and mechanical laws rather than it being an embodiment of a divine design. The concept of secularism in its purity is best practiced not as a state of affairs; but as a value, a structural dimension, which is necessarily to be exercised by and for humankind.

Secularism fundamentally exerts that the functions of the political system should be based on human prudence and reason rather than be dictated by the clergies. Hence, secularism often is related to or equated with similar philosophies, including humanism, naturalism, and the separation of state and religion. The process of secularisation affects a society's socio-political cultural life and its development. Globally, many of the societies have undergone a process of secularisation, particularly when in its engagement with modernity. By and large this essay does not intend to provide a clear indication about the future of secularism or Indian secularism. What it highlights is that the tensions confronting the theory of secularism in the wake of post-secular debates, religious fundamentalism and militancy, and the efforts it makes to cope with it.

### **Idea of Indian secularism**

India is known for its tolerance, save the internal casteist intolerances towards its neighbours for centuries. India has a historical legacy of secularism before advent of

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modernity, take instances of the reigns of Asoka, Akbar, Samorine et al. and further it was a dominant attitude during India's freedom movements in the early twentieth century. It was this philosophy that was adopted by the framers of Constitution to facilitate social inclusion for the long run of Indian democracy given its extreme diversity. However, in the post-colonial period that legacy being constantly threatened by the vote bank politics of various political parties.

Asghar Ali Engineer has analysed that..

*'it will be seen that the secularism has lost its philosophical appeal and the new so called secular leaders who have emerged on the scene during and after the Babri Masjid episode, are more concerned about their vote-banks rather than the secularism of a lofty political philosophy. Their commitment is neither to secularism, much less to minorities. They only use secularism and champion the cause of minorities to seek their votes. No wonder the quality of our democratic polity is at stake' (Engineer 1999: 16-9).*

The idea of 'Indian secularism' when considered is something quite different from the Western meaning of secularism which is the separation of church and the State. Generally, secularism meant neutrality or impartiality with regard to religions, but the Indian version is associated with 'tolerance of all religions' and has facilitated to secure special treatment to marginalised minority groups, in view with backwardness, historically. Several features of the Indian model are striking and are relevant for a wider discussion. Basically multiple religions are part of its foundation concept. Indian secularism is inseparably tied to the religious diversity it holds. The commitment to values like liberty, equality, peace and tolerance between communities, which is interpreted broadly to cover the relative autonomy of religious communities and the equality of their status in society. According to the fundamental rights of Indian constitution, it has a place not only for the right of individuals to profess their religious beliefs but also of the communities to establish and maintain educational institutions on the basis of religion, which is crucial for the survival and sustenance of their distinctive religious traditions.

The acceptance of community-specific rights is another feature of Indian secularism. This comes from multi-religious society; it is concerned as much with interreligious domination as it is with intra-religious domination. Indian secularism, according to Rajeev Bhargava, does not erect a strict wall of separation between State and religion. But it proposes a 'principled distance' between these two. Moreover, by balancing the

claims of individuals and religious communities, it never intended an insistence of privatisation of religion (Bhargava 2006: 20-29). By and large, the principle of secularism as mentioned in the Indian constitution carries the assurance that everyone has the freedom to practice their religion. Article 25 of the Constituion provies thus. Here it is unnecessary to proclaim secularism in order to grant religious freedom. This freedom can emerge from, and form a part of the Fundamanetal rights that are assured to every citizen. The pcinciple of Indian secularism goes further and establishes equality between all religious groups. Dr. S Radhakrishnan, describes this:

*“We hold that not one religion should be given preferential status, or unique distinction, that no religion should be accorded special previlages in national life, or international relations for that would be a violation of basic priciples of democracy and contrary to the best interest of religion and government... no group of citizens shall arrogate to itself rights and previlages which it denies to others. No person shall suffer any form of disability or discrimination because of his religion but all like should be free to share to the fullest degree in the common life (Radhakrishan 1956: 184).*

The freedom of religion does not necessarily need secularism to support it, equality of religions can be established via the fundamental rights of equality, Article 14. However, if it was to discontinue this, secularism would be rendered unnecesary. Secularism transcends beyond equality and freedom to declare that the State is not aligned to any particular religion. It is this meticulous loyalty that institutes the credentials of a secular State. Unless secularism, promises that the State would neither align itself with any particular religion, principally majority religion, nor pursue any religious identities of its own (Chandhoke 1999: 2-29).

Equality of all religions, and the distancing of the State from all religious groups, was speciafically expected to guarantee the minorities that they have a legitimate position in the country, and that they would not be discriminated on the basis any of their identities. Theoretically, secularism established that the majority group would not be previlaged in any manner. Consequently, the doctrines of a belief system, discouraged any pretension that the majority religion has any right to stamp the body politic with its ethos.

During the rise of demands for religious identity Jawaharlal Nehru in 1951 declared that a secular State is one in which the State protect all religions, but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the State religion

(Chandhoke 1999). According to Nehru, the concept of secularism that emerged in India possess three substantial components. Firstly the State will not attach itself to any one religion, which will thereby establish itself as the State religion. Secondly all citizens are granted the freedom of religious belief. Finally the State will ensure equality among religious groups by ensuring that one group is not favoured at the expense of the other. Correspondingly, the minorities will not be discriminated against anyway (Smith 1958: 154).

Nehru explained his notion of secularism clear on various occasions, secularism does not mean a State where religion as such is discouraged. Moreover, it provides freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion. Nehru has never considered the word secular opposed to religion and perhaps did not it difficult to as good word 'secular'. Nehru expressed that, (generally),

*“..some people think that secularism means something opposed to religion. However, that obviously is not correct.”* According to Nehru, *“Indian secularism means is that it is a State which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities; that is as a State it does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the State religion”* (Gopal 1980: 327).

In the definition of T.N Madan, a critic of secularism here, also concurs with the idea of Indian secularism with arguments of Bhargava. The secularism as political ideology and practice obviously does not stand for the separation of religion/church and the State in India, but rather for a non-discriminatory State, which is constrained to treat its citizens in certain contexts (where religious beliefs and/or identities are at stake) differentially rather than uniformly (Madan 2011: 5).

### **Interrogating Indian Secularism**

'Indian secularism' has been unique concept also tainted in several occasions. Since India is an extremely diverse country, innumerable minority communities exist with peculiar social/religious, caste, cultural and linguistic identities, the State has failed in several points to fulfill the principles of its constitution. In the post-Nehruvian era, it has seen a stalemate of Indian secularism since India has witnessed several communal and casteist violence even India declared as a secular State, for eg. Sikh pogroms (1984), Babari Masjid demolition(1992), Gujarat violence (2002).

Indian National Congress (INC) had fallen short in the post-Nehru era with secular credentials, while party had overtly engaged with the communal means towards its political ends. Moreover INC's political hegemony as constant power swear in Union since India's independence, which ended a national emergency in 1975 and witnessed the emergence of communal political outfits throughout the country. While INC has still not been able to establish that its leaders were not involved in the 1984 pogroms against the Sikh community despite ample proof to the contrary (Chandhoke 1999: 2-29), Shah Bano case, the Muslim women's search for justice over personal laws are also cases of fallacy of INC.

The 1992 Babari Masjid demolition is also a deep blemish to India's secular credentials, INC ineffectively reacted to the dispute even it had power in Centre during the demolition. Agressive cultural nationalism is undesirable it is exclusive, it excludes people who do not belong to majority Hindu culture. On the otherhand, minorities have organised themselves under the umbrella of religious leaders. The polarisation of communities have resulted in retreat from a common civic space, which at one point of time was painstakingly constructed by the leaders of the freedom struggle.

The rising Hindu fundamentalist movement has not only targeted the minority Muslim community but also Christians as the enemy within the nation (Jaffrelot 2007: 98-28). The accelerated ascendance of the Hindu Right since the 1980s, presents one of the central conundrums of contemporary Indian history and politics. The forged assertions of Hindu nationalism for majoritarian, authoritarian, militaristic, and exclusionary India are fairly evident, yet it continues to make dangerous advances in vast segments of Indian society (Kumar 2008: xiii). Several studies have noted that the Hindu nationalism gains a great deal of its staying power and effectiveness by speaking simultaneously in several languages (Tapan Basu et.al 1993: 2). Hindu nationalists converse on the one hand language of democracy and authoritarianism, secularism and religious intolerance, and a divisive cultural nationalism on the other. The extremely contentious vision of India as a homogenous *Hindu Rashtra* (nation), an attempt to make a society is monolithic, that is congruous with upper caste Hindu beliefs and practices are central agenda of Hindu nationalists. The notion of *Hindutva*-literally 'Hinduness,' more in particular, Hindu rule or Hindu nation puts in a nutshell the coercive and majoritarian manifesto of the *Sangh Parivar*, the 'Sangh (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh) family' of right-wing political, cultural, and religious organizations that comprise the Hindu Right (Kumar 2008: xiv). Innumerable cases of communal violence have pointed to the role of this right wing group, including the anti-Christian violence in Orissa in 2008 August. The reports of communal tensions in India

have been ascending, thus modernity and its values such as Indian secularism is being constantly challenged. The dangerous moves by the INC governments of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in 1970s and in 1980s, as playing Hindu communal cards have several times created ripple effect especially among the majority community.

### **Post-secularism: Rhetoric and Reality**

The idea of post-secularism derived from the post-modern approaches. The values of modernity is harshly criticised in this approach. The universality of values of modernity is rejected since these considered are the part of meta-narratives or grand narratives. According to Jean Francois Lyotard, grand narratives supersede the little narratives (Lyotard 1984: 3-9). Explicitly, post-secular debates are not an attempt to banish the religion from the public sphere; rather, it is a philosophical approach to religion that critically considers orthodox assumptions. It is a system of thought that view realities as plural and subjective and dependent on the worldview of the individual. According to post-secular society, that is characterised by *“the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly secularised environment”* (Habermas 2009: 60-69). This brief definition of post-secular society identifies two major connotations. The process of secularisation does not essentially lead to the deteriorating of religious authority on the one hand, and the increasing religious importance would not jeopardize the secularisation process on the other. Nevertheless, there are still communal tensions in the society, so debates do not disregard the predicament between religion and the secular. Post-secularism intends to explain the revival of the strength of religion, in a sense that religion strips off its supposed subordination to the secular modernity. It is not an approach to create a domain on clash of both identities that is neither religion nor the secular claims its supremacy; both of the concepts count each other as equal entities in a society.

In his articulations on post-secular debates, Habermas explains three important socio-political developments that lead to the change of consciousness in the post-secular society. Firstly, the rising happenings of religiously stimulated conflicts and the enormous broadcasting of news regarding these incidents by mass-media that have contributed to the transformation of two sensitivities that is, firstly religion is not going to disappear from the public sphere, and the gradual process of modernisation does not inevitably commission the influence of religion. Secondly, the power of religion in the development of both public opinion and private morality has been increasing. At last, the mounting figures of immigrants particularly from the Arab world with their religious traditional values in a secular social system, especially in Europe underscore the presence of religion (Habermas, 2009).

According to Habermas, secularism, until the mid-twentieth century, was a social mechanism. The obligation of a secular State to take a neutral position to ensure check and balance among competing religious denominations (of Christians) in Europe. However, in contemporary period there should have developed a systematic and sustainable mechanism of attaining ‘a balance between shared citizenship and cultural difference’ (Habermas, 2009). Several cultures and religions coexist with a common national identity as a value of modernity. In the secular-modern perspective, this national identity has been a nonaligned, non-religious character generally. Although, in this transformed reality, religious revivalism and increasing religious influence compel to rethink the process of the formation of a secular democratic national identity that ensures an equal and dignified role of religion along with the secular domain. That is the incorporation of religion to the public sphere, never be the incorporation of the latter to the former.

Scholar like, Talal Asad, philosophically approaches to the secularism and its formulations as a critic of secularism of modernity in order to demystify the history of the concept Asad draws upon philosophical imaginations of Michel Foucault. In mapping out the secular, he characterises ‘genealogy’ delightfully as “a way of working back from our present to the contingencies that have come together to give us our certainties” (Asad 2003: 16). The concept of ‘secular’ is a quality that is often an appeal, suggesting a concept that is transparent in general. That assumption in itself, together with the easy prevalence of ‘secular’ in public discourse today, is a product of the forces that form the word’s genealogy. He observes in his critique to secularism that, scholars have paid more attention to ‘secularism’ than to ‘the idea of the secular’ and paid more attention to religion than to either one. While the public discourse cannot understand the secularism as a political doctrine, the absence of the epistemological sort of the idea of ‘secular’, is also prevailing.’ By and large the ‘secular’ is approached indirectly and then considers ‘secularism’ against understandings of the nation-state and modernity; in relation to human rights discourse and its international elaborations and the universality of the its values (Asad 2003: 16-7).

The construction of the ‘secular’ is both formative of and consequent on the Western historical narratives of collective being with the modernity. Asad draws attention to that, secularism does not clear the playing field but rather draws the lines differently: “*A secular State does not guarantee toleration; it puts into play different structures of ambition and fear. The law never seeks to eliminate violence since its objective is always to regulate violence*” (Asad 2003: 22-30). Therefore it can be assumed that

tolerance would inevitably arise in secular systems based on reason-the basic constituent in modernity, have been studied by several research scholarships.

Asad investigates the binary logic of secular modernity opposed to religious with another recognizable dichotomy, the sacred versus the profane. As an anthropologist/historian of religions, Asad's discussion notes that 'the sacred' moved from being a quality of distinct 'places, objects, and times, each requiring specific conduct' to 'sacredness' as a 'unitary domain' constructed in large part through the needs of anthropologists. To be precise, in certain culturally and historically specific social systems the relationship between the object as set-aside and the bases of its sacredness, or the conduct as required, had not been a constant subject. It was the construction of 'the sacred' as a domain rather than a quality that, among other things, signalled formation of something called 'the secular'. But orienting these two as oppositions was a rhetorical move that obliterated the particular meanings of each. Moreover this was also a change from sacred quality residing in an object wherein signifier and signified were not separable to "the essentialization of 'the sacred' as an external, transcendent power" (Asad 2003: 35).

In the broad sense Asad points to the fact that:

*"Religion as a category is constantly being defined within social and historical contexts, and that people have specific reasons for defining it one way or another. Religion is associated with various kinds of experience, various institutions, with various movements, arguments and so on. That is what I am pointing to. In other words, it is not an abstract definition that interests me. People who use abstract definitions of religion are missing a very important point: that religion is a social and historical fact, which has legal dimensions, domestic and political dimensions, economic dimensions, and so on. So what one has to look for, in other words, is the ways in which, as circumstances change, people constantly try, as it were, to gather together elements that they think belong, or should belong, to the notion of religion. People use particular conceptions of religion in social life"* (Debbanerji 2009).

Even if Asad does not take a side as a post-secularist, his critique can be examined in that way. He sought for a dialogic engagement, interrogating the biases, provincial limitations and arbitrary choices within post-Enlightenment modernity through the critique of its limitations by alternate cultural histories, while probing these pre-modern

formations for pluralities of interpretation and internal resources of human emancipation (Debbanerji 2009). Contextually, build up a post-secular world, in which individuals and groups may co-exist not through the policing of the boundaries of a public sphere by the nation-state, but through the development of alternate social realities of human emancipation. However, the problematic conceptualisation of Asad is that, it has doomed relevance to the present situation in India, with the alarmed ascending of a dominant Hindutva nationalism generally in India.

Post-secular debates reject the secularism as an alien to Indian tradition and custom and secularism is responsible for the growing communal/religious violence in Indian society. It blames for the displacing of the religion from the public sphere and destroying the people's faith. Scholars from India like Ashis Nandy, T.N Madan, have argued in the Indian contexts the external threat to secularism is only a symptom of a deeper internal crisis. The internal crisis in the sense that the conceptual and normative structure of secularism is itself terribly flawed. In different ways, such arguments point that secularism is linked to a flawed modernisation process, to a mistaken view of rationality, to an impractical demand that religion has to be eliminated from public life, to an insufficient appreciation of the importance of communities in the life of people.

The foremost critic of secularism is Ashis Nandy, who argues that 'the traditional concepts of inter-religious understanding and tolerance... had allowed the thousands-yes, literally thousands - of communities living in the sub-continent to co-survive in reasonable neighbourliness' (Nandy 1997a: 162). The advent of colonial modernity has structured countless social catastrophes in Indian subcontinent. In order to sort out such harms of society, it has been advocated that a return to genuine religion and the indigenous tradition of religious tolerance as the best means to preserve and maintain a pluralist and multi-religious Indian society, which has been existed here for ages. In this context, Nandy observes that:

*The traditional ways of life have over the centuries developed internal principles of tolerance, and these principles must have a play in contemporary politics. This response affirms that religious communities in traditional societies have known how to live with each other. It is not modern India which has tolerated Judaism in India for nearly two thousand years, Christianity from before the time it went to Europe, and Zoroastrianism for over twelve hundred years, it is traditional India which has shown such tolerance. That is why today, as India gets modernised, religious violence is increasing (Nandy 1998b: 326).*

Nandy elaborates further as follows:

*It is time to recognise that instead of trying to build religious tolerance on the good faith or conscience of small group of de-ethnised, middle class politicians, bureaucrats, and intellectuals, a far more serious venture would be to explore the philosophy, the symbolism and the theology of tolerance in the faiths of citizens and hope that the state system in the South Asia may learn something about religious tolerance from every day Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, or Sikhism rather than wish that ordinary Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs learn tolerance from various fashionable secular theories of statecraft (Nandy 1998b: 338).*

In his lengthy critique to secularism/modernity, Nandy's rejection of the ideas entrenched in two ways. His critique of modern culture and society, which approvingly and respectfully draws on Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* on the one hand, and a critique of Hindu nationalism of a piece with the critique of Nehruvian secularism on the other. Nandy asserts that the communal nationalism is itself a product of modernity, owes its very existence to the oppositional but at the same time internal dialectical relation it bears to the other product of modernity and Nehruvian secularism. The argument is that the secularism is an alien principle imposing upon a people who have never wished to separate religion from politics in their everyday life and thinking, and therefore has left the people no choice but to turn to the only religious politics available, namely Hindu nationalism. Thus, secular tyranny breeds Hindu nationalist resistance, which threatens its own form of tyranny (Alam 2002: 86-109)

Peripherally Nandy's argument is fascinating, when it analyses the receptive nature of Indian culture to the 'other' religions and cultures. However, its explanatory merits are significantly flawed itself by its contracting and uncritical anti-nationalism, its skewed historiography and its nationalist reminiscence. If it examines the thrust of Gandhism, there is no gainsaying the humanism inherent in Gandhi's politics. Jaffrelot observes that the Brahminical elements in Gandhi are also manifested, as it can be exemplified from his debates with B.R Ambedkar, in regarding with casteism in India (Jaffrelot 2004: 31-38). Another principal fallacy with Nandy is that, the epistemology he used to analyse the history ignores the fact that, in India all the basic elements in the construction of a Brahminic Hindu ideology were zealously existed before the advent of modernity in India. This is a problematic positioning of Nandy in contradiction to his argument that communalism, like nationalism, is a purely modern phenomenon.

In ‘*The Intimate Enemy*’ Nandy, and it often leads him to support a dogmatic traditionalism for no other reason than that it seems to be anti-Western and anti-modern. Nandy is making a case against modernity, and the entire project of secular liberal rationalism, which he sees as more or less inseparable from colonialism, capitalism, and all the aspects of modernisation and development he finds objectionable (Nandy 1983: 12-40). That is simplistic and reductionist perspective. He has disgusted with modern hierarchies of wealth and privilege, by the inequities of modern societies and the gruesome contrast between wealth and poverty which prevails in contemporary India. Predominantly, he recognises that modern science, modern weaponry, and modern efficiency have made mass murder all the more easy and warfare all the more deadly, is oversimplified in fact (Leach 2009). It is always unnecessary to leave secular modernism from a critical examination, while there should have been a check and balance to regulate the inappropriate juxtaposing the projects of modernity, forever.

Another major critic of secularism/Indian secularism is T.N Madan, who says:

*In the prevailing circumstance secularism in South Asia as a generally shared credo of life is impossible, as a basis for state action impracticable, and blueprint for the foreseeable future impotent. It is impossible as a credo of life because the great majority of the people of South Asia are in their own eyes active adherents of some religious faith. It is impractical as a basis for state action either because Buddhism and Islam have been declared state or state protected religions or because the stance of religious neutrality or equidistance is difficult to maintain since religious minorities do not share the majority's view of what this entails for the state. And it is impotent as a blueprint for the future because, by its very nature, it is incapable of countering religious fundamentalism and fanaticism (Madan 1998: 298-309)*

In his criticism to secularism, Madan elaborates in his discussion that ‘in multi-religious societies such as those of South Asia it should be realised that secularism may not be restricted to rationalism, that is compatible with faith, and that rationalism as understood in the West is not the sole motive force of a modern State’. Moreover, ‘*the only way secularism in South Asia, understood as inter-religious understanding, may succeed would be for us to take both religion and secularism seriously and not reject the former as superstition and reduce the latter to a mask of communalism or mere expediency*’ (Madan, 1998). Madan also argues that, the alien concept of secularism and its annoyances to traditional Indian society where the religion is inseparable from society’s everyday life.

The problematic perspectives of Madan and Nady, that is secularism is a concept of Western modernity and it is inappropriate in India will be proactive positioning to Hindu nationalists. Since Hindu nationalists are ardent critique of secularism, also their political influence is increasing.

The critics of Indian secularism argue indiscriminately that the traditional concepts of interreligious sympathetic co-existence and lenience had allowed thousands of communities lived in the subcontinent with harmony and peace for ages. The challenges of the post-secularists to the modern secular India is that, their solution for the contemporary social problems of the society - a retreat of the genuine religion to public and the indigenous tradition of religious tolerance as the best way to preserve and maintain a pluralist and multi-religious Indian society.

It is true that traditional ways of life in India has only accepted the Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam never did modern secular India embrace as the former, that is traditional ways of tolerance and it has been volatile with the threats of major communalist movements such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Popular Front of India (PFI) etc. The modern India has become intolerant of implications of British colonial modernity and the cases of communal violence are in hike. The post-secular critics argue that instead of creating the religious tolerance to religions of India, the State has to learn religious tolerance from Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism. The State has to realise that the secularism may not be restricted to rationalism. It should be compatible with faith. Additionally, it can be understood that the rationalism is the not only the sole source of development of a modern State, not the inspiration of human lives and further the simple rejection of religion considered as superstition is a reductionism.

The obscurity with these assessments to secularism is, its scholars disregard that the in-built potential of a religion through a transformation into an ideological instrument in the hands of ruling regimes to legitimise its policies, which may be against one minority community. Moreover State may have absolute power that possibly will eliminate the opposition that opposed to the State policies.

The scholars who asserts, a tradition of tolerance in Hinduism have ignored the reality of a violent, exploitative and hierarchical caste system that is prevailing in contemporary India. Whose operation and practice have, historically led a vast section of humanity-not only the today's Scheduled Castes (SCs) but also a large section of the

poorest among the other backward castes-to live a dehumanised life and whose political assertion in recent times, thanks to democracy (secular modernism) is becoming intolerable to the upholders of the upper caste Hinduism (Alam:86-108). Historically, the Brahminical Hinduism has never tolerated outside or inside, any challenge to its hegemonic position in the society. It successfully countered the challenge of Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism by appropriating their symbols and reducing the 'sects' of Hinduism. Above all, the large chunk of Christians, Muslims and Buddhists in India are the converts from various Hindu communities, since it has historically been cultural system of extreme discrimination, i.e., such as untouchability (Viswanathan 2003: 29-33). Several parts of India still have been subjected to this age old social inhuman practice, which in turn shows Indian society is yet to modernise and embrace scientific temper.

The 'tolerant' Indian secularism has been flawed as the cases have been mentioned here, forming the foremost anxiety when the post-secular debates, demand the revival of religion. Moreover, as in the case of India, the emergence of religion as a political force and the assertion of other primordial identities have become a phenomena particularly in Asian continent on the political landscape. Accordingly, at the same time it poses an uncertainty on the inevitability, irreversibility, and universality of secularism and its capacity to eliminate the influence of religions in society. A significant characteristic of the process of secularisation in any society is the democratisation. Secularism evolved in the West through the popular struggles against feudalism and the Papacy occurred centuries ago, particularly in France. Democracy and secularism are inseparable, that without the extensive democratisation of social and economic structure of society, it would have been impossible to build a genuine liberal-democratic and secular State.

## **Conclusion**

The theme which intended to examine in this essay is that the post secular debates in India becomes a problematic project, essentially as there are chances to practice it in the negative senses. The foremost impasses with the post-colonial and post-structural theories that they are philosophically anti-hierarchical and anti-oppressive on the one hand on the other that is only one concept, cannot be easily practiced. It can be welcomed as critical philosophy as a role of corrective force in a society to democratise the system. It needs to appreciate that secularism is a value evolved with the formation of modern nation states.

Therefore it is an essential value to be followed for the better management of minority communities and their rights in any states in the world. The necessity is that the religious and political institutions must be separated from each other because both are very powerful institutions that command people's unqualified allegiance. These institutions would have the potential to use force against each other, that with the dissenting individuals or groups. If the two are identical or strongly overlap, then the resulting intermix thwarts autonomy more than when they are separate. The value of equality is ultimately overdue in Indian social system. The wall of separation is required in order to ensure a subtle and complex egalitarian system. The necessity is that the mechanism of democracy requires that there should not be concentration of power in any one institution or in any one group (Bhargava 1994: 1784-1791).

The post-secular debates also can be existed as a corrective force against the extreme secularisation. In the long run, predicament is that the communalist forces of various religions in India have been there to take over the public sphere. The communalist forces are demanding for a de-secularisation of India a little at the early years of its independence, largely ever since the formation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980.

If the cultural nationalist party like BJP is coming to power in India, from the top they would challenge the rationalist knowledge system by replacing the 'saffronisation' (Hansen 1999: 154-169). Contemporary India has witnessed for this threat in several incidents since 2014. The distorting of history of a state would be a catastrophic to its minorities. These imaginations of social scientists have been realising on day by day basis in contemporary India. In India, because of its colonial legacy and complexity of societies, the social modernisation process has been in less a pace. The Islamist movements, like Jamath-e- Islami, and Popular Front of India (P.F.I) in its several conferences in Kerala have been aligning with the post-secular debates to justify their inherent agenda of establishment of a religious state, essentially by upholding the arguments of scholars like Talal Asad. The chopping off hands of a college Professor in Kerala alleging blasphemy on in 2010 by this group looms the violent nature which has created. The advocates of Hindutva/Hindu nationalism are chipping away at the traditional Indian nature of tolerance and accommodation. They are making secularism as an ideology of anti-Hindu and are equating it with 'minorityism' (Nayar 2004) a mechanism to woo minority communities. In this context, scholars of post-secular debates fail to realise precisely the alarming of such phenomena fairly pragmatic sense. Religions, as Jawaharlal Nehru mentioned, have laid down values and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. They should not be mistaken for attributes of a completely formed and closed culture that India has inherited. The Hindutva and

various communal forces have made considerable headway in India, particularly after the 2014 parliamentary elections and India has lost its initial urge for secularism and religious conservatives attempting to established their hold in the State. In order to prevent the further communal polarisation of society in India secularism is a powerful idea, which has to be preserved.

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