UNIT-13: SECULARISM: IT'S NATURE, SECULARISM IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

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13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to know.

- How to explain the meaning of secularism
- Discuss the views of various thinkers on Secularism
- Discuss the Indian and western model of secularism
- Explain the meaning given in the Indian constitution
- Discuss the relationship of secularism with religion in India.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Secularism believes that religious that religion should not play a role in government, education, or the other public parts of the society. It is indifference to or rejection or exclusion of religion and religious considerations. Secularism speaks of neutrality. So It gives equal rights

and equal status to every religion of a state. It removes the society from the dominations of religions institutions and symbols. After reading this, you will be able to discuss about the meaning and different views and models of Secularism and its relation with the religion in India.

13.3: WHAT IS SECULARISM?

Secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions dignitaries. One meaning of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of beliefs, from the imposition by government of religion on religious practices upon its people. Another meaning of Secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be uninfluenced by religious beliefs or practices.

The term "secularism" was first used in 1851.It is derived from the Latin word "Saeculum" which means "generation" or "age". And came to mean that which belong to this life, to the here and how, in this world. It is widely used as shorthand for the ideology which shapes contemporary society without reference to the divine.

13.4: VIEWS ON SECULARISM

Secularism draws its intellectual roots basically from Greek and Roman philosophers such as John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Weber, Peter Berger etc.

Jafferson wrote the statute of Religious freedom, whose preamble indicates state religion, nothing that "false religions over the greatest part of the world and through all times have been maintained through the church-state. To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves is sinful and Tyrannical.

13.5: THOUGHTS ON SECULARISM

Secularism draws its intellectual roots from different philosophers, such as George Jacob Holyoke ,Peter Berger and Max Weber.

George Jacob Holyoake invented the term "Secularism" to describe his views of prompting a social order separate from religion, without actively dismissing or criticizing religious beliefs. an agnostic himself, Holyoake has argued that "Secularism is not an, argument against Christianity, it is one independent of it. Secularism does not say that there is no light or guidance elsewhere, but maintains that there is light and guidance in secular truth, whose conditions and sanctions exist independently and act forever. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life."

Secularism, according to Peter Berger,is the process by which sectors of society and culture are removes from the domination of religious institutions and symbols.

Peter Berger is of the opinion that increased social and geographical mobility that the development of modern communications has exposed individuals to plurality of religious influences. They, have, therefore, learnt to tolerate each other's belief.

Weber considered secularism as the process of rationalization. For achieving given ends, the principle used is one which is based on scientific thought, i.e., which is rational. This thought has undermined religion."

13.6: DIFFERENT MODELS OF SECULARISM

There are different models of secularism. They are described as follows:

13.6.1 Western model of secularism

Western Model of secularism is more important a classical liberal view where people may have different values and that state must not promote or protect any specific ideas. Religion also remains an individual value and state provides no protection to the citizens from other criticism of one's religion.

According to western model of secularism there needs to be separation between political institutions and religion. Separation means

complete separation where state does not interfere in religious affairs at all. This is Western Secularism.

13.6.2: Indian Model of Secularism:

Indian Secularism is a Concoction of ill defined confused ideas that are essentially incorrect.

Indian model of secularism is fundamentally different from western secularism. It does not focus only on church-state separation and the idea of inter-religious equality is crucial to the Indian conception.

According to Nehru secularism means, "equal protection by the state to all religion." He wanted a secular state to be one that "protects all religions but does not favor one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the state religion."

Secularism in India helped to focus on equality within the community equality to replace the nation of hierarchy,

Indian Secularism took on a distinct from as a result of an interaction between what already existed in a society that had religious diversity and the ideas that came from the west. It resulted in equal focus on intra-religious and inter-religious domination.

13.7: SECULARISM IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION

India has been declared a secular state by its written constitution and it is every Indians duty to stand by and believe in this declaration.

The founding fathers of our country had a deep conviction that India should be established as a secular country given the diverse religious beliefs of its people. Thus, while framing the constitution, they made several provisions which unequivocally affirmed India as a secular country. Even though initially not written in the original constitution, the preamble of our constitution was amended in 1976 to explicitly proclaim India as a secular country.

The word Secular has been added to the preamble of the constitution by the 42ndAmendment. This is a glowing achievement of our democracy.

According to Venkataraman, "A state is secular which is neither religious, nor irreligious, nor anti-religious but is wholly detached from religious dogmas and activities and thus neutral in religious matter." The Secular character of India was previously implicit in the constitution .But the 42nd amendment has made it explicit. So, secularism prevails in India. The citizens have respect for all religions and equal respect for all.

13.8: SECULARISM AND RELIGION IN INDIA

Religion plays and continues to play a key role in the affairs of human being and society because of its functions. But as the area of scientific knowledge and technology widens, the area of religion shrinks. Some of its functions are taken over by their agencies. In technologically less developed societies, rituals and symbolic acts are employed on a wide scale to placate supernatural powers for worldly gains.

Here, the process of secularism starts because of which religion loses control over several fields of social activities. Such as economic, trade, education, medicine and so on. Many of the traditional functions of religion are taken care of by secular institutions.

But secularism varies from society to society. India perhaps failed to develop diversified institutions that may take over the traditional functions of religion. As such, it remains communal and religious beliefs continue to prevail.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the belief of secularism?

Q2: Secularism speaks of _____.(fill in the gap).

Q3: What do you mean by the term Secularism? (Answer in about 40 words)

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Q4: From whom secularism draws its intellectual roots?

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Q5: Give a definition on Secularism?

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Q6: What are the two models on Secularism?

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Q7: State whether the following statements are true or false.

a) According to western model of secularism there needs to be separation between political Institutions and religion.

b) Indian model of secularism is fundamentally different from western secularism.

c) The term "secularism" was first used in 1891.

d) 42nd amendment has made Secularism explicit in the constitution of India.

Q8: Is India a secular state?(answer in about 20 words).

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Q9: In which amendment of the Indian constitution the word secular has mentioned?

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Q10: Why the process Secularism starts?

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13.9: LET US SUM UP

- Secularism believes that religious that religion should not play a role in government, education, or the other public parts of the society.
- Secularism speaks of neutrality. So It gives equal rights and equal status to every religion of a state.
- Secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions dignitaries.
- One meaning of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on

matters of beliefs, from the imposition by government of religion on religious practices upon its people.

- Secularism draws its intellectual roots basically from Greek and Roman philosophers such as John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Weber, Peter Berger etc.
- Western Model of secularism is more important a classical liberal view where people may have different values and that state must not promote or protect any specific ideas.
- Indian Secularism is a Concoction of ill defined confused ideas that are essentially incorrect.
- Indian model of secularism is fundamentally different from western secularism.
- India has been declared a secular state by its written constitution and it is every Indians duty to stand by and believe in this declaration.
- The word Secular has been added to the preamble of the constitution by the 42nd Amendment.
- But secularism varies from society to society. India perhaps failed to develop diversified institutions that may take over the traditional functions of religion.



13:10: FURTHER READING

1. Ahuja.Ram(2009): Society in India : Concepts, theories and recent Trends, Rawat Publications

2. Paul.K.C, Chakravarty.Adyanath, Paul.Nita (2011): Indian Constitution, Rupalim Prakashan,guwahati

3. Joskowicz,Ari and Katz.B.Ethan,Secularism in question,Jews and Judaism in modern times(2015)

4. Thapar.Romila(2015): What Secularism is and where it Needs to be Headed



13.12: ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: The beliefs of secularism are that religion should not play a role in government, education, or the other public parts of the society.

Ans to Q No 2: Neutrality.

Ans to Q No 3: Secularism is the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions dignitaries. One meaning of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of beliefs, from the imposition by government of religion on religious practices upon its people. Another meaning of Secularism is the view that public activities and decisions, especially political ones, should be uninfluenced by religious beliefs or practices.

Ans to Q No 4: Secularism draws its intellectual roots from different philosophers, such as George Jacob Holyoke ,Peter Berger and Max Weber.

Ans to Q No 5: A definition of secularism by Peter Berger, "is the process by which sectors of society and culture are removes from the domination of religious institutions and symbols."

Ans to Q No6: The two models of secularism are Western and Indian.

Ans to Q No 7: a) True. b) True c) False d) True.

Ans to Q No 8: India has been declared a secular state by its written constitution and it is every Indians duty to stand by and believe in this declaration. But India perhaps failed to develop diversified institutions that may take over the traditional functions of religion. As such, it remains communal and religious beliefs continue to prevail.

Ans to Q No 9: 42nd amendment.

Ans to Q No 10: The process of secularism starts because religion loses control over several fields of social activities. Such as economic, trade, education, medicine and so on.



13.13: MODEL QUESTIONS

A. Very shorts questions

Q1: From what secularism removes the society?

Q2: From which word the term"secularism" is derived?

Q3: Who invented the term Secularism?

Q4: Who considered secularism as the process of rationalization?

Q5: To focus what secularism helps in India?

B. Short questions (Answer each question about 15o words)

Q1: How Secularism gives equal rights and equal status to every religion?

Q2: What is secularism? Explain.

Q3: "Nehru wanted a secular state". Explain the statement.

Q4: Give the views of Venkataraman, on Secular state.

C: Write short notes on (answer each in about 150 words)

Q1: Secularism by Hoalyake

Q2: Western model of secularism

Q3: Indian model of Secularism

Q4: India as a secular state

D. Long Questions) Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1: Discuss the relationship of Religion and Secularism?

Q2: How secularism included in the preamble of the Indian constitution? Explain.

Q3: Write how Indian model of secularism is different from the western model of secularism?

Q4: Name some of the philosophers who gives views on Secularism. Have their views are acceptable in real politics?

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