

## Chapter-4

### Crisis of Secularism in Present India

This chapter tries to unveil the crisis of secularism in present India. India mainly faces two types of crisis: One is Ideological and the other is Real. Priority is given here to the ideological crisis first.

*Secularism* is the official ideology of the Indian state. The goal of the founders of the Indian republic was to establish a modern state that was democratic and secular. But neither the founders nor their successors have precisely defined what '*secularism*' is ; In political discourse and in competitive politics *secularism* is viewed as an antidote to religious fundamentalism, politicization of religion and *communalism*. With the demolition of *Babri Masjid* in December 1992 and the communal holocaust that gripped many parts of the country, the whole political spectrum seemed to be divided into secularists and non-secularists but the latter represented by *Bharatiya Janata Party* dubbed the former as 'pseudo-secularists', i.e. *secularism* in favour of *Muslims*. To counter BJP brand of *secularism* and *Hindutva* ideology it is not enough to claim that India is a secular state. It is necessary here to unveil what *secularism* means and re-examine the relevant provisions of the constitution, the policies and practices of the state, and the performances of the political parties in the light of *secularism*.

*Secularism* is a Western Ideal, a gift of the European enlightenment of the 18th century. The idea of secularism is supported by the history of the entire Renaissance that brought into being a secular Europe. Prior to the Renaissance that is in mediaeval Europe, religion cast a pervasive influence on the life of man and society so much so that life became completely stagnant. The Renaissance removed this awesome barrier against human progress. It replaced faith by reason in man's attitude and approach to his life and world around and inspired him to discover the strength of his vision and launch continuous adventures in the world of the unknown. Thus it defied the limits imposed by religion. However it did not discard religion. It only freed it from prejudices which covered man's vision and tried to raise the status of humans as a social and political animal.

The advancement of science and technology and the process of industrialization would not have disrupted the culture and way of life of the people of India if its old and well tested philosophy of values had been retained and given importance by the state in the

post-independence era. It could give a sound direction to the process of change and modernization which was consistent and in harmony with the great culture and spiritual tradition of India. But the rulers of India after Independence imported the idea of *secularism* from the west which was alien in this soil and imposed it on the country.

There are three key articles which are responsible for the constitutional foundation for a secular polity: [1] Article 14 guarantees all citizens as citizens the right of 'equality before law' and 'equal protection of laws'. Here the question of religion is not relevant; [2] Article 15 prohibits the state to favour any religion or members of any religious community over others; [3] Article 25 gives everyone the right, within justifiable reason, to profess and practice any religion or none. But the Indian state, as Justice *Gajendragadkar* said, 'does not own loyalty to any particular religion as such, it is not irreligious or anti-religious; it gives equal freedom to all religions'<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of formal definition, the essential ingredients of Indian *secularism* are-[a] recognition of religion and beliefs as private and personal aspects of life, [b] liberation of the civic polity from religion-dominated politics; [c] domination of common civil laws, as made and modified by representatives of the citizens; [d] recognition of equal status and opportunity for men and women irrespective of caste, colour and creed; [e] fraternity of citizens as citizens and not as members of the primordial ascriptive groups; [f] acceptance of scientific temper and inquiry involving rejection of dogma. Thus viewed, secularism is an instrument of social change and political modernization. It is a positive concept and a dynamic ideal as is manifested in several provisions of our Constitution. But over the years there has been a distortion of the true spirit of *secularism* by its practitioners<sup>2</sup>

In view of the hard facts of India's social situation, our constitutional secularism deviates from the Western notion in two respects. First, the constitution takes a positive and affirmative view of religion as a social force, and even encourages, within limits, the practice as well as preaching of denominational religions by all religious communities. Second, the constitution empowers the state to make legislation with regard to the religious practices of any community which are pernicious and exploitative and constitute a threat to the unity and integrity of the state. Thus, the constitution specifically outlaws the practice of untouchability, although it was a religious practice to some sects. Indian secularism, then, is an ideal and reality. The state is not completely separated from religion, though

there is no 'established' state religion. Indian secularism is dynamic, it is an instrument of social change.

The nature of secularism in the political as opposed to ecclesiastical sense requires the separation of the state from any particular religious order. These can be interpreted in at least two different ways. The first view argues that secularism demands that state be equidistant from all religion, refusing to take any sides and showing a neutral attitude towards them. The second insists that the state must not have any relation at all with any religion. The equidistance must take the form, then, of being altogether removed from each.

In both interpretations, secularism goes against giving any religion a privileged position in the activities of the state. In the broader interpretation, there is no demand that the state must stay clear of any association with any religious matter whatsoever. Rather, what is needed is to make sure that, in so far as the state has to deal with different religions and members of different religious communities, there must be a basic symmetry of treatment. On this view, there would be no violation of secularism for a state to protect everyone's right to worship as he or she chooses, even though in doing this the state has to work with and for religious communities. In the absence of asymmetric attention, working hard for religious freedom does not breach the principle of secularism.

The important point is that the requirement of symmetric treatment still leaves open the question as to what form that symmetry should take. For example, the state may decide that it must not offer financial or other support to any institutions with any religious connection. Alternatively, it can provide support to all institutions, without any way discriminating between their respective religious connections. While the former may appear to be, superficially, 'more secular', the latter is also politically quite secular in the sense that the state, in this case, supports hospitals irrespective of whether or not there are any religious connections and through this neutrality, it keeps the state and the religions quite separate.

It is the broader view that has been the dominant approach to secularism in India. But this, it must be recognized, is an incomplete specification. *Secularism* excludes some alternatives, but still allows several distinct options related to the unspecified distance at which the state should keep all religions, without discrimination. There is thus a need, in

dealing with religions and religious communities, to take up questions that lie 'beyond' *secularism*<sup>3</sup>

In practice, secularism has lost its dynamic aspect and become distorted by the policy makers of the state and its practitioners. The government of India has the constitutional obligation under Article 44 as one of Directive Principles, to establish a 'uniform civil code', applicable to the entire country. Such legislation was considered necessary to displace sacred rules of different religious communities from Indian family life (such as marriage, divorce, succession and women's rights) by rules that were secular. But contrary to this constitutional mandate, the Government of India has established a uniform civil code for all '*Hindus*' (including *Sikhs*) in the country, while leaving Muslims with their own system of Personal Law. The result is the official distinction of the population of the country on the basis of religion. By this policy and practice the state has virtually abolished the vital distinction between the political and religious identities of its citizens and has thus grossly deviated from the path of *secularism*. Indian *secularism* was further diluted when the *Congress* Government led by *Rajiv Gandhi* surrendered to the *Muslim* fundamentalists and incorporated into the secular civil law the *Shariat's* rule in order to nullify *the* Supreme Court's decision which established a uniformity of maintenance entitlements for *Hindu* and *Muslim* divorcees. The Court's decision was a bold step toward placing our constitutional secularism on the right track, but our political secularists undid that decision to nurture *Muslim* "vote bank". This approach clearly helps to rise the *Hindu* communal forces. It has created a clear gap between the profession and practice of secularism in this country. This situation has now started having its evitable reparations on the *Hindu* mind.

It is true that like the Western democratic states, the secular democratic state of India has rightly kept itself aloof from the religion of the law. The state has allowed full freedom to individuals and different religious communities of the country in respect of their religious beliefs and practices, modes of worship etc. So, the people in the secular India enjoy religious freedom practically in the same way as they have enjoyed it before. It is its external aspect. But the deeper or internal aspect of *Dharma*, which shapes human mind and behavior, mainly consists of the perennial truths and values, for which *Artha* and *Kamā*, were not given an independent status in the empirical life of man, has come into direct clash with the secularism of India. The state has compartmentalized the life of the individual and of community into the religious and the secular. *Dharma* has constituted the

foundation of the life of the individual and the community in India from the very beginning, it conditions and directs human conduct and behaviour. The laws of the state cannot make men moral, they fail to mould and develop the character of the people. This function has been performed by *Dharma* throughout the ages. The secular state of India has given no place to this ethical and spiritual religion in its constitution. So, India today is facing a serious crisis, it is the crisis of values.

*T.N.Madan* convincingly argues that the paradigms of modernization from the west are believed to have 'universal applicability, the elements, which converged historically, that is in unique manner to constitute modern life in Europe in the sixteenth and the following three centuries have come to be presented as the requirements of modernization elsewhere, and this must be questioned,' 'Paradoxically', notes *Madan*, 'the uniqueness of the history of modern Europe lies, we are asked to believe, in its generalization of modernization that 'prescribe the transfer of secularism to non-Western societies without regard to the character of their religious traditions or for the gifts that these might have to offer'.<sup>4</sup> *Ashis Nandy* observes that when the modern Indians "project the ideology of secularism into the past and assert that *Ashokā* was 'secular', they ignore that *Ashokā* was not exactly a secular ruler: he was a practicing Buddhist even in his public life. He based his tolerance on Buddhism, nor on secularism. Likewise, the other symbol of inter-religious amity in modern India, Akbar, derived his tolerance not from secularism but from Islam: he believed that tolerance was the message of Islam. And in this century Gandhi derived his religious tolerance from Hinduism, not from secular politics." Disavowing the legitimacy of importing secular principles from West,<sup>5</sup> *R.S.Mishra* finds the merit of Christianity as having the organising power in well-established churches which could withstand the hostile onslaught of nonreligious and antireligious modern ideologies and movements. Hinduism was never blessed with such organizational power, and yet it did not fall apart due to its *Varnasrama dharma* and the waves of Muslim domination. This is the essential cultural unity of India despite *religio-cultural* diversity. *Mishra* sees the danger of *dharma*, the essential component of Hinduism-being put under fire. He writes: "*Dharma* can in no case be conceived as a private matter or as an affair of the individual, as the secularist would have us believe. It is vitally concerned with community and its peace and prosperity. It is the non-religious secular ideology that treats *Dharma* as a private matter of individual...To leave *Dharma* or religion at the mercy of the individuals will only mean an end of it...People have to see that their rulers are governed in

their conduct and behaviour by the higher moral and spiritual principles of *Dharma* so they may not start behaving in a demonic way".<sup>6</sup>

So, for *Mishra*, *secularism* in India deserves to proceed from the premises that uphold the radically different nature of *Hinduism*, unity in diversity and not the principle of uniformity; "It constitutes its weakness as well as its strength. *Dharma* has not been accorded its due place by the Indian polity, which has also overlooked the ethical and the spiritual in its constitution. The indifference to *dharmā* and what it can mean to the public at large have resulted in a serious crisis of values for the nation. The contradiction between *dharmā -nirpekshata* (neutrality to religion) and *sarvadharmā-samabhava* (harmony of religions) is evident, for they cannot be conceived as equivalents". *Mishra* emphatically notes that it is *sarvadharmā-samabhava* which has constituted an essential feature of *Hinduism* and of Indian culture as a whole and not *dharmā -nirpekshata*, which is utterly foreign to it. It does not turn the nation to a theocratic state, for universal *dharmā* is without, whereas the former constitutes the meaning and truth of human life, individually', *Mishra* would, thus, infer that "the sovereign state of India can no more afford to maintain a policy of neutrality or an attitude of indifference towards *dharmā*, which has moulded and shaped, in a considerable measure, the culture of humanity." So, more than secularism in its undifferentiated incarnation, it is the making *sense of the secular*.<sup>7</sup> It has created a clear gap between the profession and practice of secularism in this country. This situation has now started having its evitable repercussions on the Hindu mind.<sup>8</sup>

So, any secular ideology, social or political which ignores religion, *Dharma* altogether, cannot touch the mind and heart of the people of this country which is religious through and through. The great thinkers and social and political leaders of India before independence were fully aware of this fact. But it was ignored altogether by the secular political leaders of the post-independence era. A country like India which can feel legitimately proud of its great and rich cultural, philosophical and spiritual heritage, cannot live and prosper on the basis of borrowed ideologies that are completely foreign to its genius and spirit. This hard truth has never been understood and appreciated by the secular rulers and political leaders of India. And the result is that this ancient land finds itself involved in deep crisis in different ways today.

The Indian state, modeled after the liberal democracies in the West, is the harbinger of religious conflict in India because of its conception of toleration and state neutrality.

'*Secularism*' in India now takes the form of fighting against the so-called *Hindu* fundamentalism.

### **Real Crisis of Indian secularism**

*Communalism* and communal-type movements and ideologies are very much with us today and this feature is interwoven to such an extent that not only during the periods of 1999 to 2004, it continues in some form or other in several states even to-day. Indian society continues to provide objective social, economic and political bases as also ideological and cultural soil for the rise and growth of such movements. Since the late 1950s, the country has been repeatedly disturbed by a group of communal, regional, linguistic and caste riots. Communal and caste appeals are used on a large scale for electoral as well as non-electoral political mobilization of the people. Today, *communalism* is the most serious challenge facing Indian society and polity. It marks, on the one hand, the growth of forces of national disintegration which constantly threaten the unity of the Indian people, and, on the other hand, the growth of barbaric force. Moreover, it is a problem facing the entire Indian society. Historical problems generated over decades and generations do not have short-term or instant solutions. Such solutions- pacts, compromises and accords and electoral alliances by secular parties, often tend to worsen the problem. Communalization of Indian society has been a prolonged process which has been going on for over 100 years; de-communalization should be treated as a process.

Here the role of the state counts. While the colonial state was a major prop of communal forces, the independent Indian state has so far been largely secular as well as opposed to *communalism* except during the short period 1999 to 2004. But the quality of the *secularism* of the Indian state and most of the political parties has had varying degrees of weakness. In fact, their secularism has seldom been very sturdy. Moreover, *communalism* has made serious inroads into the state apparatuses. Many of the officials of the government and middle-level leaders have openly or secretly compromised with or even supported communal forces and sometimes themselves practiced *communalism*. Neither the Central and State Governments nor the political parties, especially the ruling *Congress* Party, have fought *communalism* scientifically or with enthusiasm and commitment. They have often permitted and sometimes encouraged the intrusion of religion into politics. They have opportunistically compromised and even allied with communal parties and individuals; with the *Muslim League* in *Kerala* and the *Akalis* in

*Punjab*. Similarly, several secular groups and parties did not hesitate to join hands with the *RSS-Jan Sangh* in 1967-69 and in 1977-80 and in 1999-2004 with the *BJP*. They are continuing to do so the with *BJP* in *Bihar* and *Orissa*. But it is still very important that they have themselves not been communal. This fact has been a major obstacle in the path of *Hindu* communalism, preventing its burgeoning, and is responsible for keeping India basically secular. But it has not prevented the growth of *communalism*, especially in its ugly, barbaric form of communal riots.<sup>9</sup>

The social, class character and base of *communalism* have undergone a major change after 1947. In the colonial period, *communalism* represented in the main the interests of the *jagirdari* classes and strata, moneylenders and merchants, sections of the petty bourgeoisie, and colonial rulers. The colonial factor as a prop of communalism has by now virtually disappeared. The *jagirdari* classes and strata have been disintegrating and merging with the capitalism farmers and rich peasants, who constitute a strong base of *Sikh communalism* in *Punjab*., and who tend to support *communalism* and casteism in other parts of the country too as a means of keeping their hegemony over the poor peasants of the same caste or religion. Moneylenders and merchants still constitute a major social base of *communalism* all over India. With the creation of *Pakistan* and the gradual abolition of the *zamindari* system and landlordism during the last 30 years, *communalism* seldom now represents, except in *Punjab*, a distorted form of class struggle. There is however a tendency for the rural class struggle between agricultural labourers and rich peasants-capitalist farmers and landlords to take on the forms of caste and communal struggles. This is particularly so in *Punjab* today. Similarly, though the struggle among the capitalist strata and groups in once again beginning to take on a communal form in a few areas, its main form still is that of regionalism. The struggle of the rural bourgeoisie against the urban bourgeoisie sometimes takes casteist forms, though its main form is the ideology of peasants. The Indian intelligentsia continues to be on the whole anti-communal or at least not pro-communal, though it is not able to stand up to the communal forces once they enter a vigorous phase as the example of *Punjab* and *Gujarat*.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the petty bourgeoisie, whose ranks are being rapidly replenished by the children of the peasantry and working classes, *communalism* has failed after 1947 to get significant support from any major social class or stratum. In particular, it cannot be said that it has been getting or is likely to get in the immediate future from the Indian bourgeoisie, the type of strong social support it derived from the *jaigirdari* or semi-feudal



classes and strata and from colonialism. The Indian bourgeoisie continues to feel, as it did not before 1947, that it needs national unity and integration and that *communalism* operates against the economic, social and political development of India along capitalist lines. Its role in the spread of both *communalism* and casteism is minimal, being confined to certain socially reactionary sections and individuals. Its dominant sections and class leaders do not yet feel that the class can survive only with the help of *communalism*. Therefore, any analysis or strategy of political and ideological struggle against *communalism* which is based upon treating it as the ideological instrument of the capitalist class would be incorrect and is therefore likely to be politically in fructuous. At the same time, it cannot be said that this attitude of the capitalist class towards *communalism* would remain forever. World historical experience from *Japan* to *Germany* indicates that communal type fascist ideologies tend to serve as the second or last line of defense of a capitalist class faced with political and economic crisis and threat of expropriation or overthrow. Any long-term strategy against *communalism* must therefore take account of such a possibility. In other words, it cannot be dogmatically asserted either that the Indian bourgeoisie at present backs *communalism* or that it would never do so in the future.<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately, while the left has taken correct ideological and political positions on *communalism*, casteism, regionalism, etc; it has not been able to play the desired role. In fact, it has not even made a serious analysis of these complex phenomena, being satisfied with a few simple formulae. One reason has been its general weakness in Indian society and politics. But more important has been its relative neglects of the problem and its tendency to compromise with casteist and communal forces especially those emerging from among the minorities. This is perhaps the immense economist and economic reductionist bias from which the left in India has always suffered. This bias leads it to underestimate and even neglect, at least in practice, serious and complex study and analysis of *communalism* as well as struggle against it in the realms of ideology and culture. It underestimates the role that a new radical consciousness has to play in the creation of a new society. Consequently, the very cultural, social and ideological backwardness of the masses repeatedly hits back and holds up and even pushes back not only the struggle on unifying the nation but also the struggle for transformation of society and the efforts to constitute all-India social classes, including the working class.

Professor *Ramachandra Guha* describes these conflicts in such an unique way which deserves to be quoted at length. According to him," these conflicts run along many

axes, among which we may-for the moment- single out four as pre-eminent. First, there is *caste*, a principal identity for many Indians, defining whom they might marry, associate with and fight against. '*Caste*' is a *Portuguese* word that conflates two Indian words, *jati*, the endogamous group one is born into; and *Varna*, the place that group occupies in the system of social stratification mandated by *Hindu* scripture. There are four *Varnas*, with the former '*Untouchables*' constituting a fifth (and lowest) strata. Into these *Varnas* fit the 3,000 and more *jatis*, each challenging those, in the same region, that are ranked above it, and being in turn challenged by those below.

Then there is *language*. The Constitution of India recognizes twenty-two languages as 'official'. The most important of these is 'Hindi', which in one form or another is spoken by upwards of 400 million people. Others include Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya, Punjabi, Bengali, and Assamese, each of which is written in a distinct script and boasts many millions of native speakers. Naturally, national unity and linguistic diversity have not always been seen to be compatible. Indians speaking one tongue have fought with Indians who speak another.

A third axis of conflict is *religion*. A vast majority of the billion-plus Indians are *Hindus*. But India also has the second largest population of *Muslims* in the world-about 140 million ( only Indonesia has more). In addition there are substantial communities of *Christians*, *Sikhs*, *Buddhists*, and *Jains*. Since faith is as fundamental a feature of human identity as language, it should scarcely be a surprise that Indians worshipping one variation of God have sometimes quarreled with Indians worshipping another.

The fourth major axis of conflict is class. India is a land of unparalleled cultural diversity but also, less appealingly, of massive social disparities. There are Indian entrepreneurs who are fabulously wealthy, owning huge homes in London and New York. Yet fully 26 per cent of the country's population, about 300 million individuals, are said to live below the official poverty line. In the countryside there are deep inequalities in landholding in the city, wide divergences in income. Not unexpectedly, these asymmetries have fuelled many movements of opposition.

These axes of conflict operate both singly and in tandem. Sometimes a group professing a particular faith also speaks a separate language. Often the low castes are the subordinate classes as well. And to these four central axes one should perhaps add a fifth that cuts right across them that of *gender*. Here, again, India offers the starkest contrasts. A

woman served as prime minister for a full fifteen years, yet in some parts of India female infanticide is still very common. Landless labourers are paid meagre wages, the women among them the lowest of all. Low castes face social stigma, the women among them most of all. And the holy men of each religion tend to assign their women an inferior position in both this world and the next. As an axis of discrimination, gender is even more pervasive than the others, although it has not so often expressed itself in open and collective protest."<sup>12</sup>

*Communalism* did have a basis, however, partial and perverted in the social existence of the petty bourgeoisie. Communal propaganda was not utterly disconnected with social reality. The communalist could impose his interpretation of the reality on the middle class individuals because it seemed to conform to their experience or reality as they were then living it. Of course, the extent of benefit from *communalism* was larger the higher one went up in the social scale and the fewer became the competitors; the upper middle class individuals benefited far more than the lower middle class individuals. *Communalism* was likely to benefit the aspirants for the High Court judgeship, the university chair or vice-chancellorship, or the directorship of a hospital much more than those trying to become *chaprasis* or clerks, though the latter would also improve their life opportunities to a certain extent. Of course, in the long run, the latter are more likely not to be beneficiaries but victims of *communalism*. In any case, it is clear that the role of the individual interest in middle class politics may not be under-rated.

During this period, the spread of education to the middle and rich peasants and small landlords extended the boundaries of the petty bourgeoisie to the rural areas. The newly educated rural youth, denied opportunities on land whether as landlords or peasants because of colonial underdevelopment. The youths started to move toward towns in large numbers in search of jobs. Moreover, the landed or jagirdari upper classes were threatened by economic crisis and slow disintegration which they tried to overcome by entering the urban job market and fighting for or against the system of reservations and nominations. This development gradually widened the social base of communalism to cover the rural areas. While before 1947, this development affected largely the landlords and rich peasants, it has proceeded much faster among all sections of the peasantry in post-independence India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, creating a vast potential field for communal and communal-type movements which burst out every now and then with immense fury.

*Communalism* was not as many writers have argued, basically the consequence of a backward (*Muslim*) middle class trying to level up for positions with an advanced (*Hindu*) middle class. It was the middle class mentality which helps them to compete among themselves in a tight economic situation and forming '*sections*' and '*groups*' to enhance their capacity to do so successfully or to improve their chances in the competition. Similarly, in post-Independence India, not only the *backward* middle classes of *Telangana* but the *advanced* middle classes of *Andhra Pradesh* have produced separatist movements. In *Maharashtra*, the social base of the *Shiva Sena* is educationally one of the most advanced petty bourgeoisies. In *Kerala*, both the backward *Ezava* middle classes and the *advanced Nair* middle classes have produced caste-communalism. In *Panjab*, there is both *Hindu* and *Sikh communalism*. In *Bihar* both the '*backward*' and the '*forward*' caste petty bourgeoisies have fought furious battles.<sup>13</sup>

For various historical reasons, economic and educational disparities between groups formed around religion, caste, language or region did develop on a local or national plane. It was also necessary that these disparities be removed. But *communalism* went further and tried to make these disparities the very basis of politics. On the other hand, the removal of these disparities was often neglected by the nationalists in the name of nationalism and national integration. The price of this neglect was the growth of communalism and communal-type ideologies and movements.

With modern mass politics, simultaneously, it is necessary and urgent to have a cultural revolution or complete modernization which would simultaneously incorporate the humanist and rational elements of the traditional culture in India, India, more than any other country, needed all-round radicalism, based on a socially radical mass *ideology* and not merely on political radicalism. Otherwise, even mass politics, depending on the *existing* backward social and cultural consciousness of the masses, hide this reactionary aspect that they would tend to strengthen socially backward ideologies and outlook and, instead of uniting the people, further divide them.

For this purpose, it is always easier to build up a movement on existing consciousness than to generate a new consciousness. The radical process was slow, difficult and not having a ready-made consciousness to appeal, so, the national leadership, especially, Extremist phase found it easier to appeal to the existing religious consciousness to build more advanced and secular consciousness, but which unconsciously left space for

*communalism* and casteism and indirectly influenced their own thinking and writing. Generally, each and every ideology has some basic elements. *Communalism*, as a ideology, is constituted of several elements. Consequently, being secular, a person may have some communal elements in his or her temperament and personality and a particular mix of some these elements may lead to full-blooded *communalism*. But it be possible that communal elements do exist in an overall secular personality and may not yet amount to *communalism*. It would be wrong to brand such a person as *communist*. But if these elements are not eliminated, it will create a crisis situation. And that was what happened in *Punjab*. This crisis situation already made its havoc in *Punjab* during 1982-84 especially after *Operation Blue Star*, in *Delhi* and other parts of India during 31 October-3 November 1984, in *Bombay* in 1991 and 1992, and in *Gujarat* in 2002. It is on these elements that the *Viswa Hindu Parishad* or opponents of the *Shah Bano* judgement or proponents of *Babri Masjid* or perpetrators of *Gujarat pogroms* play. .<sup>14</sup>

It seemed that all types of communalists believe in a common ideology. We cannot expect that liberal communalists do fight with extreme communalism as per ideology is concerned. Only the secular persons and forces can be waged the ideological struggle against extreme *communalism*. During 1981-84 with *Akali* liberal communalists like *Sant Longowal*, *Prakash Singh Badal* and *S.S. Barnala*, opposed *Bhindranwale*. It was only the Communists and secular Congressmen like *Darbara Singh* who had the courage to oppose extreme *communalism*.

*Muslim communalism* damaged the national unity before 1947 mainly and the after effect since 1947, the *Hindu communalism* poses the fascism, whose main target is secular forces. The existence of *Minority communalisms* should not detract from the fact because it is very dangerous. It hands over a minority to communal leaders whose politics are invariably harmful to the interest of the members of the minority concerned. So we should not ignore or adopt a tolerant attitude towards the *minority communalism*. *Minority communalism*, unless one struggles against it, makes the struggle against *majority communalism* very difficult. Because the different *communalisms* feed on each other and any strengthening of one inevitably strengthens the other. So they have to be fought simultaneously otherwise we have to faced the case like *Punjab* repeatedly. The extreme *Sikh communalism* cannot be successful in creating *Khalistan*, - that would not be permitted by the rest of the country. The real danger was and is that of *Hindu communalism* burgeoning forth-as happened in early November 1984. The secular forces and the state

can opposed the extremist violence by making an appeal to the strong sentiment of the Indian people for national unity and declaring. But the passivism of extreme violence by the forces and the state proved that *Hindu communalism-fascism* alone could keep this country united and strong and protect the *Hindus of Punjab* from terrorist violence. It is our experience since the 1920s all over the country and also in *Punjab* since 1948, that if we are soft towards minority *communalism*, we tend to become passive against majority *communalism* also. Therefore, to avoid *Hindu communalism-fascism*, it is very important to oppose minority *communalism* to the great extend.

If we address the majority *communalism* as fascism, then it is logically derive that minority *communalism* is separatism. Minority *communalism*, if accepted the view that they are perpetually and inevitably threatened by a majority, then firmly believe that they must stand on its own legs. But politically or constitutionally, cannot satisfy the spokesman of this theory because they believe that the most cast iron guarantee has to be implemented by a state of majority prevails. In the Indian context, once the twin notions of communal identity and politics based on communal identity are accepted, minorities can exist in the long run either through the mediation of an outside power or through a separate state of their own. It is therefore not accidental that *Muslim communalism* before 1947 first wanted perpetuation of *British* domination as a safeguard of '*Muslim*' interests and later moved on to separation. Similarly, during 1982-84, *Sikh* communalists repeatedly appealed not to democratic secular opinion for defense of '*Sikh*' interests but either to the *United Nations* or to an autonomous or independent *Panthic* .i.e., *Sikh* state.<sup>15</sup>

The reiteration of minority communal themes can pose in terms of the growth of *Hindu* fascism. But when of this dangers, the apologists and components of *Muslim* and *Sikh communalism* have been putting forward the dangerous theory that *Hindus* can never be solidified around *Hindu* 'identity' or *Hindu communalism*.(368) Another reason for the relative weakness of the *Hindu communalism* was the lesser weight of the *jagirdari* elements among *Hindus*, among whom the modern intelligentsia and bourgeois elements rapidly rose to positions of social, economical, political and ideological hegemony. Among *Muslims*, the *jagirdari* and bureaucratic elements still predominated. In this sense, the backwardness or weakness of the '*Muslim*' middle class contributed to the growth of *Muslim communalism*. But why the *Hindu communalism* could not go so deep in among the masses? The answer is, it failed to link up with religion. As a political movement, it not remained at the level of '*Hindu religion in danger*', but just '*Hindus in danger*'. On the

other hand, *Hindus* were as involved in communal riots as *Muslims* because the riots occurred around a religious issue. But the major reason was the much weaker religiosity among Hindus. Hindus were not so Orthodox because of their different religious sects. Different castes had different concepts of dharma. Therefore a very weak responses to the religious emotion and the cry of Hinduism is in danger. Moreover the priestly class was virtually absent, so the task of the Hindu communalists was doubly difficult. They had to *create* the Hindu religious identity. But because of sectarian diversity and inner divisions, it was difficult to have any religion-based unity. He therefore, found it expedient to adopt a definition of who was a *Hindu* that was not religious at all. While the *Muslim* communalists had only to transform the *Muslim* religious identity into *communalism*, *Ulama* could issue *fatwas* to propagate political causes, but make appeals through the so-called *Sankaracharyas* proved to be complete flops. Even the *shuddhi* campaign divided *Hindus* and here arose the question for its validity. *Sanatanist pundits* was dead against with the *Hindu Mahasabha's* efforts to integrate the *Scheduled Castes*. Luckily, *Hindus* have not been solidified into a community only because of the strong presence of secular leadership from *Dadabhai Naoroji* to *Gandhiji* and *Nehru* and the existence of a strong secular intelligentsia. It would be foolish to rely on such a theory for a guarantee of future well-being. In support of this it may be commented that *Hindu communalism*, in its various forms, has always had a strong presence in India., whose outstanding examples were the *Hindu* communal fury in *Delhi* in early November 1984, or in *Bombay* in 1991 and 1992, or in *Gujarat* in 2002. Today the opposition to *Hindu communalism* is beginning to weaken on a large scale. In modern India, it is the first time, when a significant section of the intelligentsia is beginning to support morally of a *Hindu* religious identity or the *BJP* succeeded in forming a government at the Centre in 1999. But it should be realized that even this limited *Hindu communalism* would pose a massive social and political danger .<sup>16</sup>

The constitution of India acknowledges the concept of minorities in *Article 29* and *30* which mainly deals with the fundamental rights. In *Article 29*. (1) It is said that any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same and (2) No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 30. (1), All minorities whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

*Clause; (1A) has been inserted by the constitution of 44th Amendment Act, 1978. In it, in making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of an educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to the clause (1), the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause.*

(2) The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language.<sup>17</sup>

According to T.N Madan , " Although it seems perverse to me to place an interpretation on these constitutional provisions to the effect that only the minorities have such rights, mischievous politicians have not been reluctant to cite them as evidence of 'minorityism'"<sup>18</sup>. Dr. B.R.Ambedkar did not exactly help in removing such doubts. Ambedkar commented in the *Constituent Assembly*, "The minority have loyal accepted rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority. It is for the majority to realize its duty not to discriminated against to minority. Whether the minority will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of majority. Only when the movement the majority loses the habit of discrimination against the minority, the minority can have no ground to exist". Professor V.V.John, a distinguished Indian intellectual, being a Christian, demanded for the protection of *human rights* rather than minority rights. According to him, the leaders of the minority communities practiced *selective secularism* and demand for *Hindus* ,what they do not themselves practiced.<sup>19</sup> One ingenious argument in this regard is that minority *communalism* is a halfway house to *secularism*.

After partition, the *Muslim* fundamentalist organization, *Jamat-i-Islami* ( Hind) accepted the conditionally secular form of government 'in the present circumstances', but rejected secularism as an ideology. It described its decision quite explicitly as one dictated by 'utilitarian expediency'<sup>20</sup> Similarly, Sikh fundamentalists also used to say that religious tradition is not separated with politics and if the State of India is not acknowledge it, then India must lost her identity of secularism.



The notion of minority status has special right but many governmental actions based on political expediency have given it currency. *Ramakrishna Mission* members in Calcutta misused this idea to get themselves recognized by a court of law as a non-Hindu minority. This decision was set aside by the *Supreme Court* in July 1995. The leaders of minorities raise cries of alarm that India is fast transformed into a *Hindu* country, and their counterparts among the *Hindus* fall apart and accuse the government of *minorityism*. There are variations and ramifications within majority-minority politics. Thus, the violent student agitation of 1990 against reservations demanded that 50 percent to be the cutoff point for the minority, who are not scheduled caste or scheduled tribe, nor or other backward classes against a majority of allegedly uniformly non-privileged people, although many among them were by no means economically deprived. It cannot be denied that there exist the exploitation of certain castes and communities at the hands of privileged classes over the centuries down to this day. The idea of reservation quotas was intended to be a temporary protective measure for thirty years (Article 334) only and understood it as non-discriminatory State policy, though not fit well with the idea of *secularism*, particularly if it threatens to become permanent vested interests. The hope that compensatory discrimination will transform communal groups into components of a pluralistic society in which invidious hierarchy is discarded while diversity is accommodated in a kind of 'principled eclecticism' is far from being realized'. (*Gallanter*, 1984 p 561)

The new Hinduism or syndicated Hinduism is different from the indigenous Hinduism both in scale and scope. It is not the creation of a new sect but it is a new religious form seeking to encapsulate all the earlier sects. The creation of this syndicated Hinduism is more for political purposes than the religious one; hence it is called political Hinduism too. The Muslim and the Christians regarded Hindus as "the other" as Hindus regarded them as *mlachas*. Inevitably, the new Hinduism was unavoidable in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The neo-Hindu movements in the twentieth century, particularly after independence, were given a political edge which remains recognizable even today. According to Romila Thapar, this development was responsible for the emergence of the present day syndicated Hinduism, which is being pushed forward as the sole claimant to the inheritance of the indigenous Indian religion. The religious expressions of the syndicated Hinduism are directed more to the rural rich and the urban middle-class to bring into politics a uniform monolithic *Hinduism* to serve its new requirements. Under the guise of a new reformed Hinduism, an effort is being made to

draw a large crowd and to speak with the voice of numbers. The appeal of the syndicated Hinduism has always a political purpose.

According to Romila Thapar, the syndicated Hinduism or 'Hindutva' has presented a new concept of Indian Nationalism. According to this concept, the Hindus being the majority and being the heirs and successors of all the glamorous things of the past, are entitled to exercise authority, precedence and domination over others. We are told that anyone, including non-Hindus, can be Indian provided he accepts Hindu gods and denounces non-Hindus as foreigners. Hindus are more patriotic than non-Hindus. The latter, in order to prove their nationalistic zeals, must profess their loyalty to the majority community and join the Hindus in the patriotic duty of demolishing those places of worship which were set up by the non-Hindus, over the Hindu temples. Hindu nationalism threatens those non-Hindus, of facing the wrath of Hindus, who refuse to follow the above line. Those fundamentalist religious leaders who talk of 'Hindutva' and 'Hindu Nationalists' have no faith in the judiciary and have disrespect for the established institutions. They maintain that the Lok-Shakti is greater than the Rastra-Shakti. (Thaper, Romila, Seminar, No, 313, Delhi, September 1985.)

The proponents of new *Hinduism* talk of 'positive secularism'. They consider the pampering and protection of Muslims and granting rights and special privileges to the minorities by the state as 'pseudo-secularism'. Positive secularism, according to them, envisages the coming together of all the religious communities bound by a uniform code of conduct, rights and responsibilities. They, thus, want that a 'civil code' be enacted by the government which may be uniformly applicable to all people in India, irrespective of their religion and caste. They do not want separate marriage and property laws to be made applicable only to Hindus or only to Muslims or Christians. They believe that this will be an ideal democratic solution to communal conflicts. They do not believe that this will submerge the distinct religious and cultural identity of the minorities in the larger majority community. Rather, they believe that such policy will do away with the religious superstitions and obscurantist customs and irrational and regressive practices among all the communities and develop a scientific temper which should be the cornerstone of secular states.

Another major *crisis* is the problem of *Kashmir Valley*. Through the Article 370, (19) the Constitution gave to *Jammu* and *Kashmir* a special status, making it impossible

for the parliament to make laws for this State without the concurrence of its legislature in respect of subjects other than those mentioned in the of *Accession* or corresponding to them. This specific legal context was soon overthrown by political considerations; the *Kashmir Valley* with its *Muslim* majority was vital to secular India's interests as a token of the repudiation of the *two-nation* theory which was the basis of *Pakistan*..Since *Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah*, the acknowledged leader of the majority of *Kashmir Muslims*, had explicitly rejected this theory, the position of Indian leadership did not seem then unreasonable. But gradually *Kashmiri Muslims* came to be seen hostages, and a special status was needed for retaining the State within the union for still newer considerations. Article 370 is now said to protect '*Kashmiriyat*' or '*Kashmiri* identity. But why the *Kashmiri* identity needs special protection-is difficult to understand of a *non-kashmiri*, unless it is taken to mean *Kashmiri Muslim* identity and brought under the title of minority rights and privileges.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1947 to 1990, the Chief ministers of *Kashmir* were *Muslims* but they have not been of like minded regarding the nature of the State's relation with the Union . Although the representation of *Muslims* in the bureaucracy and the professions and the overall economic situation, had improve considerably, yet a secessionist movement erupted there in the mid-1980s. It turned violent in 1989. Well trained and heavily armed militants, supported by *Pakistani* authority, are being fought by the security forces and there is blood-shedding on both sides. As a reaction of it , Dr *Murli Manahar Joshi*, in January 1992, arranged 'unity march ( *ekta yatra*). In the Valley itself, most of the *Kashmiri Pundits* have fled their homes and live in *refugee* camps in *Jammu* and *Delhi*, or with relatives outside the Valley. They are another example of non-privileged minority. Not only *Hindus*, but those *Muslims* too, who do not seem to be in full agreement, are the targets of fundamentalists and secessionists. In fact, many *Muslims* are reported to have been killed than the *Hindus*.

It is notable that, the militant secessionism of *Kashmiri Muslims* is not pure *Islamic* fundamentalist, but more inspired by *Muslim-Kashmiri* religion and ethnology and celebrated *Urs*. There have been clashes between *Islamic* fundamentalists and devout *Kashmiri Muslims*. But after the Iranian Revolution, they are more inspired by *Islamization*. The character of *Kashmiri* separation is against pan-Indian secular nationalism. In this context, the silence of *Muslim* political leadership in India about the happenings in *Kashmir* underscores the tragic fact that all is not well with *Indian*

*secularism*. Therefore, to accommodate *Kashmiri* nationalism within the Indian State without imposing a very severe strain upon Indian secularism is not so easy. A restatement of *Kashmiri* aspiration in terms of cultural pluralism and administrative decentralization of which a national State would be seen as the guarantor is not yet in sight.

The destruction of the *Babri* mosque in *Ayodhya* in December 1992 is an unnatural incident in Indian secularism. It was done by the right-wing Hindu extremists. It was an unprecedented and crippling blow to Indian secularism. The events leading up to the demolition are well known. There was a widespread sense of foreboding, yet the Indian state, at the state and national levels, became an accomplice, through acts of omission and commission. In this act of betrayal of both traditional culture pluralism and modern secularism prevail. As Prime Minister *P.V.Narasimha Rao* put it, the demolition posed a 'grave threat' to the institutions, principles and ideals on which the constitutional structure of the Indian republic has been built' (quoted in Larson 1995;p-273). The communal riots that followed (in January 1993) in different parts of the country, particularly the cities of *Bombay* and *Surat*, far away from *Ajodhya*, were widely described as anti-*Muslim* pogroms. *Muslim* gangsters and their counterparts had a counter attack in *Bombay*. These events revealed the fragility of Indian *Secularism*. We may consider casteist politicians as the soldiers of *Indian secularism* simply because in certain situations they establish alliances with *Muslims* against upper caste *Hindus*. The most dangerous aspect is the coming to power of the ultra extremists *Shiva-Sena*, in coalition with *BJP* in *Maharashtra*. Nothing is more inimical to the spirit of *Indian secularism* than the vituperations of the former *Sena* -chief *Bal Thackeray*, against non-*Maharashtrians* and those *Muslims* whom he considers anti-national.<sup>22</sup>

The end of the crisis of Indian *secularism* is not yet in sight. While not giving to way to the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, in facing the communal challenge, the starting point has to be the realization that the way out is going to be a long journey. In this respect, *Bipan Chandra's* view is that," the national leader would have found it easier to engage in a resolute struggle against *communalism* if the centre of gravity of its social and ideological base had been shifted from the petty bourgeoisie to the mass of the peasantry and the working class; or secondly, if it had possessed control over the social condition so that the petty bourgeoisie could be rescued from the socio-economic dead-end which led it

to take to communal politics. The third alternative was to undertake an intense educative ideological and political campaign among the petty bourgeoisie strata.<sup>23</sup>

It is necessary to show to the common people, both the majority and the minority, the real face of their anxiety, frustration and fears and to bring out the falsity of the communal analysis and solution. More concretely, the actions of the majority had to help the minority to realise that its religion and particular social and cultural traits would be safe, and that religion should not and would not be a factor in determining economic and political policies.<sup>24</sup>

In India, it was necessary and urgent to have a cultural revolution or complete modernization with modern mass politics, which would simultaneously incorporate the humanist and rational elements of the traditional culture. India needed all-round radicalism based on a socially radical mass ideology and not merely on political radicalism. Otherwise, even mass politics, depending on the existing backward social and cultural consciousness of the masses, hide this reactionary aspect that they would tend to strengthen socially backward ideologies and outlook and instead of uniting the people, further divide them.<sup>25</sup>

The medieval period had witnessed a synthesis and gradual development of a cultural rapprochement among the *Hindus* and *Muslims* in different parts of the country. The popular religion with an unorthodox form had been bringing the common people together socially and culturally. There was an adaptation of the converted *Muslims*, who carried with them into new religion with old religious and social belief and practices. The common popular culture and ways of life tended to prevail. Marriage and other social customs and practices tended to be uniform, or at least mutually influenced, in both their good and bad features. *Hindus* and *Muslims* shared common holy places, and saints or *dargas* etc. Some elements of the caste system, for example, food, taboos, marriage had become common to both and also celebrated *Durga Puja*, *Diwali* etc. together by common people as well as ruling classes in the eighteenth century in *Avadh*, *Bengal*. Common literary tradition had developed based on secular heroes and heroines or common religious characters, symbols and *myths*.<sup>26</sup> It is our duty to progress the process of the evolution of a composite culture initiated during the medieval period. When we look at the problems that currently concerns India, and are seemingly new addition to the problems we have had before, we see a pattern. Every news that breaks the air now a day's directly point at only

one direction; our recently acquired habit; getting offended too easily. Although it is not true that this problem is entirely new, and India was a model of tolerance before, but it can fairly be said that; we knew how to not get offended every time we see something that deviates from the way we see the world. It will be unethical to say that this recent practice is hampering our freedom of speech, or our religious freedom, but it is also true in modern India expressing our views is getting more and more tedious every day. For every uncommon philosophy continues to offend ample amount of people, and every independent thought is deeply scrutinized before they are permitted to breath in the free air, and the situation is getting worse every day.

Asis Nandy, renowned sociologist and clinical psychologist, calls himself "an anti-secularist" and argues that ideology and politics of secularism has exhausted its possibilities in India. He even asks for a different conceptual frame which he visualizes at the border of Indian political culture. He locates the cause of new religious violence in secularism and modernity. A 'gift of Christianity ' and child of modernity and colonialism secularism is a product of Western science and rationality and function as the ideology of modern State which according to Nandy is a source of most contemporary problems. Nandy's rejection of secularism is rooted in a twofold critique of modern culture and society and critique of secular state.

According to Nandy, Indian secular state has much to learn about morality from Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism, while Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism have nothing to learn from secular State in respect. As an alternative to secularism Nandy pleads for the recovery of India's traditional religious tolerance. Nandy's critique of ideology of secularism is against Western state centered version which is adopted by India's Westernized intellectuals. In this version of secularism religion should be abolished from the scientific management of the public sphere. In contrast is the non-Western religion centered understanding of secularism that supports equal respect for all religions and suits South Asian realities.

Nandy defines religion in South Asia has split into two; Religion as faith and religion as ideology. Faith means religion as non-monolithic, operationally plural way of life. Ideology means religion as sub-national, cross national or national identifier of population protecting political or socio-economic interests. Religion as ideology is usually identified with one or more text and become the final identifier of the pure forms of

religions and modern states prefers to deal with this form of religion. This idea is a product of modernity, statecraft and development. Secularism which is an imported idea from West does not use religion to link up different faiths or way of life which has its own principle of tolerance. The idea of secularism that give state the role of ultimate arbiter among different religions and communities is incompatible with understanding and role of religion in life of the people in South Asia.

Since Idea of secularism create rigid separation of two spheres, religion enters politics through different means in the form of ideologies and instrumentalized religious exclusivism. Thus, even threat of Hindu right has to be coped with religious and not secular means through reactivating traditional forms of tolerance. Secularism is also insensitive to politics of culture and believer is treated as person with inferior political consciousness. In this process traditional culture based on tolerance is eroded tendencies of extremism increases generating communal politics. Thus, he suggests Gandhian path to interfaith dialogue.

As a psychologist, he says, "Indian tolerance is based on faith. Akbar and Asoka never heard of secularism. One was a Muslim, whose Islam was liberal, and the other a Buddhist, whose Buddhism was also liberal". So, he suggests that the ideas of Akbar and Asoka would be more accessible to people rather than concepts of secularism, which have come in for some criticism. He asks 'what's the point of using a term that dissociates itself from people?'<sup>27</sup>

Democracy as we know it, not solely dependent on the election procedure we indulge ourselves in every few years, although the structure of the democracy is solely dependent on the voting of Indian citizens. But to nurture the idea of democracy and to keep it alive instead of letting it become a dry and lifeless, the sole purpose of the democracy should be fulfilled, that is; the freedom to say what an individual wants, and how the individual wants it. History vouches for us when we say every idea in history has offended a surprising amount of people, but if the offended people were given the power to decide the fate of the idea we would have no philosopher today, neither do we have any political theorist, not novels, nor any kind, we would not have anything that makes us human, and keeps us that way. Maybe this recent trend has been given birth by the rampant information flow of social networks, and the way everyone has the notion that they have to represent something, anything, and everything, idea that questions what they

stand for are put in front of the firing squad. This is a medieval way of thinking, and for the sake of everything humanity stands for have to be countered.

It is true that this phenomenon has not come into existence into one day, and orthodox people have always existed, starting from the ancient days, and this disease cannot be cured in one day. This is worldwide phenomena now and everything from Islam phobia to genocide falls under this, displaying different intensities of the main problem we have today apart from hunger, illiteracy, and climate change, that is intolerance. Intolerance is booming like a plague and shows no sign of subsiding. Rampant religious indoctrination, far right capitalist approach to life, seeing money as the only scale of measuring people have lured us into believing that we can choose not to be offended, that a joke can be made without stirring out deep sentimental symbolism, that religion like everything else is vulnerable to criticism, and we can choose to stay passive about these things not indulge ourselves into heated arguments over things that don't affect our lives in any way if we look from the other side. But why is India so important in this argument? When it is a worldwide occurrence, why India is so special, and what valuable input can India offer that can somehow, even if it does not solve the problem, reduce the criticality of the question.

The question may seem very hard, but the answer on the other hand presents itself very easily. In India we have lived centuries after centuries living together in harmony with so many other sects, and so many other philosophical schools that we have forgotten what we used to represent in the first place, and we all have become a homogeneous mass of collective consciousness, India no longer represents a single idea, but a collection of ideas, that were originated from different parts of the world, and have their profanity among other ideas. India, if not always, but from a fairly long time has been a epitome of the idea of democracy.

It is true that India have had its fair share of conflicts, maybe more than an average, but most of those conflicts were politically motivated, and had very little to do with religious and ideological intolerance, except from some very dark ages of religious intolerance India had to suffer, the common people of India almost always lived in harmony. It changed under British rule, British empire feared the harmony among the peasants in India, and deriving fear from some peasant uprising British government used the strategy 'divide and rule' trying to incinerate communal differences among the



peaceful Islamic, and Hindu people living side by side. The fresh communist revolution probably played a big part in their fear of common people, having nothing but their will power, and the desire to overthrow an oppressive ruling system. Whatever the case may have been, they remained unsuccessful, but little by little they built up the difference and hate among the different communities that we see today. Of course the oppressive cast system of the time helped them, and the questioning living standards provided to *dalits* are not something that can be looked past. But it's not fair to accuse the British empire for every problem we have today, while it is true that they oppressed us for nearly two hundred years, and created a lot of bad blood among the uncountable diverse India, it is also true some self-imposing intellectuals and political leaders took the chance and used the communal power against India, and created what we know today as cast politics or politics of religion.

When we look at the biggest problems we see today, and at the same time look at the problems that our government acknowledges we see a big leap between them, government does not acknowledge insurgency as the same level as terrorism. While Maoism continues to grow in India and begins to take a formidably fearful form, Indian government is somehow indifferent to the problem, desperately trying to muffle the uprisings with armed forces and brutality, in response Maoists also continue to reply with brutality and violence. Government is indifferent about the problem because the middle class, the driving power of any nation is indifferent to, this is mostly because extreme left revolts do not affect them directly, most of the affected regions are poor, and are occupied by *dalits* or so called 'low casts'. This is an obscene phenomenon. While the government likes to think about these activities of temporary and marks them as romanticized revolutions, but the truth is the Maoists are here to stay. This problem can only be eradicated by eradicating poverty, hunger, corruption, cast oppression, and illiteracy. Which is far easier said than done.

Modern idea of secularism does not only concern religion, but any kind of discrimination based on religion, social status, ethnicity and cast. And for this reason the idea of secularism will have to take a big role in solving this problem.

In India we have never seen a secessionist movement motivated by language, unlike the Bangladesh liberation, or recent secession demands of Catalonia from Spain. All of these separation movements are led by oppression, or the feeling of un-belongingness.

That is true in the north east and that is true in Kashmir. While the number of states in India keep on multiplying sporadically, the 'Unity in diversity' we take so pride of continues to weaken.

Another predominant problem is the exponential financial growth of India, which continues to contrast the uneven distribution of wealth, while the number of billionaires in India continues to grow; people in obscure places continue to starve. People are being evacuated of their ancestral lands and factories are being constructed which most of the times do very little to benefit the locals, specifically the peasants. A growing sense of un-belongingness is on the roll. And this is doing a great deal to threaten our unity as Indians.

Problems are many and solutions continue to be ambiguous. The young people are discouraged to join politics, which is creating a stagnant environment in the political hierarchy, while young politicians are most of the times less prone to corruption and are ideological, they are very few in numbers. If there is a solution to this corrupt stagnation it most certainly lies among young people. Young Indians continue to show great potential in every sector of life but somehow they remain unaffected by politics. But the situation is gradually changing, and a great many students are starting to take interest in politics, for one can stay blind for only a certain amount of time. And these young political enthusiasts of India show great potential of curing our middle class of its blindness. But we see a trend of denouncing this youth, they are often written off as immature and are not taken seriously, but as they continue to multiply in darkness, it is entirely possible that before we know it the Indian politics will be overtaken by a hoard of youthful ideological leaders, one can always hope. But to do they will have to walk great lengths and cross great hurdles, all we can do is stay behind them, we who understand what is right from wrong, we, who could never gather up the courage to change the world should be kind to them, and guide them when they deviate from the path, for they are young and need our guidance, for they are the reason we still bet on the future.

The growing intolerance of Hindu fundamentalism that we continues to see inflaming in front of our very eyes is nothing but misdirected youth, who did not have the chance to learn about respect and reason before they were taken away by the fundamentalists. If someone chooses to pursue fundamentalism by all means they should have the freedom of doing so, but they should do that after learning the truth about our country, our country, and our communities, they should be served the undistorted history

of our country and not something politically influenced fictitious history that benefits some political factions, for when one knows the truth and one understands his or her enemies or one loses his or her enemies, and all he or she gains is a group of people who have a different socio-political opinion than him or her. In this cause philosophy can be of great help, if young people are taught philosophy from a very young age and they are taught to think without prejudice, they will know how to extract the truth even if the society refuses to provide them that.

India, a birthplace of scholars and great minds, and we her citizens, and her children are now facing severe problems. We are suffering from hate-politics and this has surrounded us. We are now self-centered. But India, the birthplace of potential, and tranquility, India the storehouse of spirituality of the world will endure as we believe in unity. We have faced countless numbers of invasions, and innumerable atrocities. We have welcomed our invaders. They became assimilated with us. Like every other crisis India will be able to survive this phase too. We, the citizens of India belong to this country, and we may have differences, but the unity of India is our prime concern.

## REFERENCES

1. Bhattacharyya. D.C, *Indian government and politics*, Viyoya Publishing House, Kolkata, 2012. Pp-581.
2. Ibid, Pp-582.
3. Ibid, Pp-583.
4. . Madan. T.N, *Secularism and Fundamentalism in India, Modern Myths Locked Minds*, Oxford University Press, 1997, Pp-180.
5. Ghosh, Ranjan., ( edit) *Making Sense of the Secular; Critical Perspectives from Europe to Asia*, Routledge, 2012..
6. . Misra.R.S, *Hinduism and Secularism; a Critical Study*, Motilal Banarsidass Publications Private Limited, Delhi, 1996, Pp-100.
7. Ibid, Pp-101.
8. Ibid, Pp-102.
9. Ibid, Pp-350.
10. Guha, Ramachandra., *India- After Gandhi, The history of the World's Largest Democracy*, Picador, 2007, Introduction.
11. Chandra, Bipan., *Communalism in Modern India*, Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2016, 360.
12. Ibid, Pp-361.
13. Ibid, Pp-358.
14. Ibid, Pp-368.
15. . Madan. T.N, *Secularism and Fundamentalism in India, Modern Myths Locked Minds*, Oxford University Press, 1997, Pp-40.
- 16.. Chandra, Bipan., *Communalism in Modern India*, Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2016, Pp-277.
17. Basu. Durga Das, *Constitutional Law of India*, 7th Edition, Prentice-Hall of India, New Delhi, 1998, Pp-99.
18. . Madan. T.N, *Secularism and Fundamentalism in India, Modern Myths Locked Minds*, Oxford University Press, 1997, Pp-250.
19. Ibid, Pp-255...
20. Ibid, Pp-255.

21. Ibid, Pp-255.

22. Ibid, Pp-256.

23. Chandra, Bipan., *Communalism in Modern India*, Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, Reprint 2016, Pp-67.

24. Ibid, Pp-165.

25. Ibid, Pp-180.

26. Ibid, Pp-202.

27. Nandy, Asis., *The politics of secularism and the recovery of Religious Tolerance*, Sage Publishing Journal , Vol-13, no-2, 1988.