PSEUDO-SECULARISM IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This article is a debate of pseudo secularism in present situation of Indian polity. Over the period after independence of India many changes takes place in Indian Polity. Pseudo Secularism is appeasement of some particular opinion or a group for immediate social and political gains. Pseudo means false. And Secularism means a concept wherein the Government or other entities should exist separately from religion and/or religious beliefs. Every person has a right to preach, practice and propagate any religion of his/her choice.

The threat happened from within the state especially the religious fundamentalist and pseudo secularist diluted the constitutional spirit of unity and sovereignty. Pseudo-secularism is the state of implicit non-secular trends in the face of pledged secularism. The term is used by groups who perceive a double standard exhibited within the established secular governing policy towards culturally different groups. India, the land of bewildering diversity, is a conglomeration of people, cultures, languages and religions. India's diversity is reflected in the coexistence of sensuality and asceticism, carelessness and efficiency, gentleness and violence.

KEYWORDS: Pseudo Secularism, Democracy, Federalism, Tolerance

INTRODUCTION

Secularism is the concept which vitalizes the integrated values in the modern society but the trends of multi-pluralistic society is crippled by the new phraseology of pseudo-secularism. India is having multi-dimensional aspects of political processes starting from religious ethos to modern positive secularism. However the religiosity of Indian society comes across different facet of secular norms. Especially in India from the emergence of the metaphysical society to present materialistic aspects of society the religion was misinterpreted at various levels depending upon who conceives about this. The ideology of secularism is facing severe criticism due to the pseudo secularist nature of Indian polity. Religious fundamentalism has resulted in the weakening of democratic and human rights values, no one has come forward to combat pseudo secularism in Indian polity.

SCOPE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

India is a multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-cultural society where peoples are having different faith religious values, ethos and practices. The constitution of India is safeguarding religious practices through fundamental rights. In a democratic country like India deep conflicts emerged on religious concerns especially on matters related to religious equality. However the preamble of Indian constitution declares and prohibits discrimination against members of particular religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. The word secular was inserted into the preamble by the 42nd Amendment of Indian constitution for maintaining equality among the Indians. Hence, secular values of non

discrimination on the basis of religion, caste etc were used in mere contextual basis in India. The secularism in India is prevailing for the sake of vote bank purposes, the political parties misuse secular values for their party gain.

Indian constitution focuses and envisages a secular democracy, which ensures that all citizens enjoy the same privileges without any discrimination. In practice these aspects were often misused and distorted and secularism emerged in the new shape of pseudo secularism.

The state of India possesses political and intellectual class. They have developed strong notions about secularism. The practiced notion seems to be in many ways negative repercussion. Secularism as envisaged by experts aims at maintaining equal distance to all religions but the general trend seems to be in favour of or supporting minorities instead of majorities. This created antagonism in the minds of minorities and resentment among the majorities due to favoritism. The pseudo-secularists propagate that taking advantage of one religion and at the same time subjection of other religions has nothing wrong about it.

In a democratic state like India the pseudo-secularism was misused by political parties whether the left or central parties for their party gain, who themselves proclaimed to be guardians of secularism. But in reality the communitarian approach leads to predominantly fundamentalist approach. However the use of secularism by politicians are imminent, thus India ensured that state would not be religious or anti-religious, the principles of neutrality towards all religions was adopted. But religious harmony is not maintained through pseudo – seculars for religious matters. Especially the concept of religious harmony as secularism was not sufficiently inclusive to realize this possibility.

India is a country which is a host to all conceivable religions and ways of life. India has followed a principle of "unity in diversity". This unity is based on democracy, federalism, tolerance and secular character of the state. Many societies have sought to hide their diversities and refuse to accept their heterogeneity and have paid a high price. The post- Cold War world has seen the disintegration of some states which were, though federal in appearance, non-democratic to the core. The key to India's success as a federal democracy is the recognition of its diversities. Acceptance of all religions and different ways of life is the cornerstone of the Indian culture, heritage and polity. But the nature of secular mode in Indian polity has been declining day by day.

Secularism is one of the most abused words in Indian politics. Secularism in a political and social context is a belief in the separation of the state (government and government agencies) and the religious beliefs of the people. To many Indians a secular state also means a state that guarantees their right to practice the religion of their choice. It also means that decisions are made by the government based on evidence and are not influenced by any particular religious belief.

The founding fathers did not find it important to add the word "secular" in the preamble to our constitution. Religion is after all everywhere in India. Our founding fathers had already decided to allow the various religious groups in India to be governed by their own code when it came to civil matters. This tradition continues even today.

The constitution was amended in 1976 by Indira Gandhi led government and the words "socialist", "secular", "integrity" and "to promote among them all fraternity" were added. Although she amended the constitution and added the word "secular" Indira Gandhi did not implement a "uniform civil code.

Fundamentalist forces brand Indian Secularism as 'pseudo-secularism'. They argue that the Indian Constitution, while holding on to universal citizenship rights, unnecessarily tampers with these rights by entertaining concessions for

minority religionists, and this amounts to a violation of the universal rights of the citizen. These concessions are seen by such forces as the appeasement of minorities.

Those who refer to Indian Secularism as pseudo-secularism do not approve of structures (e.g., personal law, minority rights) to ensure that minorities are not discriminated against because of culture, language, religion, etc. However, in 1950 after much discussion, the Constituent Assembly decided that minority rights should be factored in the constitutional guarantees to make possible a level playing field for all Indian citizens. With these rights, minorities would enjoy freedom of conscience, human dignity and the opportunity to be educated and pursue careers like the others.

The case of Indian society being pluralist has already been noted. Greater awareness has come about regarding the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious nature of society. Indian Secularism respects such diversity because of the importance it attaches to freedom of conscience and choosing one's religion. In addition, the practice of dharma could make for an ideal serving the interests of the common good. However, dharma has a covert referral to a hierarchical social system, and its proponents present it as a universal ideal in a historical contingency.

Much of the current tension in Indian society is on account of 'secular' politicians mollycoddling the two monotheisms and suppressing legitimate Hindu aspirations. While secularism in a Hindu context permits the existence of other faiths, it cannot tolerate negation of Hindu identity and culture. Dharma demands that spiritual paths that refuse to coexist and seek actively to destroy others must be repelled.

What we need most urgently is to recognize that our tolerant culture cannot exist without a philosophy of confrontation of intolerant ideas.

In the name of tolerance, we should not allow Jihadi terrorists, communist fascists and Muslim fundamentalists to impose their intolerant ideology on our throat. It's time to start rethinking things from the ground up. It's time to realize the limits of tolerance and move away from moral paralysis.

The need of the hour for India is the recognition of the fact that India does not owe its great virtues of pluralism, diversity and tolerance to any western concept or ideology, but to the influence over India of Vedic culture and philosophy. And also to be understood is the fact that India's age-old virtues shall not be endangered by the questioning of the relevance of secularism to the world's oldest and most pluralistic civilization.

In India, there is more religious ethos, pseudo-secularism, religious cults and fanaticisms are paves the way for religious based hedonistic life to the people. These were severely damaging the secular mode of life in India. That's why for safeguarding secularist values they should be complementary to each other. Apart from that secularist tendency, humanitarianism may envisage the better and amicable solution to tackle religious fundamentalism and throw away ill-forces and pseudo secularism against the secularism and human rights in India and elsewhere.

Religion is a matter of faith. Though the critics might not agree it is indeed a fact that India and its people, have entered the globalised era, but still maintain the deep religious values at the core.

Review of Work Already Done on the Subject

The book entitled **Secularism in India: Past and Future** written by Asghar Ali Engineer focuses on the context of communalism in the nation, tracing the past to present situation of violence motivated by religious groups and its

cleavages of political gaining. This divides are reason for strengthening secular fabric in India. The writer also concentrates on the role of the media in promoting communalism, taking examples from several major riots such as the Jabalpur riots of 1961, the Gujarat riots of 2002 and the Mumbai riots of 1992-1993. The author also elaborates on the role of politics in the ensuing violence. In conclusion, communalism has become a huge threat to India.

The work of **Secularism and its Critics** by Bhargava Rajeev has highlighted the practical aspects of religion and secularism in India. They are highly complicated to explain in detail. The reason for that is the way interpretation of religious values and pseudo secularist nature of Indian polity spoil the core values of real secular values. That's why euphemistic attitude of secularism emerged in Indian polity.

Sita Ram Goel's work on **Pseudo-Secularism, Christian Missions and Hindu Resistance** reveals that religion tends to create awareness about people involvement in institutional perspectives. However, the way religious practices existe in India and the way it is preached and worshiped in Indian society are varying according to religious fanaticism.

The book entitled **Pseudo-Secularism in India** written by Kanaiyalalu Manghandasu Taljera deals with the existence of secular and pseudo-secular values in Indian polity. The author emphasized the deliberate involvement of religions misused by politicians for their vote bank purposes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

- To study the constitutional aspects of freedom of religion and secularism

- To present the views about international covenants in civil and political rights and international covenants on economic social and cultural rights in India.

- To examine the interdependence of religion, secularism

- To analyze how far the pseudo –secularism is evolving as a threat to secularism

- To find out the implication aspects of pseudo- secularism

Research Methodology

This study is a historical and descriptive approach, based on documents and published materials which are relevant to the present study. The descriptive method is designed to analyze the interpretation and covenants on international and regarding secularism, pseudo-secularism in India.

Sources of Information

The primary sources include published documents of international covenants, and the cases of Supreme Court in India and other relevant research materials.

The secondary sources consist of books, articles which appeared in journals and news paper, reports of committees etc.

Delimitation

The study is confined to international covenants on Pseudo-secularism with respect to India. Further, this study covers recent issues related and relevant to religion and Pseudo-secularism in India after independence.

Suggestion for the Future Research

In present study a few thrust areas of reach are identified for future research. The impact of pseudo-secularism and international context may pursue another interesting area of research. Further the comparative aspects of various counties and their implications of secularism may taken to the consideration. These are some of the perspectives where future research could prove to be more meaningful.

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