CONCEPT OF 'HINDU RASHTRA' AND THE ANALYSIS OF CURRENT POLITICAL DEBATES RELATED TO IT

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ABSTRACT:

Religion plays and important role in the formation of a society as it constructs the social value and enables a sense of community among the individuals in the society. With the onset of time, we have been clearly witnessing how religion and the debates revolving it have become an important talk whether its on the news or on the debates. The paper will focus upon the role of religion in Indian national politics with special focus on the concept of 'Hindu- Rashtra' and the current political debates related to it with special reference to how the notion of secularism becomes important during this time.

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about the relation between religion and politics, it continues to be an important theme in political philosophy, despite the emergent consensus between the political theorists and in practical political contexts on the right to freedom of conscience and on the need for some sort of separation between the state and the religion. One of the major reasons for the growing importance of this topic is that religions often make strong claims about people's allegiance and universal religions make these claims about all people, rather than just a particular community.

Talking about India, the largest democratic country in the world, religion has historically influenced Indian society on a political, cultural, and economic level. The Constitution of India signifies India as a secular nation which means that every individual has a right to express and profess any religion they want to profess or express. But this notion is challenged by the rising notion of 'right wing' politics in the nation which lead to the emergence of the concept of a 'Hindu Rashtra'

Talking about the rise of right-wing politics in India, the light is shed towards the rise of the notion of a "Hindu rashtra". The concept is not new to the field as the mentions of a 'Hindu rashtra' can be found in the writings of Savarkar. Hinduism and Hindu culture had always fascinated Savarkar since his childhood days. His first article, published by Nasikvaibhav in its editorial columns in two installments was named as "The Glory of Hindu Culture". Savarkar's premise of Hindutva outlined in his book is broadly the same which the Rashtriya Swayamseval Sangh (RSS) champions have but there exists a crucial difference as: while Savarkar wanted a Hindu state, RSS wants a Hindu Nation, that is, which reflects the 'Hinduness' without making Hinduism a state religion. The difference stands in the perspective. RSS wants the state and its policy to reflect the predominance of the Hindu ethos without realizing a theocratic state which it considers alien to the nation. But when we talk about the concept of 'Hindu rashtra' in contemporary India which is formed on the ideals of secularism then it leads to various debates on how secularism should be held prominence in this era.

THE BACKGROUND BEHIND THE CONCEPT OF A 'HINDU RASHTRA'

'Hindu Rashtra' which translates to 'Hindu Nation' is not a recent concept but it has its history that dates back to the time of Savarkar. 'Hindutva', as a political philosophy not only reflected the firm conviction of Savarkar in the veracity and the practicability of the religious-cultural ethos of Hindus to be the infallible basis of conceptualizing India as a 'Hindu Rashtra', but also the response of a Hindu nationalist to the prevailing circumstances of the time.

Savarkar began his conceptualization of the idea of Hindutva by seeking an answer to the question as to what could be considered Hindu. He envisaged three fundamental bonds that would conjoin the Hindus as a common entity, namely 'rashtra' which means nation, 'jati' which means race and 'sanskriti' which means culture. Thus, territorially, a Hindu is one who feels attached to the geographical tract extending between the rivers Sindhu (Indus) and Brahmaputra, on the other hand, and from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin, on the other hand. Racially, Savarkar (1989) considered a Hindu as the one 'whose first and discernible source could be traced to the Himalayan altitudes of the Vedic 'Saptasindhu'. Such a racial demarcation of the Hindu was seemingly not meant to claim any sort of superiority of Hindus in comparison to other races in the world but to distinguish them from others. Culturally, Savarkar maintains that a Hindu must feel the pride and commonality of his cultural roots with the other people of the nation.

Savarkar defined India not only in terms of Hindu idioms but considered both terms as synonyms. The term 'Hindu' for him was not about a particular religion but a race or nationality. He sought to make a distinction between the Hindu religion and Hindutva. Savarkar deliberately preferred and picked the word 'Hindutva' over Hinduism despite the fact that he was deeply influenced by Vedic Hinduism. His concern was primarily to accommodate the diverse main native faith system and belief along with the religious practices. He refused to accept the Hindu dharma as a synonym of Vedic dharma, the dharma which was in practice among the people which constituted the majority or mainstream. Hindu dharma, for him, should be comprehensive enough to absorb all the diversities which the Hindu race constitutes of whether it is related to thought systems or the religious social rituals. Savarkar did not identify India in terms of territorial or political nationalism. He identified India in religio-cultural terms, as having a distant civilizational boundary. For him, the idea of territorial and political nationalism as conceived and cherished by the Indian National Congress was a sin. He found it detrimental to the growth of a cohesive Hindu nation.

Savarkar's premise of Hindutva is outlined in his book which the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) champions today follow with a crucial difference which is that Savarkar wanted a Hindu state but on the other hand, RSS wants a Hindu nation that reflects 'Hinduness' without making the religion as a state religion. RSS wants the state and its policy to reflect the predominance of the Hindu ethos without realizing a theocratic state which considers alien to the nation.

THE HISTORY OF RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH (RSS)

Talking about its origin, the organisation came into being in 1925 by Dr. K. B. Hedgewar in the Maharashtrian city of Nagpur. Being a person who started this organization, Dr. Hedgewar gave a tradition and some regular practices along with a proper vision and mission. His immediate purpose was to present a good image of RSS in front of the public. The development of 'Shakha' technique was at giving shape to this vision. The development of the 'branch' or 'Shakha' training was aimed at giving shape to this vision. The name of the Sangh, its flag, its prayer, its pledge, its thoughts and many other aspects of it's functioning, each gave a message creating a Hindu awareness among the people with a strong sense of dedication among the people towards the nation. The Sangh and its offspring political organization, which is Bharatiya Janta Party also known as BJP have successfully become a prominent figure in the current politics with BJP dominating the majority of seats in the whole nation.

Looking over the ideology of the Sangh, Golwalkar describes the mission of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh as the revitalisation of the Indian value system based on universalism, peace and prosperity. '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbhakam*' which means that the whole world is a one big family, is considered as the ultimate mission of the organisation. But the immediate focus of this organisation, which the leaders believe is to bring a Hindu renaissance, which would help build an egalitarian society based on this philosophy. The organisation says that it aspires to unite all Hindus and build a strong India, which could contribute to the welfare of the world.

Gowalkar in defining the goal of RSS said that 'the supreme goal is to bring to life the all round glory and greatness of our Hindu Rashtra, to rejuvenate ancient and life giving features of our cultures in the national and international context'. According to him, in order to attain the highest pinnacle of national glory, resplendent with its fourfold arrangement. This according to Gowalkar and other RSS leaders, could be achieved by making Hindu people alert, organized and powerful; by getting them imbued with unity of mind and thought, bound them together with a common code of morality and filed with absolute loalty towards the nation

The ultimate goal of the RSS and of its ideology, namely 'Hindutva' is to establish the kingdom of Manava Dharma within and to make India a world power armed to teeth. This is to be achieved by pursuing a policy of the destruction of the weakest elements in the society and protection of the strong, according to RSS. The RSS ideologists hold the view that the Indian society is to be build on 'Varnashrama Dharma' and other dharma shastras.

When Indians won their freedom from the British rule in 1947, the Constitution of India established a pluralistic democracy based on secular principles, embracing India's diversity. But the RSS's goal is to redefine India according to its majority Hindu faith.

THE RISE OF HINDU NATIONALISM IN INDIA

The history of Hindu nationalism is not something which came emergence recently, its beginning was marked when the Bhartiya Janata Party or popularly known as BJP was formed in the 1980. The party is known to have political roots to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or RSS. The party's main driver is considered to be RSS, which as discussed earlier in the previous chapters is an all-male Hindu organization formed in 1925. At its most benign, the RSS is a disciplined force of volunteers dedicated to social service, usually among organizations who offer help to citizens during natural disasters. But the ideology which the organization is based is the major reason of the rise of Hindu nationalism in India.

The Sangh Parivar's ideology is understood as Hindutva or Hinduness, which is to dintinguish it from Hinduism. The movement does not demand a theocratic state or any explicit embrace of Hinduism as a state religion. Hindutva is understood as something national and cultural rather than fitting it into the religious category. There aim is to make Hindutva synonymous to the idea of India. The Sangh Parivar believes that the Indians of other faiths do not have any problem in accepting this notion.

Coming back to the political aspect, Hindu nationalism which was a marginal ideology back in the 1950s is on a rapid rise since 2014 which rose to its peak after the 2019 elections. During the 2014 national general elections, people saw a change in the election result when the BJP broke the continuous winning streak of the Indian National Congress Party, by winning the elections with a huge number and that in both 2014 and 2019 election years respectively. BJP's electoral resurgence has brought an alternative nationalism to the fore, one based not on secular principles but rather on the premise that Indian culture is synonymous with Hindu culture.

The factor behind the BJP's victory throughout 2014 and 2019 along with the ideological ascendance of Hindu majoritarianism has been the weakened state of secularism in contemporary India. The party has long advanced the notion that the Congress party and the other parties in the nation have not been following a genuine notion of secularism. The secular arrogance increasing in the nation describes the notion that political power can be used either to co-opt or to marginalize religious voices. Secular ignorance, on the other hand, refers to situations in which politicians can easily entangle themselves in religious debates even as they try to ensure an equal distance from all faiths.

To gauge how Hindu nationalism is reshaping Indian politics, it is informative to examine how the BJP government has wielded power in both predictable and unexpected ways. Beyond the government's approach, elements of the Sangh also object to the increase approach of BJP 2.0 has taken with the respect to the traditional Hindutva agenda. On the core social issues that have dominated the BJP's cultural agenda for decades – the initiation of the construction of a Lord Ram temple in the city of Ayodhya located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the demand for a new uniform civil code to name a few.

Given the ongoing duel between secularism and Hindu majoritarianism in the Indian politics, it is important to note the role that Hindu nationalism is playing in India's democracy under the political leadership of BJP.

Soon the year of 2024 will arrive which will mark the beginning of the 18th Lok Sabha elections in the nation, the election will determine the future of the nation as a secular republic that embraces pluralism because the competitive jousting over religion raises concerns about the nation's future and lays more importance on the ideology of secularism.

GROWTH OF RIGHT -WING POLITICS IN INDIA

The field of politics is divided into two mainstream ideologies which are the right wing and the left wing ideology. These two are warring ideologies different in their outlook and application. Right wing politics is centred around the belief that social order and hierarchies are natural and this belief is supported by the natural law while the Left -wing politics supports social equality and is in opposition with the notion of social hierarchy or any other form of class division. Defining more about the Right wing politics, this ideology believes that the best outcome of the society is delivered when individual rights and civil liberties are paramount with limited involvement of the central government. Right wing politics believes that the religion should play an extended role in the society. Populism is a recurring theme in the right-wing politics. Populism is defined as a political approach that appeals to ordinary people who feel that their rights are ignored. Talking about the history of the right wing politics, then it all began in the origins of the French Revolution (1789-1799) where the supporters of the Monarchy were seated on the right hall of the National Assembly.

When we talk about the influence of these ideologies in the mainstream politics, then we can see that there are various political parties who are either left wing leaning or right wing leaning and the political future of the country is decided on whether which ideology the political party in centre follows. Talking about India, there is a rise of right wing politics in the nation but what are can be corresponding reasons to the rise?

In India, the right-wing parties follow and abide by the following ideologies namely, importance of religion values, highlighting the cultural values, nationalism, ethnic identity, showcasing the importance of traditions, and economically it focuses on capitalism and entrepreneurship. The history of right wing politics date backs to the 1980s when India saw a slight shift from leftism as Indians were becoming more individualistic rather than reveling in benefits assuring collective success. Back then The All India Congress Party failed to provide defense for its secular values along with people aligning to a religious orientation, protested against the demolition of religious and social structures which contributed to this shift.

The rise of right wing politics is marked by the event when Bhartiya Janata Party also commonly known as BJP secured an overwhelming majority and came into power in both 2014 and 2019. The results of the election sparked a wide ranging discussion about the rise of the right wing, religiously rooted nationalism in India. Critics of BJP noted that the party based its campaign on the 'Hindutva' nationalism. The BJP popularised an ethnically divisive discourse in order to gain Hindu votes and create a culture of majoritarianism in the nation. Although occupying a marginal place on India's political spectrum for most of the 20th century, the discourse of Hindutva emerged at the forefront of Indian politics. But along with the notion of 'Hindutva' being the central notion of the party's campaign, there were other factors as well which lead to BJP winning the 2019 election as well like the focus on national development in terms of economic growth, infrastructural growth, growth in defence sector and much more reasons contributed to the reasons which lead to the growth of BJP

WHAT LEAD TO THE RISE OF RISE OF RIGHT-WING POLITICS IN INDIA?

Right-wing extremism has been growing at a faster pace around the world and has become a more mainstream phenomenon in various nations with a frequent rise of right-wing parties and, subsequently right-wing extremists taking root and entrenching themselves in the political landscape around the world. India has seen a gradual rise of its own version of right-wing politics which came with the partnership of Hindu nationalism ideology. While the political ecosystem of India has been fraught with complex interactions between different actors on the ideological spectrum, it has become even more complicated with the rise of right-wing extremism.

But what can be factors which contributed the growth of right-wing politics and Hindu nationalism in India? The factors are as listed below as according to Ramachandra Guha:

a) **Indian National Congress:** Indian National Congress or popularly known as Congress Party among the common people in the nation is one of the contributing factors. Indian National Congress holds an important prominence in the Indian Struggle for independence, due to INC's major part in the Indian Freedom Struggle movement they gained support and votes of the people in India's first general elections which took place in 1952. The Congress Party continued to rule the Indian governance till many years but after the 1980s elections, the trust among the people for the Congress Party started to crumble due to which they started to look for other trustable alternative political parties.

b) **Declining popularity of Left-Wing Politics in India:** One of the major factor in bringing right-wing politics to the centre stage has been the declining supporters of Left-Wing politics as the Left-Wing political parties failed to present a cogent ideological opposition to the right-wing political parties, alongside compounded by their own internal matters. But there are political parties in this nation which were able to present themselves as good flag bearer to carry forward an ideal left-wing politics, the best example can be seen of the success the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which was formed in 1925, which initially argued for social and economic equality, removal of caste barriers and policies that favour the economically weaker sections of the society. It gained strength in West Bengal. Tripura and Kerala because of its promotion of extensive land reforms. But over the years, however, many of the party's leaders lost their ideological purity and began to profit from corruption and capitalist politics. In various states, the left-wing was seen to be dominated by the upper-class section of the society, leaving the lower-class section of the society to flounder.

c) **Global rise of Ethno-Nationalism:** beginning in the 2010s, right-wing movements across the world gained new currency and were able to expand their foothold in different parts of the world, including Europe, the United States. Australia and other parts of the Asian continent. Populists such as Donald Trump in United States of America, Victor Orban in Hungary, Rodrigo Duterte in Philippines can be seen as among the examples.

   Along with the above reason, the rise in the power of tech companies and the use of anonymous accounts online along with the increased amplification of fake news and hate filled rhetoric due to the algorithm models, right-wing narratives spread across the world

d) **The Internet as a Facilitator:** The widespread use of the Internet and the rise of social media platforms such as messaging or photo sharing platforms have facilitated the growth and spread of right-wing extremism in India. These platforms have been instrumental in accommodating and emboldening extremist groups across the world. The Internet seems to have created echo chambers that reflect the views of only one orientation. The issue of Hate speech and extremist views has been growing at a rapid speed in India

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE SPREAD OF RIGHT-WING POLITICS IN INDIA

India is a growing consumer market of a number of products and services, and one of that service and product is a smartphone and social media account. Social media account and a smart phone go in hand in hand as if a person owns a smart phone, then they may posses one or more than one social media accounts. In India where a smartphone and data pack is available at a cheaper price, the users of social media in India is increasing at a rapid speed. Looking at the numbers, Facebook has 93 million users and Twitter which is a micro blogging platform has estimated 33 million accounts.

Social media plays an important role in influencing people's opinions and way of perceiving the events all around them, this is known as political socialization through social media. Social media is a key ingredient used to spread your voice and views to almost every individual in this nation and it also provides the people a platform to interact with other people and form a community which help them to communicate and spread their thoughts and opinions to other people. But due to the algorithm game, people are only able to know one side of the story which is one of the major down side of this platform

Coming back to India, it becomes an essential question that how social media is related to the spread of the right wing politics in the nation? The 2014 elections, which bought Bhartiya Janta Party or BJP to the power to form the government at the centre is majorly regarded as the 'First Social Media Election' because of the

extensive use of social media platforms used in election campaigns by the political party which also lead to the kickstart of a social media revolution in Indian politics. The party's major success in mobilizing and bringing together India's tech generation using the social media platforms lead the other political parties in the nation to follow the same and increase their social media engagement. This also lead to the formation of various 'IT cells' by the political parties which is generally linked to spread the parties propaganda on the respective social media platform.

The growth of BJP's social media campaigning journey began to evolve extensively in 2014, the core focus of the campaign in the year was aided by professional agencies which aimed on building the manifesto of the political party on the social media platform and also promoting the political party's leader. The party's social media campaign adopted more polarizing methods in the 2017 Uttar Pradesh assembly elections and the 2019 Lok Sabha general elections after the party failed to deliver its electoral promises including its leading development programme.

Using social media extensively more to the traditional media, the party developed a distinct style of initiating political communication between the people and the government. The party's successful use of social media for political agenda building and spreading along with policy crowd sourcing and publicity developed into major successful and evident pan-India programmes. It was the party's phenomenal success in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections that made the use of social media stand out.

BJP has majorly become a primary player at increasing their social media engagement and presence at a constant pace. Their campaigns intended polarize the users and spread their ideology over the internet. As the party seeks to advance its notion of Hindutva, their aim to make the digital space a more fertile ground for them to help them spread the concept. Although BJP may not support constituting such an independent body, the opposition parties must pressure the government for a reform through all means which also include a judicial intervention. Opposition parties must also play an active role in its use of the social media platforms. The social media platforms themselves must more effectively resist the pressures and work to halt the spread of disinformation and allow the individual's to express their voice and opinion.

The advent use of social media has changed how politics is organised and conducted, as well as the nature of political communication is initiated in India. If we see both sides then, social media has allowed for the democratisation of politics and re-energised the political scenario. On the other side, several ethical dilemmas arise with the involvement of political actors in the use of social media, compounded by the proliferation of social media among a digital population. The people have to be aware before using the social media platforms and should research a think twice before believing only to one side of the story.

THE CONCEPT OF HINDU RASHTRA AND THE MINORITIES IN INDIA

India, since its inception has a diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-religious formulation of the polity. The constitution of the nation declares India as a secular nation and has kept religion and state affairs separate, which means that the state will not interfere in the matters of religion and the state intervention is limited or minimal. Despite this essential feature, there are several instances in the nation where the country has found itself in the space of religious nationalism

Considering the results of the recent general elections in the nation, there is a considerable demand for taking the country into a majoritarian path which not only challenges the foundation of a secular nation but also endangers the rights of representation of minorities in the nation.

Going back to the time when the Indian Constitution was being drafted, the drafters of the Constitution sought to eradicate the fears of a majority hegemony by providing special rights and status to the minority communities in the nation. This came in various forms like the constitutional guarantees on the protection and promotion of minority rights and interests to the implementation of affirmative action to elevate the status of minorities by providing them with special provisions but during the current times seeing the emergence of a majoritarian concept endangers this notion of the Constitution. Additionally, Indian Constitution is not the only source of the background of Indian law. The colonial past of the nation has left a very strong cast of shadow on India's formation of a legal system and judicial tradition, therefore, many law that were passed when India was a British colony are still in force and were not abrogated by the Indian constitution. Thus, the

Muslim Personal law which is initially based on the Shariat Act of 1937, enacted before 10 years before the independence of the nation remains operative. The Muslim Personal law allows Muslims a semblance of religious autonomy and limited freedom to follow a few Shari'ah based rules pertaining to marriage and inheritance. It enables the Muslim community to maintain a political and constitutional identity. Talking about our Constitution, it permits all the religious minorities to handle and manage their religious affairs and allows the individual to practice and profess any religion they want. Looking back at the history, India never conformed to any strict religious identity. In the first quarter of the century, Hindu ideologues like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Keshav Hedgewar sought to create a Hindu nation but had a very restricted appeal. In the post partition phase of the independent nation, some of the followers of the Hindu nationalist ideology made their presence felt through the creation of Jana Sangh but they were unable to make their presence count during the general elections

Hindutva, as an ideology, is defined as it equates 'Indianness' with being exclusively Hindu. It seeks to subvert the secular and pluralistic aspirations of the nation and is trying to set a path that will eventually make it a Hindu state with the Hindu ethos being the dominant ethos of the culture of the nation, which challenges the diverse notion of the nation. The 'Hindutva' notion has an effect on the legal framework of the country which protects the rights of the religious minorities. There is a concerned effort to (1) undermine the secular nature of the Indian constitution and (2) to eliminate the non-constitutional sources of minority rights. In the wake of the electoral victories indicating the rise of the ideology of Hindu nationalism, the cases of violence against the religious minorities and lower caste Hindu communities are increasing. So many cases have been recorded of the violence against minorities that the U.S Commission on International Religious Freedom has recommended that India can be designated a Country of Particular Concern. Talking about the economic policy by the BJP, it proved to be detrimental. When we look at the results of 2019, the party gained 21 more seats in the Parliament and received 37% of the votes and 6% more votes as compared to their 2014 share. The results illustrated that while two-third of the nation was not committed to the Hindutva ideology. The most troubling consequence of this election was the realization that the growth of Hindu nationalism in the nation. Perhaps this realization that the culture were more important than governance shaped the major steps of towards the rise of Hindu nationalism.

To conclude, the Constitution of the nation guarantees full access of fundamental rights to all the citizens in the nation regardless of their race, religion, sex, etc., however we have seen that how the notion of a majoritarian rule threatens these rights especially for the minorities. India's historical precedence as well as the Constitution, in its recent form, allows for the protection of rights yet the rise of the notion of Hindu nationalism has imperialed India's secularity and its character as a liberal democracy that guarantees religious freedom does not establish religion and protects individual's fundamental rights. It is very important to maintain the essence of secularism in the nation as it is the backbone for maintaining cultural harmony and diversity in the nation.

POLITICAL DEBATES REVOLVING AROUND THE NOTION OF 'HINDU RASHTRA' AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SECULARISM

As discussed in the previous section, that the notion of 'Hindu Rashtra' dates back to the writings of V.D Savarkar where he mentions about the notion. Talking about the notion in contemporary times, for RSS it means the manifestation of the 'Bhartiya' or the 'Indian' way of living which further translates to its basis of 'Sanatan Dharma' which translates to the 'eternal way of living'. To translate the ideology of 'Hindutva' in other words, it can be understood as the essence of the Hindu Dharma. But India being home to a diverse population which practice and follow a plethora of religions and beliefs, what does this notion mean to the minorities in India?

To answer this question, lets us first understand what does secularism mean? Secularism is defined as the separation of religion from political, economic, and social aspects of life, which in other words means that the religion and state should be separate. India is a secular nation since its inception and the word 'secular' was included in the Indian Constitution after the 42nd amendment in 1976. The secular aspects of the nation are reflected in Articles 25-28, which are part of the most essential part of the Indian Constitution which is the Fundamental Rights. The meaning of a secular nation is described it keeps the state institutions and religion

separate, but it recognizes and accepts all religions and enforces parliamentary laws instead of religious laws and respects the diversity in the nation.

Religion should be a separate entity in which state intervention is required whenever necessary but if religion influences the working of the government and its decisions, then it can harm the interests of the whole nation. A diverse nation like India, cannot compromise on that because it can harm the interests and demands of the minority. The notion of secularism becomes important during these times, as it reminds the state that religious beliefs should not interfere with the decisions which are formed for the people. Religious plurality in India makes secularism very important for India in contemporary times, as it is an ideology that keeps the sense of togetherness alive. To keep the essence of a secular nation alive, the use of freedom of speech is a key ingredient.

Whether secularism can maintain its hold as a defining ideology for the country will depend in part on a combination of political forces, namely the BJP's future electoral success and the strategies the opposition adopts to counter the ruling party.

CONCLUSION

Religion is the set of beliefs a human follow and helps humans form a sense of community among the people who follow and practice the same religion as them. In politics, religion, and politics are kept separate with minimal to no state intervention. To acknowledge the diversity of the nations, there is the emergence of the notion which is 'secularism' which ensures religious freedom in the nation and the independence of the state to make fair decisions keeping in mind the diversity of the nation. Secularism is important because it regulates the relationship between the state and the religious communities in society. The notion becomes invaluable for a society like India which is characterized by its religious diversity and the concept will become meaningful when it is guaranteed democratic equality.

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