

Socialism and Secularism in Indian Polity, A critical study .

Dr. Prabhuraj K N. Principal & Associate Professor Dept of Political Science. GFGC Mangalore-583230 Dist Koppal prabhuknayaka@gmail.com 9482124376

Abstract:

India is a land of Casts , Religions, languages, Cultures, Customs and Traditions. and also rich and poor. Cultural diversity is unique future of Indian society. India's Cultural tradition is rich, and has long history. Perhaps no other society of the world is as multi-cultural and multi religious as Indian society is. Secularism is valuable feature of Indian society. Secularism and Socialism both are valuable ogles of Indian Constitution. Indian constitution up hold the concept of socio-economic justice. Indian constitution is well known for it in the world. The present paper focus the theoretical and practical aspects of **Secularism, Socialism, and Democracy in India Society and polity, In this way the paper analyses how thies concepts are relevant in the Indian Society and politics. The paper covers** theoretical and practical aspect of concepts, and also practice, challenges in the context of India and in the background of Indian constitution.

Keyword: Secularism, Socialism, Democracy. Social Ownership, cooperative Federalism and Polity.

Introduction:

Preamble of the Indian Constitution states that, India that is Bharat to be a “Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, Republic” Socialism and secularism was inserted in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution in 1976, by the 42nd Amendment Act’1. what is Socialism and secularism? Why Socialism and Secularism is significant for a nation like India?. Socialism is a large and diverse political tradition, and opposition to capitalism. socialism supports common ownership of the property. Democratic control over the means of production. Socialist values include ending class exploitation, and try for distributive justice, equality, and freedom. Another concept **Secularism refers to the principle of maintaining religious neutrality by the state. While ensuring equal treatment for all religions significance lies in fostering unity, preserving the nation's diverse cultural fabric, and safeguarding democratic principles in a multi-religious society. Secularism ensure social justice and social democracy in society.** Emphasizes social and economic justice, equality, and the welfare of all citizens. Two principles gives importance for Socio-economic and Political democracy and peaceful means for social change. **This article aims to study in detail the concepts, historical roots, constitutional provisions, relevance, challenges and trends associated with secularism and Socialism in Indian context.**

“Dr. B.R. Ambedekar accepted democracy not only as a Political system or governing system, but also democracy as a way of life. Through which he could bring about socio-economic and political change in the society through peaceful means”.² Socialism, Secularism and Democracy These concepts are complementary and are often found together in modern political systems. For example, a democratic socialist state aims to achieve socialist goals through democratic means. Similarly, a secular democracy ensures culture and religious beliefs for all citizens. and equal rights and opportunities.

Objectives of the study as fallows;

1)To Understand the concept of Socialism, Secularism and Democracy in view of Indian Constitution.

2) To analyze the relevance of Secularism, Socialism and Democracy in Indian Society in the view of Indian Constitution..

3) To justify the Concepts which are more essential to create a peaceful and prosperous society.

Assumptions of the study as follows:

1) The Indian Society is in required socialist and secularist ideology.

2) The Indian Constitution aiming to protect and achieve socialist and secularist spirit in the society.

1} The theory of Socialism and the Indian polity.

Socialism is an economic and political system where the people collectively own or control the wealth and means of wealth production, rather than private individuals or corporations. It generally aims to reduce inequality and prioritize social welfare through various forms of social ownership and democratic control. Pierre Leroux defined socialism as a system where the individual is sacrificed to society, contrasting it with individualism.

Key elements of socialism.

A) Social Ownership.

Instead of private individuals owning, factories, land, and other means of wealth production, these assets are owned or controlled by the community, the state or through worker cooperatives. In India Public Sector Navratna companies like [PSUs] like ONGC, IRCTC, ONGC, NALCO, NTPC, BHEL, HEL, etc and others are under government ownership. These enterprises dominate energy, finance, infrastructure, and heavy industries, driving development.

B) Economic Equality:

Socialism aims to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, ensuring that resources and opportunities are distributed more evenly. Constitution of India in fourth chapter Directive Principles of state policy emphasize for decentralization of wealth. And aiming to provide economic justice.

3) Social Welfare:

India, constitutionally designed as a Welfare State. Committed to securing social, economic, and political justice for all citizens. Socialist systems often prioritize social safety, healthcare, education, and unemployment benefits, aiming to provide food, health, education and other basic standard of living for all citizens equally.

4) Democratic Control:

Socialism is a soft principle of the Communism. It believes democratic means of changes in society. So Socialism can be implemented through various democratic processes, with citizens having a voice in how the economy and society are organized. Constitution ensuring periodical elections, Free Media, freedom of liberty for citizens are insuring democratic control over state by the people. The public wealth is reserved and preserved for public.

Principles of Socialism

Equal Distribution of wealth;

The central tent of Socialism is the equitable distribution of resources and wealth among society's members. But in India wealth is highly unequal. The Indian Constitution, through the Preamble and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), mandates the state to ensure equitable distribution of wealth and resources among citizens. 'Article 39 specifically directs the state to prevent

the concentration of wealth to the common detriment and to ensure that material resources serve the common good, aiming for a socialistic welfare state.’

Common Ownership ;

Socialism advocates for common ownership of the means of production which can take the form of state, cooperative or worker ownership. In India Public Sectors Navratna companies like [PSUs] like ONGC, NTPC, BHEL, HEL, and others are under government ownership.

Planned Economy ;

Socialism emphasizes planned economy, where the state or Community collectively decides what to produce, how, and whom. The Indian Constitution provides the framework for a ‘Mixed planned economy’ aimed at socialist goals, with planning listed in the Concurrent List (Seventh Schedule). Initiated in 1951, Five-Year Plans facilitated state-led industrialization, social justice, and resource allocation. ‘The Planning Commission managed this until 2015, when it was replaced by NITI Aayog. By the NDA Government.’³

Cooperation over Competition;

In the name of individual Liberty, capitalism promotes competition among citizens. But Socialism encourages cooperation among individuals, Industries, Production units, and entities for societal benefits. The Indian Constitution established "cooperative federalism" as a system where the Union and states share responsibilities and collaborate, rather than operating in isolation. This structure, often described as "quasi-federal," relies on legislative, financial, and administrative. Socialism in the Indian Constitution, explicitly added to the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, signifies a commitment to democratic socialism rather than state-controlled communism, aiming for social and economic justice. ‘It focuses on reducing inequality, equitable distribution of resources, and promoting a welfare state which is guided by Directive Principles of State Policy’⁴.

2] The Theory of Secularism. And the Indian Polity.

Secularism is the principle of separating religious institutions from state affairs and ensuring freedom of conscience and religious freedom for all citizens. Its historical roots and European Enlightenment conflicts to modern constitutional frameworks that manage diverse, multicultural societies.

‘Secularism in the Indian Constitution mandates that the state maintains principled distance from religion, treating all faiths equally without favoring any’ Incorporated to Indian Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976. It guarantees freedom of religion (Articles 25-28), prohibits religious discrimination (Articles 15-16), and ensures no state religion, and also Secularism part of the basic structure.

British writer George Jacob Holyoake (13 April 1817 – 22 January 1906) was an English secularist, co-operator and newspaper editor. He coined the terms secularism in 1851 and "jingoism" in 1878. Almost 150 years ago the word shaped the nexus between political and religious demotions. In United Kingdom King and Pope mixed the religion with politics.

Defining The secularism is the belief that religious views should be excluded from state affairs representing a separation of religion from government. The Constitution embodies the principles of secularism in several key provisions that collectively ensure the state’s neutrality towards religion and its commitment to protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs.

‘Nehru's concept of the secular state the carried 3 meanings
1 Freedom of religion or irrligation for all.
2 the state will honour all faith equally.
3 that the state shall not be attached to one faith or religion which by that act becomes the state religion.’⁵

Key issues of Secularism:

Equal Respect for All Religions: In a deeply pluralistic society like India, secularism does not mean a strict separation or hostility toward religion. Instead, the state maintains a "principled distance" from all faiths while offering them equal respect and protection. The government can intervene to reform discriminatory religious practices (e.g., abolishing untouchability) to uphold constitutional sprit. Unlike Western secularism, which strictly separates religion and state, But [Sarwadharma Samabhava] Indian secularism allows the state to engage with religious groups to ensure harmony. Equality. and brotherhood. Third chapter of the Indian Constitution gives cultural and religious rights and freedom for citizens.

Freedom of Religion:

Citizens are free to follow, change, or reject any religion. The Indian Constitution guarantees cultural and religious rights as fundamental rights under Articles 25-30, ensuring freedom of conscience, practice, and propagation of religion (Articles 25-28), and protecting the distinct language, script, or culture of minorities (Articles 29-30). These provisions, including managing religious affairs and running educational institutions, promote secularism, pluralism, and minority protection.

State Neutrality:

The state does not officially endorse any religion but intervenes when necessary to ensure justice and equality. and also in harmful religious practices. Exm, Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.

Interventionist Role:

The state has the power to regulate or reform religious practices if they violate fundamental rights, such as the abolition of untouchability and child marriage. More importantly state is responsible implement and protect social justice. Banning triple talaq and reforming Muslim personal law to protect women's rights. Right to freedom of religion (Articles 25-28), these rights are subject to public order, morality, and health.

Dimensions of Secularism in India

Social Dimension:

Secularism promotes social harmony by fostering mutual respect among various religious and cultural groups. It acts as a deterrent against societal fragmentation based on religion. Indian society is famous for religious harmony, Brotherhood and peaceful coexistence of divers faith including Hindhu, Musalman, Cristin, Sik, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Political Dimension:

Secularism ensures that political power is not monopolized by any single religious group, thereby preserving democratic principles. But Religion in India deeply influences politics through identity-based voting, the rise of Hindutva ideology, and communal mobilization, challenging the constitutional framework of a secular Democratic state. It is central to public life, shaping electoral strategies, policy debates on conversion, and the intersection of religious practice with social

hierarchy, The problem is vote-bank politics, selective state intervention, and majoritarian or minority appeasement. Rather than separating religion from state, this framework frequently institutionalises the religious identity into electoral.

Economic Dimension:

Karl Marx famously viewed religion as "the opium of the people," arguing it serves as an illusion. In the era of LPG wealth is a matter in life. Hindhu religion integrates spiritual principles with material prosperity, By emphasizing equality and justice, secularism strives to eliminate economic discrimination based on religion, ensuring fair opportunities for all. Islamic economics is a system balancing material gain with spiritual responsibility, social justice, and ethical consumption., banning unethical transactions (gambling, speculation). Christianity propagate capitalism and a strong work ethic. But the problem is religion base Appeasement politics in India.

Cultural Dimension:

Culture is the shared way of life of a group of people. It encompasses the collective beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a society and are passed down from generation to generation. Indian constitution and secularism safeguards this rich cultural heritage of various religious communities, promoting unity in diversity.

Educational Dimension:

The Constitution of India ensures, Secularism in education ensures public schools and universities remain neutral regarding religion, neither promoting nor prohibiting any faith. It fosters an inclusive environment where students from diverse backgrounds have equal opportunities, and encourages rational thinking, scientific temper, and universal moral values over religious dogmatism.

Challenges to Secularism in India

Causes for communalism in India are many reasons, basically political reason. In India communalism developed through internal politics and external hands. ISI propagating communalism in India for Kashmir issue. Terrorism in Kashmir is based on communalism. After emergency period 1975-1978 the rise of Bhartiya jantha party seeking their vote bank on the basis of religion that is called Hindu politics. Aggregation of people on the basis of religion leads fundamentalism, ultimately politics is a basic challenge for Secularism in India.

Communalism:

Religious polarisation and communal violence have undermined India's secular fabric. Events like, partition of India as India and Pakistan, Kashmir issue, Demolition the Babri Masjid, Terrorism link with a particular religion, Periodic communal riots, and strategic use of religion in Politics as vote bank, these are the important challenges for maintaining religious harmony.

Politicization of Religion:

Communalism in India is an ideology, religious identity dictating the Political and social interests, this is a challenge to Indian secularism fueled by political mobilization. Political parties and leaders often exploit religious sentiments to garner votes eroding the secular ideals of the state and religion are widely using in politics. Ultimately The spirit of Democracy is in threatened

Religious Fundamentalism:

The rise of extremist ideologies among various religious groups poses a threat to secularism. Fundamentalism is becoming a key feature of Indian Society. Fundamentalism is a big threat and might be replacing the secularism.

Judicial Interpretation:

The Indian Judiciary plays meaning full role in shaping India's unique model of secularism. in 'S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994). The Supreme Court has declared secularism a "basic feature" of the Constitution,' protecting freedom of religion while allowing state intervention to reform harmful practices.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC):

The implementation of a UCC remains a contentious issue with some arguing it is essential for secularism, while others view it as an infringement on religious autonomy. and against the Religious freedom. as a tool kit for religious discipline UCC is operable.

Caste and Religious Discrimination:

India as a malty religious country, it is laudable. But in every religion Hierarchical Discrimination appears, it is a challenge for the secularism. Persistent caste-based discriminations and conflicts are apparently taking place. and religious antagonism and intolerance are challenges to the secular ethos of the nation.

Conclusion. The constitutional values like Secularism and Socialism in India is not merely a constitutional mandate. But a social necessity, practicing Secularism in a society is a sign of developed civilization, religious harmony is a state of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding social system, Secularism and Socialism indicates nation's rich diversity, prosperity, Humanity, unity and diversity, and common welfare of the common people. India can preserve its unique model of secularism, Socialism ensuring unity in diversity for generations to come. The Constitution of India is safeguard for it.

Reference;

1. Sankaranarayan, Gopal,.(2024)Reprinted2025'THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA'. Eastern Book Company,Lucknow-226001.pp.1-4.
2. [Online].Avilable at;<https://ijrrsonline.in/AbstractView.aspx?PID=2024-12-4-4>.
3. [Online].Avilable at ;[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planning_Commission_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Planning_Commission_(India))
4. Sankaranarayan, Gopal,.(2024)Reprinted2025'THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA'. Eastern Book Company,Lucknow-226001.pp.57-63.
5. Niraja Gopal Jayal. Pratap Banu Mehta.(2021) Politics in India. Oxford University Press 22 workspace. 2nd floor , 1/22 Asif Ali Road, New Delhi. Oxford University Press2010.₹,335