PREFACE

Over the last two decades a number of social scientists in India have been engaged in a critical revaluation of the intellectual legacies of European enlightenment in the post-Independent India. Their primary concern is with the prevailing academic studies on the political processes in Independent India which is as in the words of T.V Sathyamurthy "exclusively concerned with formal structures, or the conceptual or methodological 'strait-jackets' in which the Western political scientists in general sought to squeeze the extremely varied subtly nuanced, richly textured and multi-flayared empirical material which the Indian field offered". (T.V Sathyamurthy, 1994).

The studies on secularism and communalism in India amply manifest these ambivalences. The idea of 'secular' is used predominantly in connection with the understanding of a 'secular state' in India as against its philosophical understanding in the West. Necessarily this brings in a processual and above that a political dimension to this ideology, therefore requiring us to analyse the concept not us an ideology alone but also as a process i.e. called secularisation. Also it requires the analyst to move more into the realm of civil life. However at this level the analysts are meeting with severe paradoxes, as this is also the realm in which communalisation has been taking shape in India.

Communalisation is getting more and more intensified in our society. Especially in the last two decades, the communal phoenix has cast a growing shadow over India's body politic. However inspite of all
this, the Indian state still continues to claim its secular credentials. This is no doubt a paradoxical situation. The most basic problem here is that, how can the state structures be considered as ‘secular’, if they could not put into effect the project of secularisation of Indian society and politics. Also if the communalism in India is more specifically a political problem, as it is often held by large number of writers, how can the Indian state be absolved of their responsibilities in this development?

This is the situation which this thesis attempts to explain.

SAJI. P. JACOB