Religion occupies an important place in society. Religion in general attempts to reveal the relation between man and God. It opens the way for man to the Divine. True religion does not lose its touch with the Divine or the Unconditioned. Religion is one of the supreme concerns of man.

The truth or the essence of religion viz. the Divine, the Infinite or the Unconditioned remains absolutely unchanged. And religion consists in realisation of this divine spirit. It is necessary to stress its importance in view of the prevailing secular view of life and society. We live in a secular state. Secularism is concerned naturally with the affairs of this world and not with the sacred, nor with the monastic, nor with the ecclesiastical. It emphasises Humanism and social values. Sometimes secularism inspires us to take non-religious attitude towards life and its problems. It has been observed that religion is a constitutional necessity of man. It plays a greater role than anything else in our life. Therefore, religious attitude should be encouraged and properly cultivated. It helps us to lead a happy and useful life. Secularism does not seem to be inconsistent with the true spirit of religion. In India, it does not mean the negation of religion. India is a country
where religion plays a major role from birth to the graveyard of every Indian. Therefore, Indian state is not antagonistic to any religion nor does it adopt anyone of them as its own. It stands for liberty of conscience and tolerance in the largest sense. Secularism is defined here in accordance with its ancient religious tradition. From the Rigvedic time to the present, Indian genius adopted a policy of 'live and let live'.

The aim of this study is to investigate how far secularism is relevant in the context of the essences of the major religions in India. The tenets of all major religions of India — Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam and Christianity, are eternal truths like spiritual brotherhood, and love for human beings. Therefore, society needs religion which deals with higher values of life.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. The Introductory chapter explains how India is the cradle of world religions. Different religions have assimilated themselves aiming at changing the structure of society in the name of progress and as a way of life, since time immemorial up to the present. Secularism has been interpreted in the context of the situation of India.

On purely empirical ground, secularism does not furnish a system of ethics which could meet the needs of modern men.
The second chapter explains critically different views of religion both Indian & Western. In this chapter the nature of religion has been explained. The sacred and the secular go side by side. Religion is an essential thing of man and true religion does not contradict the spirit of secularism. The third chapter explains the growth of secularism in the west. The historical development is given. The view of secularism which is completely anti-religious has to face vehement criticism and is hardly compatible with the tradition of some countries.

The fourth chapter explains the main teachings of major religions prevalent in India. The fifth chapter explains the concept of dharma in Hindu ethics. Dharma does not bring a disparity between sacred and secular. It is not in favour of maintaining an ultimate distinction between being and value.

The sixth chapter explains the role of religion in secular India. The place of secularism in the constitution of India is also examined. The most impressive phenomenon of our time is the growing unification of the world. The views on religion by makers of modern India are given in this context.

The concluding chapter explains how the true religion does not go against modernity and rejects polarity between 'the religions' and 'the secular' values. I am very much obliged to my guide Retd. Professor Dr. Kalicharan Das. But for his constant inspirations I would have hardly completed the work.
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