CHAPTER FIFTEEN

CHALLENGES TO SECULARISM

Though the Constitution of India accepts the concept of Secularism and provides for a Secular State in India, Indian Secularism is confronted with the several and serious challenges. As the nature of the Indian Secularism is different from the Western Secularism, its problems are also very different from that of Western Secularism. It has been argued that 'the theory of the Secular State in India, raises many problems unknown to Western Political experience such as separate electorate for the various religious communities, communal personal laws, the caste system, agitation for laws banning cow slaughter and so forth'.

It should be noted in this context, that the problems of Indian Secularism are the result of total Indian life. Therefore, a solution to them is to be found in Indian

situation. In the words of Smith, 'Indian Solution must be found for Indian problems'.

The challenges to the Indian Secularism are many and complex. They can be listed and discussed as follows:

1) Communalism
2) Casteism
3) Party Politics
4) Obscurantism.

(1) Communalism:

Of all the challenges, the Communalism is the most serious challenge to Secularism in India. It is unfortunate that despite having a Secular Constitution, and even in the fourth decade of our independence, our country has not been able to free itself from communal conflicts. The communalism not only exists, but has increased. Now it seems that communalism pervades the whole country.

What is Communalism?:

The discussion of communalism as a challenge to

Secularism can be started with its definition. Smith D.E., defines 'Communalism' is the tendency of religious groups to function as such as in Politics'. Communualism is also defined as 'Strong allegiance to one's own ethnic group rather than to the society as a whole'. It is also defined as 'an insistence on the special interests of the community and its preference for its own tenets'. Saksena points out that, 'Communalism is the affirmation of a religious community for attaining or retaining power, social political or economic or all of them. It can be parochial but certainly not national.'

Who is responsible for communalism is difficult to determine. Some persons put the blame on the Muslims and other accuse the Hindus, and some other persons blame the Britishers for it. It is argued that 'the roots of communalism do not lie in the medieval history of India'\(^7\).

Dr. Moin Shakir has pointed out that 'the problem of Communalism in India, is a 'gift of Islam'. The history of Muslim Communalism dates back to the advent of Islam and the Indian response to it, was that of resurgent nationalism. The Muslims even after the independence have refused to change'\(^8\).

But, according to Dutt, the British had created the communal problem. He has argued that 'Prior to British Rule, there is no trace of the type of Hindu-Muslim conflicts associated with the British Rule, and especially, with the latest period of British Rule. There were

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wars between States which might have Hindu or Muslim Rulers, but these wars at no time took on the character of a Hindu-Muslim antagonism. Muslim Rulers employed Hindus freely in the highest position and vice-versa.9

But some other writers do not support this view. Prof. A.B. Shah, as pointed out that, 'the British encouraged and exploited the Separatist sentiments, but they certainly did not create it'10. Justice Shelat has also explained that the British did not create the communal problem. They only exploited the social and religious contradictions between the two communities and diverted those contradictions into politics using them for their own purpose.11

Communal Organizations :-

The communal and casteist feelings of the Indian


people were used by the Britishers, certainly for their own political purpose. The Britishers started it with the introduction of separate electorate for the Muslims. The Indian Council Act, 1909, introduced separate electorate as it was demanded by the Muslim League (1906) which was the first communal organisation for safeguarding the interests of the Muslims. Later on, other Muslim Organisations came up, for example, The Jamat I-Islami (1941), the Majlis-e Mushawart (1964), the Muslim Majlis (1968). Regarding these Muslim Organisations, Dr. Moin Shakir has observed that 'these Organisations view the Muslims as a monolithic well-knit and homogenous community and consequently characterised the religious and cultural problem as identical.--- Muslims organisations are basically conservative and Fundamentalist in their ideological posture and Political approaches. The manipulation of religion and religious idiom reinforces communal identity and solidarity.--- Their manifestos betray a deliberate effort to ignore the economic problems of the Muslim masses. Their opposition to socialism or communism is the salient feature of their economic doctrine.'

In the course of time, the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Christian and the untouchables set up their own communal Organisations. The Hindu Organisations include the Hindu Mahasabha (1907), the Rastriya Swayam Sewak Sangh (1925). The Hindu Mahasabha was organised to protect the interest of the Hindus and Hindu Nationalism as against the Muslim league. The British Government utilized the communal organisation for its own purpose. The Indian National Congress opposed the system of separate electorate but it failed, on the contrary, the result was that, the Muslims were alienated from the Congress and the differences between the Congress and the Muslim League increased, and finally it caused the partition of the country, creating independent Pakistan and India.

It was expected that the creation of Pakistan would solve the problem of communalism. But the expectation has not been realised. It is argued that 'the basis of partition was enmity between Hindus and the Muslims. The creation of Pakistan gave it a permanent Constitutional form and made it much more difficult to solution'.  

Even to-day, the Wall of Distrust and suspicion has not been demolished. There are many people among the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs who are still trying to keep up the spirit of communalism. Formerly, the Muslim Communalism dominated the scene, at present the Sikh communalism is in the forefront. In Independent India, the Constitution has abolished the system of separate communal electorates, but communalism still exists in a new form, which is explicit in the entire process of election.

Communal Riots :-

Communal loyalties give birth to the communal conflict. There were number of communal riots in pre-partition India, and they did not come to an end even after the independence of India. On the contrary, it seem that the communal violence has become a part and parcel of Indian Life. In this context, it is necessary to note the distinction between the pre-partitioned and post independence communal riots. The pre-partitioned communal riots were unorganised and there was a mass participation in them. The communal riots after the independence are organised,
and modern technics are also used in them. There is also a difference about the duration of communal riots. Previously, the riots lasted for two-three-days, now, we find that the riots continue for months together, the example of communal violence in Punjab may be cited here.

The report of the Union Home Ministry explains that from 1954 to 1960, there was a trend against communal riots. In 1961, the situation was sharply reversed. Communal riots have been occurring at relatively short intervals. As a matter of fact, the number of communal riots has been increased. In this context, it may also be pointed out that, the communal riots are not between the Hindus and Muslims, but also between the Hindus on one hand and Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists etc., on other hand.

The list of the communal riots is very lengthy. The major riots can be mentioned. The riots occurred in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and other States at various places, such as, Delhi, Srinagar, Calcutta, Ranchi, Jabalpur, Bhopal, Indore, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Bombay, Bhiwandi, Pune, Malegaon, Nagpur, Jalgaon, Akola, Washim,
Solapur, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Moradabad, Aligar, Allahabad, Bihar Sharif, Meerut, Amritsar etc.¹⁴.

The incidents of communal riot and violence are often sporadic but they result in the death of several hundred people and the loss of public and private property on large scale. It creates the problem of Law and Order in the society. It hurts all in the end including the persons responsible for it. It creates the atmosphere of distrust and frustration among the people. Thus, the communalism and communal riots pose one of the gravest threats to democracy, secularism and national integration in India.

¹⁴. For details, see Ghure G.S., Social Tensions in India, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, First Edition, (1968), PP. 304-351.


Causes of Riots :-

The immediate causes of communal riots are cow-slaughters, Holi-revelry, religious festivals and processions, music before the mosque, destruction of idols and temples, Hindu-Muslim relations regarding the marriage, divorce etc. But the root cause is the communal politics of communal organisations. It is pointed out that 'the root cause of the trouble is the manner in which we run our politics, play the game of power in which the religion, God or the Concept of God are used as pawns on chess board'.

The Linguistic conflicts, the issue of official language in a State, the place of temples, and the different economic progress of the different communities are also the causes of riots between the Hindus on the one hand and the Sikhs, Christians, Jains and other communities on the other hand. The policy of 'Reservations' is also a cause of agitation and violence among the different communities.

of the Hindus. The recent agitation for and against the 'Reservation Policy' in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh may be cited in this context.

Thus, the communal violence includes many things, such as communal conflict, personal rivalries, economic and social conflicts, political issues, and communal politics by the communal organisations, rumours, provocations, policies and their implementation by the Government, encouragement by the neighbouring and other Foreign States.

**Eradication of Communalism:**

How to eradicate communalism from Indian life is a difficult problem. There can be no single solution for it. The fight against the communalism must be multi-dimensional. Many political scientist and writers have suggested different remedies to solve the problem of communalism.

Dr. Luthera has suggested that 'if communalism is to be eradicated, a beginning has to be made from the Constitution itself. There is need to amend it so as to make the enactment of the communal Laws illegal'.

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In the opinion of Mr. Setalvad, education with a Secular bias can play in reducing the impact of the forces of the communalism and sectarianism. Only sustained and effective co-operation between the State and citizens in a system of education with a clear bias towards the Secularism can wear off these narrow and sectarian loyalties. Mr. Dalwai considers that 'the only answer to the communal problem in India is Secular integration of all the people of India.'

To meet the challenge of communalism, it can be suggested that, as communalism is a way of thinking, it is necessary to reorient the thinking of the people of our country. The people should be educated that the problems of life can not be solved by the religion. They must be educated


to treat religion strictly as their personal matter and
to oppose mixing of religion with politics. They should be
made Secular. If more people believe in Secularism rather
than communalism, perhaps, fewer communal riots would take
place all over the country.

It is also very essential to create mental climate
of trust and harmony among the various religious communi-
ties, and for this education and enlightenment of the peo-
ple is needed. Certainly, the communal parties and organi-
isations are on the forefront of communal violence, there-
fore, such parties and organisations need to be banned
by the law. The Government also must function as really
Secular Government. Its functions should not be associa-
ted with any single religion. Frequent reference to 'religi-
gious majority' and 'religious minority' should be avoided
by all the persons in the Government and politics.

2. Casteism :-

Next to religion, caste is the dominant factor in
Indian life, and it has also been a major factor preven-
ting the growth of Secular forces in India. Indian Society
is basically a caste-society and as Nehru observed 'a caste ridden society is not properly Secular'.

Caste System:

The Institution of caste has been one of the exclusive characteristics of Indian Society, especially Hindu Society since early ages, and in spite of great changes in history of India, the caste system continued to be an important feature of social life in India, and in the course of time, it has also become an important factor in the politics of the country.

The roots of the caste system are very deep. The ancient 'Varna' Scheme is supposed to be the basis of caste system, though both are different concepts. 'Varna' scheme includes four groups - The Brahmin, The Khashtriya, the Vaisya and the Sudras. And 'This four-fold division is only ideological and is not in any manner based on the facts of social system'. The 'Varna' scheme was not rigid as it

was based on occupation. The caste system, on the other hand refer to endogamous kinship groups and social institutions, and it includes several hundred castes and sub-castes. The Hindu caste system, is also looked upon as a divine institution with religious sanction. However, basically caste is a social institution, whose membership is largely decided on the basis of birth. A man is born into a caste and he dies in it, if he is not excluded from it. Man's individual efforts do not change his position in the caste. Caste is the basis of individual's social status and his social relationship in the society. The Hindu caste system is hierarchical and it creates social inequalities in the society. This is well known to all.

Originally caste was associated with a specific occupation and village community and village economy. But during the British period, it has undergone profound changes and became more flexible as a result of industrialization and modernization. The British Government also passed some laws affecting the caste system. During this period, the caste system lost many of its traditional features.
Caste and Reservation:

After India attained independence in 1947, the caste system again has undergone profound changes. The Constitution of India accepts equality as its basic principle and enforces it by recognising the individual as the unit of power operating through a system of universal adult franchise. The Constitution has also abolished untouchability which was the most undesirable and inhuman feature of caste system. The Constitution also makes discrimination and exploitation on caste, communal grounds punishable. But the Constitution itself provides for a kind of 'protective discrimination' for those sections of the society which are backward and downtrodden. The principle of reservation has been incorporated in Part-XVI of the Constitution, in which the provision has been made for the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of People, in the Legislative Assemblies of the States, in the services of the Government and Institutions. They are also given all types of facilities and special scholarship for education.
It may, here be noted that the reservation was extended to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Economically backward communities, in the Hindu and the weaker sections in the Non-Hindu communities were left unprotected. Naturally, it was resented by the people who were excluded from the reservation. The first Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 1951, introduced a new clause in Article 15 which empowered the State to take steps for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens.

On this policy of reservation, it has been argued that 'the greatest harm has been done by the attempts of both Central and State Governments to define economic, social and educational needs in terms of the caste groups and to extend aid on that basis.--- This approach has served only to perpetuate and attenuate caste consciousness and has resulted in grave injustice in many cases in which, there is no co-relation between caste, status and economic need.'

In the opinion of Balraj Madhok, the reservations given to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the Constitution have created vested interests in the perpetuation of caste system. Before such reservations came, there was going on an imperceptible process of change of castes. The people belonging to the lower caste, tried to upgrade their social status with the improvement in their economic and education condition.\(^22\)

Regarding the caste and reservation policy, it can be said that the privileges attached to castes have encouraged casteism since the caste is proving very beneficial to the persons belonging to the backward castes. Not only this, there is a general desire for the enrolment in the list of Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes even among those who are advanced and who have rejected the caste system for other purposes. Thus, the reservation policy, instead of removing the caste distinctions has maintained it, and has encouraged social tensions which retard the process of social integration. It has also created obstacles in achieving the object of caste-less society in India.

In view of the principle of equality, it is necessary to maintain a balance between the claims of the individual who is not a member of the Scheduled caste and Scheduled Tribes and the individual belonging to these castes. There should not be encroachment upon the rights of other sections. Economic status of the individual and not the caste status, should be the consideration for concessions and preferences. The distinction based on caste, should be deleted from the Constitution of India. The recent (February to April 1985) anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and other States have necessitated the Constitutional Amendment in this respect.

Caste and Politics :-

With the Independence and the adoption of democratic system of Government, with the universal adult franchise a new phase has begun in the history of caste in India. Caste started to play an important role in politics of the country. The democratic methods have given a new strength to castes and caste organisations. It is as Jaya Prakash Narayan declared in 1960 that under the present system "caste has become the strongest party in India".

Morris Jones describes 'Politics' is more important to castes and castes are more important to politics than before'. He further says 'the top leaders may proclaim the goal of a casteless society, but the newly enfranchised rural masses know only the language of traditional politics which so largely turns about caste'.

Politics in India, especially at State level can not be understood without the study of caste in that particular State. Reddy, Kammams, and Velama in Andhra Pradesh, Okkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Nayars and Ezhavas in Kerala, Marqtha and Brahmins in Maharashtra, Baniyas and Patidar in Gujarat, Bhumihars, Kayasthas and Rajput in Bihar, Jats, Brahmins in Uttar Pradesh, are dominating castes in these States. Castes included in Scheduled Castes are also important in the politics of some of the States. There are some parties which are organised to represent castes. D.M.K., in Madras, Jharkhand in Bihar, Republican

Party and Dalit Panthar in Maharashtra are examples in this context.

There are also some castes organisations at village, district and State levels. They function as a pressure groups and 'vote Banks' during the elections. The other parties which are not organised on the basis of caste, also consider caste factor in distributing the tickets and allotting the Constituencies for elections. The election campaign and then voting is also under the influence of caste.

The political parties have their election manifestos advocating Justice, Liberty, Equality, Socialist Society, Casteless Society etc., but in practice, Political Parties use tactics of caste, religion, language, region etc.

Thus, the election process in India has done much to encourage casteism. It is, however, necessary to note that the influence of caste is not alike in all States and at all the levels. Recent election studies have revealed that the influence of caste is stronger at village and district level and lesser at State and national level. It may be because, there can not be a Ministry of a
particular caste. The political necessity has imposed the need for cooperation among the different caste groups.

The continued and increased influence of caste in almost all directions of life is bound to weaken Secular and democratic character of Indian State. Casteism is also a powerful barrier against emotional integration which is very essential for Secularism in India.

It has been argued that 'if non-discrimination between the castes has to be achieved it is only possible by pulling up different castes members together within a class, where equal opportunity and status prevails for all. But can caste ever emerge into class?' It seems more or less definite that, there is no such possibility. Not only this, there is no possibility of the caste system being eliminated from Indian Society in a near future unless the protection based on caste is changed through Constitutional Amendments. Greater emphasis on economic rather than caste factor should be given. This will be more

rational and practical.

3. Party Politics:

Party-Politics, especially of communal nature has also created a hinderance in the way of Secularism in India. India has a multi-party system, but right since the independence there is a dominance of one party in the country. Up-to March, 1977, the Congress Party played a dominant role, then upto 1979, the Janata Party which was a Grand Alliance of the Jana Sangh, the Congress (O.), the Bhartiya Lok Dal, and the Socialist, was dominant party, and since January, 1980 Congress (I.), is the dominating party both at the Centre and in many of the States in India. The opposition party has always been weak in India.

Development of Political Parties:

The Indian National Congress which was founded in December, 1885, was the first Political Party in India. The foundation of the Congress was the most remarkable event in India's history. In the beginning, the Congress was the organisation for political reforms, but as time
passed it became the instrument of India's struggle for independence. The Congress was the national organisation from its inception. It was also by and large Secular in outlook and its organisation was not communal, as its membership was open to all the people irrespective of religion, faith and caste etc.

The Indian National Congress was to separate religious values from political objects. The object of the Congress was not the establishment of a 'Hindu State', but the establishment of 'Secular State', in India. The Congress stood for the Secularism, but its Hindu Phraseology, and the regiosity of many of its leaders and their programmes created doubts, distrust and uneasiness among them some of the Muslims in India.

In 1905, the Partition of Bengal opened a new phase in the politics of the country. The nationalism based on religion sprang up. In 1906, there came into being a communal party namely the All India Muslim League which launched the separatist movement with the blessing of the British. The Membership of the Muslim League was opened to the Muslims only and it was to safeguard the political rights and interests of the Muslims in India.
As a reaction to the Muslim League, the Hindu Maha-
Sabha was established in Punjab as a provincial organisa-
tion in 1907 and its All India Organisation came into be-
ing in 1915. The Hindu Maha-Sabha stood for the protec-
tion and promotion of the interests of the Hindus. It was
for Hindu culture and 'Hindu Rashtra'. Thus, the Hindu
Maha-Sabha became a communal party of the Hindu as the
Muslim League was for the Muslims. Regarding the politi-
cal situation during this period, it has been observed
that, 'in British India, communal and Secular forcs were
competing with one another for securing the support and
loyalty of the people. The Muslim League and the Hindu
Maha Sabha looked at the problem from the communal angle.
Their interests were limited. They were appealing to the
communal interests of the communities. The Congress
stood for Secularism. It looked at the problem from a
non-communal angle. Its objectives were based on general
interests. It appealed to the people in the name of unity,
Secularism, nationalism democracy and Federation'.

Then, there came into being some organisations and political parties such as Rashtriya Swayam-Seveak Sangh (1925), Communist Party (1928), Scheduled Caste Federation (1932), Congress Socialist Party (1934).

After independence, in addition to the old political parties, many other new parties were formed. These political parties include - Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Praja Socialist Party, Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party, Swatantra Party, Bhartiya Kranti Dal, Bhartiya Lok Dal, Congress (Organised)Party, Congress for Democracy, Janata Party, Congress (I.), Party., Congress (S.),Party and Dalit Majdoor Kisan Party. There were many mergers and splits in these political parties and even now the same process is continued.

Classification and Nature of Political Parties:

Indian Political Parties after the independence can be classified loosely into 'National Parties' and 'Regional Parties','Secular Parties', and 'Communal Parties'. The National Parties include the Congress (I.), The Congress (S.), Bhartiya Janata Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party Marxist. Regional Parties include Dravidian

It may be pointed out that, since the independence, many regional parties have sprung up in the country. These parties represent the interests of a particular region or particular group. Some of the regional parties even desire and struggle for separate independent State. Originally, D.M.K., for 'Dravidstan' and Akali for 'Khalistan' may be cited. The demand of 'Khalistan' by the Sikh extremists has ultimately caused the assassination of Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on 31st October, 1984, who did not remove the assassin, Beant Shing and Satwant Shing, from the personal security staff, in the name of 'Secularism'.

Secular Political Parties in India include the parties like Congress (I), Congress (S), Janata Party, C.P. I., C.P.M., D.M.K.P., etc. These political parties are secular in the sense that, their membership is open to all people irrespective of their religious and caste loyalties.
These political parties are not identified with the interests of particular religious or caste groups and they are for the general welfare of the nation. The policies of these political parties do not conform to the principle of some particular religion. But what is their practice? Even these parties play a communal politics for achieving and safeguarding their political interests. It has been remarked that 'the known Secular parties are not very Secular in terms of composition and working.' 27 No party can be called truly Secular unless it denounces communalism of any type for political purpose.

Despite the Secular character of the Constitution, in India, there are number of communal parties and organisations. The Hindu communal parties and organisations include The Hindu Maha-Sabha, The Ram Rajya Parishad, Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Bhartiya Janata Party, Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad. These political

parties and the organisations among the Hindus believe in extreme nationalism, or more or less 'Hindu Nationalism'. They also advocate 'Hindu Rashtra' and 'Indianisation'. In this sense, they are communal and opposed to Secular State.

Among the Muslims, the communal parties and the organisations are, the Muslim League, The Jamat-e-Islami, The Muslim Majlis, The Jamiat ul-ulema-Hind, The Shia political Conference, The Majlis i. Mushwari. These parties and the organisations are for the protection of the interests of the Muslims only. They stood for Muslim culture in India. Therefore, they are communal in their object and outlook.

Among the Sikhs, the Akali Dal stands for the promotion of the interests of the Sikhs in India. It is both regional and communal party.

In the context of communal parties and organisations, it may be noted that, they do not represent the whole of the respective community. A section of the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs is represented by them.

Similarly, it is very difficult to make distinction
between 'Secular' and 'Communal' parties each party considers itself to be Secular and blames the other party to be 'Communal'. It is also interesting to note that, a political party becomes 'Secular' or 'Communal' in view of political interests and party alliance during the elections and framing the Ministries.

**Secularization of Political Parties**

At present, many of the political parties have made rapid progress towards the Secularization of their policies and programmes. Their election manifestos give importance to the issues like protection and preservation of democracy, stability in the country, integrity of nation, fight against the communalism, industrialization, economic development and providing maximum employment, fight against corruption and purity in administration, enforcement of the Directive Principles, and establishment of social and economic democracy, Greater concessions to the weaker section in the society, protection to the interest of the minorities, Decentralization of power, non-alignment in the international affairs.

A careful study of the election manifestos of the
various political parties in India reveal that their election manifests are not based on a principle of particular religion, either Hinduism or Islam etc. On the contrary, the pledge to preserve the Secular democratic State in India. But almost all the parties plan their election strategy and carry on election campaign on communal lines and make compromises with the communal factors. Their practice, do not confirm to their ideological affiliations including 'Secularism'. In other words, the political parties and their leaders are Secular in words, not in action.

28. For details, see Horst Hartman, Political Parties in India, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, (1971), Chapter 4, To 10.


It has been observed that 'whatever the claims of political parties, their behaviour in regard to the promotion of Secularism has been unhealthy, rather nefarious'. None of them has ever allowed Secularism to take precedence over its political interests. 29.

In conclusion it can be said that the communal parties and organisations are conservative and reactionary. They mobilise political opinion from the point of view of either religion, caste, or language etc. They even give a call of 'Dharma Yudha'. Therefore, they pose a serious threat to Secular politics and create obstacles in the success of Secularism in India.

It is true that the communal parties do not possess effective leadership and they have a microscopic amount of popular support, but their existence is not healthy sign in the Secular State in India. Therefore, there should be legal restrictions on the political parties to make communal or religious demands and the political parties

should not be allowed to make representation of religious affairs and propagate communalism. It is also necessary that the people should be adherent to Secular principles in the politics of the country.

4. Obscurantism:

Indian Secularism is also confronted with Obscurantism. Despite of the progress in almost all the directions of life obscurantism still persists. In all the religions, there are obscurantist elements which create obstacles in the way of evolution of human and dynamic social order. It is because of obscurantism the people give importance to customs and traditions rather than reason.

In the context of the Indian Society, it may be pointed out that, there are obscurantists among all the communities. The Indian people in general whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs etc., are traditional in their outlook, and see many of the things in their traditions and customs. They look backward rather than forward. They are unwilling to accept new ideas. It is due to obscurantist element, the orthodox Muslims is opposed to any change in the
traditional way of life and the Muslim personal law. And the orthodox Hindu demands a total ban on Cow-slaughter. The worse thing is that, even the persons in the high position of the Government, are also under this influence. Every public function of the Government is accompanied by 'Bhumi Pujan' and recitation of 'Mantras'. Lakhs of rupees are spent from the public and private funds on sacrificial rituals such as 'Yagnyas', 'Havans' and 'Puja', and other religious functions.

All these factors have slowed down the growth of Secular forces and created a threat to Secularism in India. If this situation is to be changed, it needs strong renaissance movement for increasing the importance of the Secular forces in the society.

Suggestions:

It is evident from the preceding discussion that, the challenges to the Indian Secularism are varied and complex. They are partly because of some Constitutional Provisions which are contrary to the principles of Secularism and partly because of the nature of Indian Society, which is based on traditional religious and social values.
Therefore, the challenges to Secularism need to be tackled by the measures like Constitutional amendments, Secularization of Indian Society and modernization in every sphere of life. Similarly, this task can not be left to the Government alone. It requires everybody's efforts and cooperation from everybody.

Justice Gajendragadkar, observed that 'the plant of Secularism is very delicate plant, and if it has to grow on the Indian Soil, it must be watered and tenderly nursed by all Secularist in the country with care and dedication. It is hands of faith that are needed for the achievement of this task and these hands of faith must be supplied by the intellectuals of to-day' 30.

In order to solve the problems of Secularism in India, education with a Secular bias can play effective and valuable role. For this, education must be controlled by the State and completely separated from the religion.

To solve the problem of communalism Prabhakar Padhye

has suggested that 'the Indian Government should introduce a course in comparative religion as a part of educational curriculum at the secondary stage. This would enable Hindus and Muslims and others to understood the comparative merits and demerits of the different religions. Much of the religious animosity in India is born of sheer ignorance and the Government must take early steps to remove it. 31.

It may be pointed out that a comparative study of different religions is not sufficient. There should not be separate educational institutions for the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others, because this makes them separatist and communal in outlook. It may also be pointed out that, the educational change at the institutional level is not enough. The people in general should be educated and trained in Secular way of life. It means that they should be taught to make distinction between their personal life as an individual and their public life as a citizen,

and to consider economic, and political problems without religious and caste loyalties.

The political parties and their leaders also have to show by their behaviour that they are Indian first and afterwards the Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, etc. This is because of the fact that, the common masses are impressed and influenced much more by what they see in action than, what they hear in speeches. Therefore, the leaders and the politicians should first reform themselves. There should also be restrictions on political parties taking up communal and religious demands and making religious appeals to the people. In view of Secularism, the political parties should not propagate communal ideology.

It has been suggested that the Government should set up a Commission for Religious Affairs under the charge of Cabinet Minister. Such remedy will not be useful to solve the problem of Secularism. It would rather create some problems as they are with other Commission on various issues.

It has been already been stated that, India is multi-religious, multi-caste, multi-racial and multi-lingual country. Therefore, there are bound to be some minorities which create conflict between themselves and with the majority community. The Indian Constitution has safeguarded the religious, lingual and cultural interests of the minorities. But, there has been since the beginning, the animosity between the majority and the minorities, and now the Constitution has raised a Constitutional Wall of discrimination between the majority and the minorities. Therefore, there is a distrust among them.

In this situation, the majority group has a great responsibility to induce security and confidence amongst the minorities and the minorities too. Can not evade their responsibility to co-operative with the majority. It has been argued that 'A Secular State demands that while the majority is tolerant and accommodative, the minority inturn should reciprocate and avoid alienation and segregation'.

Thus, Secular attitude on the part of the Hindu alone is not sufficient to create an atmosphere conducive to Secularism. It is a collective responsibility of both the majority and the minorities Communities. The concerted efforts by them will safeguard the Indian Secularism from the evils of communalism, Casteism and Sectarianism.

The supreme need of the hour seems to be the multiplication of the Secular Citizens. The citizen will be Secular in the sense that, he keeps his religious faith strictly within personal bonds and he does not allow his religion to intrude upon others, and in the public life.

There is also need to create an atmosphere conducive to Secularism b-y accepting modernisation in every sphere of life. Technological development, increased industrialization and economic growth is also necessary because the present communal riots are not only due to religious differences but also because of economic differences among the different communities in India.

Indian Secularism needs the society with the people having Secular attitude towards the solution of economic, social, political problems, facing the nation. There is a need to accept Secularism as social philosophy and as a way of life.