

# Chapter 8: Secularism

1. **Constitution of India declares that every Indian citizen has a right to live with freedom and dignity in any part of the country.**
2. When a community are targeted and victimised on account of their religious identity, *basic freedoms of a set of citizens are denied.*
3. Secularism is first and foremost a doctrine that opposes all forms of inter-religious domination...
  - It is a normative doctrine which seeks to realise a secular society
  - ***it promotes freedom within religions, and equality between, as well as within, religions***
4. secularism opposes all forms of institutionalised religious domination, it challenges not merely interreligious but also intra-religious domination
5. **Democratic state** :- a state must not be run by the heads of any particular religion. No official religion of state.
6. A state governed directly by a priestly order is called theocratic.. Theocratic states lack separation between religious and political institutions
7. Separation of state and religion is not sufficient for the existence of a secular state.
  - The separation of religion-state is, a necessary but not a sufficient ingredient of a secular state.
8. To be truly secular, a state must not only refuse to be theocratic but also have no formal, legal alliance with any religion
9. A secular state must be committed to principles and goals which are at least partly derived from non-religious sources.
10. These ends should include peace, *religious freedom, freedom from religiously grounded oppression, discrimination and exclusion, as also inter-religious and intra-religious equality.*

## THE WESTERN MODEL OF SECULARISM

- All secular states have one thing in common: they are neither theocratic nor do they establish a religion
- state will not intervene in the affairs of religion and
- religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state

- Each Organ (Judiciary, executive & Legislature) have a separate sphere of its own with independent jurisdiction

### THE INDIAN MODEL OF SECULARISM

- Indian secularism is different from Western secularism.
- Indian secularism does not focus only on religion-state separation and the idea of inter-religious equality is crucial to the Indian conception.
- It also ushered ideas of inter-community equality to replace the notion of hierarchy.
- It equally focuses on intra-religious and inter-religious domination.
- Indian secularism opposes the oppression of marginalized section such as women, Dalit, SC ST etc
- Indian secularism deals not only with religious freedom of individuals but also with religious freedom of minority communities.
- An individual has the right to profess the religion of his or her choice.
- **Article 29-30** :Religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.
- Indian secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform.
- § Indian constitution bans untouchability, abolishing child marriage etc
- **Indian model of secularism does not follow strict separation of power...**
- § A state initiate or even support religious reforms.
- § Indian secularism allows for principled state intervention in all religions.
- The Indian state may engage with religion negatively to oppose religious tyranny.
- § Abolition of Sati practice, ban on Triple Talaq, women entry in Sabrimala temple etc
- Indian Constitution grants all religious minorities the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions which may receive assistance from the state.

- To promote these ends the state must be separated from organised religion and its institutions for the sake of some of these values

### NEHRU ON SECULARISM

- Nehru wanted a secular state to be one that “protects all religions, but does not favour one at the expense of others and does not itself adopt any religion as the state religion”.
- Nehru was not in favour of a complete separation between religion and state.
- A secular state can interfere in matters of religion to bring about social reform.