

The concept of Nationalism and Secularism both are important for the study of Political Science. For any state the feeling of nationalism is important for the unity of the nation. But for the strength of democratic state the concept of secularism is equally important. For the embodiment of democratic values without any discrimination where all citizens get equal right irrespective of their religion is accepted by the state. The Constitution of India has accepted this fact. With acceptance of secularism, all citizen can play an important role in the formulation of the State Policy. This helps in formation of a strong nation. In this chapter we will understand the importance and concept of nationalism and secularism which are basic pillars of Indian democracy.

Nationalism : Before understanding nationalism its important to understand the word Nation The English word Nation is derived from word 'Nesio' from Latin which has a meaning like caste According to Lord Brice, a nation is a nationality which is a politically organised institution and is either independent or has a desire to be independent. Every nation aspires to get independence so it can become a nation.

Thus when a collective experience and feeling of language, religion, caste and territorial unity play an important role in the formation of a Nation. Every Nation aspire to be a State. A nation which has become a State is called a nation-state. There is a difference between State and Nation. Let us now discuss the difference.

(a) By meaning : When a community experiences a feeling of unity because of ethnicity language, religion, beliefs, tradition and historical heritage, it is called a Nation. All these factors help in experiencing national unity but none of these are indispensable. When such community desire to get political independence then it is called a Nation. It is important to understand that in one nation there can be group of people with different language, religion and caste.

For any state these four elements are indispensable - Population, Territory, Government and Sovereignty.

(b) By Structure : Nation is essentially a cultural. It has a political element, but its place is secondary, whereas a State is a human community politically organized in a definite territory with sovereign power. Before 15th August, 1947 India was a Nation but not a State. After getting independence it became a sovereign state.

(c) By Strength : In order to be called a state, sovereign power has to be there. While for Nation the sovereign power may or, may not be there. Sovereign power is not an essential component for a Nation.

(d) By Scope : The word State suggests that it is a politically organized human community living in a definite territory, whereas the word Nation has a wider meaning. For example before 1948, Jews were spread in various countries of the world, but they had a feeling of National Unity.

(e) By Component : For the formation of Nation there is no need of component like language, religion as we have discussed earlier. But for a State the four components population territory, government and sovereignty are a must.

(f) By Concept : The State is intimately associated with certain notion of law whereas a nation is associated with unity and feeling of oneness.

Thus there is a conceptual difference between State and Nation. State and Nation are often used in the same sense and same meaning, but this is not correct because of the difference between the two. For example the establishment of United Nations in 1945, where there are many States in one union which are sovereign in nature. But these States are known as United Nations. In the same way India has many States but as a country it is one State.

In nationalism the feeling of belongingness is important. Nationalism is a philosophy which gives a feeling of greatness of our Nation and considers our Nation as great. Within any nation which is not independent the feeling of nationalism creates a desire to be independent. When a Nation-State faces any crises than the same feeling gives strength and a feeling to do or die for the Nation.

Characteristics of Nationalism : Certain characteristics of nationalism as given by various scholars are given below :

(1) Common habits and communication methods : Common habits and communication among large group is paramount. In communication things like language, script and symbols brings unity in society.

(2) It is a Mental Status : Nationalism is a feeling of unity and emotional integration towards the Nation. Citizens feel responsible toward nation. It may be a personal feeling toward nation but it is related with feeling of nationality.

(3) It is a recent Phenomena : Love and respect for our country is not new phenomena. We all know the history of Bhamasha Sheth who offered jewellery worth crores to the defeated King Maharana Pratap. We can find such examples in other countries of the world also. But the feeling and awareness about nationalism was for the first time felt during treaty of "Westphalia". The feeling of Nationalism was expressed in various acts. Way back in 18th century during the period of freedom movement of America, they gave slogan like no representation, no taxation and during the time of French Revolution National Unity was seen.

(4) State is not a necessary Component for Nationalism : The feeling of nationalism can occur even without State. We know that when India was ruled by Britishers, in the year 1885 Indian National Congress was established in the absence of the State. This was the first step towards the Institutionalisation of Indian Nationalism.

(5) In one nation there can be many States but Nationalism is one : Political thinker like J. S. Mill and American President - Woodrow Wilson favoured One Nation One State. After first world war many countries adopted this principle of one nation one state.

But later it was realised that one nation one state formula is not very practical and difficult to implement. The concept of many Nations can be seen in countries like USA, China, India and Russia. Here unity in diversity can be seen and this has given a very strong feeling of nationalism.

(6) Nationalism is Liberal or Extremist : When citizens are proud of their Nation with acceptance of co-existence of other nation it is called Liberal Nationalism.

Fascism under the leadership of Mussolini in Italy and Nazism under the leadership of Hitler in Germany are the best examples of extremists nationalism. Both of these ideologies believed that only the Aryan race is Great and all other races in the world are inferior to them. This feeling of Aryan superiority was one of the important causes of the second World War.

(7) Liberal Nationalism brings unity in Society : Liberal ideology of nationalism brings unity in the society crossing all banner of different religion, languages, classes and caste. People become more faithful toward the Nation-State.

(8) It gives strength to fight Against Calamities : When State and Society faces natural calamities like earthquake, flood, storm and man made calamities like foreign aggression the feeling of Nationalism gives moral strength to fight against them.

(9) It provides Economic Strength to the Nation : The slave countries under European nations suffered because of colonilism and imperialism, which led to emergence of a feeling of economic independence. It was rightly said by the economic thinker Dadabhai Navroji that the reasons for poverty in India is due to economic exploitation by Brtishers The Gandhian philosophy and thoughts about boycott of foreign goods, Swadeshi Movement and making villages self dependent were instrumental in the development of Indian Nationalism.

Inspite of the fact that nationalism is an obligation toward the State, in the time of globalization, more emphasis is given to internationalism. Eventhough, every nation expects Nationalism from all its citizens. Keeping this in mind a chapter on Fundamental Duties was incorporated in the Constitution of India by passing the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. Citizens also feel proud when their nation-state gets respect from other countries.

Meaning of Secularism (with reference to Global and Indian Context)

To know the meaning of secularism in the global context we will have to look into the history of secularism in the period between 17th to 18th centuries. That was the period when the concept of State was in the initial Stage. Middle Age were the period of religious influence and the king was dependent on the Church for his power and Kingship. Emphasis on thinking about man and this worldliness rather than other worldliness was a distinguishing feature of this period. The newly formed states were not dependent on religion or religious institution for their power. These states emerged an independent political state. Later on such states become regular in nature Along with development of state secularism become an acceptance factor an ideal State. In present time most of the democratic and communist countries have accepted the philosophy of secularism. The concept of secularism at international national level is as follows :

- (1) The state remains neutral with religion. The state does not give importance to any religion
- (2) Citizens are free to follow any religion and religious freedom is given by state. So all citizens have right to follow, propogate and make any association for religious purposes.
- (3) There cannot be discrimination among citizens on the ground of religion. All religions are equal before law. The state will not interfere with religion except in public interest.

In India we have accepted secularism by giving the Right to Religious Freedom The concept of secularism is a western concept like Parlimentry form of Government, independent and neutral judiciary and voting right to all adults. But the concept of secularism is as old as our cultural heritage. Indian culture is a blend of unity among diversity. So the state has accepted the concept of equality of all religion and tries to embrace all religion. With the 42nd ammendment of the constitution in 1976, it included the word 'Secular' in the Preamble to the Constitution and asserted that India is a secular nation and all religions are equal for the State.

Inspite of that India accepted secularism as an integrated part of democracy, it does not advocate a society without religion or antireligion. The constitution never advocates to remove religion from life rather it has given equal status to all religions.

Need of Secularism in Modern Times

The present time is a democratic era where the rights given by constitution are of great value. Among all rights, the right to freedom is the heart of democracy. For overall development citizen's physical and spiritual freedom is necessary. Such spiritual freedom is an integral part of democracy and democratic life. The acceptance of secularism can only be possible if religious freedom is accepted. The life of any individual is ruled by two powers; one religion and second State power. Both powers must remain in their own separate domain. The philosophy of secularism should be seen with above meaning. Moreover in a democratic system, the opportunities for development become more easy with acceptance of secularism. It helps in physical, spiritual and religious development of personality of citizens. Secularism is not a State Policy but an attitude which is life style of citizens. There is no place for intolerance. All individuals are free to live their life as per their desire. With acceptance of secularism the state considers religion as an individual matter and secondary aspect of life. The state gives more emphasis on public policy rather than religion. At the time of national crises, all religious heads leaving their religions aside support the state.

In some of the traditional states which do not consider individual as unit, create problem in acceptance of the concept of secularism. Such a state considers groups based on region, religion or language as unit which is not right. Instead, the state should accept an individual as a unit, which is necessary for development of the state as well as of the individual. In such a situation the group of citizens with anti state feeling, will lose their influence on state. Such a feeling of secularism provides security and inspiration for growth of citizens through state and life of citizens and society at large become excellent.

Relevance of Secularism in India

In the year 1857, Hindu and Muslim king unitedly fought to liberate India from British East India Co. To curb the Hindu-Muslim unity Britishers adopted the policy of divide and rule and thus the feeling of opposition among Hindus and Muslims increased and they became apart from each other. Thus Pakistan was born on religious grounds. Today Pakistan is known as an Islamic Republic State.

India has accepted secularism as a State Policy. India has given equal status to all citizens, irrespective of caste, colour, sex or religion for over all development of citizen as well as of the nation. After a long battle of freedom, on 15th August, 1947, India became independent with a dream to promote the ideologies of brotherhood and tolerance. This was possible only due to the inspirational leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel.

But with passing of time, the occurrence of communal riots started due to social and economic reasons. Looking at this the word 'Secularism' was introduced in the Preamble of Constitution of India, and this secularism was accepted for development of modern India, national unity and for one India.

Independent India has accepted Parliamentary Democratic form of Government. In Indian democracy individuals are considered as a unit rather than religion or religious groups. This process of individual or citizens development will create a path for national development at last. At the same time, for development of an individual religious freedom has been guaranteed through Fundamental Rights. For India the acceptance of secularism is the only way for overall development of the nation.

From 1991, India has accepted the policy of liberalization, privatization and globalization. Under this condition, Indian society can develop only when all citizens get equal status. The opportunity of economic development is given to all citizens irrespective of religion. India has always belived in

‘Vasudhevkutumbkam’ and it is in practice from ancient times. This philosophy will further strengthen the flow of globalization with acceptance of secularism at global level and an Indian citizen can easily set an example for ideal international citizen.

The philosophy of secularism can develop the feeling of brotherhood and co-operation among citizens and can protect human rights. These are fundamental requirements for universal peace and co-existence.

The development of Information Technology and globalization has crossed the state boundaries and universal state has been created. But at the same time we should not forget international politics. The invention of long range missiles and automatic weapons have made our borders with Pakistan and China more vulnerable. There is a great threat to our national security. Also the extremists and militants are creating problems in the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. These militants are getting support from our neighboring countries. In such a situation internal security, peace and unity become issue of grave concern. For internal strength of our country, the co-operation between various groups, tolerance and feeling of brotherhood are not only necessary but also required to be further strengthened. This can only be achieved through secularism and hence secularism is a need of present time.

EXERCISE

1. Answer the following questions in detail :

- (1) What is a Nation ? Explain difference between a State and a Nation.
- (2) What is Nationalism ? Explain the characteristics of Nationalism.
- (3) Write the meaning of Secularism and explain the need for Secularism.
- (4) Explain the concept of Secularism in India.

2. Write short notes on the following :

- (1) Concept of State
- (2) Characteristics of Nationalism
- (3) Importance of Secularism in present time.
- (4) Secularism in Context to Globalisation
- (5) Secularism in Context to India.

3. Write the correct option in the given box :

- (1) The word nation which is used for nationalism is derived from which language
(a) Urdu (b) Latin (c) French (d) Italian ☐
- (2) Who said that when there is a feeling among the people that we are all one, a nation gets created.
(a) Lord Curzon (b) Lord Rippen ☐
(c) Lord Brice (d) Lord Mount Batten

(3) The concept of secularism

(a) Historical event

(b) Controversial event

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(c) Medieval event

(d) Modern event

(4) When the concept of secularism become of international importance

(a) Between 17th and 18th century

(b) Between 12th and 13th century

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(c) Between 9th and 10th century

(d) Between 4th and 5th century

(5) By which Article the word 'Secularism' was introduced in Indian constitution

(a) 40th

(b) 35th

(c) 45th

(d) 42nd

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Activity

- Prepare a Chart Showing Secularism.
- Arrange street play to promote National Unity.

