

RELIGION AND THE INFLUENCE IT HAS ON A STATE

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ABSTRACT

When you are given a single ingredient, you can't cook a good dish. But when you are given a range of ingredients to choose from, you cook a delicacy. Similar is the state of a nation, where religion is diverse. Religion makes diversity, a code for prosperity, through unity. The question is, when state endorses a religion, how does the goals of development change. The ultimate goal of a state must be to protect the sentiments and values of its citizens. Prosperity cannot be achieved with oppressed citizens and therefore, a state must be secular in its approach towards religion. Religion has a great role to play within and beyond borders. A secular country better fares in these areas because of its diversity. Even though religious states accept people of other religions, it puts them in a dark spot with regard to people in general because of their inclination towards a particular religion. The paper focuses on why Uniform Civil Code would not be a practical possibility in India among other things. However, if implemented, religion based or caste based reservations must also be abolished since, the main agenda of the Code would be Uniformity and equality. Indian secularism, cannot be accepted as a definition or a model for secularism. The secularism practiced in India, suits the social, political and administrative life of its citizens.

The paper focuses upon why being secular is important for India and the influence religion has in different matters of India, as a state.

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INTRODUCTION

“I do not expect India of my dreams to develop one religion, i.e., to be wholly Hindu or wholly Christian or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another.” ~Mahatma Gandhi.

Secularism has always claimed its title as the pillar and success of modernity. Increasing structural differentiation of social spaces resulting in the separation of religion from politics, economy, science, and so forth; the privatization of religion within its own sphere; and the declining social significance of religious belief, commitment, and institutions¹ would make secularism a believable phenomenon, that would construe the promise of equality. Therefore, normatively, in order for a society to be modern, it has to be secular and for it to be secular, it has to relegate religion to non-political spaces because that arrangement is essential to modern society². However, in the present day scenario, the privatization of religion within its own sphere is not a possibility in any state. Even though it is being practiced in different countries, it takes place against a background of continuing vitality in religious organizations that demand obedience to objective and external sources of authority³. This has become a curse for the practical development of secularism.

Religion is a very powerful emotional phenomenon that motivates any individual in their daily endeavour. However, when it affects a nation, the state has to choose to be either free and secular in its arrangements or to choose and follow the principles of a religion. The paper, takes religion as this force which has the ability to decide the most important factors concerning a state. India is at a stage, wherein with the disturbance caused by the Uniform Civil Code, non-secular political parties that create vote banks using religion as their force, and all those youth joining the ISIS for Khilafat, are a threat to the basic structure doctrine⁴ established by the Supreme Court of India. The paper compares different aspects of secular states and non-secular states, just to prove that

¹ Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

² *Id.*

³ James A. Beckford, *The Return of Public Religion? A Critical Assessment of A Popular Claim*, 23(2) Nordic J Religion and Society 121 (2010)

⁴ *Kesavananda Bharati Sripadagalvaru and Ors. v. State of Kerala and Anr.*, (1973) 4 SCC 225

this secular form of India is the most incredible phenomenon given to us by the constitution makers and to ruin that secularity would be the end of India as a nation.

Comparing secular and religious states

Let us start with education. Education is what builds the next generation of a country. More knowledge a person has, more wide his perception is. It brings an empty mind with discourse tongue of awareness. However, when this education is cursed for being one-sided, or not complete, you are stuck with being a frog-in-the-well for the rest of the life. The same thing happens with education in religious countries. Taking Pakistan as an example, the literacy rates of Pakistan is less than other developing countries⁵ because of the religious bias which the ministry is showing towards the non-Islamic people. The increased focus on Madrasah schools, which only provide religious education despising western education, have degraded Pakistan's education levels alarmingly⁶. The case being contested by Pakistani government is that the religion gets to choose what to teach, whom to teach and how much to teach. This multi-educational policies of a religious country is bound to procure chaos and irregularity in education of its population. In a secular state like India, religion does not decide what to teach⁷. It just makes sure everyone gets a chance to learn what religion is all about and not mix it up in their social democratic political life by virtue of Articles 25-28 in the Constitution of India⁸. Each religious sects have the right to administer their own institutions. Although there can be reservations, the institution must be open to students of all religion, gender, caste and other differences⁹.

Moving onto the second aspect, women empowerment in terms of a religious state is minimal. Taking into consideration, Saudi Arabia, a country with a great economy and good standards of living. The moral policing according to the Sharia law results in lesser freedoms for women¹⁰. In Riyadh each and every women are bound to wear a purdha when they are in front of the public despite their religion¹¹.

⁵UNESCO, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, (June, 2013), *Adult and Youth Literacy, National, Regional and Global Trends, 1985-2015*, <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/literacy-statistics-trends-1985-2015.pdf>

⁶ USCIRF, *Teaching Intolerance in Pakistan-Religious Bias in Public School Textbooks*, http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF_Pakistan_FINALonline.pdf

⁷ *D.A.V.College, Jalandhar v. State of Punjab*, AIR 1971 SC 1737

⁸ IND CONST., art 25, 26, 27, 28.

⁹ *Indira Sawhney v. Union of India*, AIR 1993 SC 477

¹⁰ Yahya Al Alhareth, Yasra Al Alhareth, and Ibtisam Al Dighrir, "Review of Women and Society in Saudi Arabia." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2015): 121-125. doi: 10.12691/education-3-2-3.

¹¹ *Id.*

Any instances of that in a secular country would be taken up at an international stage. International debates regarding women empowerment and rights of women would follow. Dr. Merve Kavakci¹², who, despite being elected as a member of parliament in Turkey, was prevented from serving her term in the parliament, for wearing the hijab. This incident, is still being tackled by human rights activists world-wide. Then again there are women who are prevented from playing professional sports because they wore the hijab¹³. FIFA, later, overturned its ban brought in 2007, on women playing football with their heads covered¹⁴. Secularism instead of preventing people from practicing religion, should find out a way where each religion and its customs can co-exist. Where religious countries in tandem with their religious views prevent women to be educated¹⁵, secular countries promote education as a sign of development.

Whether in its own right or as a proxy for political battles, religion has long contributed to violent conflict around the world¹⁶. Pakistan ranks the worst in the world in religious freedom according to the U.S Commission On International Religious Freedom in its annual report¹⁷. Violations reached unprecedented levels because the government failed to protect Christians, Ahmadis and Hindus from the tyranny of Muslim majority. Situation may not be the best in secular states either wherein communal riots and religious massacres can always be a nightmare. More than 1,000 persons, mostly Muslims, were massacred during the post-Godhra riots in Gujarat in 2002. The surviving members of many of these families could not go back to the villages in which they lived¹⁸. However, people in a secular country always have the hope of being served justice at all costs. When the judiciary is independent of any religious views, the citizens can have the promise of justice to be assured. A secular country strictly follows the maxim '*Fiat Justilia Ruet Coelum*'¹⁹.

¹² AFP, *Female MP'S attend Turkey Parliament in Headscarves*, THE TELEGRAPH, 31, October 2013.

¹³Shireen Ahmed, *Stadiums are Still Closed to Women in Iran*, VICE SPORTS, 5, October 2015.

¹⁴ Homa Khaleeli, *Sports Hijabs to Help Muslim Women to Olympic Success*, THE GUARDIAN, 23, JULY 2012.

¹⁵ UNESCO, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, (June, 2013), *Adult and Youth Literacy, National, Regional and Global Trends, 1985-2015*, <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/literacy-statistics-trends-1985-2015.pdf>

¹⁶ Silvestri, S. and Mayall, J. (2015). *The role of religion in conflict and peace building*. London, UK: British Academy. <http://www.britac.ac.uk/news/news.cfm/newsid/1324>

¹⁷ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, *2016 Annual Report*, <http://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/USCIRF%202016%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

¹⁸ EDITORIAL, *Justice Will be Done*, THE HINDU, 11, April, 2012

¹⁹ Dr. Justice B.S. Chauhan, *Courts and its Endeavor to do Complete Justice*, <http://www.nja.nic.in/17%20Complete%20Justice.pdf>

When it comes to judiciary and law protection system of a religious state, it is not the proper equity that is provided, but the religious views are served. The salient feature of the Pakistani Constitution that “recognizes Islam as a ground norm or a fundamental norm” is not open to changes²⁰. Unfortunately, Pakistani judiciary due to its inconsistent approach to resolve vital issues at vital times in the history of that country, does not inspire much confidence among activists and minority communities, even after the Chief Justice of Pakistan opening up the question of secularism in Pakistan²¹. When the laws of the country and the constitution itself is framed to be in favour of a single religion, it needs more than a precedent to change a fundamental concept. In a secular state, religion does not have any say in deciding the provisions of justice. As can be seen in the law protection system of India, which does not favour any single religion and aims at giving equality to all the citizens by law and equal protection of law²².

The role of religion in international relations and its relationship with conflict and with peace building is increasingly acknowledged as Governmental and international organizations are increasingly willing to examine religion and incorporate it, to some degree, when addressing emerging challenges across a number of domestic and international policy areas for easy formulations of ties between countries²³. A secular country better fares in these areas because of its diversity. A state with a single religion may not be aware about the sentiments of another religion and as in domestic matters, they may neither care about other religions globally as even though religious states accept people of other religions, it puts them in a dark spot with regard to people in general because of the non-secular image protruding in the market²⁴.

Dr. Phil Zuckerman has contributed to the discussions that democratic nations today that are most secular, such as Scandinavia, Japan, Australia, the Netherlands, etc, are faring much better on nearly every single indicator of well-being imaginable than the most religious nations on earth today such as Pakistan, Jamaica, El Salvador, Malawi, and others²⁵. If declining levels of religiosity were the main cause of social ills, we should expect those countries that are now the least religious to have the greatest

²⁰ PAK CONST., preamble, art. 2

²¹ *Can Islamic Republic of Pakistan be a Secular State?*, THE HINDU, 6, May, 2015

²² IND CONST., art. 14, 15.

²³ Smock, D. (2006). Introduction. In: *Religious Contributions to Peacemaking. When Religion Brings Peace, Not War* (ed. Smock, D.) Washington DC, USA: US Institute of Peace.
<http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PWJan2006.pdf>

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Dr. Phil Zuckerman, SOCIETY WITHOUT GOD, (New York University Press, 2010)

problems. However, the reverse is true. The non-profit organization called Vision of Humanity publishes an annual “Global Peace Index”, and according to their rankings the most peaceful nations are those that are secular while the least peaceful are those which are the most religious and non-secular²⁶.

Thus taking into account all the above parameters, it would be wise to say that secular countries fare much better in the present day world scenario. Each of the most religious countries is relatively poor, compared to the secular counterparts²⁷. This reflects the strong relationship between a country’s socioeconomic status and religiosity of its residents.

Attempted definitions of Secularism

Secularism as a doctrine was first used by George Holyoake. He did not just coin the term ‘secularism’, but also defined it as that morality which should be based solely on regard to the well being of mankind in the present life to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or in a future state²⁸, or in other words, that the affairs of this world should not be governed or guided by religious doctrines or considerations of other worldliness. According to Thomas Jefferson, secularism is a ‘wall of separation between the Church and State’²⁹. India has been defined as a secular state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion³⁰.

A secular country, does not separate or diminish religion, but protects and promotes the ability of citizens to practice a variety of faith. However, the state must still construct some minimal definition of religion or religious practice in order to determine when it will avoid the religious domain and when it

²⁶ Institute for Economics and Peace, *Global Peace Index, Quantifying peace and its benefits*, http://static.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/GPI%202016%20Report_2.pdf

²⁷ *List of Countries by GDP (PPP)*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_\(PPP\)_per_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita) (18 November 2016, 02:41pm)

²⁸ Holyoake, George Jacob Holyoake, *The Origin and Nature of Secularism Showing That Where Free thought Commonly Ends Secularism Begins*. London: Watts, 1896. <http://books.google.com/books?id=WnxPAAAAyAAJ>

²⁹ *Separation of Church and State in the United States*, WIKIPEDIA, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Separation_of_church_and_state_in_the_United_States, (24 November 2016, 04:17am)

³⁰ E Donald Smith, *India as a Secular State*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1963

will override religion for state purposes (e.g., French prohibition of religious symbols in schools)³¹. India has not developed a proper and an acceptable definition for secularism despite being a diverse country in terms of religion, although there have been various attempts at pointing out the essential parts of secularism. Religious tolerance and equal treatment of all religious groups and protection of their life and property and of the places of their worship are an essential part of secularism³².

Each religious practices evolved and developed due the need at the time. With time, necessities of the religious followers, as well as the needs of the times change. Therefore, with time religious practices also need to change. As a society, no person should have the audacity to criticize these practices picking out certain religious customs. If the religious practices are not relevant in the present times it should be changed with the consent of the religion, its heads and a major group of the population for the peaceful administration of the state.

The Uniform Civil Code

The uproar with regard to the Uniform Civil Code, has questioned validity of certain practices like the triple talaq and polygamy. There are many who contend that instant divorce is not allowed, and that the triple talaq has to be spread over a specified time period, during which there are two opportunities to revoke it. Only the articulation of the third talaq makes it irrevocable³³. On the part of the court, it should be possible to test these practices for compliance with the Constitutional provisions before taking any decisions and on the part of the religious heads of Islam, it should be sought that whether the women have any such measures against the husbands. Again, polygamy was advised by Prophet Mohammed because at the time, there were lesser men for the women to marry as most men had shed their life and blood in the war³⁴. However, that is not the case today. The number of children the husband will have with each wife needs to be taken into consideration, the welfare of each child and its rights, family planning and budgeting is affected and thus the economy will be affected and the needs of each of these children has to be fulfilled by the state.

³¹ Gidon Sapir, *Religion and State a Fresh Theoretical Start*, Notre Dame L. Rev. 101, 104-105, 1999

³² *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, AIR 1994 SC 1918

³³ Editorial, *Personal Laws and the Constitution*, THE HINDU, October 19,2016.

³⁴ Sayyid Mohammad Rizvi, *The Concept of Polygamy and the Prophets Marriages*, <https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/17503>

Most religious practices, from the point of view of fundamental rights of those affected, mostly women, has a strong case of their invalidation. This is where a Uniform Civil Code applicable to all, would promote national unity. Since Uniform Civil Code is a directive principle, it is not necessary to implement it hurting religious sentiments. True, however, where in a free play of social forces it is not possible to bring about a voluntary harmony, the state has to step in to set right the imbalance between competing forces³⁵. The idea that personal laws of religions should be beyond the scope of judicial review, and that they are not subject to the Constitution, is inherently abhorrent. These practices by and large are an appalling summary of the patriarchal notions entrenched in conservative sections of society.

Uniform Civil Code would be a thought provoking step towards the strengthening of the secular feature of India and much of the separation and divisiveness between various religious groups in the country will disappear paving to a much more cohesive and integrated nation³⁶. Till now in a number of cases, the Supreme Court has been invited to declare certain aspects of Personal Laws in India as void as under Articles 14 and 15. But the court refused to do so saying that the issues raised were fit to be dealt with by the legislature and not the courts³⁷. Nevertheless, the Court has continued to emphasize that a common civil code will help the cause of national integration by removing the contradiction based on ideologies³⁸.

However, Uniform Civil Code in India is still a remote possibility as the time is still not ripe to implement such a National Code that will be binding each and every religion and all their practices. India has a many religion and to implement a Code that includes the interests and sentiments of each and every religion and sub- castes would be a daunting task. The implementation must also be done on such a scale which would not be a disadvantage to the personal laws of each religion. Most religious groups in India are a minority. The Code would have to ensure that the provisions included would not be against the customs observed by these minority groups over years. Also it would be prudent not to disturb the religious personal laws and traditions as they are settled over the years and disturbing them would amount to a large interruption in the lives of people across the country who are following the

³⁵ *Acharya Maharajshri Narendra Prasadji Anand Prasadji Maharaj v. State of Gujarat*, AIR 1974 SC 2098

³⁶ See *Ms. Jordan Diengdeh v. S.S. Chopra*, AIR 1985 SC 934

³⁷ *Ahmedabad Women Action Group v. Union of India*, AIR 1997 SC 3614

³⁸ *John Vallamattom v. Union of India*, (2003) 6 SCC 611

same traditions from generations and ages. It is impossible to decide which one law would suit each and every religion equally. Taking the example of marriage, India has separate laws for marriage for each religion and it also has a Special Marriage Act, that can be followed by persons from any religion. People still prefer their personal laws for marriage over the unified one. There was implementation, and proper planning in the above case. However, the statute is still ignored by majority of Indians because of their attachment towards their personal laws and the same would be the fate of the Uniform Civil Code, if implemented.

Not only will there be disruption in administration, there would be a violent atmosphere across the country because India is still not free from communal feelings and riots. It is easy to say that the law must prevail over personal sentiments of the citizens and must be followed by each individual. However, it would not be possible in a country where there are various religions and except for a few, each religion comes under the heading of minority and is eligible for reservations. If Uniform Civil Code is implemented, it would be a journey headed towards a goal, without knowing which path to undertake. When the path itself is unknown, what is the use of achieving the target sought.

The distinction between practices essential or integral to a particular religion, which are protected under Article 25, a provision that seeks to preserve the freedom to practice, and propagate any religion, and those that go against the concepts of equality and dignity, which are fundamental rights, is something that the courts will have to carefully evaluate while adjudicating the validity of Muslim practices or for that matter, any religious practice under challenge.

Most religious practices, from the point of view of fundamental rights of those affected, mostly women, there is a strong case of their invalidation. The idea that personal laws of religions should be beyond the scope of judicial review, and that they are not subject to the Constitution, is inherently abhorrent. These practices by and large are an appalling summary of the patriarchal notions entrenched in conservative sections of society.

Uniform Civil Code is not an achievable goal now, however, it can be possibility at a later stage. What can be done is that instead imposing a Uniform Civil Code at once, small and even changes should be brought in personal laws of each religion. The aim must be to lessen the disparity among religions. Small reforms in the interest of gender equality, women empowerment, property succession, divorce and adoptions will empower even the smallest minority. The existing laws must be strengthened and

justice should be provided equally. Even if implemented, the citizens must be given an option to choose from either personal laws or the UCC. Unless we build a strong platform in the form of personal laws, it would be hard for the Uniform Civil Code to stand alone.

Religion and reservations

Similarly if Uniform Civil Code is brought into force, reservations to minority religious sections also need to be revoked since equality is the primary concern. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's thoughts with regard to reservation was that, for the successful working of a democracy, there must be no glaring inequalities in the society. There must not be a class which has got all the privileges and a class which has got all the burdens to carry³⁹. The reservations or the protective discrimination, has undergone what Marc Glanter prefers to call crude summarization "as development at the upper end, and stagnation at the bottom"⁴⁰. For reservations, according to Desai J., the only criterion which can be realistically devised is the one of economic backwardness. Adoption of an economic criterion would translate into reality two constitutional goals: one, to strike at the perpetuation of the caste stratification of the Indian society and to take a firm step towards establishing a casteless society; and two, to progressively eliminate poverty⁴¹. This approach again would be an add-on to the secular front of the country. However, the position adopted by the Supreme Court in *Indira Sawhney v. Union of India*⁴² is apt.

Rather than the argument that the Indian state promotes secularism through contributing to each religion, the no-aid-to-religion principle in the Indian context, more effectively safeguards the individual rights of women and of minorities, and encourages tolerant attitudes in civil society. It is culture rather than religion, that has bound different communities together. Far from developing clear cut frontiers between them, Hindu and Muslim practices often blurred into each other in the subcontinent as a whole. And yet, the religious identity of people is often believed to count, more than anything else⁴³.

³⁹ "Thus Spoke Ambedkar", vol.1, p. 48 (L.R. Balley (Ed.) Thoughts of Ambedkar, 1989, Bheem Patrika Publication, Jalandhar, p.31).

⁴⁰ Marc Glanter, *Competing Equalities*, p. 529

⁴¹ *K.C. Vasanth Kumar v. State of Karnataka*, AIR 1985 SC 1495

⁴² *Supra*, n.8

⁴³ NALINI RAJAN, SECULARISM, DEMOCRACY, JUSTICE, IMPLICATIONS OF RAWLSIAN PRINCIPLES IN INDIA 68-71,(1st ed 1998).

Secularism as a Religion

Also, since secularism loosely means separation of religion from state⁴⁴, the upraise of secularism and worshipping state or the idea of nationalism itself as a religion would be equally harmful, as again it would create separation in the society but again with the back-up of the state. According to Carlton Hayes, nationalism as a whole is the latest and the nearest approach to a world religion⁴⁵. A pattern of sentiments, beliefs and ceremonial activities can be attached to the feeling of nationalism as well, which may pave way to a 'new religiosity'⁴⁶. However, this again can be a hazard and can be seen from the social movements like Nazism and Communism as pointed out by Julian Huxley⁴⁷; although he does not address the issue of nationalism directly. In India, Hinduism is 'a way of life'⁴⁸ and an ideology for nationalism. However, it should not be misconstrued for supporting the 'Hindu' religion. The nationalism termed 'Hinduism' would only be a problem, if it promotes the Hindu religion alone and thus, would not pave way for any secular movement. Therefore, instead of just promoting the term 'hinduism', the practical side of such way of life should be promoted. Practices like yoga, ayurvedic treatment and such other aesthetic ways of life should be promoted first and then the idea of the term 'Hinduism' should be attached to it, which should altogether be different from the religion.

Religion as a stepping stone to the future

Religion, in a diverse society like India should pave way for a healthy conversation and should indulge in making way to peace and integration in the society. Instead of indulging people more towards it, it should help them look more towards the scientific and rational approach in life. It should attempt to promote rationalism, scientific attitude and humanistic outlook in the society. Instead of hampering the development and progress of its followers, religions themselves should change outlook, with the changing times. Instead of providing for an element of identity which promotes inner-group conflicts by dividing people along religious lines, religions together should promote national integration. In the inner minds of each individual, they might wish to belong to some other religion because of the differences between the religions. It is these differences that the religions should seek to diminish. It

⁴⁴Secularity, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularity>, (26 July 2016, 03:14pm)

⁴⁵ C. J. H. Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism*, New York, 1926, cited in John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843—iptf*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 16.

⁴⁶ See Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992

⁴⁷ Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation*, London: Watts and Co., Abridged Ed., 1941, p. viii.

⁴⁸ *Bramchari Sidheswar Bhai & Ors. etc.v. State of West Bengal*, AIR 1995 SC 2089

should make sure that each individual is given due respect and an equal treatment in all terms of living and lifestyle. The government instead of keeping state and religion totally different must design policies which would make use of these faith communities and inter-faith co-operation for the purpose of promoting social cohesion and public security. In times of despair and chaos all over the country the different faith of various people should bind the nation as one. The present notion of secularism in India might not be a utopian one. However, this form of secularism practiced by India since time immemorial, and is the pillar of the Indian society. Every religion has certain customs and practices that are inseparable from its personal laws. However, those practices and customs do not interfere with the lives of people practicing other religion. Even if such an interference happens, life in India has evolved around. Unless we acknowledge the fact that religion always plays a greater role in the growing stages and life of each and every individual in India, we would not be able to setup a proper social life here. No other force in has greater access to the people in India than religion. religion can be the cause for the betterment and the worsening of the present social situations in India. It depends on how the administration uses it and how the population accepts it.

CONCLUSION

For a state to be secular, it is not necessary that the people should be anti- religious. However, it would help if the religious sentiments are kept private and are expressed in a way which do not obstruct the assurance of justice. Throughout the paper, an attempt to make a true definition of secularism has not been made, although it tries to convey why the religions should make it their concern to keep India, as secular as possible. The religious sentiments of each religion is in tandem to each other. However, it is the interpretations that cause ripples in the society. Indian secularism has never been a utopian form of secularism. Instead of supporting the rise of a single religion or the oppression by a majority religion, citizens should chose state to be a secular entity. Each person at the end of the day might chose to be identified with respect to his religion, sect, caste, gender or other relevant criteria, but globally, he will be identified with regard to his country. Therefore it is the idea of the state that each person should choose to protect. However, if Uniform Civil Code is the solution to making a person choose nationality over religion, the whole stability of the current Indian social scenario will be disturbed. Thus instead of taking a head-on take on the UCC, it would be more tactical if steps are taken to ensure

that personal laws are in tandem with human rights and fundamental right of each citizen. Once such an equality is ensured and enforced, the UCC can be made a statute to be implemented at a later date.

Religion and religious institutions must pave way for a rational thinking in the society, because what is at stake is India's diversity in terms of religious practices, traditions and customs and unless they are updated and developed according to the century and times we are living in, we risk the death of these age old practices and traditions.

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