

# SECULARISM: THE INDIAN CONTEXT

**RANJAN KUMAR RAY**

**Secularism is opposed** to all forms of institutionalised religious domination. It challenges not only inter-religious domination but intra-religious domination also. It promotes freedom within religions and promotes equality between religions. India is a land of picturesque beauty, the land of diversities, the land of various cultures and styles, which fill the hearts of every citizen with pride. The name 'India' owes its etymology to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization of 3300-1300 B.C. Indian society is a multi-cultural society and the same is enshrined in our Constitution, as it provides right to freedom of religion as a fundamental right which is guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution.

The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 brought the concept of 'Secularism', which was included in the Preamble. Such a significant inclusion strengthened its commitment to the ideals. The Supreme Court of India once in the famous case of *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, observed that religious tolerance among people of every religion and protection of places of their worship form the basic essence of secularism as enshrined in our Constitution.

India is a fascinating country where different faiths and patterns co-habit side by side. However, for a skeptic mind it is very difficult to accept it unless it is proved. Therefore, to corroborate it with certain instances, it can be seen that from Adi Shankaracharya to Swami Vivekananda and presently, various spiritual leaders namely Sadh guru, Jaggi Vasudev, Sri Sri Ravishankar, the Dalai Lama and so on, have been playing the most efficient role in the world's spiritual enlightenment. There is complete acceptance of spirituality in various forms in our country.

Secondly, our 'Indiana Sanskriti' or 'Indian Culture' is one of the old-

**India is a fascinating country where different faiths and patterns co-habit side by side. To corroborate it with certain instances, it can be seen that various spiritual leaders have been playing the most efficient role in the world's spiritual enlightenment**

est civilizations, which is believed to have begun about 4500 years ago. Because of population diversity there is immense variety in Indian culture. And this is the only reason why India is the birthplace of four major world religions, namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and a heaven for several more.

The nation has been marked as not only the land of sages but also the origin of great thinkers and reformists who have extended and distributed the true message of God across the world.

Lastly, it is to be mentioned that India is an agrarian country and a majority of the population is mostly connected with agriculture. Due to its agricultural potential and riches, India becomes one of the centers of human population and civilization from very ancient times which also



attracted various foreigners and thus they came to India. The foreigners those who came for business were easily able to integrate themselves into Indian culture and over a period of time became an integral part of our Indian society. The nation and its culture have greatly touched all those who have visited our land and left an indelible impression throughout the globe.

There is a reason why even after being brutally ruled and left as a fis-

cal disaster by the British Raj, India again stood up and blossomed. The reason is nothing but our spirit of fraternity. Hence, all these played an important role in the culmination of multi-cultural and religious diversity in one land, called India. Unity in diversity is the main essence of Indian culture. She is disarmingly tolerant.

The author is a student, BA (LLB), Semester-VIII, Indian Institute of Legal Studies, Siliguri

