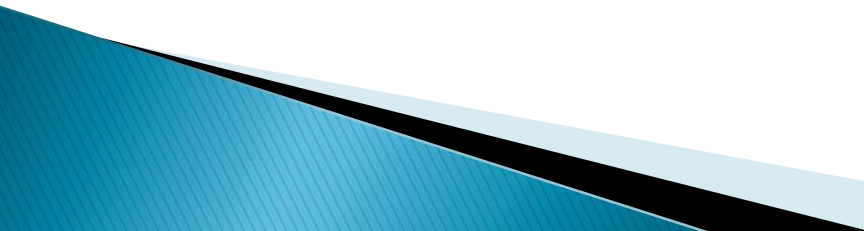


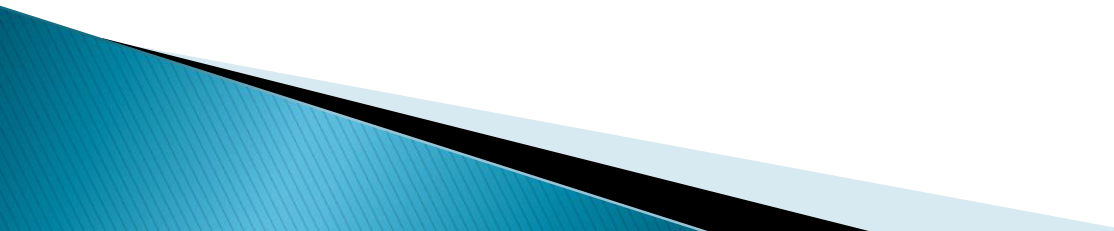
SECULARISM

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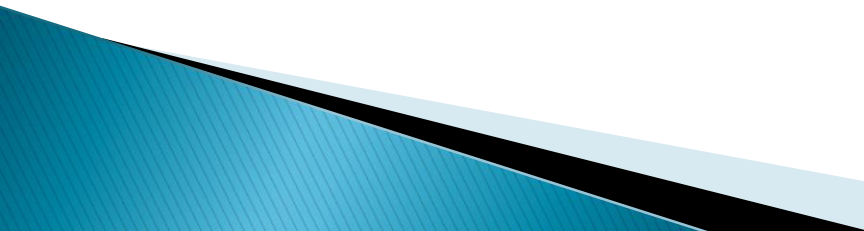
Introduction:

- ▶ The term secularism is derived from the word '**Seculum**' which means this age/world.
 - ▶ It means pertaining to this world or disassociation from religion or religious teachings.
 - ▶ The word 'secularism' was developed by the efforts of **George Jacob Holyoke**.
 - ▶ To some it means **the separation of the state from the church**.
 - ▶ To others it means the freedom of worship and religion.
 - ▶ It sustains pluralism and is against homogenization or uniformity.
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Meaning:

- ▶ Secularism is “a system of ethical principles.”
–**Jacob Holyoke.**
 - ▶ Secularism neither means absence of religion nor support for religion but freedom to practice any religion of one’s choice. **The state is neutral towards all religions, treating all religious communities equally.**
 - ▶ It is different from a theocratic state and there is no state or official religion.
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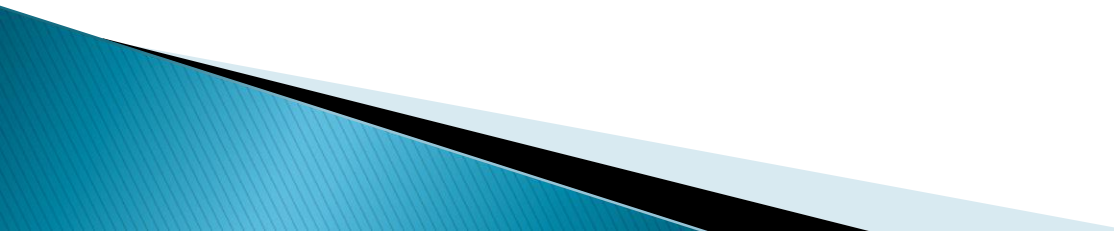
Essential characteristics of secularism:

1. It stands for **pluralism & difference** in all areas of life.
 2. It believes in **different paths to spiritual quest.**
 3. It stands for **religious freedom**, all religions are treated equally by the state & is closely connected to democracy.
 4. It implies separation of the state and religion and **equal rights of the citizens.**
 5. **Secularism is a way of life.**
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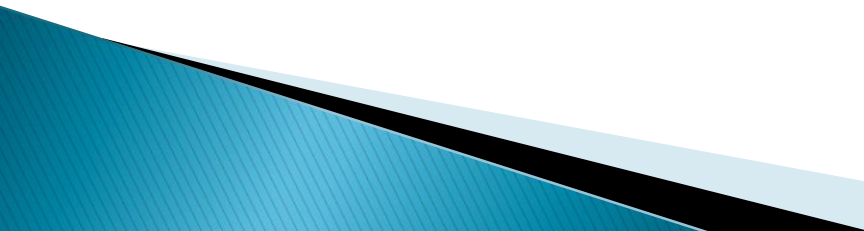
Importance of Secularism:

- ▶ The importance secularism as an ideology in multicultural states like India is greater for a good understanding between peoples and communities to lead happy an peaceful life.
- ▶ The importance of secularism as an ideology may be listed as follows–
 1. **Promotes equality:** the concept of secularism treats people belonging to different religions equally without any differentiations. People belonging to any religion are given similar opportunities for development. Thus the practice of secularism brings about equality with in a state.

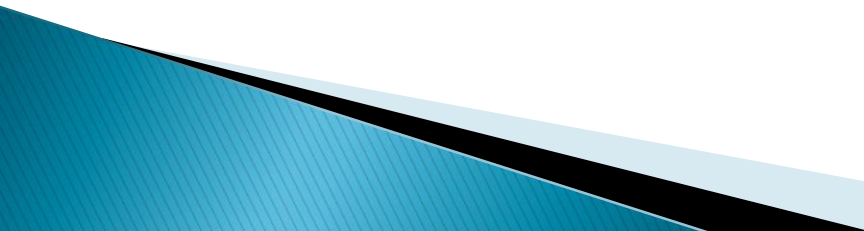
2. It leads to Stability:

- ▶ In state practicing secularism, all the people enjoy equal opportunities to make progress which leads to happiness and stability.
 - ▶ As a result, nationalism get strengthened and the country makes all round progress in all fields.
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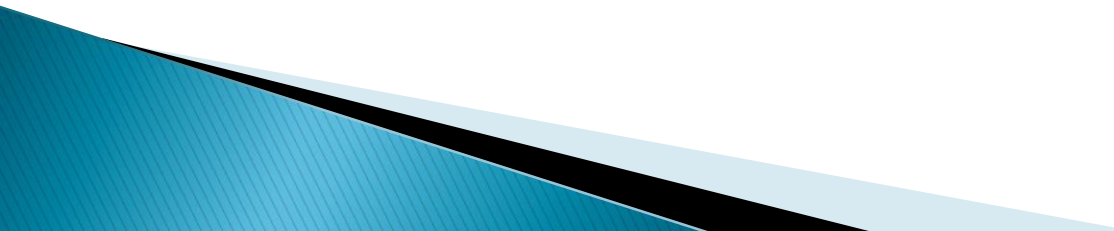
3. Promotes national integration and unity:

- ▶ The concept of secularism tends to reduce religious conflicts since the people enjoy the freedom to practice any religion of their choice.
 - ▶ As a result secularism brings about a peaceful atmosphere in the state creating a sense of tolerance among the people.
 - ▶ This kind of tolerance is necessary to promote national integration and national unity within a state.
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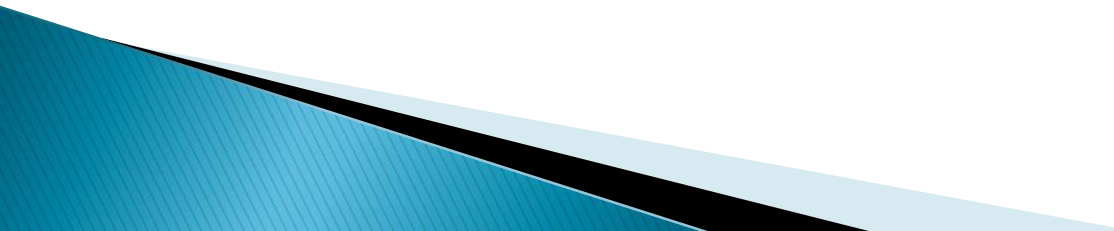
4. Prevent violent conflicts:

- ▶ The concept of secularism does not allow the members of any religious community to feel insecure.
 - ▶ So they tend to develop positive feelings and attitudes towards the members of other communities which promotes the feeling of fraternity.
 - ▶ This feeling is absolutely essential to prevent violent conflicts based on intolerance of religion.
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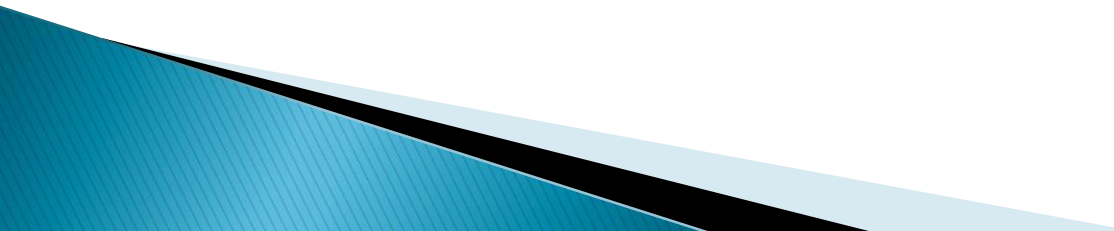
5. It sharpens thinking and rationality:

- ▶ Freedom of religion given to individuals in secularism tends to promote individualism.
 - ▶ Every man takes independent decisions in relation to religion which tends to sharpen his thinking and rationality.
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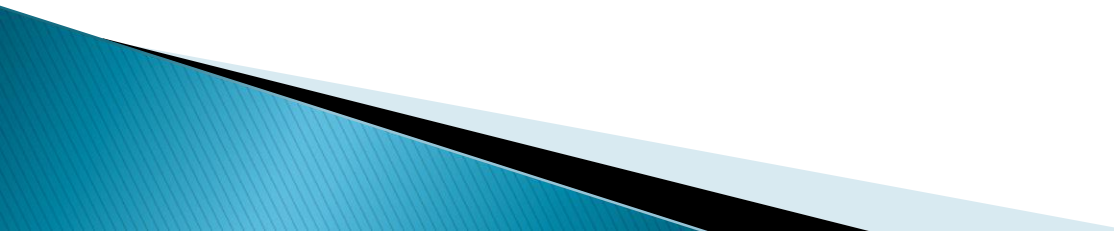
6. Leads to unity in diversity:

- ▶ Unity in diversity is possible only with the adoption of secularism.
 - ▶ For countries like India, secularism is most suitable due to its vast diversity.
 - ▶ Religious sentiments are not hurt as the state has no religion in India.
 - ▶ In fact democracy is meaningful and effective only with the adoption of secularism
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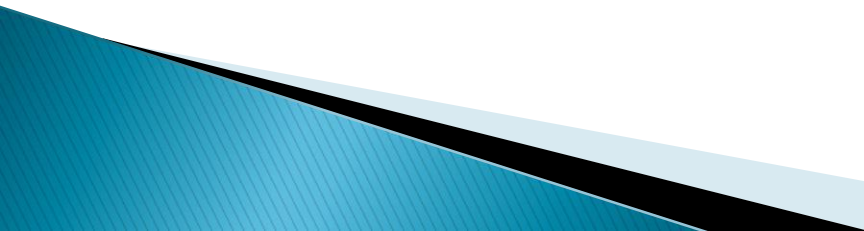
Concept of Secular State:

- ▶ The idea of a secular state was put forward by Marsilius Padua in the 14th century.
 - ▶ In his famous book 'Defensor Pacis' he wrote "the rights of the citizens are independent of the faith they profess, and no man may be punished for his religion."
 - ▶ The liberal tradition of Western democratic nations consider the secular state not hostile to religion but neutral in matters of religion.
 - ▶ But in the communist tradition, the state shows open hostility to religion.
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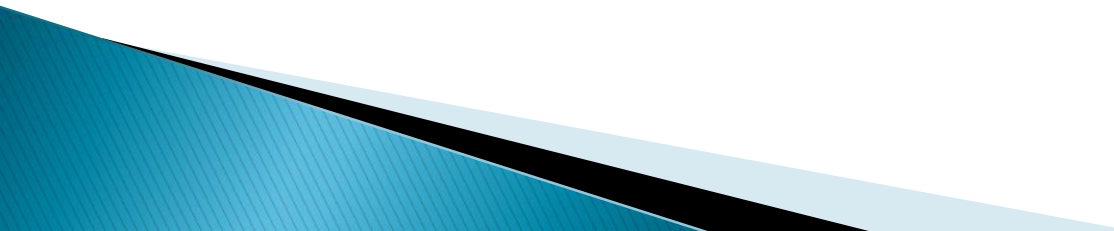
Features of a secular state:

- ▶ Any secular state is required to possess the following features –
 1. In a secular state there is the **absence of state religion**.
 2. It extends **complete freedom of religion** to all its citizens.
 3. A secular state **treats all its citizens as equal before law** irrespective of their religious faith. It does not discriminate against any citizen in matters of public employment on the ground of religion.
 4. Religion and spirituality is left to the concern of individual citizen. The state does not interfere in these matters.
 5. A secular state is guided by its desire to promote the welfare of its citizens as well as the happiness of the maximum number of people.
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Secular provisions in the Indian constitution:

- ▶ India is the only country in the post colonial Asia to have adopted secularism as a key feature of her constitution to aid in the nation building process – **Dr. Subrata Kumar Mitra.**
 - ▶ Secularism as an ideology guided the framing of the policies of the government of India after her independence.
 - ▶ Secular democracy as contemplated by the constitution of India contains the following provisions –
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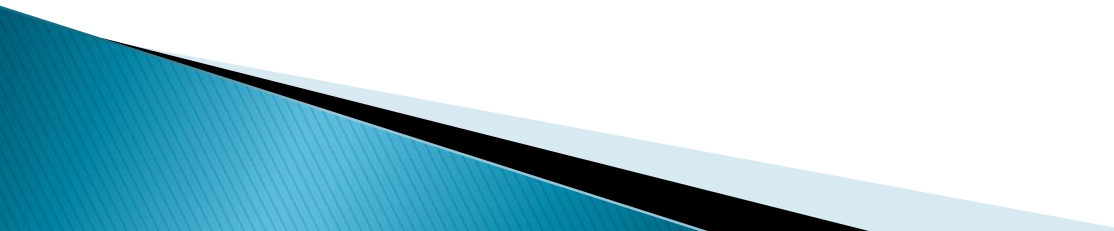
Secular provisions in the constitution of India

1. There is **no state religion of India** or the state will not be controlled by any religion.
 2. The state will **guarantee to everyone** the right to profess whatever religion one chooses to follow.
 3. The state **will not discriminate** against any person on account of his religion or faith, &
 4. The state ensures to every citizen, subject to any general **condition equal opportunities to enter any office under the state.**
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Articles in the Indian Constitution promoting secularism:

1. The **preamble of the Indian constitution** declares India as a secular state and speaks of promoting the liberty of faith, belief and worship.
2. Art. 14 says that the **state shall not deny any person equality before law** or equal protection of law within the territory of India.
3. Art. 15(1) & 15(2) **prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion**, race, etc. with regard to the access to shops, public restaurants hotels and places of public resort wholly or partly maintained out of state funds.

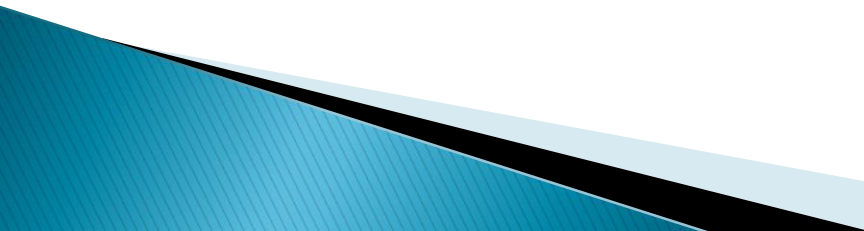
Articles promoting secularism....

4. Art. 16(1) and 16(2) says that no citizens on grounds like religion race or caste can be discriminated against **in matters of public employment** nor can be denied admission to any educational institution wholly or partly maintained by the state.
 5. Art. 25(1) says that all persons are equally entitled to **freedom of conscience** and have the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion.
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Articles promoting secularism.....

6. Art. 26 provides that every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the **right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes**, to manage its own affairs in religious matters, to own and acquire movable and immovable property and administer such property in accordance with law.
7. Art. 27 says that **no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes** on funds collected for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion.
8. Art. 28 provides that **no religious instruction shall be provided compulsorily in any educational institutions** wholly or partly maintained out of state funds.

Articles promoting secularism....

9. Art. 29 & 30 provides that the state shall not impose upon it any culture other than community's own culture and that every community shall have **the right to establish and administer an educational institution of its choice** and the state shall not in granting aid to educational institutions maintained by a minority community on the ground that it is under the management of a religious community.
 10. Art. 325 seeks to promote **single general electoral roll** which is also a part of secularism.
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Articles promoting secularism....

11. Art. 29 (1) seeks to **prevent discrimination based on religion to enter in to any** educational institution maintained by the state funds.
 - ▶ The constitutional provisions relating to the secular state in India has been discussed under 3 heads –
 1. Freedom of religion,
 2. Citizenship &
 3. Separation of state and religion.
 - ▶ The inclusion of all these provisions in the Indian constitution makes India a truly a secular state. In fact it is much more secular than the USA (Basu).

Practice of Secularism in India:

- ▶ In India the term secularism has evoked a huge debate.
 - ▶ There are supporters as well as critics to the doctrine of secularism in the country.
 - ▶ **This was evident in the Constituent Assembly where two attempts have been made to introduce the word 'secular' in the constitution but failed.**
 - ▶ The government of India has done much to implement the ideal of secularism as enshrined in the constitution.
 - ▶ However our present day political leaders are following policies which are bound to undermine the principle of secularism.
 - ▶ Today, the concept is politicised to such a great extent that it remains volatile.
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