

Jawaharlal Nehru(1889- 1964)

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Life and Works:

- Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India and also the architect of modern India was born on November 14, 1889 in a well known Kashmiri Brahmin family.
- He was an Harvard and also Cambridge university product and a lawyer by profession.
- His father Motilal Nehru & Mahatma Gandhi influenced him greatly.
- He was also influenced by Liberal ideology and socialist tradition.
- His role In the national freedom struggle is so great.

His life & works

- Nehru was a humanist, philosopher, writer, intellectual and a statesman.
- After independence, Nehru played remarkable role in building the foundation of a strong democratic, secular and socialist India.
- Some of his great works are –
 1. Glimpses of World History,
 2. Discovery of India, etc.

1. Nehru's Ideas on Secularism:

- Nehru was the greatest champion of Secularism in India.
- His ideas on secularism has greatly helped in the molding of the political and social structure of modern India.
- His ideas on secularism are closely linked to rationalism, science modernity and nationalism.
- Nehru felt that secularism is necessary for India to fight communalism and to achieve individual and social progress.
- His ideas on secularism are largely found in his speeches and his writings.
- His main ideas on secularism may be listed as follows -

1. Secularism as Freedom of Religion:

- According to Nehru secularism means freedom of religion and conscience including freedom for those who may have no religion.
- To him, secularism does not mean atheism nor anti-religion nor irreligion but it means equal respect for all religion and equal opportunities for those who profess any religion or faith.
- His ideas on secularism and religion were a mixture of the East and the West.

2. Secularism is tolerance:

- Another attribute of secularism that Nehru highlights is accepting difference and the spirit of tolerance that infuses it.

3. Secularism as a practical remedy to the problem of religious diversity:

- To Nehru secularism is a practical remedy for the solution to the problem of religious diversity, which was posing a challenge to her unity, harmony and social stability.
- Nehru considered secularism as the territorial nationalism.

4. Secularism as opposite of communalism:

- To him, secularism is the opposite of communalism.
- To him, communalism is the expression of narrow and partisan mind whereas secularism indicated mutual understanding and was broader and non-partisan.

5. Secularism as a way of life:

- Nehru considered secularism as a way of life wherein the minorities and the majorities can live together with the freedom to practice their religion.
- He neither favoured a uniform culture nor separatism.
- His idea of secularism is thus based on the principle of unity in diversity.

6. Secularism is modern and progressive:

- Nehru emphasized economic development as part of secularism which would remove the poverty and bring about development and progress in the country.
- Therefore he considered secularism as modern and progressive.

7. Secularism as a bridge to achieve equality:

- According to Nehru, secularism acted as a bridge between religions in a multireligious country like that of ours to achieve equality.
- Nehru's understanding of secularism is based on political and social equality.

Highlights of Nehruvian

Secularism:

1. His secularism is not atheistic in nature and promotes public order, morality and welfare.
2. The state does not discourage religion but promotes freedom of religion & conscience.
3. It emphasizes the concept of social and political equality.
4. It brings about modernity through social transformation and economic development.
5. His secularism is liberal and ensures religious equality.
6. Thus, Nehru's concept of secularism is both dynamic and an enlightened one.



His Ideas on Socialism: