

Secularism

- Secularism refers to the idea of keeping religion separate from government and public affairs.
- It is based on neutrality towards religion, making people practice their faith freely.
- The concept emerged in context of European societies with legal foundation (modern western secularism) of French secularism since 1905.

→ Manifestations and forms of secularism -

extent of separation of state and religion reflects different forms depending on specific values - Manifesting itself as -

- a) Differentiation - religion will not be all encompassing losing its dominance and becomes a primarily cultural aspect of life.
- b) Privatization - being matter of faith, religious practices confined to domestic / private spaces.
- c) Decline in social significance - presence and influence of religion in public life is minimized reducing its overall social impacts.

Forms of secularism includes -

- a) Soft secularism - emphasize on legal separation of religion and state, promotes religious tolerance and differences, favours political accommodation of religion - in USA (no school prayers
no govt funding for religious institutions)
- b) Hard secularism - advocates strict separation of religion and state, projects hostility towards organized religion - in France (ban on niqabs)
- c) Positive secularism - promotes mutual respect and recognition for all religions
- d) Negative secularism - advocates for non-recognition of any religion by the state

Indian secularism

- Indian constitution declares India a secular state guaranteeing right to freedom of religion (including right not to believe)
- It emphasizes on equal treatment and respect for all religions - public holidays to mark festivals
- The "Sarva Dharma Samabhav" concept is deeply entrenched in Indian living.

Features of Indian Secularism -

- a) Equality for all religions - India has no state religion and government cannot discriminate against citizens based on faith.
- b) Liberal Principles - upholding liberal and egalitarian values by encouraging reforms of discriminatory religious practices.
- c) Modern outlook - based on progressive values, scientific reasoning and tolerance.
- d) State intervention for Harmony - Unlike France India allows state intervention in maintaining religious peace and social order.
- e) Constitutionally Enshrined - the Supreme Court has recognized secularism as basic feature of constitution.
Constitutional Provisions - Freedom of religion is a Fundamental Right - guaranteed through

- Art. 25 - guarantees freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.
- Art. 26 - every religious denomination has the freedom to manage its religious affairs.
- Art. 27 - freedom from payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion.
- Art. 28 - freedom as to attendance at religious instruction, worship in certain edu. institutions

Distinction between Indian and Western Secularism

	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Secularism Western</u>
Meaning →	equal treatment of all religions and no discrimination between followers of different religions	freedom of religion for all people with complete separation between state and religion.
Code of Law →	is unequal, with personal laws may vary with an individual's religion → law seeks to adjust multiple religious principles followed by different religion	single uniform code of law dispenses justice regardless of religious background. - laws are made in absolute isolation from religious principles
Display of religion →	followers of any religion can freely practice	Open display of religion is not supported - allowed only in place of worship
State intervention →	only to remove bad practices	do not interfere till religion working within limits of law
Influence on government →	Implicit control - vote bank ballot box and policy making - influencing government	focus on liberty, equality meagre control of religion on government.

Judicial Pronouncement regarding secularism -

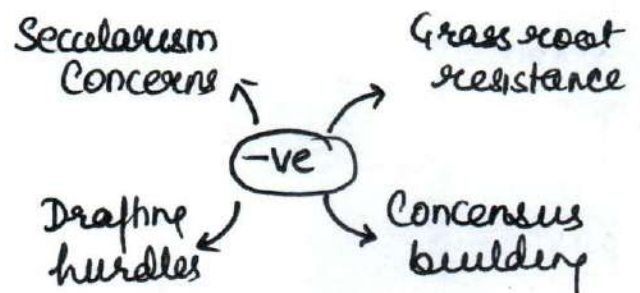
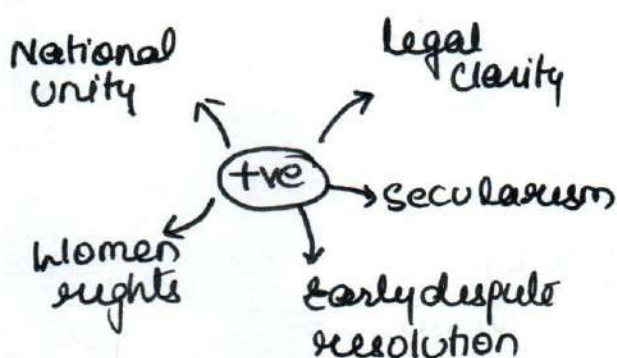
- 1) The Shirur Mutt case (1954) - the Doctrine of essentiality was coined by Supreme Court - i.e. - Only the religious practices which are essential and integral to the religion shall be protected under the law.
Ayodhya Case (1994) Sabarimala Case (2018)
- 2) Ratilal vs State of Bombay - regulations put in place by (1954) State should not interfere with the essentials of religion
- 3) Keshavnanda Bharati Case - Secularism as one of the Pillars (1973) of Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution - and it must not be altered by Parliament.
- 4) Stanislaus vs State of M.P. - "right to propagate religion" (Art 25) (1977) does not include the right to forcible conversion.
- 5) SR Bommai vs Union of India - Supreme Court observed (1994)
"Notwithstanding the fact that 'Socialist' & 'Secular' were added in the Preamble in 1976 by 42nd Amendment" the concept of Secularism was embedded in Constitution Philosophy.
Thus 42 CAA only made secularism explicit which was already implicit in the constitution

Government initiatives to promote secularism -

- i) Separate electorate abolished and universal adult franchise was introduced (Art 326) immediately after independence (1950)
- ii) National Integration Council (NIC) - was formed (1962) under the PM as means of combating communalism
- iii) 42nd CAA (1976) - word secular was introduced
- iv) National Minorities Devt and Finance Corporation (1994) to provide concessional finance to notified minorities
- v) Ministry of Minority Affairs - created in 2006 as offshoot of Mo Social Justice and Empowerment.
- vi) The Sachar Committee (2005) to find socio-economic conditions of Muslims.
- vii) Ranganath Misra Commission (2004-07) to ascertain status of Religious and Linguistic Minorities
- viii) Welfare Schemes - Nai Udhan / Nai Roshni

⇒ Uniform Civil Code - (UCC) -

India's Art 44 calls for a UCC encompassing common set of laws for personal matters like Marriage, inheritance applicable to all citizens



Challenges faced by secularism in India

- i) Communalism and religious intolerance
- ii) Religion in politics
- iii) Limited secularism - overlooking caste & ethnicities
- iv) Minority representation - creating feeling of exclusion
- v) Perceptual bias thus unequal treatment
- vi) Radicalization with lack of employability & education

Way forward

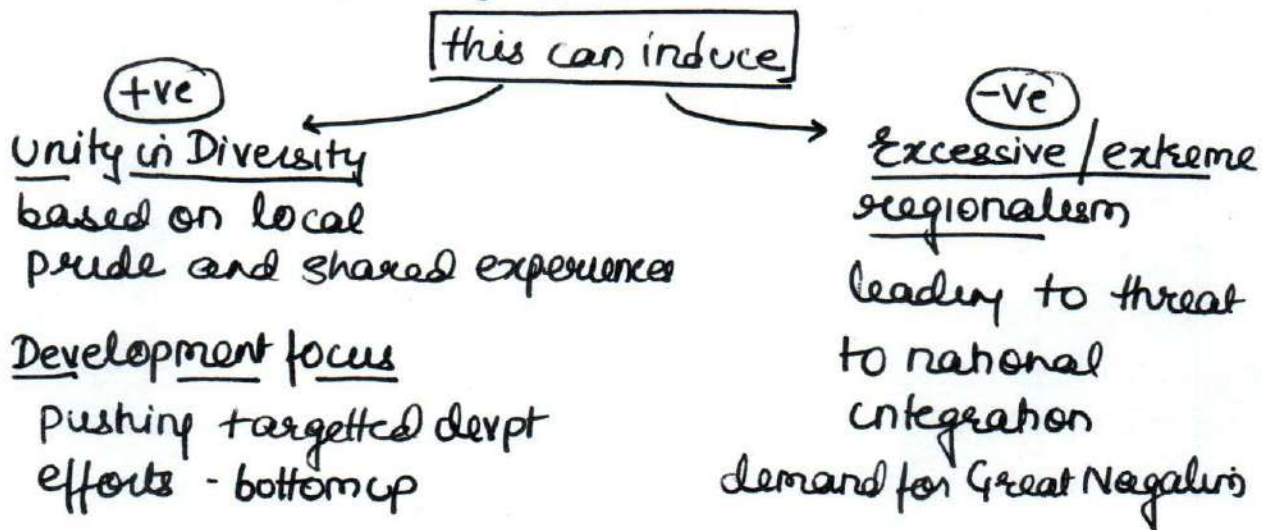
Constitutionally enshrined approach and harmony in socio-economic spheres are real in India
There is requirements of

- enhancing religious understanding to foster tolerance
- educating and skilling for gainful employment
- community building to promote social harmony
- scientific temperament to promote rational thinking
- electoral reforms to restrict communal propaganda
- responsible media avoiding sensationalism

India can sustain more informed, tolerant, progressive unified societal setup.

Regionalism

- A region is defined to be homogenous area that both culturally and physically differs from neighbouring areas
- Regionalism is defined to be a phenomenon in which people's political loyalties becomes focussed upon a region rather than the country
- Regionalism is integral part of Indian diversities caste, religion, language etc. It is conditioned by economic, political, social and cultural disparities
- regionalism characterised with group identities also forms psychological phenomenon that manifests as-
 - a) us vs them mentality - self centric approach
 - b) Limited perspective - hindering cooperation
 - c) Desire for regional autonomy - triggered by inequalities
 - d) Strong sense of belonging - loyalty to a region
 - e) Phasal psychological nature



Forms/Types of regionalism -

- i) Secessionism - this is most extreme form, where militant groups seeks complete separation from India, often based on religion and ethnicity.
Khalistan movement or insurgency in J&K.
- ii) Separatist movement - these are movements that demands separate states within India, often based on ethnicity or language - Bodoland (Assam) Gorkhaland (West Bengal)
- iii) Full statehood demand - refers to demands of increasing autonomy and power for existing UTs - as NCT of Delhi
- iv) Demand for regional autonomy - this involves existing states seeking greater control over their governance.
DMK in Tamil Nadu, Akali Dal in Punjab have advocated such autonomy.
- v) Supra State regionalism - this involves multiple states coming together on specific issues - against another group of states or central government - North eastern states
- vi) Inter state regionalism - this occurs between states with a region, often involving dispute of resource sharing - river water dispute Karnataka & Tamil Nadu
- vii) Intra state regionalism - this involves region within state advocating its own identity and development - Coastal & Western Odisha.

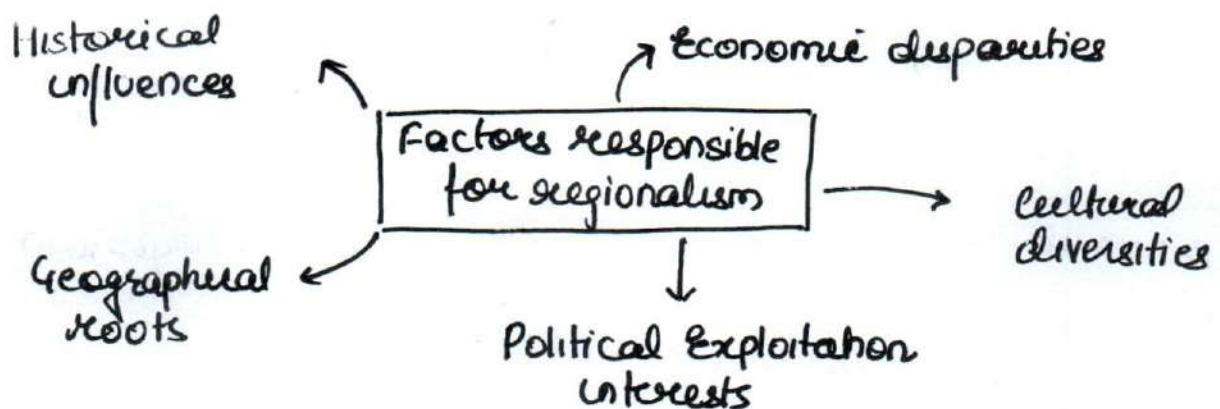
Son of Soil Doctrine -

- this concept grants certain privileges and rights to locals often based on place of birth.
- causes of its emergence -
 - competition among job seekers
 - rising aspirations thus demand
 - economic shortfall
- it raises complex challenge about balancing local needs with national mobility.
- job reservations in private sector for locals - in Haryana, Goa

Mulki Rule of Andhra Pradesh to safeguard local citizens education and employment opportunities

⇒ All these forms challenge nationalism - though involves merit of cultural preservation and local participation

The key thus is to create balance between strong regional and national identities to promote national unity and shared goals



Federalism and Regionalism

- Federalism, with division of power fosters framework that supports and manages regional aspirations / diversities
 - a) Constitutional autonomy - 5th and 6th Schedule grants some autonomy to specific regions, allowing them to preserve unique culture & pursue their path.
 - b) Minority rights - acknowledging regional aspirations by incorporating special clauses as - separate personal laws, special protection, affirmative action programs.
 - c) Political equilibrium - ensuring delicate balance between shared rule by Union and State Govts
 - d) Devolving power - the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts significantly strengthened federalism by empowering local bodies.

⇒ With regional disparities, resource dependency, unequal power distribution and weak local governance

- Fiscal federalism
- Cooperative State - Centre relations
- National education for unity

can help enhance +ve link between federalism and regionalism.

Regionalism : Threat to national Unity and integration

Growth of regional identities tends to challenge unity - as caused by.

a) Contentious Political manifestations -

- regional parties advocating secession or separate identities can create division - DMK in T.N
- coalition hurdles - where demands within coalitions can stall national policy hindering effective governance
- international impact - can influence diplomatic efforts as regionalism affecting Sri Lanka issue - TN.

b) Security concerns

- violent protests/conflicts can challenge stability as was during bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.
- inter state disputes over resources - as river water disputes challenging security.

Clashes related to regionalism -

- i) Linguistic Reorganisation of State - 1956 SRC recommended formation of 16 states and 3 UTs based on language
- ii) Demand for Dravida Nadu - self respect movement of 1925 eventually a joint campaign of DMK and Nan Tamil as secessionist movement (1960s) - Republic of Dravida Nadu

- iii) Telengana movement - creating separate state of telengana
- iv) Bodoland demand - largely involving unemployed educated youth - largely driven on protection of rights on sectarian lines
- v) Khalistan Movement - 1980 to create Sikh homeland
- vi) MNS targeting north Indians

Way Forward →

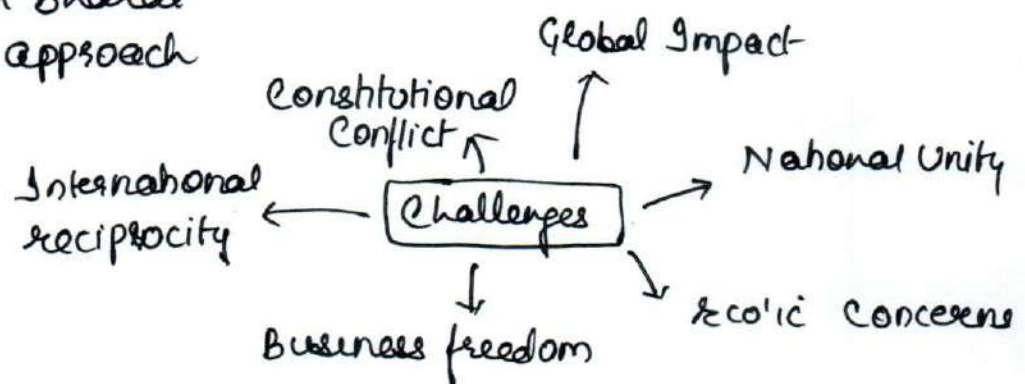
- a) Social inclusion - targeted approach
- b) Balanced development - equitable distribution of resources
- c) Diversity Celebrations - fostering cultural exchange
- d) Decentralised infrastructure development to connect
- e) Empowerment of local governance
- f) Media and Public awareness to break regional barriers

Vocal for Local is Local first policy oriented towards -

- Prioritizing local residents
- Promoting regional product
- Protecting regional heritage
- Atmanirbhar Bharat
- Swadeshi approach



Can lead to regionalism with



Communalism

- Derived from communal - related to a community - word communalism refers to aggressive Chauvinism based on religious identity.
- Communalism is aggressive political ideology linked to religion - where there is strong attachment to one's own community, while disregarding other community's ideology
- In Indian context, it is commonly perceived as a phenomena of religious differences bet'n groups - however nature of communal clashes are rarely religious - rather they manifest socio economic disequilibrium.

→ Elements of Communalism -

also referred as stages of communal ideology

- i) Mild Communalism - belief that people who follow same religion have common secular, politico-cultural and economic interests.
- ii) Moderate Communalism - common in multi religious societies where secular interests of followers of one religion are dissimilar and divergent from interests of other group - formation of Muslim League.
- iii) Extreme Communalism - interest of different religious communities are seen to be mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile - idea that led to partition of country.

- Types of Communalism

Sociologist T.K. Oomen has classified communalism based on motive as -

- i) Assimilationist - A dominant religious community expects minorities to conform to their practices potentially surpassing/suppressing the smaller group culture -
Hindu Code bill is applicable to Sikh, Buddhist, Jain
- ii) Welfarist - Focuses on improving the social and economic standing of a particular community, often through initiatives like scholarships or hostel
Jiyo Parsi initiative for Parsi Community.
- iii) Retreatist - A community isolates itself from other ideologies, often to preserve its unique identity - Bahai ~~religion~~ religion discouraging political participation.
- iv) Retaliatory - Communities having hostile interests and is often manifested as communal violence.
Hindu-Muslim riots
- v) Separatists - Demands self governance within India - non divisive - based on communal identities - Greater Nagaland, Bodoland.
- vi) Secessionist - As most extreme form, advocating for a completely separate nation, based on religion - Khalistan, Azad Kashmir.

- Development of communalism in Modern Indian History

I Pre Independence Period -

- i) Rise of Nationalist identities (late 19th Cen) initial stage saw rise of distinct Hindu, Muslim and Sikh nationalism. Revivalist movements like Arya Samaj's Shuddhi movement and Faraizi movement which aimed to reform Bengali Muslim practices.
- ii) Liberal Communalism - (Upto 1937) - perceptions of different interests but still advocated for democratic value. Organizations like Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League emerged.
- iii) Extreme Communalism (Post 1937) - rise in fascist ideology based on fear and hatred. Communities viewed their interests fundamentally opposed.

II Post Independence Period -

- Colonial legacy - of divide and rule fostered
- Caste based politics, economic disparities, social exclusion of marginalized groups
- reoccurring violence on communal disharmony rising religious extremism among youth, Delhi Riots of 2020 are reminder of on going struggle.