

SECULARISM IN POLITICAL IDEAS OF PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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BY
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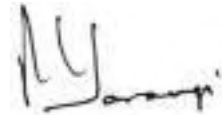
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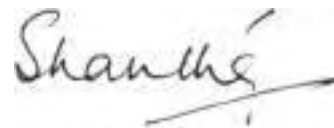
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis has been carried out by me under the guidance of Dr.PRAKASH C. SARANGI, Reader, Dept. of Political Science, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad, and that this has not been submitted for a degree of any other University.

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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Jawaharlal Nehru was not only a politician and nation-builder par excellence, he was also an extraordinary scholar who represented modern scientific values. His ideas are an Ideal blend of western pragmatism and Indian cultural consciousness. This is especially true when we consider Nehru's thought on matters of religion, religious groups and the role of the state in dealing with them. He was not only secular in his approach, but a distinct version of secularism emerges from his thought. It is neither purely western concept of secularism nor is totally indigenous. His ideas emerged out of the practical considerations of the governance of a multi-religious country like India. In view of the importance of accommodating all religions in the nationalist movement and considering the communal riots which preceded and followed the partition, secularism became an article of faith for Nehru. This dissertation is an attempt to analyse and understand the nature and extent of secularism in Nehru's ideas. But before we examine them, a brief overview of the concept of secularism is presented in this chapter. We would also lay down broad parameters to be used to estimate Nehru's ideas on secularism.

CONCEPT OF SECULARISM : A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In 1500's and early 1600's the theories of the medieval philosophers were challenged. Niccolo Machiavelli, a renowned Florentine politician, kept aside the Christian ideals and emphasised on realistic power politics. An English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes generalised his ideas. Hobbes' claim was that a persons's entire life was a "ceaseless search for power". Since this approach separated politics from religion, it was known as Secularism. Jean Bodin, a French jurist; Johannes Althusius, a German political scientist; and Hugo Grotius, a Dutch lawyer who was the founder of the science of international law, put those ideas into legalistic form.

Secularism is considered as an ethical system founded on the principles of morality and independent of revealed religion or supernaturalism. In 1846, George J. Holyoake, of England first proposed secularism as a formal philosophical system. Its first postulate is the right of every man to think for himself, that is, freedom of thought. It implies the right to difference of opinion upon all subjects of thought. Secularism asserts the right to discuss and debate all vital questions, such as opinions regarding the foundations of moral obligations, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the authority of conscience.

Secularism maintains good of the present life as a real good and to attain that is good. Through wisdom, mercy and duty to attend to poor, it asserts material agencies. It maintains that there is light and guidance in secular truth, whose conditions and sanctions exist independently, act independently, and act forever.²²

THE WESTERN PERSPECTIVES ON SECULARISM

Secularism is derived from the latin word "SAECULUM" which means "this age or this world". The British thinker HOLYOAKE defined secularist as "one who gives primary attention to those subjects the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life over those which pertain to another world".³ The American College Dictionary defined the word 'secular' as "a system of political or social philosophy which rejects all forms of religious faith and worship and the view that public education and other matters of civil policy should be conducted without the introduction of religious element."⁴ According to Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "a secular state is a form of state so contrived as to win and hold and deserve the loyalty and warm allegiance of any citizen of whatever religion or of none"

D.E.White, while defining secularism, takes into account several practical considerations. According to him a secular state is one which guarantees individual and corporate

freedom of religion, it is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek to promote or interfere with religion. In this context, the concept of secular state involves three distinct but inter-related sets of relationship concerning the state, religion and the individuals. In his book India as a Secular State, White explains three sets of relationship as follows:

religion and the individual (freedom of religion), the state and the individual (citizenship), and the state and religion (separation of state and religion).⁶ In the first set of relationship, freedom of religion means that the individual is free to consider and discuss with others the relative merits of different religions and to embrace none or any one of them without any interference from the state. If he decides to embrace a religion, he has the freedom to follow its principles of worship. If an individual later decides to renounce his religion or to embrace another, he is at liberty to do so. The state is excluded from this relationship and cannot dictate religious beliefs to the individual or compel him to pay any religious tax. The state can regulate the manifestation of religion in the interest of public health, safety and morals. The state-individual relationship is based on citizenship which excludes religion. The secular state views the individual as a citizen and not as a member of a particular religious group. Religion becomes irrelevant in terms of citizenship, the citizen's rights and duties are not affected by his religious beliefs. In the third set of relationship,, there is functional

separation of state and religion. It is not the function of state to interfere with or to promote, regulate and direct religion. Similarly, the political power has to be outside the scope of religion.

DEFINITIONS EMPHASISING PERSONAL BELIEFS

According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Secularism lays emphasis on this world rather than the supernatural, behaviour rather than belief, freedom rather than obedience and a bold maturity rather than conservatism.⁷ According to the Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, secularism means the rejection of religion after secularization.⁸ In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the term is defined as "non spiritual, having no concern with religious or spiritual matters".⁹ The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, describes it as a "movement intentionally ethical, negatively religious with political and philosophical antecedents".¹⁰ The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences says that "secularism be defined as the attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge purged of supernatural, fideistic presuppositions".¹¹ The Winston Dictionary defines secularism as "The quality or state of being devoted to world, rather than to sacred matters".¹² According to the Everyman's Encyclopaedia "secularism : materialistic and rationalistic movement....aimed at establishing morality on a utilitarian basis"

DEFINITIONS EMPHASISING NORMATIVE CONTENT

The New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, explains secularism as "The doctrine that morality 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 state."¹⁴ The same idea is also followed by The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church which explains secularism as "a system which seeks to interpret and order life on principles taken solely from this world, without recourse to belief in God and a future life". According to G.G.Hackman, secularism signifies the kind of life that is lived in complete indifference to God and to religious values.¹⁶ The same view has been put with greater force by J.C. Bennet, when he said that secularism is life organised apart from God, as though God did not exist.¹⁷ ¹⁷

CRITICAL VIEWS ON SECULARISM

According to The New Schaff Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, secularism is "an atheistic and materialistic movement".¹⁸ It proceeds to explain that "the sole ethical principles of the school was utilitarian and its dogmatic position was entirely negative, denying the justifiability of assuming the existence of God, the divine governance of the world, the reasonableness of prayer, the possibility of a future life, and the like. At the same time, this position was primarily not one of absolute denial but rather extreme agnosticism, with the assumption that what cannot be positively and indubitably

known should be ignored both in theory and in practical life"¹⁹. According to Rev.Leslie Newbigin, the term secularism has been taken to refer to a system of belief for an attitude which in principle denies the existence or the significance of realities other than those which can be measured by the methods of natural science.²⁰ As quoted by him from the International Missionary Council Meeting Report, Volume: 1 at the Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council (1928), the term secularism had been defined as "a way of life and interpretation of life that include only the natural order of things and that do not find God or a realm of spiritual reality necessary for life or thought".²¹

THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SECULARISM

Dr.S.Radhakrishnan has explained the terms secularism in the Indian context. He has said that the term "secularism here does not mean irreligious or atheism or even stress on material comforts. It proclaims and lays stress on the universality of spiritual values which may be attained by a variety of ways."²² According to G.Parthasarthy "Secularism denotes a national identity which transcends but does not negate religious identity. It therefore implies the separation of the rights and duties of a citizen in his public life from adherence in his private life, to the beliefs and practices of his religion" According to him, in India, the 'Secular State' indicates that the state does not identify itself with any one religion but is friendly with all religions.²⁴ P.B.Gajendragadkar, has said that "Freedom of religion is the

foundation of Indian secularism".²⁵ According to Rasheeduddin Khan Secularism in India means three things: first, the rejection of a quasi-theocratic state like that of Pakistan and the affirmation of a non-religion based democracy; second, the proclamation that religion is of private or group concern; and third, the assertion of the unity of the people of India and the inalienable equality of all citizens of the republic, irrespective of their caste and creed. He views the peculiar situation of India, in which secularism as an instrument of social change and political transformation has three operational dimensions. One, as a process of inter-communal political integration (as between religion-based segments such as the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs etc.); two, a process of inter-community social integration (as between the varna-cum jati segments of the Hindus and the social strata among the Muslims, Christians, etc.) ; and three, a dominant political idiom, methods and objective of general socio-political change in order to transform a religion-dominated ethos into an ethos of enlightened humanism. Thus in India secularism appears both as an ideal and as a reality. Secularism in the imagination of religiously devout politicians and many other well-meaning nationalists meant no more than political reconciliation of religious communities and harmonisation of communalism. Much publicized vedantic ideal of "equal respect to all faiths" (Sarva dharma samabhava) which is proclaimed as the "genuine Indian interpretation" of secularism. As an extension of this assumption it follows, for example, that to chant the vedas alone or to recite Quran, sing

the psalms of David, read passages from Dhammapada and listen to the devotional songs from the Granth Sahib and Zendavesta would be the pure assertion of secularism and indeed an affirmation of national integration. Thus secularism meant the cheerful fusion of religious symbols, idioms and social rituals through the theosophical, Ram-Rahim, approach to politics. In the name of toleration of all communities and their eventual harmonisation what we find is cheerful mixing of all mythologies.²⁶

Moulana Abul Kalam Azad has presented his views on secularism in his famous Book, India Wins Freedom. In the struggle for the grant of political rights, he emphasized the Islamic concept of sovereignty of God and equality of man. A true Musalman should either sacrifice or get back freedom. He believed firmly in the majesty of God. He interpreted Islam as a philosophy of democracy and freedom. A political system is justified and considered legitimate on the basis of national will. If the political system breaks down, revolution is justified. God has gifted liberty to men as a natural right. Liberation symbolised not only duty but also religious act. He defended democracy since it prevailed in the period of Muhammad and Quran. He sanctioned violence but opined that non-violence was suitable to Indian conditions. He had faith in the unity of co-religionists i.e. between Hindus and Musalmans. They should exchange each others principles and never resort to war. Peace would be established among the two communities by making compromises. History has proved mankind as one race. Since

Hindus and Mussalmans possessed common ancestors and share common history and it was too low on the part of any Musalman to consider a person from other communities as high or low.²⁷

Mahatma Gandhi too had a streak of secularism, though he advocated the religious basis of politics. To him religion meant well ordered moral world. Though a staunch Hindu he never believed in narrow sectarianism. Unlike Buddha and Ramakrishna he discarded creeds, cults, rituals and ceremonies. Being a voracious reader he evaluated the essence of religions like Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Zoroastrianism as morality. Religion devoid of morality ceases to be a religion. His ethical religion bound men all over the world. In the world religion alone would lead to philanthropy, forbearance, justice, fraternity, peace and all embracing love. To root it out would lead to the destruction of society. He believed in spiritualisation of politics because a religious man could hardly tolerate oppression and exploitation. His sarvodaya was rooted in Vedas, Gita and Buddhist philosophy. He was pessimistic about the role of state due to its violent and coercive character. According to him Ramarajya is the ideal state where sovereignty of moral principles would prevail throughout the world. He aimed at merging inner life of individual with outer life which could be a success when state observed "Ethical Religion" and followed a secular path.²⁸ He said, "I believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas, the Bible, the Quran and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas".²⁹ Equality of all the

great religions of the world made him maintain that a person should stick to his or her own religion. It is irrational to change our religion. The vision of God can be attained by the practice of all or any of the religions of the world.

Thus the Indian version of secularism is distinctly different from the point of view of practical politics of a multi-religious society. Since Nehru was primarily a practitioner of politics, his ideas should be evaluated from the Indian perspective of secularism. We believe, however, that this perspective needs to be further clarified and operationalised. We would be concerned with only religion and its role in the public sphere, i.e., to the extent that the state activity affects or is affected by the existence of religious groups. It, of course, implies that the western version of complete divorce of state from religion is rejected. The role of the state is that of an honest broker in the midst of several functioning religious groups. It is secular to the extent that it does not support any single religion and maintains an equidistance from all of them. Such a concept of secularism has three implications from the point of view of state activity: tolerance of all religions,, accommodation of minorities' rights and equal protection of all the faiths by the state. These three aspects need further clarification.

A. TOLERANCE OF ALL RELIGIONS

Existence and operation of religions have to be accepted as facts of life and every individual should be free to follow the religion of his choice. Religion is one of the most universal activities known to humankind, being practised across virtually all cultures and from the very earliest times to the present day. Although various writers have attempted wide and general definition, none of these definitions have been universally accepted. If we accept a broad view of religion, an interesting definition is given by Muhammad Naguib, "Religion is a candle inside a multi-coloured lantern. Everyone looks through a particular colour, but the candle is always there"³⁰.

Literally, tolerance means allowing of differences in religious opinion without discrimination. According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, toleration is the intellectual and practical acknowledgement of the right of others to live in accordance with religious beliefs that are not accepted as one's own.³¹ It is a policy of patient forbearance towards that which is not approved. There is toleration only where there are also things that are disapproved. If men were perfect, tolerance would be neither necessary nor possible.

The extent to which toleration can and should be extended has occupied many political theorists in modern times, most famously John Locke, whose *Letter on Toleration* (1688), put forward arguments which are now widely accepted. He argued that

no sovereign could found his right to rule on the truth of his religion, for it is not within the competence of a state to discern the truth of religious doctrines, nor is it the function of the state to save men's souls; rather the state exists to protect men's rights and may use force to that end alone. Hence, there ought to be tolerance in all matters of religion. The principles behind Locke's view were soon widely accepted, and later extended from the religious to the moral sphere by J.S.Mill.³²

A special problem is posed by the relation of religious education to prejudice. The paradoxical situation arises that although in many areas the leaders in the attack on prejudice have a religious motivation or are identified with religion as an institution, in general there appears to be more prejudice among those who are "religious" than among those who are not. This probably indicates that religion means different things to different people; in certain cases a true involvement, in other an outward, superficial expression. The problem for religious educators is to instill loyalty to one's faith while also emphasising the brotherhood of man."³³ Therefore, one of the indicators of secular spirit is toleration of all religious groups and the diversity of values they represent.

B. ACCOMMODATION OF MINORITIES' RIGHTS

Minority is a group of people perceived by a dominant group as possessing unique physical or cultural characteristics on the basis of which they are singled out from others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment and who, therefore, regard themselves as the objects of discrimination, exploitation and persecution. A minority group exists only in relation to a corresponding dominant group with greater power, higher status, and greater privileges. The lives of individual members of a minority group are characterized by varying degrees of exclusion from full participation in the society in which they live. Generally, a minority group differs from the dominant group in any specific society on the basis of race, religion, and/or nationality.

A majority-minority situation refers to a pattern of relationships based upon the distribution of power, not upon the relative numbers of individuals in each group. The source of a dominant group's power may be better weapons and more effective combat strategy, greater technological, the use of religion, or any combination of these.

Relationships between dominant and minority groups follow the same, general principles regardless of whether the symbolic differences depend upon race, nationality, or religion. It is the pattern of relationships that is crucial. Several variables affect this pattern. For example, a situation in which

there is only one minority group differs from one in which there are several. Where there is only one minority group, that group is the sole object of discrimination; where there are several minorities, as in a large country like India, some minorities are allowed greater participation in the society than others. It may happen that in such instances a hierarchy of minorities develops and the dominant group is able to manipulate and play one minority against another.

The dominant group in any society typically exerts itself to make its dominance legitimate. The creation and maintenance by the dominant group of a "racial myth" is one of the commonest means of accomplishing this end. The myth involves two related aspects: (1) the manifest superiority of the ruling group and its destiny to rule, and (2) the manifest inferiority of the minority groups, or the ruled. Because of its particular history and its social, economic, and political development, a society develops a control culture, dominant group values are applied in the evaluation of the behaviour of all members of the society. In India the values of the control culture are those of Hindus who constitute the majority of the population. Hence it becomes imperative on the part of the state to provide enough political space for the minority religious groups to secure their rights and maintain their own cultural identities.

Minorities react to their minority group status in one or more ways: (1) the minority may strive for peaceful coexistence with the dominant group and other minority groups - a pluralistic type minority; (2) the minority may desire absorption into the dominant group - an assimilationist - minority; (3) the minority may seek both cultural and political independence - a secessionist minority; (4) a minority may fight for domination over the dominant group a role-reversal minority. In case of the religious minorities in India, the second option is, of course, ruled out. The third and fourth options could lead to serious conflicts and disruptions in the polity. Hence it may be desirable to exercise the first option and it is the duty of a secular state to provide conducive environment for religious pluralism to flourish. Majority - minority situation must be understood not only with reference to the ultimate objectives of the minorities but also in terms of the interacting aims of the majority or dominant group. Historically, dominant groups in different parts of the world have tried many hard options in their dealings with minority group problems - assimilation, either forced or permitted; population transfer, either peaceful or forced; continued subjugation; and even genocide. In order to prevent these hard options a secular state has to provide legal protection of minorities and their legitimate rights.³⁴

Indians can accommodate such conflicting principles by seeing them at different levels of value, or, if you will, in compartments not watertight, but sufficiently separate so that a

concept can operate freely within its own sphere and not conflict with another operating in a separate sphere. Accommodation is not compromise. Accommodation is a belief or an attitude; compromise is a technique. To compromise is to settle an issue by mutual concession, each party giving up the portion of its desired end that conflicts with the interests of the other parties. It is the search for a mutually agreeable middle way, with accommodation, concepts and viewpoints, although seemingly incompatible, stand intact. They are not whittled away by compromise, but are worked simultaneously. This attitude has been described thus:.... "The most notable characteristic in every field of Indian activity.... is the constant attempt to reconcile conflicting views or actions, to discover a workable compromise, to avoid seeing the human situation in terms of all black or all white. . . . As India's philosopher (President) Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has put it: why look at things in terms of this or that ? why not try to have both this and that". Another observer agrees that accommodation may "reflect an Indian style of thought and that it might conceivably be accepted as an Indian tradition of political behavior. Indian constitutional structure itself is a good example of the principle of accommodation on matters of substance.

C. EQUAL PROTECTION OF ALL FAITHS BY THE STATE

Throughout the history of human civilisation there have been clear interaction between religion and political systems. Religions have sometimes legitimized political systems. Religions have provided sanctions for reform movements and revolutions. Religion has been used by human beings to establish their individual and social identities.³⁷ In early and small tribal society king was viewed as God, and similar configuration is found in later periods, in more complex societies where ever universal religious institutions and great civilizations prevailed the relationship between politics and religion became of major concern. The deep cleavage between the worldly and the transcendental orders led to growing tensions. In Hinduism, the king was considered as representative of the deity on earth by the Brahmins who themselves claimed to be gods on earth In Buddhism there was a structured institutional distinction between the deity and the monastic orders. Within the framework of monotheism, in many Islamic regimes there was no distinction between religious institution and state. In Islam there is politicisation of religion. In the history of medieval Christendom there is a conflict between government and divine law. In the ascending theory, the original authority rested with the people, while in the descending theory of government original authority was located in divinity itself with the earthly ruler designated from above. This is basically a theory of theocracy. In eastern Christendom, there is subservient role of the state to the churches.

Religion-politics nexus in the modern era lies in the process of secularisation. The constitutional status, the powers and resources accorded to the religious institutions and the legal positions of individuals and groups vis-a-vis the religion, separation of religion from state, on to state directed anti-religious activities led to conflicts between religion and politics.' Such conflicts affect the educational system and the provisions of social services. The stand taken by the religious organisations on public issues, and their propagation to influence public opinion, their support of some political parties, condemnation of others which are part of secular point of view, are improper intrusions of religion into politics. Other such elements are the religious persuasion of voters in elections, the presence of religious or confessional parties, the Islamic republics, the phenomena of social Christianity and Christian Democracy, and religiously inspired trade unions. In most societies religions have been conservative, status-quo maintaining forces in society and politics. The recent trends of religious groups have been radical, reformist and revolutionary. The use of religious symbols have been associated with the rise of nationalist movements. The emergence of civil religions which serve the public authorities as means for public legitimation is a new trend. This serves best in religious heterogeneity of people of different religions and denominations of secular society.

In the Indian sub-continent religion is still taken seriously and plays a significant role in the life of the people. There are many reasons for this, of which two may be noted: (1) Technological Backwardness and (2) Political Conflict.

Whether Muslims, Hindu, Sikh, or Jain, religion in India influences almost every aspect of life. In this society means and ends are viewed in religious terms and ritual and magic are considered as efficient. This shows that scientific, empirical and business - like approach to the world is subordinated to beliefs and rituals which results in a strong resistance to technological change. In agriculture, technological advance is hindered by caste restrictions on types of labour by dietary taboos, by the ritual value of dung, and by the veneration of the cow.³⁹ In medicine, progress is hindered by the taboo on the treatment of women by male physicians, taboo on contact with dead bodies and hence dissection, the prejudice against women entering the nursing profession, midwifery as an "unclean" occupation. In business, economic development is retarded by the Muslim taboo on money lending, heavy borrowing for ceremonial purposes due to the obligations of joint family and occupational restrictions of caste.

The adherents of different faiths are set apart when religion is taken seriously and applied to all aspects of life. Distinct groups tend to have its own folkways and mores, its distinct outlook and its distinct allegiance superior to others.

Thus each faith become a nation within a nation. The Hindu term for religion, Dharma, "covers the whole field of conduct in all its wide relations".⁴⁰ Similarly, "Islamic civilization is centered around the religion of Islam". Its doctrine "makes a bifurcation of civilizations into the Islamic, which fundamentalist Muslims regards as God inspired and the only true and defensible civilizations, and all other civilizations, which are by nature heterodox and false".⁴¹ Despite their similar emphasis on religion, the two faiths, the two civilizations differ in many fundamental respects which results in conflicts flaring up among the two communities.

It was due to the influence of Niccolo Machiavelli that for the first time there was separation of politics from religion. This was the basic foundation of secularism. It aimed at the development of broader ethical and moral values with our experience of partition, this concept and its non-western interpretation looked very promising. While the eastern interpretation emphasises on separation of religion from politics, the Indian interpretation is broadly based on universal spiritual values, common civil laws, setting aside religion as a private affair of individuals. Therefore the state cannot abdicate its relationship with religions or religious institutions. Therefore, this thesis takes into consideration the three parameters of secularism which permit the state to take a positive role in providing equal treatment to all religion while preventing the state to be controlled by any single

religion. In the following chapters it would be our attempt to examine Nehru's ideas and to assess the extent to which he conformed to these secularist norms.

Conclusion :

Religion plays a significant role in individual's life. Tolerance of religion is the need of any civilized society. Jawaharlal Nehru says that religion, rather than being a barrier should inculcate unity of the mind which will lead to the material and spiritual happiness of the individual and the society. Only through knowledge of each other's culture and civilization one can try to attain the tolerance of religions.

Minorities being a distinct community enjoy less privileges in any society compared to the majority because the latter is infused with a superiority complex. It is the duty of the state to accommodate various minorities by adhering to the principle of secularism. The democratic spirit of Jawaharlal Nehru has prompted him to remove inequalities among the majority and minority religious groups and to help in building a healthy social order. He favours constitutional provisions for religious minorities and backward castes. Compared to the west, religion occupies an important place in an Indian's life. Therefore it is imperative that the state respects each individual's religious sentiment. Nehru says that India's long history reveals religious tolerance. He is optimistic because he thinks that if secular spirit is adopted in the Indian constitution, it will

eradicate the narrow communalism and will lead to the development of a healthy society where the state honours and protects all the faiths in an equal manner.

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CHAPTER - II

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : A BACKGROUND

Before we analyse Nehru's ideas on different aspects of Secularism we would make a brief overview of the life and times of Jawaharlal Nehru. This background would help us to give us some clues to understand the context in which Nehru was writing.

When we recall the personality of Jawaharlal Nehru, we do not think of him as a Brahmin (he always resented, whenever some one called him Panditji). He was an Indian free from all distinctions based on caste and birth. He had assimilated and integrated in his personality and character all that was best in the composite Indian culture and discarded all that was irrelevant to modern times. For the past of his country, he had a healthy and undogmatic respect which he revealed in his Discovery of India. He was shrewd to know its significant relation to the present and the future: "The past becomes something that leads upto the present, the moment of action, the future something that flows from it; and all three are inextricably intertwined and interrelated: Past history merged into contemporary history; it became a living reality tied up with sensations of pain and pleasure".¹ He was fascinated by the personalities of the past like Buddha, Shankaracharya, Ashoka, Akbar and Saint Kabir who were symbols of integration and unity and their philosophic contribution was made to Indian history, philosophy and culture.

Nehru's greatest contribution to India in the importance that he had given to science, technology and industrialisation without which progress was impossible. He was fighting against the main currents of socio-cultural life in the country. He was opposed to traditions and superstitions. He believed that the pre-requisite for the successful adherence to secularism in the country which was suffering from the virus of communalism was industrialization and economic development. Being a true 'Renaissance leader', he laid emphasis on the importance of a scientific outlook. The solution to communalism, backwardness and agrarian society which was left behind due to slavery was secularism, democracy, economic planning modernization and socialism. In order to live in the modern world as an independent country, keeping intact the sovereignty, a modern outlook of life, modern techniques of economic development should be employed. Nehru's vision of modern India was : where science and not superstition, where reason and not blind faith, where humanism and not religious bigotry will reign supreme.²

NEHRU j. A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Nehru's family was originally from Kashmir. His ancestor Raj Kaul gained eminence as a Sanskrit and Persian scholar in Kashmir, during the Mughal period when Farrukhsiar was the Emperor. The family migrated to Delhi at the Emperor's insistence, in 1716. A house (Jagir) was granted to Raj Kaul which was situated on the banks of a canal, and from this fact of

residence 'Nehru' (from nahar, a canal) became attached to his name. The family name Kaul was dropped and it simply became Nehru. The family experienced many vicissitudes and their property vanished. His great grandfather, Lakshmi Narayan Nehru, was the first Vakil (Lawyer) of the Sarkar Company in the court of Delhi. His grandfather, Ganga Dhar Nehru, was kotwal of Delhi before 1857. The family shifted to Agra, and his father Motilal Nehru was born. His grand father was Kashmiri by birth, dressed up like a Moghal nobleman, Moghal court dress with a curved sword in his hand. His father's education was in Persian, Arabic and English. He became a renowned lawyer after winning a gold medal and moved to Allahabad High Court. Nehru was born in Allahabad on 14 November, 1889. Thus the ancestors of Nehru's family were exposed to multi-ethnic and mutli-religious life-style which might have influenced Nehru's secular upbringing.

His education and early training brought him into contact with scientific and technological advancement in the West and he was fascinated by the working of democratic institutions in England. He found a solution for social transformation of backward societies in democracy, individual freedom and the power of science and technology which was an impact of western science and liberalism. His pesonality and mode of thinking was based on western liberalism. He observed: "My roots are still perhaps partly in the nineteenth century, and I have been too much influenced by the humanist liberal tradition to get out of it completely. This bourgeois background follows me about".⁴

B.R.Nanda quotes a Hindu Mahasabha leader as saying that Nehru was "English by Education, Muslim by culture and Hindu by an accident of birth". Nehru has acknowledged his debt to England. The impact of the Muslim culture has been traditionally paramount among Kashmiris. Study of Urdu and Persian was found not only among men but also women. He had many Muslim friends. Though he imbibed the Hindu wisdom of the ages and read Gita, he was not a Hindu in the traditional sense. He glorified India's magnificent past, history, its mountains and rivers, which he considered as the first gods of the Aryans, who settled in the Gangetic plain. He was a true citizen of the world, being too patriotic. He was a secularist in the sense that he transcended parochial considerations and looked from a broad human angle. His secularism was founded in India's extraordinary variegated culture which was a product of unbroken history. Fusion of Greek and Indo-Aryan cultures marked the Guptas. Hindu outlook was broadened by Buddhism which spread in the east. Akbar attempted to marry Hindusim with Islam. British ideas shaped Indian psyche for two centuries. More than religion, Nehru was culture and race oriented. According to him the Muslims were converts belonging to the original Indo-Aryan stock. He elaborates in The Discovery of India : "The fact of subsequent conversion to other faiths did not deprive them of their heritage, just as the Greeks, after their conversion to Christianity did not lose their pride in the mighty achievements of their ancestors, or the Italians in the great days of the Roman Republic and early

empire. If all the people of India had been converted to Islam or Christianity, her cultural heritage would still have remained to inspire them and give them that poise and dignity, which a long record of civilized existence with all its mental struggles with the problems of life gives a people".

Nehru's secularism was founded in its sustenance in unifying and life-giving wisdom of the ages. According to him-. "Some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas, some Muslims dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past, there is no turning back even if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time".⁵

Nehrus's approach to the role religion played in social life is described by him in the following manner: "Religion as I saw it practised, and accepted even by thinking minds, whether it was Hindusim or Islam or Buddhism or Christianity, did not attract me. It seemed to be closely associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs and behind it lay a method of approach to life's problems which was certainly not that of science. There was an element of magic about it, an empirical credulous-ness, a reliance on the supernatural".⁶

He experienced a sense of desolation and wilderness in the cell of Alipore Jail. He learned painful and hard things in loneliness. He expresses his views that reliance on others is inviting heartbreak, hence one should travel the journey of his

life alone. He accumulated irritation against religion and the religious outlook because it was an enemy to clarity of thought, fixity of purpose and was wholly based on emotion and passion. Presuming to be spiritual, and thinking of some other world, it possessed few conceptions of human values, social values and social justice. With its preconceived notions it deliberately shuts its eyes to reality for fear that it may not fit in with. Although it was based on truth it does not take the trouble to discover it. It talks of peace, yet supports systems and organizations based on violence. In his own words: "it condemned the violence of the sword, but what of the violence that comes quietly and often in peaceful garb and starves and kills,- or, worse still, without doing any outward physical injury outrages the mind and crushes the spirit and breaks the heart" ?

HISTORICAL EVENTS INFLUENCING NEHRU'S IDEA :

In this chapter an attempt has been made to present the formative influences on Nehru's thought, his political ideas in the achievement of social goals. In assessing the multi-dimensional personality of a leader, his contribution to history, society, politics, Indian state, and his role as the Prime Minister should be seen in the light of the total perspective of events. In making an assessment of his contribution to modern India' we should examine the various influences, both of ideas and persons, that moulded and shaped his thought and personality. "Leadership operates under the

complex interaction of social forces - political aspirations, social relationships, economic wants, nationalism and religious beliefs. This factor explains the behavior of different leaders operating differently even in contemporary conditions:. The situational factor is very important in understanding the various actions of a leader. Seeming contradictions in his behaviour can often be resolved only by unravelling the difficult knot of circumstances that ultimately contains all the contending influences in a given situation.⁸

In 1909, Indian nationalists were outraged when the British officials were playing up the differences between Hindus and Muslism. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, Motilal wrote on March 25,1909 that the leaders of both the communities had no love amongst themselves. He explained to his son that the masses of both communities existed as good friends and the tension should not filter to the lower classes. Then nation building would be a thing of the past. Which the Anglo-Indian friends have distinctly scored.⁹ The emergence of the Hindu Mahasabha as a counterblast to Muslim League would weaken the foundation of the Congress.¹⁰

Jawaharlal Nehru, was not only a passionate soul but always active. He felt that Gandhiji had electrified atmosphere by giving a new turn to the Congress and involving the people in the freedom struggle. His basic trait was aversion to communal politics. The moderate school usually consisted of communal

politicians. He had seen that the leaders of Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha were competitive in winning favours from the British government. When Poorna Swaraj, complete independence was the demand of the Congress leaders, the communal leaders were inquisitive of the respective positions their communities would possess in independent India. Nehru entered politics when Congress was an instrument of Indian nationalism under the influences of Tila, Mrs. Beasant and Gandhi.¹¹

The Constitutional Act 1919 which divided India into numerous separate compartments in the legislature was according to Nehru a dangerous proposition. He said "I am afraid I cannot get excited over this communal issue important as it is temporarily. It is after all a side issue and it can have no real importance in the larger scheme of things. I have no fear and my vision of a future India contains no communalism"¹². This beginning of nationalism should be viewed against this cultural background of intellectual ferment, with the westernised elite turning towards liberalism and the conservatives to Hinduism and Islam respectively. The liberal advocates of social and political reform were uncompromising due to their disapproval of traditional culture, which they thought that it was a retrogressive force, submerging the masses in superstition.¹³

For a brief period after the 1916 Lucknow Pact, the relationship between India's Hindus and Muslims was amicable. Upto 1920, as long as Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a member of

Congress tensions were less. After 1923, tensions flared up between the various communal groups and in Jawaharlal Nehru's view, the major goals of Congress were in grave danger of being jeopardized. Especially in North India there was deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations. The bitterness among the communal leaders at the top, led to the rigid political communal demands. The Muslim political reactionaries helped by the British Government became prominent. The Hindu political reactionaries also succeeded in raising the communal temper of the country. Congress was in a quandary and most of the Congressmen were communists under their national cloak. Due to this Sikhs as a particular communal group loudly voiced their particular demands. According to Gandhi communal problem could only be solved by goodwill and the generosity of the majority group and consented to Muslims demands. British government's policy in India was divide and rule. The Congress blamed the Government and communalist groups for spreading communalism and the latter blamed the Congress.

This problem could not have been solved by market place tactics. The third party is dominant and hands out its gifts to the prize boys of its choice. Our leaders thought within the narrow steel frame of the political freedom only without, considering any social change or economic freedom for the masses. It meant the removal of the financial links which was binding India to London, this inter-connection would have easily changed the social structure. The Indian leaders' outlook was reformist

rather than revolutionary. The then atmosphere was not conducive for solving the communal problem by reformist - methods. The situation demanded revolutionary outlook, planning and revolutionary solutions. Lack of clear ideals and objectives led to the spread of communalism. There was hardly any connection between the day to day sufferings and the fight for swaraj. Instincts of the people were exploited by the communalist in the name of religion. The leaders of the communal groups demanded a handful of jobs to upper middle classes and a special demand for additional seats in the legislatures symbolic of political power merely for patronage. They were motivated by religious passions. Political reactionaries in the guise of communal leaders obstructed political advance. This was the unsavory situation "Muslim communal leaders said the most amazing things and seemed to care not at all for Indian nationalism or Indian freedom; Hindu communal leaders, though always speaking apparently in the name of nationalism, had little to do with it in practice, and incapable of any real action, sought to humble themselves before the Government, and did that too in vain. Both agreed in condemning socialistic and such like "subversive" movement;;, there was a touching unanimity in regard to any proposal affecting vested interests".¹⁴

In mid-twenties a unity conference was held after which the Hindus and Muslims became tolerant and respectful of one another's religious practices and beliefs. Communal tensions further escalated when voting was based on separate electorates.

It was painful for Nehru when the troubles were in his home town Allahabad.¹⁵ In a letter to Dr. Syed Mahmud dated May 24, 1926, Nehru wrote, "I do not attach very much importance to political squabbles, but the communal frenzy is awful to contemplate. We seem to have been caught in a whirlpool of mutual hatred and we go round and round and down and down this abyss. For months or even a year or more we have thought that the situation was so bad that it could not become worse. But it does (grow) worse and heaven knows where it will end. 'No country or people who are slaves to dogma....can progress, and unhappily our country and people have become extraordinarily dogmatic and little minded...Religion as practised in India has become the old man of the sea for us and it has not only broken our backs but stultified and almost killed all originality of thought and mind. I have no patience left with the legitimate and illegitimate offspring of religion'.¹⁶ He personally thought that it was impossible to cooperate with communalists provided the political objective was same. There is no meeting ground between progress and reaction, between those who struggle for freedom and those content with servitude. The political reaction covered with communalism takes advantage of the fear of each others community. Honest communalism was fear and false communalism was political reactions. The British government was supporting the reactionary leaders (Muslims) and ignoring the nationalists. Thus they were rearing communal feeling and simultaneously weakening the national struggle. History shows that this has always been done by rulers. By helping the Britishers, the Muslims were an

addition to their proposed special powers and to show to the world how necessary their continued presence in India was¹⁷.

Nehru opines, "I am convinced that nationalism can only come out of the ideological fusion of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and other groups in India. That does not and need not mean the extinction of any real culture of any group, but it does mean a common national outlook, to which other matters are subordinated. I do not think that Hindu-Muslim or other unity will become merely by reciting it like a mantra. That it will come, I have no doubt, but it will come from below. Social and economic forces will inevitably bring other problems to the front."¹⁸

Nehru thought that though the Muslim communalist had faith in democracy of Islam, they were afraid in implementing it practically. On the other hand the Hindu communalists verbally believed in nationalism, yet thought in terms of 'Hindu nationalism' only.¹⁹ In his opinion the Hindu Mahasabha was revivalist rather than progressive. Usually verbal warfare occurred between Muslim league and Hindu Mahasabha. The Britishers were giving importance to these communal organizations as against the Congress.²⁰ The fear complex among the Muslim masses should be removed and they should be assured protection which can tone down the feeling of communalism. Hunt for favours from third party, or the ruling power is according to Nehru communalism. He was of the opinion that once the foreign power is deleted, communalism would fall to the ground. Foreign power

and the communalists representing upper class groups preserve their vested interest rather than changing the economic or political structure. The solution of these would upset the social structure. He said that facts and economic forces were more powerful than government and empires.²¹

Nehru's understanding of secularism was a product of personal attitudes, historical circumstances and compulsions of policy. Being conventional believer in his youth, in his middle age he was transformed into a severe critic of organised institutional religion due to the influence of Bertrand Russell and Karl Marx, and the communal riots further reinforced this aversion. He described himself a pagan. He appreciated Upanishads, Gita and Buddhism. In 1958, perceiving the problems facing the world, he concluded, "we should keep in view the old Vedantic ideal of the life-force which is the inner base of everything that exists."²² He wants people to be benefitted by the modern technical process and also says that "the essential objective to be aimed at is the quality of the individual and the concept of dharma underlying it".²³ He believed like Vinoba Bhave that the day of politics and religion has been replaced by science and spirituality which are common to the great religions which lay emphasis on ethics, conduct and hardly on doctrine. "I am not exactly a religious person, although I agree with much that religions have to say".²⁴ Nehru did possess some religious feeling and respect for the beliefs of others provided it would not intrude into their social behaviour.

Keeping in view the religious outlook of Indian nationalism, with the Hindus and Muslims co-operating as two separate communities rather than acting together as Indians, in 1931 at Karachi Congress Nehru incorporated in the resolution on fundamental rights which provided a basis of his secularism. Some of his proposals were freedom of conscience; right to profess and practise any religion subject to public order and morality; guaranteed equality before law irrespective of religion, creed, caste or sex, no discrimination in public employment, in the exercise of trade; and state observing neutrality towards all faith, Nehru thought that Indians were committed to the secular attitude, and that communalism would logically become a non-event. Social and economic strength would further strengthen the national struggle. Hunger, poverty and illiteracy were common problems of most of the Indians. In 1937, when Jinnah in order to consolidate the Muslim League, claimed that Islam was being threatened, Nehru proposed a 'mass contact' movement among the Muslims which failed to gain momentum. With the popular backing of the British, the League reached the climax of partition. It has been observed that Nehru wanted to solve the problem of communalism by assuring a secular future for free Indians, but the then rationale had been impeccable in theory, without any chance of practice in colonial setting. Yet the survey of the country did not mean the death of secularism. Nehru and his contemporary members considered Pakistan as a political necessity and discarded the two-nation theory based on religion. In order to accommodate religious minorities,

secularism became a durable national identity in a multi-religious society.

To Nehru divorce of religion from politics and public life, separation of state from all faiths, religion as a private matter for the individual without any bearing on civil rights and duties, freedom for the profession of diverse forms of religious worship provided they did not conflict with other religions were parts of civilized scientific and rational thinking. Acting other than this was barbarous and medieval to Nehru. In India the ideal attitude is the opportunist policy. In India due to religious pluralism, civil liberties and equal opportunities, only secularism can be the corner-stone of an egalitarian society and a social cement for a democratic community, which is a single channel for social and economically unqualified masses Nehru was prepared to fight a war with Pakistan on political grounds rather than communal grounds especially over the Kashmir issue. India was committed towards the path of secularism. Immediately after independence communal clashes in the post-independent era after the partition came as a shock. Due to Hindu revivalism, Nehru was undergoing a crisis of the spirit because he was aware that the implementation of the phenomenon of secularism was going to be a challenge. Nehru at times wanted to resign. He wrote sadly, "All of us seem to be getting infected with the refugee mentality or, worse, still, the R.S.S. mentality. That is a curious finale to our careers".²⁷

In an ideal secular state there is disestablishment of all religions, where none can enjoy a privileged relationship with the state; and the Government should neither be, nor even thought to be, the agents of any type of religious revival. Nehru as a Prime Minister did not associate himself with any function that had a non-secular tinge. He stressed that the involvement of the Government of India in the 2,500th anniversary celebrations of the Buddha in 1956 was not sponsorship for the promotion of Buddhism, but recognition of Buddha as a great India. Nehru was certain that India would be doomed, unless this outlook changed radically. If India was to survive, the destruction of Hindu communalism and the establishment of secular state and society were inevitable. The communalism of the majority community which had disguised as nationalism was the Indian version of fascism. Bringing religion into politics would mean to ruin both. As a Prime Minister he saw in the Telengana rebellion violent phases of communism and communalism and he perceived that Hindu political resurgence was the primary threat to the modern democratic India. In order to curtail Sikh communalism, he supported Pratap Singh Kairon, despite his weakness, and also made attempts to curb Arya Samaj from interfering in Punjab politics. In Nehru's views, revivalism among the Hindus and the feeling of insecurity among the religious minorities were the greatest danger. He thought that the Hindus should make the Muslims feel at home and not treat the Muslims as second class citizens. The mischiefs of the communal Muslims should be dealt with sternly. He pampers Muslims and

says that after partition the Muslims who were communal were so on the defensive. He expressed his views that their loyalty should not be questioned because it will be a natural growth of circumstances. Winning the Muslims was a problem of social psychology which had to be handled carefully by the majority community. Minorities should be treated as a trust rather than as extraneous elements to be crushed or appeased. The test of success is the feelings of the minorities rather than what the majority thinks. The effective rule of the majority should provide full scope for the minorities which is an important criterion of a working democracy. Whenever there is a sense of grievance from the minorities, it demands a self-examination for the majority. He was unshaken in expressing his view that it was for the Hindus to take initiatives and be generous. He had given some justification for the minorities to be communal; and he found no reason for the majority to be so. "Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is political reactions".²⁸ Rather than remaining staunch fundamentalists Muslims and other minorities ought to become secular.

Christian minorities were the result of the works of Missionaries who visited India under the patronage of the European powers During the British era, Christianity was well knitted with imperialism.²⁹ After 1947 he did not oppose the evangelical work because it would be suppression of Christianity and guaranteed practise and propagation of religion. He pulled up the government of Madhya Pradesh for appearing to be

anti-Christian in 1959, he disapproved the intervening of the Christian clergy in the politics of Kerala in 1962. American missionaries arrived in India after 1947 and their number was doubled. What worried Nehru was that they were advising the local Christians, "quietly or aggressively" to keep aloof from the rest of India. Nehru's chief adviser; Verrier Elwin who was a clergyman spoke of the establishment of a 'Christian Mahasabha'³¹. These foreigners in the guise of missionaries were participating in non-religious and anti-national activity. Nehru's approach to the problems was to deal with the missionary institutions of India and abroad and grant visas only to doctors, nurses and specialists. Nehru justified such action on political grounds and expressed that he did not have any antipathy to their evangelical activity. He reminded President Rajendra Prasad, being a symbol of the secular state, he should not have given the permission of holding a conference and criticizing the missionaries in Rashtrapathi Bhavan.³²

The problem of integrating the Muslims became complicated due to their meagre size and historical circumstances. Nehru's policy was giving special attention to the recruitment of Muslims in adequate numbers to the armed and civil services, particularly the Police and to encourage their employment in the private sector. In 1958 Nehru collected quarterly reports of official recruitment from the respective Chief Ministers. He gave special consideration for Urdu so that the Muslims would feel that even though partition has taken place

the symbols of their community was preserved and they were holding honourable place in India. Thus Nehru was successful in building up a peaceful and co-operative atmosphere between the communities within India so that they lived as equals which was vigorously advocated abroad.

In certain matters Nehrus views did not fit squarely with his promotion of secularism as the basis of equality and democracy. Special treatment of minorities perhaps weakens the secular ideal. On the one hand Nehru condemned caste system as violation of secularism, on the other hand, he encouraged reservations which he considered as a remedy for long-standing injustices. This perpetuated division and confirmed lower status and standards.

One of the obvious aspect of secularism is that in 1948 Nehru made a commitment with the support of the Government to a resolution in the Constituent Assembly for the ban of communal political parties. He argued that the state should not interfere with religions, so also religious organisations should not build up religious grounds for political actions. This resolution was not practically implemented. In 1961, through the Law Ministry he was told that it was difficult to give a clear cut definition of communal parties and any attempt would be an infringement of fundamental rights.

In 1923, keeping in view the rights of the Minorities as Mayor of Allahabad, and guide of the Municipal Board, he rejected the suggestion to prohibit cow-slaughter. In 1947 when Rajendra Prasad wanted to immediately ban cow-slaughter Nehru refused. The issue was considered as a common problem of breeding of quality cattle and was not only a religious but also an economic issue. He took a stand with Gandhi, the compulsory stoppage of cow-slaughter would be a concession to Hindu feeling and hence it should be avoided in a composite country with a composite culture. He had a general concern for animal welfare and he considered the value of a cow, equal to that of a horse. Unlike Gandhi he disclaimed any special sentiment for the cow. Yet he listed the banning of cow-slaughter as one of the Directive Principles of state policy in the constitution. However, he told the Chief Ministers of the respective states that the legislation should be confined to cows and calves and he also suggested measures to protect and improve the quality of the breed.³⁴ He was of the opinion that ban on cow slaughter would lead to killing of the best cattle and protection of the poorest.

Nehru's understanding of secularism has been strengthened due to his liberal cultural upbringing. He wrote "The great majority of the people of the new bourgeoisie were Hindus. This was due to their somewhat better economic condition, as compared to the Muslims, and also to their taking to English education, which was a passport to government service and the professions. The Muslims were generally poorer. Most of

the weavers who had gone to the wall on account of the British destruction of Indian industries, were Muslims. In Bengal, which has the biggest Muslim population of any Indian province, they were poor tenants or small land holders. The landlord was usually a Hindu, and so was the village bania, who was the money-lender and the owner of the village store. The landlord and the bania were thus in a position to oppress the tenant and exploit him, and they took full advantage of this position. It is well to remember this fact, for in this lies the root cause of the tension between Hindu and Muslim".³⁶

Nehru was a critic of Hindu Mahasabha and so was the Hindu Mahasabha of Nehru. Hindu Mahasabha was against the Nehru Liaquat pact of April 8, 1950. In a speech in Nasik on September 1950, Nehru expressed his belief that secularism would provide great relief to the minority groups in India. He was devoted to scientific methodology stressing on rationalism. This evolved his nationalist political ideology laying emphasis on secularist democracy, a counterpoise to medievalism, obscurantism and religious dogmatism. Being a student of Indian thought, he added that secularism did not signify "merely material well being" Hence he wrote: "It must essentially have spiritual values and

certain standards of behaviour, and, when we consider these, we enter immediately into the realm of what has been called religion".³⁸

Unfortunately the flexibility and compromises which Nehru exhibited in dealing with majority opinion as Congress leader regarding economic matters was lacking when he dealt with Muslim League. Though his rationale was different, his attitude towards Muslim League was in conformity with those of the dominant Congress leadership who considered the congress party as the sole representative of the Indian people and discarded aligned groups. Grasping the nature of the communal problem in India, he wrote a letter to his daughter Indira Gandhi in May 1933. In the letter he admitted that different groups, joined the non-co-operation movement led by Gandhi in 1920-22 with different motives. He came to the conclusion that there were three kinds of Nationalism in India: Hindu nationalism, Muslim nationalism and Indian nationalism, and he considered the last one as true nationalism. It was difficult for him to draw a sharp line between Hindu nationalism and Indian nationalism. "The two overlapped, as India is the only home of the Hindus and they formed a majority there. It was thus easier for the Hindus to appear as full blooded nationalists than for the Muslims, although each stood for his own particular brand of nationalism"³⁹. He did not blame the Britishers for creating the Hindu-Muslim problem in India, but they made efforts to keep that problem alive and discouraged rapprochement among the

communities. In his autobiography in 1935, he identified both Hindu and Muslim communalism with political and social reaction.⁴⁰ He conceded that the struggle of the Congress Muslims, organised as the 'Nationalist Muslim Party', in order to combat the communal Muslim leaders had collapsed which was pitiful story.⁴¹

The after effects of the collapse were reflect in the results of provincial legislatures election which were held in 1937. The Congress Party could win seats in North-West Frontier Province where there was Muslim majority in the provinces. Congress emerged as the dominant party in almost all legislatures where Hindus had majority of seats. Throughout India, the total number of Muslim seats in provincial Assemblies were 482. The Congress contested 58 seats and won 26 Muslim League secured 108 and most of the Muslim seats had gone to provincial parties. Though it was not an impressive tally for the League, the Congress also did not exhibit a foothold among the Muslims, except in the North West Frontier Province. The need to win the confidence of the Muslim masses was inevitable for the Congress. The talk of coalition between the Congress and the Muslim League failed to materialise. One of the major causes of this failure as per Nehru's assessment was that the Congress was negotiating with the communalist. Muslim parties could not reach the Muslim masses who were in the need of welfare. According to him, the calks of understanding between Muslims and Hindus represented a medieval mentality which had no place in the modern world.⁴²

In 1937 Nehru considered the Congress-League Coalition Ministry in Uttar Pradesh a myth. It was alleged by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, that the talks of a Congress-League Coalition Ministry failed because of Nehru's insistence on the appointment of only one Minister from the Muslim League, while the latter wanted two of its representatives to be taken in.⁴³ Nehru showed very little interest in the formation of the U.P. Ministry.⁴⁴ Although not the sole decision-maker, the fact is that he played a significant role in his home province in decision-making relating to the formation of a coalition ministry.⁴⁵ He wrote to Govind Ballabh Pant, the then leader of the Congress Party in U.P, when he was interested in a coalition ministry : "I am personally convinced that any kind of pact, a coalition between us and the Muslim League, will be highly injurious. It will mean that we almost lose our right to ask the Muslims to join directly. It will mean many other things also which are equally undesirable".⁴⁶ After serious negotiations Nehru reluctantly absorbed two of the Muslim League's leaders into the Ministry but on conditions which he himself described as "stringent", and intended to secure "the winding up of the Muslim League group in the U.P. and its absorption in the Congress".⁴⁷ The talks failed when the conditions were unacceptable to the League leaders. It was generally accepted that this led the Muslim League leadership towards partition. Nehru considered the failure of the Congress-League Coalition in 1937 as "natural and logical" in the then existing circumstances, and he later on admitted that "the consequences of it on the communal question were unfortunate and

it led to a feeling of grievance and isolation among many Muslims". This led to the first time in history, within a short span of two years, to emerge as a really powerful political organisation. The leaders of the Muslim League were determined to maintain their separate political and cultural identity of Muslims and secure a share in power commensurate with their historical and political importance. Mountbatten plan was the basis for India's partition. Nehru had contributed a lot for this plan and it was legitimately known as Mountbatten - Nehru plan. Being pitted against powerful historical and social forces, Nehru failed to prevent India's partition in 1947. Jawaharlal Nehru as a national leader and Prime Minister shaped and articulated the concept of secularism. Thus India's struggle for independence proceeded with values of equal human worth, brotherhood, state does not identify itself with any one religion but is friendly and protects all religions. The national identity transcends but never negates religious identity. This implies the separation of the rights and duties of a citizen in his public life from adherence, in his private life, to the beliefs and practices of his religion. To Nehru secular state means freedom of religion, conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion. A caste-ridden society is not exactly secular but that which guarantees social and political equality is an ideal secular society. In India's intellectual heritage, Nehru's large concept of secularism as an equitable and humane social order where persons professing different faiths live in harmony in consonance with, marks a step forward. Nehru's

starting point was not religion but science and rational thought. In his view poverty and ignorance perpetuates injustice and oppression. Through education, economic and social change the disadvantage masses could be . rescued from vulnerability to the exploitation of religious sentiment by vested interests. He stressed the importance of the higher values of life. He defined secular democracy as promoting equal opportunities for a fuller life - a concept that strengthens inter-faith harmony. To him modernity and social change were a spiral movement retaining the roots in the past while aspiring to the future. The creative tension between the inertia of tradition and the thrust of modernisation would be resolved in a higher synthesis, secular and socialist democracy providing the framework for the transformation of an old society.⁴⁹

Jawaharlal Nehru was more than a Prime Minister since he had established a position in the national hierarchy of leadership prior to independence, when the Congress was under the coalition leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. Among his competitors in the Congress hierarchy before independence, none had the support of the masses as Nehru had. After independence he was a natural' choice to lead the country. He assured the masses since the pre-independent era that the mass poverty could be abolished after independence. In his opinion, India would have a number of opportunities after independence. Nehru possessed a national base and legitimacy, due to mass-leader identification. Because of this asset he became the Prime Minister. The masses

were with Nehru since the politics of ballot confirmed it repeatedly. Other leaders of the Congress realized that Nehru was an unchallenged leader of the party as well as the government because he drew great support from the masses. For their political survival, other party and factional leaders accepted Nehru as an umpire in intra-party and inter-state conflicts. Nehru was accepted as an undisputed leader of the masses due to his role in the national movement and he was shrewd in being autonomous from party factions or regional barriers.

Nehru's position was pre-eminent in the Indian political system, because of a decisive and crucial role in normal and emergency situations. Nehru collected individuals he personally wanted in the Council of Ministers. Nehru thought that the talents of stalwarts in the party, like Patel and Azad and also non-party men like C.D.Deshmukh should be utilised in national building. He was dominant in selection of candidates at central and state level. He allotted crucial portfolios to his colleagues who possessed similar ideological persuasions as he. As head of the government, he gathered information about important happenings in the country through a network of intelligence service. Summing up, Nehru is an efficient Prime Minister of the country due to his supraconstitutional position.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

When religious wars were being fought in Europe, India was tolerant due to its eclectic culture. When we assess Nehru's personality we find that Nehru had imbibed the composite Indian culture. He had struggled to link past to the present and future. He was a staunch believer in democracy which resulted from his western education. The remedy he suggested to erase communalism was secularism. Scientific principle based on reason should dominate over superstition.

Being a Kashmiri Brahmin, under the patronage of Mughals, Nehru family occupied an eminent place due to their literary expertise and law profession. His western education had moulded him into a rational man who believed in the progress of the country through science and technology. He was proud of Indian culture, especially Buddhism due to its widespread influence in the East. He was aware of the drawbacks of religion, at the same time he knew its impact on the minds of people, hence advocated tolerance of all Religions which is the base of Indian secularism.

Nehru being the architect of modern India, his life and work reflect his secular spirit. Being an active member of the Congress he opposed the then prevailing communal parties. He was against separate electorates. He was of the opinion that the communal problem should be solved by mutual consensus. He wanted

the communal leaders to be reformist rather than revolutionary. The communal leaders under the patronage of Britishers became political reactionaries. Nehru's main intention was providing a standard of living for the masses who were in abject poverty. Since the pre-independent era he had sown the seeds of secularism. With the partition of the country secularism became the inevitable basis of the polity to provide security to the masses. Nehru as a Prime Minister worked for the separation of religion and politics, at some moments successful and at some moments failure in practical terms. He worked hard for the establishment of Indian nationalism. Due to his secular approach he succeeded in solving intra party and inter-state conflicts.

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CHAPTER : III

NEHRU ON TOLERANCE OF ALL RELIGIONS

Religion is an age old practice which is transmitted from one generation to another in almost all cultures. Since there are differences in religious opinions there is need for tolerance. Tolerance of all religions acknowledges the right of others which is a sign of civilized society.

In this chapter we would discuss briefly Nehru's (1) attitude towards religion and (2) attitude towards God. Different interpretations of religion has been given by different people. If religion means rituals and scriptures, Nehru was not a religious man. If religion means belief in the moral government of the universe and the service of our fellow men, then definitely he was a religious man. To him, religion based on rituals was an anathema. Such a religion he called a women's affair, and the visits to temples, holy people ceremonies and pujas had hardly impressed him. He was attracted towards Hinduism for its Upanishads and Gita rather than for its rituals and ceremonies. He couldn't resist the overpowering influence of Mahatma Gandhi in religious matter. He thought that an individual could be victorious over any religious denomination, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim, provided the religion was concerned with inner virtues of life. To him religion was the essence of character, truth, love and purity of mind.

In his Autobiography Nehru defines religion in the following manner. He says "probably it consists of the inner development of the individual, the evolution of his consciousness in a certain direction which is considered good. What the direction is will again be a matter of debate. But as far as I understand it, religion lays stress on this inner change and considers outward change as but the projection of this inner development."¹ In Nehru's view there is no conflict between religion and science. He wrote in The Unity of India. "Perhaps there is no conflict between true religion and science, but, if so, religion must put on the garb of science and approach all its problems in the spirit of science. A purely secular philosophy of life may be considered enough by most of us. Why should we trouble ourselves about methods beyond our reach when the problems of the world insistentlly demand solution ? And yet that secular philosophy itself must have some background, some objectives other than merely material, well-being. It must essentially have spiritual values and certain standards of behaviour, and, when we consider these, we enter immediately into the realm of what has been called religion".²

Regarding God, he did not have any faith in a personal God. Nehru firmly believed and had the desire of having some faith in something which one may call by any name. Nehru agreed with Voltaire's words "Even if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him".³ "But too much reliance on supernatural factors may lead, and has often led, to a loss of

self reliance in man and to a blunting of his capacity and creative ability".⁴ He however thinks that it is desirable and necessary to have faith "in things of the spirit which are beyond the scope of our physical world, some reliance on moral, spiritual and idealistic conceptions, or else we have no anchorage, or objectives or purpose in life".⁵ "Whether we believe in God or not", he says in his book *The Discovery of India*, "it is impossible not to believe in something, whether we call it a creative life-giving force, or vital energy inherent in matter which gives it its capacity for self-movement and change and growth, or by some other name, something that is as real, though elusive, as life is real when contrasted with death." His object of belief is some ideal, personal , national or international, some distant objective, some vague conception of a perfect man or a better world.

"God" Nehru confesses, "I find myself incapable of thinking of a deity, or of any unknown supreme power in anthropomorphic terms, and the fact that many people think so is continually a source of surprise to me".⁷ Nehru's ideas reflect his views regarding the tolerance of multiple religious practices by the society and the state.

Nehru opines that one should not be carried away either by passion or prejudice since they are momentary. He cites the examples of Gautama Buddha of ancient Indian political thought and Mahatma Gandhi of Modern Indian political thought who aimed

at highest form of life in society and themselves adhered to high principles and showed the path to right action. Even temper, foresight and tolerance of spirit guides towards greatness. He says that progress should be attained by peaceful co-operation and toleration. In the name of religion, barriers should be checked and state should work for the attainment of not only political unity but also unity of the mind and heart. Only then material and spiritual happiness of all the people is possible. He aims at a classless society which could be realized through peaceful methods in a democratic manner. Science has brought about tremendous change in human life in political, social and economic organizations.⁸ In Nehru's view, tolerance is a state of mind which has made the world exciting. A rich man can put forth his ideas making use of modern mass media. He firmly believes that toleration is symbolic of culture and civilization.⁹

Nehru's rationale for accepting the principle of toleration of all religions in society can be deduced from the six universal characteristics of religion emphasised by him.

They are:

1. Religion lays foundation of morality and ethics.
2. Religion helps in the betterment of humanity.
3. Religion gives inner source of strength and creativity.
4. Religious places offer a peaceful atmosphere of study.
5. Religion leads towards metaphysics.
6. Religions are based on different philosophies of life.

1] RELIGION LAYS FOUNDATION OF MORALITY AND ETHICS

Nehru knew that religion had supplied some deeply felt inner need of mankind, and that morality and ethics have grown out of it. It was because of his young Irish Tutor, Ferdinand T. Brooks that Nehru got interested in the great books of the Hinduism like Upanishads and Bhagwat Gita. In his childhood Nehru heard from his mother and aunt stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata and was attracted to its moral side. In his early days he had read Gita occasionally and admired it, and numerous parts of it had a powerful effect on him. He was influenced by Gita's view that for a person's right deed, right results would flow. Due to his scientific training he would accept any view only when there was a scientific explanation for it. His scientific mind came to the conclusion that every right action had a right result, and every wrong action, a wrong result.¹¹

Nehru used a very broad conception of religion. He wrote, "Dharma really means something more than religion. It is from a root word which means to hold together; it is the inmost constitution of a thing, the law of its inner being. It is an ethical concept which includes the moral code, righteousness and the whole range of man's duties and responsibilities".¹²

Again, Nehru emphasises on an ethical approach to life where means would be more important than ends. "Some kind of ethical approach to life has a strong appeal for me, though it

would be difficult for me to justify it logically. I have been attracted by Gandhiji's stress on right means. It is full of difficulty and perhaps ends and means are not really separable but form together one organic whole".¹³ In a world which think: almost exclusively of ends and ignores means, this emphasis on means seems odd and remarkable.

He finds no difference between the ideals and objectives of yesterday and today are similar. He admits that they had lost some of their lustre and beauty. Previously they had warmed the heart and vitalized the body. Right was being distorted and evil was often triumphant. He questioned himself whether human nature would change after training, bearing suffering and misfortune, becoming national and raising man above lust, violence and deceit. He questions whether ends and means were tied up inseparably, acting and reacting on each other, the wrong means destroying and distorting the end. He was sure that selfish human beings hardly adapt right means. Reaction under such circumstances was a dilemma. Not acting was a complete confession of failure and submission to evil; acting meant compromise with some form of evil, and such compromises would result in untoward consequences.¹⁴

2] RELIGION HELPS IN THE BETTERMENT OF HUMANITY

According to Nehru, the only thing sacrosanct is the human being and matters should be judged from the social point of view of human betterment.¹⁵ There is no magic in this world

except the occasional magic of human personality and the human mind. There should always be the human touch, but behind the human touch one should give the feeling of firm decisions.

Religion, Nehru believes supplies certain profoundly felt inner need of human nature. Throughout the world maximum number of people follow some religious belief or the other. Religion produces two types of people (1) best of men and women, and (2) bigoted narrow-minded cruel tyrants. It gives a set of values to human life, and though some of these values have no application today, or are even harmful, others are still the foundation of morality and ethics. Science, Nehru thinks, hardly tells us anything about the purpose of life. The scope of religion is wider as it deals with many aspects of human experience. Science deals with the visible world whereas religion with that of the invisible.¹⁸

Regarding the need of religion Nehru feels that "a certain faith in a worthwhile ideal is essential to give substance to our lives and to hold us together".¹⁹ He says that "deprived of hope and faith, life would be a wilderness without an Oasis".²⁰ Unlike orthodox people, being a liberal person he believes, "There must be the most perfect freedom of faith and observance.... But when religion comes in the garb of vested interest and exploits people, it is not religion".²¹ Further, Nehru goes on to suggest that though people are weak, making errors, mortals, living varied span of life, some elements of

immortal Gods is incumbent in all.²² According to him, "Any approach that is along the line of the moral and spiritual is a higher approach. Prayer is along the line of the moral and spiritual, and therefore, it is a higher approach. Therefore I welcome it".²³

Nehru stated that religion had helped greatly in the development of humanity. While impressing upon man the awe and mystery of the unknown, they have discouraged him from trying to understand the unknown, and also what might come in the path of social effort. He regretted that religion, though it brought comfort to numerous human beings, it checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society. His idea of religion was service of humanity and he was truly devoted to working for the betterment of humanity.²⁴

His approach to life's problems was scientific. Optimism of science began in between nineteenth century and early twentieth century. He possessed the feeling of optimism which made him feel a secure and comfortable existence providing energy and self-confidence. Though some of the values have hardly any application today, religion had given a set of values to human life which still provide a basis of moral support. Religion dealt with uncharted regions of human experience, uncharted, that is, by the scientific positive knowledge of the day. Religion is an extension of the known and charted region. Scientific and Religious methods, Nehru thought, were dissimilar and had to be

dealt with different kinds of media. In spite of its magnificent achievements, science knew very little of the vast unknown region. The methods of science could not be adapted to the physical, artistic, spiritual and other elements as the invisible world. In his view life is a mixture of visible world and invisible world, and no thinking person can ignore it, science hardly describes the purpose of life but there is hope that it may invade the invisible world and illumine the problem of human existence. The controversy between science and religion in Nehru's view, can be solved by applying scientific methods to emotional and religious experience.²⁵

3] RELIGION GIVES INNER SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND CREATIVITY

Nehru says if creative imagination is lacking our growth becomes more and more stunted, which is a sign of decay. Religion consists of the inner development of the individual, the evolution of his consciousness in a certain direction which is considered good. What that direction is will again be a matter for debate. But, as far as I understand it, religion lays stress on this inner change and considers outward change as the projection of this inner development. There can be no doubt that this inner development powerfully influences the outer environment. But it is equally obvious that the outer environment powerfully influences the inner development. Both act and interact on each other".²⁷ He opines that religious belief deals with external Gods and moral behaviour rather than a faith based on inner experience. In Buddhist principles, Buddha

nature is a reality in oneself, in Hindu tradition the atman or soul is one's real self, in Christianity the belief is entirely confined to Christ.²⁸

Nehru says that the inner development of Indians was
* obscured by the more worldly tasks and the victory of the spirit of efficiency which was a characteristic feature of the western minds. This reached its zenith in the nationalism which led to grotesque wars. In his own words, "In the darkness of despair and sorrow and the eagerness to rebuild our country the light of Eastern wisdom helped thousands of our people to discover an inner source of strength and creativity. Books like Zen Buddhism and Siddhartha gave predominance to Eastern spirituality which was essential for the development of Western mind."²⁹

He perceives that in future the Buddhist saying will become true : "Every situation is the best of all occasions", to testify our loyalty towards the inner way, never to lose the golden thread which unites us with our inmost being. The combination of the two attitudes of human life, the Western mind answering to the demands of the external world, and the Eastern spirit responding to the urge, longing, promise and consciousness of one's soul, enlightens the creative integration of Asian and Western minds. The human being can deliver from suffering through Yoga and transcendental meditation and as the Western mind raises the material conditions of our lives. The integration of Eastern and Western spirit provides maturity to individual life as well as strives for a healthy society.

4. RELIGIOUS PLACES OFFER A PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE OF STUDY

Nehru says, "these days the biggest temple and mosque and gurudwara is the place where man works for the good of mankind".³¹ He found a temple to be strange place with a mass of seething humanity. He was struck by the curious way of the Hindu faith which refused to part with any born within its fold. Due to his ideas Nehru was - accused of irreligious and treated as one who is a devout follower. In the temple he found the psychological influence of the religious edifices which impress and frighten the multitudes and increase the power of the priesthood. In olden days the priests were triumphant and ruled over the minds of man in Egypt and Mesopotamia. There are not many people who can resist this numbing effect.³² He visited countries where Buddhism was a dominant faith and was impressed by the monasteries and monks who had tremendous impact on the people. He was attracted by Buddha's metaphysical doctrine. In some of the monasteries there was an atmosphere of peaceful study and contemplation on the faces of most of the monks. It appeared to him a dignity, peace, calmness, gentleness, and detachment from the world. To Nehru, Buddha's image symbolized the entire spirit of Indian thought. Nehru's belief was that though Buddha's eyes were closed some power of the spirit looked out which was full of vital energy. He was impressed by Buddha's personality due to his impact.³³ Nehru says "I prefer the open sea, with all its storms and tempests. I am not interested in the after life, in what happens after death I find the problems of this life sufficiently absorbing to fill my mind."³⁴

Nehru says, "intellectually, I can appreciate to some extent the conception of monism, and I have been attracted towards the Advaita (non-dualist) philosophy of the vedanta.... At the same time the vedanta, as well as other similar approaches, rather frighten me with their vague formless incursions into infinity. The diversity and fullness of nature stir me and produce a harmony of the spirit, and I can imagine myself feeling at home in the old Indian or Greek pagan and pantheistic atmosphere, but minus the conception of God or Gods that was attached to it".³⁵

On the whole we find the Buddhist influence profoundly on the life and political philosophy of Nehru. The personality of Buddha, the rational ethical doctrine, of the Aryan eight gold path and the compassion serenity, exalted nobility. His magnificence and ethical grandeur symbolised for him the deep strength and subterranean preserves of power of Indian culture. In 1954 he made use of the Buddhist concept of Pancha Sheela in a secular context to indicate the principle of co-existence in a divided world.

5. RELIGION LEADS TOWARDS METAPHYSICS :

In Nehru's opinion religion merges into metaphysics due to its greater appeal to the mind. Metaphysics is hard thinking and the application of logic and reasoning. Almost all thinking people either to a greater or lesser extent dabble in

metaphysics because it deals with many aspects of the universe. Since ages in Asia and Europe the trend was more towards inner life rather than external, and usually thinking persons in moments of crisis and mental trouble turn towards metaphysical speculations. Nehru accepts certain metaphysical conceptions as part of the faith. He says, "I have sometimes found a certain intellectual fascination in trying to follow the rigid lines of metaphysical and philosophic thought of the ancients on the moderns. But I have never felt at ease there and have escaped from their spell with a feeling of relief."³⁷

In his view religion not only merges into metaphysics but also into mysticism and philosophy. Though the mystics were attractive figures, he was irritated because they live in a sea of emotional experience which may likely lead to self-delusion. He is basically interested in this world, this life. He is ignorant of survival after death, and things such as soul hardly trouble him. He was brought up in an environment where soul (Atman), future life, the karma theory of cause and effect, and reincarnated were taken for granted. He does not believe in these theories as a matter of religious faith. Unknown region hardly affected his present life. Spiritualism, manifestations of spirits seemed absurd to him. It was a psychic-phenomenon to know the mysteries of the after life which is nothing but an exploitation of the emotions. Scientific method which is objective approach should involve certain subjective elements conditioned as far as possible by it.³⁸

6. RELIGIONS ARE BASED ON DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE

Nehru feels that religion is usually interpreted in different ways by different people such as rites and ceremonies, sacred books, community, dogmas, morals, reverence, love, fear, hatred, charity, sacrifice, asceticism, fasting, feasting, prayer, ancient history, marriage, death, the next world, of riots and the breaking of heads. It causes tremendous confusion due to its strong emotional response.³⁹ Nehru is strictly against bigotry and dogmatism in religion. He detests communalism in any shape or form and disfavours political or economic rights depending on the membership of a religious group or community.

Nehru says, "I was born a Hindu, but I do not know how far I am justified in calling myself one or in speaking on behalf of Hindus. But birth still counts in this country and by right of birth I shall venture to submit to the leaders of the Hindus that it should be their privilege to take the lead in generosity. Generosity is not only good morals, but is often good politics and sound expediency. And it is inconceivable to me that in a free India, the Hindus can ever be powerless. So far as I am concerned, I would gladly ask our Muslim and Sikh friends to take what they will without protest or argument from me. I know that the time is coming soon when these labels and appellations will have little meaning and when our struggle will be on an economic basis".⁴⁰

During the Azad memorial lecture delivered on February 22, 1959, Nehru said:

"When Islam came to India in the form of political conquest, it brought conflict...The philosophy and the world outlook of the old Hindus was amazingly tolerant...The Muslims had to face a new problem, how to live with others as equals...They came into conflict with Christendom and through hundreds of years, the problem was never solved. In India slowly a synthesis was developed. But before it could be completed, other influences came into play".⁴¹

In his opinion, there are inhibitions, narrow codes and ceremonials in both Moslem and Hindu views of life. He wants India to be free from certain traditional elements and thus lessen her religiosity and turn to science. He wishes India to be free from the prison which has been stunting her spirit and preventing growth. He suggests two ideas of cultivating a scientific temper and developing the spirit of toleration to follow the path of secularism. Secularism based on Gandhi's concept of the truth of all religions and Nehru's insistence on rationality and scientific temper get submerged.⁴²

CONCLUSION :

Tolerance of all Religions is essential because religion has been transmitted from one generation to other with differences of opinion still prevailing. The English thinkers

like John Locke, J.S.Mill and Allport prefer State's neutrality in religious matters while accepting plurality of views.

Jawaharlal Nehru says that one must adopt high principles, following the path of Buddha and Gandhi. To attain a progressive path Nehru says that state should work for spiritual happiness of the individual. In the modern age science may be partial towards wealthy people, but at the same time inculcates scientific temper i.e. tolerating each others culture and civilizations.

Religion provides the foundation of morality and ethics which is the profound need of human beings. This appealed to Nehru tremendously. Unlike Kautilya, he adopts the Gandhian path of adopting good means in order to attain a good end. Usually selfish people adopt wrong means and compromises with them is dangerous.

Nehru is aware that religion helped in the rise of some good men, though it has also promoted some fanatics. Due to its wider scope than science, as it deals with the invisible world, human beings cling more towards religion. The faith in the invisible world binds people together and simultaneously leads to the development of humanity. Nehru owes his feelings of optimism to science. Religion deals with the invisible world and science with the visible one. Hence human life is entangled between facts and fancies.

Nehru believes that creative imagination which is a part of religion leads to growth. It moulds the inner development and outer environment. Eastern wisdom lays emphasis on inner source of strength and creativity. Whereas the western man is more concerned of the objective conditions. The Eastern man is able to sustain his creative imagination through spiritual exercises such as transcendental meditation and Yoga. Combination of Eastern and Western spirit will build up healthy individuals and society. To Nehru religious edifices have a psychological impact because they incur fear on numerous people through the power of priesthood. Being an ardent admirer of Buddha, he found an atmosphere of peaceful study and contemplation in Buddhist monasteries and schools. A monk for Nehru was a symbol of peace, calmness, dignity and gentleness. To him Buddha symbolized serenity and the entire spirit of Indian thought. He experienced tranquillity in the old Indian or Greek pagan minus Gods. Hence Nehru seems to be engrossed more in the problems of this world rather than being worried about what happens after death.

He says that in the ancient world man concentrated more on inward rather than external life. It is common that people generally accept certain metaphysical conception which form a part of the faith in which they grow up. He detested mysticism for its sentimental nature.

Religion generally means different things to different people. Nehru is in favour of freedom of religion and culture. Above all his conception of religion is patriotism. He is sensitive to the differences between the traditional Hindu and Muslim philosophies of life. He seems to be optimistic in perceiving that those differences can be eradicated by the modern civilization. Like a Buddhist he seems to be interested in this world and in this life. Being a Brahmin by birth he rationalises the Karma theory of cause and effect, and reincarnation which is totally discarded by the west. Being a practical person, Jawaharlal Nehru has full faith in science which can inculcate scientific temper, removing drawbacks of religion and guiding towards tolerance of all religions which leads to the path of secularism.

Thus Nehru has a very broad conception of religion which provides a philosophical basis of human life. This view admits of no incompatibilities, in the existence of multiple religions. Therefore, he seems to argue that all religious faiths should be tolerated by the people.

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CHAPTER - IV

NEHRU ON ACCOMMODATION OF MINORITIES' RIGHTS

A minority is generally a distinct cultural group which is usually discriminated, exploited and persecuted. On the other hand, the majority is often the dominant group enjoying greater power, status and privileges. Since the minorities belong to a different race, religion or nationality, they hardly exhibit a full participation in the society. The criterion for evaluating the majority - minority relationship is on the basis of distribution of power. This is a crucial factor because there is a difference when sometimes in a country there is one minority group and in other there are several minority groups. The majority never faces legitimacy crises because they are infused with superiority complex, whereas the minority are infused with inferiority complex. Behaviour of the members in the society is based upon dominant group values. The principle of compatibility operates when the cultural and physical traits of the minority are similar to those of the majority. There is assimilation of the minorities into the majorities.

One significant way of understanding majority minority situations is in terms of the interacting aims of the majority. Historically majority groups have dealt with the minority group problems in the following manner :assimilation, either forced or permitted; pluralism; legal protection of minorities; peaceful or forced population transfer; continued subjugation; and genocide.

Minorities in India are not racial or national minorities as in USA and European countries but are religious minorities. Religion transcends racial differences in India. Conversions take place from one religion to another but the person does not lose his racial background or his cultural and linguistic inheritance. Though there are religious differences there is a great deal of mutual tolerance among the people. Nehru suggests that Indians accommodated minorities in a tactful manner leaving no scope to conflict. Compromises are made to reconcile conflicting interests. This principle of accommodation is also adopted in the Indian Constitution.

Nehru comments on minorities thus : "I have no desire to interfere with any person's belief, but when those beliefs become petrified in caste divisions, undoubtedly they affect the social structure of the state. They prevent us from realizing the idea of equality which we claim to place before ourselves. They interfere in political matters, just as communalism interferes. We have opposed communalism and continue to be stoutly opposed to it. It is in fact, a negation of nationalism and of the national state. Communalism means the dominance of one religious community. If that community is in a minority, this is opposed to all ideas of democracy. But if that community is in a majority, even so its dominance over others as a religious community would be wholly undemocratic".

Nehru says that casteism and communalism when extended to the political plane become barriers in the development of true democracy and equality. He is in favour of certain constitutional provisions for religious and other minorities. Nehru goes on to suggest that "so far as the minorities are concerned, it is accepted on common ground that they should be given fullest constitutional protection, religious, cultural, linguistic and in every other way. Backward minorities or classes should in addition be given special educational and other privileges to bring them rapidly to the general level".³

In this chapter an attempt is made to study Nehru's ideas regarding the accommodation of minorities' rights in the following sections:

- 1) Building an organic nation and not perpetuating separate tendencies and privileges;
- 2) Nehru's rejection of separate electorate as an evil;
- 3) Nehru's pleas for constitutional safeguards;
- 4) Nehru's views on responsibility of the majority community to satisfy the minority's needs and aspirations.

BUILDING AN ORGANIC NATION :

Nehru was fascinated by personalities who were symbolic of integration and unity such as Buddha, Shankaracharya, Ashoka,

Akbar and Saint Kabir. By Indian heritage, he did not mean Hindu heritage or the Aryan heritage of the North Indians, the Dravidian heritage or the South Indian heritage. He was profoundly conscious of the beauty of pre Aryan Indus valley civilization which is evident at Mohenjodaro' in Sind and Harappa in West Punjab (both in Pakistan). He was the first to talk of pre-Aryan civilization. Nehru appreciated the Dravidians who were the representatives of the Indus valley civilization who had an advanced culture. He believed that pre-history and history was a synthesis of various cultures and civilizations: "...tribes and people's came to India from the north-west from time to time and became absorbed in India. Between the incoming Aryans and (the native) Dravidians the first great cultural synthesis took place which led to the growth of basic Indian culture and had distinctive elements of both".⁴

Jawaharlal Nehru opines that he is proud of ancient magnificent heritage of India because it had always kept its doors windows and spirits open allowing distant people to flourish which was an addition to her strength⁵.

Nehru acknowledged India had always been a multi-religious state where some religions were reciprocally hostile. He was aware that only those rulers who were away from narrow religious stands, could follow a secular path in governing their empire, could unite the people of India powerfully and successfully. Nehru praised the wise policy of the Mughal

emperor Akbar, who successfully managed to bridge a majority of religious, ethnical, linguistic and cultural gap and built a strong and mighty Indian empire where there was unity in diversity in the early sixteenth century.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, "Akbar's success is astonishing, for he created a sense of oneness among the diverse elements of north and central India. There was the barrier of a ruling class, mainly of foreign origin, and there were the barriers of religion and caste, a proselytizing religion opposed to the static but highly resistant system. These barriers did not disappear, but in spite of them that feeling of oneness grew".⁶ Thus tolerance practised by the Great Mughal Akbar was for Nehru a model for future India. He emphasised on the unity of the Indian people. In Nehru's opinion unity must be built on the common integrated culture which was since centuries moulded by a non-violent synthesis of contradictory cultures. He knew that in order to maintain unity among the people it was necessary to suppress with strong determination, religion and militant religious fanatics. Compared to the Muslim minority, the problem of the Christian minority was simple. Christianity was one of the ancient religions of the country which came to India long before the European powers. During the British Raj, Nehru shared the feeling that Christianity and imperialism often became partners.⁷ There was bond of unity inspite of its political division. The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha had been governing the lives of the people since thousands of years. Gradually

deterioration set in with caste divisions, narrow social customs and ceremonials. Along with nuclear science and atomic energy India witnessed the coudung age.⁸

In order to win over separatist tendencies Nehru talked about the objective resolution which guaranteed safeguards for minorities. He obliged the majorities to remove suspicion and fear out of minorities so that they may rise in an equal manner with the majorities. To build up an organic nation, Nehru feels, there is a need of a uniform culture. But unfortunately India lacks this culture due to the presence of distinct ways of living, habits and traditions. Nehru glorified India for preserving its infinite variety and unity simultaneously. Imposition of unity makes a living organism lifeless. The says providing opportunity for every minority should not create barriers because this will ultimately lead to separatism. This results in isolation of minorities and keeping them distant apart from the majorities in the country.⁹

REJECTION OF SEPARATE ELECTORATES :

When Indian rulers achieved a marriage of conflicting relations, ethnical and linguistic elements, they were successful in building a stable empire. The sixteenth and seventeenth century Mughals were considered by Jawaharlal Nehru as the most successful rulers of Indian feudalism. He wrote: "The Mughal rulers were strong so long as they put themselves in line with

the genius of the nation and tried to work for a common nationality and a synthesis of the various elements in the country. When Aurangzeb began to oppose this movement and suppress it and to function more as a Moslem than an Indian ruler, the Mughal Empire began to break up".¹⁰

During the British era Nehru entered into active politics in the early twenties. Nehru was uncomfortable with the Khilafat movement and asserted that Congress should not identify with controversial religions. It is perhaps ridiculous when he says that it was an obligation of Hindus to help the Muslims at this juncture for if the British succeeded in destroying Islam, they would then try to destroy the Hindu religion. Nehru gave a suggestion to the Hindus that they should request Muslims to stop cow-slaughter rather than fight them about it. In mid-twenties there were Hindu-Muslim riots all over India which compelled Nehru to take a clear-cut stand on the issue of religion in politics. According to Nehru communalism is the alliance of religion and politics which is a most dangerous alliance, and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood.¹²

Nehru says communalism is an age old weapon of the imperialists.¹³ To Nehru Swaraj means self-government. In his opinion, in self-government, not one Indian or a thousand Indians should be made a raja or rajas, but every Indian, every Hindu. Mussalman, Sikh or Christian, who lives in India and who is proud

of calling it his motherland should be free and should have a right to take part in the government of the country. It does not mean the government of one sector or one religion. If the Hindus establish their rule in the country, it would be Hindu raj. That will not be self-government. If Muslims are able to establish their rule, that will not be self-government. That would be Muslim raj. Suppose the Sikhs establish their rule in the Punjab, that would be Sikh raj but not swaraj. The Swaraj that he likes to seek is the raj, of the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc. That cannot be the raj of one sect, one creed or one religion. It will not be a raj of the rich or of the poor, of the farmers or of the Zamindars Rich and poor having equal rights is Swaraj.¹⁴

Nehru opposed separatism in any form because he had witnessed that separate electorates have done tremendous damage to our country. Yet he reluctantly agreed to some measure of reservation because he thought that it could be eradicated with the goodwill of the minorities. Nehru had been fighting against the weakness of reservation of majority or minority, yet he accepted it as a necessary evil in the political domain though it will result in separate compartments of the people. He argued that reservation may be compatible only with an autocratic or foreign rule. In a political democracy this kind of reservation would lead to rebellion. In Nehru's views, reservation in a full blooded democracy would isolate minorities. He opines that in a democracy the will of the majority will prevail. The minority

cannot win the trust of the majority if they maintain their identity. Majority being strong in numbers ride rough shod over the wishes of the minority. Nehru cautions the majority not to inflict injustice on minorities. He wanted majorities and minorities to function in a mixed plane rather than regimented working of parties or groups or on a religious or social plane. Otherwise it would be more troublesome for the minority rather than the majority. Nehru feels that we can mould our future in a better manner keeping in view our past. In the then state of affairs he opposed reservation or separate electorate for minority. He was in favour of reservation of backward groups limited to a period of ten years. Ousting separate electorates for minorities and reservation of seats was psychologically a good move for the nation. He says, "It shows that we are really sincere about having a secular democracy irrespective of being a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or a Christian because we are all the products of the past...whether any individual belongs to this or that group, in national or international dealings, ultimately the thing that counts is generosity, goodwill and affection towards other party because lack of it would make the advice hollow. It is an act of faith above all for the majority community because they will have to show after this that they can behave towards others in a generous, fair and just way. Let us live to that faith".¹⁵

PLEA FOR CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS :

Nehru used the term Secularism in 1926. On his return from Europe in 1927 he advised Indians not to worry about the next world and to do good to the fellow countrymen and the country. He saw that the social disharmony had scattered to other sectors with the regional imbalance in development under the East India Company, resulting in maximum gains from British rule by Hindus. Divergence between the religious communities was escalated by the British policy of separate electorates and as the franchise was broadened gradually leading to the growth of communal elements. Nehru came to the conclusion that communalism was a diversion from the main campaign against the British. Both Hindu and Muslim communal parties derived their support from the feudal and upper classes, who were having a nexus with the British and also trying to build a base among the people in India. Nehru perceived the communal parties as giants with clay feet, who would fade once the Britishers were out of India. Nehru deliberately ignored the communal problem and concentrated on the national movement. Majority of the Indians, irrespective of their religion were under common burdens of hunger and poverty, and expected that when the country was free from the above burdens the course of religion in politics would be lifted. As the president of the Congress Nehru was not successful in fighting against communalism.¹⁶

In the Karachi Congress 1931, Nehru promised that every citizen should enjoy freedom of conscience and the right to freely practise any religion, subject to public order and morality, that all citizens were equal before the law, irrespective of religion, creed, caste or sex, that no disability attached to citizens for these reasons in regard to public employment and in the exercise of any trade or calling, and state be neutral in religious matters. Thus the concept of secularism was adopted which was later incorporated in the constitution. He asserted that communalism was a ghost which refused to vanish and was continuing to drink blood. He was of the opinion that the communal parties were props of political reaction. Since the Hindus were majority community he suggested them to take the initiative in generosity. He called the communalism existing among the Hindus as the Indian version of fascism. The leaders of the Muslim communal groups which belonged to middle class behaved with greater dignity compared to those of Hindu Mahasabha, who spoke only for capitalists, landlords and princes. Nehru acknowledged that . Muslims being economically and educationally backward community, might be apprehensive about the future. "Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is politicalreaction".¹⁷

The government's policy of communal award led to division among people. Sitting in prison Nehru questioned, "what a disgusting savage people we are. Politics, progress, socialism, communism, science where are they before this black

religious savagery?"¹⁸ Nehru initiated a Muslim mass contact campaign to win over them politically and economically.¹⁹ In accordance with old traditions of toleration, fullest protection and autonomy were promised to all minorities, subject only to the essential unity of the country and to the democratic basis of its constitution. So far as the minorities, it was accepted as per Article 29 (2) that they should be given fullest constitutional protection, religious, cultural, linguistic and in every other way. Backward minorities or classes should in addition be given special educational and other privileges to bring them rapidly to the general level. Nehru perceived that few problems in the world were of so simple a solution as the Indian minority problem. For him it is a superficial problem lacking deep roots. The real problems of India are economic, the poverty and low standards. As soon as these are tackled aggressively, as they should be, and as modern industry grows, the minority problem fades away. It has been a product of unemployment of the middle classes who had few avenues of work open to them and looked for employment to the state. As state jobs were limited, demand rose for reservation of these for particular communities.

According to Nehru, "we talk in our Directive Principle of raising the standard of living of the people. We do wish to give the same opportunities to everyone so that he can take full advantage of those opportunities and grow to the full stature as far as that stature allows it and if anything comes in the way of achieving this, we should remove that. It is not an easy matter. it is not a thing to be done quickly and suddenly when we have a

vast population".²¹ Thus Nehru felt that proper constitutional safeguards would go a long way in fulfilling the needs of minorities.

Responsibility of the Majority Community :

Nehru wished that Hindus, as the majority community should show generosity which would erase fear and suspicion among minorities. He wanted that the minorities be given assurance not of jobs or seats in the assemblies, but that their culture and traditions would remain intact. Provision to enrich education and language would nourish the common culture of India. In the early thirties Nehru rejected the classification of Indian history into Hindu, Muslim and British, and he emphasised that Islam does not believe in religious persecution.²² Mohammed Ali Jinnah challenged Nehru by appealing in the name of Allah and the Koran and alleged that Islam was threatened. Through correspondence Jinnah put forth before Nehru the question of safeguarding the rights and the interests of the Mussalmans with regard to their religion, culture, language, personal laws and political rights in the national life, the government and the administration of the country. This will satisfy the Mussalmans and create a sense of security and confidence in the majority community. Nehru thought that "the attitude of Jinnah and the Muslim League is governed by the desire to prevent radical changes or the democratisation of India not because of a Hindu majority but because the radical elements will put an end to semi-feudal privileges, etc."²⁴

Regarding the Christian minorities Nehru says, in the past there was a tendency for the Indian Christians to consider themselves as class apart and cut off from the great majority of the Indian community. This was perhaps natural to some extent especially in north India where Christianity was associated in the public mind with the ruling power. Unfortunately the religious issue was dominated by this political aspect and Indian Christians looked to the foreign ruling power for protection. Christianity flourished in South India without any political help or hindrance. As a whole India was remarkably tolerant in religious matters. But later on when the British power became dominant in India, there was an increasing tendency to associate Christianity with this power and most people forgot that Christianity is one of the oldest religions in India, more specially in the South. This association in the public mind with a dominant imperialism had inevitable reactions on the one side the general public, Hindu and Muslim, reacted adversely to Christianity on political considerations. They felt that it was a symbol of their political subjection and that the ruling power wanted to force Christianity on Indians. On the other hand Indian Christians began to lean on that ruling power for special protection and thus created further barriers between themselves and the mass of the people that was a temporary phase from the historical perspective which was bound to disappear after India attained freedom.

After 1947 Nehru as a Prime Minister was more concerned

with Hindu communalism rather than Muslim communalism. Hospitality to all forms of belief, preached by Hindu faith was ideal on paper; but rigid and narrow in practice. Even though the outlook of the Muslim would be worse it would not affect the future of India. Hence it seemed essential to destroy Hindu communalism. The real test of success of secularism was not what the Hindus think but how the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees feel. He felt that if Hindus were secular others would ultimately become secular. Nehru assured the Christians the freedom for evangelical work as long as it does not hamper politics, and paid special attention in recruitment of Muslims in army, civil services, police and private sector. Emphasis was given to Urdu language in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh since it was a symbol of Islamic culture and spoken by both Hindus and Muslims. Showing favours to majority or to minority was to weaken secularism as the base of equality and democracy. Due to the pressure of circumstances, Nehru was not fully on the side of secularism. In 1948, with government support he wanted to ban the communal parties but the resolution was not implemented. Nehru acknowledged that the best way to handle the problem of minorities was to view it as a part of wider issues. He was not successful in solving the problem either during the freedom struggle or after independence. He suggested that the problems of the minorities were unsuitable to his mind and temperament.²⁶

Nehru said, "the primary responsibility of the majority is to satisfy the minority. The majority by virtue of its being

a majority naturally has strength to have its way; it requires no protection. Sometimes it is right to give statutory protection to minorities. It is the duty and responsibility of the majority community to pay particular attention to what the minority there wants, to win it over. I am personally in favour, where such a question arises of the minority there, whether it is a linguistic minority or a religious minority".²⁷ ²⁷

Conlcusion :

Being a distinct group, minority is usually in conflict with the dominant majority due to their overwhelming influence in the society. There is a sense of alienation among the minorities since the power is concentrated with the majority. This simultaneously builds up superiority complex among the majority community and inferiority complex among the minorities. It is only when the physical traits of the minority and majority are similar that the principle of assimilation operates. A developed country like the U.S.A. tries to sort out the problem of minorities by adopting the assimilations policy. India where the problem is much more complex, is trying to sort out the problem of minorities by adopting the principles of accommodation which is exhibited through the Indian constitution. Though Nehru seeks to establish a caste less and Classless society in India, yet he is in favour of providing constitutional privileges for minorities. On the one hand Nehru is interested in building an organic India, at the same time he entrusts the majority community not to make the minority feel alienated. If suspicion

is present in the minds of the minorities, it creates barriers to building up an organic nation. Nehru seems to be aware of the infinite variety in the Indian society; but aims at establishing unity in that variety. If the minorities wish only for their maintenance of variety, it will lead to fundamentalism and ultimately separatism. The imposition of the majority will might hamper the opportunity of the minority who will seek for a protectorate as it happened in the past.

Nehru being one among the Constituent Assembly members was aware that separate electorates had done tremendous damage to the country. He wanted to do away with this major evil. He was successful partially in rooting out the reservations. Being slightly emotional he succumbed to the reservations for Scheduled Castes. This helped in reducing communalism or separatism but resulted in compartmentalisation of politics. Nehru justifies the reservation in foreign rule or autocratic rule, but he opines that in a democracy such a phenomenon would isolate the minorities from the mainstream. History proves that if injustice is done to the minorities, majority would suffer from it. The most desirable thing is that majority and minority should function on mixed planes. He wanted to completely do away with the reservation but due to the their prevailing situation he was in favour of reservations of backward groups for a period of ten years. Completely doing away with reservations is an ideal of secular democracy only such a condition can remove prejudice existing among different communities. Nehru says that whether a

majority or a minority one should have faith in each other and be generous and exhibit goodwill and affection towards each other.

Nehru was in favour of providing educational opportunities to all sections of the Indian society. He considered it a moral duty to assist the backward people so that they function on an equal footing with their other brethren in social and economic plane. Through Directive Principles of state policy he wanted to erase the inequalities of the vast population in a gradual manner. Though Nehru is against statutory, reservations for religious and other minorities, yet he attributes to the majority the primary responsibility of satisfying the needs and aspirations of minorities.

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CHAPTER - V

NEHRU ON EQUAL PROTECTION OF ALL FAITHS BY THE STATE

Interaction between religion and political systems has often resulted in religion legitimizing the political system. Religions have time and again led to reform movements and revolutions among human beings. In ancient days people believed in divine origin of kingship. When religion was institutionalized, tensions grew due to deep cleavage between the worldly and the transcendental. In Hinduism the king was seen as a representative of God on the earth. Politicisation of religion is present in Islam History of medieval Christendom shows a conflict between government and the law. In the ascending theory, sovereignty rests with the people. In the descending theory, sovereignty lies with the divinity. Eastern Christendom accords a secondary role to the state. In the modern era judicious nexus between religion and politics helps in promoting secularization. Conflicts between religion and politics lead to grotesque problems. Only a civil religion can help the state to establish a secular society.

In India religion plays a significant role in the day to day activities of the people. Many people belonging to different religions adopt religious means and ends to solve day to day problems. They believe in superstition and are far away from technological advancement. Progress in different sectors is restricted due to caste, taboos and ceremonies. Compared to

western countries religious grip on individual's life is more in India. Political conflicts occur when people of different religions try to exhibit their superiority over others. It is difficult for a leader of a democratic country to acknowledge on behalf the government the superiority of any single religion.

In the historical context of partition and the endemic religious conflicts it became inevitable for India to have a secular constitution. Nehru's starting point was that of a practical political thinker and leader, who, while personally believing all religions to be mostly untrue, had to provide for their freedom to function peacefully without prejudicing the democratic system; hence the secular state. According to Nehru, the secular state was the cardinal principle of modern democracy. To him it is a state which honours all faiths equally and gives them equal opportunities. It does not allow itself to be attached to one faith or religion, which then becomes the state religion. The cultural climate of that state is that of the great majority of the people belonging to that state. State remains independent of any particular religion. India having a long history of religious tolerance and having many faiths and religions, nationalism can be built up only on the basis of secularity. Narrow religious nationalism represents a backward and out-of-date society which leads to communal troubles. Indian constitution lays down that India is a secular state which is hardly reflected in mass living and thinking. In a country like England, on the other hand, the state is, under the

constitution, allied to one particular religion, the Church of England, which is a sect of Christianity. Nevertheless, the state and the people there largely function in a secular way. Nehru was impressed by such secular life style. Nehru says that Indians should live up to the ideals proclaimed in the constitution, and make them a part of their thinking and living and build up an integrated nation. It does not mean absence of religion, but putting religion on a different plane from that of normal political and social life. Anything that divides is not good, because it prevents from growing and keeps in a groove. He says that religious nationalism is a narrow creed, hence suggested that Indians should be citizens of the world with a truly international vision. The nationalism that India seeks should have its doors and windows open to internationalism. In Jawaharlal Nehru's opinion there has been equal protection of all faiths by the Indian state. Nehru's ideas on this can be broadly classified in the following sections:

1. Cultural Patronage by the state
2. State Permitting Missionaries.
3. State encouraging Truth and Moral Values Through Institutions
4. State Promoting National Integration.
5. State striving for unity in Diversity.

1. Cultural Patronage by the State:

According to Nehru the culture of the people is rooted in the national genius which smells the soil and draws inspiration from past history. India has been a land of many cultures. The Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India. Aryans later on occupied India and divided the Hindu society into four castes which were based on the principle of hierarchy and division of labour and the pattern of living was on four Ashramas, the stages of life depending on the age. The rulers and the ruled were preserving this trend in ancient India. In Nehru's own words "Hinduism has ever prided itself on its toleration". 'All sects deserve reverence for one reason or another' said the great Asoka. "By thus acting a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people...His Majesty cares not for donations or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects."³ The Hindu customs are the wearing of a dhoti, the possession of a top knot, and a lota of a different kind whereas the Hindu women usually cling to saree. He found the rituals and metaphysics present in Upanishads and Gita hardly interesting. He found mythology absurd and ridiculous. He expected change with the changing environment. He wanted the state to do away with dogmas and superstition.

He found the muslim culture absorbing as it would build up a common Asiatic bond. The symbols of Muslim culture were: a particular type of pyjamas, a particular way of shaving and

clipping the moustache but allowing the beard to grow and the muslim women taken to the sari and emerging slowly from the purdah. The Muslim and Hindu peasants and industrial workers were hardly distinguishable. Later on the missionaries preached that land, water, sun and moon were provided to individuals in equal measure irrespective of their faiths. With the coming of Mughals synthesis of culture emerged which was depicted in the form of architecture. Tajmahal is symbolic of Indo-Islamic style. With the coming of British some of the social evils of Indian society were rooted out and reason predominated the society. The Devdasi culture of ancient India and the nautch culture of medieval India was replaced by western culture. Article 29 guarantees cultural rights to people to preserve their culture, language and script.

Nehru's family background shows that in his house all Indian festivals like Holi, Diwali, Ramzan and Christmas were performed because it builds up happy atmosphere. Indian state encouraged festivals like Holi which breaks the hierarchy and Diwali which is a festival of joy where people lit their houses gorgeously. During festivals certain incentives like public holidays, extra sugar in ration shop and discounts on goods are provided. For muslim festivals like Bakrid, state provides accommodation for Indian pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. For certain festivals which are carried in the form of processions, like Ganesh and Muharram state provides security. Nehru seems to be sure that Indian state has been playing its role in preserving

and building up cultural heritage of India. His greatest contribution to India's renovating culture was his emphasis on science and scientific temper.

2. State Permitting Missionaries :

The catholicity of mind and spirit helped India to survive and flourish. It was Buddha and Shankaracharya who carried Indian culture to far-off countries. Nehru says that India had contacts with the Arabs since the seventh century. He points out that Islam came to India as a political force only some 700 years after the Prophet.

He writes : "But, though there was no invasion, contacts between India and the Arab world grew, travellers came to and from, embassies were exchanged, Indian books, especially on mathematics and astronomy, were taken to Baghdad and were translated into Arabic. Many Indian physicians went to Baghdad...This frequent intercourse inevitably led to Indians getting to know the new religion, Islam. Missionaries also came to spread this new faith and they were welcomed. Mosques were built. There was no objection raised either by the state or the people nor were there any religious conflicts. It was the old tradition of India to be tolerant to all faiths and forms of worship. Thus, Islam came as a political force."⁴

During that period the missionaries popularly known as 'Fakirs' were preaching about the other world. Hinduism talks

about Polyism, whereas Islam talks about Monism. Some of the Indians got converted. After the political conquests mosques were constructed and temples were destroyed. Marriage is a sacred bond which unites people irrespective of their faiths. Some of the Muslim rulers married Hindu princesses. The architecture was in Indo-Islamic style. North Indian women got attracted to purdah system. A new sect by name sufism arose which was binding Hinduism and Islam. A new religion known as Sikhism arose which was partly based on principles of Hinduism and partly based on the principles of Islam. The most important impact of Muslim missionaries was that their death place became renowned as Dargahs where both the sexes could enter and worship rather than a mosque which was confined to men only. Even today the rulers bow their heads and we find people from all religions in these places.

Since ages India has been permitting foreigners for religious propaganda. Some of the foreign Christian missionaries in the name of religious propaganda created the psychological bases for British imperialism to flourish. People got converted to Christianity since the low caste people were oppressed by the higher castes. These missionaries were very active in converting the tribal people. It was found that later on the missionaries whose primary object was proselytization were acting as spies.⁵ Nehru in general was in favour of missionaries. His secularism includes right to freedom of religious propaganda to Indian citizens. This fundamental right was guaranteed in the constitution of India.

However when the missionaries especially the foreigners were interfering in non-religious matters, he restricted the visas⁶. Later on the Indian renaissance movement gave call 'Back to the Vedas' and Gandhiji wanted the establishment of 'Ramarajya'. Hostility to Christianity, the idea that conversion from one religion to another is wrong became popular and each and every religion wanted to maintain its status quo. Nehru firmly believed that the state should treat all religions equally. Therefore Article 25 of the constitution provides that every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to profess, practise or propagate any religion while article 15 provides that the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on ground of religion.⁷

3. State Encouraging Truth and Moral Values Through Institutions :

State upholds law in any country. It is sometimes possible that law is divorced from morality. In India it was found that missionaries were permitted and also state did not restrict the construction of religious institutions, be it a Temple, Mosque, Church, Gurudwara, Monastery, Mutt etc. Even to this day state supplies free electricity, land and water to these institutions.

Nehru went to a temple at Madurai as a private visit. He shares his experiences in the following manner: "A strange

way to see a place with a mass of seething humanity : my ideas of the temple are consequently vague. But the vast size was impressive and sometimes oppressive. The corridors were enormous, had huge statuary, some of which were very good. I was taken to the inner sanctum, the holy of holies, the shrine of Meenakshi, an incarnation of Parvati. A great honour. I was struck by the curious way of the Hindu faith which refuses to part with any born within its fold. Here I am accused of irreligion and yet treated as one who is a devout follower"⁸. He was presented a silk scarf which was a special gift of the goddess. In the temple he found the psychological influence of the religious edifices which impress and frighten the multitudes and increase the power of the priesthood. He remembered the days when the priests were triumphant over the minds of men of the great temples of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and to some extent, of the great cathedrals. Hardly any people resist this numbing effect. He found plenty of roses, and it seemed a pity to waste them.⁹

During his life-time Shahidganj Masjid of Lahore was always in the news. Religious fervour was dominant on both sides. There were attacks on each other, evil designs were rampant and being the British rule, they exhibited their might. In Nehru's own words: "I do not have an accurate version of the incidents - who started it, who was at fault, etc. - and I have no real intention of finding out. Such kinds of religious enthusiasm do not interest me. But unfortunately, once it is

aroused, you have to face it, interest or no interest. I was thinking how backward we are in this country that we are prepared to sacrifice our lives for such trivial matters and are ready to endure slavery and hunger".¹⁰

He remembers a mosque which was fourteen hundred years old. He says: "Many empires toppled before it, old kingdoms were destroyed and many religious changes took place which changed its dress too. It was difficult to stand the tricks and storms of nature for such a long period, but more difficult than this was to endure the crimes and brutality of man. It sustained. Before the still eyes of its stones, empires came up and dwindled, religions spread and collapsed, mighty emperors, beautiful women and many talented persons came into existence, lived and then disappeared. It witnessed bravery, baseness and meanness. Big and small, good and bad, all have gone; but those stones still stand. While looking down from their heights even now, I wonder what those stones think of the multitude below - the games of the children, the quarrels, the deceit and the foolishness of the elders - how very little have they learned these thousand years ! How much more would it take them to learn and be wise ?"¹¹

Taking clues from European history, Nehru writes that Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity those who worshipped old Gods were tortured by the authorities. People who were attracted to the institutions for their culture and spiritual value started taking shelter in the jungles. Christian religion

split into two Rome and Constantinople were engaged in religious wars. The Bishop of Rome became Pope and in western countries of Europe he was considered as the head. The Eastern Roman Empire was known as orthodox church or Greek church. The cathedral of Santa Sophia was the centre of the Greek church and so it remained for nine hundred years . Osmanli Turks conquered Constantinople in fifteenth century and the greatest cathedral became the chief mosque and thus Santa Sophia was named Apa Suphea. The Czars of Russia wanted to bring Constantinople under their domination . Both were of the same religion, the orthodox Greek Church, of which the centre was the famous Santa Sophia Nehru wonders, how could that be tolerated ? The Greek cross instead of the Islamic mark, *hilal* or the crescent, should be on its dome. After a lapse of fourteen hundred and six years the administration of Constantinople changed hands from Muslims to Christians. The Sultan Caliph was a tool to be used at will. Apa Suphea remained intact as a mosque but the Sultans were hardly going for prayers. The Sultan bowed, the Caliph accepted European sovereignty but one of the prominent Turk, Mustafa Kemal Pasha revolted. He drove out Greeks from his country. He not only turned out Sultan-Caliph but also abolished the institutions established by them. He brought about reforms in his country especially in religious and social fields. He crushed bigotry in religion and escalated the women out of veil and gave them a leading position in society. He put an end to customs and rituals and propagated modern education. It appears that Nehru seems to be impressed by Kemal Pasha, who was a man of courage

rather than a hypocrite. Constantinople was renamed as Istanbul. Apa Suphea's fate was changed. It witnessed Greek services and Greek worship for nine hundred years. It heard the azan in Arabic and lines of devotees for namaz stood on its floor stones for four hundred and eighty years. In 1935, Apa Suphea was no more a masjid. *Hojas, mullahs* were replaced to other mosques. During the Byzantine period, on the orders of Gazi Mustafa Kemal. it had been decided that instead of being a mosque, Suphea be converted into a museum.

Nehru wonders at such changes and says, "But those stones and walls are silent. They had seen a lot of *jumma namaz* and Sunday services. A daily exhibition is now their lot. The world keeps changing, but they stay. On their worn-out faces is an apparent smirk and a mellow voice as if whispering: how ignorant and foolish is this human creature who does not learn by his thousands of years' experience and repeats the same follies".¹² Article 28 (1) of the constitution of 1950 declared that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds. During the last few months of his life, Nehru circulated a message to the educational institutions of India, asking them to include religious instruction in their routine courses.¹³ Nehru's concept of secularism includes imparting religious education to students at basic as well as university level so that human beings emerge as a rational being rather than having sentimental attachment to his own religion. In the present century religion

at its highest is found in men like Tagore, Aurobindo, Gandhi, Ramanamaharshi and Sufi Safiullah and at its lowest in men who run with knife, grenade and petrol in their hands and shouts of Allaho Akbar or Bandemataram on their lips, there is hardly any arrangement for the proper study of the history, morphology, psychology and philosophy of the major religions. One can study Hinduism at Banaras, Islam at Deoband, and Christianity in the Divinity colleges; but where can one study all of them together in comparison, contrast and interaction ? If an individual wants to understand his fellow citizens - he must understand him and live a life of fruitful co-operative endeavour-then it will be of immense help to understand what raises them to the level of the gods and drags them down to the level of the beasts - namely, their religion. Nehru felt that departments of comparative religion should be established without delay in all the Central Universities to begin with, and then taken up by all the universities of the land. In view of the vital importance of the subject, it should be made possible for any college student to take it up as one of the subjects for his degree course, and provision should be made for research and scholarly publication in at least the major universities of India.¹⁴

4. STATE PROMOTING NATIONAL INTEGRATION :

Inspite of having various boundaries of kingdoms and empires, India remained a cultural unity. British rule inculcated a psychological feeling of unity. As an individual is

a product of circumstances so also are the states which are the results of historical circumstances Nehru thought that logically and normally India must not be divided but he recognised that circumstances might force a partition. In India, the integration of states was a non-violent operation. Jawaharlal Nehru was leading in this broader integration, where the map of India had to be changed considerably.

Whether of a majority or minority, language is a vital part of individual, community and national life. The Constitution mentioned in the Eighth Schedule several languages which Nehru called national languages to show that they all enjoyed equal status, though Hindi, spoken by the largest number of people was considered as the national language and other languages as regional languages Regarding this matter the constituent Assembly accepted Nehru's view that the content of Hindi reflects composite culture of India. He denounced fanaticism of the translators and organizations. Although he venerated Sanskrit and recognized its contribution to Indian civilization, yet he did not want to live with it in the dead past and he wanted written and spoken language to be as near to the language of the people as possible. He showed moderation and clarity of mind.

India became a single united country since the constitution embodied its territorial integrity. The cultural problem was preserving and enriching the diversities of India's

composite culture which was a faith of Jawaharlal and strengthening its unity. For him integration was an ongoing social and economic process. Nehru thought long on the nature of the Indian nation state, went into the past which helped him to see how the present India had grown from the past. He imbibed the consciousness which the upanishads had injected into Hinduism; he was an admirer of the serene face of Buddha and his popular revolution; he being a Hindu understood the lasting impact of Islam on Indian life. It appears he wanted one national religion, Brahmanism, and one world religion, Buddhism. This combination of nationalism and religion had its strength and weaknesses. Jawaharlal Nehru stuck to Hindu nationalism which was a natural growth from the soil of India, but he fought with the exponents of mere Hindu nationalism, which gave rise to Muslim nationalism. The debate keeps going on even now in spite of partition.

He energetically pursued larger nationalism to provide the spirit to the new nation state. Anyone could see the diversity of India since there is no common race in India. Racially Rajput and Tamil were distinct, yet there was the impress of India on both. This could be applied to the Scheduled tribes who breathed the spirit of India for centuries. The diversities especially in Punjab and Kashmir were reflected in state's Reorganization and language problem especially the Tamils who refused to accept Hindi as the national language. Religion was the dividing force during partition and the challenging taste

for Jawaharlal was to raise the people to the level of a larger nationalism by making them rise above religion. He adopted the secular approach and injected the secular spirit. Fundamentalists had misunderstood and misrepresented him. He did not attempt any repudiation of religion, even of a personal god, in whom he had no belief or faith. Although a country predominantly of Hindus, nobody wanted a Hindu state, though Pakistan was turned into an Islamic state. The spirit of the constitution of which Nehru was an architect was secular in order to safeguard the civil liberties. The constitution provided for freedom of religion, freedom to profess and manifest and implicit in it was the freedom to convert without coming into conflict with the rights of other religions,- the right to denominational institutions to exist was recognized, and no discrimination was to be shown towards them. The provision for reservation of seats for Anglo-Indians in the legislatures was considered an extension of the secular spirit rather than an abridgement.

Beyond and above the constitution, Nehru propagated the secular spirit, not only by an outlook but by certain measures. The Hindu code Bill, codified the complex personal law of the Hindus based on Brahmanical texts, usages, and customs because Hindu law was petrified by being linked to religious doctrine and did not move with social practice. Though there was much orthodox opposition, Jawaharlal Nehru ultimately carried it since it was an attempt at secularism. To him Muslim law was more progressive than Hindu law in certain aspects, and being rigidly

linked to religion could not be changed without a strong urge among the Muslims. Nehru perceived that the ideal of a uniform civil code was distant. Although India was not secular enough from the western point of view. Jawaharlal battled on to the end. Untouchability was social and religious obscurantism which existed in practice, though abolished under the constitution. Thus the state provided the Scheduled Castes an opportunity to assert and enforce their rights. Nehru reinforced secular appeal with an economic appeal since achieving economic equality was extremely difficult.

Nehru doesn't ignore the political aspect. To him India, inspite of overwhelming Hindu population, is a composite country from religions and other points of views. It was a problem to live fundamentally or a Hindu country ignoring the view points of other groups. The Hindu sentiment affects political activities in numerous ways. The stopping of cow slaughter can be justified on economic grounds, rather than Hindu sentiment, which may revolutionise the minorities. Nehru was aware that the prevailing feeling in the country was strong Hindu revivalism. In his own words: "I am greatly distressed by it because it represents the narrowest communalism. It is the exact replica of the narrow Muslim communalism which we have tried to combat for so long. I fear that this narrow sectarian outlook will do grave injury not only to nationalism as such but also to the high ideals for which Indian and Hindu culture has stood through the ages. We are facing a crisis of the spirit in India today and a false step may have far-reaching consequences"¹⁶.

5. STATE STRIVING FOR UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Nehru always spoke of the unity of India and he clarified his thought in his work on the *Unity of India*. He expressed his broad view that in the political struggle almost all Indians irrespective of their religion, caste and creed participated.¹⁷

Nehru gives a clear idea about our national objective in the following manner: "we aim at a strong, free and democratic India where every citizen has an equal place and full opportunity of growth and service, where present-day inequalities in wealth and status have ceased to be, where our vital impulses are directed to creative and co-operative endeavour. In such an India, communalism, separatism, isolation, untouchability, bigotry, and exploitation of man by man have no place, and while religion is free, it is not allowed to interfere with the political and economic aspects of a nation's life. If that is so, then all this business of Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh must cease in so far as our political life is concerned and we must build a united but composite nation where both individual and national freedom are secure".¹⁸

India being a land of many communities, Nehru is in favour of a united nation based on tolerance and communal harmony, by respecting each other's beliefs and habits. India's culture was based on harmony since the distant past which **was** enlightened by Buddha, Ashoka and Mahatma Gandhi. Hatred and

intolerance of the people resulted in the bifurcation of the country into India and Pakistan. Vicious circle brings sorrow and disaster, whereas tolerance and friendship will have a positive impact.¹⁹ Every Indian, Nehru thought, should have an obligation towards his country and inculcate the feeling of fraternity among distinct religious groups. Newspapers can play a significant role in erasing fear and conflict. Advancement of India can be attained through co-operation among all the children of India. Nehru says that democratic machine should strengthen the governmental machinery by removing conflicts. Though India passed through grave times, it survived them with a measure of success. The constitutional machinery should preserve the unity, the stability and the security of India. It being a developing country should not frequently resort to elections because it not only disturbs people's minds but also involves lots of expenditure.²⁰

Nehru wanted to entrust the members of the Parliament a special status because they should not confine themselves to a particular constituency but represent India. The representative should be above local problems - parochial, state and provincial and work honestly to solve the larger problems of the country.

Parochial inserts results in separatism.²¹ He says "whatever internal divisions and dissensions and conflicts we had in India in the past few thousands of years, the concept of India has remained. The concept of India, Bharat or Hindustan call it what you like has remained and has kept us mentally together. It mattered not so much in the old days and that is why politically we were apart. But it does matter today in the age we live, when we must not only be integrated in that matter-that is not good enough but we must emotionally and intellectually be integrated".²² After independence he wanted to build up a united India with the goodwill of the Indian people, keeping intact, however, its great variety. Indian culture had widespread effect in Asia. In his view, "Indians went abroad others came here and they were absorbed here. Their ideas were absorbed, their religions were absorbed, so that India is a country of many religions which are all Indian in a sense because they have been here for hundreds and hundreds of years. India is not an one-religion country or an one-language country. These are the varieties that have come together to make this great Indian nation. And what makes an individual or a community or a nation great is its wideness of vision its receptive ness. Our whole approach has to be to welcome all people who live in India as one family, whatever religion they may belong to, and whatever customs they may have, and work in co-operation with all"²³.

CONCLUSION

Interaction between religion and political system is found among the major religions of the world such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam which has brought about change in human beings. Due to this nexus, Nehru feels a secular society can be established with the help of civil religion.

Indian society is obsessed with superstition. Political conflicts are common due to a feeling of superiority of one religion over others. Jawaharlal Nehru opines that historically India has exhibited religious tolerance. Though secularism is a western concept people of India need it to preserve their unity and integrity.

Nehru says that cultural patronage was exhibited by the ancient Indian state because the state protected people of all varnas and saw to it that the people were observing and following the ashramas. He says that in the medieval Indian state encouraged Sufism and protected not only the previously present religions but also Sikhism which was an offshoot of Hinduism and Islam. In the way of dressing of the poor people of India irrespective of religion was common. With the coming of the Britishers obviously a new culture arose but the people were happy with the mixed culture because some were sticking to their traditional principles and some were changing to the new patterns. Constitution of India guaranteed cultural rights to all the people of India who had their distinct festivals which

were movement of joy. Regarding these matters state is a patron of both majority and minorities.

Since time immemorial Indian state was in support of missionary activities. Indian missionaries spread Hinduism and Buddhism to other western and eastern countries. On the other hand India had been liberal in welcoming missionaries from the western countries. State played a significant role in encouraging missionary activities because the rulers seemed to have abiding faith in them. Due to this liberal trend the western religions like Islam and Christianity entered India and to some extent maintained its cultural identity and in many ways got assimilated into Hinduism. Marriages and architecture showed the synthesis between Islam and Hinduism. Christian missionaries during the British period played a significant role in converting low caste people to Christianity. Nehru was in favour of Christian missionaries as far as they were Indians because during his time foreign Christian missionaries were carrying out espionage activities which he very much disliked.

Once western religions entered India the construction of religious institutions is inevitable. The state never put a check on the construction of the religious institutions. Nehru was in favour of the presence of these institutions because they spread the value of truth and build up moral support for the society. He cites the example of Apa Suphea which was previously a mosque, later on church and then a mosque and after that was

converted to a museum. Nehru seems to be wondering at such changes. However he is in favour of religious instructions in educational institutions.

A psychological feeling of unity, generally known as nationalism emerged in the Indian state in the pre-partition era. Jawaharlal Nehru being an active leader of the then period played a significant role in national integration. Language spoken by majority was accepted as national language. Nehru staunchly believed that India's mixed culture would strengthen her unity inspite of partition. He firmly believed that patriotism was his religion he was in favour of state remaining above religion. He spread the secular spirit in the state in a constitutional manner. Nehru was in favour of fundamental rights as claims of citizens and on the other hand he supported Directive Principles to strengthen India politically and constitutionally.

Jawaharlal Nehru, being the first Prime Minister of Independent India, practised and preached tolerance and communal harmony. He expected the press to highlight the dangers of communal riots. He thought that only democratic government can preserve the unity. Members of Parliament should represent whole India rather parochial India. He expected Indians to be emotionally and intellectually integrated. On one hand .India should preserve its variety and on the other hand its unity. India should widen its vision and live as a multi-religions family.

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CHAPTER - VI

NEHRU ON SECULARISM - AN EVALUATION

Evaluating any aspect of Nehru's ideas is a daunting task. This is especially so when it is on a controversial topic like secularism. Nehru himself was an enigmatic personality embodying in himself past traditions, present compulsions and future aspirations of the people and the country. His writings reflect the inevitable contradictions of irreconcilable values. Perhaps his scientific temper prompted him to maintain a distance from religions. But his need as a leader of masses, both during freedom struggle and subsequently during democratic elections, brought him closer to religions of different denominations. Perhaps he could not resist the temptation to use religions for political purposes. But he cannot be characterised as non-secular because he maintained equal distance or equal closeness with all religions. It could be that he was trying to explore a new definition of secularism. In this chapter we would attempt to evaluate Nehru's idea of secularism.

Nehru's letters to contemporary leaders and his daughter are quite significant. His four major works *The Glimpses of World History*, *An Autobiography*, *Discovery of India* and *Unity of India*, present before us the different facets of his secularism. According to Professor C.D.Narasimhaiah: "His Autobiography gives the most moving, can did account of the sorrows, sufferings and heartaches of the most sensitive of our

public men. He explodes and legend concerning himself with admirable candour and analyses, the motive springs of his actions with that rare intellectual integrity which belongs to the truly great"¹.

Glimpses of world History, outlines three aspects of Nehru's ambivalent personality which depicts him as a historian. writer of great potential and vitality, and a revolutionary fighting vigorously for his nation's freedom. A part of the last letter reads:

"Our age is different one: it is an age of disillusion, of doubt and uncertainty and questioning ...sometimes the injustice, the unhandiness, the brutality of the world oppress us and darken our minds, and we see no way out...And yet if we take such a dismal view we have not learnt aright the lesson of life or of history".²

His observations are translation of experiences and their realization into thought. He quotes at the beginning of *Discovery of India*:. "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought I summon up remembrance of things past...."³

It was an interpretation of India's past. Narasimhaiah gives an excellent description in the following manner: "He relies on the imagination to work the miracle and imagination seldom lets him down. But he does not beat his wings in the

void; he takes care to see what he says is grounded in fact. He turns to poetry, fiction, painting, tombs, monuments, inscriptions, travel books, learned treatises and contemporary records in order to reconstruct the past. His material is not always second or third-hand as some specialists seem to think, for he goes to primary sources quite often".⁴

In *Unity of India* he attempts to highlight the cause of Indian freedom. He tries to lift his motherland into a world perspective and tries "to redeem the sordid present from shame and betrayal".⁵

A major part of this collection of essays deals with Congress politics and India in foreign affairs, including the period and problems of British imperialism in India. Krishna Menon who edited the *Unity of India* said: "...his treatment of the problems has given us much that is history, expressed with directness and simplicity, yet with great foresight and imagination".⁶

A bunch of old letters found in Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, I Series and II Series are letters written to Nehru and some written by him. The letters are purely political and some are his philosophical speculation and personal musings interwoven with the urge for social and economic action. These letters contain an epitome of Indian history of the last forty years or more. Some people do misjudge Nehru and describe him as

a man of moods and impulses. These letters reveal that behind and underneath all these outbursts of momentary feelings there was in him a deep and unchanging purpose which had swayed his thought and action since the beginning of his political life. These letters help in explaining that over more than forty years he seemed to yield to stronger personalities and it often seemed that in the end it was his way of thinking and his philosophy of life that prevailed.⁷

Statesmanship has to be essentially pragmatic, intent on attaining practical ends through available means. Nehru achieved great distinction in numerous ways. In the freedom struggle he was a leader next in importance to Mahatma Gandhi. He spent long years in jail during which he wrote his Autobiography, Glimpses of world History and The Discovery of India, which have become world famous and been translated into many Indian and foreign languages. He travelled throughout India and several times addressed mass meetings. His association is with agrarian revolt in Uttar Pradesh, trade union and youth movements. He was a successful chairman of the Allahabad Municipality. Before and after, he become the Prime Minister of India, he was interested in the freedom movements of Asian and African countries.

His ideals were basically human, rational and worldly and he hardly attached any importance to spiritual values. He was impatient and irritataingly contemptuous of religious taboos.

communalism, caste, capitalism and landlordism yet he regained the goodwill of even those whom he condemned. His passion for politics seems noteworthy. He was secular to the core of his heart and mind being aware of the susceptibilities and sensitivities of others and did not intent hurting them.

Nehru was one who understood the character and content of the Indian National Movement in a better perspective. From the beginning he considered the movement as not only political but also a socio-economic question of the whole society. His additon of socio-economic content to the concept of 'Swaraj' provoked many individuals and groups, in the Congress, to criticise him. Nehru's determination to play a more decisive role in the freedom movement, had a profound impact on Indian political thinking.

Nehru was conscious that Indian nationalism, although based on universal principles of 'pacifism, liberalism and rationalism', had its own limitations. For example it was based on non-violence, but lacked certain vital elements. He demanded the introduction of a secular, rational and scientific, international outlook as the essential ingredients of Indian nationalism. He himself was a vocal critic of a religious. metaphysical and revivalist outlook which was harmful to the society. He was determined to rule throughout the country which involved manipulations and a need of a strong central government which can undermine the positions of opposition parties Nehru was

the leader of the opposition, because he was berating the subordinate leaders for not implementing congress policies effectively.⁸

Nehru formulated a clear ideology, i.e. commitment to secularism through state-directed planning.⁹ Under his Prime Ministership, Nehru explained his concept of secular state to Pradesh congress committees that the secular state must be thought of as a social ideal, the realization of which depends on far more than constitutional provisions.¹⁰ He played the role of the first Prime Minister of independent India for nearly 17 years. People admired him, although criticised, he did not mind during his life time, he wanted criticism to be fair, relevant and expressed with a historical sense and in dignified language.

Nehru's critics have been both foreign and Indian. His foreign critics are few. Michael Brecher has been fair, friendly, and sympathetic. Foreign critics range from the urbane and cynical waiter Crocker, a former Australian High Commissioner, to the polite and ironical British newspaperman Neville Maxwell. Most of the Indian critics were opposed to him in public life. Important among them are C. Rajagopalachari. Acharya Kripalani, Jayaprakash Narayan, M.N.Roy, Dr.Rammanohar Lohia, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, D.P.Mishra, Sampurnanand, Dr.Khare, and Sardar Patel. Nehru's views on secularism has been both appreciated and criticised. These evaluation are shaped and coloured by the critics perception of Nehru's role as the

country's leader and statesman and by his association with other important personalities like Gandhi or Azad.

Keeping in view the Indian conditions, Jawaharlal Nehru has given a novel version of secularism. The Italian philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli for the first time suggested a separation of religion and politics. Secularism became a western concept in order to subjugate religion and escalate politics. The Western perspective on secularism confines to this life only. It lays emphasis on moral and utilitarian principles severed from God. On the other hand Indian views on secularism lay emphasis on mixture of religion and politics or spiritualisation of Politics, since Indian people are extremely religious. Secularism being based on reason lasts as long as scientific temper exists amongst the people.

According to Alija Ali Izetbegovic there is pure reason and practical reason. Usually thought denies God, to whom man and life conform, not only on this earth but also on the next. Because there is a belief among the religious world that only those enter Paradise whom God will irrespective of their good deeds. This explains the difference between the belief of the scientist and science as a method or sum of results what a scientist thinks and believes is not science. Science is only a part of his complete impression of the world, a part that is a result of the critical, comparing, and classifying function of reason. Reason rejects supernatural explanation and retains that

which is based on the chain of natural causes and consequences and which if possible, can be proved by experiment and observation. Science is confined to nature and everything else slips which are the natural limitations of science. Usually science stops at these limitations but a scientist being a man, goes on, since every man is an artist to a certain extent. The difference between scientific research and the use of its results is that the former understands the world while the latter conquers it. Hence the scientist does not look at science with the same eyes as other people. In general, public view science as a sum of the results of quantitative and mechanical kind. For the scientist as a doer, it is a search, an experience, an effort, a desire a sacrifice in a word, life. For him science is, moreover, the joy of learning, a sublime feeling of the highest ethical value. In this joy, the scientist surpasses himself and becomes a thinker, a philosopher, an artist.

Thus the difference arises spontaneously between what the scientist discovers for himself and what he discovers for the rest of the world. When science detaches from the scientist and his life, it "cools" and becomes a sum of knowledge and results it becomes indifferent and, in its final result, an irreligious function.

May be not with the scientist but certainly with the public, through its innate rejection of metaphysics and its inevitable silence on "ultimate "questions", science contributes

to the formation of atheistic opinions. This contributes to the universal dualism of man's world.¹¹

Nehru firmly believed in 'cultural amalgamation'. He himself was an outstanding and shining product of this synthesis. He was steeped in catholic, liberal, tolerant, and cosmopolitan humanism which was characteristic of his family tradition. Being a Brahmin by birth, he did not believe in the caste system, and never observed taboos about eating or drinking with the people of other faiths, or the so-called lower castes. He played in the lap of a Muslim, Minshi-Mubarak Ali, and participated in the Muslim festivals. In his house all festivals of India such as Holi, Diwali, Id and Christmas were celebrated. His elegant dress - the churidars, the achkan and the Gandhi cap symbolised the cultural amalgamation and sartorial synthesis which both Hindus and Muslims wore traditionally.

To him 'unity-in-diversity' was the most outstanding characteristic of Indian historical tradition of tolerance and assimilation. He neither appreciated the Hindu revivalists (who wanted "Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan") nor Muslim chauvinists (who wanted Pakistan). Linguistically he spoke Urdu which was the language his father used and could also speak, read and write Hindi which was the language his mother used. He respected fourteen national languages and also the literature of the four South Indian States.

His heart was open to people of all lands. His friends included people of all religions, agnostics, atheists and of 'no religion'. The doors of his mind were open to any one. He was a revolutionary of the spirit, an intellectual, a statesman, a man of vision, a man of action and perfect symbol of an integrated Indian.¹²

Seven years after he had become Prime Minister he wrote: "I have received so much love and affection from the Indian people that nothing I can do can repay even a small fraction of it; and indeed, there can be no repayment of so precious thing as affection. Many have been admired, some have been revered; but the affection of all classes of the Indian people has come to me in such abundant measure that I have been overwhelmed by it".¹³ He wrote these words when he was at the height of his power, fame and popularity. People of India gave him their affection, their admiration, their loyalty in an abundant measure.

It is sometimes said that "what Nehru thinks today, the country thinks tomorrow", and his response to the complex environment is a cliché of Indian thought. He provided a secular constitution within a humanist culture. Of course he betrayed the expectations of a small minority during his last 10 years as Prime Minister. He was a politician struggling for power through an ideology or a scale of values remaining loyal to his faith even when he comes to control the entire apparatus of political.

social, intellectual and cultural initiative within the community. The tragedy of the liberal mind is that it must create heroes first and be betrayed by them afterwards. Politics for him was a form of self-consciousness, the attempt of every individual to discover for themselves new dimensions and possibilities contributing their share to the creative activity of a whole culture.

Rather than becoming a prisoner, he would prefer breaking an organisation. He lived in a state of perpetual tension - a state adored by the liberal intellectual and the despair was an implication of the 'pale cast of thought'. His nerves and temper were rooted in the violent protest against the oppressive, the irrational, the inefficient, the gross, the vulgar and the humanly degrading in a stagnant society throwing corrupt individuals and institutions. His intension was to lift individuals from peevishness and anger, rather than descending to the level of common man. Instead of enlightening a nation rather than administering a country the Prime Minister had swallowed the thinker. He lost the feel of the dreams and the frustrations of the common people. He was hardly in touch with statistics, files, figures and protocol. There is no doubt that he was a military thinker, creative writer, philosopher, educationist, economist, parliamentarian, politician, historian, but the spirit within him languished and died. As a Prime Minister, he was a more brilliant tactician who knew how to exploit the myths and the illusions of his countrymen: he could create new myths to

replace the patched up decrepit fabric of hopes and fears which carried him to power. Certain myths of Jawaharlal are a part of the fraud called politics. The age of Nehru forgot the problem of integrity in politics, into an organic progressive and socialist society. He was concerned with a revolution in the hearts of men which compels them to attain a novel kind of adjustment within themselves as well as with their environment. Nehru's task was to give this impulse a concrete institutional and intellectual shape, and his basic failure is a fact, because he failed to rise upto this great challenge Nehru has taught us the important lesson of life:

"Every age does not get the saviour it deserves, and in politics we must look only for politicians, not for myths and destinies, humanists and prophets, martyrs and culture-heroes, because politics ultimately means betrayal (even if it is Lenin, Stalin, or Mao) and a politician can only administer, he cannot create. He is not the architect but the scavenger of history".¹⁴

In this multi-religious world, tolerance of all religions is inevitable. Nehru acknowledges that the progressive path is only that of Buddha and Gandhi. Being shrewd, he is sure that science seems to be in favour of affluents.

In order to bind the people of various civilizations, religion is based on moral and ethical principle. Machiavellian and Kautilya suggested any means to be adopted by the

state in order to attain a good end. But Nehru, unlike them seems to be a follower of Gandhi, i.e. good means to attain good end. Slight deviation from this path leads to corruption. He is aware of the good and bad aspects which religion nurtures. Religion being engrossed in the invisible world leads to fancies. Imagination, no doubt to some extent moulds individuals life. He found Buddhist monasteries peaceful due to his personal psychological experience. It appears from his religious ideas that his faith seems to be resting on two religions namely Buddhism and Hinduism. It would be absurd to call Nehru an atheist.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's death on 26 May, 1964 made India lose a nationalist leader, heir of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the architects of independent India and its first Prime Minister. Crowds gathered the man who lectured them, sometimes even bullied them, and had received from people reverence and affection. Flowers were spread over the bier. Sanskrit mantras were chanted by a group of Hindu priests, and the banal English words of *Abide with me*, were sung by a number of Christians, the reason being that it had been one of Gandhi's favourite hymns. The procession moved in the great ceremonial way to the cremation ground. When the body was placed on the pyre, the Hindu priests began the magical rites for the dead, holy water from the river Ganges was sprinkled, and some eminent leaders placed pieces of sandal wood on the pyre. The Indian flag being replaced with white scarf and flower petals. His grandson, Sanjay Gandhi, lit the pyre and the

body of Jawaharlal Nehru, socialist, agnostic, prophet of Indian secularism, went up in flames like that of a Hindu king. To many it appeared a display of bizarre incongruities. Nehru's will, which was written ten years before his death was that no religious ceremonies should be associated with his funeral. Muslims willingly took part in a Hindu ceremonial represented not only the special place they occupied in Nehru's political life, but also his antecedents, were strongly influenced by the Muslim rulers of India - the Mughals. The priests collected the ashes from the cremation ground, put into copper urns, sprinkled with water from the Ganges, and taken to Nehru's house. Thousands of people paid them homage when they were placed in the garden and later on taken to his birth place at Allahabad where the river Ganges joins the Jamuna at a spot particularly sacred to Hindus. In his will, Nehru had asked that some of his ashes be thrown into the Ganges which had been read over the radio by his sister. He disclaimed any religious implication. For him, he said, the Ganges was "a symbol of India's age-long culture and civilization, ever changing, ever flowing, and yet even the same. She reminds me of the snow covered peaks and deep valleys of the Himalayas which I have loved so much and of the vast plains below where my life and work have been" Regarding the remainder of the ashed should, he wrote, "be carried up into the air in an aeroplane and scattered from that height over the fields. Where the peasants of India toil, so that they might mingle with the dust and soil of India and become an indistinguishable part of India" .¹⁶

The crowds lined the tracks when the ashes were brought by train from Delhi to Allahabad. Along with Nehru's there was an urn containing those of his wife, Kamala, which Nehru had kept in his room for the twenty eight years since her death and the urns were placed under a tree where Nehru had spent his childhood. There were flowers and adoration. Soldiers and priests took them to the bank at the sacred spot and ferried out to the confluence of the rivers where they were scattered. A helicopter showered flower-petals mantras chanted, guns boomed out, buglers blew the *Last Post*, a military band played *Abide with Me*, all its members being Hindus.

Nehru's funeral proceedings angered many Indians for its superficial absurdity. The weakness of his family in abiding to it all was excused on the grounds of thier grief. The secular intelligentsia opined the flouting of Nehru's own desires as a cynical attempt by the Government to milk emotional feelings they could from the death of Nehru whose place in the hearts of the Hindu masses owed much to traditional values. To foreigners, who had seen in Nehru a leader free from what they believed to be essential bigotry and superstition of Hindu beliefs, a modern man in their western sense who were firm for these opinions. Although being born a Hindu, his whole education was western in form and content. He escaped from Hindu society and religion inorder to become a western style liberal democrat, forward-looking, criticizing the weight of Indian tradition since he attempted to take his country into the twentieth century with

a jet speed rather than with a bullock-cart speed.

Nehru's will, was a decade old with its repeated disclaimers of any religious feeling. Since he had emerged from the Hindu world, there had been change in his attitude towards the Hindu world especially in the last few years of his life. In the governing circles Hindu occultism had had its devotees ever after independence. Advisers to ministers, officials and politicians were astrologers who made a comfortable living. Nehru had mostly ignored the soothsayers entering his palace, yet the occult had penetrated the palace, which was almost Byzantine in character, in the last months after his stroke in January 1964.

Regarding the ceremonies some people complained that! they were hardly in the traditional form. The scattering of Nehru's ashes from the air should never have been allowed to happen. The presence of orthodox - and orthodoxy is in some unexpected places in India.

Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, the Berlin- educated socialist leader, a spokesman and a virulent political enemy of the late Prime Minister said in a public meeting: "whatever Mr. Nehru might have written in his will, whatever he might have said about his attitude towards religion, the fact remains that Mr. Nehru was born a Hindu, he had his (sacred) thread ceremony performed in the Hindu ways, he lived a Hindu, died a Hindu, and was cremated

according to Hindu rites. All his ashes should have been immersed".¹¹⁹

The responses were significant events in the complex plot of Nehru's life which gives an understanding of India for whose freedom he fought and visited jail and for whose destinies he presided as a Prime Minister for seventeen years after India gained independence from British rule to his death.

Nehru seemed to be over concerned for the minorities especially due to historical circumstances. The personality cult projected Nehru as the political successor of Gandhi, the sole leader of the country and the only protector of the religious minorities. He was rigidly against the separate electorates and strongly in favour of constitutional privileges to minorities so that they felt at home in India. Although he attempted to build up nexus between Hindus and Muslims he himself admitted a failure in solving the communal problem which was based on suspicion and fear. He entrusted the majority to adopt a good attitude towards the minorities because he perceived that majority communalism was much more dangerous than minority communalism. It appears that Nehru was slightly partial towards the minorities in certain aspects.

"Among the disruptive tendencies are some which come under the name communalism - politics under some religious garb, one religious group being incited to hate another religious group....Then there is casteism, perhaps the most insidious and dangerous of all in our country".¹⁸ On this theme Nehru harped all through his political life. He moved closer to religion during the years in which he had sought to identify himself more and more with India. Nehru's hatred of religious-communalism had kept him from formal faith but could not prevent him from creating a personal syncretism which satisfied both his desire for traditional roots in Hinduism and socialism. He had found intellectual rationalization in Vivekananda's Brahminical ideal of selfless service. He had talked often in private conversations about Hindu ideals and ideas from the late 1950s, though his uncompromising dislike of formal religious expression concealed his growing religiosity.¹⁹

Nehru said, "So far as I am concerned, I am prepared to lose every election in India but to give no quarter to communalism or casteism",²⁰ which was not true. Time and again he made compromises in the matter of elections. Nehru talked of the Congress leading the country to the goal of castelessness. In the selection of candidates, Nehru often blamed the Muslim League, the Akali Dal, the Hindu Mahasabha as communal parties. Yet Congress was no different, it was arousing the caste-community based-passions - because behind it was present the power of Government patronage.

In a bye-election which were held in summer 1948 in the Ayodhya - Fyzabad constituency of the U.P. legislature, the efficacy of religion as an electoral instrument had been proved. Narendra Deva, capable, reliable and sincere person of the socialist party was one of the candidates. On the other hand congress selected a Sadhu from Deoria district as its candidate which was criticised by M.N.Roy, in his Radical Humanist in the following manner : "A majority of the voters of the constituency live in the twin cities of Ayodhya and Fyzabad, the birthplace of Shri Ramachandra and a famous place of pilgrimage. Their mentality is religious in the orthodox sense.... A religiously minded electorate was asked to choose between a man of the masses and a man of God. They could make no mistake. Insidious propaganda particularly pictorial made it doubly sure.... Towards the end of the campaign, the walls of the city were plastered with huge posters depicting the Congress candidate coming to holy Ayodhya and being reverentially welcomed by Hanuman. Another poster depicted him as sitting beside Shri Rama himself. Naturally, the Congress candidate recommended by the highest conceivable authority won".²¹ Nehru who had always kept track of the developments in Uttar Pradesh knew how his party's candidate had won. This experience shows how a secular Nehru could shape things when religion was exploited in elections.

Another blatant instance of religion influencing politics with Nehru's knowledge if not approval was towards the end of his life in the bye-election in the Amroha constituency of

parliament. The independent candidate, J.B.Kripalani gained the support of the combined opposition parties. Noting that Muslims formed 37 percent of the voters, the Congress party put up Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim against Kripalani. In order to carry out the propaganda the Congress organisation brought in Muslim divines from Deoband and Ajmer to incite the religious sentiments of the Muslim voters which turned the campaign into a holy crusade. Similar communal appeals were supported by Kripalani's supporters. The Congress candidate received heavy polls from the Muslim community; the Congress registered an increase of 22 percent over the vote it had polled in the 1962 election; this time all the additional votes for the congress came from the towns in which Muslims were in a majority.²²

Nehru who swore by secularism ' selected Muslim candidates for constituencies where Muslims formed the majority electorate. In spite of a long record of service in the rural areas in 1952 a Hindu Congressman was rejected in favour of a former Muslim League legislator for the Beldanga constituency in West Bengal which had a sizable Muslim electorate. Muslim majority constituencies were assigned to important Muslim congressmen by Nehru. Azad was moved from not so safe Burdwan constituency in West Bengal to safe Rampur constituency in Uttar Pradesh in 1952 and to a much more safer Gurgaon constituency in Punjab in 1957. Thus principle was transformed to prudence because Azad a man of great standing in the congress party, twice its president; and changing his constituency for reasons of

religion was a condemnation of the party's own declared secular ideas. Zakir Hussain criticized these changes. In Nehru's insistence, again, in 1962 the Muslim majority constituency of Basirhat in West Bengal was given to Humayun Kabir: The sequel to this arrangement was interesting. Previously in the Parliament the constituency was represented by a non-Muslim communist member; but when Congress deliberately chose a Muslim candidate, so did the communists.

The Congress all over the country appealed to religious groups, basing its appeal not on the party's social, economic or political programmes but on Nehru's image as the protector of the Minorities, asserting that to safeguard their identity they should vote for Nehru's Congress. In 1957 the Bishop of Kottayam, just before the general elections, appealed to the Christians of Kerala to vote for the Congress.²³ Nehru remained silent, in 1962, when his friend Syed Mahmud called upon the Muslim community throughout the country to vote for Congress candidates. This made a prominent journal write, "To ask any community to vote for this or that political party is quite plain communalism of the kind that has done cruel damage to the country in the past and is hampering national integration today. In fairness to Dr. Mahmud it should be said that he has done what his party has been doing ever since independence. In the first two elections the congress openly claimed that the interests of the Muslims would be safe only in its hands; implicit in the claim was the allegation that the Muslims in this country would have a hard time of it if any other party gained power".²⁴

Nehru's party not only urged the Muslims to vote only for the Congress, in Kerala where the party was weak but also entered into alliance with the Muslim League to capture Muslim votes, promising it a seat in the Cabinet. The countrymen were amazed with Nehru's justification - that the Kerala Muslim League was different from the All India Muslim League. After elections the Kerala Muslim League had lost this virtue, because Nehru suddenly realised that a coalition with a communal party would irreparably damage his secularism. Nehru did not give to the League the promised seat, instead offered it the speaker's office.²⁵ Fighting against communalism Mahatma Gandhi gave his life; his political heir (Nehru) without any hesitation compromised with it for purely political gains. In state politics Nehru did not bother as long as the legislature showed a Congress majority. He was bothered by the party's factions in States like Rajasthan, Bihar, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh etc. and was obliged to intervene in order to preserve the Congress party in the state. Nehru's government received money or 'purses' presented to him, externally shown as coming from rich men who were interested in getting themselves elected though they were corrupt. When one of his old colleagues, Mohan Lal Saxena, pointed out about the corruption, Nehru conceded, "I know the Congress has many bogus members" but promptly came the justification: "other political organisations appear to be much worse in this respect. My knowledge of other countries also has shown me how political organisations deteriorate in this

respect", and he asserted that "the election purse has been collected through the sale of one rupee and five rupee tickets....it does not come from a few rich men... I see no reason why I should not accept such a purse".²⁶ Nehru decided to milk the best cows in the country the industrialist and due to majority support amended the Companies Act, which meant permission for industrialists to make open donations to 'political parties' primarily the party in power, which every industrialist knew would be returned to power at the next one, two or three elections.

Nehru looked at religion as a rationalist. He knew that the overwhelming majority of his people were religious minded and to them religion was not only an integral part of their lives but very often life itself. Even though he was prepared to respect religion, he hated its rituals. His support of the Hindu Reform Bill shows how religion had degraded the human spirit of numerous people either to a lower status or hardly given them any status. He served his country and his people with all the physical and mental qualities he possessed and like Tagore he believed that service was worship. Although being aware of the slowness of the parliamentary procedure he respected democratic system. As humanist he respected the rule of law which is the base of civilized society, guaranteeing sense of security and pride which results from equality before the law and the law is equally applicable irrespective of the highest or the lowest.²⁷

As a nationalist, he saw India sharing a common heritage and tradition. which clearly explains his concern for the minorities. Even after partition he made their rightful place in the country and provided them with freedom to practice what might be an anathema to the majority. Critics point out that he was taking the minorities along with the majority on the path of social reform and of national integration into the national fold pursuing a policy of laissez - faire as far as the minorities were concerned. Everafter Nehru will remain not only as a great Prime Minister, but as a great fighter of freedom and humandignity.²⁸

He was not only the leader of the nation but also of the masses. He was not only a national statesman as well as a citizen of the world - a universal man. In his opinion no conflict should exist between good of one nation and that of the whole world, since both are one and identical. Throughout his life he worked and was guided by this faith. He was not bound by regional, language or religion bias. He mingled with people to whatever part of the world he went feeling the exhilaration of fraternity. He felt enraptured talking and looking at people, in the language of the upanishads, the people were his God.²⁹

A very significant development in modern history is the emergence of India in the mid-twentieth century as a secular state borrowing Fundamental . Rights from U.S.A. Directive

principles of State Policy from Ireland, Fundamental Duties from Russia and Parliamentary form of Government from mother of Parliament i.e. Great Britain. His leadership was recognized by eminent observers of the political scene in the world. Chester Bowles writes of Nehru: "one of his greatest achievements is the creation of a secular state in which the 45 million Muslims who chose not to go to Pakistan may live peacefully and worship as they please".³⁰

As any other man he was a product of his generation who rebelled against the imperialist tyranny, steeped in the culture of the East and West. He was angry against injustice which made him become an idol of Indian parliament. To the questions put forth before him, he answered gracefully, effectively, passionately and fearlessly, without concealing any information. It is said that listening to him was an education by itself.³¹

Although, the word secular is not enshrined in the constitution, Nehru emphasised on secularisation because it is permeated with secular spirit. Some of the articles ensure that religion is a private affair of an individual and state remains indifferent in religious matters. Other than Jawaharlal Nehru, members of the Constituent Assembly and other leaders of the Congress like Patel and Tandon and non-Congressmen like Ambedkar, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyar and H.C. Mukherji contributed in devising the constitution.

He emphasised on the importance and need for a secular state : "We have said repeatedly that we will not tolerate any communalism in this country and that we are building a free, secular state where every citizen has equal liberty and equal opportunity".³² He asserted three years later, "The whole purpose of the constitution, as proclaimed in the Directive Principles, is to move towards what I may call a casteless and classless society. It may not have been said precisely in that way; but that is, I take it, its purpose, and anything that perpetuates the present social and economic inequalities is bad".³³ A year before he died, "India has always been noted for religious tolerance and so it was quite natural for us, when we became independent, to decide to be what is called a secular state".³⁴ Although he was in favour of a secular state he made certain grave lapses.

While amending the constitution in order to give special privileges to important communities which could not be brought into the category of 'Scheduled Castes', Nehru conceded that it was "wrong to dub or brand a whole class as backward. If communities as such are 'brought' into the picture, it does go against certain explicit or implicit provisions of the constitution".³⁵ He agreed for special privileges to socially and educationally backward rather than 'economically' backward. He did not accept the suggestion that the special provisions be restricted to a certain period, because the communities would create a permanent vested interest. He exempted 'socially and

educationally' advanced castes like Brahmins from special provisions although they were economically backward. The amendment resulted in wedges between various castes. Nehru would address numerous crowds in the following manner: "I lay stress everywhere on the unity of India and on our need to fight communalism and casteism".³⁶

Nehru decided to alter the personal law of the Hindus to be in conformity with modern thought and attitudes. He was deliberately indifferent to Muslims and Christians. He was hardly willing to explore a common civil code for all communities. Sponsoring the Hindu code Bills, he declared: "The Bill which has given rise to so much argument became a symbol of the conflicts between progress and reaction in the social domain...The spirit of the bill...was a spirit of liberation and of freeing our people, more especially our women-folk from the outworn customs and shackles which have bound them."³⁷ Nehru confined towards Hindu women because they had no divorce rights which women of other communities claimed. President Bourguiba of Tunisia, President Ayub Khan of Pakistan made certain changes in the Muslim personal law in their countries, but Nehru had conceded the claim of the ulemas that the Indian Parliament has no right to legislate on the civil law of the Muslims of this country. Religious sanction and religious basis for the civil law of Indian Muslims was invoked by the Ulemas who deliberately ignored that "the Mohammedan law as practised in India is the shariat as modified by the principles of English law and equity.

in the varying social and cultural conditions of India; and during the centuries it has tended to become a discrete system, somewhat at variance with its original sources. It is a system of law in its nature civil, and, therefore, capable of being amended by a human agency, Parliament of India".³⁸ Critics point out that Nehru had viewed it from political expediency of collecting votes from Muslim citizens. "We have passed one or two laws recently and we are considering one...in regard to Hindu marriage and divorce...These are personal ingrained in custom, habit and religion...Now we do not dare to touch the Muslims because they are a minority and we do not want the Hindu majority to do it. These are personal laws and so will remain for the Muslims until they want to change them...We do not wish to create the impression that we are forcing any particular thing in regard to Muslims personal laws".³⁹

Under Nehru's instigation certain unfortunate conventions could have been discouraged and the healthy ones started, when the country became independent. Ministers in their official capacity, in official cars and accompanied by personal staff attended religious functions. In the tradition of genuine secularism a firm directive could have been issued against this practice. Hardly any convention was passed against the mass media which was under the control of the Government of India, such as All India Radio to clear of denominational prayers. Although he was aware Nehru hardly restricted the radio network

which began its daily programme with Hindu devotional songs and prayers.

Certain suggestions of Nehru did not help the process of secularisation of the country. He went to extremes in his desire to prove his secularism. In one instance, he wrote to K.C. Neogy, Minister for Refugee Rehabilitation, suggesting that Muslim officers should deal with Muslim refugees. Genuinely secular, Neogy consulted Patel who said that this would lead to further demands that Sikh officers should deal with Sikh refugees and Hindu officers with Hindu refugees.⁴⁰ One more grotesque faltering of Nehru's secularism occurred during the negotiations leading to Nehru-Liaquat Pact. A demand was made by Liaquat Ali Khan that reservations should be provided for Indian Muslims in various public services and in representative bodies in states as well as at the centre in proportion to their population. It is said that due to Gadgil's opposition the cabinet did not approve this arrangement which resulted in the partition of the country.⁴¹

Nehru's desire was to assure Indian Muslims that they live as equal citizens with other religious communities, but his electoral pact with the Muslim League in Kerala was a misdirection, which was a complete departure from his declared devotion to secularism, which strengthened communalism in Kerala, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

Nehru was aware of the serious drawbacks of our electoral system. During his first election campaign: "In a country like ours with such large numbers, direct election...is a complicated problem and the candidate may never come into touch with the electorate; and the whole thing becomes distant".⁴² In a UNESCO symposium he told that "the voter reacts to sound and din, he reacts to repetition and he produces either a dictator or a dumb politician who is insensible. Such a politician who stands gets elected in the end, because the others have collapsed because of the din".⁴³ He has given a two-fold solution to this problem: one is to educate the voter and the second is to make "the election direct at the base and indirect from there onwards".⁴⁴ In case a candidate lost the confidence he could be recalled which would involve the voter directly in the governance of the country. His suggestion was appeal to caste and religion would have diminished by allotting half the seats by direct elections and half by electing party lists.⁴⁵ Persons who could be asset to Parliament could be elected without having to fight an election. Money would have been a less important factor in the composition of Parliament.

CONCLUSION

Nehru's writings depict his eminence in literary activities. His statesmanship won him worldwide fame. Due to his rational outlook he became a renowned politician. As a Prime Minister his leadership was outstanding. Even critics acknowledge him as a secular Leader especially when one views his

attitude towards minorities. As every rose has a thorn attached to it, so did Nehru's secular ideas which had its own strength and weaknesses.

Secularism in the west is complete separation of religion and politics. But in India where religion has its predominant influence on the minds of the people, we find spiritualisation of secularism. As an intellectual, Nehru kept in view this paradigm of secularism and worked for the inculcation of scientific temper among the religious minded people. In general people had their own whims and fancies whereas science confines itself on facts.

The grandeur of Indian home is explained as a Hindu kitchen, Muslim dishes and English table. This sort of multi-dimensional cultural effect was observed in Nehru family. His liberal education made him emerge as a rational person. He adopted Islamic style of dressing. Being a Brahmin and a Buddhist he favoured non-violence which immediately brings to our mind that he was a man of peace. As a nationalist, rationalist and the first Prime Minister of India he played a significant role in India.

Critics point out that as a nationalist he was a secularist, in the beginning stage as a Prime Minister he stuck to his secular principles but later on when his government was encouraging astrology, his secular ideas got merged with religion especially when we observe his desires after his death.

He advocated tolerance of religions because as the world is not based on one common religion so is India. Nehru was aware of this fact and not surprisingly in his funeral people belonging to various nationalities and people of different religions made their presence. Some foreigners criticized his cremation ceremony because it was totally based on Hindu customs and traditions.

Nehru was successful in providing similar rights to the minorities as those of the majorities. Critics point out his partial attitude towards the minorities because he provided them certain special privileges so that they do not feel alienated. In order to win the favour of the majority he made provisions for reservation of certain backward people. All these things rather than erasing differences, further nurtured communalism.

Nehru said that since time immemorial Indian state has been protecting the people of different lands and religions. Nehru was a universal man and he was successful in adopting the best political ideals from the developed countries of the world. A stigma was attached to his name because although he worked for the cultural synthesis which was present to some extent; national integration and unity of India, critics point out that he promoted casteism and could not prevent communalism. His compromises with communal parties deteriorated his secularism.

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41. N.V.Gadgil, *Government from Inside* (Meerut : Meenakshi Prakashan, 1968), pp.86-87.
42. *The Hitavada*, Nagpur, 30-12-1951.
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45. Each voter can cast two votes, one for the candidate of his choice in his constituency and the other for a general list of candidates put up by each of the major parties. The system also does away with bye-elections, because vacancies are filled from these lists.

CHAPTER - VII

CONCLUSION

Secularism as a political principle emerged during the time of renaissance and has been very widely accepted in the twentieth century. After the political surgery of India into India and Pakistan, India adopted the concept of secularism as one of its basic principles of governance. Jawaharlal Nehru's faith in secularism gave a definite shape to the Indian polity. Western thinkers regard secularism as a complete separation between religion and politics. On the other hand, Indian thinkers have given a slightly different meaning to the concept. Keeping in mind this Indian perspective, three parameters of secularism were used to examine Nehru's political ideas. They are: tolerance of all religions, accommodation of minorities' rights, and equal protection of all faiths by the state.

Modern nation states are multi-religious states, hence there is a need for tolerance of all religions. Jawaharlal Nehru is critical of the dogmas present in religion, but he seems to be optimistic that by tolerating each other's culture and values, religion can build up unity among people hailing from distinct backgrounds.

Minorities, due to their distinct socio-psychological situation, are fearful of the majority. Being a strong democrat he wanted to remove inequalities existing in the caste system. To solve this problem, Nehru was in favour of reservations for

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as special favour for religious minorities to preserve their cultural and educational practices. It is unclear to-day whether such a policy emanating from Nehru's ideas has removed or enhanced inequalities.

Religions revolutionised the society and gave specific moulds to modern states. Since India was technologically backward, religion had a strong hold on the state. Viewing from historical point, Nehru comes to a conclusion that India has been observing religious tolerance. To eradicate the then prevailing political disease, communalism, he suggested the political remedy, secularism, for establishing a healthy state which treats all religions with equal respect.

Nehru's personality depicts composite Indian culture. His liberal ideas were a product of western liberal education. This made him adopt secularism due to its rational appeal. Although a Brahmin, he advocated tolerance of all religions due to his scientific temper. Buddhism did have some impact on his mind. He had a broad perspective of minds of Indian people, which could be mainly due to his close touch with masses. He not only preached secularism which is a western concept but did practise in many aspects. As a prime Minister he encouraged secularism because he firmly believed that reason should dominate over passion. From many points of view he proved himself to be secular, but as a Prime Minister he was not entirely successful

in implementing his secular ideas, because of the compulsions of electoral process in a country where most of the people have a strong hold of religious taboos and superstition.

The western thinkers on secularism expected the state to remain neutral towards religion. But being an ardent follower of Gautama Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru believed in simple living and high thinking and advocated state to promote spiritual happiness of the people. Science provides a conducive atmosphere for tolerance of distinct religions. Nehru adopted Gandhi's religious path for its moral and ethical principles. Religion due to its vision of the invisible world has a broader scope than science and the common faith unites people and paves the path for humanitarianism. Nehru can even be called a secular from the western point of view because of his obsession with this worldly affairs. He opines that religion merges into metaphysics which is a part of individual life. Religion has its different connotation to different people. To Nehru it means patriotism. He is aware of the variations present among Hindus and Muslim philosophies of life. He perceives that science could erase the differences and lay a concrete path to secularism. As far as the first parameter is concerned his ideas are truly secular because there will be less conflicts regarding religious matters if an individual observes tolerance of all religions. But one can practise it if he has knowledge of all religions. In this respect he seems to be truly secular

Though the religious minorities and majority possess the same physical traits the minorities are usually infused with the inferiority complex due to the presence of the power structure in the hands of the majority. Each country has its own way of sorting out this problem. On the one hand U.S.A has adopted assimilation principle and on the other hand India is following the principle of accommodation. Nehru's ideas are contradictory because he wants to provide constitutional privileges to minorities as well as build up an organic India. He is in favour of eradicating separate electorates and entrusts the responsibility to the majority to satisfy the aspirations of the minority. It is questionable whether such a solution of accommodation has eradicated the feeling of prejudice prevailing among the different religious groups. Nehru opines that suspicion among the minds of the religious groups will result in fundamentalism and separatism which will hamper the unity of India. Nehru's passions overwhelm his reason when he is in favour of reservations to certain castes and tribes. In order to do away with communal politics his ideas lead to casteist politics though within a single religion. Any sort of reservation is an obstacle in attaining the ideal of secularism. Through Directive Principles of State Policy, Nehru wanted the state to provide special favours to the backward castes by providing educational opportunities and jobs. He has worked hard to accommodate the rights of minorities. He seems to be too soft towards the minorities which was not liked by the majority community. There is no doubt that he pampered the minorities but he was not

entirely successful to persuade every member of the majority community to adopt similar attitude. He might have been successful in winning the favour of minorities due to his personal charisma but expecting the same attitude from everyone was perhaps unrealistic. When we make an analysis of his ideas regarding this matter ^Ihe seems to be reasonably secular, though with occasional compromises. India has been a land of many religions such as Hinduism, Christianity Islam, Sikhism etc. Conflicts arise only when one religion tries to subjugate other. In Nehru's view India has for most of time exhibited tolerance of all religions because peace prevailed preserving the unity and integrity. Cultural patronage by the rulers was the characteristic feature of the Indian state. Unlike the ancient rulers who worked for preserving life not only on this earth but also practised a way of life for securing a place in heaven in next world. Nehru hardly had any concern for the next world. India always welcomed the services of the missionaries. Nehru himself appreciated the Indian missionaries which had gone abroad in the ancient India. The weakness of the Indian caste system were exploited by Christian and Islamic missionaries. Most of the people got attracted to these religions and got themselves converted. Through the institution of marriage synthesis of culture prevailed and Nehru seems to be an admirer of Mughal emperor Akbar in this matter. When the missionaries in the later era were involved as spies Nehru as a statesman put check on their activities. Indian state in Nehru's view encouraged the building up of religious institutions and he was in favour of

this because only these institutions provide moral support for the masses.

The nineteenth century India was marked by British imperialism. One positive fallout of the British rule was the idea of Indian nationalism, going beyond narrow religious sentiments, but filled with all emotive elements of a religion. Religious nationalism evoked the sentiment, *Bharat Mata*, or Mother India. After partition in 1947 Jawaharlal Nehru laid greater emphasis on science because being the first Prime Minister of independent India he perceived that science alone can erase the then prevailing communalism, and inculcate scientific temper which forms the base of secularism. To attain the goal Nehru suggested certain concrete steps such as democratic form of government, preserving distinct cultures, and being emotionally integrated as a multi-religious family. Nehru's ideas on the third parameter, equal protection of all faiths by the state, appears paradoxical. In the Indian constitution, of which Nehru was architect, on one hand state provides fundamental rights where no discrimination is permitted on the ground of religion and on the other hand, state curtails certain rights adopting Directive Principles of state policy giving an economic justification. For example, even today there is hue and cry for a uniform civil code. Nehru has left a legacy from which India has hardly been able to recover. Regarding this parameter we can conclude that he seems to be a secular in certain matters and not entirely secular in certain other matters.

Critics also do accept Nehru as a secular leader of independent India, yet in certain aspects he seems to have several shortcomings. He knew the technique of changing the traditional Indian society through science. In accordance with the basic secular philosophy he confined himself to this world. He was influenced by Buddhism due to its non-violent appeal. Although he was in favour of tolerance of all religions, he imbibed only Buddhism and Hinduism. Due to his pampering of minorities the majority became prejudiced which resulted in communal clashes off and on. He was the architect of a constitution which protected all faiths in an equal manner, yet his efforts to reform non-Hindu religious groups were neither visible nor significant. Due to his compromises with communal parties at state level communalism gained ground, simultaneously giving way to casteist politics.

On the whole, considering all the three parameters of secularism, our arguments suggest that in the realm of ideas, Nehru had a scientific temper and can be regarded as secular; but when one comes to the brass tracks of politics, there were several gaps in putting his ideas into practice. Perhaps his vision did not match with the compulsions of a democratic polity. Or, it could be that the need to preserve the unity of a nascent polity was utmost in his mind, even at the cost of compromising on the principle of secularism. Only some future research unravelling the dynamics involved in decision making on religious matters during Nehru's Prime-Ministership can unravel this mystery.

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