



Socio-Political Orientation for India of Tomorrow

Secularism Reviewed and Redefined

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Abstract

India today is at a promising point of crossroad, in more sense than one. A resurgent economy is struggling to leave behind the destructive trail of pandemic. While politics is learning to balance short term interest with long term stability, the political force is exhibiting ever changing social reality. The youth, a sizeable mass, with reservoir of enthusiasm and technical skill, confronted with numerous existential issues, is learning to negotiate social reality and is making peace with maturity. Tomorrow, which may take few years to unfold, will surely be a different India. It is the responsibility of the current leadership to craft and give shape to that India in waiting.

Hopefully, India of tomorrow, is likely to be free from poverty and will be tending towards prosperity for all sections of people. People's wellbeing will be at the heart of the country's aspiration. This article is an attempt to vision a future India, free from the shackles of religious fundamentalism. It is known that no one wants to be trapped in the vicious tornado of communalism. The age old civilization has shown remarkable energy for renewal and rejuvenation at many crisis points earlier.

This article is an attempt to draw a social and administrative framework which will be culture oriented and people centric. The paper attempts to construct a framework where country's governance and all developmental initiatives will factor the cultural mooring of the country. Cultural and social space will be free from political activism. And, there will be exclusive leaders in the cultural and social space who will guide and drive the society and maintain the cultural trails.

It is never claimed that the framework is drawn to perfection and is accorded print of finality. It is admitted that this framework needs to be drilled down to finer details and needs to be refined by experience and wisdom, reconciling multiple factors that constitute the composite culture that is India. If the foundational premises of the framework will be accepted at intellectual level and subsequent exercise is made to prepare a blueprint for a better India, then the objective of the article will be met.

Backdrop

India in 2019-2020 is passing through a phase when there is heightened political will, coexisting with crumbling social cohesion. Country appears to be passing through a patch of turmoil in terms of political and social orientation. As if there is vacuum in ideological guidance that ought to bring about some kind of synergy and symbiosis in the social fabric. While section of public opinion is engaged to review and rewrite the 'idea that is India', some other sections appear to be steadfastly engaged in fomenting turbulence. Country is passing through simmering unrest arising out of fear and hatred amongst social groups. Social voices and public debate are seen to be sharply polarized, as never before. That the spectra of terrorism and hostile geo-politics in the neighborhood are already lurking behind, constitute other grim parts of the prevailing situation.

Problem Statement

In the context of growing polarization centering on communal feelings and raging debate about majoritarian aggressiveness, it may be appropriate to make dispassionate observation of things happening around.

In the name of secularism, and apparently with view to promote scientific temper, for long, we have been encouraged to maintain neutrality towards religious beliefs. We have also seen blatant cultivation of what is called minority appeasement, in the name of building proof and credential of being a tolerant nation. Without denying and despising the secular credo of India, we hear groups disparaging other groups as pseudo-secular. That only means, secular credo of India is being seen by different groups through different prisms. Extreme views are getting fortified on both sides of the divide; that is, views favoring *Hindutwa* and views favoring multi-culturalism, allowing liberal space to minorities.

We therefore live in a time, where it is perhaps relevant to raise a question: can India do, being bereft of its cultural ethos? Irrespective of the degree of secularism we subscribe to, can we ever forsake the civilizational bedrock of India? Can India ever deny its deep spiritual base? It then requires, of course, to have clarity about Indian culture and spirituality, both from ideological perspective and from ground reality.

Amidst this backdrop, this paper attempts to find an appropriate socio-political paradigm for India of tomorrow. Contemporary issues have been identified and analyzed, factors and forces operating underneath have been kept in

view and answers have been provided to some sweltering questions. These discourses may help to steer the legislative and governance issues of our great country. Needless to mention that there is no political bias in our approach; nor is the author affiliated with any political party. Though the paper attempts to conclude on some issues; at no place is there a claim that the reality appraisal made and conclusions arrived are final and inflexible.

It is premised that India is an ancient civilization that has stood the test of ravaging times. Everything that happens in India is stubbornly rooted in its culture. That cultural base, though not homogenous and monolithic, is live, evolving and has multi-layered reality. The cultural ethos, though amorphous and ambiguous, still influence our personal and social behavior and belief. To a great extent, this cultural base, diverse and heterogeneous as it is, has contributed a lot to maintain the unity and integrity of our country. Nationalism, brotherhood, fellow feelings, compassion, respect for others and environmental care are the values that are deeply embedded and widely cultivated in India, as part of its cultural norms.

Secularism Reviewed

India is acclaimed to be a country with secular ethos. By tradition, spanning over centuries, people of various faiths and those professing different religions live together without harbouring any ill feelings towards each other on grounds of religion. In fact, people generally respect other religious heads, places of worship and join in religious celebrations of other communities with jest and jubilation.

Religion, at the level where it gets visibility, is part and parcel of social conditions. Man lives in society, which has multifarious elements interacting with each other; principal amongst those are economic factors and political forces. It is here, the complexities of religion comes alive, making it subject of secular (worldly) forces. Religion as practiced and lived, becomes different from religion as philosophy. When scope of religion extends the boundary of individual faith and gets mixed with social norm and institutional binding, then faith and devotion get mixed with politics and economics. At some extreme point, the mixture becomes something like communal and sectarian.

Within the overall togetherness and camaraderie ruling the social fabric in India, there lies, however, strong sectarian and communal affiliation. These affiliations are observed more at family and social level, than at individual level. Donning the mantle of tradition, these affiliations maintain

values and codes of moralities in the group. These also serve the purpose of group level security and perpetuation of temporal wisdom and rites.

Phenomena of leadership and having dominance over others in the group is a primordial personality cult of *homo sapiens*. Every group setting creates kind of field where leaders crop up. The same applies in social and political circles, religious communities not excluded. These leaders have need for power; they display directive authority and they use others' insecurities as their weapon for exerting influence. These leaders foster group interests, nurture intergroup adversities and perpetuates group identities. That is how communal interests have been articulated by the community leaders and communal conflicts are thrust upon societies. India has thus given rise to host of communal and ethnic groups and is witness to communal conflicts, which at times conflagrate to major holocausts. Each of these groups and subgroups has drawn their political affiliations by which spoils of power are shared, state sponsored discrimination and appeasements are secured. Thus, lines of demarcation amongst religions and religious beliefs become subject of politics.

Politicians of various colours and hues pick up gauntlet to save religious interests. Regimented religious groups and organized political parties share their own locus and create situation where State and the wielders of State power become background players in religious affairs. This process has been in play in India for long time and began to consolidate in the aftermath of independence.

India was partitioned on the lines of religion. Frontier districts with majority of Muslim population formed part of Pakistan and districts having majority Hindus remained in India. Besides British ruled India, there were some princely states, some of which were ruled by Muslim rulers, who decided to remain with India. Thus, post Independent India had largely Hindu and some non-Hindus, who were known as minorities. The first post-independent census in 1951, enumerated 361 million people, with 303 million (84%) Hindus and 35 million (9.8%) Muslims. Besides there were 8 million Christians, constituting 2.3%. There were other small religious groups like 1.9% Sikhs, 0.7% Buddhists, 0.5% Jains and 0.4% others.

Framers of Indian constitution had onerous task of drafting a bill which would hold the trust and confidence of all sections of people. It was required to bind all sections for nation building activities, while aligning them into the mainstream of nationalism. Equality before law and

nondiscrimination among religious groups were made cornerstones of Country's governance edifice, together with rule of law, freedom of speech and separation of power among executive, legislature and judiciary. Thus was born a secular India, which would ensure freedom to practice all religions and guaranteed equal treatment to affairs of religion. It was meant that State would not interfere in any religious activities; which implied freedom to religious and social leaders in the affairs of religion. It was also implied that State would not promote any specific religion; which means state machinery would function in manner that is religion agnostic.

The intent and the provisions of the Constitution is one thing and its practice is another. Indian constitution is now seventy years in operation. There have been changes in socio-economic and political status of the society. In a diverse and vast country like India, changes are not uniform across the socio-economic strata and not evenly spread across the geographical expanse. Therefore, there are patches of misalignments between the constitutional stipulations and the situation on the ground. It is also possible, some of the exceptional provisions in the constitution, temporarily provided for, might have outlived its intent and implication.

Further, Constitution is a mother document; it only outlines the broad contours. It may not always be possible to remain directly relevant to the realities on the ground. That gap between broad contour and detailed lines are supposed to be bridged by suitable legislation and appropriate judicial pronouncements. The legislations and judicial pronouncements indeed have been made in large numbers over seventy years, responding to emerging situations. It is possible that some provisions have been stretched little far, apparently to deal with the prevailing reality.

The above two paragraphs attempt to make a point that constitution is getting evolved, responding to societal developments; keeping however the basic structure of constitution intact. These paragraphs also bring out the fact that constitutional provisions have been twisted at times, suiting the need of the time and also suiting the interest of the people and groups in power. No wonder we see people do anything, including something illogical, avowedly pledging allegiance to the country's constitution. In a country valuing its democratic ethos and freedom of speech and expression, there is no prohibition in public posturing, irrespective of wide gap that wedges between what we say, what we mean, what we do and what comes out as outcome. We heard a comment in graduation class in

political science that Indian constitution is a lawyers' paradise. Today, perhaps, it will not be out of place to comment that Indian constitution is a commentators' paradise and a golden point of reference for all, including the street demonstrators.

For long time, secularism was overwhelmingly supported by people who took pride for being non-believers. Being secular was defined to be freedom from religious bindings. It caught the so called modern and progressive outlook prevailing in the second half of twentieth century, when anything having oriental leaning was despised to be anachronistic. Some liberal schools of thought made secularism more acceptable by saying that secular India treats all religions with equal respect. Over a period of time, however, it became clear that all these meant nothing more than rhetoric, and those accommodated political philosophies of ruling leaders of the day. For a developing country, grappling with acute problems on multiple existential fronts like hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, public health and unemployment etc, the overt neutral stance of statecraft with respect to faith and culture, with some favourable stance to minorities, was considered fair and just. Religious leaders were expected to take care of their respective communities. During this period, spanning half a century, while Hindu religious leaders remained conservative and kept themselves confined to their traditional values, the minorities became somewhat expansionary, covertly with aid from their respective headquarters, located outside India. While protection of minorities became a laudable policy of the government, the minority leaders found conversion and promotion of their institutions as unexceptionable sacred duty. Politicians found the time appropriate to build their vote banks.

We do now face situation when, India's secular character is under question; not so much in principle, as in practice. More than its geographical territory, India lies deeply defined by its enduring culture. Secularism, as an administrative convenience of being a canopy, is all acceptable; but it is beset with grave danger if Indians are advised to be civilized, bereft of its cultural moorings. If Indian culture believes in supremacy of God and sees God in many forms despite in essence being one, why do we have to forget God to become a secular Indian? We do believe Lord Buddha, Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohammed as representatives of God at the time they were respectively born. And if their cultural legacy is to be followed as cult, then the practitioners of those faiths should have no conflict with Hinduism. A Buddhist, a Christian and a Muslim can follow his or her religious practice, without

trying to prove superiority of their progenitors and prophets. Their attempt to convert Hindus to their religion is an adventure misplaced, bereft of any value proposition to the proselyte.

It may be appropriate to highlight distinction between two concepts such as 'dharma' and 'religion'. Though, in popular discourse, these two words are used interchangeably, but these words connote different things. 'Dharma' by definition is that what holds everything; it is the base of existence; it stands for properties and attributes of a thing. When applied to life and living of humans, 'dharma' is a way of life; it promotes being and becoming.

It must be appreciated that Hinduism, by its ethos and belief, promotes brotherhood and tolerates multiple creeds. Hinduism assimilates other religions by maintaining their identity. So, Muslims and Christians have to learn to coexist with people of other faiths. If there appears to be any majoritarian backlash today, as perceived by some, then it is a reaction to the expansionary move of leaders of Christianity and Islam. Leaders of Semitic religions find their motive and resources from countries outside India. There are traces of evidence of some of these groups, may be splinter ones, engaged in sinister design to dismember India. Indian leaders of Muslims and Christians community, must appreciate India's civilizational culture which promotes universal brotherhood and humanitarian values.

Leaders of all religions must desist from subversive attempt for cultural conquest. Cultural conquest involves subaltern subjugation and some ingenuous allurements. Leaders of Semitic religion perhaps carry air of being superior race and look for positive discrimination under statute. These communities demand special status to their places of worship, education, travel, recognition for their rites and festivals and so on. That brings in racial and communal dissatisfaction and room for inter class clash.

We hear kind of war cry from *jihadis*, from Islamic fundamentalists for their separate identity, power etc. These demands create threats to liberals from other community and breeds animosity. Some minority community, particularly Islamic, play victim of their backwardness. They keep social practices and living pattern in primitive status that serves the purpose of maintaining exclusivity. These community leaders display prejudice by not embracing mainstream education, upbringing and by not adopting liberal living style, particularly by their women folks. They ensure to keep the

people's outlook restricted, so that sectional interest can be whipped up.

There is murmur in the air to wrest power in democratic way by multiplying minority numbers. Somehow, Muslim culture permits polygamy and their family sizes are much larger than their Hindu brethren. As per Census 2011, Hindu population was 966 million, constituting 80%, Muslim 172 million, 14%, Christian 28 million, 2.3% and Sikhs 28 million, 2.3%. Experience shows that Muslims are able to create exclusive pockets for themselves and for that purpose even migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar are adding to their strength.

What have been spoken about leaders and communities here are general in nature and do never apply to all people and groups in the communities. No attempt is being made to tarnish any particular communities. India has tradition of embracing all groups, communities, including invaders. There are exceptional people, talent and groups in all communities, working in diverse fields, who have remarkably contributed to country's culture and prosperity.

What is found at work, in the ultimate analysis, is lust for power by leaders, by inciting passion, inviting destruction and fomenting communal discord amongst otherwise peace loving people. Leadership uses people for reaching their sinister design, on the pretext of people's wellbeing. The elements at work are combination of religious practice, social practice, politics and economics. This is neither spirituality nor religion, in their pristine form.

Successive governments, both at Centre and States, during last seven decades have used the communities as vote banks. Community based issues like identity, residential status and some fringe economic benefits have been kept live to win over their support, leading to electoral grip on those sections. Political parties understand their vulnerabilities and hold the communities hostage for their electoral benefit.

Hindus are observed to lack unity when it comes to pursuing their community interest. They are also fragmented as far as their political preference is concerned. Some of them, now as in the past, remain indifferent to religious identity and practices. Hinduism has maintained its flexibility in adjusting with developments happening around. While maintaining its divine part, the discrete elements remain evolving together with living conditions, in time and space. Leaders in *Sanatana* Hindu tradition have attempted to appeal to all communities to pursue their own religion, while

pursuing the higher goals of life. Hindu religious leaders normally remain engaged to find solutions for the humanity, as they believe that the humanity is a family. They normally share good feelings for others in the society. Mostly they remain apolitical, following the highest tradition of saints. They usually are not seen to nurse the ambition of expanding the numbers, as much as they are concerned about the wellbeing of everyone. They have undoubtedly spread their influence in many countries outside India, but they remain minority in all countries in the world. However, of late, Hindus are expressing concern of being persecuted in neighboring countries. Most of the Hindus carry a grievance that the partition of India at the time of independence was an avoidable affliction on mother India.

Secularism Redefined

All Indians, irrespective of their religious affiliation by birth, will accept the sovereignty of God in matters of spirituality, like we accept the sovereignty of Indian constitution in matters of governance. It is however, true that there are atheists and skeptics, who may not accept existence of God. Such people, low in number, most likely would remain neutral with regard to cultural nature of country's governance.

All the prophets of the past, the progenitors of major religions in the world, are equally venerable for their respective divine credential. There is hardly any difference in their ideology, save and except the time and place where they descended. They all are the messengers of God and they had their message for the whole humanity. They are above all sects, creeds and organizations. Every successive prophet fulfills the past ones and provides continuity for the future. All religious and social groups must come together on this understanding. The call of the hour is convergence; not conversion. Notwithstanding difference in social and institutional practices, there is no scope for ideological conflict amongst religious and community groups. It is however seen that leaders attempt to maintain archaic identity for respective groups and create conditions for conflict. A strong cohort of social and religious leaders have to stand strong against any kind of conflicting onslaughts, created by vested interests. Political class have to desist from using religious sentiment for political end; that is the spirit of secularism.

It is to be understood that God is one. All the so called religions are actually different ways of life, propounded by some Heads (founder incarnate) at some time. God glows in the incarnate. God becomes awake in man through

unrepelling love. There is no single progenitor of Hindu religion; however, Hindu religion has tradition of respecting all Godheads, sages and scriptures. Hindu religion accepts Buddha, Christ and Mohammed as prophets, like Krishna and Rama Chandra.

Fundamental tenets of all religions is to love human being and lead a righteous life by adopting such conducts which lead one and all towards becoming (growth and expansion) and belonging (fellow feelings and inclusiveness). Hindu religion in fact accepts each person as offspring of immortality and all humanity as one family. Then where is the scope for discord and disrespect for any other person or religion?

Codes of health and hygiene and environmental concerns are parts of all religions and very explicitly outlined in all scriptures. Therefore all religious communities and social groups rally around such issues of collective existence. Differences in food habits, dressing style, dialects should never be treated as points of difference among communities.

State, which is the stay of existence, has to nourish every individual in furthering education, industry and marriage for good progeny, besides upholding equity and liberty. Society evolves into state with a view to work and solve the problems of life and growth, and to achieve welfare. Government of the day is duty bound to serve every individual with his family and environment, and to nurture and treat them for their welling up and existential progression. Government has to take measures to push all round efficiency of people with compassionate consideration, according to their tradition, temperament and culture which make them enjoy freedom and fellow feeling.

Framework for Socio-Political Reorientation

An alternate framework, which is slightly refined (modified) version of the current governance framework of the country is proposed below, in terms of structure and social forces; both at formal and informal level.

Diverse groups of People, having identified faith and practicing multiple religion, as are living in India for centuries, will continue to remain in the same pattern of heterogeneity. No one will be required to forsake their religion or cultural roots. At the same time, there will not be status called 'majority' and 'minority', based on their number. Each religious community will be treated as a collective mass. No special status and treatment can be

exclusive right of any group. World of religion does not admit adventure of seeking power.

State activities will of course have regards for the tradition and culture of the country. In matters of tradition and culture, State will be advised by religious and social leaders of impeccable credentials. The scientific basis which is good for humanity is the backbone of culture. The norms will be in place through exchange by scholars, by churning the commonality of all religions in true sense.

Love for motherland and respect for the king (Government of the day) are part of all religious lore. For all people born and living in India, the country is the motherland. We all are duty bound to protect the unity, integrity and prosperity of the country. All those indulging in seditious activities are punishable as per law of the land. People with nefarious intention who indulge in cold blooded destruction have no religious sanctity behind their action. They are to be treated as criminals, irrespective of their religious affiliation.

India values democratic institutions and, above all, right to life, liberty and property of each person. Therefore, any one indulging in unlawful activities leading to loss of life and property is to be treated as criminal and punishable as per law. State machinery has to be independent (meaning, secular) to take stern and deterrent action against any individual or group indulging into vandalism, without counting their religious and political affiliation. Administration is there to secure the life, property and enlightening culture of the people and to serve through humane cooperation.

All religious and cultural groups will be treated by the State in accordance with rule of law, without exception. All the discriminatory provisions existing in the rule book including those in the Constitution will be abolished once for all by enabling legislation.

All Indians will be treated alike under the law. Therefore, there is need to have uniform civil code. This code will encompass all religious groups. The scope of law will rest at level where there will be commonality with respect to collective living. Areas of faith, belief and choice of living will be outside the scope of the code. It is to be understood that State exists for individual and for families. Therefore State has to leave the areas of individual choice and family habits outside its regulation. Here, the guiding maxim is that the least government is the best government.

The citizenship of India is a sacrosanct identity that allows certain privileges. Citizens of other countries can live in

India only by following the rules of Indian union. They may be accorded status and privileges as per the applicable law. There is no scope for illegal migrants to live in India and interfere in country's composition.

India has to have a population policy. Number of members in a family will have to be regulated as per that policy, regardless of any religion's doctrine. Country's resources are already strained and do not permit infinite demand on those, arising from burgeoning population.

Every individual, family and social unit, will have freedom to practice any religion. That provision exists in the constitution. But there are too many exceptions and conditions, which empower State to impose certain restrictions and allow certain discriminatory privileges. These need to be reviewed in the light of the fact that there will be no state interference, except when unity and integrity of the country comes under threat. That exceptional situations will be dealt by the Union Government.

Society is a school of life. It has role to build and regulate life and existential process of individuals and families. It has to operate and strengthen its institutions and traditions, particularly those pertaining to instinct based occupation and clan based marriage. Tradition is the inherited culture and attitude through habituated beliefs and customs and is the basis of life, education and society. Some principles of economics, morality and eugenics are best managed by social norms. Society has to live in concordance with individual, living Ideal and dharma. Religious leaders have great role to play here and those are too serious issues to be left to politicians. Politician look for numbers in the next election; seers look for human wellbeing up to foreseeable future.

Religious establishments and properties will be managed by social and religious groups, independent of State and political interference. These will be guided by an overarching regulation to this effect. All existing rules and regulations including constitutional provisions have to be reviewed and amended on this principle. It is to be clearly understood that politics and religion are to remain at arm's length distance. State has limitation in dealing with religious issues in the same manner, State has limitation in dealing with social issues. Social and religious leaders without political ambition will largely manage the affairs of religious establishments and properties. However, there has to be much more detailing about the composition of such non-political forces.

The two words 'socialist' and 'secular', which were added by 42nd constitutional amendment in 1976 are to be deleted. Owing to the ambiguity of these concepts, these have been cause of much misinterpretation.

Just for the sake of better clarity and acceptance, 'Hindustan' may be called 'Aryabrata'; just as 'Hindus' should be treated as 'Aryas', which includes all the civilized citizens of India, who accepts the codes of becoming and belonging.

Structure, Form and Forces

If the above regulations have to be translated into operating framework, there is need for nonpolitical forces to consolidate and be active on social front. The framework has to ensure balance between: a) individual choice and State authority; b) State jurisdiction and domain of non-state forces; c) between informal and formal power structure.

Political framework and its operating system is undergoing a massive transformation in India of today, particularly since 2013. Participants in political system have become very vigilant and assertive. Taking advantage of disintegration in conventional society, political class have assumed almost everything that go to regulate and control group activities. Today's political leaders at all levels are drawn from professional and enlightened classes and they use technology, communication and digital tools including social media very effectively. Being under the watchful eyes of a vigilant media, they appear to have taken their job seriously.

Limitation of the current political framework is that it has become too much intrusive and all embracing. Political parties have hardly left any aspect of society to function independently. Politicians' activism has become directive and compulsive. Secondly, nonpolitical forces have toed the political line, under the fear of getting marginalized. Even powerful personalities are seen to be falling overboard to be inducted into political system with intention to serve the society. They feel they can make difference by working from within the political system and not from outside. Bureaucrats, members of defense forces, judges and journalists, all with respectable credentials, have stooped into political system with a view to win larger objective of getting toe hold to serve people through legislative and executive functions of the State.

The next step of this process will be formation of non-political front, which will be working outside the political system. True religious leaders, social workers,

professionals, accomplished artists, scientists and business magnets need to constitute this front. This front does exist today in unorganized way. That front will have representation from all religious communities. But their effectiveness have to be such they should be able to guide and direct the political forces. That front can then uphold secular forces, without forsaking culture, religious tenets, values of ethics and morality, life education, eugenics based marriage system and eradication of social evils. That front will balance politician, power brokers and election machinery. However, formation and functioning of that force is a matter of details.

Conclusion

We are living in a time marked by continuous innovations and connectedness. It is therefore imperative, that we examine some such aspects of our body politics, which are constantly hindering our progress and social cohesion. This paper has attempted to reexamine the concept of secularism in India and has drawn a larger framework of society and politics, in which religion is a part.

This article advocates that State in India has to remain aloof from affairs of religion. At the same time, State operation cannot ignore issues of Indian tradition and culture. Indian people and their representatives need to be mature enough to distinguish where the domain of State ceases to exist and where from society takes over. Practice of religion is an act of individual choice and social dynamics. Religious leaders of all communities have great responsibility to guard their ground with regard to observing the principles and practices of 'being and becoming'. Leaders of each religious group will have to find meaning in their religion and find areas of convergence. If religious leaders carry and manifest political ambition, the group has to dislodge him or her from the position and treat him or her as political leader. Therefore, every person must have minimum level of consciousness to discriminate the area of religion from the ambition of politics. Religion thrives on love, politicians aspire for power and pelf. Politics draws its validity from pursuit of power; religious practices draws inspiration from knowledge and enlightenment. Both draw their existence from sound social order. Everyone has right to cultivate political power base; but for that religious sentiment cannot be exploited. Vigilant voters have to safeguard their religion from the vices associated with politics.

It may sound idealistic and utopian; yes, it is a concept that needs to be tried by translating into guidelines and convention. Institutional and structural framework has to

evolve. These presuppose that tenets of religion and sinews of culture are understood in their spirit and practiced with the mission of wellbeing of body, mind and soul. Enlightened leadership is *sine-qua-non* for this line of socio-political order.
