

Ali institutions lose
their influence in
society”



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ali Engineer, Indian Express, dated 30-4-1991.

Secularism: “ Belief that morality, education, etc. should not be based on religion ” - Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary. Meaning of Secularisation:

i. “ The term ‘ secularisation’ implies that what was previously regarded as religious is now ceasing to be such, and it also implies a process of differentiation which results in the various aspects of society, economic, political, legal and moral, becoming increasingly discrete in relation to each other”. M. N. Srinivas in “ Social Change in Modern India” ii.

“ Secularisation is the process by which traditional religious beliefs and institutions lose their influence in society” - Ian Robertson in “ Sociology” - Page 384 As industrialisation advances, the general historical tendency is for societies to become increasingly secular, or worldly, in their values, beliefs and institutions. The principal cause of secularisation is to be found in the complexity of modern urbanised industrialised society. In simple societies, religion extends to every aspect of experience. In a complex society many new specialised institutions arise. As a result, religion becomes a separate and a distinct institution with a limited field of influence, and may find itself in competition with other institutions such as science or government.

Religious belief is no longer self-evidently true. Religion loses its monopoly of faith and has to compete with alternative belief systems, including even atheism. Religious commitment tends to become part time rather than full time.

1. Differentiation is one of the salient features of Secularisation. The ethical, political and economic issues are separated from each other. For example,

the economic issues are decided on the basis of economic principles only in a true secular state.

2. Rationality, scientific attitude, and humanistic outlook - are some other characteristics of secularisation. Modern education lays stress upon scientific attitude towards human problems. It has also contributed to the development of humanitarian outlook. 3.

Development in the means of transport and communication, urbanisation, legislation, social and reformative movements - all these have added to the secular thinking. Measures of the Process of Secularisation: The process of secularisation may be measured in several ways. Ian Robertson has mentioned the following measures: 1. The establishment of religion as a separate and distinct institution with a limited role in society- is a true measure of secularisation.

The process is occurring in all industrial societies. 2. A second measure of secularisation is the extent to which the religious institutions such as churches, temples, mosques, etc. which have modified their teachings and rituals in order to come to terms with secular society. " As Peter Berger [1970] suggests, the churches and secular society are engaged in a bargaining process, but the compromise inevitably favours the stronger party, secular society. The churches may thus become more concerned with preserving themselves than with their original mission".

3. A third measure of secularisation is the declining membership of the churches and the decreasing attendance at worship and other rituals. This process is in fact very difficult to measure.

How many people are going to the church or temple or mosque regularly?

How many are going there with real religious commitment? These questions cannot be answered satisfactorily. However, the evidence from all industrial societies points to a steady decline in church membership and attendance.