3rd

Prof. V. S. Vyas
Memorial Lecture

INDIAN SECULARISM: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

BY

Prof. Rajeev Bhargava

Honorary Professor & Director

Parekh Institute of Indian Thought, CSDS, Delhi

FEBRUARY 06, 2024

ESTD. 1981

विकास अध्ययन संस्थान

INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES JAIPUR

Institute of Development Studies

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INDIAN SECULARISM: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Prof. Rajeev Bhargava

I thank Dr. Arvind Mayaram and Prof. Vinish Kathuria, and I thank all of you for being present here, I am particularly delighted that Professor Vyas's family members are here to listen to what I reckon is a subject that was dear to his heart. I'm was far too Junior to Professor Vyas. I met him once, but I know him as a very distinguished economist, public intellectual and institution builder so I am very delighted to be here to give a lecture in his memory, and I thank the Institute for giving me this honour.

I begin my story of Indian secularism a little before the independence of India, but not before providing a partly fictitious account of its historical setting. Imagine a world in which different faiths, modes of worship, philosophical outlooks, and socio-religious practices exist side by side. Deep diversity is accepted as part of the natural landscape – Syrian Christians, Zoroastrians, Jews, Muslims – Arab traders or Turks and Afghans who came initially as conquerors but settled down – not to speak of a variety of South Asian faiths – all are at home. To feel and be secure is a basic psychosocial condition. All groups exhibit basic collective self-confidence, which is possible only when trust exists between communities. There is no deep anxiety about the other, who does not present an

existential threat. This is not to say that there are no deep intellectual disagreements and conflicts, some of which even lead to violent skirmishes, but these do not issue in major wars or religious persecution.[1]

This approximates the socio-religious world of the Indian subcontinent, more or less till the advent of colonial modernity and constitutes the background condition of civility and coexistence in India. Indeed, it is not entirely mistaken to say that until then, India had not undergone a full-fledged process of religionization - the process by which ideas of loose community of faiths nourished by the rituals or teachings of one or more traditions are transformed into bounded, well demarcated, rivalrous communities to which all members of a society belong and thereby have a fixed, well-differentiated, categorical identity. To be sure, a rough crystallization of religious communities may have taken place in the early modern period but the idea of modern religion was consolidated in Indian culture, like never before in the past, only by the last

[1] Rajeev Bhargava, "The "Secular Ideal: before Secularism: A Preliminary Sketch" In *Comparative Secularismsin a Global Age*, eds. Linell E.Cady and Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010), 159-180. ; Rajeev Bhargava, "Forms of secularity Before secularism: the political morality of Ashoka and Akbar," In *world of difference*, eds. Said A. Arjomand and Elisa Reis, (Sage, London, 2013), ; Rajeev Bhargava, "Beyond Toleration: Civility and principled coexistence in Asokan Edicts," *In The Boundaries of Toleration*, eds. Alfred Stepan and Charles Taylor (Columbia University Press, New York, 2014).; Rajeev Bhargava, "An Ancient Indian Secular Age?" in *Beyond the Secular West*, ed. Akeel Bilgrami (Columbia University Press, New York, 2017), 188-214; Rajeev Bhargava, "Afterward: Nepalese Secularism in Comparative Perspective," In *Religion, Secularism, Ethnicity in Contemporary Nepal*, eds. David Gellner, Sondra Hausner and Chiara Letizia (Oxford University Press, 2018), 428-46.

decades of 19th century. After this it became possible to count the number of heads belonging to each religion.

Religionization was coterminous with the formation of national communities, including Hindu and Muslim nations. With this the background condition of civility and harmony was unsettled. Religious coexistence could now no longer be taken for granted, doubts about coexistence forced themselves upon the public arena and religious coexistence became a problematic issue to be spoken about and publicly articulated.[2] An explicit invocation and defence of the idea became necessary that all religions must be at peace with one another, coexisting with trust and comfort, and if undermined, mutual confidence must be restored. It is around this time that a project of what came to be called 'communal harmony', dependent less on the state and more society-led, began to take shape, with Gandhi as its principal articulator.[3]

Despite the entry and growth of a discourse of communal harmony, matters continued to get worse, however. From the late 1920s, sections of Hindu and Muslim elites were sucked into what can be called a majority-minority syndrome, a diseased network of neurotic relations, so completely poisoned

[2] Rajeev Bhargava, "Majority-Minority Syndrome and Muslim Personal Law in India" In *The Fate of the Nation-state*, eds. Michel Seymour, (Montreal University Press, Montreal, 2004). 327-356.

[3] M.K. Gandhi, *The Way to Communal Harmony*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1963)

and accompanied by such a vertiginous assortment of negative emotions (envy, malice, jealousy, spite, and hatred) that, collective delirium and cold-blooded acts of revenge, sending groups on a downward path of deeper and still deeper estrangement were mindlessly, alternately, cyclically, generated. A group of Muslims had entered a state of paranoid that was only partly grounded in fears of inter-religious domination (domination bymembers of one religious comments over another religious community) but which got exacerbated and became a very real prospect for those who stayed behind in India after the formation of Pakistan.

The majority-minority syndrome had another consequence. In the 19th century, a number of freedom- and equality-centred reform movements had been initiated within Hindus and Muslims. But the syndrome set off by inter-communal rivalry forestalled these reforms, intensifying anti-reformist tendencies. Ambedkar grasped this point well: "When people regard each other as a menace, all energies are spent on meeting this menace. The exigencies of a common front against one another generates a conspiracy of silence over social evils. Internal dissent and conflict is squashed in favour of the idea that everyone must close ranks or the community would weaken." In other words, prospects of intra-religious domination (domination by members of a religious community over members of their own community)had also grown by the

time of India's independence.

It was in such a context replete with continuing inter- and intra-religious domination that independent India had to decide the character of the newly instituted state and its relationship with religion. It had two options: either to have a polity that consolidates both forms of inter-religious domination, a patriarchal, upper-caste dominated Hindu majoritarian state or to have a secular state that blocks these tendencies and tries to reduce both these forms of domination. In 1950, when India was declared a republic, it chose the second option with the explicit objective of dealing with two forms of institutionalized religious domination.

In doing so, two distinctive conceptions of political secularism was developed, one Gandhian, the other, that I call Indian Constitutional secularism. The first that took inspiration from Gandhi's social project of communal harmony was believed to be wholly homegrown and was variously called '*sarva dharma sambhaav*' or '*panth nirpekshta'*. According to this, the state must be equally well disposed to all paths, god, or gods, all religions, even all philosophical conceptions of the ultimate good as an entity separate from all religions, the state was to ensure trust between religious communities, to restore basic confidence if and when it was undermined. This might happen under conditions when there is a threat of inter-religious domination. Secularism then refers to a comportment of the

state, whereby it maintains distance from all religious and philosophical conceptions in order to promote a certain qualityof fraternity or sociability among religious communities, perhaps even inter-religious equality. This makes Gandhian secularism distinctive. Unlike modern western secularisms that separate church and state for the sake of individual freedom and equality and have place for neither community nor fraternity, the Gandhian conception demands that the state be secular for better relations between members of all religious communities, especially in times when they are estranged.

Indian Constitutionalism Secularism (ICS)

ICS translates Gandhian political secularism, an adversary of inter-religious domination into the language of rights. It does so by ensuring that religious communities that are smaller in number have rights that protects them from multiple disadvantages. At the same time, it also goes beyond inter-religious issues to incorporate a transformative agenda aimed at reducing intra-religious domination. It is its opposition to all forms of institutionalized religious domination that makes ICS distinctive.

What then is the relationship between a constitutional state and religion that it wishes to partially transform? To answer this question, I begin with a distinction between individual ethics of self-fulfilment and social norms of everyday conduct. By the first, I mean a framework for meaningful living

and dying, say, a full life in this world, Swarga, Jannat, heaven in another world, or freedom from recurrent births and deaths (moksha or nirvana), or obeying the commands of God. By 'social norms of everyday conduct', I mean rituals and ceremonies of social interaction, but primarily norms governing interpersonal relations — with whom one should or should not interact, who one should or should not marry, with whom one should or should not dine, who is to perform which job in society, etc. Ethics of self-fulfilment and norms of social conduct may be so tightly connected that they form one single system. Or the connection between them may be so loose that they are seen to constitute two separate systems.

In the Abrahamic traditions, the connection between ethics and social norms was increasingly forged so tightly that they became part of a single deeply connected system. And the term 'Religion' was invented to refer to this whole. The process by which this tight connection is forged is what I call religionization. Thus, if a person chose to be, say, a Latin Christian, he instantly became part of this entire system. Adopting a particular set of Christian beliefs on salvation went hand in hand with taking part in specific Christian rituals and ceremonies, and entering a web of unequal social relations with non-Christians. It would be wrong and impermissible for a person with Christian beliefs to participate in non-Christian social rituals or tolerate pagans.

For this reason, a religion-centred social revolution in Europe meant (a) breaking the monopoly of Christianity, presenting options other than dominant Christian ideas of self-fulfilment — pluralisation of ethics; (b) loosening the connection between ethics and social norms, freeing social norms from Christian ethics, building norms of social equality that transcended religious identities — secularisation; and (c) fighting a church that blocked secularisation and pluralisation.

By contrast, the connection between ethics and social norms remained very loose in Indian traditions. Because social norms and power hardly ever dictated the choice of ethics, there was greater innovation, and so ethical frameworks proliferated. People could move freely from one framework to another and sometimes, without any discomfort, participate in several. And yet, precisely because social norms existed independently of ethics, this very ethical flexibility went hand in hand with great rigidity within social norms. This is so because hierarchical and fixed caste relations lay at the core of these norms. Ironically, they even complemented each other; as long as one remained within the caste system, one could choose any ethical framework, any path to self-fulfilment. A person could find fulfilment in a loving relationship with Krishna, in achieving swarga, or in liberation from the cycle of rebirth and at the same time follow common norms governing unequal social relations. A person may quit this - worldly Vedic ethic

in order to lead an ascetic Jain life but all the while continue to belong to the Vaishya caste, and therefore remain enmeshed in hierarchical caste relations. This was true even for those who became Christians or Muslims; they chose a modified Abrahamic ethic but remained entrenched in the caste system.

'Religion' in India

Given that the term 'religion' was invented within Latin Christianity to refer to a single system, it was not easily applicable in the subcontinent where ethics and social norms do not cohere into one single whole. Yet, such is the force and sway of the term 'religion' that it has been simultaneously used to refer to two relatively distinct and independent systems of ethics and social norms. This has generated many problems and much confusion.

Consider the following simple example from the natural sciences to grasp the absurdity of this profound misnaming. The term 'water' refers to a single entity composed of two distinct elements, oxygen and hydrogen. Where the two gases are deeply connected to form a single compound, the term 'water' is appropriate but we rightly use two distinct terms 'hydrogen' and 'oxygen' for each when the two remain disconnected from each other. How utterly erroneous to call them 'water" when they exist separately! Calling distinct systems of ethics and social norms in India by the common term 'religion' is equally insane. But then once a term grips the

popular imagination, it is difficult to dislodge. Some scholars have tried to get out of this hole by using 'religion' in two different senses — ethical religion and social religion. Though not entirely satisfactory, we might accept this and say that in India, a profound pluralism of ethical religions exists. Yet, followers of different ethical religions participate in much the same caste-ridden social religion.

How does all this help us understand the relationship of our Constitution to Indian religions? Unlike Europe, where people have to fight for pluralisation of ethics, here: (a) we strive to conserve the immense pluralism of our ethical religions, to act against any attempt at religious homogenisation or exclusion. The Indian Constitution performs this 'conservative function. (b) By preventing a tight connection between social norms and ethical religion, the Indian Constitution also ensures that we do not have 'Religion' as conceived in exclusionary monotheistic traditions, something as totalising as Latin Christianity had been or Saudi Islam now is. (c) Finally, its main objective is to destroy what is at the core of India's dominant social religion — its deeply hierarchical caste system and its gender-based hierarchies.

So, a number of features mark Indian secularism. (a) A distinction is drawn between the identity of the state which is made largely independent of religion and an important but limited sphere where religious freedom is guaranteed and

religion, officially recognized (Articles 25-30). (b) The qualification for citizenship qua membership in the state is made wholly independent of religious affiliation but a small number of important rights are mediated by membership in religious communities. (Articles 26-30). (c) The state is required to be equally (well - or ill -) disposed to all religions. No religion is supposed to be politically dominant or favoured by the state. More interestingly, (d) religion is understood to be a complex, morally ambiguous phenomenon - some aspects of which deserve respect and non- intervention, other aspects that deserve respect requiring positive intervention from the state, and still others active disrespect and state-intervention (ban on untouchability, potential to reform personal laws). In short, there is no blanket disrespect towards religions nor an unqualified respect for them but rather an attitude of critical respect. This is crucial, given the virtual impossibility of distinguishing the religious aspect from the social aspect, as B.R. Ambedkar famously observed. Every aspect of religious doctrine or practice cannot be respected. Respect for religion must be accompanied by critique.

This attitude of critical respect finds expression in law and public policy in the form of what I have called 'principled distance'. The strict separation of the French and American variety is rejected. Also abandoned is a policy of favouring one religion. (as in Europe or the Middle East, including Israel)

Instead the state has to constantly decide when to engage or disengage, help or hinder religion depending entirely on which of these enhances our constitutional commitment to freedom, equality and fraternity. In sum, two features distinguish India's constitutional secularism from other secularisms: (a) critical respect for, and (b) principled distance from all religions.

Given its complexity, this constitutional secularism cannot be sustained by governments alone but requires collective commitment from an impartial judiciary, a scrupulous media, civil society activists, and an alert citizenry.

The current discourse of Indian secularism and its problems

So much so for the normative models of secularism. What about the current state of the discourse of secularism in India. I accept that forces have been unleashed more recently that attack the secular ethos of our society in a manner that is more blatant and persistent, but it would be foolish not to admit that wittingly or unwittingly, deliberately or unintentionally, various social and political groups have been chipping away at the secular edifice, so that gradually, overtime, its moral power and legitimacy have been eroded. Indeed, my focus is on the discourse of secularism led by secularists themselves. The moral and spiritual power of secularism, its attraction and appeal vanish when those who defend it lose their way. Though I attend to the conceptual and narrative-related flaws in the understanding and defence of secularism, I do not for a moment

suggest they contributed more to the crisis of secularism than external factors. Far from that, such internal factors account more for the loss of its moral appeal and power, which is my focus in this presentation.

Where then did we go wrong with the discourse of secularism? As part of this answer, I briefly state five propositions. My first point relates to something important that is almost completely absent from our discourse of secularism - the religionization of ethics and faiths - A process that was fast - tracked and consolidated in Europe during and after the wars of religion in 16/17th century, did not properly emerge in India at least until the 19th century.[4] The history of the sub-continent is littered with millions of individuals and groups having taken steps to form multiple ethical religions, sometimes with fluid and at other times with more rigid and exclusive attachments but a full blooded idea of a bounded community of a tightly knit system of ethics and social norms, seeking exclusive allegiance was at best marginal, not centre stage. Fuzzy communities, multiple allegiances, and fluid, hybrid and composite identities were possibly the norm. The introduction of the idea of fully grown comprehensive religion had a dramatic, somewhat disastrous impact on early religious formations that still persist in India.

[4] To be sure, a few strands here and there did threaten to turn in that direction. Dharm Shastric Brahminism and currents in Islam inspired for instance by the leadership of Sirhandi. But contrary features in the social imaginary are likely to have pulled them back, contained them or steered them on an altogether different track.

Yet, this process of religionization is still reversible. Older religious formations are still verymuch around and have a fairly stable presence. It follows that religionization is still incomplete and therefore still unstable. Reversing this religionization of ethics, faith and traditions, (and ritual and philosophy) should be one of the primary tasks of the secular project in India. Secular practice has partially recognized this, in its invocation of Kabir, for example, or figures such as Lal Ded in Kashmir and more recently, Sai baba of Shirdi but the issue has never found a forceful, general and normative formulation. I believe these religious currents must be actively supported by society and state.

However, since one must acknowledge at least a partial religionization of faiths and philosophical outlooks, Constitutional secularism both tries to prevent and confront religion. With this I move to my second claim: those who defend secularism have frequently lost sight of the whole point behind a secular state, what secularism is for. Most Indian secularists have frequently defended not the complex, sophisticated, Indian Constitutional model that simultaneously opposes both forms of institutionalised religious *domination*, but instead some very limited and partial version of it or worse, one or the other Western variants. They have alternatingly defended a secularism that is anti-religious - alienating the religious by failing to treat them as citizens worthy of equal

respect sometimes put their force behind an a religious secularism - failing to understand that no modern state can keep itself aloof from religion, especially in places like India where religion cannot easily be separated from the social and the cultural, and sometimes chosen to support a vulgar form of Gandhian, multi- religious secularism that has a high propensity to tolerate indefensible socio-religious practices and that cries foul every time the state intervenes in religion. This has got defenders of secularism into a mess. They have allowed the state to intervene in religion when they should not have, to intervene when restraint was desperately needed and frequently continued to respect aspects of religion not worthy of respect and disrespect those facets that deserved respect. An acute understanding of the complex and variegated ways in which inter- and intra-religious domination persists in the interstices of Indian society has been elusive and therefore has been challenged, if at all, only half-heartedly.

My third proposition: that Indian secularism is not anti-religious is widely understood. But not that it is simultaneously against both forms of institutionalized religious *domination.* How did this misunderstanding grow? First, these two struggles - the one against inter-religious domination (a defence of minority rights, opposition to majority and minority communalism) became separated from the other, intra-religious domination (religion-related patriarchy and caste domination;

fanaticism, bigotry and extremism). Then, this intra-religious dimension was ejected from the meaning of secularism and, much to the detriment of its overall value, secularism began to be identified, by proponents and opponents alike, exclusively with the defence of minority rights, as a device for the protection of minorities, especially Muslims.

This opened the door for viewing secularism first as a tool to protect the interests of Muslims and Christians, of no relevance to Hindus and then for twisting it to appear as pro-Muslim and anti-Hindu. The strength of Indian secularism - its advocacy of minority cultural rights - was easily made to appear as its weakness and the burden of its defence, rather than be shared by all citizens, fell on the minorities and 'pro-minority' secularists. This is unfair, partly because it puts the entire burden of defending secularism on minorities and on secularists who are sensitive to the rights of minorities. Secularism is needed as much to protect Hindus, Muslims and others from intra-religious domination - from their fanatics, orthodoxies and extremists, and from proponents of religion-based caste and gender hierarchies. Indeed, there are good reasons to believe that a causal nexus exists between a failure to address intra religious domination, in particular, caste hierarchies and the intensification of inter-religious domination. The more one ducks the problem of caste hierarchies by taking refuge in a discourse of upper-caste led Hindu unity, the more the

scapegoating of Muslims and Christians and the deeper the abyss into which secularism falls.

My fourth proposition is to do with secularism's frequent failure to distinguish communitarianism from communalism. Communitarianism simply notes that an individual is at least partly defined by his or her religious/philosophical commitments, community and traditions. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to claim that one is a Hindu/Muslim/Sikh/ Christian/ Atheist and so on, to take legitimate pride in one's community or be ashamed of it when there is good reason to. Communalism is different. Here one's identity and the existence and interests of one's community are viewed, even defined as necessarily opposed to others. It is communal to believe or act in a way that presupposes that one can't be a Hindu without being anti-Muslim or vice-versa. Communalism is communitarianism gone sour. It is to see each other as enemies locked in a permanent war with one another. Every decent Indian national should be against communalism. But no one should decry legitimate forms of communitarianism. It is simply wrong to conflate communitarianism with communalism.

The conflation of communitarian and communal in India has often meant that secular persons with a Hindu background or identity have not found a way of articulating the religious or socio-religious interests of Hindus without sounding communal and have often appeared to have defended Muslim faith and

interests in bad faith, as if in doing so, they were really being communal but this was permissible given the vulnerability of minorities in a representative democracy dominated by Hindus. The fact is that there is nothing wrong in articulating and defending some Hindu, Muslim and Christian interests when they do not come into conflict with one another.

Attention must also be drawn to another problem of Indian secularism. Our education system often fails to distinguish religious instruction and religious education. No publicly funded school or college should have religious instruction, best done at home or in privately funded schools; but reasonable, decent education should include elementary knowledge of all religious traditions. A deeper understanding of these traditions is vital, for it would make young students aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and discern what in them is worth preserving or discarding. But Indians come out of their education system without a deeper, critical understanding of the their religio-philosophical traditions. As a result, a defense of our own religious traditions or critique of others is shallow, lacks weight and frequently mischievous.

My last and final point is perhaps the most important. In the last 40 years or so, ever since Mrs. Indira Gandhi played the 'Hindu card' in the early1980s, we have developed a secularism that is a travesty of the original idea - what I call 'party-political secularism', an odd, nefarious 'doctrine' practised by political

parties, particularly the so-called "secular forces". This secularism has dispelled principles from the core idea and replaced them with opportunism; opportunistic distance from all religious communities is its slogan. It has removed 'critical' from critical respect and reduced the idea of respect to making deals with the loudest, most fanatical, orthodox and aggressive sections of every religious group. Thus, political parties keep off religion or intervene as and when it best suits their party or electoral interests. This has led to the, the unexpected and cynical unlocking in 1986 of the Babri Masjid/Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, the orthodoxy-appeasing curtailing of women's rights in the law overturning the Shah Bano judgment in 1986 and the indefensible banning of *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 - all by the Congress party - and to electoral deals with the likes of Bukhari by all and sundry. It has even made states complicit in communal violence. This is also a fertile ground for majoritarian Hinduism whose spokespersons can question all the deal-making and opportunism of "secularists" without examining their own equally unethical practices. The word 'all' is replaced by 'majority': respect only the majority religion; never criticise it, but recklessly demonise others; and the state is rid of the corrupt practice of opportunistic distance not by restoring principled distance but magically abolishing distance altogether. This is untrammelled majoritarianism masquerading as secularism, one that opposes what the BJP calls 'pseudo-secularism.

Alas, electoral politics has sidelined or corrupted our constitutional secularism and the rise of Hindutva has made the Gandhian part of Constitutional secularism redundant. To be fair, electoral politics breeds opportunism. If one's only aim is to win, to do so by any means is always tempting. But it is here that we need the courts, a free press, an alert citizenry, and civil society activists to move in, to show a mirror to these parties and tell them what they can and cannot do. At present Indian constitutional secularism is swallowed up by this party - political secularism, with not a little help from the Opposition, media and the judiciary. Moreover, since it came to power in 2014, the BJP's majoritarian 'secularism' has done much to undermine the democratic and institutional conditions of real secularism. With the abrogation of the Kashmir-related Article 370, the introduction of the severely discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act that adds a religious test to the procedure of granting citizenship, the bewildering court judgement on the Ayodhya dispute and the brazenly partisan handling of the Delhi communal riots following the Shaheen Bagh protests, Constitutional Secularism has been forced to go on the ventilator. Indeed, secularism has already been pronounced dead by many. I suggest that this judgementis premature and unsound because it does not take a long-term view. In my view, two crucial moves are needed to kick-start the discourse and practice of secularism. First, a shift of focus from a politically-led project

to socially-driven movement for justice. Second, a shift of emphasis from inter-religious to intra-religious issues. Recall the birth of the majority-minority syndrome in the 1920s. Today, a century later, after the formation of Pakistan and the rise of majoritarianism, Indian Muslims appear to have opted out of this syndrome. When this happens, the syndrome implodes. The result is neither open conflict nor harmony, simply an exiled existence for Muslims in their own homeland.

Remember the other debilitating consequence of the syndrome: all dissent within the community is muzzled and much needed internal reforms are stalled. If so, the collapse of the syndrome unintentionally throws up an opportunity. As the focus shifts from the other to oneself, it may allow deeper introspection within, multiple dissenting voices to resurface, create conditions to root out intra-religious injustices, and make its members free and equal. After all, the Indian project of secularism has been thwarted as much by party-politics as by religious orthodoxy and dogma.

For the moment, the state-driven political project of secularism and its legal constitutional form appear to have taken a hit. But precisely this 'setback' can be turned into an opportunity to revitalise the social project of secularism. Since the Indian state has failed to support victims of oppressions sanctioned by religion, a peaceful and democratic secularism from below provides a vantage point from which to carry out a

much-needed internal critique and reform of our own respective religions, to enable their compatibility with constitutional values of equality, liberty and justice. A collective push from young men and women untainted by the politics and ideological straight jacketing of the recent past may help strengthen the social struggle of emancipation from intra-religious injustices. Those who most benefit from upholding these constitutional values, the oppressed minorities, Dalits, women, citizens sick to death with zealotry or crass commercialisation of their faiths must together renew this project.

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Prof. V.S. Vyas

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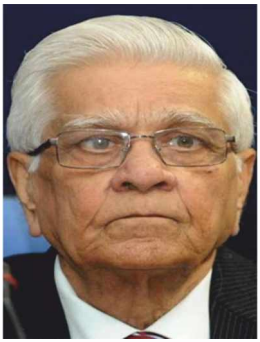

Professor Vyas was the Director of the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur from 1989 to 1996. Later on, Prof. Vyas became the Chairman of IDS Jaipur (1999 to 2002; 2004 to 2008). Prof. Vyas was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2006. Prof. Vyas was the Director of the IIM Ahmadabad from 1978 to 1982. Prof. Vyas was a Member of the Board of Trustees of IFPRI, Washington D.C., Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Center for Tropical Agriculture, Cali, Columbia, Member of the Board of Governors of the IDS, Sussex (U.K.). He was the Senior Advisor at the World Bank (1985 to 1989), a Member of the Economic Advisory Council of two Prime Ministers – Mr. Atal Vihari Vajpayee and Dr. Manmohan Singh, a Member of the Central Board of the RBI and the first Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Board of Rajasthan. He was the Chairman and member of several international and national commissions and committees. Prof. Vyas continued as Professor Emeritus of IDSJ till he passed away in 2018.

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