

# A Study of Secular Attitude of Postgraduate Students in Relation to Gender and Discipline

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**Abstract:** With cases of rising communal riots and violence in present India, developing secular attitude in the minds of its citizens has become crucial. Therefore, the present study is designed to study the secular attitude of postgraduate student in relation to their gender and discipline. The study is conducted on 100 students of Tezpur University using “Secular Attitude Scale” (MSSAS) by Anshu Mehra and Durganand Sinha (1992). Statistical technique mean, standard deviation and t-test is used for analysis of the collected data. The result of the study reveals positive secular attitude among the students.

**Keywords:** secular attitude

## 1. Introduction

India is identified as one of the most diverse nation in the world. It is a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious country for which it is called the land of diversity. So, when people belonging to different culture, language, and religion live together in one nation the most important factor that is necessary is respecting and tolerating every culture, language and religion. And most importantly, the feeling of oneness must exist in the mind of each citizen of the nation. Therefore, the 42nd constitutional amendment, 1976 inserted the word ‘secular’ in Indian constitution. The amendment changed the description of India in the preamble from a ‘sovereign democratic republic’ to a ‘sovereign, socialist, secular democratic republic’. Therefore, secular attitude plays an important role today in democratic India. The communal disturbances (which is now a serious problem) in the nation can be stopped only when its citizen will have a broader outlook towards the concept of secularism. In this case, education is the best solution which can be used by any nation as it help to instill the feelings of secularism in young minds. Therefore, it is necessary to study the secular attitude among students, because India as a nation can develop to its fullest only when its citizens develop secular attitude.

## 2. Concept of secularism

Secularism as a concept had its origin in the western countries and relates to the separation of the church from the state, giving the state a position of neutrality between different religions and guaranteeing all citizens the right to profess any religion. But in India the concept of secularism does not simply imply separation of church from state. In India, taking into

consideration its constitutional provisions, it can be said that the concept of secularism is used to denote indifference towards all religions. It refers to non-interference or separation of state and religion. India does not have its own state religion, so all religions are to be accepted and respected by the state. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, while participating in the debate in Parliament on the Hindu Code Bill, 1951, explained secular as “Secular state does not mean that it shall not take into consideration the religious sentiments of the people. All that secular state mean is, that this parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion upon the rest of the people. This is the only limitation the constitution recognizes. Dr. Radhakrishnan (1949), former President of India explained secularism as follows: “When India is said to be a secular state, it does not means that we reject the reality of an unseen spirit or the relevance of religion of life or that we exalt irreligion. It does not mean that secularism itself becomes a positive religion or that the state assumes divine prerogatives. Though faith in the supreme is the basic principles of the Indian traditions, the Indian state shall not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion. We hold that no one religion should be given preferential status, or unique distinction, that no one religion should be accorded special privileges in national life or international relations for that would be a violation for the basic principles of democracy and contrary to be the best interest of religion and government. This view of religious impartiality, or comprehension and forbearance, has a prophetic role to play within the national and international life.”

Secularism and education: At present if we look into the nature of the rising political riots and conflicts in India, it can be said that the philosophy behind incorporating the term secularism in the constitution of India is not fulfilled to its truest sense. It is felt that the philosophy behind incorporating secularism in the constitution is not reflected in people’s attitude and thought.

In today’s society prime task of education in any nation is to shape its citizens’ attitudes, values and beliefs. Hence, education is the building block of secular attitude. The aim behind incorporating secularism in the constitution of the nation will be fulfilled only when secular ideology will be translated into educational practice.

### 3. Review of related literature

Ali (2017) in his qualitative study of secular attitude of Madrassa students revealed that majority of the selected Madarsa students are familiar with the meaning of secularism and they consider India as a secular state.

Kamble (2016) conducted a study on secular attitude among Indian youngsters which revealed that there is no difference in secular attitude and social change among Indian youngsters. Social change is associated with secular attitude. The study further suggested that education of secularism must be started from school level. Indian constitution must be the base of all education system. Government and funding agencies must motivate researchers for search of a real picture of Indian society and valuable information about secularism.

Kumar (2016) measured the secular attitude of higher secondary students. The findings of the study stated that there is no significant difference in the secular attitude of higher secondary students on the basis of gender, locality of institution, type of institution, medium of instruction, parental qualification, residence of students, mode of schools and type of family.

Singh and Singh (2015) conducted a study on secularism in relation to gender and religion. The findings of the study revealed that boys and girls showed similar level of secularism. Christian group showed more secularism than Muslims.

Ali and Kishore (2014) studied secular attitude of Madarsa students and revealed that the Madarsa students possess average secular attitude.

Ashrafi and Govil (2013) attempted to measure the secular attitude of undergraduate students belonging to two major communities (Muslims and Non-Muslims) residing in India. They found that secular attitude of students are influenced by certain demographic variables like religion, parental education, and living place. The study also revealed that attitude of teachers and administrators, treatment of teacher to the subject, relationship of teacher with the colleague and a democratic environment of the campus may also influence the mindset of the learner.

Malingam and Visvanathan (2011) conducted a study on secular attitude and attitude towards discipline of professional college students. The study revealed that no significant relationship exists among professional college students between secular attitude and attitude towards discipline.

### 4. Objectives of the study

- To study the secular attitude of the post-graduate students.
- To compare the level of secular attitude among the male and female post-graduate students.
- To compare the level of secular attitude of post-graduate students in relation to their disciplines.

### 5. Hypothesis

- The post-graduate students possess positive secular attitude.

- There is no significant difference in the level of secular attitude between the male and female post-graduate students.
- There is no significant difference in the level of secular attitude of the post-graduate students based on the discipline.

### 6. Methodology

*Method of study:* Descriptive Survey Method is used in the study.

*Sample:* For studying the secular attitude of postgraduate students, 100 post-graduate students were selected as sample from the total population keeping in mind the demographic variables. 10 male and 10 female students were selected as sample for the study from the department of Sociology, Mass Communication and Journalism, Cultural Studies, and Social Work. 7 male and 13 female students were selected as sample for the study from the department of Education. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for selection of required sample.

*Tool used:* 'Secular Attitude Scale' developed by Dr. Anshu Mehra and Prof. Durganand Sinha was used for collection of data.

*Procedure:* To study the secular attitude of post graduate students, the researchers administered the secular attitude scale on the selected sample group. After collection of data, the data is scored according to the scoring system as mentioned in the manual. Then the score obtained were analysed with mean, SD, and t-test to meet the objectives and test the hypotheses of the study.

### 7. Analysis of data and discussion

The data was analysed by mean, standard deviation and t-test.

*Hypothesis no. 1:* The Postgraduate students possess positive secular attitude.

Table 1  
 Statistical Constants based on the Scores of Secular Attitude for entire samples

Variable	N	Mean	S.D.
Secular attitude	100	129.78	11.31

*Interpretation:*

The table 1 indicates the statistical constants (Mean value and Standard deviation value) of the total score of secular attitude of postgraduate students. From the table, it is observed that the overall mean of secular attitude of postgraduate students is 129.78 and Standard Deviation is 11.31. It is observed that the mean 129.78 is high, therefore, the hypothesis that the postgraduate students possess positive secular attitude is retained.

*Hypothesis no. 2:* There is no significant difference in secular attitude between male and female post-graduate students.

*Interpretation:*

From the table 2, it can be inferred that the overall Mean and Standard Deviation of secular attitude of male postgraduate students is 128.85 and 11.45 respectively and that of female postgraduate students is 130.60 and 11.22 respectively. By comparing the mean score, it can be observed that the secular attitude of female postgraduate students is higher than male postgraduate students. The calculated t-value is 0.77 with df 98 is less than the table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis, there is no significant difference in secular attitude between male and female postgraduate students cannot be rejected. In other words, the null hypothesis is retained.

*Hypothesis no. 3:* There is no significant difference in the level of secular attitude of the post-graduate students based on the discipline.

Table 3

Comparison of Secular Attitude on the basis of Respondent's Discipline

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	Df	F-Value
Between Groups	486.66	121.665	4	0.95 N.S.
Within Groups	12184.5	128.2579	95	
Total	12671.16		99	

N.S.: Not significant

*Interpretation:*

From the table 3, it is inferred that the f-value measured 0.95. The calculated value of F 0.95 is less than the table value 2.47 at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the level of secular attitude of the post-graduate students based on the discipline is retained.

**8. Conclusion**

The findings of the study reveal positive secular attitude. So, it may be concluded that higher education is successful in developing secular attitude of the students. However, secular attitude is not reflected in all the citizens of the nation as communism is becoming burning issue in the nation. The reason behind this might be secular attitude among students is developed at higher stage of education but not at lower stages. As least population of India (compared to total population) opt for higher education, the problem lies with remaining large number of population, who complete their education only up-to secondary or primary level. So, developing secular attitude among students must be the prime focus of education at all stages starting from primary to higher.

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