

# Rejuvenating the Nehruvian Concept of Secularism for Contemporary India

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## Abstract

*An important attribute that came to depict Jawaharlal Nehru, was that of his foresight and vision, that not only transcended the animate aspects of post-Independent India but also the ephemeral, that in turn came to sculpt the collective conscience of our country thereon. Like a great statesman he was able to envision things beyond the periphery and into the ethos of what could be dubbed as the “Indianness”, of our society. He not only articulated the founding principles very philosophically, but also chartered out a practical course concerning India’s all-round development, which was encompassed in an inclusive social system the bed-rock of which would be the tenets of Secularism. In the context of contemporary India, where societal cleavages are sharpened on the lines of religion, caste and creed, there is a dire need to rivet our attention on the high ideals Nehruvian Socialism. Given the Indian context, Nehru’s re-articulation of the western concept of secularism to suit India’s needs is one of the most important contributions made by this towering figure of Indian politics.*

*This paper strives to look into the factors that helped Nehru give a secular vision that was tailored to the needs of India and its complex society; and further looks into its success and failure since its inception. While doing this, it simultaneously tries to discover its relevance and applicability to the polarised society of contemporary India.*

**Key Words:** Secularism, Nehru, Indian Society, Religion, Relevance.

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*Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
Where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls  
Where words come out from the depth of truth  
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection  
Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way  
Into the dreary desert sand of dead habit  
Where the mind is led forward by thee  
Into ever-widening thought and action  
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.*

-Rabindranath Tagore

## **Introduction**

This great hymn, “*Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake*” from *Gitanjali* by Tagore, resonates with the great poem, “*O Nanna Chetana aagu ni aniketana*” by the Kannada poet, Kuvempu. Both speak of the capacity of the human spirit to transcend all boundaries when there is freedom of different varieties. For humans to live as “humans”, the quintessential principles of dignity, equality and freedom in different walks of life are a prerequisite. It is these universal principles that come to define not only an individual but also the societies in which they reside. When we juxtapose these universal principles with the recent events of defiance showed by Indian novelists, poets and writers by returning their awards to show their aversion to the growing intolerance and violent communalization that is curtailing especially the freedom of free speech and dissent, in turn challenging the principles of secularism and pluralism, that our country’s constitution espouses, we see an indication of the regressive trend that is taking modern India back to medieval ages.

As we remember our great and first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on the occasion of his 126<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary, it is worth pondering over his contribution, not only as a statesman but as a philosopher as well. What deserves special attention is his contribution to a secular, plural, inclusive and tolerant society that he envisioned for Independent India. Since the 1990s this idea of ‘Indianness’ has been overpowered by majoritarian religious extremism, especially after the rightwing forces began to enter the echelons of power, albeit through

democratic means. Contrary to this, Nehru had been uniquely secular, practically a social democrat, upholder of liberty and equality, modern and rational in outlook and above all a great statesman. His progressive attitude is one of his greatest contributions to modern India. He was against superstition, majoritarianism, feudalism, hegemony and imperialism of all kinds. This kind of leadership of Nehru was not restricted only to India, but it also made him a towering figure in world politics as well.

This post-centenary silver jubilee of Nehru has come as a coincidence in a context where much cherished values of pluralism and tolerance have come under the scanner. Now more than ever there is a dire need to re-emphasize the multi-dimensional contributions of Nehru, especially in the field of secularism. Looking at the present scenario of religious extremism, one can see that the atmosphere is not conducive to secularism and pluralism both in India and in the world at large. Yet one should not ignore the silver linings in achieving the goal of a humane society. One such ray of hope is the riveting to the brand of secularism that was popular in the periods of the 1950s and `60s, which was spearheaded by Nehru. Like a great statesman he was able to envision things beyond the periphery and into the ethos of what could be dubbed as the “Indianness”, of our society. He not only articulated the founding principles on a philosophical pantheon, but also chartered out a practical course concerning India’s all-round development, which was encompassed in an inclusive social system, which in turn would be the bedrock on which the tenets of secularism would reside.

### **Nehru and his Concept of Secularism**

India is a beautiful mosaic of diversity and a melting pot of cultures, traditions, religions and races. This diversity and pluralism is infused with inclusivity, tolerance and mutual respect. It is for this reason that India is typified as a nation which espouses the principle of “unity in diversity” in its Constitution. It is also a very complex society intertwined with layers of positive as well as humbling experiences since its inception. Very few can understand its complexity and ethos and resonate with it. Nehru understood this complexity and ethos, and his classical work, “Discovery of India”, is a quintessential articulation of that experience.

### **The Birth of Indian Secularism**

European Society was not as diverse, plural and complex as that of India. This enables them to define things more clearly, such as what is ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’ or differentiate between what comprises the ‘worldly’ and the ‘otherworldly’. However, in the Indian context,

where religion is so much interwoven in the everyday and cosmic life, so diverse and contextual, it is hard to put in black and white categories what separates one from the other. One cannot ignore the fascinating and intricate interactions taking place in our society. So the question was how to appropriate western thought of secularism to the Indian plural context. Therefore, the focus was not so much on segregating religion from the State, but rather on maintaining impartiality towards and equal treatment of all brands of religion in its relation to the State. This kind of positive neutrality was focused on individual freedom and liberty, backed by a scientific and rational outlook.

The immediate past and post-Independent Indian history was ravaged by religious intolerance and violence in the wake of partition. It had shown the ugly side of religion. Therefore, India needed to move away from a State that would dictate the religious norms which would bring discord and disunity in our pluralistic society. At that juncture it was of extreme importance for the Indian State to distance itself from the tag of being a Theocracy, where the line between the State and Religion does not exist. History in general shows that religious violence and religious differences have not been favorable to peace and prosperity. Therefore, India's stance on adopting the western principles of secularism post-independence in retrospect has been a very prudent one.

### **Evolution of Nehru's Secular Thought**

The Hindi word for secularism is *Dharmnirupekshata*, and in Kannada it is called *Jatyateetate*. The closest translation that could be considered is Trans-religiosity or going beyond one's own religion. Indian secularism helps one to go beyond one's own religion<sup>1</sup> and not segregate from or oppose the State. This kind of interpretation is because of the significant role that religion plays in the Indian ethos. Therefore, the State gives equal opportunity to all religions and is not attached to any one religion. Nehru was part of these complexities and therefore, it was he who was able to re-interpret and appropriate the western idea of secularism to the Indian context.

In Nehru's own life the ideas about secularism were ingrained in his childhood when he experienced being nurtured in a secular ambience. His resident teacher was Ferdinand T. Brooks, a theosophist. Apart from his influence, the regular interactions with Annie Besant and Munshi Mubarak Ali, and living with Jews in Harrow left a deep impact on him, and at the initial level removed many religious dogmas from his mind. The exposure to rich English

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<sup>1</sup> Going beyond one's own religion here means, that a person can be deeply influenced by one's religion yet respect the pluralistic views of the society.

philosophical thought played an important role in his life, but greater was the influence of Buddhism which dissolved the feeling of discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

Nehru's knowledge of Indian history, religion and culture was enormous. As was brought out in his seminal work titled 'Discovery of India', where he thoroughly showed his awareness of the historical past of India, this country was and has been a tolerant, plural and inclusive society since time immemorial.

Nehru was a rationalist, knowing well that human values were superior to religious orthodoxy. His conflict with several people on religious show-offs suggested that he was absolutely against any form of ritualism, religious superstition and unscientific metaphysical approach to life. His secular credentials were based upon his rational humanistic attitude towards life, and this life was more important than the one after death... Humanism is real religion and serving the downtrodden the greatest worship, Nehru embodied and practised this in full measure<sup>3</sup>. Thus, we see Nehru's pragmatic approach to human life and its development.

### **Nehru's Idea of Democracy, a Corollary to Pluralism**

Nehru stands tall in a galaxy of leaders, who have also made significant contribution to the whole process of India's freedom struggle, formation of the constitution and building and shaping the democratic Institutions, culture, ethos and thinking pattern of this vast democratic nation. Readings in the life of Nehru show that he considered that democracy and secularism not only supplemented but complemented each other.

For Nehru, democracy and civil liberties were absolute values, ends in themselves, and not merely a means for bringing about economic and social development. There was in him what his biographer, S. Gopal, has called "*a granite core of intellectual and moral commitment to democratic values*". "*I would not,*" said Nehru, "*give up the democratic system for anything.*"<sup>4</sup> This same democratic system which he introduced has stood the test of time. India the largest democracy in the world has had free and fair elections and peaceful transfer of power from time to time, which is a rare phenomenon in our subcontinent.

Nehru was a firm believer in freedom of thought and expression, and particularly freedom of the press. He believed that even the demands of public safety should not normally

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<sup>2</sup> Vivek Kumar Srivastava. "Nehru and his Views on Secularism". *Mainstream*, Vol 52, No 47, November 15, 2014, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5316.html>, accessed on 12.11.2015

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Mridula Mukherjee. "Indian Democracy: Debt to Jawaharlal Nehru". *Mainstream*, Vol 52, No 23, May 31, 2014, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article4958.html>, accessed on 11.11.2015.

encroach upon these freedoms.<sup>5</sup> Nehru applied secularism to the development of the human spirit and of the nation. He never used religion for votes. He articulated the humanistic values inherent in religious equality. His secular ideas flow from the great Indian tradition; hence they are not anti-religion but receive sustenance from humanism and universal ethics.<sup>6</sup> On the contrary, today the survival of some of the political parties depends upon religious fundamentalism and extremism. There are even religion-based parties creating communal disharmony.

Nehru used the opportunity of election to educate people on the importance of participatory democracy and he converted the election campaign into a referendum on 'the idea of India', challenging the communal forces responsible for the Mahatma's assassination, which had been demanding a *Hindu Rashtra*.<sup>7</sup>

In Nehru's understanding, democracy was necessary for keeping India united as a nation. Given its diversity, and differences, it could only be held together by a non-violent, democratic way of life, and not by force or coercion. Only a democratic structure which gave space to various cultural, political, and socio-economic trends to express themselves could hold India together. "*This is too large a country with too much legitimate diversity to permit any so-called 'strong man' to trample over people and their ideas.*"<sup>8</sup> Thus, we see that in Nehru's vision the purpose of choosing a democratic parliamentary system over a presidential system was to protect the plurality of the nation and to usher in a society which is just, equal and free and not dominated by archaic laws that sprang from the principles of the myriad religions that existed in India.

### **Nehru on Communalism**

History tells us that in the first war of Indian Independence both Hindus and Muslims fought together against the might of the British Empire. By the time Nehru became the first Prime Minister of India, he had witnessed several communal clashes based on religion. He was well aware of these things. He said, "*It must be remembered that the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of a minority group*"<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Vivek Kumar Srivastava.

<sup>7</sup> Mridula Mukherjee.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> "Nehru for Today." *Mainstream*, Vol 52, No 47, Nov 15, 2014, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5323.html>, accessed on 10.11.2015.

He was aware of the dangers posed by majoritarianism during the national movement. The Hindu reactionary organizations and movements, which had emerged particularly during the 1910s and 1920s, were a threat to national unity. He decided to serve the cause of nationalism by recognizing the fundamental unity prevalent in all religions. He upheld the cause of nationalism by bringing together people from all major religions on the issue of national unity.<sup>10</sup> What is happening today is exactly what he predicted then. Majoritarian communalism at times is so easily flavored with the rhetoric of nationalism. Words like ‘*pitr bhoomi*’, ‘*bharat maata*’, ‘*punya bhumi*’, ‘*vande mataram*’, making *Gita* the national book, recognizing only Hindus as Indians and others as outsiders and so on are linked to a construct of ethno- nationalism, that gives primacy to the argument of superiority of race, ethnicity and religion, which is mightily dangerous to a country like India. The world has known the horrors of such a construct of a Nation when the Nazis under the leadership of Adolf Hitler sought to weave a ‘Nation-State’ that was based on the idea of racial purity, a thing that ultimately had disastrous consequences. Nehru Said, “*I have some knowledge of the way the Nazi movement developed in Germany. It attracted by its superficial trappings and strict discipline considerable numbers of lower middle class young men and women who are normally not too intelligent and for whom life appeared to offer little to attract them. And so they drifted towards the Nazi party because its policy and programme, such as they were, simple, negative and did not require an active effort of the mind. The Nazi party brought Germany to ruin and I have little doubt that if these tendencies are allowed to spread and increase in India, they would do enormous injury to India. No doubt India would survive. But she would be grievously wounded and would take a long time to recover*”.<sup>11</sup>

### **Nehru’s Example of Communal Harmony**

There are lots of instances where Nehru took keen interest in mending communal discord. For instance in Bihar, when Hindu-Muslim riots broke out in the wake of Partition, he rushed to the rescue of the unfortunate victims; unguarded he went to the scene of rioting and told the mob in Patna: “*Kill me before you kill a Muslim.*” It was not an empty declaration; he meant it. It had the desired effect on the rioters, and the situation soon came under control. His action in other riot-stricken areas was as effective as in Bihar. In Delhi, he gave refuge to

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<sup>10</sup> Vivek Kumar Srivastava.

<sup>11</sup> Ramachandra Guha, ed. *The Multiple Agendas of Jawaharlal Nehru*, in Makers of Modern India. Penguin Books India, 2010, p 331.

hundreds of Muslims in the Prime Minister's house; dozens of them were saved due to his sheer personal intervention<sup>12</sup>.

His action in the Punjab region, then the most violently and badly affected province during the communal disturbances, was no less heroic. He toured the bloody areas in a jeep, sometimes at considerable risk to his life. In one town he was told that the Sikhs were plotting a wholesale massacre of the Muslims. Without fear he went to the Sikh quarters, rounded up their leaders and warned them: "*If you harm one single hair of a Muslim, I will send in a tank and blast you to bits.*"<sup>13</sup> At times it may seem to one that he was pro-Muslim, yet it is a fact that he opposed Mr. Jinnah and his supporters. Nehru was well aware that majoritarian communalism could easily take the form of fascism which is all the more detrimental to a democratic society. He said, "*when a majority thinks itself as the entire nation and in its attempt to absorb the minority actually separates them 'even more. We, in India, have to be particularly careful of this because of our tradition of caste and separatism. We have a tendency to fall into separate groups and to forget the larger unity*".<sup>14</sup>

### **Threats to Secularism in the Present Context of India**

In the last few decades we have seen that religious extremism is gaining adherence through the process of politicization. Exploitation of religious sentiments is used to gain political power. Consequently, this suffocates democracy and chokes secularism and pluralism. One religious group's identity leading to religious extremism can lead to other religious groups to do the same and it goes in a vicious circle.

Last few months the issue of intolerance has been playing out incessantly on some TV news channels, newspapers and discussions. It is a serious issue for all of us. It has its impact on our lives, society and economy.

Recently there is a series of incidents which show the extreme side of intolerance other than, the periodical communal clashes between different religious groups that happen during some religious gathering or political rallies or places of disputes. Some of such incidents are as follows:

1. Murder of Govind Pansare, a rationalist;

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<sup>12</sup>Rafiq Zakaria, "Secular Outlook". *Mainstream*, Vol 51, No 23, May 25, 2013, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article4213.html>, accessed on 12.11.15

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ramachandra Guha, pp 334.

2. Murder of Narendra Achyut Dabholkar, a rationalist and author from Maharashtra. He was murdered on 20 August 2013. He was the founder president of an organization to eradicate superstition.
3. In August, a Kannada language scholar, M. M. Kalburgi was gunned down by a visitor to his residence. Kalburgi was a well-known critic of idol-worshipping, a practice adopted by most Hindus.
4. The Issue of Cow slaughter and beef ban: there have been increasingly violent reactions to Indians who consume beef. A Muslim was beaten to death for supposedly eating beef, and a lot more are harassed and beaten for transporting cows.
5. A large number of Indian novelists, poets and writers returned their awards to show their aversion to the growing intolerance and violent communal nationalism in India.
6. Barak Obama, President of America, after his visit to India said, *“Michelle and I returned from India — an incredible, beautiful country, full of magnificent diversity — but a place where, in past years, religious faiths of all types have, on occasion, been targeted by other people of faith, simply due to their heritage and their beliefs — acts of intolerance that would have shocked Gandhiji, the person who helped to liberate that nation.”*<sup>15</sup>
7. Some of the provocative statements by political leaders:
  - a. *'You have to decide whether you want a government of Ramzade or haramzadey.'* This was what Minister of State for Food Processing, Niranjana Jyoti, said while exhorting Delhi voters to make a choice in the assembly election<sup>16</sup>.
  - b. *'Anyone who rejects the view that Hinduism is a mark of national identity will have to pay a heavy price?'*<sup>17</sup> --Yogi Adityanath, a five-time MP
  - c. Throughout their campaign in Maharashtra, Asaduddin and Akbaruddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul Muslimeen used religion to ask for votes<sup>18</sup>.  
(this is an example of intolerance in minority community as well)

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<sup>15</sup> MSN news, Religious intolerance in India would have shocked Mahatma Gandhi dated 06.02.15, <http://www.msn.com/en-in/news/other/religious-intolerance-in-india-would-have-shocked-mahatma-gandhi-barack-obama/ar-AA92j6y?ocid=UP97DHP>

<sup>16</sup> Jyoti Punwani, “Why BJP MPs get away with explosive speeches” December 15, 2014 <http://www.rediff.com/news/column/jyoti-punwani-why-bjp-mps-get-away-with-explosive-speeches/20141215.htm>, accessed on 18.11.15.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

- d. "Muslims can continue to live in this country, but they will have to give up eating beef."<sup>19</sup> -- Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana and member of the BJP.
  - e. "*Hindustan is for Hindus*"<sup>20</sup> - P B Acharya, the Governor of Nagaland
8. To make Gita the national book<sup>21</sup>

These are a few but serious statements and incidents of intolerance. These are light years away from Nehru's vision and dream. They pose a serious threat to the unity and integrity of India. There is a dire need for vigilance by the citizens who must learn from our great leader, Nehru. A few of these learnings are discussed below.

### **Lessons from Nehru's Secularism**

When one goes through the life of Nehru, one can easily accept that he was a rational, secular, democratic, tolerant man and as the first Prime Minister of the nation he has set a precedent in incorporating these ideas into the Indian psyche.

1. **Danger of Politicization of Religion:** Salman Rushdie once remarked, "*The simple truth is that whenever religion gets into society's driving seat, tyranny results.*" (The Guardian, March 18, 2005)<sup>22</sup>. History is witness to the events of the medieval age and now to the experiences of the theocratic states in the world, that when religious laws overpower the secular laws, all-round development of a person and country comes to a standstill. In a broadcast to the nation, March 26, 1964 Nehru said, "*Pakistan came into existence on the basis of hatred and intolerance. We must not allow ourselves to react to this in the same way. That surely will be a defeat for us. We have to live up to our immemorial culture and try to win over those who are opposed to us. To compete with each other in hatred and barbarity is to sink below the human level and tarnish the name of our country and our people. One evil deed leads to another. Thus evil grows.*"

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<sup>19</sup> Nirupama Subramanian, "Muslims can live in this country, but will have to give up eating beef, says Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar" - October 16, 2015, See more at: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/muslims-can-live-in-this-country-but-they-will-have-to-give-up-eating-beef-says-haryana-cm-manohar-lal-khattar/>, accessed on 18.11.15

<sup>20</sup> Assam Gov lands in another controversy, *Deccan Herald*, Nov 23, 2015. <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/513433/assam-guv-lands-another-controversy.html>, accessed on Nov 23, 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Sushma Swaraj wants PM Modi to declare Bhagwad Gita as the 'national book' Dec 8, 2014 <http://www.firstpost.com/politics/sushma-swaraj-wants-pm-modi-to-declare-bhagwad-gita-as-national-book-1838695.html>, accessed on 18.11.15

<sup>22</sup> Irfan Ahemad, *Islamism and Democracy in India*. (Princeton University Press, 2009) vii

*That is not the way to stop these inhuman deeds. If we can behave with tolerance and friendship to each other, that surely will have its effect elsewhere. If not, this vicious circle will go on bringing sorrow and disaster to all of us and others*<sup>23</sup>. He even criticized the concept of a Theocratic state. India, he repeatedly emphasized, had always been a secular state: the more recent change in the thinking of some Indians was *“a reversal of the historic process”; or rather “a perversion of the course of history”*<sup>24</sup>.

Since the time of Independence and especially in the past three decades, religious extremism has been a prominent phenomenon in Indian politics, playing an essential role in shaping the main events in the recent past, especially in politics. There is also a subtle movement to make India a Hindu Rashtra on Brahminical terms. Nehru had almost prophesized saying *“we must have it clearly in our minds and in the mind of the country that the alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood.”*<sup>25</sup> And this prophesy seems to be a reality now!

- 2. Openness to Opposing Views:** One more important aspect of Nehru’s life is his ability to respect opposing views. Whether during the freedom struggle or during the formation of the constitution or during his tenure as Prime Minister, throughout he respected contrary views. He was sensitive to the opinion of others and respected the differences. He said on June 2 1950, *“I am not afraid of the opposition in this country and I do not mind if opposition groups grow up on the basis of some theory, practice or constructive theme. I do not want India to be a country in which millions of people say “yes” to one man; I want a strong opposition*<sup>26</sup>.

On the contrary, today we see centralizing tendencies not only of polity but also of culture and religion as one nation, one culture and one religion. There is a growing intolerance for opposing or different viewpoints or ideas. It is not a good trend for a participative democracy. It is detrimental to an inclusive plural society.

- 3. Socio-Economic Development an impetus to secularism:** If secularism has to survive, there needs to be a proper and definite socio-economic structure. The lesser the all-round development of people and society and generation of employment, the greater would lead

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<sup>23</sup>“Nehru for Today.”

<sup>24</sup> Rafiq Zakaria.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Mridula Mukherjee.

to progress. In one of his letters to Chief Ministers on December 22, 1952, Nehru wrote, *“Behind the plan lies the conception of India’s unity...The more we think of this balanced picture of the whole of India and of its many-sided activities which are so inter-related with one another, the less we are likely to go astray in the crooked paths of provincialism and communalism.”*<sup>27</sup>

It is may be true that educated people and developed areas can still succumb to religious extremism. However, no organization can survive without the grass roots organization. In many of these communal clashes it is the lower economic and unemployed people that are involved, as they are the most vulnerable to political rhetoric. Therefore, the vision of Nehru in strengthening socio-economic fundamentals is a must for the survival of a secular democracy.

- 4. Concern for the Minority:** In a majoritarian state minorities need to be protected because they cannot protect themselves. Therefore, most of the secular countries have provision in the constitution to protect the minorities. In a speech in the parliament on August 7, 1950 Nehru said, *“So long as the minority in Pakistan does not feel secure and does not trust the majority, there is something wrong there. I am prepared to apply this test to India, too. So long as the minority in India does not feel secure and is not prepared to repose its confidence in the majority, there is something wrong here, too. We must consider both sides of the case objectively and fairly. If we do not do so, we put ourselves in the wrong and take a lop-sided view of the situation”*<sup>28</sup>.

## Conclusion

Even half a century after Nehru’s tenure as Prime Minister, his ideas are still very much relevant. It may be really wishful thinking to ask what would have happened to India if Nehru were not leading independent India in its infancy. Looking at what has happened in the countries of the subcontinent, one can perhaps think that we too would have probably gone down the same path as they did, which would have resulted in being a little less democratic, as well as less secular state. Nehru, in this way, was really a beacon of hope for a progressive India. However, the present context in India lends us to think that after decades of independence, the wheel of development, rationalism, scientism, humanism etc. has not only

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<sup>27</sup> Nirupam Sen. “Nehru’s Striking Relevance for Our Times, REVIEW ARTICLE.” *Mainstream*, Vol 52, No 47, November 15, 2014, <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article5315.html> , accessed on 12.11.2015.

<sup>28</sup> “Nehru for Today.”

come to a standstill but seems to be rolling backwards. If we need to have a country as envisioned by Nehru, we need to rejuvenate his thinking and reinterpret and contextualize things that he stood for, for our needs today.

Nehru was a far-sighted and visionary personality which could feel the “Indianness” in it. He was practical and progressive. From him we have to learn that it is plurality and not uniformity, inclusion and not exclusion, secularism and not orthodoxy, pluralism and not majoritarianism, harmony and not incongruity that holds India together. One may criticize him for what he was not, but he had everything that a great leader could ever think of. Remembering him is a moment of pride for all Indians.

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