

SOUVENIR

National Seminar on
Challenges to Secularism and Democracy in India

12th February 2018

Organised by



Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor Chair for Promotion of Secular Values

M E S KEVEEYAM COLLEGE VALANCHERY

Malappuram-Kerala

(NAAC Accredited with A Grade)

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FOREWORD

MES Keveeyam College Valanchery aims at becoming a foremost centre of higher education fostering all-round academic distinction along with core human values: a vivacious institution which enlightens the youth just as it enriches and empowers them and remains a resource centre for the society. In a view to promote scholastic studies on secularism, an academic chair was set up in the institution in the name of Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor who was man behind the formation of Muslim Educational Society. *Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor Chair for promotion of secular values* has organized a *National Seminar on Challenges to secularism and democracy* in India on 12th February 2018. The seminar was attended by prominent figures from politics, academia and media.

We are extremely grateful to **Sri. V M Sudheeran** who inaugurated the seminar and enlightened the participants with his motivating words. We are grateful to all the resource persons who gave instructive lectures in the short seminar. We extend our thanks to the College Management Committee for the financial support.

We also express our sincere thanks to all the members of Internal Quality Assurance Cell who worked as a team to make this programme a grand success.

Dr. C Abdul Hameed (Principal)

Dr. C. Rajesh (Coordinator)

ABOUT OUR INSTITUTION

MES Keveeyam College Valanchery, under the aegis of Muslim Educational Society, has learned and shaped the future of students belonging to the rural areas of Malappuram and nearby districts for nearly 36 years. The college is affiliated to University of Calicut. The college has been conferred an 'A' grade in the NAAC accreditation with CGPA 3.28, marking a felicitous recognition of its striving for excellence. The institution is placed at 51st position in the National Ranking of Colleges by MHRD in 2017.

ABOUT THE IQAC

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is the cell that is formulated for monitoring the quality parameters in colleges and universities. It was formulated based on the recommendations given by National Assessment Accreditation Council. Tasks of the cell include developing a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institution, making significant and meaningful contribution to its development and channelizing the efforts and measures of the institution towards academic excellence. IQAC has been constantly involved in organizing faculty and student development programmes.

Souvenir Editorial Team

Chief Editor : Capt(Dr) C Abdul Hameed (Principal)
Executive Editor : Dr. C Rajesh (IQAC Coordinator)
Associate Editor : Athira Radhakrishnan (Department of English)

Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor Chair for promotion of Secular Values



P. K. Abdul Gafoor was the founder President of Muslim Educational Society (MES) and one of the pioneers of education amongst the Muslim community in Kerala. He was a medical doctor by profession and served as a Professor of Medicine at Calicut Medical College. In 1964, Dr. Abdul Gafoor and a group of young educated Muslims established MES at Calicut, with the objective of cultural, educational and economic upliftment of Muslims. The glorious vision of the 'Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor Chair for the promotion of secular values is to honour the contributions of the great leader towards the educational development of backward communities and for appraising his ideology of secular values throughout his life. The objectives are to act as a forum for discussion on contemporary issues threatening the concept of secularism; conduct lectures and seminars on issues related to protection of secular values in India; and to honour people and organizations working towards the protection of secular values.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MES Keveeyam College Valanchery, with the mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the top levels of excellence, envisages becoming a leading centre of higher learning by fostering all-round academic excellence along with core human values.

The progress that India achieved with a strong foundation on secularism and democracy is accepted worldwide. But the nation faced serious threats to these fundamental values on many occasions. Dr. P K Abdul Gafoor Chair for promotion of secular values has organized a national seminar on Challenges to secularism and Democracy in India on 12th February 2018. The seminar was intended to give an insight into the value of secularism and democracy that our constitution upholds.

The seminar was inaugurated by Sri. V M Sudehheran (Former Minister, Govt. of Kerala). Dr P A Fazal Gafoor (President, MES Kerala) Presided over the function. Dr N M Mujeeb Rahman (Secretary, MES Kerala) welcomed the audience and Dr. C Abdul Hameed expressed the vote of thanks. Mr. Jacob Thomas (Former President, Kerala Union of Working Journalists), Mr. N Abdul Jabbar (President, MES Malappuram District Committee), Prof. K P Hassan (Secretary, College Management Committee) and Sri. N Haridasan (Vice President, Parent and Teacher Association) Felicitated the function. After a brief inaugural session, lectures were delivered by Sri. VM Sudheeran, Dr P K Abdul Gafoor and Sri. Jacob George.

Intercollegiate elocution completion was conducted for UG and PG students. About 40 students from various colleges participated in the programme. Prof. T Y Aravindakshan, Prof. K C Aruna and Mr. Subair KP were the judges of the competition. Mr. Haseeb Roshan PM (Majlis Arts and Science College, Puramannur) and Mr. Selva Serin (MES Keveeyam College Valanchery) won the first and second prizes respectively in the English Elocution competition. Ms. Krishnapriya (Govt. Victoria College Palakkad) and Rasheeq Rahman (Markaz College Athavanad) won the first and second prizes respectively in the Malayalam competition.

Mr. V M Sudheeran released the souvenir of the National workshop held in the college in collaboration with UGC HRDC of Aligarh Muslim University.

ACADEMIC SESSIONS

V M Sudheeran



V. M. Sudheeran, former President of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) and former Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly and Health Minister, is an active social and political leader in Kerala. He was a Member of Parliament from the constituency of Alappuzha four times and a Member of Legislative Assembly from 1980-1996. He was elected to Kerala State Assembly many times from Manalur Constituency.

The political heights in his career includes

- 1971-73 President, Kerala Students' Union
- 1975-77 President, Kerala Pradesh Youth Congress
- 1977-79 General Secretary, Indian Youth Congress
- 1977 Elected to 6th Lok Sabha
- 1980-96 Member, Kerala Legislative Assembly
- 1985-March 1987 Speaker, Kerala Legislative Assembly (K.Karunakaran Ministry)
- 1990-91 Vice-President, P.C.C., Kerala
- April 1995- May 1996 Minister of Health, Kerala (A.K.Antony Ministry)
- 1996 Re-elected to 11th Lok Sabha (2nd term)
- 1996-97 Member, Committee on Railways
- 1998 Re-elected to 12th Lok Sabha (3rd term)
- 1998-99 Member, Committee of Privileges, Committee on Human Resource Development and Convenor of its Sub-Committee-II on Medical Education, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Railways
- 1999 Re-elected to 13th Lok Sabha (4th term)
- 1999-2000 Member, Committee on Human Resource Development
- 2000-2001 Member, Committee on Ethics
- 2014-2017 KPCC President.

Let me commemorate the service and foresighted vision of the former President and visionary of M.E.S , Dr. Abdul Gafoor. This topic under discussion today is a much debated one. Youth has a role to play in determining the fate of our country. We have been going through a tough time where secularism faces a couple of challenges and threats. Witnessing the scene from this point, one should remember Mahatma Gandhi, the epic freedom struggle and Pandit Nehru, our first Prime Minister who laid a strong foundation for our democracy. It is really a matter of pride for us that many countries who got freedom with us are now under military rule and apart from them India still enjoys democratic setup. We still elect our representatives through election, but at the same time we should be aware about the fact that we are lagging behind the Global Democracy Index. Last year our position was 32 and this year we again moved back to reach 42. The report was given by Economics Intelligence Unit. Norway bagged the first position in this Index. The report is also noted for its documentation of details like violence against minorities and the so called ‘protectors’ of slaughter of cows, threats to freedom of press, murders of media persons and the like. The document was based on election procedure, doings of government, culture of politics etc.

Democracy and secularism are like two sides of the same coin and they often complement each other. We have a constitution which values both democracy and secularism. Only if we oblige to the core values of constitution, we will be able to carry out the said values of democracy and secularism. The introduction of our written constitution says, “We, the people of India having solemnly resolve to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, democratic republic...” For implementing the same, the Judiciary and the Executive should win the hearts of people. The framer of our constitution B R Ambedkar says, “the name of a democracy depends upon the people who practise it, if it is partitioned by good people, it will lead to good results and if bad, bad results will be the outcome.”

The foresighted visions of these words can be read in the context of changing governments here. The freedom of press is equally important in this background. The talks related to the media freedom is actually a challenge to the increasing rate of corruption, terrorism, religious fundamentalism, human rights violation and injustice happening to the various economic-social-cultural factors. The need of the hour is to have a close interrogation

on the feasible functioning of the governmental institutions. The influx of money and extravaganza that is happening in the election procedures is affecting the charm of democracy to an extent. The topic of criminalisation that is happening here and there in India is to be approached with a little bit of anxiety. Putting on the one side of the spectrum the criminalisation and the other side the power of money in a way will affect the election which in turn is blow to the very concept of democratic election setup where the people elect their representatives. It reflects in the voting percentage where people feel voting as a burden rather as a legal responsibility. It is essential in a democratic setup to make the people aware about their right to vote.

The deterioration of values happening with legislative assemblies is also something to be taken care of. Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the parliaments in different states, the so called Sanctum Sanctorum, are in their way of losing ideals which had previously kept them upright. People have lost their belief in the current democracy and Judiciary which are now known for biases, prejudices and corruption. Elected representatives and civil servants are now devoting their time to indulge in unnecessary debates and demands all the while moving away from the those programmes needed for uplifting the community and people. The interesting and the at the same time distressing fact which one recently come across is the loss of time happening in the Lok Sabha sessions. With the 15th session of representatives conducted by Lok Sabha, it was reported that the proceedings of the Sabha was stopped for a time not less than its 65%. When EMS was hailed as the first Chief Minister and P C Chacko as our first Opposing Leader, it was said the in the year 1957-58, only four walk-outs from the parliament were reported. Getting in to the year 2011-12 will supply us the fact that the parliament had almost 180 walk-outs and was compelled to stop its proceedings for, to say, 34 times. This was actually against the very existence of parliament and even the things which should be discussed inside the house were not being able to get into the notice of concerned officials. Such non-productive practices were in a way curb the functioning of a healthy democracy.

One of the crucial concerns of the day was the inflation of political parties. With the first Lok Sabha, we have only 5 parties, when it comes to the 16th one, the number has increased to 32. It is impairing the feasible running of democracy. In Kerala, in the year 1957, only 4 parties exist and in 2017 the number shoots to 14. The threats against democracy or against the very structure and purpose of our democratic setup are actually obliterating the

pride and glory of both our constitution and democracy. The serious apprehensions of the day include things like, a situation where the people don't get the benefits of the plans which in records are actually for their well being, the theft happening with officials, inequality in social-economic sectors and the like. Corruption and the failure in the execution of the allocated money for the public are causing harm on democracy. The sad reality is that people are losing their belief in Judiciary, which was actually framed for protecting the interests of the people. The recent happenings in Supreme Court indicate the weakening of moral values inside the judicial setup. These incidents also had a direct effect on media too. The events that culminate in the death of Gauri Lankesh epitomize the current disturbing state of the country. Religious fundamentalism is often a threat to democracy. Attempts have been happening in our country to destroy our sovereign-secular setup with religious ideals. The harassment faced by the dalits and other minorities is an aching factor to be looked upon. It is only when we overcome all those threats and challenges of democracy by reconstituting the value system, by developing a self critic attitude and by despising the love for power, a country like India will regain its lost glory. Politics is for the public – this dictum should be stressed in order to move forward. For such a dream vision we need a youth generation and a youth quake which should instill in us the need of democracy and secularism.

Jacob George



Backed with a strong experience of more than 30 years, Jacob George is a prominent journalist and a well known television personality in the state of Kerala, India. He started his career with the Mathrubhumi daily and later moved on to India Today. He was the president of the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ), the only organization of the journalists' community in the state for three years from 1998. At present, he is the Chief Editor of The Health Café, a national magazine on health and wellness being published from Thiruvananthapuram. Jacob is also conducting a high profile weekly programme Vattamesa (Round Table) on Kairali – People channel, a discussion forum that goes deep into various political, social, academic and cultural issues. He has an MA in English Literature and MJ (Master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication), both from the University of Kerala. He has a special interest in the study of Broadcast Voice. He has a passion for Mass Communication and the Science of Image Building and Reputation Management. Jacob lives in Thiruvananthapuram, India.

Lecture 2

Jacob George

There was an age where all believe that English is the language of the hell. The coming ages supply us with the realisation that English is the language of hope, the language of aspiration and prosperity. The vision of personalities like Jawaharlal Nehru was that of an innocent, flexible and feasible democratic setup. Education should be rooted in such a context. The time when India got freedom, Sardar Patel asked Nehru to renovate the Somanatha Temple at Gujarath. When the proposal was put before Gandhiji, he said the money of government is not supposed to be used for the renovation of a temple. Patel went on with this move by collecting money from people and finally when the work was over, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India, was invited for the inauguration. Nehru was against the notion of a temple being inaugurated by the President of a secular country. The scene which we witness now is our Prime Minister Narendra Modi often inaugurating and laying foundation stones for temples. The contradictions of two governments and the diverse viewpoints of two are much evident here.

Newspapers were actually harbingers of the beautiful concept – democracy. It was in 1940s that the printing press came into existence. Though Bible is said to have the credit of using the printing ink for the first time, it is with the newspapers' effort to spread the message of democracy that the printing gains its momentum. "Believing, but not belonging" – this is the dictum on which secularism rests its ideologies. Countries like Britain depend on their democracy rather than on religions. They don't let their religion mix up with their politics. To them, religion is their private affair. America, which was noted for its age old democratic setup, too follows the same system and try to keep a safe distance between politics and religion. The notion of democracy was actually a contribution from the European side. In an age when secularism is losing its grip among people, the receiving end of this phenomenon is to be found with minorities who suffer the worst. India now has a fascist ideology which can modify the rule and system the way it wants. The modern democratic visions of Nehru lead to the establishment of prestigious institutions like IIT and IIM. In India, the inception of National Institute of Design was formed by seeking support and inspiration from Charles Eames and Ray Eames. For those who believe in democracy and secularism, they can be the owners of a broad mindset and can lead the country to reach its aims for achieving its broad vision of a better future.

Dr. P A FAzal Gafoor



Dr. P A Fazal Gafoor is the president of Muslim Educational Society, the largest educational agency in Kerala. He is a neurologist by profession and currently the Director of MES Medical College Perinthalmanna. He is a prominent figure in the media with active participation in debates about social and environmental and educational issues.

Lecture 3

Dr P A Fazal Gafoor

In the present scenario, where one witness sweeping changes in the democratic setup, Indian democracy is being obliterated by various challenges. Along with the threats, there are a number of factors which harm the very existence of democracy. While the SC/ST reservation is an unnecessary factor in democracy, the Triple Talaq Bill is anti-democratic, irrational and more like a hilarious concept now a days. One of the enigmas which disturbs is the question why a secular country like India is giving subsidy for religious affairs. The need of the hour is to stop subsidy for hajj, as it is something to be undertaken only by those who are affluent and physically fit. It is aching to see the religious influence even in languages. Even with our national language Hindi, this religious fundamentalism happens. Hindustani is the original language, from that a hybrid of Hindi and Sanskrit is being inflicted upon us. The journey actually progresses from pseudo-secularism and is moving close to pseudo-nationalism. Nationalism must not be imposed. Constitution grants right to preach and propagate religion. The sad reality today is the switching from the very motive of propagation of religion to debates over the relative merits of different religions that often lead to conflicts. It is an unpleasant activity even to have a dispute with other religions. Red Corridor is known for Maoists, it is said that even that place is notorious for conflicts. Surveying through the history of India will equip us with a couple of love stories that surpass the ideologies of all religions. The popularity and success of films like *Ennu Ninte Moideen* certify the fact that people receive those stories whole heartedly. Ambedkar says, "I was born a Hindu, but I shall not die as a Hindu." Constitution grants us the right to eat; there are deliberate political agendas which even curb this right. There is a phrase in our constitution which only says about the right to protect animal husbandry and it nowhere reminds or mentions the right to protect the religious sentiments of Hindus. The action to ban the slaughter of cows is something to be looked down upon. Rasiya Ahamed and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad were the cabinet ministers of the time when Nehru was the Prime Minister. It is a historical document that in the Congress Ministry that 10 percentage of the seats were allocated to Muslims. Now the minority ratio is below 6 percentage. It is pitiable to witness people who perceive minority as only vote banks. That is the vote bank politics existing now.

Photo gallery



Dr N M Mujeeb Rahman (Welcome Speech)



Dr. P A Fazal Gafoor (Presidential Address)



V M Sudheeran (Inaugural Address)



Jacob George



Release of the Souvenir of CALEM workshop by V M Sudheeran



Distribution of Prizes to winners in Elocution Competition



Capt(Dr) C Abdul Hammed (Vote of Thanks)



Audience of the seminar

Event in Media



Madhyamam (13-02-2018)



Malayala Manorama (13-02-2018)



Mathrubhumi (14-02-2018)

Organizing Committee of the Seminar

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(Secretary, MES Kerala)
Dr Hussain Randathani
(Chairman, Academic Committee)
Prof. K P Hassan
(Secretary, College Managing Committee)

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