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Q5(d)

Write a note on global trends of secularization.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on global trends of secularization
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Secularization means religion losing social significance, especially in Europe.

Weber and Wilson stated the classic trend.

Berger recanted; Casanova described public religion.

The United States and the Global South do not copy European emptying.

India shows constitutional secularity with Census-strong religious identification.

Introduction

Secularization is the claim that religion loses public authority as societies differentiate. Globally the trend is split: European institutional decline, American persistence, and vigorous public religion in much of Asia and Africa.

Body**Classic expectation**

- Max Weber described disenchantment as a world-historical rationalisation.
- Bryan Wilson treated secularisation as the shrinkage of religion's social significance in industrial societies.
- Peter Berger once expected a secular world, then recanted toward desecularization.

Observed trends

- **Western Europe:** lower church attendance, believing without belonging in Grace Davie's phrase, and a residual Christian culture.
- **United States:** higher practice, with recent dips, and politicised faith.
- **Jose Casanova:** religion returns in the public sphere even where private belief changes.
- **Global South:** Pentecostal growth, public Islam, and Indian religious politics sit beside a secular constitution.
- Indian Census still records almost the whole population in named religions. Differentiation of education and medicine proceeds without emptying ritual.

Reading the globe

- There is no single downward line. There is institutional differentiation plus religious revival and marketised faith.
- **Durkheim**'s sacred migrates into nation and consumption as well as remaining in temples.

Flow diagram

Secularization -> European institutional decline

Secularization -> US persistence persistence

Secularization -> Global South public religion

Weber Wilson -> Secularization

Berger Casanova -> Uneven globe

Conclusion

Global secularization is real as differentiation of science, law, and market from church control in parts of the West. It is not a universal death of religion. **Berger**, **Casanova**, and Indian **Census** politics show public faith beside secular states.

Facts & figures

Weber

Disenchantment: rationalisation strips the world of magical meaning.

Davie

Believing without belonging: residual faith with weak church membership in Europe.

Casanova

Public religions in the modern world; deprivatisation of faith.

Berger

Moved from a secularisation thesis to a thesis of desecularization and pluralism.

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