

Office of the Chief Public Relations Officer
Jamia Millia Islamia

Press Release

**JMI's Institute of Advanced Studies in Education organizes an invited Talk on
'Constitutionalism in the Secularism Debate'**

New Delhi, September 7, 2026

The Department of Teacher Training and Non-Formal Education, Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE), Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), organized a talk titled 'Constitutionalism in the Secularism Debate' on 3 September 2026 at the Multimedia Lab, IASE, JMI. The talk was delivered by Dr. Tanvir Aeijaz, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Ramjas College, University of Delhi. The programme was organized under the guidance of Prof. Farah Farooqui, Head, Department of Teacher Training and Non-Formal Education, with Dr. Andleeb and Dr. Naziya Hasan serving as conveners.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Naziya Hasan, who welcomed the gathering and introduced the dignitaries, including the distinguished speaker, Dr. Tanvir Aeijaz. Prof. Ajaz Masih, Head, Department of Educational Studies, felicitated Dr. Tanvir Aeijaz with a sapling as a token of respect and gratitude. Thereafter, Dr. Andleeb introduced the speaker and highlighted his academic achievements and research contributions.

Dr. Tanvir Aeijaz, an accomplished academician and scholar with nearly three decades of teaching experience, has worked extensively in the areas of public policy, constitutionalism, federalism, public accountability, health and education policy, gender studies, and political theory. His wide-ranging academic and research experience provided a strong interdisciplinary context for the discussion.

In his talk, Dr. Aeijaz provided a comprehensive overview of the conceptual evolution of secularism in India. He drew attention to the inherent 'fuzziness' surrounding the concept and noted the difficulty of finding precise equivalents in Hindi and Urdu. Referring to the historical context of the 1920s, he observed that the Urdu press at times used the expression 'La Mazhab'(irreligious), a formulation that could generate misunderstanding. He distinguished among three related concepts: the secular, secularization, and secularism.

Dr. Aeijaz contrasted the Western model of secularism, often characterized by a 'wall of separation' between the state and religion, with the Indian model of 'principled distance' and 'qual respect for all religions', which permits state intervention in matters of social reforms. He traced the Gandhian vision of *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* (equal respect for all

religions) and the Nehruvian approach of *Dharmnirpekhta* (non-alignment with any religion) as important influences on India's constitutional understanding of secularism.

He further discussed how debates around secularism intensified during the 1980s. Referring to scholars such as Ashis Nandy and T. N. Madan, he explained critiques of approaches that seek to marginalize religion from public life and the possibility that such efforts may, in certain contexts, provoke stronger religious assertions. He also discussed the Shah Bano case as a significant moment in the debate, highlighting the tensions between religious personal laws and general civil law, questions surrounding the Uniform Civil Code, and the emergence of debates over 'pseudo-secularism'.

Turning to contemporary challenges, Dr. Aejaz discussed concerns regarding perceptions of majoritarian preference by the state. He emphasized the importance of education in cultivating constitutional values and enabling citizens to understand and practice the principles of justice, liberty, and equality in everyday life. The discussion thus offered a nuanced exploration of the relationship between constitutionalism and secularism in contemporary India.

Following the talk, faculty members and research scholars engaged with the speaker through questions and discussion, further enriching the academic interaction. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Tariq Anwar, who acknowledged the contributions of the distinguished speaker, the chairpersons, organizers, dignitaries, participants, and all those involved in making the event meaningful and enriching.

Prof. Saima Saeed
Chief Public Relations Officer







DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER TRAINING & NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, NEW DELHI

Invites you to attend a talk on

CONSTITUTIONALISM IN THE SECULARISM DEBATE

Speaker



DR. TANVIR AEIJAZ

Dr. Tanvir Aejaz is an Associate Professor, with 28 years of teaching experience in the Department of Political Science at Ramjas College, University of Delhi. He holds a PhD in Public Policy from the University of Delhi, with a focus on Accountability in Public-Private Partnerships in Healthcare Policy. He serves as a Vice-Chairman, Senior Visiting Fellow, and Member Secretary of the Centre for Multilevel Federalism, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, and as a Senior Visiting Fellow (Hon.) at the Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRi). He is a founding member and Secretary of the Association for Public Policy Education at Global Jindal University (JGU), Sonapat, India. Dr. Tanvir Aejaz was appointed as an honorary Professor/Lecturer Extraordinary at Stellenbosch University, South Africa (2021-2023). He also served as a project Mentor to an AGAPE awardee under the aegis of Global Justice Programme, Yale University, USA. A prolific scholar, columnist and media commentator, Dr. Tanvir Aejaz has published research articles and book chapters in national and international publications. He serves as an Editorial Advisor to *Alternative Perspectives Journal* and is on the Review Panel of *Praxis International: Journal of Social Sciences and Literature*. He is a columnist and reviewer at East Asia Forum, Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, and contributes regularly to The Indian Express, Outlook and other print and online media. His research interests include public policy, constitutionalism, public-private partnerships, public accountability institutions, federalism, health and education policy, gender studies, and political theory.

* VENUE: MULTIMEDIA LAB

DATE: 3RD SEPTEMBER

TIME: 2 PM

Prof. Farah Farooqui
Head

Dr. Andleeb
Convener

Dr. Nazliya Hasan
Convener

Dr. Tanvir Aejaz

Prof. Farah Javed Farooqui





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