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'Religion and Politics are Intertwined'

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Bengaluru: Academician Prof Pradeep Chhibber of the University of California, Berkeley, on Saturday said religion forms an integral part of the political setup in the country.

He was speaking at a panel discussion on 'Religion and Indian Politics,' organised by Jain University, University of California, Georgetown University and Lokniti, a New Delhi-based research organisation, in the city.

"Normally, what comes to mind when one talks of religious politics is that of extremism and intolerance. Also, the general notion is that religion and politics don't get along. However, I strongly believe that both religion and politics are strongly intertwined and share a complicated relationship. In India, religion plays a huge role in influencing the political system. Religious practices in the country form the backbone of democracy in the country," observed Chhibber.

Prof Irfan Nooruddin of Georgetown University felt that there are no institutions or laws that prevent discrimination in the country. "We lack a framework of how much religion can penetrate politics. The notion of impunity - that one can get away regardless of the type of discrimination that they accord to other religions - is what ails the country," he said.