

Chapter 2 - Understanding Secularism

1. List the different types of religious practice that you find in your neighbourhood. This could be different forms of prayer, worship of different gods, sacred sites, different kinds of religious music and singing etc. Does this indicate freedom of religious practice?

Answer: The different types of religious practices that we can see in our neighbourhood are as follows:

1. A Sikh person worships in Gurudwara to Guru Nanak using Guru Granth Sahib
2. A Muslim worships in a mosque and their sacred book is the Quran.
3. A Christian worships Jesus Christ in a Church and their religious book is the Holy Bible.
4. A Hindu worships in a Temple to the idols of Gods and Goddess.

This shows that the people in India have the freedom to practise the religion of their choice and yet live together in peace and harmony.

2. Will the government intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to practise infanticide? Give reasons for your answer.

Answer: Yes, the Government can intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to practise infanticide. This is because the Indian Constitution clearly states that the Government has the right to intervene if there is a threat to social harmony. Also, killing an infant is a crime and the judiciary is the only authority that can punish a person to death and no other religion or person can commit the crime of killing someone.

3. Complete the following table:

Objective	Why is it important	Example of a violation of this objective
One religious community does not dominate another		
The state does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the religious freedom of individuals		
That some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community		

Answer:

Objective	Why is it important	Example of a violation of this objective
One religious community does not dominate another	It is important because the Constitution gives the right to religious freedom to all and if it is not provided there may be chances of riots and disturbance of harmony in the country.	Stopping the people of a particular religion to celebrate their festival

The state does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the religious freedom of individuals	It is important so that every individual in a country has the right to follow the religion of their choice. This is what makes the nation a secular country.	India is a country where people from different castes and religion reside. However, Pakistan has declared itself as an Islamic Nation
That some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community	Religion cannot be divided on the basis of wealth or creed. Hence it is important that no member dominates other members from the same religion. Following their religion is the right of every individual.	Distinguishing between upper-class Hindus and the Dalits

4. Look up the annual calendar of holidays of your school. How many of them pertain to different religions? What does this indicate?

Answer: The annual calendar of our school marks holidays like Eid, which is celebrated by Muslims. Diwali, which is a Hindu festival, Christmas, which is celebrated by Christians and Guru Nanak Jayanti which is a Sikh festival. This proves that India is a secular country and every individual has the right to religious freedom.

5. Find out some examples of different views within the same religion.

Answer: Some examples of different views within the same religion are as follows:

1. Hindus worship different idols of Gods and Goddesses.
2. Muslims are divided into Shia and Sunni
3. Followers of Lord Mahavir are called Jains
4. Buddhist followers are divided into Mahayan and Hinayan

6. The Indian State both keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion. This idea can be quite confusing. Discuss this once again in class using examples from the chapter as well as those that you might have come up with.

Answer: The Indian state both keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion because if a person with a majority religious group gets the state power he may use the power to discriminate and persecute the people of other religions. The majority may even deprive the minority of practising their religion. For example, untouchability still exists in the Hindu community. If the state power is handed over to a person belonging to an upper-caste Hindu majority, he may use it as a weapon against the lower-class people of the society or that state.