

# Understanding Secularism

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## Improve your learning

**Q. 1. List the different types of religious practices 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. Does this indicate freedom of religious practice?**

**Answer :** India is a secular country. We can see different types of religious practices in our neighbourhood. There are temples, mosques, gurudwaras and church all around us. The Hindus can be heard praying by singing Bhajans, Jagrata and Kirtans. They go to temple and read Ramayan. The sound of Azaan comes 5 times a day from the mosque. Some people are often seen going to Makkah and Madina for their pilgrimage. The Sikhs often visit the gurudwara and we can see a langar there. The sound of carols and hymns can be heard from the church, especially during Christmas.

Yes, this indicates freedom of religious practice among the people.

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

**Answer :** Infanticide or infant homicide is the intentional killing of infants. Yes, the government will intervene if a religion group says that their religion allows them to practice infanticide. This is a crime against life. So, the government does not allow any such activity to be conducted.

**Q. 3. Find out some examples of different views within the same religion.**

**Answer :** At times, there is a difference in views in the same religion. Such as the following :

1. The Hindus have many different deities. Different people worship different deity.
2. The Buddhists are divided into Mahayan and Hinayan.
3. The Muslims are divided into Shia and Sunni.
4. The Jains are of Shwetambar and Digambar sects.

**Q. 4. 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 :** India is a secular state. It never favours any particular religion nor it is ruled by any particular group. Equal respect is given to every religion. However, at times it may intervene if there is any domination or any such ill practice by one religion on the others. This interference is only done to ensure equal treatment to all the groups.

**Q. 5. Read the paragraph under the heading ‘What is Secularism?’ and comment on it.**

**Answer :** Secularism means separation of the state from religion. This is an important part of the Fundamental Rights as mentioned in the Constitution of India. This feature was very important to be included in our constitution because it would help to prevent the domination of one religion over another. Every country has different religions but one of them has a majority over others. If this majority religious group has the access to State Power, it can use this for personal gains. It may also use the financial resources to discriminate against the other religions. The state also does not enforce any particular religion nor does it take away the religious freedom of the people. However, it may intervene if it is any domination by one religion on the others. This interference is only done to ensure equal treatment.