

## Secularism (2)

Class 8th

Sub Civics

**Question 1:** List 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:** There are three temples, one mosque, one church and a gurudwara in my neighbourhood. There is a tomb of a Sufi saint in the nearby market. People sing bhajans in temple, gurbani in gurudwara, qawwali at the tomb and carol at the church. Processions of Ram Navami, Muharram and Guru Parab are taken out at different occasions. This shows that people enjoy a lot of freedom of religious practice in my neighbourhood.

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

**Answer:** In this case, the government will definitely intervene. Our Constitution has given the government the right to intervene in religious affairs if there is a threat to social harmony or of a criminal offence. Infanticide is a savage crime and cannot be allowed at any cost; even in the name of religion.

**Question 3:** Complete the following table:

Objective	Why is this important?	Example of 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.		

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**Answer:**

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Why is this important?</i>	<i>Example of violation of this objective</i>
<i>One religious community does not dominate another,</i>	<i>This is important to prevent the tyranny of majority community.</i>	<i>One religious group preventing another religious group from celebrating a festival.</i>
<i>The State does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the religious freedom of individuals.</i>	<i>This ensures that the State continues to be a secular state.</i>	<i>Pakistan has declared itself as an Islamic nation.</i>
<i>That some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community.</i>	<i>This prevents majority tyranny within the same community.</i>	<i>Members of forward caste among Hindus often commit atrocities against members of the Dalit castes.</i>

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

**Answer:** *There are holidays for major festivals of Hindus, e.g. Holi, Diwali, Dussehra, etc. Similarly, there are holidays for major festivals of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, etc. like Eid, Bakrid, Christmas, Good Friday, Guruparab, etc. This indicates that the school authorities give equal respect to all religions.*

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

**Answer:** Following are the examples of different views in the Hindu religion:

- Some people are devotees of the Lord Shiva.
- Some people are devotees of the Lord Vishnu.
- Idols of Durga are installed on grand scale in West Bengal during Dussehra.
- Ram Lila is played on grand scaled in Delhi during Dussehra.

**Question 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 does not interfere in religious beliefs and practices of individuals and thus keeps away from religious affairs of the citizens. But when someone tries to disturb social harmony in the name of religion then the State has the right to intervene. This is an example of a balancing act between non-interference in religious beliefs and maintaining social harmony. For example; there are many instances when the Hindus insist on taking out the Ram Navami procession through Muslim dominated areas. Similarly, the Muslims may also insist on taking out the Muharram procession through Hindu dominated areas. In such a case, the administration has to assess the situation so that social harmony can be maintained.

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**Question 7:** *The poster (given in the book) highlights the need for 'Peace'. It says, "Peace is a never ending process ..... It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests." Write in your own words what you think the above sentences are trying to convey? How does it relate to the need for religious tolerance?*

**Answer:** *Peace can never be the final destination because situations keep on changing. Society is quite complex in which different people have different aspirations and motivations. Many people are always on the lookout for an opportunity to disturb social harmony. So, a peace process has to take into account the differences and common interests of different sets of people in the society.*

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