

Class – 8th
Social Science
Chapter – 2 (Civics)
Understanding Secularism

Q.1 Very Short Answers

1. What examples does history provide us on the grounds of religion?

Answer: History provides us with several examples of discrimination, exclusion, and persecution on the grounds of religion.

2. What happened in the Jewish state of Israel?

Answer: Muslim and Christian minorities were treated badly in the Jewish state of Israel.

3. How are non-Muslims treated in Saudi Arabia?

Answer: In Saudi Arabia, non-Muslims are not allowed to build a temple, church etc. They also cannot gather in a public place for prayers.

4. What does the term ‘secularism’ refer to?

Answer: The term ‘secularism’ refers to the separation of the power of religion from the power of the State.

5. What do you mean by the freedom to interpret’?

Answer: ‘Freedom to interpret’ means an individual’s liberty to develop his own understanding and meaning of the religion that one practices.

6. Why cannot government schools celebrate religious festivals?

Answer: Government schools cannot celebrate religious festivals because it will be a violation of the government’s policy of treating all religions equally.

7. Why is Paramjit allowed to drive in pagri?

Answer: Paramjit is a Sikh youth and for him wearing a pagri is a very important part of his religion.

8. How is Indian secularism different from that of American secularism?

Answer: Unlike Indian secularism, there is a strict separation between religion and the State in American secularism.

9. What is meant by ‘principled distance’?

Answer: This means that any interference in religion by the State has to be based on the ideals laid out in the Constitution.

Q. 2 Short Answer Questions

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

Answer : The government in any democratic nation would intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to practice infanticide because this tradition goes against the Fundamental Right to Life. It involves the killing of an innocent and is, hence, unacceptable. The government, in this case, interferes by coercion. However, sometimes, the government may also intervene via support. For example, Sikhs in Delhi are excused from wearing helmets on two-wheelers because their religion demands them to wear a turban-a sacred tradition for them.

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

Answer : Many holidays on a school's annual calendar pertain to different religions. This indicates that India is a secular country where religious freedom is granted to its citizens and all religions are equally respected.

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

Answer : Among Muslims, many people believe in 'Parda system', whereas many do not approve of it & see it as interference in the freedom of women.

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 :

→ The Indian State distances itself from the religion and it is not ruled by a religious group & nor does it support any one religion.

→ Equal respect is given to all the religions. In order to prevent domination by one particular community, the state may interfere in the religion.

→ State may interfere in the religion to ensure that all the religions are treated equally.

→ Sometimes, the State may have to intervene in the religion based on 'personal laws' of the communities to ensure that laws relating to equal inheritance are protected.

5. This poster alongside highlights the need for 'Peace'. It says, "Peace is a neverending 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? This chapter had three drawings on religious tolerance made by students of your age. Design your own poster on religious tolerance for your peers.

Answer : Peace is a never-ending process. It cannot ignore our differences or overlook our common interests.' The above sentences say that for all the communities to stay together, it is very important that each religious community should respect the other, their interests & their religious practices. We should not feel bound by any law that we need to respect the other religion, whereas, we should work

towards decreasing the differences amongst religious communities & work towards brining peace in the society as a civilized society. Only then, we will be able to enjoy the co-existence of different religious in the society.