

# Ch 2 Understanding Secularism

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## Exercises

2. Will the government intervene if some religious group says that their religion allows them to practise 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.

3. Complete the following table:

Objective	Why is this 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

(a) This is important to protect the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Religion. Example of violation: the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6th December, 1992 by Hindu nationalists.

(b) This is important to uphold the ideals of a democratic nation which allows its citizens freedom to choose whichever religion they wish to follow.

Example: France, in February 2004, banned headscarves and turbans in public places, thereby hurting the sentiments of Muslim and Sikh minorities.

(c) This is necessary to uphold individual freedom in the light of pressure from a group or religious community that one belongs to.

Example, the Christian community is divided into Protestants and Catholics; Irish Catholics are looked down upon and troubled by the officials of the Church of England who are pre-dominantly Protestants.

4. 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.

5. 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.

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 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.

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7. 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 bringing peace in the society as a civilized society. Only then, we will be able to enjoy the co-existence of different religions in the society.