Understanding Secularism

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, 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:

A Sikh person worships in Gurudwara to Guru Nanak using Guru Granth Sahib

A Muslim worships in a mosque, and their sacred book is the Quran.

A Christian worships Jesus Christ in a Church, and their religious book is the Holy Bible.

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.

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:

Hindus worship different idols of Gods and Goddesses.

Muslims are divided into Shia and Sunni

Followers of Lord Mahavir are called Jains

Buddhist followers are divided into Mahayan and Hinyan

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. 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. 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, they may use it as a weapon against the lower-class people of the society or that state.