

CLASS VIII CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING SECULARISM (NCERT)

What is Secularism?

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- Secularism refers to this separation of religion from the State.

➤ **Example of discrimination**

- Israel- treats its own Muslims badly.
- Saudi- non Muslims cant build temple or gather in public prayers.
- Discrimination happens when one religion was given an official recognition by the Gov.



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Why it is important to separate religion from the state?

➤ 1 Reasons

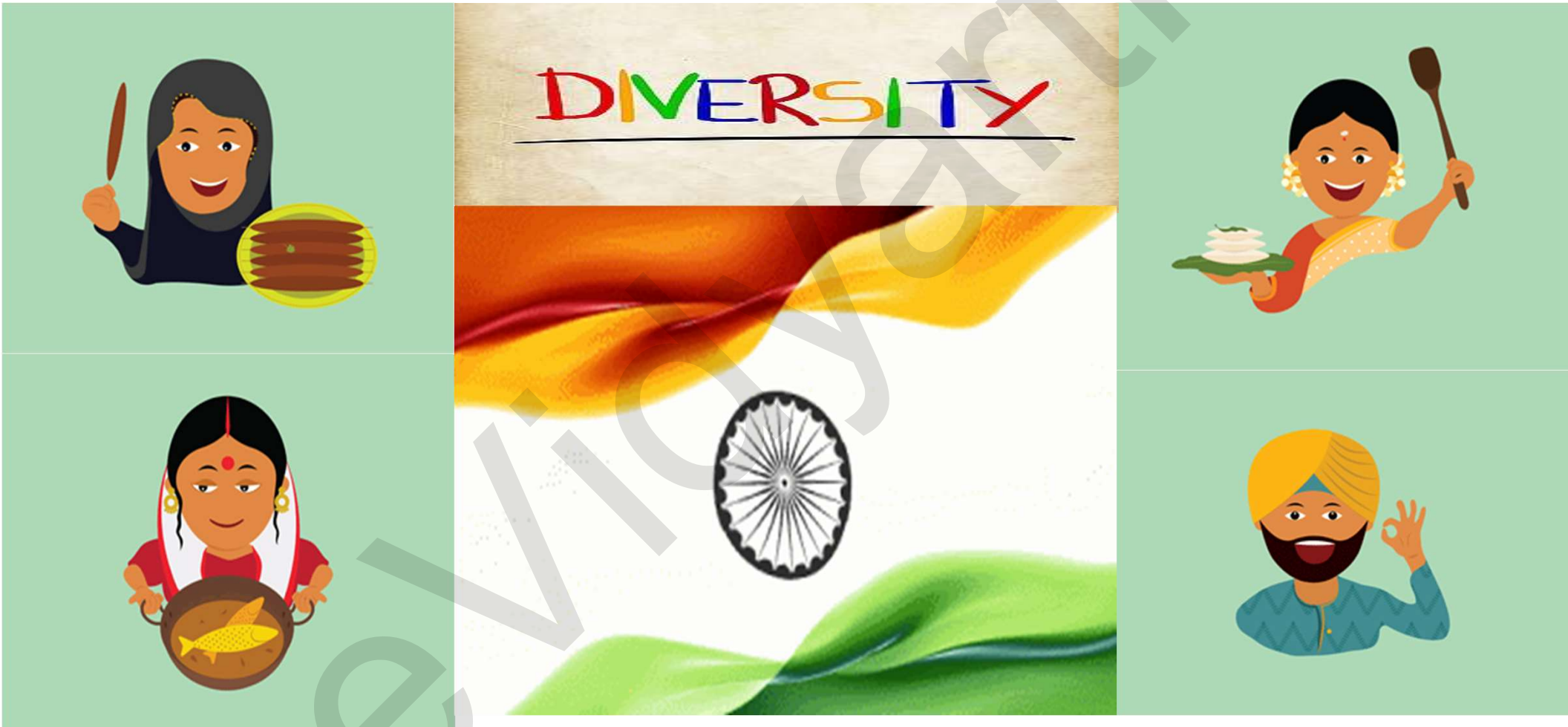
- Religion should be separated from the state.
- If any religion with majority got an official place then it can easily violate or kill a minor religions rights.



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➤ 2 Reason

- A particular individuals has the right to practice its or any other religion or have the freedom to interpret religious preachings.

➤ Example

If a particular group does not like untouchables and has the official recogn. Of the state, then no other individual can stop them from doing that as they have the power of the state.



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What is Indian secularism ?

- One religion community does not dominate another.
- State does not take away their religious freedom of individuals.
- In India gov.t spaces like courts,schools,offices doesn't promote or display any religion.



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India with different secular strategy

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➤ 1 strategy

- In India the state does not support any religion along with use distancing (doesn't display or promote)
- In India (gov.t schools) doesn't display or promote any religion nor in their morning prayers.



In a government school in Seemapur, students want to celebrate a religious festival.

GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL

Sir, there is a big religious festival next month. We've never celebrated it in school. Can we do it this year?

I'm afraid that isn't possible, Rekha. This is a government school. We cannot give importance to any one religion. Private schools may do that. Government schools don't celebrate any religious festivals in the school premises. Most religious festivals are a public holiday so that we can celebrate these at home.

I never thought of it this way. I guess we can always celebrate it outside school.

Anyway we were planning to celebrate it in our locality.



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➤ 2 strategy

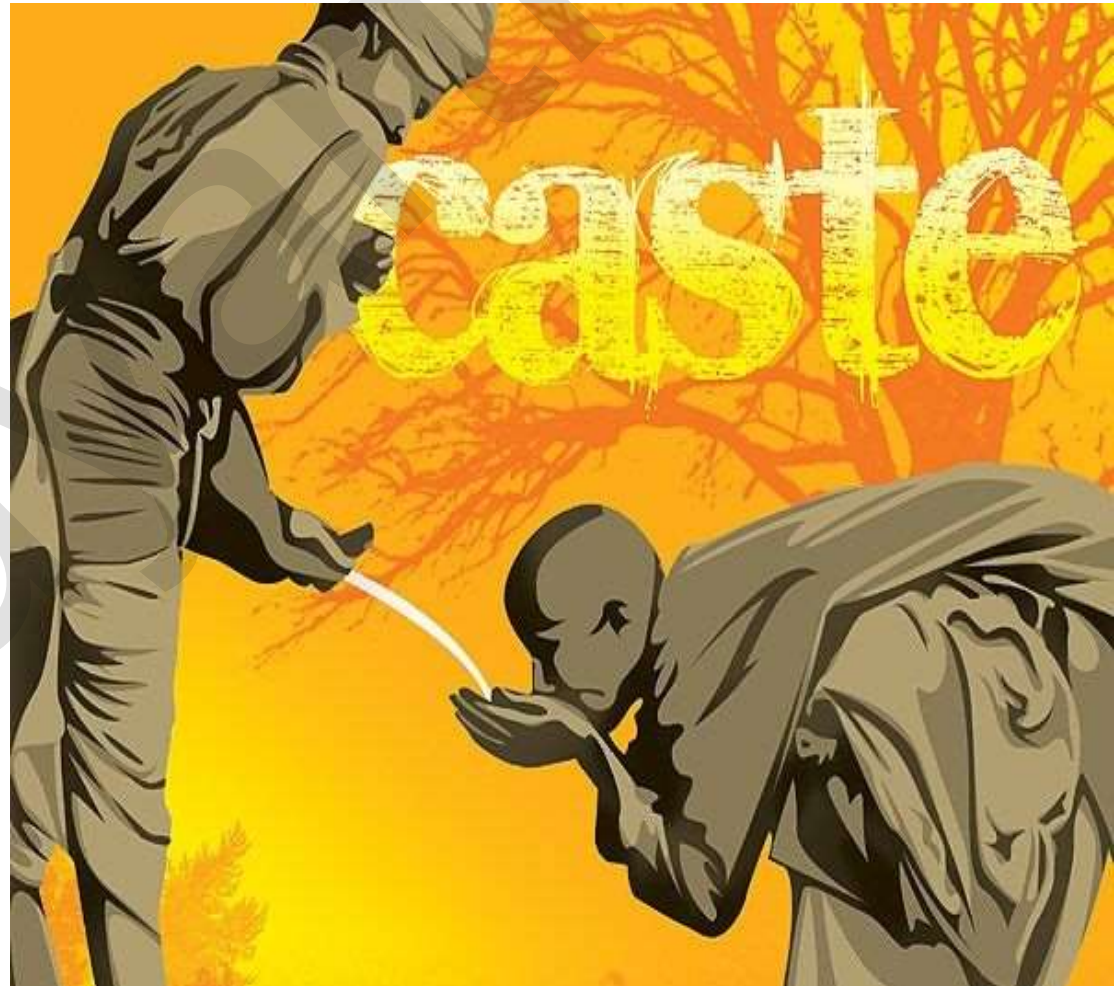
- Not to interfere in others religion and to respect them.

➤ 3 strategy

Prevent domination- abolish untouchability

- In this strategy the state is intervening in the religion in order to end a dominating social practice.

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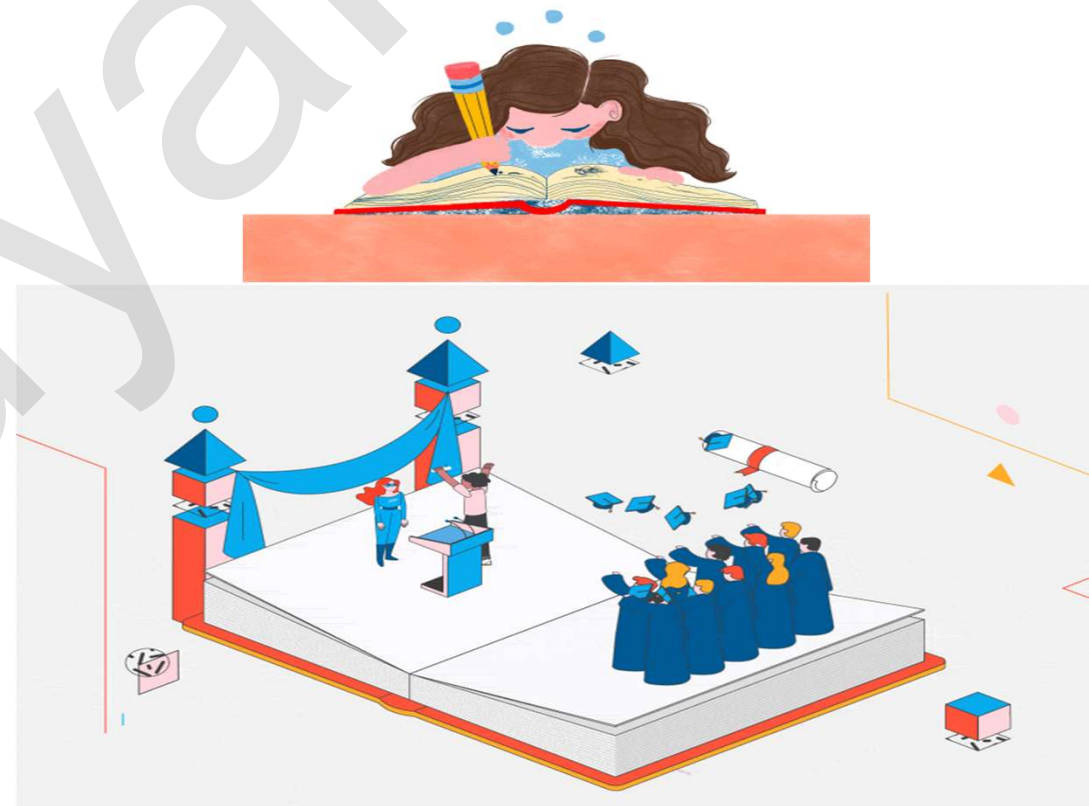
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➤ 4 strategy

- Indian secularism grants religion to set up their own schools and colleges (financial aids)
- Indian (state) can intervene in religions but with ideals laid in constitution.



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Exercises

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Question 1.

List the different types of religious practice that you find in your neighborhood. 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 : Different types of religious practice:

(i) Jagran (ii) Kirtan (iii) Namaj (iv) Mass (v) Havan

Yes, this indicates freedom of religious practice.

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Question 2.

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

Answer :

The practice of infanticide is a crime. Under this practice the life of a newly-born child is killed. The law does not allow anyone to kill a life.

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Question 3.

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

Answer:

As for example, only in the Hindu religion, we have hundreds of deities worshipped by different groups of people. (alvars, nayanars) Similarly, in Muslim community, there are Shiyas and Shunnis. In Jainas, there are Shwetambar and Digambar sects. In Buddha Dharma, there are Hinayaans and Mahayaans.

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Question 4.

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The Indian State both keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion. This idea can be quite confusing. Discuss?

Answer: India is a land of complex ideas. There are many ideals in the Constitution but practices are quite different from them. We see laws explain a concept in a different way. But people interpret it differently. Law itself in some cases act differently.