

8th Standard- Social Science

Civics-Understanding Secularism

A country which does not officially promote any religion as it's country's religion is a secular country. India is one of them.

India adopted a policy to separate the power of religion and the power of the state.

The separation of religion from the state is known as secularism.

The state can intervene in religion in order to end an evil social practice which it believes discriminates and violates fundamental rights.

The Indian secularism is different from other democratic countries as the Indian states can intervene in religious affairs.

The term secularism refers to the separation between the power of religion and the power of the State. This is important for a country to function democratically.

There are two chief reasons why the separation between religion and State is important.

- The first is to prevent the domination of one religion over another.

- The second is to protect the freedom of individuals to come out of their religion, embrace another religion or have the freedom to interpret religious teachings differently. We can give an example of the practice of untouchability which allowed upper caste people to dominate lower caste people.

Secularism's opposition to institutionalized religion means that it promotes freedom and equality between and within religions.

Indian secularism does protect an individual's religious freedom by maintaining a separation from religion.

The Indian State is not ruled by a religious group. It also does not support any one religion.

In India, government spaces such as law courts, police stations, government schools and offices are not supposed to demonstrate or promote any one religion.

Indian secularism follows a strategy of non-interference. But at some time it also intervenes in religion. Again we can give an example of the practice of untouchability. The Indian Constitution bans this practice. In this instance, the State is intervening in religion in order to end a social practice that it believes discriminates and excludes and that violates the fundamental rights of lower caste people.

The intervention of the State can also be in the form of support.

Indian secularism is different from that of other democratic countries such as the United States of America. There is a strict separation between religion and the State in American secularism but in Indian secularism, as mentioned above, the State can intervene in religious affairs.

In Indian secularism, though the State is not strictly separate from religion it does maintain a principled distance vis-a-vis religion. This means that any interference in religion by the State has to be based on the ideals laid out in the Indian Constitution.

Secularism: It refers to the separation of religion from the State.

Coercion: Forcing someone to do something. In the chapter, the term refers to the force used by a legal authority such as the State.

Freedom to interpret: It refers to the freedom that all persons shall have to understand things in their own way. In the chapter, it refers to individual liberty to develop their own understanding and meaning of the religion they practice.

Intervene: In the chapter, the term refers to the State's efforts to influence a particular matter in accordance with the principles of the Constitution.

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