



CHAPTER: Understanding Secularism

Grade: 8

Board: **CBSE**

Book: **NCERT**







1.

Chapter Summary and Placement



<Read through the following to understand how this chapter is connected with the previous and next grades and also the important concepts covered in it.>

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1. The Constitution of India acts as a guide for the functioning of the government.
 2. The meaning of discrimination and the different types of discrimination are learnt in the previous grades.
 3. In this chapter, the meaning of secularism and what it means in the Indian context is discussed in detail.



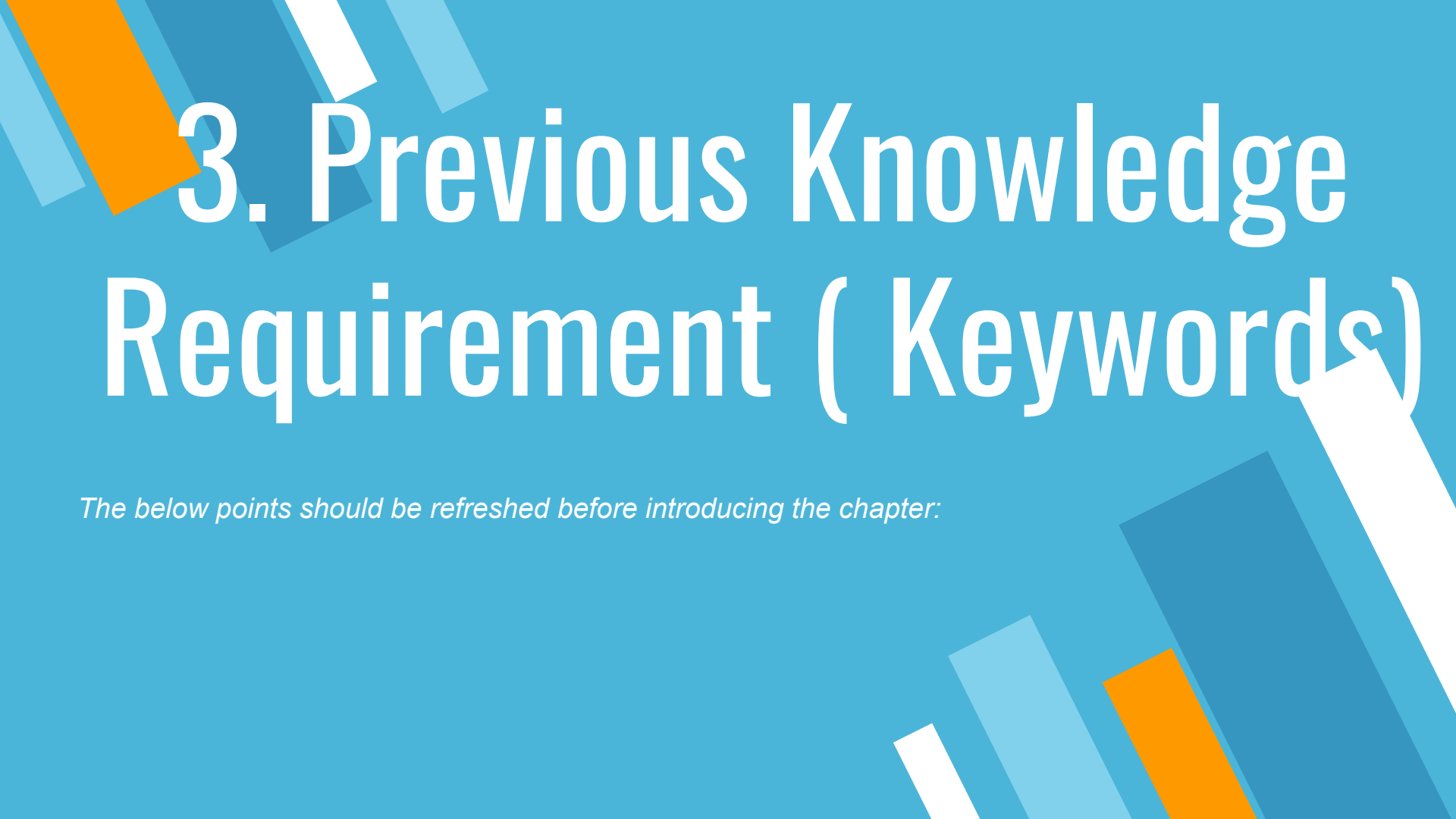
2.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

<On completion of the chapter, students will be able to:>



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- 
1. Understand the term secularism.
 2. Explain the need for separating 'State' and 'religion'
 3. Explain the nature of Indian secularism
 4. Analyse the differences between Indian secularism and secularism in other democratic countries

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3. Previous Knowledge Requirement (Keywords)

The below points should be refreshed before introducing the chapter:




1) Recall the details learnt about discrimination based on religion.





4. TEACHING PLAN

Follow this section for getting ideas on teaching the content covered in the chapter. The subtopic given in the first column with the matching learning outcome can be explained using instructions and resources listed subsequently



Subtopic and Learning Objective #1

What is Secularism?

LO:

Understand the term secularism.

Teacher Activity

1. The teacher may introduce the chapter with performing **Activity 1**.
2. Explain the meaning of secularism. Secularism refers to this separation of religion from the State.

Check for understanding:

- a) The _____ allows individuals the freedom to live by their religious beliefs and practices.(Indian Constitution)

Resources Suggested

Textbook

Activity 1

Name of the activity – Class discussion

Type of activity – Individual/Random/Group

Learning Objective: Understand the different viewpoints about secularism.

Use it for – Chapter introduction.

Materials – Textbook

Teacher instructions:

1. The teacher may explain a few situations in the class. The intention is to help students come up with their opinion about the situation based on what they have learnt about fundamental rights and the Indian Constitution in the previous chapters and grades. An example is as follows:
 - a) Imagine that in a remote district in India the people of the society who are not following the Islam community are not allowed to build church or temples. They are also not allowed to gather for religious festivals and ceremonies. Do you agree with this kind of system.
2. Once a small Q&A session is completed, the teacher can display the images in **Resource 1** and ask the students to draw inferences based on the pictures: where have they seen these picture/ what do they stand for?
3. The students should be given time to think and come up with valid points. This can be done in groups if the class size is more.
4. At the end, the teacher may pick best points from each group and end the discussion. The points may include,
 - a) In India, every citizen has the right to follow their religious belief.
 - b) Nobody can force or stop a person from following their religious practises.
 - c) Indian constitution has specifies these as fundamental rights.

Resource 1



Hinduism



Jainism



Christianity



Buddhism



Sikhism



Islam

Subtopic and Learning Objective #2

**Why is it Important to Separate Religion
from the State?**

LO:

Explain the need for separating 'State' and 'religion'.

Teacher Activity

- a) The teacher may explain the reasons for separating the state and the religion.
- a) The tyranny of the majority and the violation of Fundamental Rights that can result is one reason.
- b) The need to protect the freedom of individuals to exit from their religion, embrace another religion or have the freedom to interpret religious teachings differently.
- b) Explain the consequences of having the power in the hands of a majority community.

Check for understanding:

- a) Give one reason for keeping the religion separate from state

Resources Suggested

NCERT Textbook

Subtopic and Learning Objective #3

What is Indian Secularism?

LO:

Explain the nature of Indian secularism.

Teacher Activity

1. Explanation about the ways in which the state stays away from religion in India.
2. Perform **Activity 2**

Resources Suggested

NCERT Textbook

Activity 2

Name of the activity – Discussion

Type of activity – Group

Learning Objective: Explain how the Indian State both keeps away from religion as well as intervenes in religion

Use it for – Enhance understanding skills, creativity by analysing the given situation.

Materials – Textbook, situation that the students take up

Teacher instructions:

1. The teacher may divide the total class population into two groups.
2. The students can then prepare points on how a state may interfere as well as stay away from the religion. For example:
 - a) To establish secularism the state should not disturb the religious harmony.
 - b) Government institutions are not supposed to conduct any particular religious festivals or promote any one religion.
 - c) Indian constitutions grants rights to religious communities to set up own school.
 - d) Government interferes in the religious matter based on the ideals set by the Constitution.
3. The language should be simple, crisp and clear.
4. The teacher may verify the conversations for basic language errors

Subtopic and Learning Objective #4

In what way is Indian secularism different from that of other democratic countries?

LO:

Analyse the differences between Indian secularism and secularism in other democratic countries

Teacher Activity

1. Explain the secularism in the United states of America.
2. Analyse the difference in the practice of secularism in India compared to the USA.
 - a) The U.S. Constitution prohibits the legislature from making laws “respecting an establishment of religion” or that “prohibit the free exercise of religion.
 - b) In the U.S.A. the separation between State and religion means that neither the State nor religion can interfere in the affairs of one another.
 - c) There is a strict separation between religion and the State in American secularism, in Indian secularism the State can intervene in religious affairs.

Check for understanding:

- a) Why do we need a constitutional mechanism

Resources Suggested

NCERT Textbook



5. WORKSHEETS

Print or copy the worksheet questions on the blackboard and ask the students to attempt them. They can be given as homework or a class test as well.

Worksheet 1

Use it like: Class test/ assignment/ class work/revision

Answer the following questions in brief:

1. What are the features of secularism, with reference to the provisions of the Indian Constitution.
2. Explain the three strategies followed by the Indian government to ensure secularism.
3. Explain the difference between the secularism in India and USA.
4. Do you think that there is no violation of fundamental rights happening in Indian society?
5. What is secularism? Why is it important to keep religion distant from the state?

Worksheet 2

Use it like: Class test/ assignment/ class work/revision

Fill in the blanks:

1. The most important aspect of secularism is its separation of _____ from _____ .
2. The tyranny of _____ could result in the discrimination , coercion and persecution of religious minorities
3. As per the Indian constitution one religious community does not _____ another.
4. In a secular society some members do not dominate other members of the _____ .
5. The state does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the _____ of individuals.
6. In the government institutions, none of the religion should be promoted. This is the strategy of _____ itself from religion.
7. The strategy of _____ is followed by the state in order to respect the sentiments of all religions and not interfere with religious practices, the State makes certain exceptions for particular religious communities.
8. The strategy of _____ is followed by the state in order to prevent a religion-based exclusion and discrimination
9. In U.S.A most children in government schools have to begin their school day reciting the _____.
10. The knowledge that fundamental rights makes us _____ to their violations.



6. SOLUTIONS

This section gives you sample answers for activities and questions listed above.



Worksheet 1

1. The Indian Constitution mandates that the Indian State be secular. According to the Constitution, only a secular State can realise its objectives to ensure the following
 - a) that one religious community does not dominate another;
 - b) that some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community;
 - c) that the State does not enforce any particular religion nor take away the religious freedom of individuals.
2. First, it uses a strategy of distancing itself from religion. The Indian State is not ruled by a religious group and nor does it support any one religion. In India, government spaces like law courts, police stations, government schools and offices are not supposed to display or promote any one religion. The second way in which Indian secularism works to prevent the above domination is through a strategy of noninterference. This means that in order to respect the sentiments of all religions and not interfere with religious practices, the State makes certain exceptions for particular religious communities. The third way in which Indian secularism works to prevent the domination listed earlier is through a strategy of intervention. Any interference in religion by the State has to be based on the ideals laid out in the Constitution.

Worksheet 1

3 Indian secularism differs from the dominant understanding of secularism as practised in the United States of America. This is because unlike the strict separation between religion and the State in American secularism, in Indian secularism the State can intervene in religious affairs. Indian Constitution intervened in Hindu religious practices in order to abolish untouchability. Any interference in religion by the State has to be based on the ideals laid out in the Constitution.

4 The Indian State is secular and works in various ways to prevent religious domination. As per the Indian constitution people can follow any religion. Even though the ideals exist, in many parts of the society religion plays an important role. People are not supposed to follow any other religion that what they belong to by birth. They are not supposed to marry outside the same religion. Minorities protest for more reservations. People are converted from one religion to another forcefully in many parts of the country. All these incidents show that violations happen frequently that we need a constitutional mechanism to prevent them from happening.

Worksheet 1

5 Secularism refers to the separation of religion from the State. There are two major reason why the separation is of state and religion is important.

- a) To prevent the domination of one religion over another: Almost all countries of the world will have more than one religious group living in them. Within these religious groups, there will most likely be one group that is in a majority. If this majority religious group has access to State power, then it could quite easily use this power and financial resources to discriminate against and persecute persons of other religions.
- b) Another reason that it is important to separate religion from the State in democratic societies is because we also need to protect the freedom of individuals to exit from their religion, embrace another religion or have the freedom to interpret religious teachings differently

Worksheet 2

Fill in the blanks:

1. religion, state power
2. majority
3. dominate
4. Same religious community
5. religious freedom
6. Distancing
7. Noninterference
8. Intervention.
9. Pledge of Allegiance
10. sensitive



6. EXTRA RESOURCES

Carry out the following suggested activities/ tasks if you have the time and resources to do them



Extension Activity 1

Name: List out all the holidays from the school holiday list and separate them based on the religion who celebrates this. Imagine that only one set of festivals are celebrated by the school. Describe the feelings of the students who belong to the other communities and the problems that may occur.

Purpose: Recall all the explanation given in the chapter. Understand the consequences of discrimination based on religion.