

DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

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Key Objectives of the Chapter

- a. To learn about the status of diversity in India
- b. To learn about how discrimination is rooted in our culture
- c. To learn about prejudices and stereotypes
- d. To learn about people who stood against the whole idea of discrimination and caste system
- e. To have the basic knowledge about our constitution

Expected Learning Outcomes

We aim to make sure that children understand, at this very tender age, how and why discrimination is a rooted part of our culture. With the end of the chapter, the students will understand what stereotypes mean and how they affect people with whom they are bound with. Also, the students will also be enlightened about Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the legend who challenged the caste system.

Focus Point

The major focus point is to enlighten about the evils of our society

1. Things to answer after reading the context :
 - a. What thoughts do you have after meeting someone who is different than you ?
 - b. What do you think is the best way to know about them ?
 - c. How does being prejudiced affect the nation ?

Introduction: India, Diversity and Discrimination

India is a vast land and its diversity does not only include its landforms, but also the different cultures, religions and languages spoken here. We Indians also do not have the same skin color, and yet we follow the idea of “Unity in Diversity”. But do you know many of us fail to address the idea of diversity in a positive manner and end up either

discriminating or being discriminated against or our different unique selves.

Discrimination goes a long way, we look the other gender differently, we look at people with different skin colors differently, we look at specially abled people differently and also we do not pardon people who do not belong to our own town or religion that easily.

In this chapter, we will enlighten you about how diversity and discrimination run hand to hand, and will educate you to be better and beautiful citizens of the country, so that you understand the beauty of diversity in our country.

Judgemental and Biased: The Idea of Prejudice

As I stated earlier, India is a country with a lot of diversity ranging from languages, cultures and even skin color. We look at certain kinds or communities of people, and form an opinion about them, even without having a proper knowledge about them. Let me give you a simple example.

In Canada, there is a community of Aboriginals who were said to be the first of the inhabitants of that place according to history. As soon as the British and the French took control over Canada, they were sidelined as they were considered savage and uncivilized. They have been through a lot of problems and racism, which means they were treated badly by the whites because of their race and black skin color, and today, they have been given their due place in the constitution. But do you know, that even today, they suffer a lot of violence there. Many White people have opposed the idea of discriminating the aboriginals, but even today, they are not treated well by many of the people. This is prejudice, forming an opinion, that the aboriginals are associated with the idea of being criminals and uncivilized.

2. Things to answer after reading the context :-
 - a. What do you understand by the phrase “ Breaking the stereotypes”?
 - b. Give some instances from your childhood when you felt you were being stereotyped ?

Breaking The Stereotypes

Do you remember that people often form certain opinions about something, and make the coming generations accept that the opinion is a fact. Many such opinions are accepted as reality which often form a part of our daily lifestyle.

Stereotypes - Stereotypes means having a fixed image about something . It negotiates the word ‘unique’ . Each person is born unique but we don’t really get

ourselves into understanding this small fact. There has been this stereotype for generations about the genders that girls are weak and boys are strong. We have been made to believe that boys don't cry because they are strong and girls are weak. This stereotype has not only made the girls sound weaker but also has created a mental illusion for the boys, where they suffer this mental strain when they are in a big problem. Not letting the boys cry when they need to seek help or need to drain their emotions out, affects their inner peace. The girls are also bound to a certain area as they are made to believe that they are a weaker gender to face the world. However, many girls and boys are breaking the barriers and are coming out strong.

Crying is not a sign of weakness, it is a way you pour out your emotions.

Stereotypes stop people from being themselves . It does not allow them to live their life in their own way and sometimes , even people's dreams are shattered due to this .

3. Things to answer after reading the context :-
 - a. Describe a few instances when you felt you or someone else was being discriminated against .
 - b. What measures should be taken to stop inequality ?
 - c. How do you feel when you see a person being discriminated against in both ways?

Barriers to a Healthy Environment

Inequality and discrimination - Inequality and discrimination are barriers to a peaceful society . Discrimination can take place due to different religions , caste system , people speaking different languages ,economic backgrounds , etc.

Poor people are often treated in a negative manner. They are not respected properly . A lot of **injustice** is put on them because they do not have enough money or resources to stand for themselves . You might have met or seen children of your age working hard to earn a living, because their parents cannot afford to earn as much as to send them to schools and afford food at the same time. These people who are poor, often face discrimination on a large extent, where they are

not treated as respected individuals. Remember, people should always respect the other people, despite their income and position. Disrespecting people just because they are poor makes you look uneducated and uncivilized.

Sometimes people experience both types of discrimination . They are poor as well as belong to those cultures which are not valued. **Tribals** ,and even some other groups experience such kind of discrimination. Just like the example of Aboriginals, there are many groups in India like the Dalits and the tribals who are treated with a lot of discrimination. The government has however taken a lot of steps to end discrimination for these people and have them lead happy lives.

Things to answer after reading the context :-

- a. List some other famous people who had also been a victim of discrimination .
- b. How were the Dalits treated ?

Work Discrimination

DALIT - There are different kinds of professions in this world like teaching , cleaning , farming , etc . Although some are treated as more valuable than the other . Cleaning , cutting hair , and washing are treated as dirty.

This actually is a result of the caste system where people were neither allowed to change their profession nor were they given equal respect . They were called the ‘Dalits’ or the ‘untouchables’ . They have been treated with a lot of discrimination as much as the history chapters tell us. There was one person who fought against discrimination of the untouchables, and it was the one and only, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was a victim of the caste discrimination . He is known as the “Father of the Indian Constitution” and also the best known leader of Dalits. He was the first person from his caste who went to England to become a lawyer. His education was funded by a Brahmin. He believed that Dalits must fight for their rights . He also encouraged a lot of dalits to apply to different kinds of government jobs .

5. Things to answer after reading the context :-

- a. What is your definition of equality ?

- b. Inequality exists even today , after Independence . Comment your views on this topic .

Fight for Equality

The fight for freedom did not only include the Britishers but also Dalits fought for their own rights . Women wanted to be treated equally . Tribals and peasants fought for themselves .

CONSTITUTION OF INDIA - In 1947 , when India became a nation , the leaders set out a vision that these things should not be practiced anymore .

Untouchability is a crime now and legally abolished by the law . Now , people are free to choose their profession, education and even they are free to live a life that they want to. No upper caste people have a say in their lives.

Also, the Constitution placed several rights for the poor or lower caste people so that they no longer can be treated in an ill manner. The Constitution also set that people are free to choose their own language, religion and a way of life and they will not be discriminated against on the grounds of their gender, religion or caste. All of them are equal and have equal rights to celebrate their own festivals. This is how India became a **secular** country .

The Constitution of India has made India a secular country but still in different parts of the country , discrimination based on caste , creed , sex is still being practiced . So it is our responsibility to raise our voices against the injustices . Education plays a vital role in changing the environment. Children should be educated enough so that they can make choices and proper decisions for themselves . The world should be a fair world for everyone .

Did You Know

1. The Constitution of India is the longest Constitution in the World.
2. The Constitution of India was handwritten by Behari Narain Raizada.
3. “ The best way to diminish the power of stereotypes is by education” .