

CIVICS

Chapter 2: Diversity and Discrimination



Diversity and Discrimination

Prejudice and Stereotypes

India is a nation where people belonging to different castes, classes and religions live together. All the eight major religions are practised in India and more than 1600 languages are spoken by the people. However, diversity is not always celebrated as people feel safe and secured with people belonging to their own religion, caste and class.

Prejudice means to judge others in a negative way or to see them as inferior. People who are prejudiced may criticise the religious beliefs, habits, customs, dressing styles and languages of other people.

When people judge others on the basis of certain preconceived notions and established norms, they create a stereotype. For example, 'girls are emotionally fragile but boys are emotionally strong' is a popular stereotype.



A women breaking a stereotype by driving an auto rickshaw

Discrimination

Discrimination is the result of prejudiced thinking and creating stereotypes. Discrimination occurs when people are treated unequally and are not given due respect because of the caste to which they belong or because of the work they do. In India, people are discriminated against on the basis of their caste, class, gender, religion, wealth and occupation. For example, people belonging to the lower castes are discriminated against

in various ways. In many areas even today, they are neither allowed to enter into temples nor can they draw water from wells. Discrimination can occur due the existence of diversities such as:

- **Religious diversity:** When people belong to different religions are prevented from residing in the same neighbourhood.
- **Social diversity:** Discriminations based on castes and gender.
- **Economic diversity:** This occurs when people belonging to poor sections are discriminated against in offices, schools, hospitals etc. by not treating them properly as they are poor.



An illustration showing discrimination based on gender

Mostly, people belonging to the lower castes are also poor. Tribals and poor people belonging to minority communities also experience discrimination.

Caste Discrimination

- Discrimination based on the caste system has been in practice in India since ancient times.
- The Indian society is divided into four castes. People of the lower caste are generally engaged in doing menial works like cleaning, washing, picking garbage etc.
- The people belonging to the upper castes look down upon the **dalits**. They are considered to be unworthy and **untouchable**.
- The people of the lower caste use the word 'dalit' for themselves as the word itself means 'broken'. This reflects how people belonging to upper castes have discriminated

against them out of their prejudices. The government has listed the dalits as 'Scheduled Castes'.

- The caste system denied any other work to the untouchables except for the work such as picking up garbage, removing dead animals, making leather etc.
- The untouchables were not even allowed to enter into the homes of the people of the upper castes, to draw water from the public wells or to enter into temples.
- In village schools, the children of the dalits were discriminated against. They were not allowed to sit with their classmates, which again is a form of discrimination and which denied them respect and dignity.



In many places even today, the dalits are not given entry into the temples.

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.

Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar

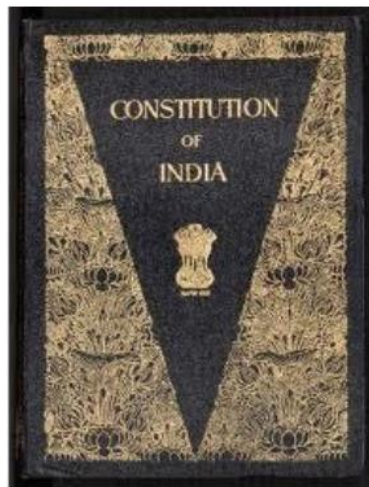
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is considered to be the father of the Indian constitution. He belonged to the 'Mahar caste' which was considered to be untouchable and forced to live in the outskirts of villages. Dr. Ambedkar was the first person from his caste who not only completed his college education but also went on to become a lawyer in England.

He was moved by the treatment meted out to the people of the lower caste. He asked the Dalits to send their children to school and colleges. He also encouraged them to opt for government jobs in order to move out of the caste system. He protested against the denial of entry of the Dalits into temples. Later he converted into Buddhism, which treated all its members equally. Dr Ambedkar believed that the Dalits would have to fight against the injustice which was meted out to them by the people.



Dr. B R Ambedkar provided leadership to the dalit communities in India.

Striving for Equality by the Dalits and the Indian Constitution During the freedom struggle, people were not only fighting against the British rule for gaining independence, but many of the Dalits, tribals and women were fighting to gain equality and dignity in the Indian society. While the Dalits demanded entry into temples, women demanded the right to education. Peasants and tribals demanded that they should be released from the grip of the moneylenders, which often charged high rates of interests and snatched away their lands and homes.

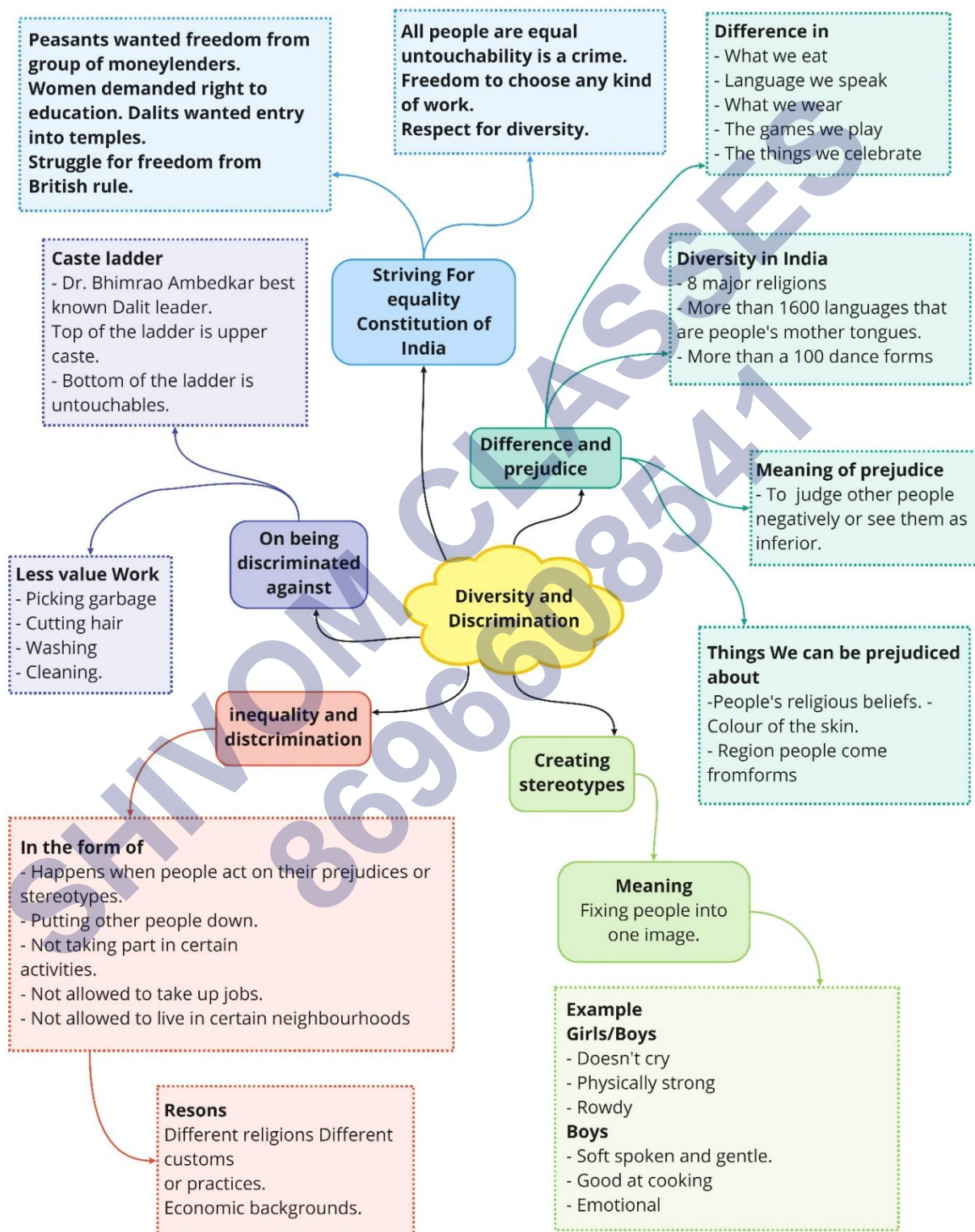


The constitution of India lays down the principle of equality for all the people irrespective of their caste or creed.

After gaining freedom, one of the most important tasks in front of our leaders was to frame the constitution of the country. The leaders framed a constitution which stressed on the following points:

- All people of the country should be considered equal. It was felt that the principal of equality would unite the people within the country.
- Everyone should have equal rights and opportunities. Untouchability was abolished and was made a crime punishable by law.
- People are free to choose the kind of work that they want to do.
- The government was entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring and protecting the right of the suppressed and marginalized communities.
- The principal of equality and freedom to the people to follow any religion was a key element of establishing secularism.

Class : 6th Social Studies (Political Science)
Chapter - 2 : Diversity and Discrimination



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

Question 1. Which of the following is not a suitable reason responsible for discrimination?

- (a) Different religion
- (b) Different language
- (c) Different choice

Question 2. A common stereotype about _____ is that they are not interested in educating girls and therefore do not send girls to school.

- (a) Hindu
- (b) Sikh
- (c) Muslims

Question 3. According to government Dalits are _____.

- (a) Scheduled castes
- (b) Scheduled tribes
- (c) Generals

Question 4. Who was considered the Father of Constitution?

- (a) Dr. Ambedkar
- (b) Jawaharlal Nehru
- (c) Rajendra Prasad

Question 5. How many major religions are in the world?

- (a) One
- (b) Ten
- (c) Six

Question 6. _____ is a negative aspect in a social set up.

- (a) Good behavior
- (b) Discrimination
- (c) Constitution

Question 7. Which of the following work is not considered low?

- (a) Hair cutting
- (b) Garbage picking

(c) Teaching

Question 8. Who delivered the speech on the eve of independence

(a) Rajendra Prasad

(b) M.K.Gandhi

(c) Indira Gandhi

(d) Pt Nehru

Question 9. Who travelled Kerala , a little less than seven hundred years ago

(a) Ibn Bagula

(b) St Batuta

(c) Ibn Batuta

(d) St Thomas

Question 10. Which of the following is NOT the feature of geographical diversity

(a) India is geographically divided into four equal part

(b) India is a vast country

(c) Some part of India are very fertile

(d) There are many numbers of races in India

Question 11. Which is Tibetan national epic?

(a) Mahabharata

(b) Kesar Saga

(c) Ramayana

(d) None of them

Question 12. Ladakh is a desert in the mountains in the ___ part of Jammu and Kashmir

(a) Eastern

(b) Southern

(c) Western

(d) Northern

Question 13. The weaker and backward sections of the society are protected by the

(a) State

(b) Tribes

(c) Dalits

(d) Public

Question 14. Islam was introduced in this region more than _____ ago and there is a significant Muslim population here.

- (a) Five hundred years
- (b) Two hundred years
- (c) Three hundred years
- (d) Four hundred years

Question 15. Children with special needs are no longer called

- (a) Disabled
- (b) Diverse
- (c) Unusual
- (d) Prejudiced

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. There are _____ major religions in the world.
2. The upper castes acted in ways, which did not give the so-called _____ the same rights as they enjoyed.
3. People form certain attitudes and opinions about others who are not _____ them.
4. We have more than _____ languages that are people's mother tongues.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. Dr Ambedkar had also fought for the rights of the Dalits.
2. There are more than a thousand dance forms.
3. We feel safe and secure with people who look, talk, dress and think like us.
4. Government jobs are open to all people.

➤ **Very Short Questions :**

1. Write an example of gender stereotypes.
2. How many major religions are there in the world?
3. What is the quality that is generally associated with boys and men?
4. What prejudice mean?
5. What is seen as a key value that unites us all as Indians?
6. Write the name used by government for Dalits.

7. How do you think a person who is discriminated against might feel?
8. What is Mahar?
9. Who are untouchables?
10. What do you mean by stereotype?

➤ Short Questions :

1. India is a secular country. What does it mean?
2. Give an example of prejudice.
3. Write a short note on Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar?
4. What are Dalits?
5. "Some people may experience both kinds of discrimination." Explain the statement.

➤ Long Questions :

1. How did people at the station discriminate against Dr Ambedkar and his brothers?
2. In addition to the lower castes being discriminated against, there are also various other communities that are subject to discrimination. Can you think of a few other examples of discrimination?
3. What is the difference between discrimination and stereotypes?
4. What does the Constitution say with regard to equality? Why do you think it is important for all people to be equal?
5. How can the stereotype that girls are a burden on their parents affect the life of a daughter? Imagine this situation and list at least five different effects that this stereotype can have on the way daughters get treated in the house.

ANSWER KEY –

➤ Multiple Choice Answer :

1. (c) Different choice
2. (c) Muslims
3. (a) Scheduled castes
4. (a) Dr. Ambedkar
5. (c) Six
6. (b) Discrimination
7. (c) Teaching

8. (d) Pt Nehru
9. (c) Ibn Batuta
10. (d) There are many numbers of races in India
11. (b) Kesar Saga
12. (a) Eastern
13. (a) State
14. (b) Cultural Diversity
15. (a) Disabled

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. eight
2. untouchables
3. like
4. 1600.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True

➤ **Very Short Answer :**

1. "Don't cry. You are a boy. Boys are brave, they don't cry."
2. There are eight major religions in the world.
3. They are brave and they don't cry.
4. Prejudice means to judge other people negatively or see them as inferior.
5. Equality of all persons is seen as a key value that unites us all as India.
6. The government refers to this group of people as Scheduled Castes (SC).
7. A person who is discriminated against might feel insulted, humiliated and hurtful.
8. Mahar is one of the communities which were treated as untouchables in the Bombay Presidency.
9. The groups who were placed at the bottom of the ladder were seen as unworthy and called "untouchables".

10. Stereotype means fixing something into an image that society creates around us.

➤ Short Answer :

1. India is a secular country where people of different religions and faiths have the freedom to practice and follow their religion without any fear of discrimination. This is seen as an important element of our unity – that we all live together and respect one another.
2. For example, if we think English is the best language and other languages are not important, we are judging these other languages negatively. As a result, we might not respect people who speak languages other than English.
3. Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar (1891-1956) is considered the father of the Indian Constitution and is also the best known leader of the Dalits. Dr Ambedkar fought for the rights of the Dalit community. He was born into the Mahar caste, which was considered untouchable.
4. Dalit is a term that people belonging to so called lower castes use to address themselves. They prefer this word to 'untouchable'. Dalit means those who have been 'broken'. The government refers to this group of people as Scheduled Castes (SC).
5. Some people may experience both kinds of discrimination. They are poor and they belong to groups whose culture is not valued. Tribals, some religious groups and even particular regions, are discriminated against for one or more of these reasons.

Long Answer :

1. The stationmaster was quite sure they were Brahmin children and was extremely touched at the plight in which he found them. But when he blurted out that they were Mahars, stationmaster was stunned and his face underwent a sudden change. As soon as he heard his reply, he went away to his room and they stood where they were. There were many bullock-carts plying for hire. But his reply to the station master that they were Mahars had gone round among the cart men and not one of them was prepared to suffer being polluted and to demean himself carrying passengers of the untouchable classes.
2. Tribals, some religious groups and even particular regions, are discriminated against for one or more of these reasons.

Few other examples of discrimination:

- They are not allowed to enter the homes of the upper castes.
- They are not allowed to take water from the village well.
- They are not supposed to enter temples.

- Their children could not sit next to children of other castes in school.

3. Difference between discrimination and stereotypes:

Discrimination	Stereotypes
Discrimination happens when people act on their prejudices or stereotypes.	When we fix people into one image we create a stereotype.
Example: If people do something to put other people down, if they stop them from taking part in certain activities and taking up jobs, or stop them from living in certain neighbourhoods, they are discriminating against them.	Example: When people say that those who belong to a particular country, religion, sex, race or economic background are “stingy,” “lazy,” “criminal” or “dumb,” they are using stereotypes.
Discrimination can take place because of several reasons such as different religions, different language and different economic backgrounds.	Stereotypes stop us from looking at each person as a unique individual with his or her own special qualities and skills that are different from others.

4. With regard to equality, Constitution said that:

- Untouchability is seen as a crime and has been legally abolished by law.
- People are free to choose the kind of work they wish to do.
- Government jobs are open to all people.

In addition, the Constitution also placed responsibility on the government to take specific steps to realise this right to equality for poor and other such marginal communities.

It is important for all people to be equal so that they can follow their religion, speak their language, celebrate their festivals and express themselves freely.

5. While the male children are considered an asset to the family, the female children are considered a burden to the parents.

This stereotype affects the life a daughter in the following way:

- Many girls are not even allowed to go to school.
- Those who get chance to study may not concentrate on their studies as they are being discouraged.
- They are deprived of their parents’ attention even when they fall sick.

- Since their childhood to their marriage, they are considered as a temporary member of the family.
- Even after marriage they are subject to exploitation.

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