

6th – Diversity And Discrimination



1. Difference and prejudice: - There are many things that make us what we are-how we live, the languages we speak, what we eat, wear, the games we play and the things we celebrate. There are eight major religions in the world. Every single one of them is practiced in India. We have more than 1600 languages that are people's mother tongues, and there are more than a hundred dance forms. Yet this diversity is not always celebrated. This is because we feel safe and secure with people who look, talk, dress and think like us.

2. Creating stereotypes:-all of us are familiar with gender differences. What does it mean to be a boy or a girl? Many of you would say, "We are born as boys and girls. It is a given. As children grow up they start believing that boys do not cry so that even if a boy feels like crying he stops himself from doing so. He also believes that crying is a sign of weakness. So, even though both boys and girls sometimes want to cry, especially if they are angry or in pain, as they grow older boys learn or teach themselves not to cry. If a grown boy cries, then he feels that other will either tease him or laugh at him, and so he stops himself from doing so in front of others this is the way boys and this is how girls are: these are statements we hear constantly and accept without even thinking, and we start believing that each one of us must behave accordingly. When we fix people into one image we create a stereotype. 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. 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. They fit large numbers of people into only one pattern or type. Stereotypes affect all of us as they prevent us from doing certain things that we might otherwise be good at.

3. Inequality and discrimination:- discrimination happens when people act on their prejudices or stereotypes. Discrimination can take place because of several reasons. Groups of people who may speak a certain language. Follow a particular religion, live in specific regions etc. may be discriminated against as their customs or practices may be seen as inferior. People who are poor do not have the resources or the money to meet their basic needs of food. Clothing and shelter. They experience discrimination in offices, in hospitals, schools etc, where they are treated badly because they are poor.

4. On being discriminated against:- people are engaged in different kinds of work like teaching, carpentry, pottery, weaving ,fishing, farming etc. to earn a livelihood. however, certain kinds of work are valued more than others. Activities like cleaning washing cutting hair, picking garbage are seen as tasks that are of less value and people who do this work are seen as dirty or impure. In the caste system, communities/group of people was placed in a sort of ladder where each caste was either above or below the other. Those who placed themselves at the top of this ladder called themselves upper caste and saw themselves as superior; the group who were place at the bottom of the ladder was seen as unworthy and called "untouchables".

Striving for equality:- the struggle for freedom from British rule also included within it the struggle of large groups of people who not only fought against the British but also fought to be treated more equally. Dalits, women, tribal and peasants fought against the inequalities they experienced in their lives. When

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India became a nation in 1947 our leaders too were concerned about the different kinds of inequalities that existed. Those who wrote the constitution of India, a document that laid out the rules by which the nation would function, were aware of the ways in which the constitution also placed responsibility on the government to take specific steps to realize this right to equality for poor and other such marginal communities. The writers of the constitution also said that respect for diversity was a significant element in ensuring equality. They felt that people must have the freedom to follow their religion, speak their language, celebrate their festivals and express themselves freely. They said that no one language, religion or festivals should become compulsory for all to follow. They said that the government must treat all religions equally. Therefore, India became a secular country where people of different religions and faith have discrimination had been practiced in our society and how people had struggled against this. Many leaders of these struggles such as Dr Ambedkar had also fought for the rights of the dalits. So this leaders set out a vision and goals in the constitution to ensure that all the people of India were considered equal. This equality of all persons is seen as a key value that unites us all as Indians. Everyone has equal rights and opportunities. Untouchability is seen the freedom to practice and follow their religion without any fear of discrimination

