

## Chapter – 2: Diversity and Discrimination

### Difference and Prejudice

- Things define us – how we live, what language we speak, what we eat, wear, what we play – influence by Geography and History
- How diverse India – 8 major religion – every single in India – more than 1600 language – more than 100 dance forms
- Diversity – not celebrated – we feel secure with people – look, talk and dress like us
- Sometimes – we meet people – different than us – strange
- People – form opinion about others – not like them
- Rural people –
  - More than 50 % people – live in villages
  - Do not like to use modern technology
  - Peak harvesting and plantation – families – 12 to 14 hours working in field
  - Forced to migrate to cities
- Urban People –
  - Life – easy – people – spoilt and lazy
  - Spend little time with others
  - Care only about money
  - Living in city – expensive – earning's large part – spent on rent and transport
- Some statements – villagers – ignorant (not knowing anything) – urban people – money-minded and lazy
- Opinion about different people – always negative – **prejudice** – judge others negatively or as inferior
- We think – one way – best for doing things – may not respect others
  - Example – we think English best – judging others – negatively – may not respect others – who don't speak English
- Prejudice about many things – religious belief, colour of skin, region they come from, accent they speak, clothes they wear
- Sometimes – prejudice – so strong – we may hurt others

### Creating Stereotypes

- Familiar with gender difference
- What does it mean to be a boy or a girl?
- Some may say – born as boy or girl – what to think
  - They are well behaved.
  - They are soft spoken and gentle.
  - They are physically strong.
  - They are naughty.
  - They are good at dance and painting.
  - They don't cry.
  - They are rowdy.
  - They are good at sport.
  - They are good at cooking.

- They are emotional.
- Above statements – divide into groups for Boys and Girls
- Example – “they don’t cry” – generally associated with boys – babies or children – hurt themselves – parents console – boys don’t cry
- Children grow up believing – boys don’t cry – stop themselves when they want to cry
- If grown boys or men – cry – thinks – others will tease him or laugh at him
- People say a lot of things – if someone is handicapped physically – people think – they are handicapped mentally also
- We fit – boys and girls – into images – society created
- Fix people – in one image – create **stereotype** – people – belong to particular group (country, religion, gender, race, economic backgrounds) – dumb, lazy, criminal
- Stingy and generous people – everywhere – every group – some like that – does not mean – all like that
- Stereotype – stop us from looking at people as unique – special qualities or skills – different from others
- Fit – large number of people – into one pattern – prevent us from doing things – we are good at

## Inequality and Discrimination

- Discrimination – people act on prejudices and stereotypes
- Discrimination –
  - Stopping others from doing something
  - Stop them from living in neighbourhood
  - Stop them from taking water from same well
  - Not allowing them to drink tea from same cups
- Discrimination – several reasons – Samir Ek and Samir Do –
  - Different religions
    - Source of discrimination
    - Certain language, religion, region – may be discriminated
  - Economic backgrounds
    - Not diversity – BUT – inequality
    - Poor people – no money – meet basic needs – food, clothing, shelter
    - Experience discrimination – office, hospitals, schools, etc.
  - Some people – experience both
    - Poor and belong to groups whose culture not valued
    - Tribals, some religious groups, people living in some particular regions
- Following section – script from Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar’s life – 1901 – 9 years old
  - He went to Koregaon, Maharashtra – meet father
  - Waited long – station master asked for ticket – asked – why they stayed late
  - They told him – going to Koregaon – waiting for father or his servant – did not know how to reach Koregaon
  - Well-dressed – station master thought – Brahmin children
  - Station master asked – who they were (which caste) – Dr. Ambedkar blurted out – Mahar – considered untouchables
  - Hearing reply – station master’s behavior – twisted
  - More time elapsed – nobody came to pick – station master also left

- 30 minutes after – station master returned – asked – what to do now
- They said – get bullock-cart on hire – reach Koregaon
- Word went around – they are Mahars – nobody accepted to take them
- They were ready to pay double amount – station master – not knowing anything
- Imagine – how difficult – people could not move easily or freely – refused to touch – not allowed to drink from the same source of water as others

## **Striving for Equality**

- Struggle for freedom from British – included internal struggle against discrimination
- Dalits, women, tribals, peasants – fought against inequalities
- Dalits – organized – try to gain entry in temples
- Women – demanded – equal right to education
- Peasants and tribals – release themselves – grasp of moneylenders and high interest rates
- 1947 – India became a nation – leaders concerned – inequalities
- Those who wrote constitution – document of rules and regulations – aware of discrimination
- Many leaders like Dr. Ambedkar – fought for rights of Dalits
- These people – set out goals – ensure – all people – equal
- Equality – key value – unites us as Indians
- Untouchability – crime – illegal by law
- People – free to choose jobs
- Government jobs – open for all
- Constitution – placed responsibility on government – ensure – right to equality for poor and marginalized communities
- Writers – also said – respect for diversity – imp. – ensure – equality
- People – freedom to follow religion, speak language, celebrate festivals – they want
- One language, religion or culture – not compulsory
- Government – treat all religions – equally
- India – became secular country – people – different religion – follow and practice – their religion of choice
- Ideals – protected in Constitution – this chapter points out – inequalities exist even today
- Equality – work for it – not happen automatically