

We **the People of India**

Module I



Constitutional Rights Education for Children

Vaan Muhil

Tirunelveli

Pledge

for the Children of Constitutional Rights Education Club

**I, a member of the Constitutional Rights Education Club,
pledge that I shall**

- Hold in respect the values of equality, social justice, socialism, democracy, secularism and diversity that are enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- Not discriminate against people based on their caste, creed, colour, race, religion, language, sex, social status and place of birth.
- Live in harmony with everyone, by Thiruvalluvar's words, "All are equal by birth".
- Not accept and stand by any form of exploitation and oppression.
- Not indulge in any form of violence under any circumstance.
- Respect the fundamental rights and personal freedoms of an individual enshrined in the Constitution of India.
- Discharge the duties of a citizen, as specified in the Constitution of India.

**Constitutional Rights Education
Programme (CRE)**

Vaan Muhil



Constitutional Rights Education for Children

Module I

We the People of India

Vaan Muhil

15, Kavitha Nagar, Maharaja Nagar PO,
Tirunelveli – 627011.



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Year

June 2022

Publisher

Vaan Muhil

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Tirunelveli

Tamil Nadu– 627011.

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Foreword

With a clarion call to develop Constitutional rights as a culture, Vaan Muhil has taken the initiative to introduce Constitutional Rights Education among children. This Constitutional Rights Education Programme proceeds intending to instill the values of the Constitution of India and inculcate the fundamental rights enshrined in it among children, enabling them to grow as citizens with humanistic values, that will be reflected in classrooms, hostels, schools, sports centres and Communities.

The Constitution comprises fundamental rules for the functioning of a country, guidelines for the working of the country's various government bodies and directives for future nation-building activities. The Constitution of India upholds highly esteemed values such as equality, social justice, socialism, democracy, pluralism, secularism, fundamental human rights, federalism etc.

The Constitution Drafting Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar has charted for India an exemplary Constitution, to dispense equality, justice, secularism and democracy in this vast country with various diversities. But the sad reality is that the significant features of our Constitution have not reached a majority of the Indian population. Analysing this gap and realising the importance of Constitution rights education, our organisation has taken up this historic initiative of introducing the same among the younger generation.

In today's scenario, where discrimination, intolerance, hatred and social disparity create innumerable factions among people, resulting in feuds between them, thereby staking the social harmony, it becomes essential to imbibe fundamental elements of democracy such as equality, social justice, etc. as the core of our living. In this regard, this Constitutional Rights Education (CRE) Programme also aims to cultivate the inherent sterling qualities in children.

This unique initiative that was supposed to have been set in motion in the past year, faced multiple hindrances due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and the subsequent lockdowns throughout the country. Hence, there were difficulties in taking forward the CRE Programme among children, as schools remained closed, despite the modules being ready. Apart from schools, Vaan Muhil is also aiming to educate thousands of children on Constitutional rights through CRE Clubs in communities. Last year, these clubs were formed in 125 communities in 17 districts in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry with the support of 10 civil society groups.

This module “We, the People of India”, designed for children in grade six is an easy-to-understand textbook with numerous practical activities, stories, references to historical events, case studies, discussions, roleplays, etc. Significant provisions of the Constitution of India and relevant International Human Rights Laws also feature in this module.

Vaan Muhil recalls with gratitude the noteworthy contribution of various educators, human rights activists and socially concerned teachers in the preparation of this module. Prof. I. Devasahayam, the Director of the Institute of Human Rights Education for the past 15 years, sowed the seeds for the publication of this module and Dr. L. Bernart provided support by creating the content for the same. Vaan Muhil whole-heartedly thanks and appreciates the contribution of Mr. G. Ganesan, State Co-ordinator, Ms. G. Priya and Mr. P. Rajan, Assistant State Co-ordinators, CRE Programme, in designing and fine-tuning the module, Mr. S. Mohan, in editing, Mr. Jayaraman and Mr. Jayakumar, in initial designing and layout, the field staff in providing inputs, CRE Club facilitators, staff at Vaan Muhil and especially all the Directors of civil society organisations, who provided great support in starting the Constitutional Rights Education Clubs in their respective districts.

Our sincere gratitude to Dr. V.Vasanthi Devi, former Vice-Chancellor, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and the Chairperson of our State Advisory Committee for her constant encouragement and guidance in taking the CRE Programme to children. Vaan Muhil acknowledges and is thankful for the constructive inputs and unwavering support given by Mr. Gana Kurinji, Prof. A. John Peter, Ms. Oviya, Ms. Subhadra, Fr. Dr. John Kennedy and teachers and human rights educators, Mr. Tamilaasan, Ms. Santhaseela, Ms. Sornalatha and Ms. Shanthi. A note of special appreciation to Ms. B. Amala Kavya, for her remarkable translation into English in a professional manner and for having supported us in taking this module to a larger forum beyond Tamil Nadu. Special thanks to Mr. Thirunavukarasu, Director, Eluthu Kalaiyagam and Mr. Varghese for taking extensive efforts in designing the module.

M.A. Britto

Programme Director
Constitutional Rights Education Programme
Vaan Muhil

I am delighted in submitting this module made for Constitutional Rights Education to the people concerned. We are very clear of the fact that rights education cannot be imparted through textbooks or classrooms or be memorised. Neither could it be an exam-oriented syllabus.

Human rights are universal. There have been many distinguished personalities in history who have sought to protect the rights of human beings, which are celebrated as great values that human beings possess; many are the documents they have drafted in this regard. Each nation with its own constitutional laws has ensured that the rights of the citizens are secured. This is in addition to having the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with various International human rights conventions and covenants, treaties and pacts in national and international forums. However, there have been violations of these human rights all around the world, making it a necessity to introduce human rights education and develop it as a culture. As the aforementioned human rights protection conventions did not bear fruitful results, the United Nations announced ten years from 1995-2005 to take human rights education to the ground level with elaborate plans to sensitise the public about human rights. India is one of the nations that has accepted this scheme and this Constitutional Rights Education Programme is a part and extension of the human rights education scheme.

The Constitution is not a mere compilation of legal provisions, but forms the identity of a nation. It has the authority to decide the direction in which a nation must progress and can be regarded as an ethic of the nation. This Constitution which is a written document finds its ultimate achievement through people following and making use of the laws and rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The objective of the CRE Programme is to make the rights enshrined in the Constitution and prescribed in law books and legal documents a life style for people by taking the Constitution to civil society groups, activists and children. We are completely aware of the fact that the rights enshrined in the Constitution cannot be restricted to textbook education. The rights are to be perceived beyond the teaching-learning process, by approaching them as a way of life. A closer observation of the lessons reveals that they are value-based education, which might also enable the learners to understand the political mechanisms behind those values. The modules are designed in such a way that they can be perused by students, social workers and civil society groups. It is our deepest desire that the forthcoming era shall be that of the people, wherein the qualities of democracy, equality and secularism promised by the Constitution are upheld.

We recall with gratitude all the friends who have contributed to the making of this module. This great initiative taken up by Vaan Muhil shall be inscribed in history. A special note of thanks to Dr. L. Bernart and friends for aiding in the fine-tuning of this module.

This module is not the culmination of the program, but the beginning of a new initiative.

Wishing the effort to reach great heights,

Dr. I. Devasahayam

Chairperson, Curriculum Development Committee,
CRE Programme
Vaan Muhil.

Introduction to the Module

Dear all,

Greetings!

We are taking this initiative to bring Constitutional Rights Education to school students beginning with sixth grade from this academic year.

But is it possible to teach rights? Will students be able to understand their rights?

To answer these questions, we have eight lessons divided into three units in this textbook.

In the first unit, we give an overview of the background of human rights. Rights have not been created, but are natural, universal and inherent in all human beings. Hence, the first unit discusses general human yearnings. It opens an interaction about the fundamental needs of human beings.

Human beings tend to live in groups that become society. Hence, we term human beings as 'social animals'. The society in which we live is not a homogenous society, but a pluralistic society that houses numerous diversities. The human beings in this pluralistic society have dignity. Human yearnings, social life, the plural society and human dignity are general aspects of human life. But are these features of human life protected?

Why are these aspects not respected? Why is there a violation of these fundamental rights?

The second unit discusses this in detail. Prejudice plays a crucial role in the denial and violation of rights. We tend to hurt others through our words and acts due to these preconceived notions that take root in our minds and this results in the creation of rifts in our society.

What are the means to safeguard the qualities of a plural society?

The aforementioned features are enshrined as rights in our Constitution. The basic preaching and philosophies that our ancestors, sages, philosophers and scholars found essential for the existence of human life take form as law in our Constitution. They were not newly created, but have been inherent in us. They need to be cultivated. This Constitutional Rights Education leads us on that path.

Module Development Committee

Constitutional Rights Education Programme

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1. HUMAN YEARNING

It seems to me we can never give up yearning and wishing while we are still alive.

-George Elliot

Objectives

- To learn about significant aspects of human feelings - yearnings.
- To understand that yearnings are common to all human beings.
- To know how our basic needs are transformed into yearnings.

Dear children,

We shall learn about significant aspects of human feelings in this lesson - yearnings. Whenever our needs are not met, they are transformed into yearnings. To understand human yearning, read the following conversation carefully. Upon reading, ponder if you have experienced similar yearnings.

Child : Maa! Maa...!

Mother : Why are you screaming dear?

Child : I had cut down the thorny shrub in our garden. hadn't I?

Mother : Yes, so what?

- Child** : That plant has sprouted shoots again!
- Mother** : Iyyo! That should be cut down immediately.
- Child** : Come Amma, we'll cut it. (The mother cuts the plant with a sickle. A few days later, the child who was playing in the garden notices the plant sprouting again and is surprised. She runs back to her mother.) Amma, why does this plant keep sprouting new shoots even as we cut it down repeatedly?
- Mother** : It is just like that.
- Child** : Tell me, Maa. (Starts whimpering)
- Mother** : The plant also has life dear. That is why...
- Child** : The plant has life?!
- Mother** : It is because it has life it yearns to live.
- Child** : Why does it think that it should not die? This plant is completely useless!
- Mother** : We do not have any use for it. However, the plant does have life dear.
- Child** : So...
- Mother** : Since it has life, it yearns to live.
- Child** : Is it only the thorny shrub that has a desire to live?
- Mother** : Sweetheart, I know you are very intelligent. But why do you ask so many questions?
- Father** : What happened, dear?
- Child** : Didn't we have a thorny shrub in our garden? Amma cut that down last week. But it has sprouted again today. We don't need it. When I asked Amma, why it continues to sprout, she told me it has a desire to live. A yearning to live. What do they mean, Appa – yearning, and desire?
- Father** : All living creatures in the world have a yearning to live dear. It is quite natural and common.
- Child** : If this yearning is natural, isn't our cutting of the plant wrong, Appa?
- Mother** : Exactly, dear!
- Child** : If plants have this yearning to live, won't human beings have the same yearning, Appa?

Father : Of course, every human has this yearning.

Child : Do I too have yearnings, Maa?

Mother : You have yearnings. Your Appa has and I too have them.

Child : Me too? But I don't think I have any yearnings, Amma.

Father : No no. You definitely have yearnings, dear.

Child : How is it possible, Appa?

Father : You want Amma and Appa to buy you all that you desire, right? You want us to take you to the fair, you want us to get you candies. So, you too have a lot of yearnings like these.

Child : So, these are yearnings!

Father : Not just these, some have a yearning to get access to higher education, some have a yearning to play well, some have a yearning to lead a healthy life, some long for their parents to be kind and caring, some long for an independent life... There are various yearnings like these.

Child : What do we do about these, Appa?

Father : We are humans just like any other person. So, we should not just prioritise only our yearnings, but empathise with others and try to understand their yearnings as well.

Child : My friend Mallika from next door does not get a proper nutritious breakfast, as her parents leave early in the morning to work in the fields. Due to this, she remains malnourished. Won't Mallika have a yearning to have a wholesome breakfast?

Mother : Yes, dear. She would definitely have that yearning. This is what we call the yearning to live. We can lead a healthy life, only if we consume nutritious food daily.

Child : I understood that, Amma. But Appa, please tell me how and when this yearning for life manifests in us.

Mother : That is a great question! We all have this yearning right from birth. It always exists within us. But, when a human being is in a very crucial situation, it explicitly manifests itself. Look here dear, I have a few newspaper clippings. I'll read out the news bits from those. Listen carefully as I read and you'll understand what I've been telling you.

Yearning I

A woman from Alangulam, Tirunelveli: My father is a drunkard. Due to grinding poverty in my home, I could study only till fifth grade. At that time, I was taken for millwork for a contract period of three years. They took me there saying I would be given Rs. 50,000, if I work for a term of three years. I was also told that I would be taught sewing, computer operation, and handicraft making. None of these courses was taught during the period. Things were smooth for the first six months. Then, the eight hours work duration was gradually increased to sixteen hours and I was asked to work overtime.



I was not even given a day off and had to work when I was unwell too. Proper accommodation was not arranged; I would not have time to eat. Since it was a cotton mill, the inhalation of small cotton particles caused difficulty in breathing. We went with the dreams of saving money for our marriages, but only to return with diseases. I could earn only Rs. 38,000 even after working for four and a half years. Now, I stand hopeless.

(First-hand experience shared at the Conference for Women Survivors, who had worked in spinning mills)



Do you know?



All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights – 1948



Food for thought

- What are the different kinds of issues faced by adolescent girls working in spinning mills?
- What kind of jobs are taken up by girl children in your locality?

Yearning II

Aylan: There had been a civil war in Syria for five years and many were killed. The number of people running for their lives and taking refuge in other countries was on the increase. In such a situation, Abdullah Kurdi, a hairdresser, along with his wife and two sons was escaping to Greece via Turkey with fourteen others in a boat. Unfortunately, the boat sank and everyone fell into the sea.



“When we were about 4 km from Kos Island, a huge wave toppled our boat and all of us were sinking in the water. Holding on to a part of the boat, my wife and I struggled to save our children. In the first hour, our eldest son Khalif slipped away from our hands. In my efforts to save at least my second son Aylan, I was holding him above the water. But he also died in my hands. Finally, I struggled to save my wife, but in vain; she too left me. I lost everything. Even if I am given the entire world now, I do not want anything”, said Kurdi.

The boat sank and everyone died. Their bodies were washed ashore one by one. One of those was Aylan, the toddler. The world was shell-shocked and he shall always remain a symbol of those people who are oppressed.



Food for thought

- Why do people leave their countries and go to other countries?
- Who are refugees?
- Debate in class the reasons for the death of children like Aylan.
- The yearnings of those who drowned in the sea.
- The yearnings of the father who is now left alone.

Child : I feel sad after reading these news pieces, Appa. Only now do I understand, that every human being has a lot of problems, struggles, and yearnings in their life.



Do you know?

- A study conducted by CACL has revealed that child labour, among vulnerable communities, has increased by nearly 280 percent in the State during the pandemic. The study also found a big jump in the proportion of working children from 28.2 percent to 79.6 percent because of the impact of COVID-19 and school closure.
- More than 94% of the children had stated that they started working due to the financial crisis in their house and family pressure. These children are also not attending online classes due to various reasons, including non-conducive atmosphere at home, need to work, lack of smartphones among others.



Different types of yearnings

We learnt that the yearning to live is common to all living beings. We also know that of all these living beings, humans have a lot of yearnings. Shall we find what those are?

1. Yearning related to the body

I should not catch a cold or fever; I should not fall ill with a headache. I should live a hale and healthy life.

2. Yearning for things

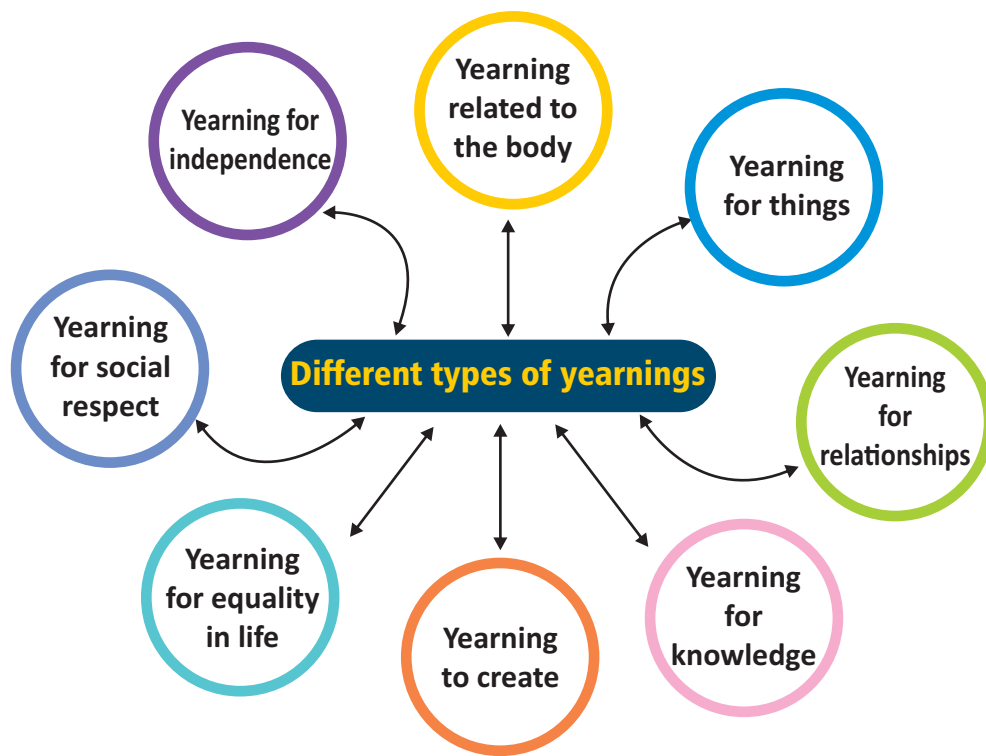
I desire a good dress like my friend's. I wish for my parents to buy me all the books, as soon as the school reopens. I want money to buy toffees every day; I wish to buy colour pencils.

3. Yearning for relationships

I want my parents to love me and care for me. I wish for my teacher to treat me well. I want my classmates to mingle with me jovially.

4. Yearning for knowledge

I want to learn a lot; I want a great teacher. I want different kinds of books that would educate me.



5. Yearning to create

I have a desire to paint. I yearn to paint the beautiful scenes I see. I am always scolded at home for painting instead of studying. I long to paint; I desire to sing and give orations on the microphone.

6. Yearning for equality in life

My classmates have a lot of money. When asked, they would reply, that they lied at home asking for money for notes and books. I don't like any of these. I wish to always speak the truth. At the same time, few other classmates do not bring lunch, due to poverty in their homes. I feel bad whenever I see this – while one eats, why does another have to starve? I long for everyone to be equal.

7. Yearning for social respect

Fourteen-year-old Suguna's father is a conservancy worker. “I studied till eighth grade. I stopped my education after that owing to poverty. But I desired to continue my education. Not just that, I wanted to become a doctor; I could not”, worries Suguna. It is her yearning to become a doctor.

8. Yearning for independence

My name is Meera. My brother and I are in eighth and ninth grades, respectively. Every evening, my brother plays with his friends on the street. But I am not allowed to do the same. My mother restricts by making me stay at home. Hence, I am confined to my home. I wish to play with my friends on the street, like my brother.



Do you know?

- The socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are already having devastating effects on children's ability to have access to health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation and housing services, with a projected additional 150 million children living in multidimensional poverty.
- With parents losing jobs and income, it is equally important to understand what the consequences will be for children living in monetary-poor households.
- By the end of the year, between 122 and 142 million additional children will live in households which cannot make ends meet due to the impact of the corona virus pandemic, according to updated Save the Children and UNICEF estimates.

COVID-19 and children, UNICEF data hub
(<https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children>)

Activities

1. Let us learn new words

Life	sprout	independence
growth	relationship	need
right	equality	dignity
refugee	desire	yearning.



2. Time to share

Children! Share with the class your yearnings in life.



3. Show time

Children! Divide yourselves into groups and prepare skits on yearning and perform them in front of the class.



4. Story-time

Write and share with the class a story about a yearning you have or know somebody else to have.



5. Sing a song

Divide the class into groups of equal numbers. Compose and sing a song on yearnings.



6. Identify the yearning

(Eg): I want a pretty dress.

Ans: Yearning for things

1) I want everyone to love me.

Ans: _____

2) I want to study a lot

Ans: _____

3) I should not fall sick with headaches and fever.

Ans: _____

4) I want to play outside with my friends.

Ans: _____



Do you know?

- The progress to end child labour has stalled for the first time in 20 years, reversing the previous downward trend that saw child labour fall by 94 million between 2000 and 2016.
- The report points to a significant rise in the number of children aged 5 to 11 years in child labour, who now account for just over half of the total global figure. The number of children aged 5 to 17 years in hazardous work – defined as work that is likely to harm their health, safety or morals – has risen by 6.5 million to 79 million since 2016.

International Labour Organisation



2. SOCIAL LIFE

To overcome poverty and the flaws of the economic crisis in our society, we need to envision our social life.

- Muhammad Yunus

Objectives

- To understand the needs of social life
- To learn the significant aspects of social life
- To realise that human beings are born, live, and die in society
- To know that social life is natural for human beings

Dear Children,

In this lesson, we shall discuss social life.

Nandini and Vinod are in their seventh and sixth grades respectively, studying at a school in the city. They planned to visit their grandparents in the village during the summer vacation.

Finally, the day of the journey dawned. They were excited to go to the village with their parents, after a long time.

The bus that would take them to their grandparents' village arrived; they boarded the bus and took their assigned seats and the bus started moving. Vinod and Nandini started to observe the happenings on the bus.

Their grandfather's friend, Mr. Abdullah got into the bus, and their parents stood up and greeted him. He too returned the greeting and took his seat. Nandini's father shared with them that Mr. Abdullah and their grandfather were very close friends since their childhood and that he too would frequently visit Mr. Abdullah's house, when he was young.

The bus halted at the next stop and a few passengers got down. The vegetable vendor Chellamma struggled to get onto the bus with her heavy vegetable basket and a few passengers helped lift her basket into the bus. The children also noticed some passengers talking proudly about Chellamma, who despite her old age held on to her value of leading her life only by her hard work.



Nandini and Vinod enjoyed the changing scenery outside, as the bus went past villages. Nandini curiously asked her mother about how villages were formed and how people came to live in them.

Mother : Shall we rewind time a bit to know about how people came to live as they do now?

Vinod : Sure, Amma.

Mother : Early human beings lived in caves and trees.

Nandini : Didn't they all live in the same place, Amma?

Mother : No, they were continuously moving from one place to another.

Vinod : Why were they moving, Amma?

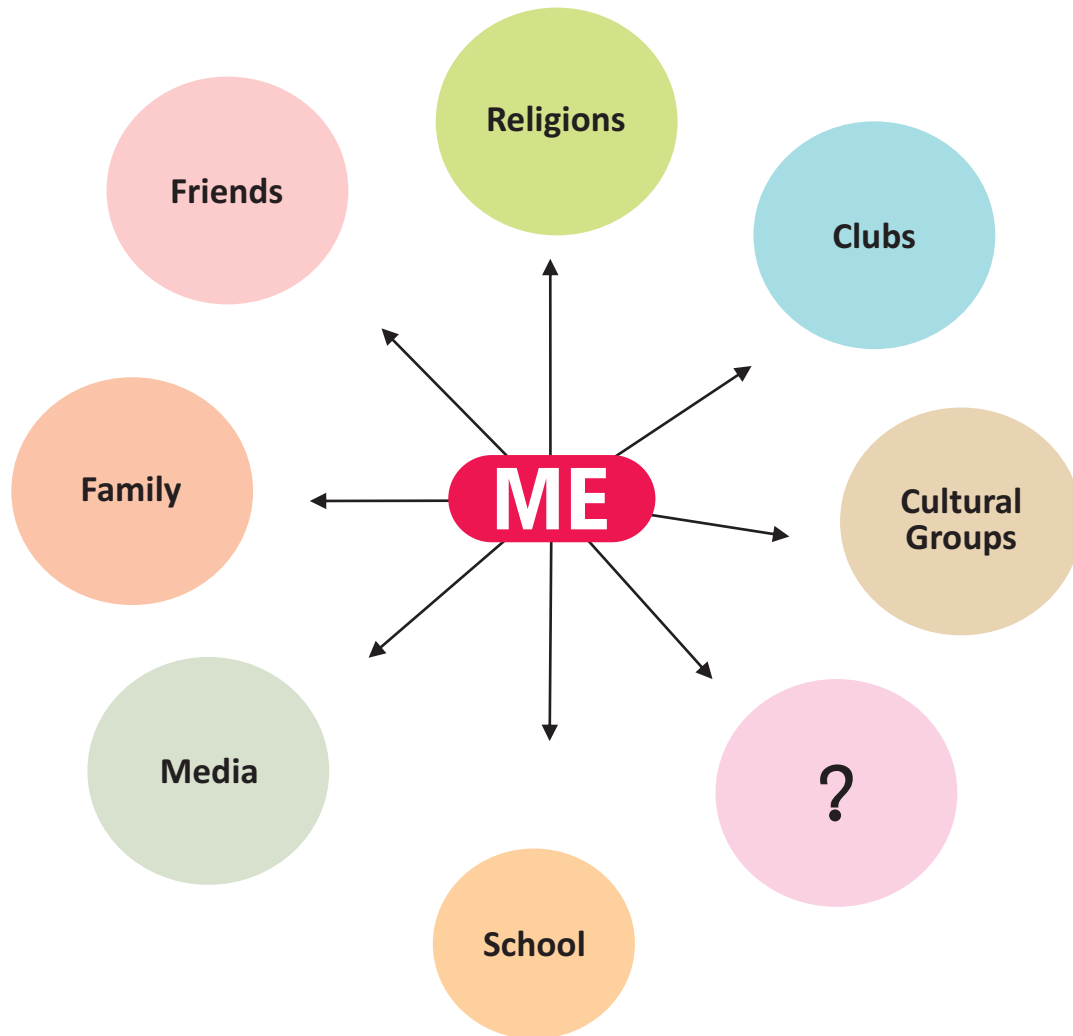
- Mother** : They were migrating in search of food, water, and shelter.
- Nandini** : What kind of food did early human beings consume, Amma?
- Mother** : They lived by eating the meat of animals they hunted alongside consuming fish, tubers, fruits, and stalks of edible plants.
- Vinod** : Were they constantly migrating in search of food and other necessities?
- Mother** : No, after a certain point in time, they started to live in permanent settlements as small communities. Many such small communities joined hands to live together as a society.
- Nandini** : Didn't they get into fights when they became a big society from being smaller communities?
- Mother** : Of course, there were clashes within and between these communities.
- Vinod** : Do these clashes happen even today, Amma?
- Mother** : I can't say that they do not happen. But as human civilisation kept developing these clashes have reduced considerably, as communities began to live harmoniously.



- Nandini** : How did that happen, Amma?
- Mother** : The basis of a developed human society is to lead a harmonious life with everyone. Hence, we all are living as a society, dependent on one another. Right from birth, we are dependent on one another to satiate our own needs and others' needs. We cannot lead a life independent of one another.
- Vinod** : Please tell us more about social life, Amma.
- Mother** : Right from our childhood, we are dependent on other human beings like our parents, siblings, and relatives. As we grow, we are connected to playmates in our locality, classmates, etc. We are also connected to people in playgrounds, societal and religious gatherings, etc. under different circumstances. In this way, is it possible for us to live without interacting with our fellow human beings?
- Vinod** : Not possible, Amma.
- Mother** : Yes. Now listen to Appa explain this clearly to you.
- Father** : All of us lead a social life, right? Is it possible for us to isolate ourselves from the rest of the society? We can't. So, what do you think happens when one person in society commits a crime?
- Nandini** : Yes, I know Appa. They arrest the person and put them behind bars. But why are they imprisoned?
- Vinod** : I just know that they are imprisoned, Appa.
- Father** : Curbing the freedom of a person who has committed a crime and isolating them from the rest of the society is in itself a form of imprisonment. Generally, courts decide the degree of punishment and imprisonment for a convict depending on the magnitude of the crime. Accordingly, the convicts serve their sentences. However, isolation is a greater punishment than any physical punishment.
- Nandini** : I know that, Appa. Now I have understood clearly what social life is.

The conversation that started at the beginning of their journey came to an end as the bus neared their grandparents' village. They happily got off the bus and walked toward their grandparents' home.

The basic feature of social life:



Dear Students!

Divide yourselves into groups. Debate the following topics and present your views to the class.

- How do we get our food and clothing?
- The people involved in these processes, directly and indirectly.
- Is it possible to get these by ourselves, independent of other people?

Human beings are born into society and die in society. Hence, they are called social animals. Human beings are a species capable of creating a society; individuals come together and live as a community. They have to live as groups and communities. While living in such societies, we learn the practices, traditions, and culture of the society, and this process is called socialization.

Unfortunately, all humans do not enjoy equal status, due to social differences. Owing to various reasons, there rises a lot of differences between one individual and another. Each individual is accorded respect and value based on their social standing. But few are denied those. For human beings to live in this society, their existence must be at a level greater than that of animals and this higher level of living is accorded and ensured through equal rights and dignity.

Chennai floods and relief work

In the first week of December 2015, Chennai city received unprecedented heavy rainfall. Many lost their lives. Thousands of people lost their homes and livelihood. Countless people were stranded without access to food and water. Social workers risked their lives to provide these people with food, water, and medicines and also to securely shift them to safer places. Many individuals, organisations, and even children offered aid and services to these people and helped them tackle the aftermath of the flood. Due to continued efforts from the government too, Chennai people were able to return to normal life very soon.





Do you know?



- Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 29, Universal Declaration of Human Rights -1948

Discuss in groups

1. How does one get the urge to help those in distress?
2. Why do you think many people help strangers?
3. Have you ever helped a person whom you noticed to be suffering?
4. Is it possible to live without receiving help from others?
5. For what all are we dependent on others?

Follow up the discussion by reading the Thirukural given below and understand its meaning.

Thirukural 521

**“When wealth is fled, old kindness still to show,
Is kindly grace that only kinsmen know.”**

Showering a person who has lost all the wealth in his life is a unique quality found in kith and kin,
says Valluvar.

Activities

1. Let us learn new words

socialisation harmony masses
social life culture religious harmony
civilisation



2. Time to share

Children! Share with the class the lifestyle of the people in your locality. Describe how they are dependent on one another.



3. Debate

Our family is self-sufficient in satisfying our needs Vs the difficulty of satisfying our needs without others' help.



4. Illustrate to Educate

Come up with an illustration that describes the theme “Unity in Diversity” and educate the class about it with the help of your illustration.



5. Compose a Poem

Theme: Social life

6. Antonyms

Find out antonyms that contradict the following words.



(Eg)	First Person	Second Person
	Harmony	Enmity
	Unity	_____
	Construct	_____
	Peace	_____

7. Identify and place the odd words separately from the following set of words

family village society harmony participation
enmity fight separation help unity
rumour anger stubbornness friendship

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Food for thought

- Is it right to foster friendships based merely on material wealth, money, education, social standing, power and authority, caste, and religion?
- How do we interact with our friends and neighbours?
- What kind of clashes do you think happen between kinspeople?
- Is it the right approach to maintain enmity and hostility with your friends and relatives?



3. PLURAL SOCIETY

The world is my town and its people my kinsmen.

- Kaniyan Punkunranar, Purananuru 192

Objectives

- To understand plural societies
- To learn about the characteristics of a plural society
- To realise the necessity for a plural society

Read the following conversation between a teacher and their students

Teacher : Dear students, in today's class, we shall be learning about our country India. We proudly say that we are citizens of this country. I will be testing all of you on how much you know about our country. Can each of you stand one by one and tell the class one fact you know about India?



- Student 1** : India is a vast country.
- Student 2** : India is the birthland of Gandhi.
- Student 3** : India is a subcontinent.
- Student 4** : The capital of India is Delhi.
- Student 5** : Many languages are spoken in India.
- Student 6** : People of different ethnicities live in India.
- Student 7** : There are many religions in India.
- Teacher** : Excellent! Any more responses?
- Student 8** : There are different cultures in India.
- Student 9** : All of us live in unity.
- Teacher** : All of you have given great responses. Let me pose a question. Some of you responded that there are people of various religions, ethnicities, speaking different languages residing in India. How do you think is it possible for people of different cultures to coexist peacefully within the same country?
- Student 1** : I feel that it does not do good to have different factions. It might disrupt the unity. It is indeed confusing.

Student 3 : I don't agree with your opinion. There are different types of flowering plants in our garden and it is the variety that makes it beautiful.

Student 4 : But each of these plant varieties is not equal in number. Some plants are greater in number and others are lesser. How can we consider all these plants to be the same?

Teacher : There might be a greater quantity of some flowers and a lesser quantity of other flowers. But all these flowers need to be treated and maintained equally. Whatever be their quantity all these flowers have lives and have a right to live. This must be understood. Similarly, our country too would not have any clashes if we do not discriminate between minority communities and the mainstream and between different castes and languages and treat all people equally.

Student 5 : Does equality guarantee unity?

Teacher : Definitely. When people are treated equally, there will be no discrimination. In addition to this, we need to accept that the variations that exist between us are quite natural. We should also realise that it is the right of every individual to speak their mother tongue and worship a God of their choice; it is an individual identity. By following these steps, we shall be able to overcome all confusion.

Student 1 : Could you please elaborate on this a bit more, ma'am?

Teacher : Our country is akin to the garden with different flowers, as it has different kinds of human beings. All of them cannot be expected to be the same. We need to live harmoniously. Did you understand?

Student 6 : Does this mean India's beauty lie in its diversity?

Teacher : Of course. This is the reason why we exist as a single country with multiple states. We also have Constitutional rights to protect each of our languages and cultures.

Student 7 : We too shall strive to protect them. We'll respect our differences while celebrating our unity.

Here are a few examples to elucidate the diversity that was explained through this conversation.

Incident I

Vaigai village celebrates religious harmony

There is a Bathrakali Amman temple in Vaigai village near Utrakosamangai, Ramanathapuram district. Behind the temple is a mosque. To date, both Hindus and Muslims take part in the worship conducted in the temple and mosque, without any discrimination. Only after the prayers in the temple are completed, does the worship at the mosque begin. The materials required for the Pongal festival in the temple are provided by the Muslims. This practice has been followed for generations and stands as a great example of religious harmony.



Food for thought

- Have there been instances in your locality similar to the one in Vaigai village?
- Why do we have to accord importance to such events?
- What is your opinion on religious harmony?

Incident II

D'Michaella Jadhav from the north-eastern state of Manipur was working in Bengaluru. He was having dinner with his friends in a roadside stall. A group of passers-by asked them something in Kannada to which they replied in Hindi. The group assaulted them for not knowing Kannada while earning from Karnataka. Despite them stating that they were from Manipur, the group attacked them brutally.



- Newspaper clipping



Food for thought

- Is it right to discriminate people based on language when India is a multi-lingual country?
- Have you seen similar incidents in your locality? If yes, share those with the class.
- Share with the class your experience of visiting places of worship of different religions.



Every year, the 20th of August is observed as Religious Harmony Day. On that day, all of us take an oath for maintaining religious harmony. The oath says,

“I hereby pledge that I will strive towards achieving unity and harmony among the people of India without any discrimination based on caste, religion, and creed. I also declare that I will find solutions to any differences that may arise among us through peaceful negotiations by following our Constitutional law.”

Dear Students,

Let us also take a vow to maintain the plurality of Indian society by embracing and celebrating our diversity, while pushing away our differences to lead a harmonious life.

It is said that “Unity is strength”. Interact with your parents on the meaning of this statement and share your views with the class.

In a nutshell

- All human beings have a yearning to live; this yearning can be an individual yearning or the yearning of a community.
- Plural society may be defined as a society in which human beings live in groups harmoniously while respecting the natural differences that exist between them.





Do you know?

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.



Article 2, Universal Declaration of Human Rights -1948

Activities

1. Let us learn new words

status	plurality	society
religion	race	language
diversity	unity	nature
garden	flowers	beauty
discrimination	freedom	equality

2. Read out loud

“Unity in diversity”

“Respect differences; remove discrimination!”

“All are equal before law”

“Social harmony results in national unity”

“Diversity is our strength”

3. Pick the right pairs

1) Strength Individual Ans: _____

Group

2) Forest Tree Ans: _____

Trees

Single Religion

3) Country Ans: _____

Multi-religious

Individual

4) House Ans: _____

People

Equality

5) Human beings Ans: _____

Discrimination

4. State True or False

- 1) India is a subcontinent with many languages and religions.
_____ True / False
- 2) People belonging to the mainstream and minority communities are equal.
_____ True / False
- 3) The Constitution of India emphasises on being a mono-religious nation.
_____ True / False
- 4) Different colours add beauty to a painting. _____ True / False

5. Is it possible to be friends?

- 1) When two people are of different skin colours

- 2) When two people belong to different religions

- 3) When one prefers peace, while the other resorts to violence

6. Pick out your favourite words from the following set of words and give reasons for your choice

fight love unity
diversity society nature
plurality discrimination beauty

Ans: _____

7. Pick out your favourite sentences from the following set of sentences and give reasons for your choice

- 1) All are equal.
- 2) Differences are natural.
- 3) India's beauty lies in its diversity.

Ans: _____

8. Showtime

Divide the class into three or four groups and script and perform a play on the topic “Unity in Diversity”.



9. Read and understand the meaning of the following poem

The world is my town and its people my kinsmen
Good and evil comes not from others.
Pain and respite emanate from within;
Neither death is new nor life.

We rejoice in felicity terming it a balmy breeze
and patiently bear adversity –
The wise deem life a rudderless boat
borne along rapids,
even as lightning and rain strike down from darkened skies
The boat moves steered by fate
Needless then, this praise of the rich
More so the insult of the poor.

Kaniyan Punkunranar - (Purananuru 192)



Do you know?

The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws.

Article 14, Constitution of India



4. HUMAN DIGNITY

Human dignity is analogous to freedom and includes self-respect and self-esteem.

Objectives

- To understand that human dignity is natural
- To realise the greatness of human dignity
- To learn about human dignity with apt examples

Dear Children,

In this lesson, we shall be learning about human dignity which is closely associated with our feelings. Human dignity is a fundamental right that the Constitution of India guarantees all of us.

Our Constitution defines the needs of the Indian population as fundamental rights. When these fundamental rights are denied, it becomes impossible for human beings to live with dignity.

Human dignity is basic and common to all human beings. Human dignity is also referred to by other terms such as honour, self-esteem, self-respect, self-worth, etc. Human dignity is a personal feeling specific to the individual. It is in this regard that

undermining and condescending acts of speech, treatment, and violence are considered to be assaults on human dignity.

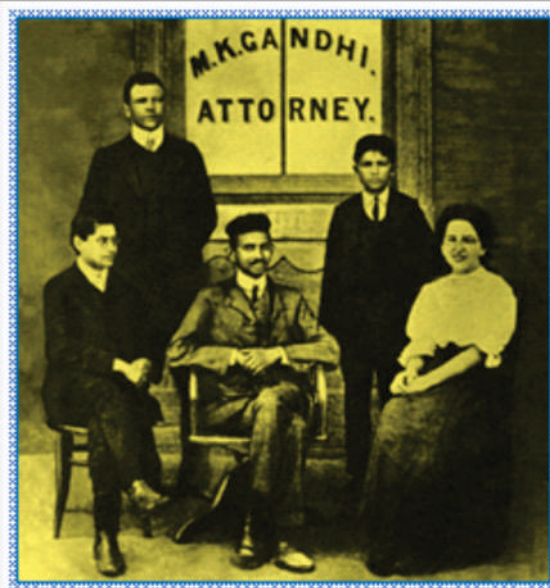
Let us now look at incidents from the lives of great leaders where their dignity was tarnished leading to the ignition of the spirit of freedom in their hearts.

What happened to Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa?

During his time in South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi happened to travel from Durban to Pretoria on 7th June 1893, in a first-class train compartment. Since he was a person of colour, the Whites compelled him to travel in a third-class compartment.

Gandhi refused to move from his seat and showed them his first-class ticket. Angered by Gandhi's attitude, the Whites forcefully left Gandhi at the railway station in Pietermaritzburg, in the dead of the night.

It was a huge insult to Gandhi. He felt that the Whites had disrespected not only his dignity but also basic humanitarian values. Instigated by this incident, Gandhi started his non-violent protest against the racial discrimination of the Black people by the Whites.



This incident was the germ for Gandhi's freedom struggle in India, thereby helping to reinstate the dignity of the Indian people.



Do you know?

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 12, Universal Declaration of Human Rights – 1948

Ambedkar's insult at school

In his childhood, Ambedkar was not allowed to sit along with the rest of his classmates on the bench in the classroom. He had to sit alone on the floor, that too in a corner. The reason given was that the floor would be defiled. Hence, he had to get his education by bringing a rag to sit on the floor in a corner. He could not drink water from the common pot kept at school. A person belonging to a privileged caste had to pour water into his cupped hands, so that he could drink. This was done by the peon in the school. If the peon was on leave, he had to stay parched throughout the day, which he recalls with pain as, “No peon, No water”.



One day, he went to solve a problem on the blackboard at the teacher's command. Immediately, the other students rushed to take their tiffin boxes kept behind the blackboard, as Ambedkar belonged to an underprivileged caste. They had acted so because they believed that their food would become impure if Ambedkar touched the container. It was a huge insult to him and caused him great pain. He realised that there were many others like him whose human dignity was tampered with. This incident kindled a fire in him to work for the cause of scheduled caste people.



Do you know?

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 4, Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948



Rosa Parks – The First Lady of Civil Rights

Every country has different types of discrimination. The USA bears witness to the horrendous acts of racial discrimination perpetrated by the Whites against the Black people. Many activists have fought against this brutality and some of the significant people include



Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

Rosa Parks grew up witnessing the oppression of Black people like marginalising them to live in Black ghettos, restrictions for Blacks in using public buses, cruel acts of getting down from buses when a White person boards it, etc. One evening while returning from work, Rosa Parks sat herself down on a seat in a bus. When a white person boarded the bus, the bus driver asked Parks to get off the bus. She stood her ground and refused to get down saying she had paid for her ticket. The driver called the police and she was arrested for violating the law.

The news of Rosa Parks' arrest spread throughout America and Black people started protesting against centuries of oppression and marginalisation against them. Thus, began the famous protest called 'Montgomery Bus Boycott'. People boycotted buses and took taxis; those who could not afford taxis preferred to walk. Children were not sent to school, as they had to take buses. Due to this, buses became deserted and the revenue decreased. As a result of immense involvement in the protest, the American government complied and amended its laws to allow people of all races to travel in buses. Black people celebrated their victory. December 1st, the day on which Rosa Parks was arrested is observed as 'Rosa Parks Day'. Parks who actively fought for the rights of Black people in a non-violent way passed away in 2005, aged 92.



Food for thought

- Why was Mahatma Gandhi forced out of the train?
- Why was Ambedkar insulted at school?
- Why was Rosa Parks asked to get down from the bus?
- If you recall any similar instances of discrimination that have occurred to you or those around you, share those incidents with the class and present your views about it.

All these three incidents reiterate the following facts about human dignity.

Every human being needs to be respected and treated with dignity by others. All of us nurture a deep yearning to live a life of respect with human dignity.

Some incidents disrespecting human dignity

1. Sanitation work

The fancy term “sanitation work” includes clearing away faeces and cleaning sewers, which are forced on a certain section of the socially oppressed people in India. In cities, men belonging to these underprivileged communities are forced to get into manholes to remove the blockages in them, while women from these communities bear the burden of clearing out human faeces with bare hands.

Saraswathi, a sanitation worker from Uttar Pradesh cries for help, “Every part of my body stinks. It stinks despite me showering multiple times. I cannot put my hands to eat. Please give me some other work and redeem me from this hell”.

- News Clipping

Thiruvalluvar opines in Kural 214 that people who do not rise in solidarity against the insult of fellow human beings are corpses.



Food for thought

- It is people belonging to specific communities who are involved in sanitation work.
- Whose responsibility is it to keep the city clean?
- Are all jobs common to working people ranging from officials holding offices of power to sanitation workers?
If not, why?
- What are the issues faced by sanitation workers?

Dear Children!

Read the following poem aloud in class and debate its meaning.

DIGNITY?

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
says we all should have equal dignity,
but is that the way we think
in everyday life?

I live in a big house in a wealthy suburb
and you live in a small house in a poor suburb:
Should I have more dignity than you?
Or should we have the equal dignity of fellow human-beings?

I drive an expensive sports car
and you drive a second-hand sedan:
Should I have more dignity than you?
Or should we have the equal dignity of fellow human-beings?

I wear a bespoke suit
and you wear an off-the-rack:
Should I have more dignity than you?
Or should we have the equal dignity of fellow human-beings?

Carl D'Souza

2. A trans-woman's cry for dignity

"It is indeed true that the love of a mother is the most pure and genuine, Amma, and I have experienced that with you in my childhood. Now, I feel the same, though I am far away from you. You would have revelled in the joy of giving birth to a boy. But I grew up to be your daughter and will always live as your daughter.

You and I are not responsible for this separation between you and me, but it is the society that is responsible. Society's vain pride and oppressive attitude are responsible. It is not my mistake or yours that I was born a female soul stuck in a male body. It's nature's destiny that I am born like this. But the society that should explain this making of nature to the world has failed in its duty. The cruelty that your daughter experiences due to this cannot be expressed in words. Begging and sex work are forced upon the people of my gender.

Society and the government will accept us someday. Then, you too would accept me and you will shower me with all the love you have bottled up in your heart. Someday, I shall sit together with you, Appa, and my brothers to have a meal as a family.

Amma! I need you, I need the love and care of Appa and you. I need to play with my brothers. I don't want anybody to insult my gender and I want society to realise this."

Respected Mangai Bhanu, 2015, Orinam Webpage



Food for thought

- How does society view transgendered people?
- Have you witnessed incidents of trans people being insulted? How did you feel at that time?
- What would you do if you had trans people in your family?

3. Appreciate efforts that uphold human dignity

There are 15 trans-people employed in Washermanpet Metro Station, Chennai. They do jobs such as issuing tickets, screening passengers, and maintenance of the station. “These jobs have opened the door to an improved life when we were struggling to get recognition from society. I feel proud that the Chennai Metro Administration has employed me who was alienated by my parents and relatives”, says Arun Kartik brimming with happiness.



News 18, 16.02.2021



Do you know?

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948

4. Continuing untouchability

In a village primary school in Erode, a woman belonging to a scheduled caste has been employed as a midday meal scheme worker. The people of the dominant caste in the village did not like this. Protesting against the appointment of the woman, they filed a petition with the headmaster to replace her. The headmaster did not accept the petition. So, parents of the dominant castes sent their children to school, with their lunch packed. Many parents demanded the transfer certificates of their children.



The youth there retorted, “We will not allow for any relaxations when it comes to caste. Who will eat the food made by this scheduled caste woman when we have strict caste rules in our village?”

The women of the village said, “We don't like this. If the government gives an order, let it do so. We can't change our practices. So, we send our children to school with their lunch packed”.

Kumudam Reporter, 13.01.2002



Food for thought

- Why should we refuse to eat the food made by a scheduled caste woman?
- What kind of an attitude and mindset is it to insult a human being based on caste?



Do you know?

Untouchability is a punishable offence.

Article 17, Constitution of India

5. Children as bonded labourers



“These children have been working on the loom from nine years of age. They would be given an advance of three thousand rupees upon joining employment. The very act is like mortgaging the individual. They have to work on the loom from seven in the morning till late at night. They would get a bare minimum of fifty or sixty rupees

as salary. They can't get out of this endless cycle until they pay back the advance amount. There are a lot of children like this in Kancheepuram”, says an affected individual.



Do you know?

Traffic in human beings and begging and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Article 23, Constitution of India

“A year ago, a young girl who could not stand this torture any longer, set herself alight and died. Another girl continues to go to work with a noose mark on her neck. These children are forced to work for more than eighteen hours. Do you know how many children have died due to this exploitative practice?”

Kumudam Reporter, 18.09.2001



Food for thought

- What happens to the dignity of children when they are subjected to bonded labour?
- Have you seen or heard of instances where children work as bonded labourers? Discuss in class.
- What are the struggles and sufferings that bonded labour children undergo?
- People who are taken for bonded labour could be from different strata and walks of life. But they do have a common factor linking them – dignity. When human dignity is denied, human beings are denied their right to life.

Dear Children,

What is your standpoint after reading and understanding the abovementioned incidents? Have you understood the significance of human dignity? Human dignity is a fundamental human right. All people deserve respect because they are human beings. All human beings deserve respect irrespective of their age, gender, culture, religion, place of birth, colour, race, language, inability, skill, social status, and political views.

Activities

1. Let us learn new words

The Buddha Gandhi Ambedkar
statue clay gold
caste high low
school midday meal untouchability
child mortgage bonded labour
human being right dignity



2. Who? What? Why? How?

- 1) Practising two tumbler system in tea stalls is a punishable offence. Yes/No
Ans: _____
- 2) Practising untouchability in schools is _____
in _____
in _____
- 3) Who were responsible for restricting all children to have lunch together as equals at school?
 - a) Headmaster
 - b) Children
 - c) Parents
- 4) For what price were the bonded labourers mortgaged?
Ans: _____
- 5) What was the duration of the work for bonded labourers?
Ans: _____
- 6) Trans-people should be treated as equals. Yes/No
Ans: _____

3. Read out the following words aloud. Pick two words you like the most and the reason why. Pick two words you dislike the most and the reason why.

Casteism Pride Untouchability
Headweight Humanism Equality
Right Love Human Dignity

Word most liked**Reason**

1. _____
2. _____

4. Observe the activities in the following statements. Pick a statement that you like and dislike each and the reason why.

- 1) Eating together with everyone.
- 2) Enquiring about one's caste.
- 3) Mocking an innocent.
- 4) Teachers treating all students equally.
- 5) Visiting one's friends often.

Word most disliked**Reason**

1. _____
2. _____

5. Share your experiences

It is believed that all the students have understood human dignity from this lesson. Share with the class incidents where you or others have received degrading treatment.

6. Showtime

Prepare and perform a play reiterating the changes required in us, in the class, in our families, and in our locality to uphold and safeguard human dignity.

**Do you know?**

- No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
Article 24, Constitution of India
- The State shall, in particular, strive to minimise the inequalities in income, and endeavour to eliminate inequalities in status, facilities and opportunities, not only amongst individuals but also amongst groups of people residing in different areas or engaged in different vocations.
Article 38, Constitution of India



5. PREJUDICE

“An unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge.”

Objectives

- To understand preconceived notions
- To learn the characteristics of prejudice
- To realise the ill effects of prejudice on the society

Dear Children,

In the previous lessons, we learned that all human beings are equal irrespective of their race, religion, language, culture, and food. But it is also true that we perceive certain groups of people to be othered, based on these aforementioned factors. When we foster such an approach towards people, we are nurturing adverse thoughts and ill feelings about them. These misconceptions about people are called prejudice or preconceived notions. This lesson shall make you understand how adverse misconceptions take root in our minds and their ill effects with apt examples in the form of dialogues.

What is prejudice?

It is the attitude and mindset of having a misjudged, insulting, and degrading opinion about an individual or a social community and justifying that attitude and approaching the specific individual or community with the same preconceived notion.

Preconceived notions and their manifestations

Dialogue 1

- Wife** : Can we admit our son to the school in our locality?
- Husband** : What? The government school! No dear.
- Wife** : It is closer to home and will be easy for our son to go.
- Husband** : No, the students in that school are not good company. The people of that locality generally are a bad influence. If our son studies along with those kids he will also be spoilt.
- Wife** : That is a wrong opinion. All children are good-hearted. You have a misconceived opinion of them. It isn't right to judge a person without knowing them and to speak ill of them. You're developing a prejudice against them.

Dialogue 2

- Student 1** : You shouldn't talk to him.
- Student 2** : Why shouldn't I, pal?
- Student 1** : The people of their street are our enemies.
- Student 2** : It isn't like that. He's a nice guy.
- Student 1** : They're unhygienic, mate.
- Student 2** : Look for yourself. They are tidy, hygienic...
- Student 1** : You'll know with time when he shows that attitude peculiar to his street.
- Student 2** : He's my friend and I know him well. It is your mind that is corrupt, which is why you're judging everyone and framing misconceptions about them. First, learn to treat and respect everyone equally.



Food for thought

- The people of that street are our enemies. (Fact / Prejudice)
- They are unhygienic. (Fact / Prejudice)
- It is (possible / impossible) to have an opinion about an individual without knowing them.

Dialogue 3 (During a lunch break in school)

- Student 1** : Hey, why are you sitting alone? Come, eat with us.
- Student 2** : Don't call him, mate, he shouldn't sit with us.
- Student 1** : Why? Doesn't he study with us?
- Student 2** : No, just look at the band on his wrist, it's of a different colour.
- Student 1** : So?
- Student 2** : It's the band of a different caste.
- Student 1** : So, is it to indicate my caste that you tied this coloured band on my wrist?
- Student 2** : Yeah. Others shouldn't associate with us, we shouldn't let them.
- Student 1** : I don't want an indicator that represents my caste. I want to mingle with everyone and treat everyone equally. (They call the student sitting at a distance to eat with them.)



Food for thought

- What restricts a person from eating with others?
- If your friend is a victim of such a situation, how would you react?



What are the facts learned from the given dialogues? On what basis do we form opinions?

We have a lot of preconceived notions. When we begin interacting with the group of people, we have these prejudices foregrounded in our minds. Such an attitude does not pave way for an open dialogue or free discussion, but instead leads to divisive ways.

Factors contributing to prejudice

1. **Ignorance:** Believing others' words to be true unquestioningly.
2. **Rumours:** Believing in rumours without logically thinking about them. Imbibing the messages conveyed through colloquial language usages, proverbs, tales, riddles, etc., and judging and generalising people based on it.
3. **Jealousy:** Having a wrong opinion of a person due to jealousy.
4. **Social standing:** Looking down on people of less-privileged castes. Degrading and insulting them might be acts of people enjoying better social positions in terms of caste privilege, power, wealth, and authority.

Father sets son on fire due to superstition

An auto-rickshaw driver from Nannilam locality in Thiruvarur district had two sons aged five years and three months respectively. He blindly believed in astrology and superstitions. In the recent past, he had gone to an astrologer to read his horoscope. The astrologer warned him that he and his elder son would not get along well and his elder son would pose a threat to his life if they lived together.



Since the day of his visit to the astrologer, he developed a hatred toward his son and started behaving violently to him. His wife had warned not to torture the son, listening to the astrologer's words. The father did not stop with that, but poured kerosene over his five-year-old son and set him on fire. Neighbours came to the aid of the screaming child and rushed him to the hospital, but sadly the child passed away. Superstitious belief not only resulted in the child being tortured but also led to him losing his life.

Dinakaran, 4.3.2021



Food for thought

- Share with the class what you know about superstitions.
- Discuss a few superstitious practices that you find in your locality.
- Discuss in class the ill-effects of superstitions.
- What can you as students do to eradicate superstitions?



Do you know?

Rumours on social media

The usage of social media is increasing day by day. It can be said that there is not a single person who does not use social media like WhatsApp and Facebook. Surveys show that the use of social media is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Reports indicate that in the year 2018, the sharing of rumours through WhatsApp has increased two times in villages. There have been innumerable clashes among people due to rumours being shared on social media about the trafficking of children and cruelty on cows. 29% of the public do not check for the authenticity of the news being shared on social media and believe them as such. Rumours play a crucial role in instigating negative thoughts in society that result in communal disturbances.



Puthiyathalaimurai 18.7.2018



Food for thought

- Is it right to blindly believe the news being shared on social media?
- Discuss in class the pros and cons of social media.
- Share with the class the ill-effects of rumours from your personal experiences or those of your acquaintances.

Continuing female infanticide in the 21st century

A female child was born into a family in Mottanoothu near Andipatti, Theni District. As the family already had two girl children, the third female child was given cactus milk upon birth, murdered, and buried by family members. News of this horrendous act came out after a nurse inspecting the children in the village for routine check-ups reported the absence of the female child to Child Line during her weekly visit. Upon investigation, the child's mother and paternal grandmother were arrested and imprisoned. It is an unanswered question as to how long girl children would be killed in the name of superstitions.



Food for thought

- Why does female infanticide continue to happen even in the 21st century?
- What are the reasons for violence against female children in this era of equality between sexes?
- Have you watched the Tamil movie Karuthamma? Discuss its plot in class.
- What can students do to prevent female foeticide?

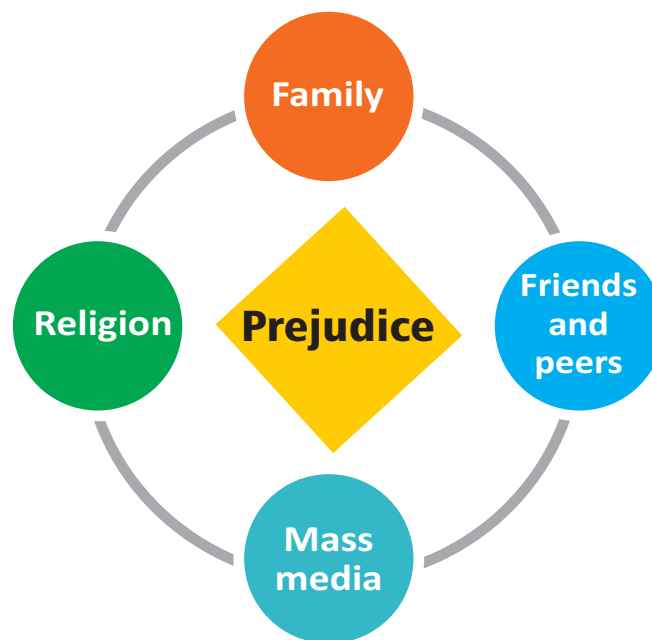


Do you know?

February 24 – Female children protection day

According to the prohibition to reveal the sex of the child act of 1994, a doctor can be sentenced to imprisonment of three to five years for revealing the sex of the child. Public approaching clinics and laboratories to know the sex of the child can also be sentenced to three years imprisonment.

Where does it stem from?



Family:

Children live with their immediate and extended family members like parents, siblings, uncles, and aunts. Young children unconsciously imbibe the ideals of their family members just like how they reflect their family members in their behaviour and values.

Religion:

Religions play a significant role in developing prejudiced thoughts among people. Each religion does not merely consist of its own God, but different ways of worship,

food practices, dressing styles, and tradition. When children are raised in these religious environments, they are kindled to view life only based on these religious rituals. When children are taught to perceive their own religions and the corresponding Gods as superior, right from their childhood, children tend to see all other religions in a negative light.

Friends and peers:

The child that is only exposed to their family members, comes into contact with different people in various environments like school, college, hostel, workplace, etc. Their circles of acquaintance expand and they go through a change of experiences, which might or might not lead to a change of perspectives. Some try to establish and justify the ideals of the caste and religion they were born into and raised by in these public circles.

Mass media:

Preconceived notions are strengthened by films and magazines that exaggerate or negatively portray certain communities as having specific qualities while depicting incidents of communal and religious clashes.

The role of social media that is a product of massive technological advancements in today's society is inevitable. Social media has made communication and information sharing easy and simple. The wealth of information that has been unknown to the larger public is now made available to all of the human population through social media. Though it has a lot of advantages, it does have a few disadvantageous ill effects, especially when it is used to share false manifestos, rumours, and news that develop hatred, as they sow seeds for negativity among people. Hence, it is necessary that mass media be used for promoting social harmony.



Do you know?

States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

Article 2, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



Do you know?

To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Article 5, UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

Activities

1. Let us learn new words

prejudice	ignorance	jealousy
rumour	status	equal opportunity
slander	manifesto	

2. Time to share

Children! Have you heard people in your locality speak ill of others and spread negativity? If yes, analyse the incident to find the preconceived notions hidden in the dialogue and share your views with the class.

3. Register your views

Write an essay on what students can and should do to prevent prejudices and preconceived notions.

4. Sing a song

Divide the class into groups, compose and sing a song on the topic 'Prejudice is a social evil'.

5. Time to raise your voice

Prepare and deliver a speech in class on the topic 'Prejudice is a social epidemic'.

6. Choose the right answer

1. It is possible to form judgements about a person based on rumours. (True/False)

2. Completely believing in others' words due to ignorance is _____.
(Fact/Prejudice)

3. Reflecting and practising the ignorance and practices of older people is _____. (Fact/Prejudice)

Write down a few prejudices and preconceived notions as are portrayed in movies, social media and magazines.

1.

2.

3.

4.



6. Hurtful Words and Painful Acts

Do not be hindered by the negativities hurled at you; the hurtful words and painful acts of others should not let you down.

Objectives

- To understand the effects of hurtful words and painful acts
- To learn about painful acts with examples
- To incorporate encouraging words as a part of our lifestyle

Dialogue between students and teacher

Teacher : Children! Do you know which place we're about to tour today?

Students : Yes, sir. We're going on a tour to Chennai.

Teacher : Now tell me, what are all the tourist spots you would like to visit in Chennai?

Students : I will tell... I will tell...

- Teacher** : Okay, one by one.
- Student 1** : Vandalur Zoo, Marina Beach, Guindy Park, memorials of leaders, Vadapazhani Murugan Temple, Santhome Church, Chennai Airport, and many such places.
- Teacher** : Good, you've mentioned many places and we'll visit all of them. Do you know which route we'll be taking to visit these places?
- Student 2** : Yes, sir. We're taking the Kural Vazhi route. All 1330 Thirukural couplets are written in this route at regular intervals.
- Teacher** : Very good. We shall look at certain kural and their meanings on our journey. Once we cross the town of Vallioor, we find a kural in which Thiruvalluvar talks about hurtful words.

Thirukural

*In flesh by fire inflamed, nature may thoroughly heal the sore;
In soul by tongue inflamed, the ulcer healeth never more.*

This couplet means that the internal wounds made by a fire burn will heal, though the scar might remain, whereas hurtful words of the tongue will forever scar the heart and leave unhealed wounds.

- Student 3** : We understood your explanation, sir.
- Teacher** : Polite words ensure the peacefulness of the heart at home and in our school environment, while harsh words will leave us hurt. Similarly, we would be happy if we are appreciated for a good deed we do and we would be encouraged to perform better. On the other hand, discouraging words demotivate us from doing the deed.
- Student 2** : Could you please explain in detail, sir?
- Teacher** : We had learned about prejudice in the previous lesson and that ignorance, rumours, and jealousy are factors instigating prejudiced thoughts. Prejudice is manifested through harsh hurtful words hurled at others. It is a very bad violation of human rights. Let us take a look at another kural now.

Thirukural

When pleasant words are easy, bitter words to use,
Is, leaving sweet ripe fruit, the sour unripe to choose.

The meaning of this kural is, choosing to use harsh words, when there are pleasant words to be said, is akin to choosing unripe fruits over sweet ripe fruits.

Teacher : Hurting a person means that we're approaching them with an oppressive attitude. We would have seen people use words with casteist overtones in their daily lives. Not just this, can you identify other instances where unpleasant and harsh words are used?

Student 1 : Gender discrimination.

Student 2 : Based on appearance, skin colour.

Student 3 : By their occupation.

Student 4 : Based on marital status, place of birth, lifestyle, etc., we hurl abusive words at others.

Teacher : Right. Recount if you have experienced any such unpleasant and hurtful words being used against you. If yes, recall in which of the following places they were used - in your family, classroom, peer group, playground, street, religious places, or other such places. Share with the class if you have witnessed abusive words being used against people in your family or locality. Analyse the reasons for the use of harsh words.



Student 3 : Men and women are equal. But sir, why are only women at the receiving end of abuses and derogatory terms?

Teacher : That's a thought-provoking question. Preconceived notions about male privilege and the treatment of women as slaves are the root cause of such problems. These notions will never aid in the development of our society. Hence it is only right that we discard such backward thoughts from our systems. The Constitution of India also emphasises that people should not be discriminated against, based on race, language, caste, religion, sex, locality, economic status, health condition, place of birth, etc. As children, you must know that the basis of human rights is respecting everyone and treating them as equals. Hurting a person with harsh words can also be regarded as a violation of human rights.



Do you know?

The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.

Article 15, Constitution of India

Children, here are a few instances for you to get a better understanding.

Kamala's story:

Kamala, who is in her ninth-grade has a darker complexion. She also has big rabbit teeth and was always seen with a worrisome look. When the teacher inquired, she revealed that she was scolded at home by her family members and relatives for her appearance. She had a younger sister of a fairer complexion who passed away when Kamala was five. Upon her demise, her parents used to scold in grief, "Couldn't this bad omen die? Why did God have to take our



angelic child?” and these words pierced Kamala's tender heart. She shared with her teacher that she is troubled by her parents' harsh words and any death news reminds her of these words, which is the reason for her worry.

Student 1 : Is it right to discriminate against Kamala based on her complexion?

Your response _____

Student 2 : Is skin complexion a determining factor in deciding one's worth?

Your response _____



Teacher : All of you as students who are the future of the nation, will have to find feasible solutions for these issues. Have any of you experienced similar issues? Now let us look at another incident about degrading words that leave unhealing wounds in one's heart.



It was lunchtime in Azhagipatti Higher Secondary School and students were having lunch seated in clusters under tree shades. Muthu, Pandi, and Velu sat as a group to eat their lunch. They are good friends and are always seen together. They come to school together and go home together. Though they play along with the other students, they sit alone, away from the rest of the students while eating. They also share their everyday experiences in school during their mealtime.



One day, the headmaster noticed them sitting alone and enquired about why they were not eating with the other students. All the three boys did not know how to answer. The headmaster pushed them to answer. Muthu said, “The other students mock us, that's why...” and the headmaster asked in reply, “Why do they make fun of you?” They replied, “They consider us unhygienic and our food unclean. They make fun of us saying that we're uncultured and also use hurtful words against us. They always alienate us. Despite us learning hard and scoring well in exams, they undermine us saying that we would've copied.”

Classroom discussion

- Student 1** : Is it right to make fun of others with a discriminatory attitude, sir?
- Student 2** : What is discrimination, sir?

Teacher : Have you ever empathised with others' pain? Thiruvalluvar comments that if one word in our speech is impolite and causes displeasure in others, then the entire conversation is regarded unpleasant.

Thirukural 128

**Though some small gain of good it seems to bring,
The evil word is parent still of evil thing.**



Do you know?

States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Article 19, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child-1989

We have seen that using hurtful words is a violation of human rights.

Teacher : So far, we discussed hurtful words and their impacts. Following this, we shall learn about encouraging words and how they motivate us.

Encouraging words

Rani a tenth grader, was an active student with multiple talents. She came first in all the subjects and was also passionate about performing in plays. She had an exceptional leadership quality and took responsibility for all her tasks.



While discussing her growth and development with her friends, she said with pride, “When I was five years old, my aunt encouraged me saying I should have the qualities of a queen to suit my name and for that, I must strive hard. I have had a newfound motivation since then. Today I have the eagerness to take responsibility for any task and I find my aunt's words as the motivating factor.”

Teacher : What were the words that motivated Rani?

Your response : _____

Teacher : What are the words that encourage you?

Your response : _____

Dreams to come true

Former Indian President Dr. Abdul Kalam, when interacting with children, used to say, “Dear students, you should dream. Dreams are not those that come to you in your sleep, but those that do not let you sleep. Each student should have their ambition planned and should strive hard until they achieve their aim.” Dr. Kalam's inspiring words have been the motivation to lakhs of young student minds in India to attain success.



Food for thought

- What were Dr. Kalam's inspiring words?
Your response : _____
- What does Dr. Kalam say about how one's dreams should be?
Your response: _____
- What is Dr. Kalam's opinion on how we should work until we achieve our aim?
Your response: _____

Painful acts

Dear students, so far, we have been learning about prejudices and their manifestations in words. In this part of the lesson, we shall be learning about how these thoughts and words are reflected in our actions.

Painful acts are those acts of violence and misbehaviour perpetrated by an individual or a group of people towards other individuals or groups of people. They are alternate ways in which violence can be perpetrated.

- **Verbal abuse**
- **Physical violence**
- **Sexual violence**
- **Emotional violence**



Violence can also include attacking, wounding, torturing, alienating, isolating, imprisoning, creating fear, and causing great pain. To understand violent acts better, let us now have a look at newspaper accounts of true incidents, following which a class discussion shall be conducted on the reasons and causes for these events.

Incident I

In Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, a newly-wed groom went abroad within three months of his wedding. Following this, the groom's family tortured the new bride for dowry and went to the extent of shaving her hair off her head.



Incident II

Building construction was under progress in Meenambedu near Ambattur, where two of the construction workers were consuming alcohol. A two-and-a-half-year-old child in the neighbourhood was playing in the vicinity. The drunkards had

forcefully taken the child and made it drink alcohol. When the mother came searching for the child, she found the child near the workers. Upon lifting the child, she realised the child was unconscious and smelled of alcohol. Immediately, the mother registered a complaint with the police based on which the two drunkards were imprisoned.



Incident III

My name is Murugan and I live in a village next to Periyakulam in Theni District. A lot of boys in my village have gone to work in snacks preparing companies in Andhra. A man asked me to join the job as well. Due to poverty in our family, my mother took a sum of Rs 20,000 and sent me to work in a snacks company in Andhra. The initial few days went by pleasantly. Only later did I realise the unpleasantness of the place. I had to wake up at four in the morning to begin work and was allowed only a short break for breakfast and lunch. I had to work the rest of the day continuously. I would be beaten even for minor faults in my work. It would be eleven or twelve at night when I go to sleep. We were not allowed to go out like others. Once, the boss complaining about my work quality, poured the boiling oil kept for frying murukkus over my body. My body had blisters all over. I request all children to go to school and get an education. Please don't go to work.

-Testimony of a young boy who had gone to work in a snacks selling company



Do you know?

No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Article 21, Constitution of India

You would have read and understood the aforementioned incidents. Now read the following questions and discuss your responses in class.

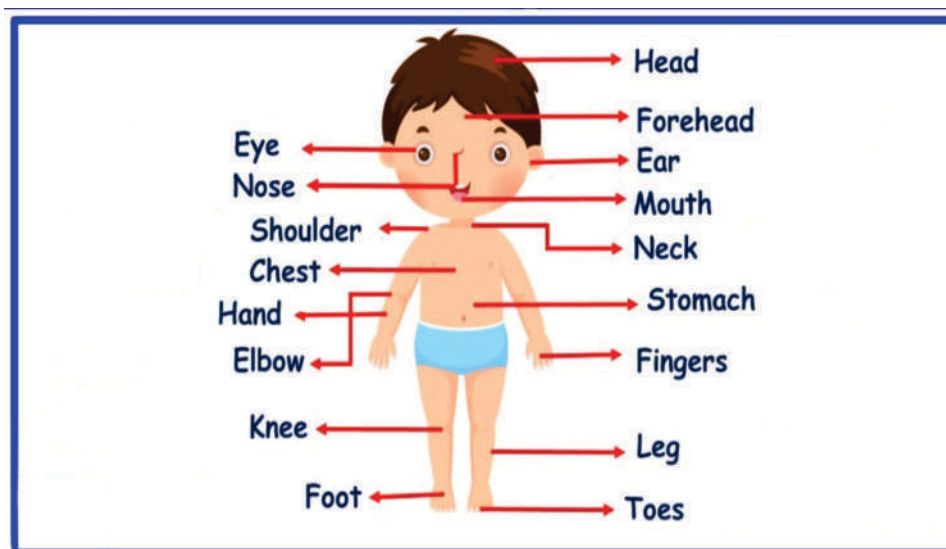


Food for thought

- Is it a right to torture a person, asking for dowry?
- What is your opinion about giving and receiving dowry?
- How do you view the act of forcefully making the child drink alcohol?
- What are the implications of making a child consume drugs?
- Are there acts of violence against children within the home environment?
- What are the ways in which violence is perpetrated against children?
- What are the rights that children lose when they are sent to work?
- Are there child labourers in your locality?
- What are your suggestions to prevent child labour?

What is safe touch?

Children must be made to understand what is wrong touch and stay wary of it. Children, know that nobody has the right to touch your body. If you are subject to bad touch at any time, you must report it to your parents, teachers, the school head, or contact child helpline 1098. Kindly remember that not disclosing such instances will only lead to further adverse effects for yourself.



In this lesson, we learnt that hurtful words and painful acts are also violations of human rights. Universal Declarations, international human rights laws, and our Constitution strive to create a society where human rights are not violated. But there are a lot of factors that challenge social harmony. We shall take a look at those in the next lesson.

Activities

Let us learn new words

touch	scold	child labour
dowry	fatigue	violation of rights
encouragement	appreciation	energy
eagerness	excitement	attempt

Make a list of words that have encouraged you in life.

Encouraging people

Words of encouragement

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Make a list of words that have hurt you in life.

People who hurt

Hurtful Words

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**How are various people subject to ill-treatment with harsh words in society?
Elucidate with examples for each of the given instances.**

1. Gender discrimination
2. Appearance
3. Occupation
4. Marital Status
5. Financial Status
6. Family lineage
7. Name
8. Caste
9. Religion
10. Use of specific dialects in language

Make a list of motivating words or statements and read them aloud in class.

(eg) : You are talented.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Word sequence

Fill in the succeeding words in this following sequence of words

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 1. Burn | W___d | S__r |
| 2. Caste | H__h | L_w |
| 3. Casteism | P___e | A____c__y |
| 4. Poor | M__k | T___e |
| 5. School | F_____s__p | L__e |

- | | | |
|----------|---------|---------|
| 6. Caste | D_____e | C____h |
| 7. Word | A_____n | L__e |
| 8. Human | R____t | D_____y |

Circle the inhuman acts from the following list

1. Discrimination in the use of glasses in tea stalls.
2. Laughing mockingly.
3. Friendly smile.
4. Mingling without discrimination.
5. Selling away young children.
6. Torturing children.
7. Practising caste discrimination.
8. Playing games with inclusivity.

Circle the words of motivation in the following list

1. Stand on the bench!
2. You will never progress!
3. You shall succeed in life!
4. Very good! Keep it up!
5. Your handwriting is neat and pretty.
6. Don't lose heart with one failure.

Replace the odd word in each set with a relevant word

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1. school | caste | student |
| 2. effort | excitement | scolding |
| 3. flower | plant | cemetery |
| 4. knowledge | effort | failure |
| 5. society | humans | caste |
| 6. science | superstition | development |

Show-time

Hurtful words and painful acts are a form of violence. Prepare and perform a one-act play in class reiterating that these kinds of violence are violations of human rights.





7. Discrimination in our Society

Discrimination is the treatment of a person or particular group of people differently; any preference, exclusion, restriction or distinction based on race, language, colour, national or ethnic origin or religion or sex or place of birth.

Objectives

- To understand the importance of social life
- To realize that social life is natural to all human beings
- To understand different forms of discrimination and the contributing factors

Dear children,

In the first three lessons, you were taught about human nature and how human beings belong to a plural society and in the previous set of lessons, we learnt about prejudices, their manifestations in words and actions, and how they create rifts in our society. In this lesson, we shall look at various forms of discrimination in our society.

We have already learnt that India is a multi-cultural nation with a lot of diversities. However, the factors that are considered to be the strong pillars of our society could be the elements that lead to rifts being created.

We find human beings discriminating against each other based on caste, religion, language, creed, gender, etc. The Constitution of India assures equal rights to all the citizens of our country. However, it is only a section of the society that enjoys maximum benefits of our Constitutional rights, while many people are being denied their basic rights. Ponder whether our society would still be a pluralistic society if these rights are being denied.



What is discrimination?

Differentiating people based on race, skin colour, birth, caste, creed, language, gender, health condition, place of birth etc. and according to them different treatments. It also refers to acts encouraging preferences or



exclusion, isolation of people, and restricting one group of people while prioritising another group. This discrimination is visibly seen in various public spheres of life-in politics, economics, social realm and culture and results in the curbing or denial of human rights and basic freedom of a person or a group.

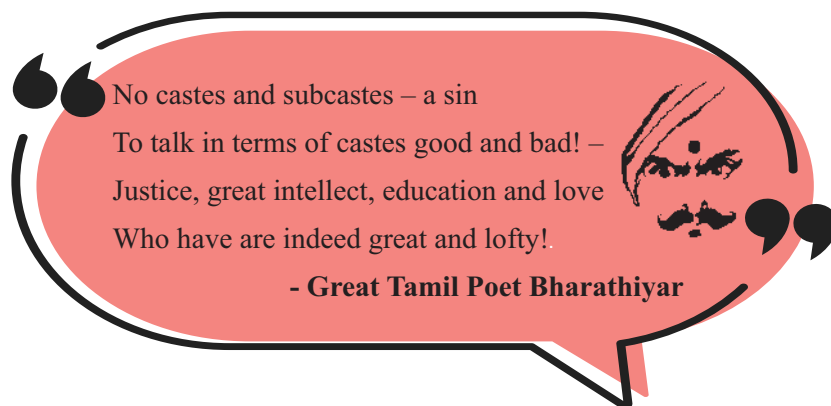
Let us now have a look at how society is breaking apart due to discriminatory thoughts being stimulated.



Incident I

The population of scheduled caste people in Thirunaal Kondachchery in Nagapattinam district is very small. If a person belonging to this caste dies, they had to be cremated in the crematorium on the banks of the Kadalaazhi river, which is three kilometres away. They do not have proper roads to access the crematorium. They had to undergo a lot of struggles to reach the crematorium, every time a person in their community passed away. Kunjammal and her husband, Chellamuthu, who was over a hundred, passed away within a time gap of a few months. The people of the community decided to cremate them with respect by taking the common path. But they were forced not to take the route due to the opposition they faced from the huge number of people of other castes living there.

- Viduthalai Magazine



Read the poem out loud in class together and understand its meaning.



Food for thought

Discuss in class why certain groups of people are denied access to public paths, wells, and playgrounds, while all citizens of India are considered equal before law.



Do you know?

No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition.

Article 15 (2), Constitution of India

Incident II

"My name is Prabha. I was married in the year 1990 and my husband passed away suddenly in 1999 due to a heart attack. I have a seven-year-old daughter. I went back to my parental home and lived with my mother. One day, I was about to fetch water in the pot and my mother stopped me, asking me to go sometime later, as it was the morning time when

all the villagers would come to the pond to fetch water. She requested me to pay heed to her as the villagers would talk about me as a bad omen".



Food for thought

- Why is it considered a bad omen if widows cross the path of people walking on roads?
- Is it right to discriminate against people based on superstitions, cultural rites, and rituals?
- Have you witnessed similar events in your vicinity? If yes, share those instances with the class.

Incident III

In today's India, clashes and attacks do occur all over the country in the name of food habits. The people of this country follow different cultures and practices and do not follow the same food habits. India has diverse food styles that vary from state to state. Some people are vegetarians, while most are non-vegetarians and this choice of food practice is a right that belongs to the individual. However, it is depressing to know the numerous acts of violence happening in the name of food

practices. Shouldn't our food practice be decided by us? These clashes in the name of food pose a threat to the pluralistic nature of Indian society.



Food for thought

- Is it right to attack people based on their choice of food?
- Is it a decent act to force one's food habit on others?
- Share with the class your personal food practices.
- Discuss in class the different food habits of India.



Thirukural advises that all human beings born in this world, though following different occupations deserve equality and equal rights.

Thirukural 972

**All men that live are one in circumstances of birth;
Diversities of works give each his special worth.**



Dear children! Let us recall the lesson “Social Life”. We learnt that human beings are social animals and they cannot exist without society. It was also established that human beings are always in need of relationships. But where have the qualities of mercy, love, and affection gone?

We say that we are citizens of India. We speak different languages and follow different religions. Do we deliberately wish to fight with each other? We only desire to live a harmonious life. Did we pay heed to religion when Murugan, Mubarak, and Joseph played together? We sit together with them in class and did not make friendships based on religion. But why do some practice violence and kill each other in the name of religion?



Do you know?

Subject to public order, morality and health, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

Article 25, Constitution of India

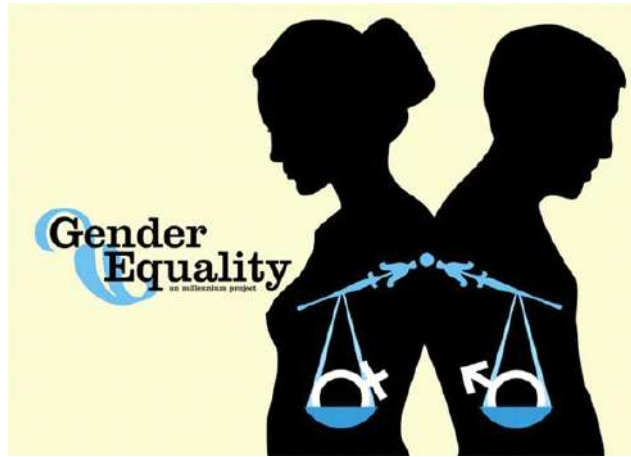
Activities

Let us learn new words

discrimination	diversity	citizens
equality	brotherhood	harmony
plurality	priority	untouchability
oppression	food habit	

Write and speak

Write and share with the class what you consider as essential factors for us as Indians to live in harmony.



Raise your voices and read out loud

- Let us take pride in the pluralistic nature of our society.
- Let us praise our mother tongue.
- Though we are diverse in our religions, we all are equal before law.
- Casteism breaks our society and does not create a civilized society.
- All are equal before law.
- Men and women are equal.
- Diversity is our strength.
- Celebrate plurality and shun away discrimination.

Group Activity

Draw and showcase a painting in class on the theme 'Unity in Diversity'.

Construct a word tree

Divide yourselves into groups with equal members and draw a huge tree. Write down factors that are necessary to keep the society intact and harmonious in a few branches. Write down a few factors that lead to discriminate our society into branches that have to be cut down. Debate this in class.



Speak out loud

Deliver a speech or do a two-page write-up on any one of the following topics.

- Unity in diversity
- Unity is strength
- The equal society that we desire
- Religious harmony
- Let us be united by our mother tongue
- Factors that create rifts in our society

Wake the artist

Divide the class into groups of equal members and draw pictures showcasing the pluralistic qualities of our society like religion, language, food, dress, and festivals.

Show-time

Write and perform a one-act play on any discrimination you have witnessed in your locality.





8. "WE", the People of India

"The Constitution can provide only the organs of State such as the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary. The factors on which the working of those organs of the State depend are the people and the political parties they will set up as their instruments to carry out their wishes and their politics."

Objectives

- To understand how our inherent qualities and desires are transformed into Constitutional rights
- To learn the differences between democracy and monarchy and realising the significance of democracy
- To know the superior ideals of the Constitution of India

Dear children,

In this lesson, we shall be learning about democracy and its characteristic features, our Constitution, and its Preamble. Read the following conversation carefully.

- Teacher** : Children, tell me what do you know about democracy?
- Student 1** : Allowing the people to take roles and positions.
- Student 2** : Participation of all people.
- Student 3** : People taking part irrespective of their differences in caste, religion, creed, gender, etc.
- Student 4** : Can you explain this in detail, sir?
- Teacher** : Have you seen people over the age of 18 years casting votes?
- Student 5** : Yes sir.
- Teacher** : Very good. All citizens of our country over 18 years of age have the right to cast their vote for a candidate of their choice. “One vote, one value”, is the basis of our democratic rule. The only qualification required is the completion of 18 years of age. One does not get any privileges in voting based on caste, religion, creed, language, money, or any other qualification, instead, all citizens are given equal rights in voting. We have to keep in mind that only one vote is given to both the privileged and underprivileged, irrespective of their economic status.
- Student 6** : I had read about former American President Abraham Lincoln's definition of democracy in the newspaper. Please allow me to recite that. **Democracy is a government of the people, for people, and by the people.**
- Teacher** : Correct! The rule and the power are centred around the people. The welfare of the people is the priority. Now let me explain how the term democracy was coined. It has its roots in the Greek words 'demos' and 'kratos' which mean people and authority respectively. Hence democracy is that rule in which the power and authority are vested in the people.

I hope you have had sufficient understanding of democracy. Moving on, we shall be looking at the characteristic features of democracy.

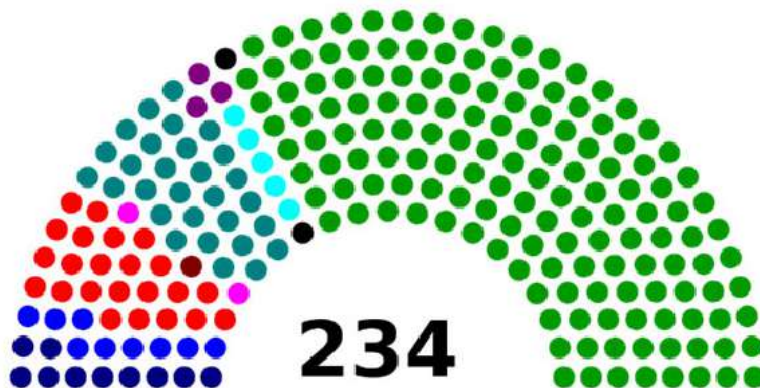


September 15 – International Democracy Day

1. Complete participation

The government and administration should be modelled in such a way that they allow for complete participation from the side of the people.

2. Equal right to vote



All people of the country must be granted equal voting rights without any discrimination.

3. Right to choose

In elections, all people have the right to elect a candidate whom they prefer and have faith in.

4. Inclusivity

Democratic governance should be inclusive of all the citizens of the country without any discrimination.



5. Respect for plurality

Due respect must be given to the country's diverse pluri-factors like language, gender, creed, geography, cultural practices, etc.

6. An answerable government

A democratic government is committed to being answerable to its citizens.

7. Transparency in governance

A democratic government must be transparent in its functioning and policy-making, wherein all citizens have access to know the functioning of the government.

8. Protection of rights

The fundamental rights of the people and their freedom must be safeguarded in a democratic rule.



Children, perform the following role-play as a skit in the classroom.

Monarchy Vs Democracy

Setting : Classroom

Participants : Teacher and Students



Ilango : Greetings, everybody! The skit that is about to be performed is named Monarchy Vs Democracy. Kindly sit back and enjoy. Please do not forget to share your views at the end of the performance.

Pari : Who is ruling us now?

Chezhiyan : The Chief Minister

Iniyan : No, it's the Prime Minister

Teacher : Ok ok, who appointed these ministers?

Pari : The Governor or the President

Ilango : So, can the Governor or the President appoint anybody according to their wish?

Pari : That is impossible. The leader of whichever party wins in majority of the constituencies decides the ministerial candidate.

Iniyan : Who selects them?

Samathuvam : We do. We cast our votes for whichever party we believe would work for the welfare of the people and elect the candidates. The candidates who win with the majority votes get the office for governance.



Chezhiyan : But isn't this the crucial step? Who selects the leaders who rule us?

Suthanthiram : We do. 'We' refers to the people of our country.

Samathuvam : So, we elect our leaders and ministers based on our choice by casting our votes in their favour. Without us, nobody can become a minister, isn't it? This is why the rule in our country is called democracy. We have the choice to decide on a candidate who we feel will safeguard our rights and work for our welfare. It is a rule by the people, for the people, of the people. Since all of us are participants in the governance of the country, all of us can be called rulers of the country.

Suthanthiram : You say, rulers? Monarch? But from what I've heard there can be only one monarch or sovereign. Then how is it possible for all of us to be rulers of this country?

Samathuvam : Yes, it is true that there can be only one sovereign in a monarchy. All the authority and power are vested in them, who would be the monarch. People do not get to choose their monarch. Generally, it is hierarchical wherein people belonging to one family rule generation after generation.

Sago : If the monarch fails in their duty, can they be questioned? Or can they be punished for their misdeeds?

Samathuvam : Nobody has the right to question the monarch. The people do not have the right to comment on the regime of the monarch. There are no laws to direct the regime. We all know about the rights that the people have in a democracy. But a monarchical rule does not have any right for the citizens, only duties.

Needhi : So, are there rights for people only in a democracy?

Samathuvam : Yes, that's right. A government that is formed by the people is bound to protect the rights of the people, which is why we are focused on safeguarding democracy in our country. Democracy is a rule that respects all the citizens and treats them equally. There is justice in a democracy.

Sago : But there were great rulers in our country about whom we learn in our history books.

Samathuvam : It is true. Some rulers were known for their generosity, kindness, and merciful nature. One can't deny that. Let us assume that a few rulers did not have these qualities. What can we have done about them? Could we have replaced them? No, right? But, in a democracy, we get to choose the rule. If the chosen leader commits a mistake or disrespects our rights, we can replace them after five years in the elections. That is democracy.

One more important aspect of democracy – a monarch may consider the welfare of their subjects out of grace and mercy, whereas in democracy, working for the welfare of the people is the primary duty of the government, while kindness and mercy might also be required in a democratic rule as well. Democracy provides people the space to fight for their rights by approaching courts when they are not naturally met by the government.

Suthanthiram : Does democracy have such a great significance? We thought democracy merely meant people casting votes. Only now did we realise that people are the foundation for a democracy.

Samathuvam : Do you know what the people are called in a democracy? In a monarchy, the people would be subjects of their monarch and had to obey the monarch. But in a democracy, we're citizens and we enjoy freedom, protection of the law, citizenship, and rights. We're

citizens of this country irrespective of our religion, gender, language, and other such diversities.

In a monarchy, the sovereign is the centre of life and all activities. But people are central to a democracy. Hence, we all are rulers of our country.

Difference between monarchy and democracy	
Monarchy	Democracy
Power vested in the monarch	Power vested in the people
People have duties	People enjoy rights
People are subjects without rights	People are citizens of the country

Illango : Thank you for patiently watching this skit Monarchy Vs Democracy.



Food for thought

- Most of you must have watched the movie Baahubali. Speak about the type of government depicted in the movie. Now, do you know who rules our state? Who selects them? Is it a person like the Rajamatha from Baahubali or is it the people?
- Which type of government ensures the rights of the people and protects them?
- In which type of rule do people enjoy freedom?

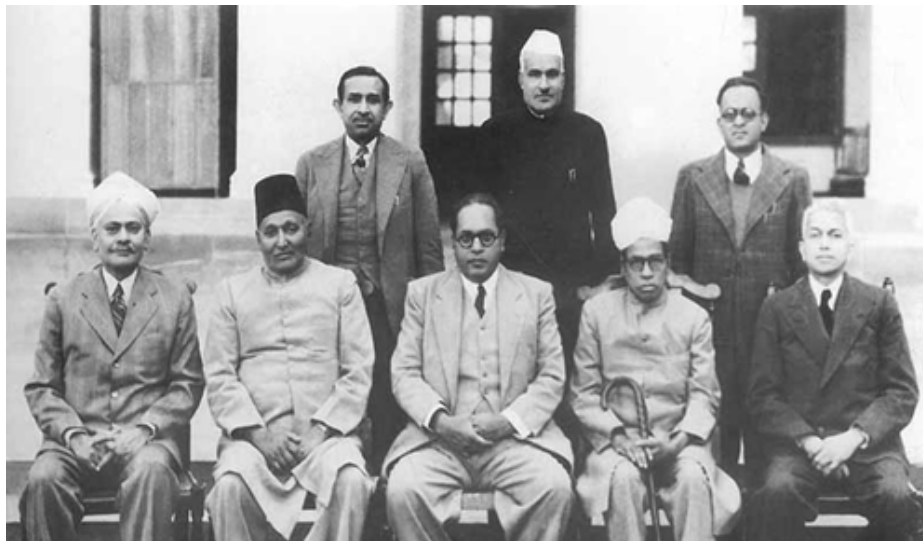


Democracy has given people rights. It is due to democracy that we are able to speak about these rights in our classroom. In short, the qualities we had discussed earlier like plurality of social life and human dignity are being glorified, protected, developed, and practised as a way of life here. Hence a government that endorses the qualities that have been discussed can only be a democratic government. The Constitutional law was framed to safeguard the people and the policies of democracy. It takes a judicial form and is a weapon to protect our rights and our freedom, upholding the principles of democracy. Do you know how, when and by whom was our Constitutional law framed?

The drafting committee of the Indian Constitution

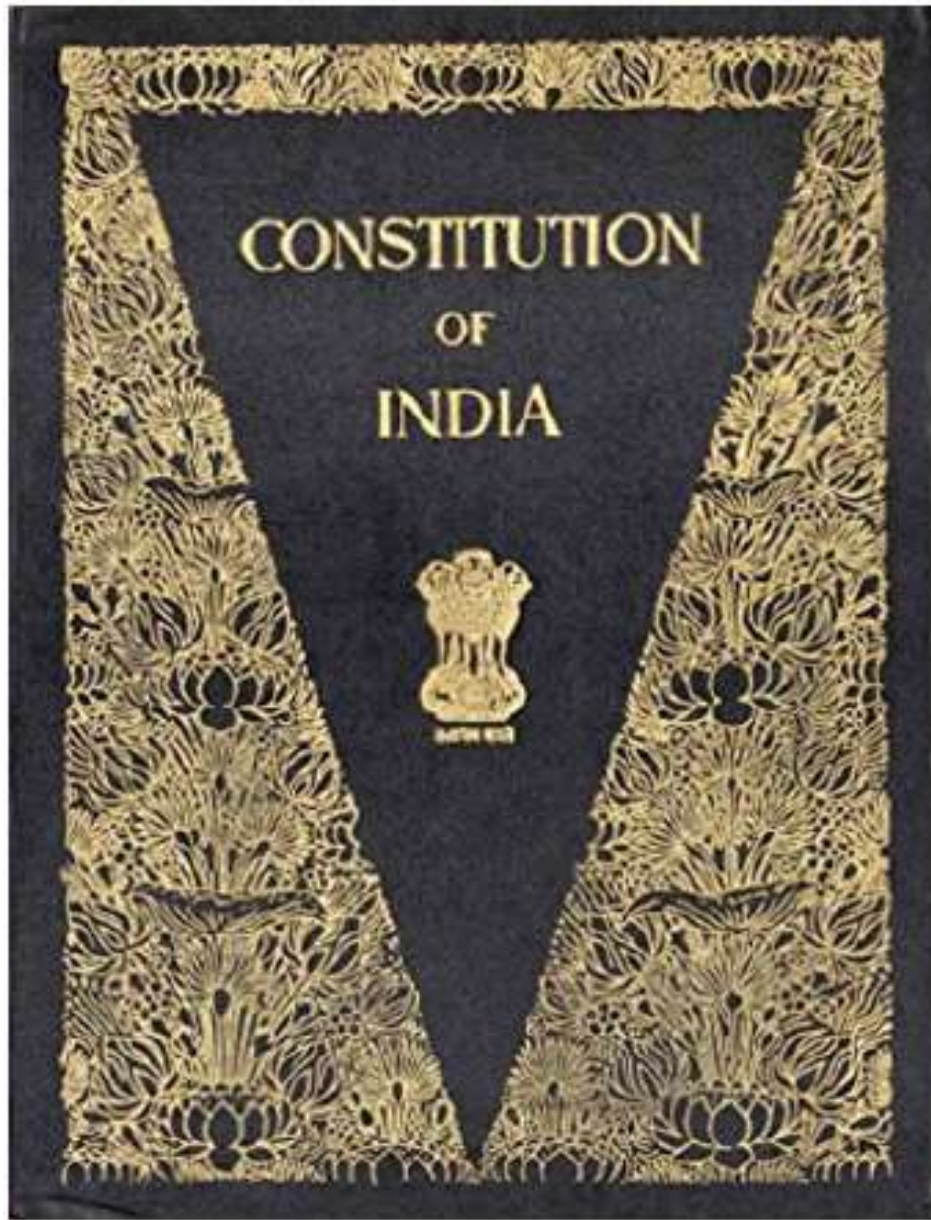
The drafting committee of the Indian Constitution was formed in 1947 under the chairmanship of Dr. B R Ambedkar. The members of the committee included

- Dr. B R Ambedkar as the chairperson
- N Gopalaswamy Ayyangar
- Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer
- K M Munshi
- Syed Muhammed Saadulla
- N Madhavarao
- T T Krishnamachari



The Constitution of India

- Is the longest Constitutional law in the world
- Has 22 parts
- Has 12 schedules
- Has 395 articles
- Has had 114 amendments



The Preamble to the Constitution of India is designed in such a way that it reflects the high ideals of democracy enshrined in the Constitution. We can understand the freedom and rights of citizens and the ideals of democracy that are endowed on us by reading the Preamble to the Constitution of India.

First, let us read the Preamble to the Constitution of India to understand it better. Kindly read in groups and get help from your teacher for the words that you do not understand.

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA



The Constitution of India

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA,
having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a
**SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST
SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**
and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought,
expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the
individual and the unity and
integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do
**HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO
OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**



Dear children,

Did you read the Preamble to the Constitution of India? Did you understand the terms featuring in the Preamble? Discuss in the class the terms that were both familiar and unfamiliar. The ideals represented by the following terms are responsible for the functioning of our classrooms, families, villages, society at large, and government, as they are today. They are intertwined with our lives and lifestyle and the Constitution of India is closely related to our every action.

Now that we have read the Preamble to the Constitution of India, let us learn in detail what each of those terms means.

“...to constitute India into a **SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC...**”

Sovereign

Sovereignty can be defined as the quality to rule ourselves autonomously without any external interference.



Socialist

The resources of the country belong to the government and are for use by its people. These resources need to be distributed equally among citizens. All people must have equal and dignified access to these resources with economic equality.

Secular



Religions in the country and the Indian government, its offices, and their administration shall remain mutually exclusive from each other. The government shall not interfere in religious affairs and shall treat people of all religions equally.

Democracy



Democracy is a rule in which people have participation. The electing of candidates to rule our country through elections is also part of our democracy.

Republic

The quality of being governed by candidates chosen by the people may be termed republic.

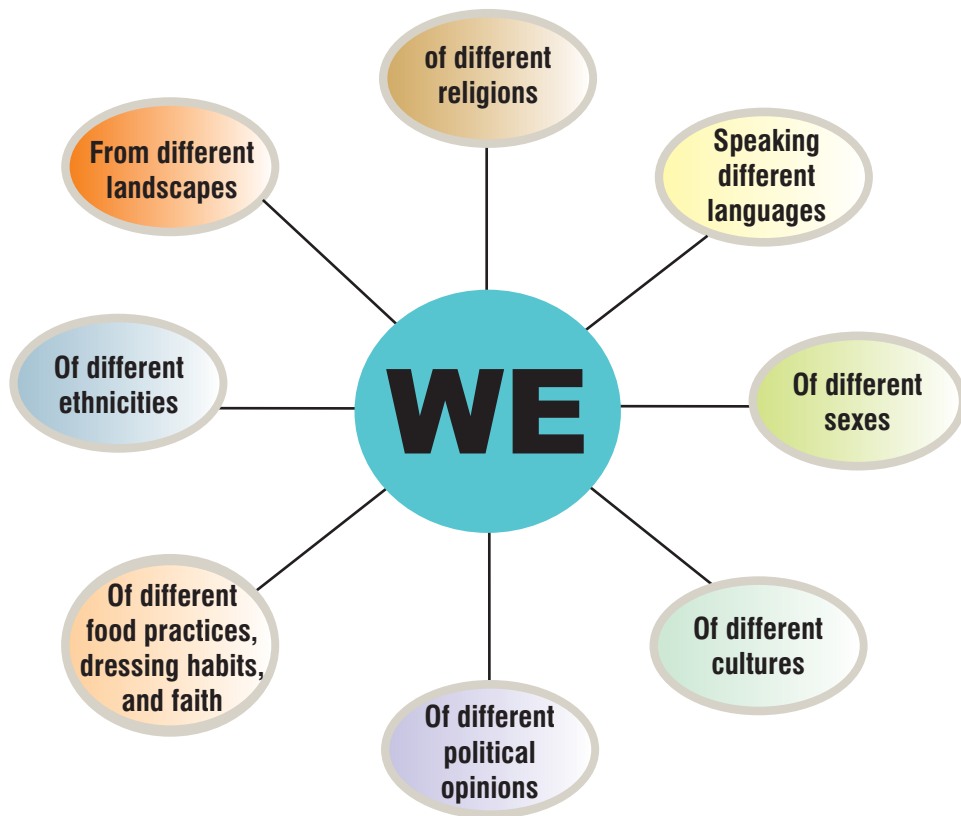
Dear children,

We hope you have understood the basic tenets of our Constitution through these terms. Kindly go back and read the first line of the Preamble.

“WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA...”

Share with the class your perception of the word 'We', in the context it is used here. Keep in mind during the discussion, whether the term 'we' is being inclusive of all the people of the country or excludes certain groups of people. If it is inclusive of all people, who form a part of it?

Despite us belonging to different faiths, religions, and communities, our identity as Indians is foregrounded in this discussion. Any person born in India is a citizen of India and the law is common to all Indians. Did we have recognition as citizens during the era of monarchy? No. We were mere subjects back then, who were dependent on the monarch and subservient to them. We are citizens in a democratic rule who are endowed with rights, freedom, and equality and are protected by the law of the country. Despite our numerous differences, all of us are citizens of this country and the Constitution of India is the fortress that protects our rights.



Now that the differences between monarchy and democracy are established and the basic tenets of our democratic Constitution have been taught, we shall move forward to learn about the significant objectives of our Constitution as said in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Justice

Justice must be served equally to all people in the social, economic and political spheres.



Freedom

- Freedom to the expression of thoughts
- Freedom to speech
- Freedom of faith
- Freedom to communicate the truth
- Freedom of worship

Equality

All people of the country deserve equal rights and opportunities to grow, as citizens of the country, irrespective of the differences in caste, religion, creed, gender, place of birth, financial status, language, etc.

Fraternity

The people of the country must pledge to respect every individual's dignity, while also celebrating our harmonious life of unity in diversity by developing the quality of fraternity in themselves.

It is the duty of all the citizens of the country to preserve the plurality of our diverse country by keeping in mind the values enshrined in the Constitution of India. Kindly go back to the Preamble to the Constitution given earlier in this lesson and read it aloud in class and share your views about it. We shall look at the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of India in detail in the next grade.



Activities

1) Fill in the blanks with the right words

1. India is a _____. (democracy / monarchy)
2. India is a _____ country. (secular / theocratic)
3. The resources of the country belong to _____ people. (some / all)
4. Our country is a _____ nation. (unsovereign / sovereign)
5. The leaders of our country are _____. (elected / appointed)
6. People _____ in a democracy. (do not participate / participate)

2) Match the following sets of words with the right pairs

1. equality - social, economic and political
2. fraternity - of thought, expression, belief, faith, and worship
3. liberty - of status and opportunity
4. justice - assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the country

3) Show-time

Prepare and perform a play in class highlighting the ideals enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of India.

4) Write an essay

Write an essay on the topic 'We, the people of India' and read it out loud in class.

5) Let us raise our voice

1. Let us treat everyone with equality.
2. Let us uphold the dignity of those around us.
3. Let us not interfere in others' freedom.
4. Let us respect everyone's rights.
5. We shall not discriminate among ourselves.
6. Let us develop a sense of fraternity with people of all creeds and religions.
7. Let us believe that violence is not the solution to any issue.
8. Let us follow the ideals enshrined in the Constitution of India.
9. We shall agree with the law and respect it.
10. We shall abide by the law.

6) Circle the words associated with the Preamble to the Constitution of India in the following grid

s	o	c	i	a	l	i	s	t	i	c	h
j	x	z	a	c	y	e	b	e	g	m	s
n	p	r	f	h	l	y	k	q	s	v	t
d	i	g	n	i	t	y	d	u	a	g	h
e	c	b	q	z	e	c	w	a	p	o	g
i	m	d	f	i	k	a	n	l	r	t	i
u	f	r	a	t	e	r	n	i	t	y	r
w	d	f	y	n	p	c	q	t	v	b	n
j	h	g	x	v	t	o	r	y	c	d	a
f	r	e	e	d	o	m	m	o	r	t	m
h	y	f	b	u	s	e	a	l	i	d	u
e	m	b	v	f	g	d	j	y	p	k	h

7) Group discussion

Conduct a group discussion in class on the values of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity featuring in the Preamble to the Constitution and how they are reflected in our daily lives.

8) Know the meaning of the following quote and debate it in class

“We all are rulers of this country!”



Constitutional Rights Education Programme (CRE)

Child Protection Policy

Policy for Constitutional Rights Education Clubs for Children

- All human beings under the age of 18 are children.
- All children have right to life, right to development, right to protection and right to participation.
- All the activities of the club shall be directed towards the best interests of children. It shall always be ensured that children are the priority in these clubs.
- All children shall be treated equally and shall not be discriminated against based on caste, creed, religion, gender, place of birth, complexion, language etc.
- Children shall not be ill-treated physically, emotionally and sexually.
- The photographs and videos taken during club activities shall not be shared without the express consent of those concerned.
- Any instances of abuse towards children that come to the notice of the club shall be reported to our organisation, and on their advice, it shall be reported to Child Helpline number 1098, Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit and Juvenile Justice Board.



Constitutional Rights Education Programme

With a clarion call to develop Constitutional rights as a culture, Vaan Muhil has taken the initiative to introduce Constitutional Rights Education among children. This Constitutional Rights Education Programme (CRE), with the guidance and contribution of activists and academicians proceeds, intending to instill the values of the Constitution of India and inculcate the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution among children, enabling them to grow as citizens with appreciable humanistic values, that will be reflected in classrooms, hostels, schools, sports centres and communities.

Last year, Constitutional Rights Education Clubs were formed in 125 communities in 17 districts in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry with the help of 10 civil society groups. Constructive measures are underway to take this CRE Programme to Government and Government aided schools this academic years.

This module designed for children in grade six is an easy-to-understand module with numerous practical activities, stories, references to historical events, case studies, discussions, roleplays, etc. Significant provisions of the Constitution of India and relevant International Human Rights Laws also feature in this module. The contributions of several educators, human rights activists and socially concerned teachers play a crucial role in the making of this module. It is being published both in print and digital formats.



Vaan Muhil

Constitutional Rights Education Programme

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