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Social Justice and the Marginalised Groups

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ An overview of the needs of marginalised groups and government policies and action
- ▶ Understanding the need for society at large to assist the government efforts to improve the lives of marginalised groups

Objectives

- ▶ To understand who the marginalised groups are and what they need
- ▶ To learn how the government is trying to improve their status and living conditions
- ▶ To know about the action and attitude change required in society at large
- ▶ To appreciate the need for involvement of every section of society—from the common man to the industrialist, apart from government

Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Globe
- ▶ Pictures, charts, atlas and wall maps
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain the historical background of marginalisation of groups—SC, ST, BC and children—in India.
- ▶ Explain the lack of sensitivity and attitudinal change required among all of us. Students should be encouraged to know the misery engendered by the lack of consideration and neglect of various sections of society.

Background and Reading

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain, sharing the aids, etc., pausing to examine and explain the data in the boxes.
- ▶ Particularly focus on making each student aware of the required change in his/her own and family attitudes and actions.

Marginalised Groups

- ▶ People living on margins or edges of society all over the world—called marginalised—not permitted to mix and move with rest of society—discriminated against—isolated on various grounds:
 - People with diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy, etc.
 - People who do menial jobs like sweepers, drain cleaners, etc.
- ▶ Practice of caste system excluding people from society.
- ▶ Adivasis and women also suffer isolation and discrimination.
- ▶ Untouchability one of the worst forms of discrimination—when one section of people treated as outcasts—suffer ill-treatment and exploitation—now they are called Dalits—people do not like their sight or touch—though government passed resolutions and Constitution prohibits the practice, it is still there and people still suffer.
- ▶ Dalits often do not get seats in schools—forced to live and work in unhealthy environment—often abused by police and public.

Constitutional Provisions for safeguarding interests of SC, ST and BC

- ▶ In India—many categories of people—castes, religions, culture—Scheduled Caste [SC], Scheduled Tribe [ST], Backward Classes [BC].
- ▶ The Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955—and then onwards many other Acts—to ensure dignity of labourers—any offence against backward people is punishable by law.
- ▶ Reservation of seats provided to them by government—in education and government jobs—allowed access to any religious, non-religious or public places—people take time to change, many not changed—even now abuses and atrocities inflicted on Dalit people—though there is a cry for equality and people speak against apartheid in other parts of the world, we still practise discrimination and exploitation in India.
- ▶ Manual scavengers—who remove even human excreta—by hand—we cannot be comfortable without their help—but they are isolated—1993—The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines [Prohibition] Act passed:
- ▶ Prohibition imposed on use of manual scavengers.
 - Discontinued the use of dry latrines.
 - Construction of water-seat latrines.
 - Despite ban—around 13 lakh workers still working as manual scavengers and there are 96 lakh dry latrines in India.
- ▶ Mandal Commission report submitted in 1978—implemented by then Prime Minister V.P. Singh's government—recommended 27% government jobs be reserved for socially and economically backward classes—caused countrywide protests.

Adivasis or the Tribals of India

- ▶ Adivasi—Sanskrit origin meaning 'original inhabitant'—traditionally inhabited hills, forests, dry plateau regions—settled in Chota Nagpur area which is rich in minerals—also in other parts [Gonds, Bhils, Jarawas, hill tribes of Uttarakhand, NE States].

Equality in a Real Sense

- ▶ Despite government efforts, many people doing menial jobs are still backward—being stereotyped for this job.
- ▶ Society has to work towards equality in all aspects.
- ▶ Efforts be made to create awareness among people to remove discrimination and exploitation.

Child Labour

- ▶ Directive Principles of State Policy—children below 14 not to work in factories—free and compulsory education be provided.
- ▶ Yet 15 million children working as labourers for a meagre ₹ 10/- per day—work for 16 hours a day in tea shops, restaurants, etc. [bicycle/auto repair shops]—miserable conditions—used also as domestic servants and often exploited as beggars [also by paedophiles and child marriages and for such dangerous things as camel racing].

Need of Health Care

- ▶ Recently seeing growth of specialty hospitals and nursing homes—even people from abroad coming for treatment—hospitals now with all facilities, modern equipment, trained doctors—growth of medical science—but now not service-oriented—rather a money-making profession—many poor people unable to get benefit of these facilities—doctors refuse to spend time in rural areas—public health centres in rural areas not effective.
- ▶ Though government spends money on public health care, conditions poor—number of patients increasing—not enough doctors to attend them in hospitals—operating theatres lack facilities—some places electricity erratic—inexperienced doctors can cause death—time for government and people to join hands and eradicate these shortcomings.

Case Study—The Bhopal Gas Tragedy

- ▶ One of the worst industrial accidents in human history—occurred early morning on 3 December 1984—about 40 tonnes of toxic and poisonous gas Methyl Isocyanate [MIC] leaked into the atmosphere from Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- ▶ Caused by lack of functioning of safety devices in the factory—said water entered the storage tank which caused a chemical reaction—this increased temperature of liquid MIC in the tank and converted it into gas—the toxic gas was released into the atmosphere.
- ▶ Union Carbide company of USA did not care adequately for the safety of people in a developing country like India—inadequate government regulations made them neglect safety measures in a factory producing deadly poisonous pesticide—there had been a few earlier accidents at the Bhopal plant and workers had complained of exposure to toxic substances—but proper safety mechanisms were not put into place.
- ▶ Leaked poisonous gas engulfed city—blinding people, choking and suffocating them—gas affected the tissues of their eyes and lungs and also attacked the nervous system—killed more than 3500 people and over 3 lakhs suffered breathlessness, sleeping and digestive disorders and loss of vision.

- ▶ Indian Council of Medical Research revealed after study:
 - (i) Blood of people exposed to MIC has been permanently toxified, leading to damage of brain, kidneys, lungs, muscles, gastro-intestinal system, etc.
 - (ii) MIC has also interfered severely with the reproductive ability of human beings and animals.
 - (iii) Different plant species suffered from chromosomal aberrations and reproductive failures.
- ▶ Main problem – doctors did not know the proper treatment for MIC gas inhalation – impact of disaster still felt by the survivors – incapable of carrying on even light physical labour and unable to earn a livelihood.

Assessment Corner

Oral Assignment

- A. Ask for answers at random from the students. Confirm the right answers. Let them write down the correct answers if they like in their books.

Written Assignment

- B–F. The teacher has two options – (i) Either do these exercises orally first and then ask the students to write them down. OR (ii) Ask the students to write the answers on their own. Then the teacher can announce the correct answers to the students and they can ask their partners to cross-check them.

In either case, the answers can be written as homework and the teacher can check them in the class.

Think Tank

- G. **HOTS questions:** Discuss the questions in the class and let the students write the answers to G and H as homework. Teacher should assess individual work.