



Lesson Plan 2 - 2nd and 3rd Level - 'Untouchability'

Time required

45 minutes

About the lesson

An introduction to the Indian caste system and the term 'untouchable'.

Learning Outcomes

I can discuss ageism as an example of social discrimination

I can understand what the term 'untouchability' means within the context of the Indian caste system

Resources

Microsoft PowerPoint presentation – Lesson 2

Relevant CfE Outcomes/Experiences

SOC 2 19a
SOC 2 18b

This lesson aims to encourage pupils to consider social issues such as equality and prejudice within their own society and other societies. Pupils will develop a basic understanding of the Indian caste system and, specifically, an understanding of the term 'untouchability'.

10 minutes

Show pupils HEBS ageism advert. (Slide 1) Introduce ageism as a stimulus to encourage pupils to discuss their feelings/opinions on ageism focussing on the following questions.

- How are older people discriminated against?
- Have they, as young people, ever felt discriminated against (E.g. only two school children allowed in a shop at once, comments about appearance/clothing).

35 minutes

Part 1 should be teacher led and should provide an introduction to Indian caste system. The main teaching points are noted below.

- India has a hierarchical, strictly segregated system of social organisation.
- Caste segregates all Indians from birth. There are four main caste groups in society. The Brahmins (scholars and priests), the Kshatriyas (kings and warriors), the Vaishyas (traders), and the Shudras (artisans and labourers). (Slide 2)
- Within these groups there are hundreds of individual castes, often based on occupation.
- The Dalits are a separate group of society who are excluded from the caste system altogether. They don't count as part of society.
- There are 250 million Indians who are classified as Dalits which is equivalent to the population of the USA.
- Dalits are known as 'untouchables'.

Part 2 should be pupil led with discussion points being generated from the pupils' responses. Present the term 'untouchable' (Slide 3) and give pairs/groups 1 minute to discuss what they think it means.

Discuss pupils' ideas.

By the end of the discussion pupils should understand that untouchable means that they are literally untouchable. They are unfit to mix with higher castes socially, to dine with them, to attend the same temple, even to use the same well lest they pollute the water. If an upper caste person comes into contact with an untouchable, even an untouchable's shadow, they will wash in order to purify themselves.

This discrimination continues despite the fact that the Indian Government does not condone it. Since the introduction of the Indian Constitution in 1950, these discriminatory practices have been outlawed.