



4. Racial

Discrimination

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### Objectives

- ▣ There are so many races in the world. Every race has its own identity, history and culture. These must be respected. All are equals. They have the same rights. No race has any right to discriminate against another race.
- ▣ Similar to the discrimination based on caste in our country, people are discriminated against on the basis of their colour in the western countries. The similarities between these two kinds of discrimination are to be brought out to the students.

### Definition of Discrimination

In this convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. -*International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Article(1)*

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms. - *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article-4*



### Teacher's Activity

The teacher divides the students into three groups and asks them to read the following passages about three important personalities. Then each group is asked to read aloud one of the passages to the whole class.

## 1. The one who Defeated Racism-Nelson Mandela

75 percent of the South Africans are black people. But these black people were treated as slaves by the white minority.

The black could not move from place to place, even in search of job and shelter. Here and there one could see placards with the writing “Whites only”

Their houses were demolished. They were paid very low pay. Their properties were confiscated and the black prisoners disappeared from prisons mysteriously. All these were every day happenings.



They were denied the right to property and were forced to work in dangerous mines. Nelson Mandela fought for these people and against this racial discrimination. As a result, he had to spend 28 years in jail. The fight of the Black against racial discrimination lasted for 80 years!. It was this struggle that gave impetus to the struggles against various forms of discrimination through out the world.

The black gathered together under his leadership and fought against oppression in a non-violent way. The white government suppressed the movement. It laid conditions for the release of Mandela, but he did not agree to any compromise. Liberation of the black alone was his aim, he said. In the end, his mission succeeded. He was released unconditionally in 1990 and in 1993, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

In 1994, following the landslide victory in the general election he became the

- (i) *The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration;*
- (ii) *The right to form and join trade unions;*
- (iii) *The right to housing;*
- (iv) *The right to public health, medical care, social security and social services;*
- (v) *The right to education and training;*
- (vi) *The right to equal participation in cultural activities;*

*-International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*

President of South Africa. But he did not suppress the white. Instead, he made them ministers. The black should not discriminate against the white because they have got a majority in the Parliament, he said.

But, what is to be regretted is that, though several years have passed since Mandela became the President, 72 per cent of the land is in the hands of 13 per cent white population.

## 2. The victim of Racialism-Martin Luther King

**Martin Luther King Said :**

“I have a dream

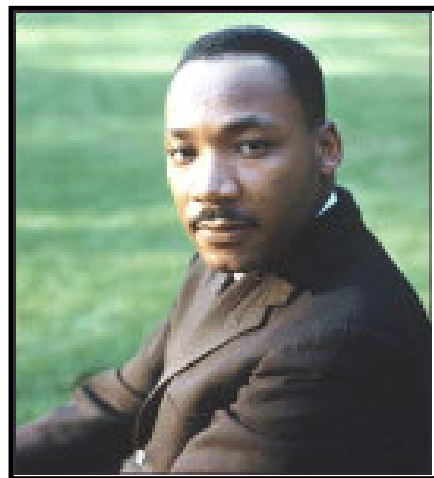
that the nation will hold the truth that all men are created equal,

that one day sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

that one day .....Mississippi (America) will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

that little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers...”



Martin Luther King was a pastor and his faith in God made him shudder at the discrimination based on colour. He decided to fight against this. In the race-conscious American Society, he propagated against this racial prejudice in a non-violent way.

King's initiation into the struggle against racialism dates back to 1955. Rosa Park, black woman was travelling by bus in Mont Gomari. According to

the law of the state, a black occupying a seat should offer it if there was no seat for any white passenger. Rose Park refused to get up and so was arrested. Martin Luther King formed a struggle committee and started boycott of buses. King lead the boycott. Struggle programmes against racial discrimination followed.

**He was arrested more than thirty times for taking part in struggles.**

“We are the rightful citizens of America. We need not get our rights through violence. The only weapon that we have is struggle, and the greatness of democracy is in the right to struggle”, he thundered.

He opposed racial discrimination and demanded equal opportunities in education and employment. He was awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964. In 1968, he was assassinated by a hard-core white racist. On that day the American flag flew at half mast and the day was declared a black day by the President of America. He was so great !.

### **Mandela**

We don't have your frizzy hair;  
Nor your drooping lips. But  
A community here, very much like yours;  
Of the same colour.  
Same is the case here too.  
Same stinking slums,  
And the fight, very much like yours;  
Slaves, what if they are  
In Africa,  
Or in Asia.  
You fight against discrimination,  
We fight the evil  
That strangles us  
Over two thousand years!  
You may be a Christian,  
    May worship Jesus,  
    But an untouchable!  
I may be a Hindu,  
    May venerate Ganapathy,  
    Yet an untouchable!  
Across continents, in every society, remember,  
There are brothers, your own brothers.



*-Agni Puthran, Arumbu, August 90*

### 3. The man who abolished slavery-Abraham Lincoln



We know animals are sold and bought at markets. But do we seek their permission before doing so? No, not at all. There was a time when human beings were sold like animals, and this was an approved practice. These humans were forced to serve those who had bought them. Mainly the black were sold like this. The owners treated them like animals, worse than animals. But this kind of slavery, like untouchability in India, was not at all considered wrong.

It was Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth President of America who abolished this practice. Born in a poor family, he was simple and kind. When he became the President, people did not know much about him. But later, he became part of American history itself. He brought to an end the Civil War. In a real democracy, there can be no slavery, there is no place for slavery, he stated categorically. The Proclamation of Abolition of Slavery was made soon. But the fate of those who fight for the liberation of the suppressed overtook him also. He was assassinated for abolishing slavery!



## **Class Work**

1. Mandela had to spend 28 years in prison for fighting against racial discrimination. What are your feelings on hearing this? what are the rights denied to Mandela because he was a black?

<b>Feelings</b>	<b>Rights denied</b>
a.	d.
b.	e.
c.	f.

2. You might have understood the evils of racialism from the brutal assassination of Martin Luther King. What are your feelings on hearing about this murder? What are the rights lost by black Americans?

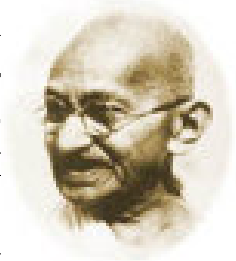
<b>Feelings</b>	<b>Rights denied</b>
a.	d.
b.	e.
c.	f.

- 3. Racialism - racial discrimination
- Casteism - caste discrimination
- Religious fanaticism - religious discrimination
- Linguistic fanaticism - linguistic discrimination

Fanaticism creates discrimination and discrimination violates human rights. What can be done to create a society founded on equality? Form groups among yourself and discuss this. Then share your feelings

### Untouchability - Casteist in India and Racial in the Western Countries

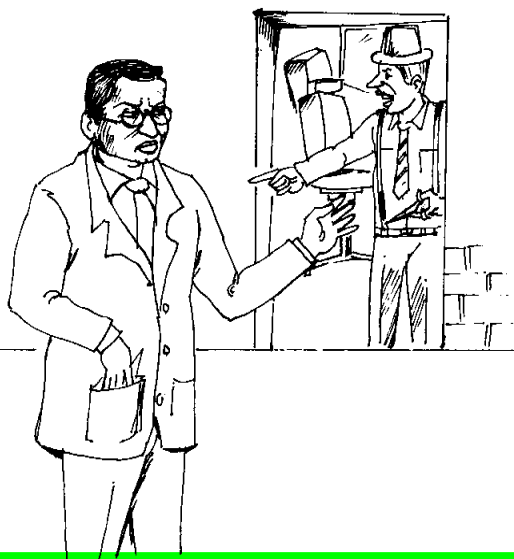
When I was in Pretoria, one day, I went to an English man to get my hair cut. He refused, turning away in disgust. I felt insulted. I went out and bought a pair of scissors and, standing before a mirror, I cut my own hair. I was successful in cutting hair in the front part of my head. But I spoiled the back side and, my friends in the court were very much amused.



“what happened to your hair, Gandhi? Did rats chew on your head?, they asked. “Nothing like that. The white barber refused to touch my black hair. I decided to do it by myself”, replied Gandhi.

My friends were not surprised at my reply. It was not the fault of the white barber to have refused to cut the hair of a black. Had he done that, the white would have boycotted him. We find the same story in our place also. The ‘upper’ caste people donot permit the barber to cut the hair of the ‘untouchables’! I reaped the consequences of this many a time in South Africa. I did not get angry as I believed that all those humiliations were nothing but retribution.

*-My Experiment with Truth, M.K.Gandhi*



## Home Work

- 1) You have come to know about discriminations based on caste and race. If we accept that both are discriminations,
- What are the similarities and differences between them?
  - What are the rights lost by people because of discrimination?

	<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Differences</b>	<b>Rights denied</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Consolidate the views and read it in the class.

- 2) Lincoln, King and Gandhi who opposed untouchability and religious fanaticism were killed.  
Write a poem or drama highlighting their sacrifice.