
Book Review

Discrimination based on Sex, Caste, Religion and Disability

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A cost-free handbook of 152 pages in 2003 developed by NCTE under the aegis of National Human Rights Commission to sensitize and address teachers and teacher educators through educational interventions.

The following contributors and editors developed this handbook.

Contributors

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There are six chapters in this book which are as follows:

1. **Discrimination based on Sex, Caste, Religion and Disability : A Conceptual Framework**

In the first chapter, meaning and scope of the Discrimination, Non-discrimination and Positive/Protective discrimination are explained. After knowing this module, the teacher will be familiar with the provisions contained in the Constitution of India regarding discrimination and discuss the implications of these provisions. A comprehensive introduction of various committees and commissions, fundamental rights, constitutional provisions made for women and children are also described in this chapter. After reading this, the teacher will understand the implications of caste as a system and as an institution as well as the dilemma of caste and casteism. The fundamental principles of any contemporary society are humanity dignity, liberty, equality, justice, but in India injustice, inequality and discrimination exist in the worst form due to social stratification and hierarchy which are directly linked to religion and caste. The prevailing theory regarding the origin of caste is “occupational theory”. The upper castes are in clean occupations while the lower castes work for the service of upper castes and following unclean occupations, they do not have right to both property and education. These castes are socially, economically and culturally backward till date. Castes are a complex phenomenon, their structures are diverse and differ from each other, from one another to culture and region to region. The caste-based system affects the development of society and the nation also. So it is necessary to the teacher that they have enough knowledge about all legislative measures to eliminate discrimination amongst SCs and STs which have been introduced through this handbook. In this chapter, the teacher will also be to know the major factors leading to discrimination for disabled persons and various national and international recommendations on disabilities.

2. **Discrimination based on sex/gender**

After reading second chapter of this book, the teacher would-be able to understand the processes that lead to formation of the sex-role identity and self-concept in children and adults. The teacher is able to evaluate gender-based discrimination in constructing a negative self-concept (poor self-esteem and poor self-image) in girls and a positive self-concept in boys. We observe many differences among girls and boys, in the home, in the street, inside the classroom, in the play-field, during the school recess. For instance, in general, boys are active, playful, confident, bold, demanding, loud, at times rough, rowdy,

aggressive, kicking and fighting, intimidating and difficult to control. Girls are passive, gentle, quiet, accepting. Often shy, different, timid, less communicative, easily intimidated, accepting commands unquestioningly. After reading this module the teacher could understand his/her perception regarding the roles of women and men (gender) as distinct from their biological sex. This handbook helps teachers critically examine existing gender bias in curricula, school programmes, text-books, and teaching-materials. It is helpful in identifying the necessary changes in the social roles of girls and boys that make them friendly partners to live harmonious lives and achieve an integrated world view. It helps teachers to develop thinking of the basic elements of a girl friendly school; its activities and content that can promote a sense of equality between girls and boys and can help them develop positive self-concept and become aware of the state of education of girl child in the early childhood, primary, upper primary and elementary education levels and prepare an agenda for mobilization of the community. This handbook is about to develop the teacher-educator understanding for gender sensitive transactions of content and process of education textbooks and curricular areas which appreciate the impact of protective discrimination.

3. **Discrimination based on Caste/Tribe**

After reading this third chapter, a kind of insight develops in teachers based on narratives of caste discrimination that explain how the teachers and disciples discriminate. This helps to identify the possible manifestations of discrimination in the condition of schools. With the help of this book we get to know all the forms of discrimination, such as caste intensified discrimination, caste-specific discrimination, caste-imposed discrimination and self-imposed caste discrimination.

4. **Discrimination based on disability**

The study of handbook is exigent of every teacher and teacher educator to knowing the operational meaning of the terms like impairment, disability and handicap. It explain all the seven category of disabilities mentioned in Persons with Disabilities PWD Act, 1995 such as blindness, person with low vision, hearing impairment, mental retardation, loco motor disability, mental illness, leprosy cured person. Here is also a list of disabilities not covered by the PWD Act, 1995, learning disability, cerebral palsy and multiple disability, which is helpful in understanding the human rights approach to disabilities. It described inclusive

education as an ideology rather than a program. Information about assistive devices required for the success of education of children with disabilities is given in this handbook which develop insight into relevant methods of teaching disabled children and practice classroom activities to facilitate inclusion. After this the teacher should be acquire the knowledge of enabling technologies relevant to education of disabled children understand psyche-social implications of disability

- Effect of disability on Personality
- Role of Persons with Disability
- Role of Peer Groups
- Role of Parents
- Role of Teacher

5. Discrimination based on religion

This fifth chapter handling with issues related to discrimination based on religion of an individual. The teacher has to keep them in mind while dealing with issues related to religion in the context of cultural and religious plurality generally available in all our classroom situations. Various relevant constitutional provisions in our Constitution which provides protection against discrimination.

Article 15- Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth

Article 25- Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

Article 26- Freedom to manage religious affairs

Article 27- Freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion

Article 28- Freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions

Article 29- Protection of interest of minorities

Article 30- Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions

6. Implications for teacher education

In the previous chapters dealing with discrimination based on sex, caste, religion and disability are basically addressed to the school-teacher in order to enable him/her to develop the desired sensitization necessary for inculcating in their students. Therefore it is

necessary to clear the concept and value of non-discrimination in relation to the parameters indicated the young minds which will help in the reshaping the destiny of the nation. In fact, this is also the spirit of Article 51A of the Constitution relating to fundamental duties. Article 51 A (a) States "to abide by the constitution and respect its ideals and Institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem." An important idea of the constitution is a provision of equality before law (Article 14) and nurturing this idea is the corner-stone of building up the of non-discrimination.

This Handbook will help the teachers to develop the required mind set towards the issues related to Sex, Caste, Religion and Disability. Thought, ideas and strategies described in the handbook should be made an integral part of the teacher education and the co-curricular activities organized in the institutions related to the preparation of the teacher. The various Constitutional Articles are systematically presented at the end part of this handbook. The language however, needs some brushing-up as some grammatical errors can be noticed.

References:

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