

# PREJUDICE

## Learning objectives:

- Enable students to gain a wider and deeper understanding of difference and the negative impact of prejudices.
- Challenge values and perceptions.
- Enable students to understand how belonging to a minority group should not bind that individual to that group alone.

## English learning objectives:

- 1.2 Understanding and responding to what speakers say in formal and informal contexts.
- 2.1 Developing and adapting speaking skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts.
- 3.1 Developing and adapting discussion skills and strategies in formal and informal contexts.
- 3.2 Taking roles in group discussion.
- 5.1 Developing and adapting active reading skills and strategies.
- 5.2 Understanding and responding to ideas, viewpoints, themes and purposes in texts.
- (Writing).
- 8.1 Developing viewpoint, voice and ideas.
- Also, locating and extracting information.

## Preparation/resources:

Internet access to 'Extracts: Different faces of prejudice' (see below) OR printed copies to be given to students.

## Exercise 1 (30 minutes):

*In pairs*

Ask students to read from the extracts: 'Different faces of prejudice' and to note how these individuals express their experiences of prejudice and fear.

To help support students' understanding of a wider range of prejudice experiences, ask them to think about the following:

- What aspects of prejudice affected these individuals?
- What are the differences in how these individuals talk about their experiences of prejudice?
- What similar experiences of prejudice do all these people have?

**Exercise 2 (20 minutes):***In small groups*

Focus attention on the different ways that prejudice can be expressed. Ask students to initially consider how individuals in the extracts experienced prejudice but also to draw on their own experiences and those they may have witnessed. Remind students that prejudice or discrimination can be experienced by anybody. Ask students to make notes, especially if proceeding to the extended activity/homework.

- Is prejudice always obvious?
- How can prejudice manifest itself?
- How can people react to prejudice?
- How do feelings of prejudice come about?
- Is prejudice ever justified?

**Reflection (10 minutes):***As a whole group*

Ask volunteers from each group to feed back to the whole class on the discussions that emerged from their groups. Were there areas of disagreement?

**Extended activity/homework:***Individually*

Using one of the extracts as inspiration, ask students to write an imaginative piece describing a day in the life of one of these individuals. Students should focus on the impact that they wish to have. How did prejudice affect the life of this person at the time that they were experiencing it? Did they speak English? How did people treat them? Concentrate on the voice of the person, using emotive language to express emotions.



## Extracts: Different faces of prejudice

**Jubair** ([www.banglastories.org/jubair-ahmed/settling-in-3.html](http://www.banglastories.org/jubair-ahmed/settling-in-3.html))

Jubair feels that the Bengali community is now well established in the UK and in London:

*Now our Bengali students can go to school with courage; we have grown up here. We used to go to school with fear, like thieves; at any time anybody could beat us up, slap us, punch us; we could not respond, we could not win; we were such a minority. Now our children can talk in Bangla even when they are on the bus; they do not care. I like it. They speak Bangla, then they switch to English quickly, and again Bangla. They have no complex...'*

**Anwara** ([www.banglastories.org/anwara/who-i-am-8.html](http://www.banglastories.org/anwara/who-i-am-8.html))

Anwara is one of the poorest interviewees we met and is very representative of many of the migrants who moved from West Bengal in India to the Satkhira region of Bangladesh just above the Sundarbans on the eastern side of the border with India. There is discrimination against them – mainly linked to their poverty but also to do with their lack of connections.

**Farzana Banu Shirin – her forefathers were Bihari** ([www.banglastories.org/farzana-banu-shirin/my-journey-6.html](http://www.banglastories.org/farzana-banu-shirin/my-journey-6.html))

After passing her college exams, Farzana got a job as a school teacher. In her school, there are 250 children and eight teachers. Farzana says that in Syedpur it's easier for people of Bihari origin to get jobs. She says that here her colleagues have never made fun of her, like they might do elsewhere in Bangladesh.

*It's the only place in Bangladesh where there is this tolerance of Urdu-speakers. Of the 250 kids in the school, 75% are Urdu-speakers but I am the only non-Bengali amongst my colleagues. This is because of discrimination and because Biharis are less well educated than most Bengalis.*

She says she got her job only because her father knew people.

*It is very difficult to get a government job anyway, but when you're not Bengali, the chances of you landing one is practically zero. Connections are very important, it is not enough to just be intelligent.*



**Vicky (Noor-e-Omar Khan): his parents' mixed marriage and miracles in his life** ([www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/the-interviews/child-of-migrants-vicky---dhaka-town-hall-camp.html](http://www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/the-interviews/child-of-migrants-vicky---dhaka-town-hall-camp.html))

Vicky is a 17-year-old student from Town Hall Camp. His father, a Bihari, married his mother, a Hindu Bengali.

*My mother used to be a Hindu, a Brahmin (member of the highest class). My father is a Bihari. They fell in love and got married and there was trouble – even a court case filed against them. The police told my mother that if she went back to her father's the guy would be tried for abduction, but she did not want to return to her father so the police happily organised a wedding in their honour. After that my parents lived in Syedpur at my paternal aunt's place for six years.*

*We came to Town Hall Camp in 1977. My brother and I were both born in the camp. Then my father went crazy and started roaming the streets in an unkempt way and remained so for 12 years. It was the most difficult time of my life. Some used to call me 'son of a Hindu', others 'son of a madman'.*

**Jobed Ali Gazi: tension between Hindus and Muslims** ([www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/religion-2.html](http://www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/religion-2.html))

Jobed Ali Gazi lives in ward number 8 of Tengrakhali in the Satkhira district. He is a Bengali refugee from the West Bengali side of the border.

*My father Khoejuddin Gazi had 175 bighas of land in Shamsernagar number 2. We were very rich and the mosque belonged to us. Hindus from East Pakistan started flocking into our villages but we did not say anything, we invited them, fed them and even gave them money to help them settle. But soon after they arrived they started stealing our goats in the dead of night to give them in sacrifice to their goddess Kali. Then, when we would be on our way to the mosque, they would pull at our skull caps. After that, they started setting fire to our houses and fields. 50 to 60 families came over here together. We had lost our land, we weren't going to be choosers so we settled on khas [non-agricultural] land. There were Hindus here and some of us started to treat them badly.*

**Tapan Sikdar: how Hindu names are transformed into Muslim ones** ([www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/religion-2.html](http://www.banglastories.org/about-the-project/migration-themes/religion-2.html))

Tapan Sikdar is a 25-year-old who lives in Ramzannagar in Satkhira and works as a motorcycle driver.

*There is both a covert as well as an overt Islamisation going on in Satkhira and Hindus are being intimidated to leave. We are being told this is a Muslim country and the Islamist extremists have started referring to some places with Hindu names – such as Harinagar – with a Muslim one, Habibnagar.*