8th class student Raju came to his aunt's home in the city from his village. There he saw a boy of his own age in a house in the neighbourhood who appeared visibly different from other boys of the house. He remained sad and not even played ever. Neither, he was going to school. He was always indulged in work for the rest of family members. Everyone kept ordering and scolded him. He polished the shoes of members of the house, serve them breakfast and at the time of going to school he put the bag of the children into the school bus and put the bags back in the room when the children were back to home. Raju saw him very keenly. He understood that the boy was a domestic servant. When Raju asked to his aunt about the boy, she told him that the name of the boy was Ramu. His parents were poor so he came away from them to work in the city.

When we talk about lakhs of children like Ramu, we find them working in roadside Dhabas, tea stalls, automobile workshops etc. We see many children begging around traffic lights. Such things happen in day to day life that makes them common and it seems just normal thing for everyone. People take it as their fate. It does not seem that the lives of lakhs of such children are crushed under poverty; therefore these children either remain away from formal education or cannot get proper education.

**Activity:**
Prepare a list of all the children of your village or street with their names and addresses who do not go to school. Try to get them join in school with the help of teachers.

**Economic Disparity**

There are some people across the societies of the world who possess comparatively more amount of valuable resources like wealth, education, health and supremacy etc. in comparison to other people of the society. These resources are unevenly distributed in the different sections of the society. This is the main reason of affluence and poverty. Some sections of the society are disadvantaged and poor since generations and some are resourceful and rich. Condition of people of dark complexion in America is an example that this situation is present in those societies which are even technologically advanced. According to an estimate, 20 percent people in the world have control over 80 percent resources, and remaining 80 percent poor people live their lives with only 20 percent resources.

Those, who justify this condition, have an ideology which speaks that there are poor and deprived people in the society because either these people do not have
efficiency or they do not work hard to improve their status. According to them, if they worked hard or had knowledge, they never had been where they are today. This condition is considered as the result of their evil deeds of previous birth by some fatalistic people. Whereas, the fact remains that if adequate opportunities are given to these deprived people, they prove their caliber best.

**Equal Opportunities and Success of efforts**

When looking carefully we find that those who are poor in the society live their lives also through hard work only. Work which involve a lot of physical strength like breaking stones, carrying heavy load, rickshaw and handcart pulling etc. are done by poor people throughout the world. still of that they can hardly improve their lives. Odd jobs which are considered as mean in the society are carried out by the poor people only.

There is a proverb in South America, “if work were good for you, the rich would leave none for the poor’. It does not mean that there is no importance of hard work in life. Hard work and individual efficiency is important, but when all other aspects are equal then only lack of hard work and efficiency of an individual is held responsible for disparity of poverty and prosperity. Prevailing inequality of opportunities in the society makes the hard work and efficiency of deprived people of the society worthless. The fact is that all the things are not equally available for all the people or group of people in the society.

**Social Inequality**

Generally, social inequality is not due to innate differences between individuals. It has nothing to do with individual ability. This inequality is social because it is created by the society itself. Children inherit the social status of their parents. Those who have influence and authority in the society deprive others from the opportunities by declaring them ineligible. Thus the social inequality remains generation after generation. Economic and social inequalities have strong relation. Lowest sections of the society are the poorest. Therefore, social inequality is not economic. It is a social boycott.

Social boycott are those means through which a person or a group of persons is prevented from mingling in the society. They are marginalized in the society. These ways deprive an individual or group from those opportunities which are open for other individual or groups. Consequently that person or group is marginalized in the society. The person or group of persons who has long experience of such discrimination or abusive behaviour take it as his destiny and finally gives up to make efforts of becoming part of the mainstream of the society. In such a situation, on one side those persons are deprived of the opportunities of their personality development and on the other side society does not get benefitted from their talent. This is the virtual loss of the society.

**Activity:** Observe different forms of discrimination in your village or street and other places.
Prejudice, traditionalism and discrimination

'Prejudice' is a presumption which is based on merely hearsay without knowing and examining the facts of the subject. The person who is suffering from prejudice refuses to change his earlier opinion even after knowing the facts.

'Traditionalism' places the entire group of people in the same category. People in traditional society are prejudiced towards other social groups which are unchangeable and rigid, for example during British rule in India some castes were declared as scandalous castes. Such castes were known as a group of criminals and a number of bans were imposed on them. But such assumptions can be true for some people in the group but for the entire group this cannot be true.

'Discrimination' is such behavior towards other group of people and an individual in which an individual of a group is deprived of those opportunities which are open for other individuals or groups. A behavior is noticed in which the efforts are made to justify discrimination on irrelevant grounds instead of basic reasons for it.

Activity:
Have you ever seen any behaviour affected by prejudice in your own social environment? If yes, make a list.

Classes Suffering From Social Inequality

The subject which has been of biggest concern in Indian society is; various forms of inequality and its ability to generate exclusion. Orthodox notions were strong during colonial rule in India. There are various forms of social discrimination and exclusion in India like in other societies of the world.

1. The form of caste system prevalent in India is derogatory, insulting and exploitative for some sections of the society. Untouchability is the excessive form of this caste system. Caste system classifies people based on their occupation and status. Although in 19th century relation between caste and occupation has got weakened. Now it has become easy for an individual to change his occupation, because opportunities are available to change his/her traditional occupation.

2. Everyday we read in newspapers about violence and discrimination against women. Women have been victims of disparity of opportunity in male dominated society like India.

3. Even mentally challenged, blind and handicapped, 'differently abled', people have to struggle hard because the society is formed in such a way which does not meet their needs.
4. Sometimes we also hear the news of discrimination with religious and linguistic minorities worldwide including India.
5. In all societies economically backward people are marginalized. In spite of protest against discrimination based on caste, sex etc. in the history, prejudices still prevail there for some sections of the society. At the same time certain new prejudices emerged.

**Activity:** Make a list of those groups in your surroundings who are victims of inequality and marginalization.

**Efforts to establish Social Justice**

The facilities and opportunities which we expect for ourselves, must be given to others also, that is social justice. This will make a society which will be based on equality and every individual will get equal opportunities to show his caliber and develop talent. This will ensure progress and development of the entire society. The government is working to establish social, economical and political justice. The deprived and backward communities have been recognized by the Indian government and have been placed in three categories/lists. The first list includes 'Scheduled Caste (SC)'; the castes which are placed in this list are considered as lowest castes of the deprived sections of society. The second list includes 'Scheduled Tribe (ST)' which encompasses tribe castes. The third list includes 'Other Backward Class (OBC)'. In this list those socially, economically and educationally backward castes are included which are not included in the first and the second lists. These sections are supposed to get special treatment. Some seats are reserved for this section of the society in various fields of government services.

1. Some seats are reserved in central and states legislative assemblies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and in local bodies some seats are reserved for other backward class and women. At the same time vacancies have been reserved for these classes in government services and educational institutes. The same principle is applied on other development programmes and schemes introduced by the government. Out of these government programmes and schemes, some programmes and schemes are exclusively introduced for these classes by the government and priority is given to them in some other programmes.

2. Laws have been enacted to stop and eliminate caste discrimination and untouchability in society. The provisions of punishment have been made stricter for atrocities and derogatory acts committed against these sections through amendments in 'Scheduled Caste and Schedule Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989'.

3. Strict punitive provisions are made through legal framework to stop domestic violence and eve teasing against women. The constitution makes provisions to provide equal opportunities for livelihood for men and women and give them equal pay for equal work.
4. Child labour has been proclaimed as unlawful and elementary education has been made compulsory and free now.

5. Vacancies in various government services have been reserved for differently abled people and many schemes are being run for their welfare.

6. Religious and linguistic minorities have constitutional right to protect their unique culture, language and script. They can open educational institutes for this purpose.

Legal provisions alone cannot change the society or bring lasting social reforms. Continuous social campaign full of awareness and sensitiveness is needed to bring the social changes and reforms.

**Glossary**

**Colonial Period** : The period during which India was ruled by people from other country (Britain)

**Untouchability** : The state of not to touch a human being of a certain cast

**Minority** : Small group of people in terms of religion and language in the population

**Marginal** : The part of society which is kept away from power and resources and is not part of mainstream of society.

**Exercise**

1. Choose the correct option-
   (i) What is the main reason of economic inequality -
       (a) Difference of labour  (b) Difference of qualification
       (c) Difference of opportunity  (d) Difference of efforts ( )

   (ii) What is main cause behind inequalities in opportunities -
       (a) Prejudices  (b) Traditionalism
       (c) Discrimination  (d) All of the above ( )

   (iii) The responsibility of social change liaise with -
       (a) People  (b) Society
       (c) Government  (d) All of the above ( )
1. Match the both columns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column ‘A’</th>
<th>Column ‘B’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Caste of marginal class</td>
<td>Other Backward Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Tribal Caste</td>
<td>Minority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Socially, economically and</td>
<td>Schedule Tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational backward caste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Small group of language and Religion in</td>
<td>Schedule caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Fill in the blanks of following sentences-
   (i) ............... is the excessive form of cast system..
   (ii) Unchanged, rigid and conventional notion are called as .............
   (iii) 80 percent poor people of the world live their lives with only ........ percent resources.

3. Describe the main causes of Economic Disparities in society.
4. What is social boycott? Write their effects.
5. Write in details about deprived classes due to social inequalities.
6. Write the efforts of government for establishing social justice.