



GCSE Religious Studies

Religion, Human Rights and Social Justice

Workbook



Name:

Key Concepts in Religion, Human Rights & Social Justice

Rights and responsibilities is a key theme. Many people argue they have a right to something, often without thinking of other people's rights. For when you have a right to something, e.g. freedom of speech, you have to have the **responsibility** to speak appropriately, that is, not hurting others by telling lies about them. Where prejudice and poverty exist, it is often the case that someone somewhere is not meeting their responsibilities.

Given that people are individual and different, it is important to be tolerant of others who are not the same as us. This means that we should accept differences and we shouldn't target others because of these differences. You can see that if we are **tolerant**, there is no place for prejudice. You can also see that where people are tolerant of each other, they can live in **harmony**.

All religious believers agree that life is special and sacred. Many believe we were all created equally by God. This means we have equal worth and value, and should enjoy equal rights (**equality**). Anything to deny these rights would be wrong.

Lots of people are disadvantaged in life for many reasons. Religious believers would see a need for systems to bring social justice to those people, they believe that things have to be made fair. They also call for all people to show **compassion** (loving kindness) to others. This means giving help where it is needed, simply because it is needed.

Overall, religious people believe they have the duty of **stewardship** (a responsibility to look after the world and the people in it). If we are serious about this responsibility, we will try to defend the rights of all to live in harmony and in a just world.



Tasks:

1. What is the topic of 'rights and responsibilities' about?

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2. What does being tolerant mean?

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3. How can humans live in harmony?

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4. What is equality?

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5. What do religious believers believe about life?

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6. What would believers see a need for?

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7. What do believers call people to be?

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8. What duty do believers have?

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9. What should believers defend?

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10. What is the meaning of 'stewardship'?

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Social Justice



Social justice is fairness in terms of wealth distribution, the law, equal rights and opportunities for all people. For social justice to exist, society must be fair to all regardless of race, age, gender, sexuality and disability. It also means that society has to be organised so that it is open to all in terms of education, health care, housing and social welfare.

The United Nations' 2006 document *Social Justice in an Open World* states, 'Social justice may be broadly understood as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth.' Social justice is a reason why religions fight for human rights and against prejudice and exploitation of all people, including the vulnerable and the poor.

Social justice in the modern world is difficult to achieve. Different political methods have been tried, but there are always those who feel things are not fair. Different political parties manage a country's economy in different ways, and promote social justice differently. It is probably true to say that there are people in society who can look after themselves despite political systems, but there are always those who cannot. Some will argue that the poor need preferential treatment and a society is judged on how it treats its most vulnerable. Others believe too much help can make people reliant on that help so they do little to help themselves.

Buddhism

In Buddhism, along with the idea of selflessness, Buddhists believe that right action, livelihood, speech, effort and intention should, if carried out properly, lead to social justice.



Christianity

IN the UK, Christians have fought for prison reform since the 18th century, organisations like Christian Aid work in inner cities and the House of Lords includes clergy who discuss the law – all these are examples of involvement in social justice.



Hinduism

In Hinduism within India, there is a conscious move away from the caste system, which separates people and has created a massive gulf between rich and poor.



Islam

The Qur'an contains references to social justice. One of Islam's Five Pillars is zakat, or alms-giving. Charity and assistance to the poor (concepts central to social justice) have historically been important parts of the Islamic faith.



Judaism

In 'To Heal a Fractured World: the Ethics of Responsibility', Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks states that social justice is central to Judaism. He explains the concepts of simcha (gladness), tzedakah (the religious obligation to perform charity), chesed (deeds of kindness) and tikkun olam (healing the world) all allow for social justice.



Sikhism

Sikh scriptures promote the message of equality of all beings and reveal that Sikh believers should deal with all humankind with the spirit of universal brotherhood and equality.



Tasks:

1. What is social justice?

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2. What is needed for social justice to exist?

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3. What is social justice a reason for?

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4. Why is social justice in the modern world difficult to achieve?

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5. What do Buddhists believe about social justice?

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6. What do Christians believe about social justice?

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7. What do Hindus believe about social justice?

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8. What do Muslims believe about social justice?

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9. What do Jewish people believe about social justice?

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10. What do Sikhs believe about social justice?

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What do we mean by human rights?

There are many descriptions and declarations of human rights. They are all what humans should be able to expect as a minimum because they are human. They include basic rights and freedoms: right to life, to not be persecuted by others, to have a fair trial, to free speech, and also the right to have food, shelter, education, healthcare and work.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights starts with the most fundamental statement that: 'all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.' Everything else comes from that. Laws are built on it and our behaviour towards and with others should be governed by it.

Rights and Responsibilities

People have the right to voice their opinions. But that right brings a responsibility to also listen to the opinions of others, as they also have a right to their opinion. It also brings the responsibility of speaking in a responsible and respectful way, and of taking the consequences of exercising our right. It is the same for any human right, for example, if I have a right to education, then so do you; if I have a right to good healthcare, then so do you. We cannot say only we have rights, and we cannot say that we do not need to take responsibility for exercising those rights. Sometimes our right affect others in a negative way, and we have to be mindful of that.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights

Statements of rights have been written all through history. Britain's first was probably the Magna Carta (1251CE), which stated the ruler's commitment to his people. Setting out a code of rights is perhaps the first step in building law and legal systems.

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was written and then adopted by many countries in 1948, coming about partly because of the atrocities which countries fighting the Second



UNITED NATIONS

World War had carried out. Although countries adopt this Declaration, there is no binding requirement for them to keep it. These rights are in two distinct groups: civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. The UN claims that these are part of the way to build freedom, peace and justice in the world.

Examples of human rights include:

- Everyone is:
 - equal
 - born free
 - to be treated in the say way
 - innocent until proven guilty
- Everyone should respect everyone else
- Everyone has the right to:
 - legal protection
 - a public trial
 - asylum
 - belong to a country
 - marry
 - own things and keep them
 - free speech
 - meet peacefully with others
 - vote
 - work
 - rest
 - an education
 - basic rights – food, water, shelter, healthcare
 - artist freedom and enjoy the arts
- No one may destroy the rights of others
- There must be laws to protect these rights



Tasks:

1. What are human rights?

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2. What is the statement from the UN Declaration of Human Rights?

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3. What do people have a right to voice?

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4. What does this right bring a responsibility of?

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5. What did the Magna Carta outline?

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6. Why did countries begin to adopt the UN Declaration of Human Rights?

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7. What are the two distinct groups of rights outlined by the UN?

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8. What is the most important right, in your opinion, and why?

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9. What is the least important right, in your opinion, and why?

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10. So any of the rights surprise you? Why?

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The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act (HRA) gave a legal standing in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). These are based on the UN Declaration. The HRA is supposed to ensure that people's human rights are protected and respected by public authorities. It make it illegal for public authorities to act against a person's human rights. Everyone in the UK is protected by these rights.



Although, the rights are not absolute. The government has the power to limit or control people's rights under certain conditions, such as in wartime. They also rely on people respecting each other, and not behaving in a way which would go against other people's rights. Respect is the key to everything, because respect for others leads to all those rights.

Respecting Human Rights as a Religious Citizen



A citizen is someone who is a member of a country or nation. Some people have dual citizenship (usually because of having parents from different countries, or by living in another country for a number of years). Being a citizen brings rights within that country, but also responsibilities to respect and follow the rules of that country.

A religious citizen is simply someone who is a citizen, but has a religious belief. Those beliefs should mean they respect the law of the country in which they live or have citizenship. Generally speaking, British law has as its basis the Ten Commandments. Both are based on respect. So religions would all agree with laws based around respect.

Sometimes religious laws and secular laws do not match up. For example:

- In some religions, the bodies of people who have died should not be desecrated. This means that post-mortems are not allowed. However, the law can remove this right, especially if the person died under suspicious circumstances.



- In Quaker Christianity, believers are pacifist. Therefore, if they were called to fight in a war, they would claim to be a 'conscientious objector'. However, during World War times, conscientious objectors were subject to much abuse and ridicule, as they were believed to be traitors and cowards.



- Some believers like to wear symbols to express their religion. In some settings, e.g. school, some children might not be able to wear rings or necklaces, as it goes against the uniform code. In France, the wearing of religious clothing in public has been banned, however many believe that it is their right to express their opinions and beliefs publicly.



Tasks:

1. What is the HRA?

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2. What does the HRA ensure?

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3. What does the government have the power to do?

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4. What do governments rely on?

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5. What is key to everything?

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6. What is a citizen and what is a religious citizen?

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7. What does British law have as its basis?

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8. How do post-mortems potentially go against religious beliefs?

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9. How does being called to fight in war potentially go against religious beliefs?

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10. How does wearing symbols/clothing potentially go against religious beliefs?

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Freedom of Religion and Belief, Including Freedom of Religious Expression

In the UK today, the right to religious freedom is protected, and freedom from persecution because of religion is also possible, because of discrimination laws.

Freedom of religious expression is the right of any person to follow the religion of their choice and to be open about what they believe. In the UK, you cannot be told (legally) that you are not allowed to follow a particular religion and none are

banned. Nor can you be ordered by law to follow a particular group's interpretation of that religion, so you could not be told that the only legal denomination of Christianity is the Church of England. This was not always the case. For example, in the 16th Century, the Protestants under Queen Mary and then the Catholics under Queen Elizabeth I, were executed for their beliefs.

Freedom from persecution because of religion – this is a right to be legally protected if someone targets you because of the religion you follow. They would have committed a hate crime, which is a criminal offence. So, for example, if a person stacked another

person in the street, simply because they should they were Muslim, then that would be a hate crime. That does not mean that a person who is refused the right to wear a religious symbol whilst at work is a victim of religious discrimination, unless the symbol was compulsory to their religion (like a Sikh's turban).

All religions will argue for their right to both of these freedoms. But do they all seek to protect the rights of others to their (different) religion?



Buddhism

Buddhism teaches that all religions are just different ways to the same religious truths. When asked for his religion, the Dalai Lama once said, "The religion of kindness". The Buddha himself, after enlightenment, did not try to convert anyone. He explained and discussed what he had learned, allowing people to decide for themselves. However, there have been occasions of Buddhist violence, in Sri Lanka and Thailand, for example, against other religions.



Christianity

Many Christians believe that the only way to salvation (earn a place in heaven) is through belief in Jesus. This excludes all other religions, and is the main reason why Christianity has always been a missionary religion; trying to convert others. Some believe that as long as a person leads a morally good life, then they too can earn salvation, which opens the door to accept all other faiths, given their key principles fit with Christianity's. Whatever the belief about who can and cannot go to heaven, it is important to treat everyone with equanimity and kindness, so Christians should not be involved in any form of religious discrimination.



Hinduism

Hinduism is a wide-ranging religion and is open to all other faiths. A famous Hindu, Rabindranath Tagore, once likened religions to 'different paths to the top of the same mountain.' Hinduism does not agree with trying to convert others, and some Hindus have reacted negatively to perceptions of this being done by Christians and Muslims in India. It is also true that some practices of non-Hindus are seen as impure, for example, eating beef, which makes some from the Brahmin caste treat non-Hindus as inferiors. In India, Muslims have complained that the Hindu-based legal system discriminates against them, making them feel threatened.



Islam

Islam sees Jews and Christians as 'People of the Book'. They have received revelations from Allah, although have allowed them to be corrupted. In essence, there is still a form of the right religion to their beliefs. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had to build relationships with people of each of these faiths, and a lot of his teachings show the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, as well as inclusiveness and mutual acceptance. In



particular, they were allowed to practise their own faiths in their own way. There is also a sense that those who are morally good will also be rewarded in the afterlife, so should be respected now. However, it is definitely the case that modern history, especially, has seen intolerance of other religions by certain Muslim groups, which has led to mass migrations and mass murder. Whilst this is not supported by Islamic teachings or law, it is perpetrated by those calling themselves Muslims, and so this makes non-Muslims feel this is a Muslim way. This has brought religious intolerance down onto Muslims as a result.



Judaism

In Jewish thinking, other religions could be seen as either G-d fearing or those who seek to deny or demote G-d. The latter will always be wrong. Jews are clear that Judaism is the best way to live, but they do not say others should not live how they choose to. To be a Jew is an accident of birth, not by design. Regarding non-Jews, the deciding factor is how they live their lives, not who they choose to worship so there should be no intolerance or religious discrimination shown. It is true that the modern Palestinian – Israeli conflict has caused much trouble between what are Jewish and Muslim communities, and there is clear evidence that there is a religious basis to their disagreement. It has led to intolerance on both sides, and hence discrimination not just in Israel, but anywhere that Jews and Muslims live.

Sikhism

The Rahit Maryada states that 'Sikhs must in no way give offence to other faiths'. Guru Nanak said, 'There is no Hindu, no Muslim... I shall follow God's path.' Guru Gobind Singh said that different clothes and cultures did not stop all being the same flesh and blood creations of God. There are many examples from the life of Guru Nanak where he shows there should be no boundaries' and no discrimination because of religion – often rejecting exclusiveness which others claimed for their own religion. But Sikh history does include examples of troubles with other religions; usually when rules in an oppressive way by those of another religion. It is also true that specific Muslim practices, such as the eating of Halal meat are forbidden to Sikhs, which we could take to be a disapproval of one or more other religions.



Should Religious People Openly Express Their Beliefs?

A public display of a person's beliefs can be seen as simple as how they live their life. You might not even notice a person is religious, just that they are generally a good person (since all religions promote morally good behaviour). It might be something obvious – like wearing or having a particular symbols of the faith, perhaps a Jew wearing a kippah (skull cap), a turban by a Sikh, a Muslim carrying tasbeeh (prayer beads). It might be really overt or obvious, for example, someone talking to you about their religion and why you should convert.



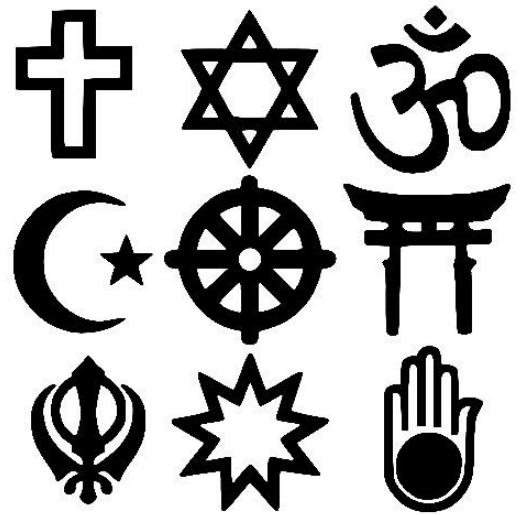
In the West, fewer people follow religions, and it seems acceptable to make fun of religious believers and their beliefs. Society is not guided by religion anymore, so it has less authority.



Conflict between the law and expression:

- A check-in desk worker at an airport was banned from wearing a cross and chain because it might offend passengers who weren't Christian

- Discussions have been had surrounding whether shops should display Christmas cards in their windows as it might offend non-Christians
- A nurse was suspended because she offered to pray for a patient who was in the hospital she worked at
- A Muslim woman employed as a teacher was asked to remove her full face veil because it was not deemed appropriate when teaching young children
- A secondary school has renamed Christmas holidays as 'Winter Break' to avoid offending the Muslim student who attend. In contrast, the school has not reduced the length of the break so that it could make Eid a whole-school holiday.
- A head teacher lost her job because she decided that all assemblies should be given to all students, and not split for religious or non-religious groups



Is it easy to follow a religion in the modern world?

More and more countries are becoming more 'religion-rich' as immigration brings new faiths in, and new places of worship are being built. The internet means anyone can access any religion, or group within it, for information or worship from their own home, without having to be part of a physical community. As a society, it could be said that we know more about other faiths, so are more tolerant. Laws protect religious freedoms. All this makes it easier than ever to follow a religion.



Prejudice

The two key words for this part of our theme are **prejudice** and **discrimination**. The two words are linked, but their meaning is slightly different.

Prejudice is when you pre-judge something or someone, usually without any real evidence to base that judgement on. In most cases it is negative. We use the word to describe a person's dislike of certain other people when they have no good reason. We talk about prejudice against colour, religion, age (**ageism**), nationality, sexuality or appearance. Prejudice is about what we think – it is about the ideas in our head.

Discrimination is when we put these prejudiced ideas into action. We treat people differently or say things because they are not the same as us or what we know. We make known to them our dislike and therefore it can have a great effect on a person's life. In Britain, it is against the law to discriminate against a person with certain protected characteristics in certain situations.

Prejudice and discrimination break people's human rights, because they stop them having the same chances as others and they lead to harm.



Positive Discrimination

Discrimination can be positive as well as negative. Positive discrimination is used to promote opportunities for minority groups in society, especially so that those groups are better represented in public services. For example, the Police Service may advertise specifically for black, Asian or gay officers – members of all these groups have an understanding of minority issues. The aim is to create a Police Force which better reflects and so can better serve our society, both locally and nationally.

Tasks:

1. What is the definition of prejudice?

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2. What is the definition of discrimination?

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3. What kinds of prejudice/discrimination have you personally seen or experienced?

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4. How do prejudice and discrimination break people's rights?

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5. What is 'positive discrimination'?

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6. What is an example of positive discrimination?

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7. What can be a purpose of positive discrimination?

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What Makes Someone Prejudiced and Want to Discriminate?

Everyone can be prejudiced at times, even by accident. Not everyone will discriminate against others though because of their prejudice. Which is the more serious – the thought or the action?



Prejudice can be a barrier that stops people living, working and learning together as a community. It is very unfair and it only takes someone to be 'different' to be singled out for discrimination. The victims are almost always in the minority and find it very hard to deal with.

There are five main reasons for prejudice and discrimination:

1. Having a bad experience with someone might make you think anybody else like them is like that. For example, maybe when you were young you were frightened by a grumpy old man and now you think all old men are grumpy.
2. Having been told bad things about a certain group of people by your parents/carers, so you might be prejudices without even getting a chance to know differently. Our upbringing has a big influence on us and our parents' words have a huge effect.
3. Having seen something on television or read it in a newspaper (or other forms of media) that was biased or focused only on one idea, opinion or fact, taking it out of context. You might have believed it, so now you are prejudiced.
4. When you do not have enough detail about something to base an opinion on, yet you think that you are able to judge someone. This is called ignorance. For example, having a negative opinion about a group of people, who you have never met or actually learned about –



Types of Prejudice – Religious Teachings

Sexuality

Some people are shown prejudice because of who they are attracted to. Traditionally in the UK society expects men and women to be couples. Homosexuals often suffer homophobia because people do not agree with the relationships they have. It is often difficult to tell families (who may themselves be unsupportive or even homophobic) and as a result there is little support available. For religious people who are gay, there are also fears of how their community might respond, and it may be the case that their religion forbids homosexuality. Also, many religions do not agree with these relationship, although they do agree that people should not be discriminated against. For religion, a key role of sex is to accept God's blessing of children, and same-sex couples cannot do this naturally and in holy books there are teachings against homosexuality.



In the UK, same sex marriages are now allowed by law, and with the help of science, having children is also possible, so things are changing. Some religions do now accept that people are homosexual, but still disagree with them having sexual relationships.

Disability



Sometimes people who have a disability are discriminated against. Disabilities encompass a wide variety of conditions, categorised into two types: physical, for example, wearing glasses, being in a wheelchair, not having a limb; and mental, for example, a learning problem or a mental illness. By law, a disability is a long-term issue which has a significant impact on the day-to-day life of the person with the disability, so that they cannot do (some) things as normal.

People with a disability are often denied access to places, e.g. school or public buildings. Religion believes that all people are equal and God creates people in many different ways. We are all valued despite our differences. Some people who have a disability have gone on to succeed in all fields, from sporting achievement to academia. Such achievements should be



an inspiration and make us realise that we all have different talents to benefit society. Discrimination is totally wrong where disability is concerned and, based on the Disability Discrimination Act, is also illegal.

Gender Prejudice

People can often be discriminated against because of their gender. This is called sexism. Traditionally, there are roles for men and roles for women in society and within religion. However, these have not been equal roles with equal opportunity, Religions would argue that the roles are equal but different. In society in the last 100 years the role of women has changes. There are far more women in top jobs, in male-dominated sports, in politics and in the armed forces. However, in terms of leadership of religion, most still are male-dominated.

March 2015 marked the start of the ministry of the first female Anglican bishop, Libby Lane.



Tasks:

1. What is sexuality discrimination?

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2. What does UK society expect for couples?

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3. What is a key role of sex for many religious people?

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4. How are things changing in the UK?

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5. What is disability discrimination?

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6. What are the two types of disability discrimination?

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7. What do religions believe about the equality of people?

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8. What have people with disabilities succeeded at?

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9. What is gender prejudice?

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10. Which sector is it that men are still dominant?

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Religions on Prejudice

Buddhism

Buddhism believes that as discrimination leads to suffering, it must be wrong and should be avoided.

- The belief not to harm others or use harmful language (Precepts)
- Everyone should try to develop metta (loving kindness)
- Everyone is equal because everyone is welcome in the Sangha
- Prejudice creates bad karma and has a negative effect on re-birth
- The Dalai Lama stated that the best way to live life was to 'Always think compassion'.



Christianity

Christianity believes that all forms of discrimination are wrong.

- God created everyone equally (Old Testament)
- There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male or female. We are all equal in Christ (Galatians)
- So in everything, do unto others what you would have done to you (Matthew 7:12)
- Jesus told us to love our neighbour (Sermon on the Mount)
- In the Good Samaritan story, the man is helped because of his need, not because of who he was or was not (in fact, the victim and helper were enemy nations)



Hinduism

Hindu Dharma is that Brahma is found in everything, so therefore any prejudiced thoughts or discriminative acts would be viewed as wrong.

- Hindus believe in non-violence (ahimsa) love and respect for all things
- Compassion is a key belief with the desire to improve things for others, not persecute them



- Hurting others can lead to bad karma which affects future reincarnations
- Hindus believe that the true self is the atman and as everyone has one, that must mean that everyone is equal
- The Bhagavad Gita suggests that to reach liberation then you should work for the welfare of all fellow human beings

Islam

Islam believes that Allah created everyone as equal but different. This was Allah's design, so discrimination is unjustified (Qur'an).



- Allah loves the fair-minded
- The Five Pillars (beliefs and actions) apply to all – equality
- Muhammad (PBUH) allowed a black African man to do the call to prayer in Madinah and he welcomed anyone regardless of wealth, status or creed
- The Muslim Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone is equal
- On Hajj (the biggest gathering of Muslims on earth) everyone is equal in dress and action

Judaism

Judaism teaches that prejudice and discrimination are incompatible with Jewish law. Over the years, they are the religion that has been the target of this to the extreme and therefore have strong opinions on the issue.



- G-d created everyone as equal, so prejudice is seen as an insult to G-d
- The Torah tells Jews to welcome and not persecute strangers
- The Nevi'im states that G-d expects people to practise justice love and kindness to all
- Treat others as you would like to be treated (Old Testament)
- Jewish leaders stated that Jews should live in harmony with non-Jews

Sikhism

Sikhism believes in the principle of justice and to fight for justice where it does not exist. Equality and sewa (service to others) would clearly indicate that discrimination is wrong.



- Using the same mud, The Creator has created many shapes in many ways – Guru Gobind Singh
- Those who love God love everyone (Adi Granth)
- God created everyone so all are equal so deserve the same treatment and respect
- The use of the Langar suggests everyone is welcome – Sikh or not
- God is without caste – Guru Granth Sahib

Tasks:

1. What are the Buddhist beliefs and teachings about prejudice?

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2. What are the Christian beliefs and teachings about prejudice?

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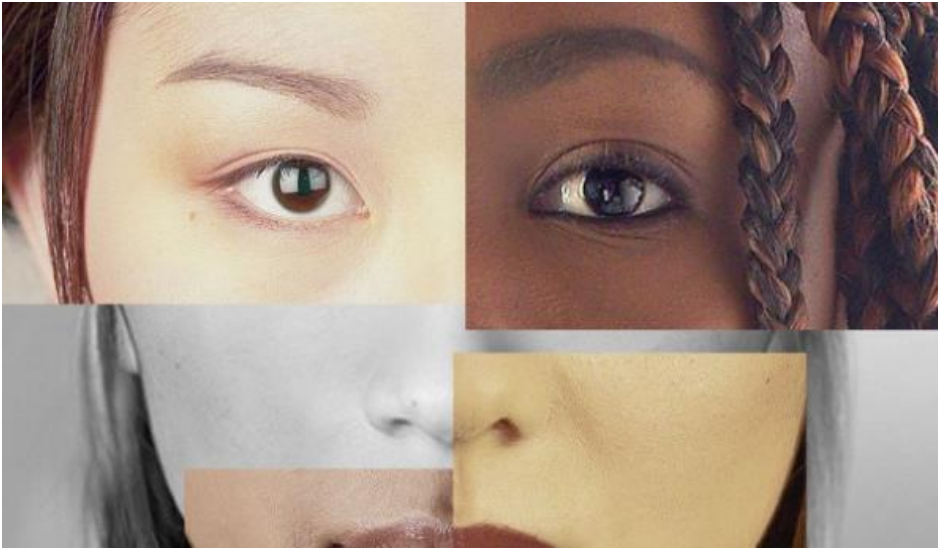
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3. What are the Hindu beliefs and teachings about prejudice?

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Racism



Racism is the belief that the colour of a person's skin, or their race, makes a person less valuable than others, so they can be treated unfairly. We use the word 'racist' to describe someone who discriminates against people of other races in a negative way.

The slave trade in the 17th and 18th centuries was based on the belief that people of colour were somehow of less value than other people, and so could be bought and sold, and treated in any way, with no rights at all. It cost the lives of tens of thousands and destroyed many communities. This attitude of superiority still exists in the world today. The statistics in the UK show that if you are black, you are more likely to get excluded from school, to achieve less highly than others, to get stopped by the police more often, to get sent to prison, to be murdered – the list goes on.

The police keep record of race-related crimes, which show that those of Asian heritage suffer most hate crimes, often people they are thought to be Muslim. This is in direct relation to society's perception of the nature of Muslims as portrayed by groups such as the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIL / ISIS.

Equality and Justice

Religions believe in equality (that we all have the same intrinsic value, and are special beings) and in justice (that things must be made fair, and wrongs made right). So it seems impossible that religious believers could support prejudice of any kind. Prejudice clearly suggests a sense of superiority (not equality) and leads to injustice (not justice).

Positive discrimination though can help to bring about both as it tries to raise up the life and well-being, as well as the profile and status, of many minority groups.

Tasks:

1. What is racism?

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2. What does the word 'racist' describe?

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3. What happened in the 17th and 18th centuries, based on racism?

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4. What attitude still exists in the world today?

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5. If you are black in the world, what do statistics show you are more likely to do/be?

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6. Which race suffers the most crime in the UK?

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7. Why do people of this race suffer the most crime?

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8. What do religions believe in?

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9. What does prejudice lead to?

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10. What can help to bring about equality and justice?

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What does the law say in the UK?



There are laws in the UK to deal with discrimination. As prejudice is about the way people think, the law cannot do anything, but when that prejudice turns into discriminative actions, then the law can act. However, discrimination is not always easy to prove.

The 1976 Race Relations Act (RRA) made it illegal to discriminate against anyone because of race, nationality, ethnic or national background in four main areas: jobs, education, housing and the provision of services; to use threatening or abusive language in regard to race. It also made it illegal to publish anything to stir up racial hatred.

The Commission for Racial Equality was set up to deal with cases of discrimination and to act as a watchdog against racism. In 2000, the RRA Amendment Act was introduced as a way of strengthening the 1976 Act. It stressed the need to promote harmony and tolerance amongst all people.

There have also been laws passed about Equal Pay (1975), Sex Discrimination (1975), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and the Sexual Orientation Regulation (2007). All these Acts have been superseded by the Equality Act (2010).

As well as the law there are organisations that support victims and try to improve awareness of the discrimination certain groups face. There are also many organisations which fight prejudice and which support victims.



JCORE is the Jewish Council for Racial Equality. They believe that concern for social justice should be an important part of Jewish identity and that Jews have a duty to both work

with others and to work for others in the struggle against discrimination. They do a lot of work to educate Jewish children about this duty and to support asylum seekers in the UK.

FAIR (www.fair.org) is the Forum against Islamophobia and Racism. This organisation is all about making the UK less Islamophobic, less anti-Semitic and less racist. They see no place for attacks on Muslims and Jews in a civilised society, and reject the extreme actions of some Muslims as being against the religion. Part of their work is to encourage and facilitate discussion between Jews and Muslims, rather than fuelling hatred between the two or against them.

Tasks:

1. What did the 1976 Race Relations Act do?

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2. What was the Commission for Racial Equality set up to deal with?

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3. What was the RRA introduced for?

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4. Which Act superseded the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts?

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5. If What is JCORE and what does it do?

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6. What is FAIR and what does it do?

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Religious Attitudes to Wealth

How do people become wealthy?

Highly paid jobs, winning the lottery, being born into wealth, inheriting wealth, owning a successful business and being talented are all ways in which people can become wealthy. In addition, people can become wealthy through crime and gambling,

What might be seen as fine might not to others. If people have worked all their lives we tend to accept this, but are less accepting if they got their money otherwise. If it seems undeserved, we do not like it, often because we are unsympathetic to that person, for example, a criminal winning the lottery. Even if we accept the way they earned the money we then turn to how they use or spend it. If the rich use their money well for example, giving to charity, looking after friends and family, and do not flaunt it, then they tend to receive less criticism. As humans, we are great at double standards. We might to the same if we were rich, but because we are not, we are very quick to judge.

Buddhism

Buddhism believes that there is essentially nothing wrong with having wealth; rather how it is used.

- Riches ruin the foolish...through craving for riches, the foolish one ruins himself – Dharmapada
- Acquiring wealth is acceptable if, at the same time, it promotes the well-being of the community or society – Phra Rajavaramuni
- Unskillful thoughts founded in greed are what keeps us circling samsara, in an endless round of repetitive, habitual attachment



Buddhism encourages right action, right thought, right intention and right livelihood. For the wealthy to see poverty and ignore it would be wrong.

Christianity

Christians believe that there is nothing wrong with wealth itself; it is how we use it that matters. We can use it for good and bad. Wealth is seen as a gift from God. Our money should come from lawful



means. In the Bible there is the warning that the wrong attitude for money could lead people away from God.

- For the love of money is the roots of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:10)
- No one can serve two masters - you cannot serve both money and God
- Be on your guard against all kinds of greed: a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Luke 12:15)

Hinduism

For Hindus, it is important to create wealth (artha) to provide for their family and maintain society. Rich devotees should not hoard wealth, but use it in stewardship roles. Excess wealth can bring problems as it can lead to over indulgence and materialistic rather than spiritual living.

- Money causes pain when earned, it causes pain to keep it and it causes pain to lose as well as to spend (Panchatantra)
- Happiness arises from contentment, uncontrolled pursuit of wealth will result in unhappiness (Manu)
- Act in the world as a servant, look after everyone and act as if everything belongs to you, but know in your heart that nothing is yours – you are the guardian, the servant of God.
- Hindus believe that life is all about good deeds here and now. This not only helps the receiver but it helps the giver's own rebirth.



Islam

Islam teaches that all wealth is a gift from Allah; humans are caretakers of Allah's wealth and we will be judged by our use of it.

- Riches are sweet, a source of blessing to those who acquire them by the way – but those who seek it out of greed are like people who eat but are never full (Hadith)



- To try to earn a lawful livelihood is an obligation like all other obligations in Islam – no one has eaten better food than what he can earn by the work of his own hands (Hadith)
- It is not poverty which I fear for you, but that you might begin to desire the world as others before you desired it, and it might destroy you as it destroyed them (Hadith)

Islam teaches that wealth comes from Allah for us to use it to the benefit of humanity.

Judaism

Judaism believes that wealth is a gift from G-d and can be used for the self and others. The Tenakh clearly states that money can only be earned in the correct way. Materialism can lead to people sinning – if your heart is filled with the desire for money then there is no room for G-d. The Talmud does see that a decent standard of living is needed for the well-being of the individual.



- Do not weary yourself trying to become rich (Proverbs)
- He who loves silver cannot be satisfied with silver (Ecclesiastes)
- He who has a hundred, craves for two hundred (The Midrash)
- Money is not desired but it is necessary

Sikhism

Sikhs believe that anyone possessing riches has been blessed by God as they are able to help the poor. Livelihoods should be made by honest means. Anything that is earned dishonestly is seen as 'blood of the poor'.



- One who lives by earning through hard work, then gives some of it away to charity, knows the way to God (Guru Gobind Singh)
- Be grateful to God for whose bounties you enjoy (Guru Nanak)
- Those who have money have the anxiety of greed (Adi Granth)

Tasks:

1. What are the Buddhist beliefs and teachings about wealth?

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2. What are the Christian beliefs and teachings about wealth?

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3. What are the Hindu beliefs and teachings about wealth?

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4. What are the Muslim beliefs and teachings about wealth?

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Causes of Poverty

- Disease / disability
- Bad investments
- Climate / natural disasters
- Idleness or lack of effort
- People trafficking
- High-interest loans
- War/corrupt governments
- Addiction
- Family and upbringing
- Debt
- Lack of education / employment
- High taxes
- Immigration
- Unfair trade / poor wages



Religious Teachings about the Duty to Tackle Poverty

Buddhism

- Karuna (compassion) wishing others freedom from suffering
- 'Today everyone is looking for personal happiness. So, I always say, if you wish to be happy and aim for self-interest, then care for others. This brings lasting happiness.' (Dalai Lama)



Christianity

- If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need, how can the love of God be in him? (1 John 3:17)
- If a brother has no clothes or food what good is it to wish him well without caring for his physical needs? (James 2:15)



Hinduism

- Some believe by helping those in poverty, they can improve their own karma and rebirth
- It is taught: 'it is the same God shining out through so many different eyes. So helping others is no different than helping ourselves.'



Islam

- He who eats and drinks whilst his brother goes hungry is not one of us (Hadith)
- For a debtor, give him time to pay – but if you let it go out of charity this is the best thing to do (Qur'an)



Judaism

- You shall not burden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother (Torah)
- The Torah forbids charging a fellow Jew interest on money



Sikhism

- A good person always seeks the welfare of others – Bhai Gurdas
- A place in God's court can only be attained if we do service to others in the world

Tasks:

1. What are the causes of poverty? Name five.

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2. What are the Buddhist teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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3. What are the Christian teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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4. What are the Hindu teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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5. What are the Muslim teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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6. What are the Jewish teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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7. What are the Sikh teachings about the duty to tackle poverty?

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How the Poor are Exploited

Fair Pay

This means being paid at a rate that is appropriate for the work done. Also, that there is equal pay between men and women for the same job. It is a difficult issue because no one can say objectively what 'appropriate' pay is. Pay can be based on hours worked, qualifications

needed, the necessity of the job and the type of job. A person might work a lot of hours but be low paid whereas another might work fewer hours at a highly qualified job and get paid more. There are some who are paid excessive wages like footballers, whereas a nurse is paid much less. The minimum wage in the UK protects the very low paid, though this by many is seen as not enough and therefore they pay the 'living wage', which is slightly more. There are workers who are exploited in the UK and there are those who do not deserve the wages and bonuses they get. Low-paid workers often do jobs of great necessity for our everyday living, so it is not as if the job is worthless, yet the wages they are paid by government or employers are unfair. Remember 'fair' does not mean 'equal' as this would be impossible to achieve.

In the UK religion has played a large part in campaigning for an increase in the minimum wage and working for the interest of the low-paid. Regular statements are made, particularly by Church bishops to highlight this issue for the poor. There is a balance to be found as paying higher wages might mean fewer jobs, but even so there are too many people who are working really hard for long hours of work but little money.

Excessive Interest on Loans

Those in poverty often take loans to pay for what they need. It might be to pay for Christmas as wages are not



enough, or as a one-off item not budgeted for, for example, a new fridge. Loan companies exploit this by offering same-day release of money, but the rate to pay it back can be huge – even thousands of per cent interest. People paying weekly only at the minimum rate will see that what they owe actually increases rather than reduces. Each payment only pays off some of the interest on the loan which gets bigger and bigger. The poor often fall behind on payments and some take on additional loans to pay off the first loan. This is a vicious circle of increasing debt. The loan companies make a lot of money this way. In 2015, the government implemented restrictions on interest, but it was nowhere near enough, so poverty increased.

All religions disagree with these loans. In fact, Islam does not allow interest for fellow Muslims, and Judaism for fellow Jews. Religions accept that companies have to make profits, but disagree with the extent that loans can exploit people. They exploit their need, their inability to pay and their lack of understanding as to how the system works. The loans only make situations worse.



Tasks:

1. What does 'fair pay' mean?

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2. Why is 'fair pay' different to 'equal pay'?

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3. What is an example of a person being paid unfairly for the type of work that they do?

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4. What has religion had a large role in campaigning for?

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5. What do Church bishops regularly make?

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6. What are excessive interest loans?

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7. What is the problem with excessive interest loans?

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8. What do religions believe about excessive interest loans?

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People Trafficking



'People trafficking' is a modern-day slave trade. People are 'sold' for many purposes. Trafficking gangs take large amounts of money, but the people find themselves in awful situations that they cannot escape. Poor people in foreign countries are offered the

'chance of a better life' in another country. It might be war-torn or a place where there is little opportunity and a trafficker offers to take an individual to a wealthier country, if they can pay the price. This can be thousands of pounds and families will save up to give a person a better chance. Often, these people find themselves in slavery and prostitution when they get to their 'better life' and are told they have to pay more so are forced to work to obtain their freedom. Many live in fear as essentially they are illegal immigrants. They live in terrible conditions, often suffering violence and never achieving freedom from these gangs.

Some are trafficked to work, bring 'bought' by rich families to work for very little. Again, people pay, believing they will get a job and will be able to send money home to their families. It actually means they are being sold into slavery. They have no idea of what is actually going to happen and their families are given false promises. This sadly often involves children.



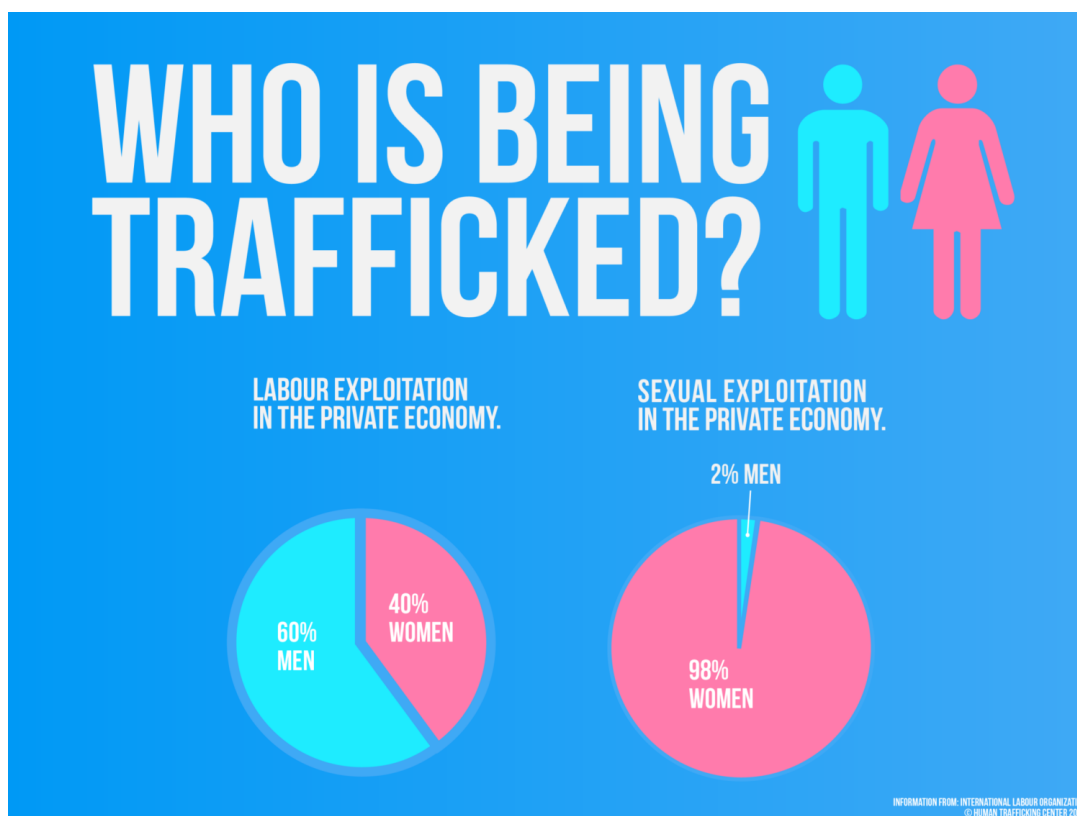
In recent years, we have seen people trafficked across Europe. They are migrant workers who cannot get into the UK legally, so gangs offer to smuggle them in for a high price. Some pay it and get here, whilst some are caught and often deported back to their country of origin. Some are successfully smuggled only to find themselves at the mercy of the gangs who demand more money, which they have to work to get.

2015 saw a new type of people trafficking, with many people trying to escape war-torn areas of the world like Afghanistan, Somalia and the Congo, Syria and Iraq. They paid for the right to a journey on a boat to get to Europe from there they could try and make their way to a country that would accept them. The



journey cost them vast sums of money and many of these people were not poor; they simply saw no other way to escape the horrors of their own countries, so paid what they were asked. Many of the boats were inadequate and they sank, killing men, women and children. Once in Europe, they had no right to claim status in any country – millions have been 'displaced'.

Religions see this activity as not only illegal, but as inhumane and totally unacceptable in a modern world. It goes against every kind of moral principle and religious teaching about our treatment of each other.



Tasks:

1. What is 'people trafficking'?

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2. What are poor people in foreign countries offered?

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3. What are trafficked people forced to do to obtain their freedom?

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4. Sadly, who does people trafficking often involve?

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5. What happens if people are caught trying to get into a country?

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6. What happened in 2015?

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7. What happened to the boats?

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8. What do religions see 'people trafficking' as?

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Responsibility for Those Living in Poverty

Who should help the poor?

1. The Government

We elect a government to look after the best interests of society and this includes the poor. They provide for the needs of the country as a whole and for individuals.

They should help because they have the means to help: they collect taxes to finance the running of public services. {People will not vote them into power if they do not help.

The Government has the health services, educational services, welfare services, links to business and the means to bring all these together to help the poor. They have the money, expertise and the access to coordinate helping the poor. Also, their policy decisions on saving and spending directly affect the wealth of individuals, for example, cutting benefits or spending more on the homeless.



2. Charities

A charity by its very nature is set up to help. It collects money to help its cause and therefore has the means to help.

Charities should help because that is the reason they exist. They are set up on religious or humanitarian principles, that is, compassion and wanting to reduce suffering. People who belong to these charities perhaps just want to 'give something back' to society to help those who have not had the same opportunities they had.



HELP *for*
HEROES
Support for our Wounded

They fund-raise through organised events, national charity shops, donation collection and do on. They then decide through experience how what is raised is best spent.

3. Religions

Religions are about communities and helping each other. The worship of God has to be seen in action as well as in words. They should help as the teachings of holy books tell them it is their duty. Famous leaders in history and today put the poor at the heart of their work. Also, helping the poor is seen as doing God's work, or showing loving kindness or bringing social justice to the world. God rewards such action.

Religions organise community events, donate to religious charities, work with the poor here and abroad, pray for them and simply be there for people in their times of need.



4. The Poor

The poor need to want to help themselves or at least want help from others or the help is wasted. The poor should not want to remain poor. They should want to improve their situation rather than staying reliant on society and charity. Often, it is about believing that life can improve for them. Some people are poor due to their own action (e.g. drugs) or inactions (e.g. not gaining qualifications), so they do have a responsibility to themselves to change this.

They have to believe things can improve, take the help that is on offer and work hard to become independent again. Small steps can change things greatly. Many have made efforts to get out of poverty, but been knocked back, so it is up to society to make it possible for the poor to help themselves.



Tasks:

1. Explain in detail the responsibility that the government has to the poor.

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2. Explain in detail the responsibility that charities have to the poor.

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3. Explain in detail the responsibility that religions have to the poor.

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4. Explain in detail the responsibility that the poor have to themselves.

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Charity

Buddhism: International Buddhism Relief Organisation

History: The aim is to give practical and direct help to all living beings anywhere in the world. It sees itself as having a duty, especially to the most vulnerable, particularly children to whom the future belongs. It sets up sponsorship for many children in many countries.



I.B.R.O

United Kingdom

Registered Charity No. 1049429

Recent Project: In Malawi, IBRO has financed the digging and building of wells so that the villages can get clean water. Communities have been able to redirect time previously spent fetching water into projects such as growing more food. This is lifting them out of poverty.



Christianity: CAFOD

History: This was set up in 1962. Historically, Catholic churches

generated charity funds on one specific day of each year. They themselves decided what to do with this money. Cafod was the organisation set up to centralise the fund-raising, and be more effective and wide-ranging with it. Working which began as disaster relief and aid work now includes campaigning for a fairer world, and a cast array of educational work, including a schools magazine as well as church magazines.

Recent Project: Nicaragua is the second-poorest country in the Americas. Cafod is contributing to a range of revival and urban projects to transform people's lives, for example, projects to give emotional and educational support for women and girls so that they do not get forced into sexual exploitation.

Hinduism: Sewa International

History: This is a UK charity, entirely run by dedicated volunteers from all sections of the community. It



funds long-term projects for economic development. It tried to combine modern and indigenous techniques to improve living conditions in affected disaster areas of India. It focuses on education, orphanages, village amenities and employment.

Recent Project: The Women's Empowerment Project runs in Odisha, India. Its major focus is to form village women's committees. This tried to give women a greater say in the decisions made in their village. It also educates women, because it is proved that for every year of education a woman has, the better her children's lives will be and the better their life chances in the future. Her education encourages theirs and gives her more ideas for what they could do and more ambition for them.



Islam: Muslim Aid

History: Works on over 70 countries across Africa, Asia and Europe. It aims to help the poor overcome their suffering by reducing poverty. It responds to emergencies but at the same time sets up strategic programmes to eliminate poverty, focusing on education and skills, provision of clean water, healthcare and ways to generate income.

Recent Projects: Beity Syrian Orphanage Appeal was set up in Turkey to take orphans children from the Syrian crisis. It makes sure they have food, medicines and education at the orphanage. For many it also provides trauma counselling. These children have a chance to rebuild their lives.

Judaism: World Jewish Relief



History: Founded in 1933 to remove Jews from the horrors taking place in Nazi Germany and brought 70,000 Jewish people to safety before the start of the Second World War. After the war, work began to respond to the needs of Jewish refugees and communities all over the world, with the aim of supporting Jews in distress. Its work involves empowering local communities by teaching them to be self-sufficient/ Today WJR stands as the leading UK international agency responding to the needs of Jewish

communities at risk or in crisis, outside the UK and Israel. At times of major international disaster, they lead the UK Jewish community's response to others in need all over the world.

Recent Project: WJR funds three centres which support over 100 former street children to give them a chance of escaping poverty. It provides food and shelter, and access to medical and social workers as well as trauma counsellors. It ensures that they have an education and vocational training.

Sikhism: Khalsa Aid

History: It is based in Slough – UK, as a humanitarian



organisation run on Sikh principles, especially sewa (service to humanity). It runs entirely from donations and volunteers actually pay their own expenses. One of its aims is to strive to assist in any possible way to combat poverty.

Recent Project: In the Punjab region there has been a lot of flooding. Many villages have been destroyed and crops have been devastated. Khalsa Aid has responded by supplying food rations, blankets and clothes to affected people. They have also sent equipment to help ensure clean water is available. Khalsa Aid is working with the communities to help them rebuild, and to get them through to the time when their new crops will be harvested.



Tasks:

1. Explain the history and work of International Buddhism Relief.

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1. Explain the history and work of CAFOD.

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1. Explain the history and work of Sewa International.

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1. Explain the history and work of Muslim Aid.

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2. Explain the history and work of World Jewish Relief.

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2. Explain the history and work of Khalsa Aid.

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Poverty in the UK

There are some charities that focus on key areas of poverty in the UK. Sometimes when we see poverty in Africa, for example, we forget that actually there are plenty of poor people in the UK too.

Shelter

Shelter is the UK's leading housing and homelessness charity. Shelter helps millions



of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through their advice, support and legal services. They campaign so that, one day, no one will have to turn for them for help, and that no one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

The charity for formed in 1966 by Bruce Kenrick (founder chairman) and Des Wilson (founder-director), in response to the country's massive housing crisis. Their vision – along was to establish one organisation to speak for the millions of 'hidden homeless' living in overcrowded slums.

Today, housing problems are again a national concern and more people than ever before need Shelter's support. Our housing shortage touches everyone – from those struggling to set up a home, to those trying to hold on to the one they've got. Every eleven minutes in Britain another family becomes homeless.



Giving
Hope
Today

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army work all year round to:

- Rebuild lives – offering a hand-up to homeless people, a family tracing service, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, anti-human-trafficking services
- Offer – food parcels, lunch clubs for older people, supporting the emergency services during major fire and incidents, visiting prisoners
- Giving people the chance to belong – youth clubs and music groups, for example

As a Christian Church and registered charity, the Salvation Army also runs a Christmas Present Appeal each year for children, the homeless and older people who would have little or nothing at Christmas time. It runs homeless and resettlement centres, care homes for older people, employment services for the long-term unemployed, support services to the armed forces and home-visiting services in local communities. All this is done by volunteers and ministers who believe in putting their Christian beliefs into action and to follow Jesus' example to help (not judge) anyone who is in need.

Issues with giving to charity: dilemmas

- Do we give to charity or directly to the individual
- Do we give money, for example to a beggar or buy them food
- How do we know the money we give actually helps the people who need it?
- How much of each £1 we give to charity is actually spent on the poor?
- How much does it cost to run the charity work?
- Which charities do we choose to give to when so many are so deserving?



Exam-style questions

1. What is meant by the term prejudice? (1 mark)

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2. What is meant by the term justice? (1 mark)

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3. Which word describes the idea of acting upon a prejudice? (1 mark)

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4. Which word describes the idea of a duty that someone has to carry out? (1 mark)

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5. What is social justice? (1 mark)

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6. What is compassion? (1 mark)

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7. What is meant by the term stewardship? (1 mark)

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8. What is meant by the term tolerance? (1 mark)

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9. Give two human rights. (2 marks)

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10. State two charities who work for social justice. (2 marks)

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11. Can you explain the importance of stewardship? (2 marks)

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12. Give two religious arguments for giving to charity. (2 marks)

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13. Can you explain positive discrimination? (2 marks)

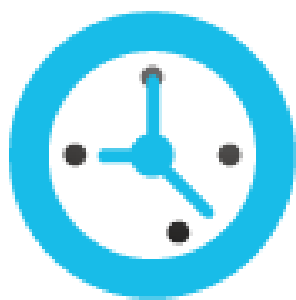
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14. Give two reasons why poverty exists. (2 marks)

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15. Can you explain how religion influences charity? (2 marks)

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Time + Effort = Success

16. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about social justice. (4 marks)

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17. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about human rights. (4 marks)

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18. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about freedom of religious expression. (4 marks)

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19. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about rights and responsibilities. (4 marks)

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20. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about prejudice and discrimination. (4 marks)

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21. Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about the cause of poverty. (4 marks)

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22. Explain two religious beliefs sexuality discrimination. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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23. Explain two religious beliefs about disability discrimination. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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24. Explain two religious beliefs about the use of wealth. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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25. Explain two religious beliefs about the exploitation of the poor. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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26. Explain two religious beliefs about responsibility to those in poverty. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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27. Explain two religious beliefs about supporting charities. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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28. Explain two religious beliefs about poverty in the UK. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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29. Explain two religious beliefs about working for social justice. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. (5 marks)

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