



25 Church Lane
Nether Poppleton
York
YO26 6LF
01904 341004

Mala News

Patrons

Felicity Kendal CBE
Maharajah of Benares
Sir Mark Tully OBE
Lady Young
Madeline Weinrib
Obeetee Pvt Ltd

Indian Caste System

The Indian caste system is, in some ways, like the class system we have in the west, yet much more obvious, as a lot of castes are adopted into the family name like Gupta, Patel, Yadav.

Student caste profile				
Category	Caste	No of the students	Total	%
Upper Caste	Brahmin	51	113	8.62
	Kshatriya	47		
	Baniya	9		
	Kayastha	3		
	Pathan	3		
Lower Caste	Bind	166	1198	91.68
	Chauhan	68		
	Gaud	12		
	Gupta	16		
	Halwai	2		
	Mali	3		
	Maurya	99		
	Muslim	30		
	Naai	10		
	Nat	8		
	Pal	68		
	Patel	74		
	Praajapati	43		
	Vishawkarma	20		
	Yadav	221		
	Dhobi	1		
	Harijan	201		
Kol	103			
Saroj	39			
Sonkar	12			
Dharkar	2			
		1311		

Under the Indian constitution, it is illegal to discriminate against lower caste people. However, 70 years after independence, it is clear that caste segregation still looms large in the lives of Indian people today.

If you are in a lower caste group your expectations and indeed life expectancy itself, are less than those in a higher caste. As a lower caste person you would be expected to respect the boundaries that divide the social classes. Your standing in the community and likewise your employment and marriage prospects are also restricted. Results of a survey found that only 11% of women had married outside their own caste. Attitudes are slowly changing but will progress a lot faster if lower caste children are able to reach higher levels of education.

Our main aim is to help children, of whatever caste, achieve their full potential. As the chart shows, we have children from many castes, but if they want respect from their peers they will only get it by doing well in their studies.

Although children in Project Mala schools are aware of their caste, we are pleased that it plays no part in the treatment and respect the children give to each other.

When I asked for a photograph of children from different castes sitting together, I wondered if it would have to be staged, but Anil quickly came back with the picture below because these children are real friends and were sitting together at lunch. Nitesh and Shivangini are Brahmins, Nargis and Fajal are Muslims and Manorama and Suresh are

lower caste. The girls are in class ten and the boys are in class eleven of our Guria Secondary School.



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Regards

Robin Garland

Project Mala

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01904 341004

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