



Q2P

DESCRIPTION

Q2P is a film about toilets and the cities of Mumbai and Delhi. The title of the film *Q2P* when said aloud is 'queue to pee', referring to the waiting line outside public toilets. Access to toilets varies in relation to gender and caste. The film examines how 'cities of the future' are designed in terms of sanitation. We hear the silence that surrounds toilets and sense how similar it is to the silence that surrounds inequality. The toilet becomes a riddle with many answers, some of which are themselves questions – about gender, class, caste, space and urban development.

DIRECTOR

Paromita Vohra

PLACE

India

YEAR

2006

Whole Film	
Main Theme	Other Themes
Sex and Gender	Caste and Class; Politics and Power; Medical Anthropology

Film Contents					
	Timing	Clip Title	Lesson Purpose	Main Theme	Other Themes
Clip 1	10:36 – 23:16	Toilets in India	Students will examine what toilets can tell us about social hierarchy in India.	Caste and Class	Sex and Gender; Politics and Power
Clip 2	24:38 – 34:03	Toilets for Women and Girls	Students will understand issues surrounding gender inequality in public toilet provision.	Sex and Gender	Caste and Class; Medical Anthropology

Additional Resources on Page 8

Clip 1

10:36 – 23:16



Toilets in India



Lesson Purpose

Students will examine what toilets can tell us about social hierarchy in India.

Lesson Objectives

Students must be able to identify some of the social issues that surround toilets in India.
 Students should be able to explain the link between the scheduled castes and toilets.
 Students could discuss the design of city spaces in terms of toilets, caste and gender.

MAIN THEME

Caste and Class

OTHER THEME

Sex and Gender;
 Politics and Power

GOOD TO KNOW

The term 'untouchables' is used by people in this film, but it is often deemed to be offensive, so in this resource we use the term 'scheduled castes'. Another alternative name for these people is 'Dalit'. See the 'Fact File' and 'Related Films' for additional information.

FACT FILE

Caste is a form of social stratification associated with Hinduism and the Indian subcontinent. It is a cultural system based on symbolic ideas of purity, and a social system of hierarchical rules and regulatory practices. Different strata of society, associated with different roles and occupations, are also known as 'castes'. People of higher castes tend to be associated with ritually pure occupations, while lower castes handle materials that are thought to be polluting.

People born into a particular caste normally marry within it. In anthropology, such marrying within a defined group is known as endogamy. The caste system is linked with the Hindu belief in reincarnation: your position in the caste system depends on the deeds of your previous life. Only by rebirth can a person change caste.

In India, caste operates on two different levels:

1. Jatis: social groups within a community that are specific to a location and occupation.
2. Varnas: overarching caste groups, of which there are four (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisha and Shudra). Below the Shudras are the scheduled castes or Dalits (formerly known as the 'untouchables'). The 'scheduled castes' undertake polluting activities (such as dealing with emissions of the human body).

STARTER ACTIVITY

- a. What difference do you think having a toilet inside a person's home (rather than in a separate building or outside) makes to someone's life?
- b. Historically, have people in your country always had a toilet inside their home?

BEFORE WATCHING CLIP 1

1. The number and location of toilets, drinking fountains, changing rooms etc. influence social life. Draw a simple map of your school, college or workplace, marking the locations of these facilities.
2. Consider
 - a. how the locations of toilets, drinking fountains, changing rooms etc. affect the way people move and interact in the space; and
 - b. why the building or space was designed in this way.

At the start of this film, we learn that in development plans for Indian cities, relatively few areas of the city are reserved for public toilets.

WHILE WATCHING CLIP 1

Make a list of inequalities related to toilets in India.

Play clip 1 search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/4009081

SUGGESTED EXERCISE

1. How is the distribution of toilets in Mumbai influencing social life?
2. What explanations are given in the clip for why people from the scheduled castes always perform tasks associated with toilets?
3. In this clip, we meet two women who are both called Santosh. They work as cleaners for the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). What do we learn about their lives?

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION

Discuss the statement 'people design spaces and spaces design people' in relation to caste and gender in India.

Teacher: *Students could consider that even though some parts of the city appear to be modernising, old divisions remain. People from scheduled castes are still manually cleaning the toilet facilities used by people of higher castes.*

COMPARISON

The idea of what is dirty or taboo is culturally constructed and may differ across space and time. The Toilet Museum shows many varying toilet practices, and has a replica of the throne/toilet of King Louis XIII of France. At the time it was in use in France this was considered fashionable, but now such a throne might be considered strange, unpleasant or even 'dirty'.

Can you think of practices related to health and cleanliness which are acceptable in your country today that would not have been thought acceptable a hundred years ago, and vice versa?

SUMMARY TASK

Examine the connection between caste and toilet provision in India.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

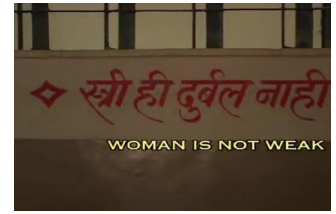
How has this lesson changed your perception of the toilets in your home/school/college/workplace?

Clip 2

24:38 – 34:03



Toilets for Women and Girls



Lesson Purpose

Students will understand issues surrounding gender inequality in public toilet provision.

Lesson Objectives

Students must be able to understand why women and girls in India may not be able to use public toilets.

Students should be able to explain the health, educational and social consequences of this.

Students could assess why the toilet needs of women and girls are not prioritised in India.

MAIN THEME

Sex and Gender

OTHER THEME

Caste and Class;
Politics and Power;
Medical Anthropology

STARTER ACTIVITY

There are very few public toilets in Indian cities, and often these are for men rather than women. Why do you think this might be? What consequences do you think this might have?

Play clip 2 search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/4009776

SUGGESTED EXERCISE

1. What reasons are given by girls and women in the clip for not using:
 - a. toilets in schools (teachers and students); and
 - b. public toilets.

Teacher: Encourage students to recognise the range of issues surrounding toilet provision in India. Simply building a toilet does not always solve the problem. For example, schools may lack funds to maintain and clean toilets effectively. The clip touches on the embarrassment girls and women may feel about discussing toilets with other people. For at least some of the women in this clip, there seems to be an expectation that they should be able to exert self-control (so avoid using public toilets altogether).

2. What short- and long-term implications could not using the toilet regularly have for the women and girls in the clip? Create a table with two columns (short term and long term) to demonstrate your answer.

Teacher: Encourage students to recognise that the medical health of girls and women in India is being affected by a range of issues connected with sanitation. Medical anthropologists can offer insights into the way health issues are understood in particular communities and the range of factors (including social and political ones) that combine to create incidences of illness.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION

Discussion 1

Using information from the clip and your own knowledge, discuss the statement: 'safety and sanitation are gendered issues'.

Discussion 2

Do you think the situation will improve for women in India? Why or why not?

Teacher: For both discussions, encourage students to consider the factors involved, and why the needs of women and girls might not always be prioritised. Because many people of lower castes in India cannot afford to have toilets in their own homes, many use communal toilet blocks or go to the toilet in the open. After dark, this can be particularly dangerous, and we hear from two women that they never go alone at night, they always go in groups. For further information about this situation in a slum neighbourhood, students could watch [45:05] – [49:34]. At the end of Clip 2, we hear news reports about a gang rape in Delhi, and a newscaster warns women and girls to not travel alone in Mumbai. Later in this film ([35:36] – [40:55]), we see a large group of women gathering together at an event to 'reclaim the night'. Nandita Shah, a women's activist, says:

Whether I've been raped or not I'll always be afraid. What will happen to me out at night? What will happen after 7? By then I must return home to be safe By meeting here and staying out all night together We will struggle against our fear and conquer it.

([35:36] – [36:03]).

COMPARISON

In Clip 2, several women express their embarrassment over talking about the toilet and needing to use a public toilet. Is a sense of embarrassment or shame about going to the toilet found in other cultures?

Teacher: Encourage students to think about the range of euphemisms people use to refer to the 'toilet'.

Compare this film with another ethnographic example which involves 'polluting' substances and gender.

Teacher: See Okely 2013 in the 'Introductory Texts' for another ethnographic example.

SUMMARY TASK

Evaluate the issues in toilet provision for women in India.

CLOSING ACTIVITY

What do you appreciate most about your toilet?

Additional Resources

INTRODUCTORY TEXTS

Eriksen. T.H. 2015. *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Pluto. Chapter 2 (pp. 142–56), which is about social hierarchies, discusses inequality and caste.

Okely, J. 2013. Gypsy women: models in conflict. In H. Callan, B. Street & S. Underdown (eds.), *Introductory Readings in Anthropology*, pp. 166–73. New York: Berghahn Books in association with the Royal Anthropological Institute.

This explores ideas and behaviours surrounding cleanliness, polluting substances and gender in a gypsy community. Okely discusses toilet blocks, menstruation and pregnancy in relation to these issues.

ADVANCED TEXTS

Clark-Decès, I. 2011. *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Includes chapters on a range of relevant topics, including caste, governance, transnationalism and illness.

RELATED FILMS

Caste at Birth, 1991 (dir. M. Hamermesh; dist. Filmmakers Library): search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity|video_work|4009040.

Caste at Birth focuses on people from scheduled castes in India. We hear in their own words about their lives, and also from people of higher castes who benefit from their services. The film includes interviews with a few scheduled-caste people who have, against the odds, become politicians, writers and doctors. These, however, are the exceptions. Government policies have had relatively little impact on the hundreds of thousands who are still, amongst other devalued roles, bonded labourers and rock-breakers. Most have little hope of changing the outcome for their children who, like their parents, may be illiterate and malnourished. The association of scheduled castes with pollution continues to be perpetuated.

THIS GUIDE search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/4076047