Directions: Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow in the space provided.

A Hindu View of the Four Classes

In traditional India, society was organized into hereditary social classes, known as castes. Hindus believed that each person was born into a particular social class based on behavior in a previous life. Membership in a caste was based on birth and lasted for one's entire life. One could not marry someone from another caste or move into another caste based upon one's achievements. Within each caste a person was expected to fulfill the duties and obligations of their position.

Originally there were four basic classes in Hindu society, as well as a large number of untouchables. Untouchables were viewed as so low as to be outside the caste system. Untouchables were given the work none else wanted to do, such as sweeping the streets, or handling the dead. Within each class there developed many castes. Castes were based on the ancient divisions of tribe, profession, and religion.

The Code of Manu, the most famous of the Hindu books of sacred law, was written sometime during the first and second centuries B.C.E. It outlines the duties of the four classes as seen from the traditional Hindu viewpoint.

The Code of Manu: For the sake of the preservation of this entire creation, Purusha, the exceedingly resplendent one, assigned separate duties to the classes which had sprung from his mouth, arms, thighs, and feet.

Teaching, studying, performing sacrificial rites, so too making others perform sacrificial rites, and giving away and receiving gifts—these he assigned to the brahmins.

Protection of the people, giving away of wealth, performance of sacrificial rites, study, and nonattachment to sensual pleasures—these are, in short, the duties of a kshatriya.

Tending cattle, giving away of wealth, performance of sacrificial rites, study, trade and commerce...and agriculture—these are the occupations of a vaisy.

The Lord has prescribed only one occupation...for a sudra; namely, service without malice (bitterness) toward these other three classes.

Source: Rig Veda

1. Identify the duties and obligations of each of the following classes:

   Brahmins:

   Kshatriyas:

   Vaisyas:

   Sudras:

   Untouchables:

2. On a separate sheet of paper provide a graphic representation of these five classes. Use a chart, graph, or picture illustration, to exhibit the different duties and obligations of each caste.
What does this diagram reveal about the impact of the caste system?