

Ron Hoglund, Cranford Public Schools

**Lesson Plan: Global Inequality and Education: The Dalits of India
Fulbright-Hays Study Tour of India, July 2022.**

Scope:

This lesson on the Dalits of India (“untouchables”) was designed as part of a unit on global children and inequality or global ethnic minorities in a Current Global Issues course, but it can also be adapted for a World History course. The list of film resources can be used as teacher resources to learn more about the issue of caste discrimination in India. One or more of the films may be screened in class, as time allows. Assessment suggestions follow to allow instructors to come up with their own creative assessment and rubric, as none are provided here. Assessments can be customized for students of different abilities. Instructors may find it useful to compare caste discrimination against the Dalits of India with racial discrimination in the United States. Giving agency to disenfranchised groups by exploring the means of which they have challenged discriminatory social conditions and resisted oppression is an essential component of this lesson.

Essential Questions:

- What are the reasons behind global inequality?
- In what ways have global ethnic minorities organized to challenge discrimination and create a better future for themselves?
- What solutions are most effective to solve the issue of global inequality?
- Who are the Dalit and what are the roots of caste discrimination in modern India?
- How does the experience of Dalit children in India compare to the experience of children around the globe?

Students Will Be Able To

- Describe various global ethnic communities and explain what action they have taken to fight discrimination.
- Analyze text and describe life for Dalit children in India.
- Present what they learn about Dalit children in India to the class.
- Describe how the Dalits in India view American culture and how they may have drawn from our history in their own fight for equality.
- Interpret data from the annual “State of the World’s Children” report by UNICEF.
- Evaluate actions that can be taken to fight against inequality for global ethnic minorities.

Lesson Procedures:

1. Pre-assess. Ask students to come up with examples of specific groups of people who have faced persistent inequality on the global stage. Examples can include: First Peoples of North America; African Americans in the United States; Indigenous communities in Central and South America: Maya, Quechua speakers; select ethnic groups in Africa; “colored” and biracial people in South Africa; Dalits (aka untouchables) in India.

2. Ask students to briefly research each group.
 - a. What are the historical reasons they have faced discrimination?
 - b. What inequalities do they face today?
 - c. What is being done to help them overcome these inequalities?
 - d. What specific challenges do children in these minority groups face?
3. The Dalits in India: Break each class into groups. Distribute copies of the book *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* OR copies of children books on the Dalits by Martin Macwan listed in the resources. Each table will have a book that covers a different aspect of the Dalits experience in India. Give students about 15-20 minutes to browse the books and sketch out a brief report on what they learned. Ask them to select ONE page that most caught their attention and to take a photograph of it so they can share it with the class on the LCD board.
4. Turn-key: Each student group should briefly present to the large class on what they learned about Dalit life and education in India from the book they read.
5. Discussion Questions. After each group has presented, consider the following discussion questions:
 - a. What do the texts reveal about life for children and families in India? How does their experience contrast with the experience of children in the United States?
 - b. What did you find most surprising from the texts about life and education for Dalit children in India?
 - c. How does the experience of Dalits in India compare to the experience of other historically marginalized groups throughout the world?
 - d. How do Dalits in India view the United States and American culture? To what extent have they taken inspiration from United States history or culture in their fight for equality?
 - e. How do actions by Dalits in India to organize and resist oppression compare to similar efforts by African Americans (or other minority communities) in the United States?
 - f. What solutions would you suggest might be most effective in combating the discrimination of Dalit children in India and why?
 - g. What questions do you still have about Dalit children and education in India?
6. Extension Lesson: Screen one of the films in the resources below to learn more about the Dalits of India. Consider assigning students a film reaction or thought paper and having a post-film discussion (this would work well for higher-level students.)
Alternatively, standard level classes may benefit from teacher-created film questions (not included here.)

Assessment Suggestions:

- Assign students to prepare a summary report on the state of children based on the “State of the World’s Children Report” from UNICEF.
- Design an educational campaign to end discrimination of the Dalit in India and/or support education of Dalit Children.
- Create a story board based on Martin Mcwan’s books OR *Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability* on what it is like to be a Dalit child in India

- Write a short fictional story based on the Dalit experience in India.
- Screen one of the films in the resources section and ask students to write a reaction paper OR create reflection questions for them to respond to as they view the film.

Teacher/Class Resources:

Articles/Reports

“State of the World’s Children” 2021 UNICEF Report:

<https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021>

Rethinking Globalization, Chapter V: “Kids for Sale: Child Labor in the Global Economy.”
(edited by Bill Bigelow, 2002)

“Addressing Caste Discrimination Through Non-Formal Education” by Martin Mcwan:

https://www.hurights.or.jp/archives/asia-pacific/section1/hreap_v10_sectoral_education6.pdf

Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability by [Subhash Vyam Durgabai Vyam](#) et al. (2011)

<https://navayana.org/products/bhimayana/?v=7516fd43adaa>

OR for purchase:

<https://www.amazon.com/Bhimayana-Experiences-Untouchability-Subhash-Vyam/dp/8189059173>

“Brown University Bans Caste Discrimination Throughout Campus in First for Ivy League”

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/12/07/us/brown-university-caste-protections-cec/index.html>

Books

Children’s books by Martin Mcwan (If available- difficult to find in the United States.

The book *Bhimayana* is a perfect substitute- see above):

“Me and My Village”

“What is Proper? What is Improper?”

“What Our Hands Can Do.”

“Me and My Mother”

Films:

Writing with Fire (2021) documentary produced by Sushmit Ghosh and Rintu Thomas

Daughters of Destiny (2017) documentary series produced by Vanessa Roth

India’s Forgotten Children (2014) documentary directed by Tanay Pant

India’s Hidden Slavery (2008) documentary directed by Michael Lawson

Lion (2017)

India Untouched: Stories of a People Apart (2007) documentary directed by Stalin

Kurup:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvke6ycgkL4>

“India’s Dalit Revolution” Al Jazeera World, 2017:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdGY9UX1Gr8>

“Dalit Muslims of India” Al Jazeera World, 2015:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7xTSy4P9QI>

“A New Life for Nepal’s Dalit Women” DW News, 2018:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rAGgh5QNVic>

Lesson Standards

- 6.1.2.CivicsCM.1: Describe why it is important that individuals assume personal and civic responsibilities in a democratic society.
- 6.1.2.CivicsCM.2: Use examples from a variety of sources to describe how certain characteristics can help individuals collaborate and solve problems (e.g., open-mindedness, compassion, civility, persistence).
- 6.1.2.CivicsCM.3: Explain how diversity, tolerance, fairness, and respect for others can contribute to individuals feeling accepted.
- 6.1.2.HistoryUP.3: Use examples from the past and present to describe how stereotyping and prejudice can lead to conflict.
- 6.1.5.CivicsPD.3: Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community, state, national, and global challenges.
- 6.2.12.EconGE.6.a: Evaluate efforts of governmental, non-governmental, and international organizations to address economic imbalances, social inequalities, climate change, health and/or illiteracy.
- 6.1.12.HistoryCC.16.b: Determine past and present factors that led to the widening of the gap between the rich and poor, and evaluate how this has affected individuals and society.
- 6.2.12.CivicsHR.6.a: Evaluate the effectiveness of responses by governments and international organizations to tensions resulting from ethnic, territorial, religious, and/or nationalist differences.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.f: Assess the impact of Gandhi’s methods of civil disobedience and passive resistance in India and determine how his methods were later used by people from other countries.
- 6.2.12.HistoryCC.5.g: Analyze how feminist movements and social conditions have affected the lives of women in different parts of the world, and evaluate women’s progress toward social equality, economic equality, and political equality in various countries.
- 6.2.12.CivicsHR.5.a: Assess the progress of human and civil rights protections around the world since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- 6.2.12.CivicsDP.3.a: Use a variety of resources from multiple perspectives to analyze the responses of various governments to pressure from the people for self-government, reform, and revolution.
- 6.2.12.CivicsPI.5.a: Analyze the structure and goals of the United Nations and evaluate the organization’s ability to protect human rights, to mediate conflicts, and ensure peace.

Note: *The instructor could also choose to support this lesson with ELA standards not listed here.*