



TEACHER COMPANION SHEET

**VALUE OF THE MONTH:
EQUALITY**

FOR TEACHERS



Directorate of Education
Govt. of NCT of Delhi

A. EQUALITY

Did
you
know?

- India's top 10% of population holds 73% of the wealth (Oxfam, 2018)
- It would take 941 years for a minimum wage worker in rural India to earn what the top paid executive at a leading Indian garment company earns in a year, while the executive will only take 17.5 days to earn what a minimum wage worker in rural India will earn in their lifetime (presuming 50 years at work) [Oxfam, 2018]
- One-fifth of maternal deaths and one-quarter of child deaths in the world occur in India. Major reason is the lack of access to health care. (UNICEF, 2009)
- 24% of the world's malnourished population belongs to India. It is due to lack of access to food security in the country. (GNR 2018)

It is clear from the figures given on the left, that while India has experienced high levels of economic growth in the last few decades, it has also led to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the super-rich and very little advancement for a vast majority of people belonging to the bottom and poor sections of our society. This has resulted in rising levels of income inequality in the country. Economic growth has also not led to a proportionate improvement in various human development indicators such as maternal mortality, malnourishment and access to high quality education and health care for the vast majority of our population. While high economic growth is important, principles enshrined in our Constitution point us to the fact that as a society we should strive for greater equality and inclusive growth that results in the expansion of human freedoms and capabilities for everyone.

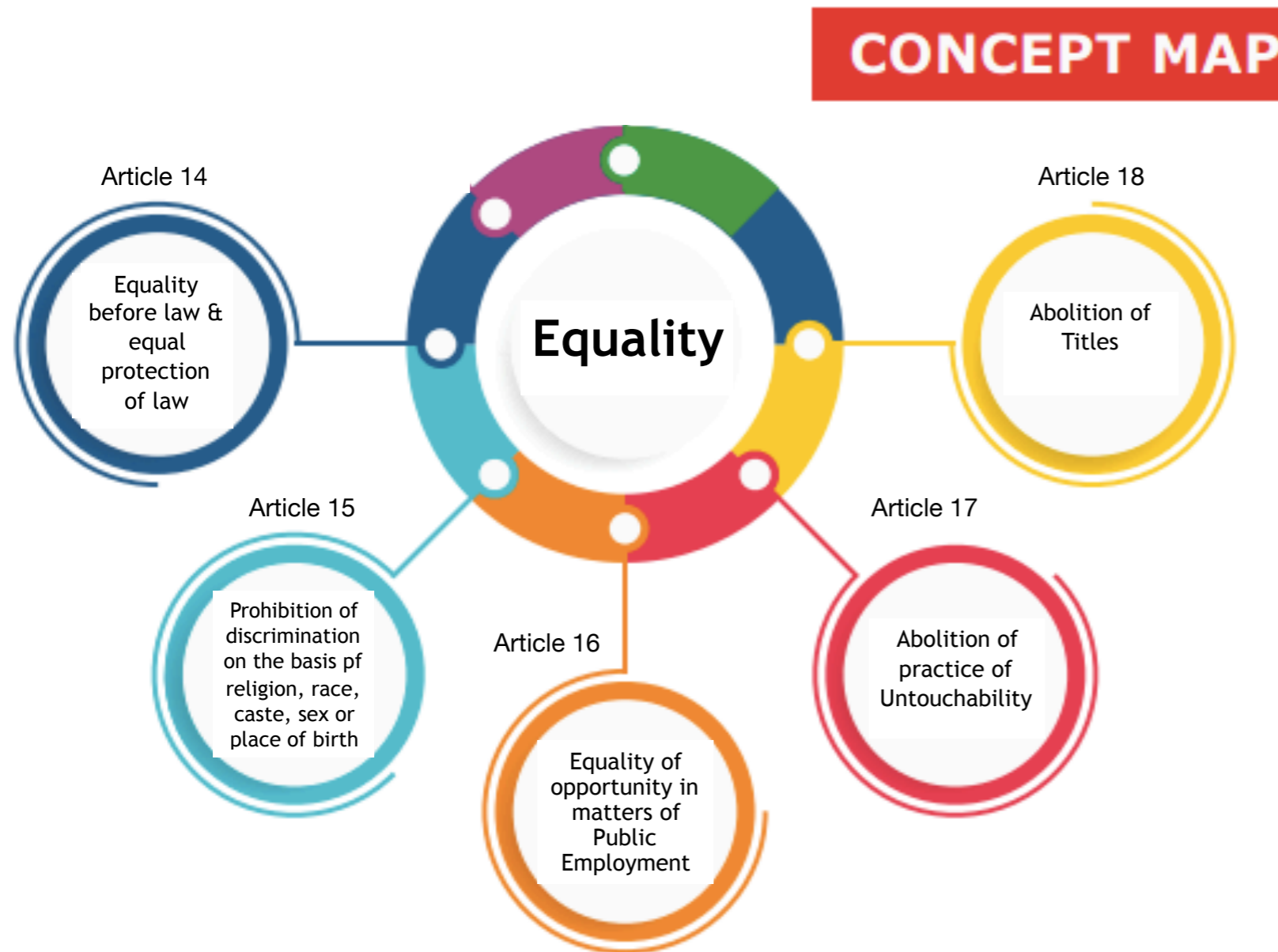
Various forms of inequalities on the basis of class, caste, region, religion and gender continue to exist all around us. To combat this, the value of equality has been placed as a foundation to our Constitution, hence written on the very first page i.e. 'Preamble' to the Constitution. The Constitution of India seeks to provide 'equality of status and opportunity' to all citizens.

Equality means the state of being equal where everyone is treated in the same manner, given equal opportunities and not discriminated against on the basis of caste, class, gender, religion or place of birth.

Objectives of the Campaign :

1. The aim of all the activities in this campaign, is to move from textbook based, theoretical understanding of the Preamble, to real-world experiential understanding of Constitutional principles like equality.
2. The focus should not be on collecting information or data from the students or to test students but to help them explore and understand the constitutional value of equality while having fun.

B. EQUALITY CONCEPT MAP



Equality, which is one of the foundational principles given in the Preamble to the Constitution is realized through the Fundamental Rights and provisions in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Fundamental Rights in the Constitution guarantee:

- **Equality before law and Equal Protection of Law – ‘Equality before law’** means that every person will be treated equally under the law of the land and there would be no special privileges in favour of any individual irrespective of rank or status etc., nor any form of discrimination. **‘Equal protection of law’** is a positive concept which means the right to equality of treatment in equal circumstances. It implies that equals would be treated equally and by extension unequals would be treated unequally. Since circumstances are not always equal, the concept of equal protection permits affirmative action by the State towards unequals by providing special facilities, protection and opportunities to specific groups of people to create a level playing field.

The vision of ‘Equality of status and opportunity’ in the Preamble to the Constitution, finds expression in Article 14-18 of Fundamental Rights, also known as rights of equality. Article 15 – ‘prohibition of discrimination’ is the most relevant to the practice of equality in our everyday life.

- **State will not discrimination against citizens on the grounds of Religion, Race, Caste, Sex or Place of Birth.** Citizens shall not on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subject to any disability or restriction with respect to access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of entertainment as well as the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained by state funds or dedicated to the use of general public. Further, it also allows the State to extend special provisions for women and children, socially and educationally backward groups and Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) for their advancement.
- **Equality of opportunity in matters of Public Employment** assures equality of opportunity in matters of public employment and prevents the State from any sort of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Special provisions may be granted to the backward classes, under-represented States, SC & ST for posts under the State.
- **Abolition of Untouchability** - The Constitution of India abolished untouchability and made the practice of untouchability in any form an offence, punishable by law. Through this progressive provision and accompanying legislation, an attempt was made to put an end to the highly exploitative practice of caste based discrimination in India. However instances of caste based discrimination and violence continues to exist in India and requires further social action to weaken this deep rooted practice.

- **Abolition of Titles** - During the colonial era, the British conferred titles such as Rai Bahadur, Sawai, Rai Sahab, Zamindar etc. to Indians in order to promote their own imperialistic interests. After independence all these titles were abolished. According to the Constitution, the State is prevented from conferring any titles and Indian citizens are not allowed to accept any title from any foreign state. However, this provision is not applicable to military and academic distinctions and other state awards such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan etc.
- **The Directive Principles of State Policy** - To ensure the social, economic and political advancement of citizens, these principles have been laid out in the Constitution to guide the process of law making and governance in the country. These include several provisions to promote equality in society such as adequate means of livelihood equally to all citizens; equal pay for equal work for men and women; avoidance of concentration of wealth and distribution of material resources in the community for the promotion of the common good; securing right to education and public assistance in cases of unemployment and old age, among several others.

As per the constitutional imagination, equality does not mean that everyone should be same, but it is ensuring that everybody has equal opportunity, and is not treated differently or discriminated against because of their identities. It is a basic human value which is essential for human dignity.

Equality, as guaranteed in our Constitution not only provides formal equality but also substantive equality by making special provisions for disadvantaged sections of society to bring them to an equal plane. Let's understand the meaning of 'using equity to attain equality'!

While equality means treating everyone the same, equity means the absence of avoidable or remedial differences among people. Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful. Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help. But not everyone starts at the same place, and not everyone has the same needs. Equity appears unfair, but it actively moves everyone closer to success by "leveling the playing field."

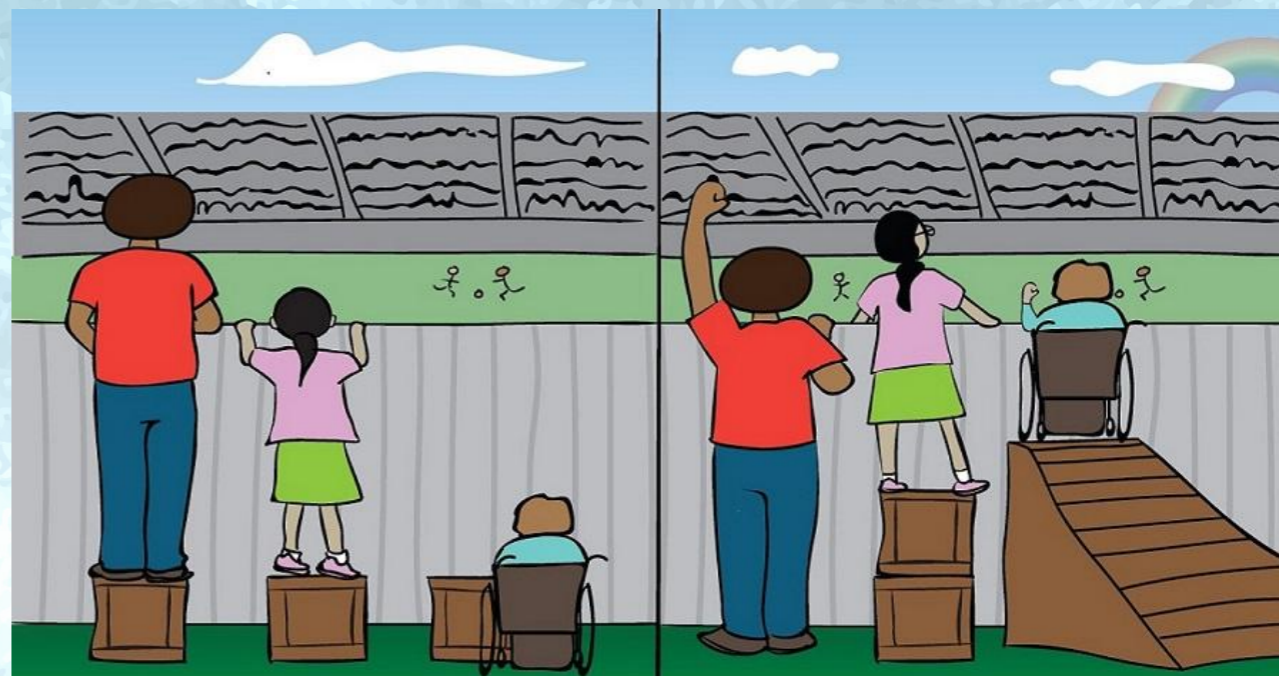


Figure 1: Equality

Figure 2: Equity

The picture explains equal access. Different people may need different kinds of support to get equal access to opportunities. Those who already have a lot of resources and power to access opportunities may not need any support, people who may have some resources and power may need some support and people who are very disadvantaged may need a lot of support to access opportunities and improve their position. Hence the State should provide different forms of support to people coming from different socio-economic backgrounds and socially and economically marginalized communities such as poor, Dalits and Adivasis need more support. Therefore the Constitution mandates that the state should promote the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of society to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. Reservation is only one of the measures to bring social justice, and is sought to be reviewed periodically.

Even though the Constitution provides a mechanism of rights and laws to ensure equality, it is not enough to reach our vision of an equal society. It is on each of us to increase our awareness of existing inequalities, reflect on them and find ways to ensure that everybody has an equal opportunity.

C. ACTIVITIES FOR THE MONTH OF EQUALITY

WEEK 1

Introduction

1. The equality month begins with the teacher introducing the value of equality to the students and explaining the concept map so that students understand the value.
2. This is followed by a **self-survey** where students will reflect on their own thoughts and reactions to real life situations connected to equality. Students will further conduct **surveys** within their family and community at home to understand other people's experiences of equality. This will enable students to understand what equality means in everyday life and how resources, privileges and disadvantages are unequally distributed based on the socio-economic status and identity of different people.
3. Teachers are also encouraged to introspect on the survey questions. They can share their reflections with students during discussion on the topic. Remember a good teacher is a constant learner.

EQUALITY GAME BOOKLET (ONLY FOR Class 6 to 8)

Objective:

Students will be able to experience the value of Equality through the game as they engage with their peers and community. As the students undertake exciting self to society action projects they will gain a deeper understanding of the value and experience empathy towards others.

How the Liberty Game runs:

1. The action projects given in the Equality Game Booklet run in Week 1 at home/community.
2. Each student to pick up one action project from the theme of the month.
3. The fact that the action project has been done needs to be verified by one person, either their family member or friend.
4. Students reflect and write about their experiences on the action project reflection sheet in their diaries.
5. When the students return to school, the teacher unpacks the experience and invites students to share what went well and what were their challenges. More details are given below.

Setting the Tone

Do you know that Gandhiji was approached by a mother who told him that 'my child eats too much sugar, please tell him to stop ', his response was 'I can't do anything about it, please come back after three weeks'. When she came after three weeks, Gandhiji told her child to stay off sugar and shared how it was harmful. Mother asked Gandhiji why he had asked her to wait for three weeks. Gandhiji said 'at that time I was still eating sugar myself so how could I tell your son to abstain'. This demonstrates how Gandhi used to learn about self and society by conducting such experiments.

This can be read out in the classroom to start the discussion on action project on equality.

1. Action Project 1

Abstain from something you really like or can't do without for 3 days. For e.g. TV/Phone/Sweets/Junk food/Sport or any other thing you find difficult to let go of.

2. Action Project 2

Now let us see what Action Project 2 is. Let us do a quick experiment right here in the classroom, raise the hand with which you write. Ok now put this hand behind your back. Now take your pencil in the other hand and write your name with it. So how did it feel .. (unpack few responses)..

Action Project 2 - Organise a get together with a group of friends or family around meal time in the form of an 'equality adda' where each person shares his/her dream about what they would like to see as an equal world and commit to change one personal attitude or behaviour towards that vision of an equal society.

3. Action Project 3

Now let us go to the third option. Think of a family member in your house of the other gender- it could be your mother, father, sister, brother. List down 5 tasks they do in the day which represent their normally understood gender role - for e.g. cooking and cleaning done by your mother. How would it be for you to do any of these tasks? Take a few responses

Action Project 3 - Spend a day living the life of a person from the opposite gender and perform all the chores/tasks she/he undertakes on a normal day.

4. Action Project 4

Think of the best birthday gift you ever got till now. Take a few responses.. .would it have been possible for someone who is less privileged than you to have got this gift? But don't we know that gifts are not about money but they are about love...so how can we show that to some of our underprivileged friends; friends who are less advantaged than you in terms of socio-economic background or access to rights and entitlements.

Action Project 4 - Create a suitable gift for someone who is less advantaged than yourself and present it to him/her

Choosing the Action Project:

Students should be at liberty to choose the action project of their choice. Make sure all 4 action projects have enough number of students to enable maximised learning for all students when they have discussions in Week 2. Teachers can also use the grouping strategy of numbering the students 1,2,3,4 and dividing the action projects.

Note to Teacher: Discussions on the value of equality will bring out aspects of unequal distribution of resources and privileges in our society. Teachers should not shy away from questions and dilemmas expressed by students. Teacher should seek to moderate these discussions with sensitivity, bearing in mind the background of students. Critical thinking should be encouraged while steering students towards adopting a positive outlook towards overcoming any adverse situations in their lives, sharing their privileges with others and advocating for a more equal and just society.



Reflection on Survey

1. This week begins with individual and group reflection by students on the responses they gathered from the survey.
2. Teacher should invite representatives from each group to share experiences and learning. Following questions can be used during the discussion to consolidate learnings:
 - Do you think there is a difference in the treatment of individuals on the basis of their wealth/ work they perform? List the various grounds on which people are treated unequally in our society.
 - Do you think some people are more privileged than others and some people are more disadvantaged than others? Why do you think this inequality exists and what can be done about it?
 - What role do societal rules, values, and traditions play in the kinds of inequality we experience in our everyday life?
 - What can be done to ensure that the value of equality can be practiced effectively in our everyday life?

**Reflection on Action Project
(ONLY FOR CLASS 6-8)**

- When the students return next week, get them into common action project groups. In the groups they share what went well and what were their challenges in doing the action projects. They also discuss what were their experience and how did it make them feel. After they have done this for a few minutes, unpack summary of experiences from one member of each of the Action project groups. Facilitator consolidates understanding with the following questions in a large group discussion:
- Based on the action project what did you learn about privileges you have and others don't?
 - Has there been any change in your perception about someone from a different background? Do you think now you will engage differently with them and how?
 - What can you do to promote equality in your immediate circle?

Facilitator gathers these learnings and brings home the nuances of inequality as it manifests in society. Students will internalize the need for equal status and opportunity for all and possibly become advocates of equality in their own spheres. Action projects 1 and 2 are about experiencing lack of privileges and the 'other' and the need to develop empathy towards individuals/groups who don't enjoy privileges as we do and question why this inequality exists in society. Action project 3 allows students to step into the shoes of a family member of a different gender and experience life through their lens. Action project 4 is a simple gesture of love towards someone who is less privileged. End with the idea that there is a need to learn from the experience of self and others and act to promote greater equality.

Understanding in-depth (ONLY FOR CLASS 9 & 11)

1. This segment is to create an in-depth understanding of Liberty, within students of Class 9 and 11, and relate their previous knowledge with their findings and reflections after the survey.
2. Teacher should invite students of the class to share how their understanding of the value of Equality evolved after having gone through the process of survey. Following questions can be used during the discussion to consolidate learnings:
 - What did you learn about equality in terms of:
 - distribution of resources amongst different classes of society
 - equality of opportunity available to different groups – men & women, caste, religious & regional groups.
 - How can you relate your findings about equality with the existing knowledge of textbooks and beyond?
 - Why do you think there are differences in access to wealth, resources, societal respect & power enjoyed by different groups of people in society? What can be done to create a more equitable society?

EVENT : Panel Discussion

- The Student Council Club will prepare to organise two Panel Discussions on the Value of the Month in Week 3.
- Chosen students from Class 6th to 8th will participate in one panel discussion and chosen students from Class 9th and 11th will participate in second panel discussion.
- Two articulate students each from Class 6, 7, 8 and three students each from Class 9 and Class 11 will be identified to represent their grade in Student Council Club for Panel Discussion (in total 6 students for each panel).
- The club may invite parents, SMC members, alumni, and other members of the community to attend the 'Panel Discussions'.
- Students of Class 6 to 8 will be participating in a panel discussion based on their experiences on equality from the surveys and equality game.
- Students of Class 9 and 11 will be participating in a panel discussion based on their in depth understanding of liberty from the surveys, their own reflections, and making connections with their existing knowledge of textbooks.
- The teacher-in-charge of the Student Council Club will act as the moderator of the panel discussions. Guidelines for panel discussion have been shared in the lesson plan. Guiding questions will also be sent to teachers as cue cards.

Role of a Moderator:

Facilitator

Set the agenda, keep the discussions on track, bring out the most interesting information, and give each panelist an opportunity to share their views.

Timekeeper

Make sure the panel starts and ends on time and follows the time frames on the agenda. Make sure they don't spend too much or too little time on any one single element.

Dialogue Builder

Build dialogue, keep the conversation lively and push the panelists to talk about specifics rather than speak in generalities. Get the dialogue going with the audience, take questions from the audience and communicate them to the panelists.

Energizer

Model energy and enthusiasm. Work the room and engage the audience.

Neutral & Objective

Withhold own personal opinions and judgment. Don't show bias or favouritism toward any particular side, faction or person.

Summarize and Close on a Positive Note

Synthesize the views presented by the panelists for the audience, and close the event on a positive note, enlisting the top learnings the panelists had during the process of 3 weeks.

WEEK 3