

2012

People in India

Kelly Davidson

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People in India

Kelly Davidson – School not available

Grade Level (Req.): 6th-8th grade	Content Area (Req.): World Geography, Human Geography, English/Reading	Unit (Opt.):
<p>Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Arts: Write stories about the people in the interviews. Write letters to them, if possible. • Physical Education: Play soccer, football, Kabaddi, and Guli Dowda. • Life Skills: Make chapattis like Chandra. 		
Time Frame (Req.): One class period	Goal (Req.): To understand that there are people around the world and we can learn from one another.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will determine how the lives of those in India and the USA are similar and different.	
<p>Materials Needed (Req.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indian interviews • Pictures of those interviewed – need to be found • Interview handout • • • • 	<p>New Vocabulary (Opt.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 	
<p>Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): What is life like for people living in India?</p>		
<p>Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give each student an interview and a picture. 2. Allow students time to read the interview and study the photograph. 3. Pass out copies of the Interview Handout. Give students about twenty minutes to complete it. 4. When students are finished, have them find others in the room with the same interview as them. Give them about 10 minutes to prepare a brief presentation for the class, introducing the person they read about. 5. NOTE: This lesson was originally completed in conjunction with the lessons covering the book “Homeless Bird”, by Gloria Whelen. Therefore, one question on the handout refers to the book’s main character, Koly. 6. Extensions: Find the location of each city or village the interviewees live in. Research the sports football (soccer) and cricket. Investigate cultural items such as: Hinduism, gender issues, Hindu weddings, horoscopes, etc. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 		

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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Participation

Assessment (Req.): Interview Handout, Presentation

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 6-8: Understand how geographic and human characteristics create culture and define regions.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- How culture and experience influence people’s perceptions of places and regions
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Location
- Place
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School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21st Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.):

Other Resources (Opt.):

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Interviews from India

Name _____

Section _____

Name and age of person interviewed.

Where do they live?

Who do they live with?

In 5-6 sentences, summarize this person's life.

List topics from this interview that made you think of the book,
Homeless Bird.

INTERVIEWS

Depak Goswami

I live in Dumka, India and my name is Depak. I'm 19 years old and live with my parents, my sister who is 12, and my brother who is 10. My father works a book stall in the village. He sells books to the local people.

Around the house, my siblings and I are expected to keep our rooms clean and occasionally we are asked to sweep. When I was younger, I sometimes did things to make my parents angry. They called me a nuisance and referred to their scoldings as "giving me a piece of their minds". When I really upset them, they would give me a beating, but it was all out of love, they only wanted me to become a good man. Today, my family's favorite thing to do is sit around and talk. My parents give me good advice. Since I am ready to make some important decisions about my education, I want to hear all they have to say.

I love everything American. My favorite film ever is "Good Will Hunting" and my favorite television program is "Fear Factor". I love it when they have to eat disgusting things like bugs and innards. My kid brother likes to watch the WWF wrestling shows. For music, my favorite would have to be Hindu classical, but I love soft rock from the West too. I have been working on my English a lot lately and hope to improve my accent. I also speak Hindi. Reading books is one of my passions and since my father sells books, I have a great place to buy them. Occasionally, I will play cricket, but I mostly enjoy being a fan.

When I was younger, I attend a school which was right next to my house, so I usually went home for lunch. Today, I attend a special art school on weekends and I am preparing to take the entrance exams for the National Institute of Fashion and Technology (NIFT). My dream is to become a famous fashion designer in America. The art training helps with that, but our master, or teacher, only deals in paints, so that is what I am expected to use too. I'm anxious to begin expressing my style with fabric.

I would have to say that my family values love most. There is so much love here in India. We love each other and we love our friends.

My family has had some financial hardships, but we have a good outlook. My parents rarely burden us with such things, therefore, we all stay happy. Sometimes, there is pressure to do well

in school, but I feel little stress. What more can you do than try your best? That is all that is expected of me. Worry would make me unhappy. I say, go and enjoy life, come what may.

When I earn extra money, I spend it all on books, and of course, clothes. I am crazy about clothes. Hopefully someday, you will be crazy about the clothes that I design in America.

I hope that Americans learn a lot about India. Mostly, I hope they come to learn that it is a country with a lot of love, many people, and a place full of lots of diversity, but plenty of unity. Also, we have a great philosophy here. One of my favorite Indian sayings is, "All the world is a family". I think it says it all.

Kunal Saurabh

Hello, I am Kunal and I'm 19 years old. I live in the village of Dumka in east India. My father works for the government labor department and my mother takes care of the house. I live with my parents and my older brother who is 22 and my sister who is 20.

Around the house, my siblings and I are expected to do very little. Our mother loves to take care of things there. She does not always trust us to clean or cook properly. Sometimes, she asks us to straighten things up, but usually, she dominates and does it all herself. I am lucky in that way. Unlike my friend, Depak, I still get in trouble quite a bit. My father gives me a fierce scolding and I am sometimes still beaten or hit. It no longer hurts my body, only my pride, for I know when I have done wrong.

When we are all together, we love to share the wonderful meals that my mother prepares and share each others thoughts. I can get great advice from my brother, sister and parents. They can tell me what life is all about and what I should do in various situations. I trust them and depend on them a great deal.

I work on speaking English a lot. Since I want to end up in the U.S.A., speaking good English is very important. I also speak Hindi. My knowledge of English allows me to enjoy all things American. For example, I love the movie, "Titanic" and at my house, we almost always watch things on the Discovery channel. I like some American music, but my all time favorite is Noh Rafi from India. In my spare time, I like to listen to music, read, play cricket, and paint.

When I was younger, I went to a private school and rode the bus about 10 km. each day to get there. Later, I lived closer to my high school so I could ride my bike. I always loved History and Geography but did not care much for mathematics. I even hated English class once, until I realized what an important class it was. Today, I am awaiting the entrance examinations for

NIFT, or the National Institute of Fashion and Technology. It is a university in New Delhi. My hope is to learn more about fashion and become a world famous fashion designer like Calvin Klein or Versaci. Right now, I attend a private art school on weekends where I am perfecting my skills.

My family values each other and our love for each other the most. Luckily, my parents do not put a lot of pressure on me to do well in life. They simply trust that I will do good. I think things are much harder today than they were for my parents when they were my age. My father is always telling me stories about back in the good old days. There is more competition today for jobs and an education. My family is not one to worry though. We trust that the Gods will make things right for us.

When I have extras rupees, I like to buy books. I was not always one that liked to read, but I have learned to love reading form my companions. When I was younger, most of my extra cash was spent on candies and sweets. I think books are a much better buy because they do not make me fat and they can last forever.

I hope that Americans learn a lot about India. Most importantly, I hope that they learn about Gandhi. He did so much for our country and he even influenced people in American. Also, we are a country with many different religions that are all working for peace. Peace is especially important in this day and age. India is a very spiritual place and if Americans learn to understand that, they may become enlightened.

Dr. Davendra Prasad Singh

Hello, my name is Dr. Singh and I am a Geography Professor at Magadh University in Bodh Gaya, India and I sometimes teach for the university in Patna, India. My name means king and lion, so I guess I am like the lion king.

I was born in Sareya, Sikoundarber in Gaya, presently called Jehanabad in the state of Bihar. My father was an officer in the Indian army and my mother stayed at home. As an only child, I got lots of my mother's attention but I did not escape chores on the family farm. We grew rice and pusse (a grain) along with mustard for the oil. We also had one cow, an ox, a horse, dogs, and two buffalo. I attended a government run village school when I was young and then went on to a university. Later I attended graduate school. Geography has also been my major emphasis in school.

Some of my fondest memories are of playing games and sports as a child and teenager. I played football, which you may call soccer. My team even won prizes for playing so well. I also won individual prizes for running and wrestling.

One of my favorite games in our village was called Kabaddi. It is a breath game of strength, endurance, and training. Eleven players are on each team and the field is split in two, down the center. One player holds his breath as he crosses the line, onto the other team's side. He must try to capture as many people as he can while his breath is held. When he lets out his breath, the other team may capture him if they catch him before he runs back to his side. Each team alternates turns and the team with the most people left in the end wins. Holding and controlling your breath is very important in yoga and other Hindu customs.

My other favorite village game was called Guli Dowda. All players are split into two teams. Each team has two sticks, a small one and a long one - these can be found easily in all villages. For round one, teams alternate letting each player hit the small stick with the big one. The object is to keep the small stick in the air as long as you can. Teams keep track of hits and once everyone has had a turn, the numbers are all added up for each team. Next, each team member gets to hit the small stick as many times as he could hit it in the first round. In other words, if I hit the stick in the air six times before it hit the ground in round one, I would now get to hit it six times again in round 2. The difference is, this time to object is distance. When all players have hit the small stick in round two, you look at which team was able to hit the small stick farther. This is a cumulative of all team players' distance hits. The losing team must then run on one leg the distance of the winning team's small stick. It is their punishment for not being the champions.

When I was only twelve years old, my parents arranged a marriage for me. I married Sumitra Devi, who was also twelve at the time. The whole thing seemed like child's play to me, I did not fully understand what was going on. Our wedding, along with all the traditional ceremonies, took nearly one week and we all traveled to Sumitra's home for the festivities. There were hundreds of people there. After our marriage, Sumitra came to live with my family for one week. After that, she returned to her home where she stayed until she was seventeen.

By the time she came to live in my parent's home permanently, I was off to college, so I really did not get to know her until we were each about twenty-four years old. Until then, we saw each other very infrequently. Later, we both lived in my parent's home, as joint family living is a tradition here.

Today, I live in the city of Patna in the state of Bihar. I still have a joint family home and my parents, though retired, live with me. Unfortunately, my wife passed away several years ago, but our children live with me still. I have a son who is 27. He is married and works with the merchant marine. His wife stays at home and helps to clean and cook for the family. I have a daughter who is 23. She is a post graduate student in geography. She has even helped me to write and publish geography books. I almost always have her in the back of my mind because I would like to arrange a marriage for her someday. I have another daughter, age 17, who is in college and two more sons, ages 15 and 13. We all live in the same house and share nearly everything. We have one closet for men's clothes and one closet for women's clothes. When we get dressed in the mornings, we are all welcome to wear any clothes there, we do not have individual ownership of them. It is the same with bedrooms, we share. If someone feels like sleeping in a different room that night, they do. No one says anything. I have arranged for my

son and his new wife to have a private room, but if someone else wants to sleep in there, they will be allowed.

Since my daughter-in-law and daughters take care of most household chores and my sons take care of our farm (we still grow rice, pusse, and mustard and have pretty much the same animals as we did when I was a child). I spend most of my time researching or writing about geography. Sometimes I just lock myself up in my room and write for days. My children will bring me my meals and my 15 year-old son, who shares a room with me, just comes in to sleep.

I also enjoy travel and my religion, Hinduism. As a Brahmin, India's highest caste, I am also a Hindi priest. I always wear a medallion around my neck, showing that I am a holy man. Weddings, and other Hindu rituals, are ceremonies that I can perform and I am often sought out to do so in my community.

One big difference I see between the United States and India is that here, we have a closed society. Affection between women and men in public is unacceptable. So much as talking to a woman one does not know can be seen as scandalous. Girls and boys often go to separate schools. If they are poor, they may have to go to the same school, but they must sit on opposite sides of the classroom. There is very little opportunity to get to know people of the opposite gender. That is why I believe that arranged marriages are the best. I took part in the arrangement of my son's wedding and I will do it for the rest of my children as well. Otherwise, they would have few opportunities to meet perspective mates. In the United States, I think things are very different.

Chandra Abkari

Hello, my name is Chandra and I am 29 years old. I was just married in June of 2003 and I now live in joint family home with my mother-in-law and father-in law, who are each in their 60's and my husband who is 32. My mother-in-law has always worked in the home while my father-in-law is a retired air traffic controller. My husband works as a travel agent and I am a national tourist guide in Mumbai, India.

When I was a child, I attended a private school from the ages of 4-15. Today, the law states that one must be 6 years old before beginning school. After that, I went to a private junior college for two years with an emphasis in history. After graduation, I went on to a three year college and once again, specialized in history.

I really do not have chores around the house that I am responsible for. I'm very lucky, my mother-in-law loves to cook. She does all the cooking and all the shopping in the market. It's really nice because when I get home from work, which is often late, I have no responsibilities. We have two maids that come to the house daily to clean and do laundry. When I was a child

and still lived in my parent's home, my mother would make me help her with the cooking. I always ended up being responsible for the chapatis (flat bread). It is a hot and sticky job and I can say that I do not miss it at all.

I love to spend time with my friends. I feel blessed that I have such great people to spend time with. We like to meet in cafes for lunch. I also love karate and I have a brown belt. Travel is one of my passions and I hope to be able to travel more outside of India. With my parents, I have traveled all over the country. My husband has been all over the world and we hope to travel a lot someday.

I speak a number of languages, which helps a lot with the many languages in India. It helps with my job as well. My mother tongue is Marathi. I also speak Hindi, Gujarati, Konkani, English, Spanish, and Italian.

Working as a National Tourist Guide is a really exciting career for me. I work pretty steady from the month of October until April. During those months I usually work three to four days a week. Once a season I do an outbound tour, which takes me away from home for two to four weeks. May through July in India are very hot and the demand for guides really slows down. Since I live in the suburb of Skandivili, the commute into the city of Mumbai takes about one to one and a half hours. I take the train, but pay for first class so I can be in a clean car with women only. It is very safe. If it was not, I would use my brown belt. I usually walk from the station to our office. Sometimes I don't get off work until 6:00 p.m. and the long commute makes me get home late. Luckily, I now have a cell phone which helps with communication to home.

In life, family and each other is what I value most.

If I could do one thing to make life in India better I would make education compulsory for everyone and I would have it enforced strictly. Without an education, what can you do?

Life today is easier for me than it was for my mother. Women have more rights today. For example, many people in India believe in arranged marriages. My grandparents never even saw each other before their wedding. My parents had met each other, but during that day and age, only the man had a choice in the matter. I, on the other hand, knew my husband for six months before we married. He found me, there was no arrangement, no dowry to be paid, and either one of us could have called it off. My parents, as Hindus, did want me to have my horoscope done before I was married though. I had it done when I was 18. A horoscope reader looks at the time and place of your birth to determine a number of things about you. When looking for a husband, I was coupled with a total of thirty-three different young men. None of them seemed like the right man for me. I just gave up. Then, through work, I met my husband and the romance happened naturally. My parents did ask that his horoscope was compared to mine. Luckily, we were compatible.

My goals in life are to continue the joint family custom and to have a child. We have seriously talked about adoption. There are so many unwanted children in India and India does not really need any more people. I would be able to leave my child at home with my mother-in-law for child care.

My biggest worry is about war and violence. India has a long history of conflicts with Pakistan.

When I have extra rupees (money) I like to spend it on jewelry. Semi-precious and precious stones are my favorites.

A few things that I hope Americans learn about India are that we are a country with a rich and ancient history. There are lots of Indians that do not know our history. There is so much wisdom to be found here. Also, I believe that we are a country of family, love, friendship, and patience.